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CUL-US-LEBANON-EXHIBITION 1 Lebanese artists: film series evoke memory of war in Washington By Joe Macaron WASHINGTON, May 4 (KUNA) -- Over 29 Lebanese artists are recounting the painful memories of their country's civil war to project a brighter and promising future free of violence in an exhibition currently on display at the American University in Washington, DC. The exhibition looks at contemporary art produced in the diverse and multilayered country of Lebanon, a diverse country defined by the convergence of civilizations in the past six millennia. The Lebanese civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990 and claimed more than 250,000 casualties and lives, comes to life in this all-Lebanese-show at the Katzen Arts Center. It is the first comprehensive North American exhibition of art made in the aftermath of the war and includes nearly 50 paintings, sculptures, installations, photographs, and media-based art by 29 artists based primarily in Beirut. Spread all over the museum, the arts work articulate the memories, dreams and political realities of Lebanon by a mixture of prominent and young artists like Ayman Baalbaki, Chawqi Chamoun, Mouna Bassili Sehnaoui, Nabil Nahas, Amal Dagher, Marwan Sahmarani, Nadim Karam, Mohammad Rawas, and Nada Sehanoui. The Katzen Arts Center's director Jack Rasmussen told KUNA that the museum have been focusing on international shows since it opened five years ago and after hosting an exhibition on Syria and Israel, it was time for Lebanon. He described the Lebanese exhibition as "terrific and exciting, it is different from what you would see in New York." Rasmussen noted that the art work displayed is "a mixture of Arab and Western influence" and that he was more interested "to understand what is happening now, it is hard to understand the present." Rasmussen said he mostly picked contemporary arts for the exhibition to see how "the generation that grew up in the Lebanese civil war would reflect on it." The Lebanese curator Amal Traboulsi, who kept her Beirut Gallery open throughout the civil war, was contacted by Rasmussen to help the American University Museum narrow the artists taking part in the exhibition titled "Convergence: New Art from Lebanon" that will be on display until May 16. Traboulsi told KUNA "as the history of Lebanon and the Middle East is often tumultuous, this art exhibition gives reason for some hope." She noted that the younger generation of Lebanese artists are more connected to their country now and "each speak about their painful experience in their own way in an international style" affirming that she told Rasmussen ahead not to ask her for arts work that are similar in style and substance "because Lebanon is a diverse country and I want the exhibition to be like the country." The exhibition is presented under the auspices of the Lebanese embassy to the United States and organized by the Association for the Promotion and Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon (APEAL), a non-governmental organization, an initiative privately funded by Lebanese and international sponsors. Between May 13 and 16, ten Lebanese film series will also be on display in the museum offering another perspective of the country's civil war with highlighted movies like "the Kite" by Randa Shahal Sabagh and "Under the Bombs" by Philippe Aractingi, and "When Maryam spoke out" by Assad Fuladkar. (end) jm.bs KUNA

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