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APEAL awards students arts scholarships



Gasparian, Assaad and Dallal during the presentation of the Maria Geagea Arida Annual Scholarship Award, Tuesday at the Albergo. Photo by Hasan Shaaban

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BEIRUT: The Association for the Promotion and Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon announced winners of its 2017 scholarship awards Tuesday.

The jury of the APEAL Maria Geagea Arida Annual Scholarship Award selected Natasha Gasparian and Myriam Dallal to be its laureates. The prizes will allow Dallal to finalize her work toward a doctorate at Universite Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne in France in arts science, while Gasparian will pursue a master's degree in art history and curating at the American University of Beirut.

APEAL said jurors were deeply impressed by the finalists' "academic and professional accomplishments and their level of artistic maturity and strong oral presentations."

"In addition to the grants and scholarships provided by APEAL, there is an institutional structure which allows aspiring scholars to find opportunities in Beirut, and a whole network of people to engage and collaborate with," Gasparian said in her thank-you remarks.

"There is much at stake in what gets produced, exhibited and written about now in Beirut, and it is important to recognize that there are also disagreements that confirm the existence of local debates worth being part of."

Dallal's doctoral dissertation focuses on the causal link between amnesia and collective memory through visual information in the context of the Lebanese War and its conclusion with the Taif Accord. She thanked the association "for believing in the necessity of following up and supporting such a topic that might seem outdated to some, given the fact that the subject of war was widely discussed in the past few years. This will add to the challenge of finding new ways and angles through which to address the subject."

APEAL instituted the Maria Geagea Arida Annual Scholarship Award in 2010 and has been distributing the scholarships to talented art students and budding artists on a yearly basis.

Scholarships help subsidize tuition fees and are granted for arts-related postgraduate programs such as art, art history, museum studies, curatorial studies and the like – both in Lebanon and abroad.

Three recipients were awarded the 2016 scholarship – Hicham Faraj, who was destined for Yale’s fine arts master’s program in graphic design, Ghalas Charara, who applied for the master’s program in critical, curatorial and cybermedia studies at Geneva’s Haute Ecole d’Art et de Design, and Sarah Naim, who was destined for a master’s of fine arts at the California Institute of Arts.

“This year’s awards have a special meaning for APEAL,” said Nada Boulos al-Assaad, APEAL secretary and scholarship committee member. Nodding to Dallal’s “well-deserved scholarship,” she pointed out that Gasparian will be among the first students to enroll in AUB’s new master’s program in art history and curating.

“Seeing universities in Lebanon introducing new academic [curricula] dedicated to arts is great news for Lebanon,” Assaad said. “It is in line with APEAL’s initiatives and goals. We firmly believe that promoting art and artists in Lebanon translated into actively motivating our youth to pursue higher studies in that field.”

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