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THIS WEEK'S ART WORK

"The diner", 2020, Omar Gabriel

Photographer and director, the artist documents human intimacy as a way to question social norms. His photographic journeys tell the stories of the "mavericks" or "marginalists", in the context of their respective societies, inspired by sexual taboos in the Arab World. Through photography and cinema, he explores human behaviour and the taboos of Lebanese society. His work navigates themes related to gender, sexuality, beauty and the complexity of human relationships, transcending all borders and being therefore universal.

Omar Gabriel directed a series of short films entitled "Letters to Myself" in 2022, which looks back at the daily difficulties faced by the LGBTQIA2+ community in Lebanon. "I want this documentary series to show that I am, as a human, broader than my gender. I go beyond this debate in order to address the complexity of my humanity. We are all complex creatures and art is the only platform which gives us an open access to others, the only place where all disciplines can be blended together, and where artistic expression does not have limits."

Location: Lebanon.

Nominations

LEBANON

Naïm Abou Jaoudé and Dalia Salam Rishani awarded the Emigrant's Medal of Merit

The medal was awarded by former President of the Republic Michel Aoun and presented by the Lebanese Ambassador in London, Rami Mortada, to :

- Naïm Abou Jaoudé, for his success in finance and his philanthropic commitment to Lebanon;
- Dalia Salam Rishani, for her political commitment, and in recognition of her contribution to fostering youth education.

Photo: Dalia Salam Rishani and Naïm Abou Jaoudé with the Lebanese ambassador in London, Rami Mortada. Copyrights L'Orient-le-Jour.

Nominations

LEBANON

Maha Khalil Chalabi awarded the 2023 Shield of Arab Women

The award was presented during the seventh edition of the Arab Women Festival organised by the Arab Women Council at the Antonine Institute in Hadeth-Baabda. Secretary General of the International Association for the Safeguarding of Tyre, Maha Khalil Chalabi has been involved for more than forty years in the protection of the archaeological treasures of her native city. A UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador as a "fervent defender of heritage", she notably succeeded in obtaining for Tyre the status of exceptional heritage from the United Nations Security Council and the European Parliament during the civil war. This new award reinforces and encourages her in her fight for the preservation of Tyre's cultural heritage.

Photo: Photo: Maha Khalil Chalabi, surrounded by her friends. Copyrights L'Orient-le-Jour.

Nominations

IRAQ

Rand Abdul Jabbar is the winner of the Richard Mille Prize of the Louvre Abu Dhabi

In collaboration with Swiss watchmaker Richard Mille, the Louvre Abu Dhabi launched the second edition of the Richard Mille Art Prize with the "Louvre Abu Dhabi Art Here" exhibition. The \$60,000 prize is intended to be a platform of support and recognition for artists who contribute to pushing the boundaries of contemporary art in the United Arab Emirates.

Iraqi artist Rand Abdul Jabbar won this edition with her work 'Earthly Wonders, Celestial Beings' (2019-ongoing). She was competing with nine other artists. Rand Abdul Jabbar had previously exhibited at Shubbak Festival (UK), SAVVY Contemporary (Germany), Rabat Biennale (Morocco), Biennale d'Architecture d'Orléans (France), Abu Dhabi Art, Jameel Arts Centre, NYU Abu Art Gallery Dhabi and Entrepôt 421 (UAE). Her work focuses on Iraqi cultural heritage with an emphasis on architecture, archaeology and mythology. She also explores the tension between the tangible and the ephemeral in her own family history, producing fragmentary reconstructions of past events and experiences.

The Louvre Abu Dhabi took the opportunity of the ceremony to announce the theme of the third edition of the Richard Mille Art Prize: "Transparency". Organised by Maya El Khalil, the call for entries will open on 30 March.

Nominations

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, JORDAN, KUWAIT, LEBANON, LIBYA, SYRIA, YEMEN

Arab Women of the Year Awards

Organised by the London Arab Organisation, this ceremony highlights the outstanding achievements of women from the MENA region.

Dr. May Chidiac, a Lebanese journalist and former minister, received the Achievement in Media Activism Award for her work over nearly four decades and for establishing the May Chidiac Foundation Media Institute, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to research and education on media, human rights, democracy and social welfare issues.

Kuwaiti Dr. Nada Al-Chammari, partner and director of inspiration at Orbital Space - a UAE-based company which strives to make space accessible to all - received the innovation award and is the first woman to be recognised by the organisation in the space field.

The Prize was also given to Sheikha May Al-Otaibi of Bahrain for education; Libyan Foreign Minister Najla Mangouch for diplomacy; Sheikha Fatima bent Hazza Al-Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates for cultural development; Jordan's former Minister of Social Development Khawla Armouti for community service; Lebanese model Nour Arida for social impact; Yemeni mathematician Manahel Thabet for scientific development; and Syrian athlete Dima Aktaa for the community spirit award.

Photo : Nour Arida, copyrights Arab News.

Nominations

IRAN

Ahmad Samii Guilani honoured by France

At the age of 102, Ahmad Samii Guilani has been honoured by France after a long life devoted to translating the greatest French-speaking writers. He is now a Commander in the Order of Academic Palms.

Photo: Ahmad Samii Guilani at his work table, September 11, 2022, in Tehran. Atta Kenare / Agence France Presse.

Nominations

EGYPT, MOROCCO

Time Magazine puts Rabat and Gizeh in the spotlight

The Moroccan capital has been named one of the "fifty extraordinary destinations to visit in 2023" by Time Magazine. Highlighting the festivals hosted by the city (Visa for Music, the International Auteur Film Festival, etc.), the architectural achievements of Iraqi Zaha Hadid and the largest theatre in the Arab world, the magazine sells the assets of Rabat, whose cost of living has increased significantly in recent years.

The Time list also includes Giza and Saqqara in Egypt.

Photo: copyrights glob.art

Nominations

SAUDI ARABIA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, MOROCCO

King Faisal Prize winners

The King Faisal Foundation annually honours achievements in the categories of service to Islam, Islamic studies, Arabic language and literature, medicine and science.

For this 2023 edition, an Emirati, a Moroccan, a South Korean, two British and three Americans won the prize.

The prize for services to Islam was awarded jointly to Sheikh Nasser bin Abdullah (United Arab Emirates) and the prize for Arabic language and literature was awarded to Professor Abdelfattah Kilito (Morocco).

Photo: Prince Khaled Al-Faiçal on his way to the announcement ceremony of the winners of the 2021 King Faisal Prize, in Riyadh, on 10 February 2021. Copyrights King Faisal Foundation.

LEBANON, PALESTINE

Mahmoud Darwish Prize

The Mahmoud Darwish Foundation has revealed the names of the winners of the prize of the late poet.

Palestinian poet and translator Salma Khadra Jayyusi won the Palestinian Creativity Award, Lebanese artist Marcel Khalife received the Arab Creativity Award, and Italian translator and academic Isabella Camera d'Afflitto won the International Creativity Award.

Architecture

MOROCCO

Tribute to Omar Essakalli and Fikri Benabdellah

Archimedia pays tribute to two architects who participated in the construction of modern Morocco and who marked their era: Omar Essakalli and Fikri Benabdellah. Omar Essakalli is known for his various achievements, including the design of the Casablanca Technopark, the City of Innovation in Rabat and the Biocity in Istanbul. Mohamed Fikri Benabdallah is notably at the origin of various projects including the Centre d'Études Nucléaires de la Maâmora, the airports of Fez Saiss, Al Hoceima, Ouarzazate and Oujda, the renovation of the Moroccan embassy in Paris and the renovation of the Maison du Maroc at the Cité Universitaire in Paris, the restoration of the Nejjarine museum in Fez, etc.

Photo : copyrights MAP.

LEBANON

Studio Caramel

The brand created in 2016 by Rami Boushdid and Elie Bassil has come a long way. Despite the difficulties and the economic situation in Lebanon, the two entrepreneurs have managed to blend traditional Lebanese craftsmanship with today's contemporary design expectations. The two friends combine wood, leather and brass to create timeless furniture, such as the "Groove" coffee table, which is inspired by Phoenician architecture. Studio Caramel's key pieces have been featured in high profile magazines Walkpaper and Elle Décoration, as well as in the Financial Times.

It will be possible to meet Studio Caramel at the next Dubai Design Fair.

Photo: @studio.caramel on Instagram.

Digital Art Exhibitions

LEBANON

"Are androids covered with electric dew?"

The name of Caline Aoun's new solo exhibition at the Beirut-based gallery Marfa' intrigues. The multidisciplinary artist works on our relationship to matter, and more precisely the encounter between nature and technology, through the four works exhibited:

- "Nature's Time Capsule", a series of three handmade paper works made from pine needles;
- Two works of "mechanical art", based on the technological modification of the indoor environment;
- "Vanishing Act, an installation that explores two forms of energy: light and heat.

"I really hope that viewers will remember that the spaces we live in, all kinds of spaces, are not inert or static (...) how artificial mechanisms can change the way we engage with our physical environment" - Caline Aoun, the exhibition's introduction.

On view until 28 April 2023.

Photo: "Vanishing act", 2023, Caline Aoun. Copyrights @marfaprojects on Instagram.

Plastic Arts Exhibitions

LEBANON

Beirut: "Filiation" by Leila Jabre

The Janine Rubeiz gallery hosts the works of Leila Jabre Jureidini until April 5 for the exhibition "Filiation". The graphic designer, painter and sculptor is used to tackling hot topics, such as consumerism in "Fragments" in 2012, the female condition in "Freedom Fighters" in 2019, or the Lebanese crisis. However, this new solo exhibition breaks new ground. The multidisciplinary artist nostalgically addresses the memories of her childhood around painted or embroidered canvases. This work of quilted thread recalls the family heritage of Leila Jabre Jureidini, whose parents worked in a weaving factory in Hadeth.

Born in Lebanon in 1963, Leila Jabre Jureidini studied graphic design at the ESAG in Paris, followed by a degree in visual arts and communication design from Parsons the New School of Design in New York, before continuing with a degree in sociology and anthropology at the Sorbonne University. She worked as a designer in France and the United States before returning to live in Beirut. She then started to dedicate herself completely to art. In 2008, she exhibited her work in London, Paris and Beirut. She participated in two editions of the Sursock Museum's Autumn Salon, which awarded her a special mention from the jury in 2012.

Photo: Photo: "Brick", by Leila Jabre Jureidini, acrylic painting and wool thread weaving on canvas, 2022.

Plastic Arts Exhibitions

MOROCCO, PALESTINE

Rabat: "Poetry in the colours of Al-Quds

The exhibition "Poetry in the colours of Al-Quds: poets' strokes through the pens of visual artists" is held at the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Acharif agency, in collaboration with the House of Poetry of Morocco in Rabat and the Moroccan union of professional visual

artists. Twenty-five artists and as many poets participate in the event. The Palestinian cause is at the heart of the exhibition.

Plastic Arts Exhibitions

ALGERIA

International exhibition in Khenchela on the occasion of 19 March

Still in the vein of the celebrations of the 19 March 1962 ceasefire, the city of Khenchela hosts a plastic arts exhibition bringing together works from twenty-two countries including Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Germany, France, Belgium, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Italy, Spain, Yemen and Kuwait.

Fouad Belagh, president of the "Lamassete" association, which initiated the exhibition, told the Algerian Press Service that "this exhibition (...) highlights, in particular, the sacrifices made by the Algerian people to free themselves from colonialism and regain their independence.

Photo: copyrights APS.

Plastic Arts Exhibitions

PALESTINE

Gaza: the Shababek Gallery exhibition

The contemporary art gallery created in 2009 by young artists from the Gaza Strip presents a new exhibition entitled "وصلة" (bond).

The exhibition showcases the work of eleven artists who have benefited from a residency at the gallery, allowing them to develop their tools and creativity, always in relation to Gaza and, in general, Palestine.

For example, Assaf Al-Kharti describes the vicious circle in which the young Gazan generation is locked. His installation, made entirely of iron circles, depicts a human being whose abilities and possibilities are reduced by the existence of these vicious circles, from which it seems impossible to escape. The artist states that he wanted to

represent "the journey of young people in these vicious circles because they have no choice but to be in them. They are always torn between leaving or staying, between choosing patience or humiliation, facing life or death, ...".

Shababek uses its resources to support young and new emerging artists by giving them the opportunity to have their very first art exhibition. The aim is to support the art movement in the Gaza Strip and to share the untold story of Gaza with the world through art.

Photo: Assaf Al-Kharti's work.

Cinema Festivals

JORDAN

Amman International Film Festival returns in August

The annual festival, which focuses on debut films by Arab and international talent, will take place from 15 to 22 August in the Jordanian capital.

In addition to the four competitive sections, the festival opens a special section dedicated to French and Arab co-productions. It is organised in cooperation with the French Institute of Jordan.

Directors wishing to have their films selected and screened at the festival can now submit their applications.

Cinema

SAUDI ARABIA

A second season of "Masameer County" on Netflix

The second season of six episodes is already a success. Created by Abdulaziz Almuzaini and Malik Nejer, the series follows the adventures of the inhabitants of Masameer, an imaginary county that sheds light on the daily life of the Saudi kingdom.

MOROCCO

Rabat: Pan-African Film Days

This first edition of the festival takes place from 12 to 16 March in Rabat on the initiative of the Hiba Foundation and with the support of the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication. The festival is held mainly at the Renaissance cinema and the coffee place "La Scène", but also in other venues in the capital city such as ISMAC, ISADAC and OnomoHotel.

In addition to screenings of short and feature films, the event also includes round tables, workshops and masterclasses in photography, sound and acting.

Several countries are present: Senegal, Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Tanzania, Niger, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritius.

This cultural event is part of the "Rabat African Capital of Culture in 2022", placed under the high patronage of King Mohammed VI. Created in 2006 on the initiative of King Mohammed VI, the Hiba Foundation is a non-profit association that works to support creation, federate private initiatives, encourage talent, participate in the development of emerging arts and favour contemporary creations.

The full programme can be found on the following link <http://www.renaissance.ma/>

Cinema

ALGERIA

Iraqi short film "Echach" wins Lotus Film Days

The first edition of the Lotus International Short Film Days in Setif crowned the short film by Iraqi director Ali Al Kaabi. The film tells the story of a young visually impaired woman who undergoes surgery to regain her sight.

The Algerian films "Jamiouna Nantami" by Mohamed-Larbi Bourourou and "414" by Younès Ismaïl won the second and third prizes respectively.

Photo: L'expression algérienne.

SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT, JORDAN, LEBANON, SYRIA, TUNISIA

Red Sea Film Festival announces selected projects for its development programme

The Arab and African film projects selected for the fourth edition of the Red Sea Lodge at the Red Sea International Film Festival are:

- "How To Not Get Married In Saudi Arabia" by Ghadeer Binabbas (Saudi Arabia)
- "Sukun" by Lina Mahmoud (Saudi Arabia)
- "Mecca Berlin" by Mujtaba Saeed (Saudi Arabia)
- "By Hasnaa's Side" by Amaal Yousef (Saudi Arabia)
- "Lost Soul" by Sarah Mohammed Almuneef (Saudi Arabia)
- "An Endless Night" by Mohamed Kassaby (Egypt)
- "To Each Their Own" by Samer Battikhi (Jordan)
- "Temporary Lives" by Wessam Hachicho (Syria)
- "The Sun Has Seen Everything" by Wissam Tanios (Lebanon)
- "My Father Killed Bourguiba" by Fatma Riahi (Tunisia).

TUNISIA

The Tunisian Film Library offers a special Ramadan programme

Seven evenings of Tunisian cinema and film-concerts are on the Ramadan programme of the Tunisian Film Library during the period from 30 March to 15 April 2023, including three films released between 1968 and 1977, two film-concerts and two screenings of the Khéméis Khayati collection with testimonies of Tunisian and Arab film-makers.

"The Ambassadors" by Naceur Ktari, "The Adventures of Prince Ahmed" by Lotte Reiniger, "The Rebel" by Omar Khlifi, ... Find the whole programme on

<https://cnci.tn/cinematheque/>

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Film Nights: a first edition in Paris

The first edition of these Saudi Film Nights in Paris was organised on March 13 by the Saudi Arabian Film Commission. Films directed by young talents were in the spotlight.

This first screening featured five short fiction films:

- "Swing" by Dana and Raneem Almohandes;
- "Othman" by Khalid Zidan
- "Dunya's Day" by Raed Alsamari
- "Matchstick" by Salma Murad
- "Starting Point" by Kamel Altamimi.

The Saudi Film Nights continued at the Gobelins school of visual creation, where fifteen Saudi students are enrolled. The films will soon be screened in other French cities (Toulouse, Montpellier and Lyon).

Cinema Festivals

LEBANON

Animation film festival at the Royal Cinema in Bourj Hammoud

The cinema recently refurbished by Karl Hadifé proposes to discover the diversity of animated films on 16 and 17 March, thus going against preconceived ideas restricting this film genre to a child audience. The programme has been developed in collaboration with the Lebanese artist and director Nicolas Fattouh, with films from all over the world including Lebanon, Iran, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. The entire programme is available on Instagram: <https://bit.ly/3JDxDTY>

Photo : L'Orient-le-Jour.

ALGERIA

"Migration Comique" by Kamel Abdal

The Algerian comedian is back for a Paris show on 11 March. In his new one-man show, "Migration comique", he shares the story of his life as an ex-Algerian, part-time comedian, former literature teacher and as a migrant.

Dance Festivals

ALGERIA, TUNISIA

Algiers: the International Festival of Contemporary Dance returns from 9 to 13 March

The International Festival of Contemporary Dance in Algiers was back for its eleventh edition after a three-year break. It took place from 9 to 13 March at the Algiers Opera Boualem Bessaih.

Mali was the guest of honour at this eleventh edition, which was entitled "Memory". The inauguration was celebrated by a new performance by the ballet of the Algiers Opera entitled "Thiqa" (trust).

Six other countries participated in the festival: Tunisia, Italy, Russia, France, Great Britain and Canada.

Fatima Zohra Namous-Senouci, curator of the festival, informed the public that several master classes would be organised for young people from several wilayas (Djanet, Tizi Ouzou, Ain Defla, Algiers, etc).

Photo : El Watan.

MOROCCO

Rabat : « Cases in Transgression »

The Mohammed VI Foundation gallery hosts an exhibition entitled "Cases en Transgression" (Cases in Transgression), based on the work of the artist and cartoonist Zakariaa Tmalah, until 14 April.

The exhibition presents a variety of excerpts and covers of comics on which the artist had the opportunity to work, including "Tahta Ssifr 1", "Tahta Ssefr 2" and "Ighrae Al Aàli". Zakariaa Tmalah tries to highlight forgotten characters, such as the homeless. A graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts in Tetouan, the artist, born in 1987, works with different graphic design methodologies. He is particularly interested in women, war crimes, the environment, but also in history and politics. He has won numerous awards, including "The Best Illustrated Comic Project" in 2012 for his project "Under Zero" at the Tetouan International Comics Festival.

Photo: copyrights Zakariaa Tmalah (@zakariaatmalah)

Gastronomy

LEBANON

The success of Zali restaurant

Zali is a family restaurant that Liza Maalouf and her family opened in Bali in 2021. The family decided to start this adventure after the "thaoura" (revolution of 2019), the economic crisis and the double explosion of the port of Beirut. The restaurant team learnt traditional Lebanese recipes in a village in the Bekaa and also directly from the hands of their elder, Liza Maalouf. The restaurant opened in the middle of a lockdown, but takeaway sales kept it going. Today, Zali offers classic Lebanese cuisine (shawarma, tawook, kafta, kebbé, samké harra, ...) and has won the Manassah prize of the al-Dar start-up Award in Abu Dhabi. The family is already planning to open a second place.

Photo : @zalifrombeirut on Instagram.

Literature Nominations

EGYPT, MOROCCO, PALESTINE

The Al-Babtain Prize for poetic creativity from the Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation of Kuwait.

The Moroccan critic won the eighteenth edition of the "Al-Babtain Prize for Poetic Creativity" in the category of the best book of poetic criticism for his book "Poetics and Harmony of Discourse: The Linguistics of the Text and the Poetics of Jean Cohen". The Egyptian critic Ahmed Darwish also received the prize for poetic creativity for his book "The Reception of Poetry".

Palestinian poet Alaa Al-Qatrawi won the prize in the young poets category while Saudi poet Abdulaziz Khoja won the foundation's appreciation prize.

Sudanese poet Roda Al-Hajj won the Foundation's Best Poetry Volume Award and Jordanian poet Abdullah Abu Shmais won the Best Poem Award.

The 2023 edition attracted a wide participation from different countries of the Arab world, with more than eight hundred applications.

Photo : copyrights World Morocco.

Literature

IRAQ

"I remember Fallujah"

"I Remember Fallujah" is published by JC Lattès and is Feurat Alani's first novel.

The story is inspired by the life of Feurat Alani's father, looking back at the quest for identity, the obsession with normality but also tackling the Iraqi society under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

Synopsis: "In the early 1970s, the young Rami decides to flee Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. A political refugee in France, he is a secretive man who keeps his past to himself.

At the end of his life, while in hospital, Rami suddenly suffers from amnesia. His memories seem to have stopped somewhere between Iraq and France. "I remember Fallujah," he tells his son Euphrates, who sees the opportunity to finally discover his father's story...

Ensuite c'est le néant. Rami a oublié la seconde partie de sa vie : celle de l'exil. Euphrate va alors raconter à son tour ce qu'il en sait, avec l'espoir de percer certains secrets. Une quête qui le plongera dans les tumultes de sa propre odyssee familiale, de Paris à Falloujah. Un premier roman chavirant de la mémoire retrouvée, un livre inoubliable sur l'identité et la transmission dans lequel père et fils renouent le fil rompu d'un dialogue aussi bouleversant que nécessaire. »

Literature Nominations

EGYPT, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, MOROCCO, TUNISIA

Sheikh Zayed Prize announces first selection

The seventeenth edition of the Sheikh Zayed Prize announces the selection in the following categories

- translation
- Arabic culture in foreign languages
- publishing and technology.

The five works in English, French and Spanish listed in the Arabic Culture in Foreign Languages category are

- "The Rise of the Arabic Book by German author Beatrice Gruendler, published in English by Harvard University Press in 2020
- "The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt by Egyptian author Omnia El Shakry, published in English by Princeton University Press in 2017;
- "De l'autre côté des croisades: L'Islam entre croisés et Mongols" by French author Gabriel Martinez Gros, published in French by Passés Composés in 2021;
- 'The invention of the cadi. La justice des musulmans, des juifs et des chrétiens aux premiers siècles de l'islam' by French historian Mathieu Tillier, published in French by Editions de la Sorbonne in 2017;

- "Los moriscos antiguos murcianos: Expulsión, vuelta y permanencia (1609-1634)" by Spanish author José Pascual Martínez, in Spanish and published by Publicacions de la Universitat de Valencia in 2022.

The shortlisted works in the Translation category are

- Tunisian Abdelaziz Chebil's translation from French into Arabic of 'Sarraq al-Kalimat: Bahth fi al-Intihal wa-Eilm at-Tahleel al-Nafsani wal-Fikr' (Thieves of Words: Essay on Plagiarism, Psychoanalysis and Thought) by Michel Schneider.
- The translation by the Tunisian Chokri Al Saadi from English into Arabic of John R Searle's 'Al-Ibara wa-al-Mi'na: Dirasat fi Nathariyat al-A'amal al-Lughawiya' (Expression and Meaning: Studies in Speech Act Theory).
- The translation by Moroccan Lhoussine Banouhachim from French into Arabic of "Al-Imbratoriya al-Khatabiya: Sinaat al-Khutaba wal-Hajaj" (The Rhetorical Empire: Rhetoric and Argument) by Chaim Perelman.

In the Publishing & Technology category, three publishing houses were selected: Sindbad Publishing in France, ElAin Publishing in Egypt, and The Institute of Arabic Manuscripts in Egypt.

Literature Painting

TUNISIA

A monograph of the contemporary painter "Thameur Mejri

The book was published by Skira on 19 March. The Kamel Lazaar Foundation is organising a presentation and signing session on this occasion.

The presentation of the book and a discussion with the artist will be given by Moez Majed and Emna Louzyr, both poets and journalists.

The monograph looks back at the artist's career, focusing on his practice and ideas through various interviews with Olfa Youssef, Olivier Rachet, Deena Weinstein, Matthieu Lelièvre and Lina Lazaar. The reader will find the painter's favourite themes: the complexity of human existence and its deconstruction.

Photo: work by Thamer Mejri, 2021. Copyrights Hatem Bouriel.

TUNISIA

Brigitte Giraud is Tunisia's Goncourt Choice

French writer Brigitte Giraud has won the Goncourt Prize for her novel "Vivre Vite", published by Flammarion, in its seventh edition. The jury for this edition was chaired by the Tunisian author Saber Mansouri.

PALESTINE

Samira Azzam's texts translated into English for the first time

Ranya Abdelrahman has translated the Lebanese author's thirty-one short stories from Arabic into English in a new collection entitled "Out of Time", which is published by Arab Lit Books.

From washerwomen threatened by the arrival of the washing machine to crooks who take advantage of funerals to make a little money, Samira Azzam's stories are funny, poignant, and surprising. They tell a wry tale of Palestinian society in the 1940s and 1950s.

It is hard to know why her work has been forgotten, because it is of such quality" - Ranya Abdelrahman.

Born in 1927 in Palestine to an Orthodox Christian family, Samira Azzam was a teacher in the early 1940s when she decided to publish articles in the newspaper "Filastin" under a pseudonym. The Nakba forced her to flee to Beirut, where she began to write many short stories. She rereads and amends the work of her fellow journalists for influential literary journals such as "Al-Adab" and "Al Adib".

Her reviews and fiction are recognised and acclaimed in literary circles and among the general public. She published four collections of short stories during her lifetime and two more were published after her death in 1967. She was 37 years old.

LEBANON

"Beautiful Ladies" by Nisrine Naqouzi

This novel has just been published by Dar al Nahda. The book tells the story of three women who share their daily lives. It deals with the construction of gender in the Arab world, and also addresses the different pressures and authorities women are subjected to throughout their lives, especially regarding their bodies.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre reveals the results of the third research scholarship programme

The 2023 edition received a total of 111 participants from 17 countries, including 13 Arab countries. Eight research projects were selected for funding.

In the category "Supporting Manuscript Publishing and Arab Heritage":

- "Report on the Book 'Ibn Musafir's Choices" by Moqbel Al-Ahmadi (Yemen) and Shafiq Bitar (Syria).
- "Hadith Bayad wa Riyad" by Fayez Al-Qaisi (Jordan)
- "The Creation of Narrative: A Study of Stories... and an Inquiry into the Biography of Iskandar Dhul-Qarnayn and the Wonders that Happened to Him" by Nabil Hamdi Al-Shahed (Egypt).

In the category "Literature and criticism":

- "Evolving Narratives in Emirati Literature: A Technical Study" by Maryam Al-Hamshi (United Arab Emirates).
- "The New Historical Novel and Bets on Fantasy" by Mustafa Al-Nahhal (Morocco)
- "The Literary and Critical Movement in Saudi Arabia: Beginnings and Trends" by Muhammad Al-Safrani (Saudi Arabia)
- "The Aesthetics of Meaning: The Philosophy of Tradition in the Arabic Language from Interpretation to Meta-Interpretation" by Shafiq Wail (Algeria).

Finally, in the Arabic Lexicon category, the selected research is: "The Illustrated Arabic Dictionary for Children" by Amr Gomaa (Egypt).

Cinema Literature

ALGERIA

"A long way to the Evian Agreements"

A new comic book on the negotiations of the Evian Agreements, signed by the Algerian comic artist Bouchra Mokhtari and the Swiss historian Marc Perrenoud. It was presented on 18 March at the National Library of Algiers. The book was published by Editions Barzakh and its French original Title is « Un long chemin jusqu'aux Accords d'Evian ».

"Switzerland was an area of retreat for Algerians, and a refuge for French rebels, (...) a place of publication to escape censorship in France (...) in addition to being a land of welcome for solidarity networks with Algeria" - Marc Perrenoud for Algerian Press Service.

Literature

SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, QATAR

The Katara Prize for the Prophet's Poet

Katara has announced the ten poets who have qualified for the semi-finals of the Katara Prophet's Poet Prize.

The qualified participants in the classical poetry category are Haider Al Abdullah from Saudi Arabia, Muhammad Al Mughirfi from Kuwait, Abdul Hamid Hassan Abdullah from Sudan, Maher Muhammad Al Khouli from Syria and Salah Al Din Al Kho from Mauritania.

The finalists in the Nabati poetry category are Rahim Al Ghanami and Abdullah Al Sarahid Al Otaibi from Saudi Arabia; Jaber Hamad Al Hajri, Jamal Bandar Al Otaibi and Abdullah bin Nasser Al Subaie from Kuwait.

PALESTINE

One hundred thousand books for Gaza

This initiative, launched jointly by the Nelson publishing house and the Lebanese NGO Amel, aimed to send one hundred thousand books to the Gaza Strip in 2021, after many libraries and bookshops were destroyed following the clashes between Palestinians and Israelis.

A committee is meeting this week in the Beirut neighbourhood of Burj Abu Haidar to evaluate the implementation of the initiative and to take stock of the actions of the last two years.

Fashion

SAUDI ARABIA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, KUWAIT, SYRIA

The Fashion Minute

Emirati singer Balqees Fathi becomes a Di.Va. Valentino. The "Di.va" label, given by the director of the Italian luxury house Pierpaolo Piccioli, is the equivalent of becoming an ambassador for Valentino.

Also this week, Olympic swimmer Yusra Mardini, known for her Bafta nomination for the Netflix feature film "The Swimmers", walked the runway in Miami for luxury brand Hugo Boss.

Finally, Saudi actress Fatima Al-Banawi participates in Estée Lauder's new campaign "Together We Shine", which celebrates Arab women. She is joined by Saudi lawyer Sofana Dahlan and Emirati designer Sara Al-Tamimi.

LEBANON

Emergency Room's new collection

The Lebanese fair trade fashion brand reveals its latest collection "Home Sweet Home" for Dubai Fashion Week.

"This show marks the 5th anniversary of the brand. A milestone considering the many challenges the company has had to overcome." - Eric Mathieu Ritter, designer of Emergency Room for L'Orient-le-Jour media.

"Home Sweet Home" revisits these looks from the past and brings them back to the forefront. Denim and knitwear are given pride of place, as are masks, balaclavas and curtained caps. The colours of the past lines are replaced by a more nuanced palette, with an emphasis on black and white.

"Celebrating its fifth anniversary and the launch of its Home Sweet Home collection, Emergency Room reaffirms its commitment to innovation, sustainability and social justice." - collection manifesto.

Photo : L'Orient-le-Jour.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Nourie Flayhan collaborates with Adidas for a special Ramadan collection

The exclusive capsule celebrates the city of Dubai through a unique design created by the Lebanese artist. The collection includes t-shirts and hoodies. The designs are inspired by the emblems of the United Arab Emirates - the palm tree, the henna and the seven stars to honour the seven Emirates - reinvented and interpreted by the illustrator.

MOROCCO, PALESTINE

Marrakech Fashion Week

The second edition of the Ochre City's Fashion Week returns from 14 to 18 March. Ghita Chraibi, Alphadi, Lunde de Jour, Rajae Errais, ... Most talented designers of Morocco will be present.

Between the Menara gardens, the old Kasbah or the Agafay desert, various high places in the city will host the event.

The public will be able to admire original collections inspired by Moroccan culture and contemporary art. Haute couture pieces will also be presented during this edition, using local fabrics and traditional craft techniques, with a view to sustainability and respect for the environment.

The winner of the young talent competition is Palestinian Donia Shehadeh, who offers satin evening gowns with stitched volumes and sensual cuts. She will have the opportunity to walk the runway in France, during Paris Fashion Week, as part of the Oriental Fashion Show.

The event offers a varied programme of activities, including a solo exhibition by the artist Houyam Rahmani on 15 March.

Festivals Music

MOROCCO

The return of the "Oasis: Into the Wild" festival in Ouarzazate

This second edition will take place from 27 to 29 October at the Atlas Studio in Ouarzazate. In addition to international artists (TSHA, Todd Edwards, Honey Dijon, ...), the young Moroccan scene will also be represented with AliA, ANÍA, AMVN, Capra, Driss Bennis aka OCB, Kawtar Sadik, Kosh, Liver J, Nathabes B2B Abel Ray, Nomads and Ojoo Gyal

ALGERIA

Amazigh song contest

The first place in the eleventh edition of the contest held in Tizi-Ouzou went to the twenty-year-old student Sonia Amrani for her interpretation of a song by Cherif Kheddami, "Dh'adzayri" (Algerian). She will receive financial support to continue developing her talent.

The competition is organised by the Tharwa N'Gaya association and is dedicated to the Kabyle singer Rabah Asma.

A dozen musical groups - from Khenchla, Tougourt, Sétif, Oran, Ghardaia, Boumerdes, Bordj Bou-Argeridj, Béjaïa, Bouira and Tizi-Ouzou - took part in this edition.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, IRAQ

Abu Dhabi Festival Award 2023

The award recognises musicians and composers who have made significant contributions to music and the arts. The composers of "Symphony of Three: Peace, Love, Tolerance" received this year's Abu Dhabi Festival Award:

- Emirati composer Ihab Darwish
- Inshad singer Sheikh Mahmoud Al Tohamy (Egypt)
- Iraqi musician Naseer Shamma.

The annual award was established by the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation in 2012, and is held as part of the Abu Dhabi Festival. Past recipients of the award include record producer Quincy Jones, composer Philip Glass and trumpeter Amin Maalouf.

MOROCCO

Jazzablanca 2023: part of the line-up unveiled

Launched in 2006, Jazzablanca presents every year big names in Pop, Soul, Rock, Funk, World Music and Jazz. The 2023 edition is scheduled for 22-24 June, with Mika, Beth Hart, Gyedu-Blay Ambolley, Kamaal Williams, Sona Jobarteh and Ismail Sentissi. The rest of the programme is not yet known.

TUNISIA

Festival of the Medina of Tunis

The music festival is held from 27 March to 17 April in the medina of the capital, for its thirty-ninth edition. The Opera Theatre, the Theatre of the Regions at the Cité de la Culture, Bir Lahjar and Dar Lasram in the Medina will host numerous concerts, not forgetting the Municipal Theatre of Tunis. The musical genres will be multiple: R'bab, lute, kwîtra, derbouka, alto violin, violin, tarr and mandolin, ...

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, JORDAN, KUWAIT, LEBANON, LIBYA, SYRIA, YEMEN

Shakira breaks all records

The Colombian and Lebanese star entered the Guinness Book of World Records with fourteen world records for her song "Music Sessions Vol. 53". Her hit with Argentine producer Bizarrap has become the most listened to song on Spotify and the most viewed song on YouTube in 24 hours. The track was also the fastest Latin song to have reached 100 million views on YouTube in just two days.

The song also set other records for Shakira, such as being the first female singer to debut in the Top 10 of the Billboard Hot 100 with a song in Spanish.

LEBANON

Toufic Farroukh releases "Untamed Elegance" on 6 April

The "Studio de l'Ermitage" will celebrate the release of the album - composed, arranged and produced by Toufic Farroukh - on 6 April at 8.30pm.

"Toufic Farroukh's music is multi-faceted, nourished by jazz, Arabic, Brazilian, Balkan and even classical influences. It does not reflect any particular aesthetic because, according to him, music is "first and foremost the musicians" and what they can bring to the table that is different and therefore new. He also knows the luxury of being able to freely choose the sound and textures. Yes, the melody, an essential starting point born of life experiences, encounters, books and films, enhanced by a great harmonic depth, making the most of the colours provided by a rich and elegant orchestration.

Meticulously and lovingly constructed, "Untamed Elegance" is a record which, not without modesty, reveals the discreet and persistent beauties of a great journey outside time and fashion." - Denis Desassis, journalist.

LEBANON

An upcoming album for Yara Bou Karam

The Lebanese pianist has just released her first track, "Finire", an improvised piano piece which was recorded in one take, in order to make it as sincere as possible.

"It was my mind that played on that piano. I felt completely detached from my body." - Yara Bou Karam for Arab News.

The young woman who played her favourite instrument at the age of eleven has since participated in lots of festivals in Kuwait, Bahrain, France, Australia, ... She will soon release her first album in April, and "Finire" is a foretaste of what she is preparing.

ARAB WORLD, SAUDI ARABIA

"Under the Stars"

As part of the Francophonie week, a large-scale concert was held in the AIUla region, which was the subject of a special programme, "Under the Stars of AIUla". Several leading artists participated, both French and Arab. Egyptian mezzo-soprano Farrah El Dibany was among them, as well as Saudi stars Aseel Abu Baker, Ayed Youssef from "Besm Al Elah" and Dalia Mubarak the folk singer from "Areen Al Ashq", "Ya Monyati" and "Maa Khaled Al Shwaq".

Among the celebrities are Maître Gims, Carla Bruni, Enrico Macias, Hélène Segara, Chimène Badi, Claudio Capeo, Gilbert Montagné, Yanns, Farrah El Dibany, Dalia Mubarak, Sultan AlMurshid, Zena Emad.

The 95-minute event will be broadcast on 24 March on TV5 MONDE at 9pm.

Photo : @ludovic_pouille sur Twitter.

MOROCCO

"Lmadi Mat" by Rafie

The singer has just released his latest track (le passé est mort in French), which is once again in the Raï genre. With lyrics by Mounia Barakat, a composition by Ibrahim Barakat and an arrangement by Zakaria Zayane, Rafie offers a nostalgic track that returns to a past love story. The video clip has already been viewed over 200,000 times.

Exhibitions Painting

LEBANON

Beirut: "Domus Berytus" by Gilbert Halaby

The painter presents a solo exhibition until March 30 in Beit Beirut. Gilbert Halaby returns to the landscapes of his childhood, with the umbrella pines of Dhour El Choueir, a village in the Lebanese mountains. The series of forty canvases is a colourful series, which signs the reconciliation between the artist and his past, long marked by the civil war.

Photo : Gilbert Halaby.

Exhibitions Painting

LEBANON

"Elle", the exhibition of Lebanese women artists at Chaos Gallery

The Chaos gallery, in Tabaris, displays until March 30 a group exhibition of thirteen Lebanese artists: Ghislaine Chalhoub, Haifa Khodr, Hoda Baalbaki, Irene Ghanem, Jocelyne Ghannagé, Joyce Samaha, Karine Hochar, Laurette El Hallal, Lina Chammaa, May Ammoun, Mireille Merhej, Nayla Sirgi and Nevine Mattar. The gallery wanted to celebrate women's art for this Women's Rights Day month, with artists having a very different but still very colourful artistic approach.

Photo: 'Meadow' by Hoda Baalbaki, 2012.

Exhibitions Painting

IRAQ

Dubai: Afifa Aleiby's solo exhibition

The Iraqi artist has a solo exhibition at the Zawyeh Gallery on Alserkal Avenue. Entitled "Timeless Echoes", this event presents the latest works of the painter, which can be discovered until May 8. As usual, the female figure is very present in her work.

"Women are important to me because I can express my ideas through them. The way they sits, their poses, the way they move their hands, the way they look, all these elements are crucial to express my intentions" - Afifa Aleiby, for The National.

Motherhood is another strong theme in the paintings on display, with four of the nine pieces depicting a mother and child at different stages - pregnancy, childhood and death.

Afifa Aleiby was born in 1953 in Basra. Due to the political situation, she decided to move to Italy after her studies in the USSR, then back to Moscow, before moving to Yemen to work as a teacher at the Institute of Fine Arts. Bringing together different influences from Renaissance painting to religious icons and social realism, she uses the female figure as a recurring motif to reflect the political situation and societal issues.

Photo : « At the Spring », 2022, Afifa Aleiby.

Photography

LEBANON

Beirut Photo Week

Photographers Ammar Abd Rabbo, Patrick Baz, Myriam Boulos, Omar Gabriel and Gilbert Hage participate in a sale in which one can find their most sensual works. The sale takes place from 22 to 24 March. Benefits from the sale will fund Beirut Photo Week. This major Lebanese photography meeting will be held next November, but the organisers fear that the lack of funds will have a negative impact on the event. The work of the six photographers, gathered under the title "Sense", revolves around the notion of eroticism. Breaking stereotypes and the neo-orientalist vision of Lebanese society, artists explore the concept of sensuality, making a point of demonstrating that it has its place in Lebanon.

Photo : Patrick Baz, exhibited artist..

SYRIA

A monumental statue in exile representing poet Abû Al-'Al Â Al-Ma'arri

A Syrian statue representation the head of Syrian thinker Abû Al-'Al Â Al-Ma'arri, an 11th century poet (963 - 1057) is at the entrance of the French city of Montreuil. The poet questioned the notions of freedom, religion, free will and love.

The bronze statue was erected as a tribute to an identical work that existed in Syria at the entrance to the poet's native village, southwest of Aleppo, until it was beheaded at the start of the war. The intellectual diaspora of Syrians in exile (poets, filmmakers, writers, researchers) asked the city of Montreuil to host a new statue.

The work was created by Assem Al Bacha, a Syrian-Argentinean sculptor exiled in Granada. Abû Al-'Al Â Al-Ma'arri was sculpted by the artist in a symbolic way, "in his old age and blindness".

The sculpture was inaugurated on 15 March, the day marking twelve years of war, with a Syrian buffet and the screening of the film "Silver Water, a portrait of Syria", a documentary by Ossama Mohammed and Wiam Simav Bedirxan on the beginnings of the insurrection.

Photo: copyrights, French city of Montreuil.

Festivals Theater

MOROCCO

The Tan-Tan Theatre Festival

Organised on the initiative of the Association for Theatre and Fine Arts on 17 and 18 March, under the slogan "Intangible heritage at the service of theatre", the Tan-Tan theatre festival presents various folkloric shows, plays, and also offers training courses and symposiums.

The closing ceremony pays tribute to the director Abdemjid Saâdallah and the researcher in the fields of theatre and Hassani culture, Salima Amraz.

It is possible to discover the plays "Naksha" by the Lougatos troupe (Marrakech), "Borious" by the Damlij troupe (Casablanca) and "Sebbat" by the Anfas Forum for Culture and Art (Oulad Taima). A Palestinian show concludes the event with the Al Markab troupe.

Photo : copyrights MAP.

Literature Heritage

ARAB WORLD, LEBANON

"Arab cities, between tradition and modernity"

The new book published in Arabic by the Arab Thought Foundation is organised in four parts:

- The first part deals with the history and identity of the Arab city, presenting its characteristics and architectural heritage;
- the second focuses on the erasure of memory and distortion of heritage witnessed by Arab cities, in light of the profound transformations that occurred due to massive migration from the countryside;
- the third undertakes the task of defining smart, green and creative cities, and presenting models and projects for Arab cities established or under construction according to these concepts;
- the fourth analyses the organic relationship that has always linked cities and this literary genre that documented the history of Arab cities, old and new, and contributed to preserving their memory from dissipation and oblivion.

Conferences Theater

ALGERIA

A first national conference on theatre in Algiers

On 14 and 15 March, theatre professionals will meet to discuss the various issues facing Algerian theatre today. Artists, directors, directors of establishments, ... All have the

objective of revitalising the sector. This conference is organised by the Ministry of Culture and Arts, with the directors of regional theatres who have, on this occasion, presented the balance sheet of their activities in 2022. This event is an opportunity to show the Algerian public several shows including "Antigone" at the Algerian National Theatre.

Photo: the Minister of Culture and Arts, Soraya Mouloudji. Copyrights Algerian Press Service.

Festivals Theater

LEBANON

Launch of the International Folklore Theatre Festival of Lebanon

Kassem Istanbuli, a leading figure in the Arab theatre scene, is launching a new festival with the Tiro Association for Arts and Theatre Istambouli, the Lebanese International Folklore Theatre Festival, in the city of Tyre. Completely free of charge, this festival offers different rhythmic performances and dances from all over the world, ranging from Bollywood to Hollywood. The new festival also aims to offer workshops and artistic training for children and young people to raise their awareness of the art world and open them up to other cultures.

Photo: copyrights Al Mayadeen.

Festivals Theater

ALGERIA, PALESTINE

Palestinian theatre group closes Inchad Days

The theatre group "Oshak El Aqsa" closed the National Days of Culture and Inchad organised by the local cultural association Tourath in Setif. These days celebrate the anniversary of the ceasefire of the Algerian war of independence (19 March) but also the Palestinian Land Day (30 March).

The show given by "Oshak El Aqsa" was written by Palestinian refugees from Lebanon, reflecting on their living conditions in the refugee camps and the risk of emigration.

ALGERIA, PALESTINE

The advent of the Saharawi National Theatre

The Algerian National Theatre is launching the project to create the National Theatre of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic. The idea is to reaffirm and enrich the Saharawi theatre scene, to produce plays locally and to contribute to the influence of the Saharawi heritage.

The project is supported by the Saharawi refugee camps, the regional theatre of Sidi Bel Abbès and the Algerian national theatre.

Photo: copyrights APS.

Theater

TUNISIA

The winners of Carthage Puppetry Arts Days

This fourth edition took place from 11 to 18 March. More than one hundred puppeteers from fourteen countries participated. A dozen workshops of puppet making but also of theatre were organised on this occasion.

During the closing ceremony, the director of the event, Monia Abid Messaâdi, paid a tribute to Abdelghani Ben Tara, actor and former director of the National Centre for Puppetry Art (1996-1997).

The jury composed of professional puppeteers (Mohamed Nour from Egypt; Mouhieddine Ben Abdallah, Khouloud Thabet, Abdesselam Al-Jamal from Tunisia; and Mohamed Adnan Saloum and Aymen Rahaliqui from Syria) decided to award

- The first prize for the best performance in puppet manipulation to Najjiba Al-Nouri and Saber Sassi.
- The second prize to the duo Haithem and Nasi and Ali Nasser.
- The third prize to Norhan Sedki.

Photo : La Presse de Tunisie.

Nominations Theater

EGYPT, QATAR

Mohamed Riyad is the president of the National Egyptian Theatre Festival

The Minister of Culture, Dr Nevin Al-Kilani, announced the decision to appoint the artist, Mohamed Riyad, as the head of the Egyptian National Theatre Festival.

Photo: Al Sharqi.

Heritage

TUNISIA

Signature of a memorandum of understanding between Tunisia and the USA on the protection of cultural property

A memorandum of understanding between Tunisia and the United States of America on the protection of cultural property against import, export and transfer of illicit ownership of such property was signed by the Minister of Cultural Affairs Hayet Guettat Guermazi and the U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Joey Hood.

The signing of this document is part of the implementation of the 1970 Unesco convention through which the signatories undertake to collaborate in order to protect the heritage and to take the necessary measures to prohibit and prevent all forms of theft, clandestine excavations and illicit export.

This five-year document is a basis for launching training and exchange programmes in the field of cultural heritage between the two countries.

Photo : Webmanager.

MAGHREB, MOROCCO

The "iguidar" in danger?

"Iguidar", or "agadir" in the singular form, means fortress, wall or collective granary in Amazigh. They are found in various countries: in Algeria, in the Aurès, in southern Tunisia and in Libya, in the Djebel Nefoussa. However, it is in Morocco that they are most numerous. The materials used for their construction depend on the region, ranging from argan wood to oleander in the Anti-Atlas for example. Originally, iguidars were used for storage. The inhabitants of the time stored everything of value in them, starting with barley, also known as the "green gold of the mountains".

Today, this cultural heritage is in a state of disrepair and urgently needs to be restored.

"The challenge is to safeguard the Moroccan collective granaries, while they have almost disappeared in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya," Salima Naji, architect and anthropologist, interviewed for Agence France Presse.

Photo : Arab News.

Exhibitions Heritage

YEMEN

Manuscript exhibition in Sana'a

The Yemeni capital inaugurates the first exhibition of Quranic manuscripts, organised by the Kafel Development Foundation in cooperation with the Grand Mosque Library and the Manuscript House of the Ministry of Culture, with the support of the Endowment Authority and the Quranic Teaching Charity.

The exhibition included 39 manuscripts on paper and 26 manuscripts on parchment.

The exhibition displays Qur'anic manuscripts from different periods of Islamic history.

Photo: copyrights Al Mayadeen.

OMAN

Omani gallery in Kenya

The National Museum in Nairobi has inaugurated the Omani Gallery, which symbolises the shared history between the two countries.

The gallery, entitled "Oman-Kenya: A Collective Memory", is organised in four parts telling the story of the former South Arab kingdom, the Omani influence on the East African coast, the development of the kingdoms, and the main Omani personalities on the East African coast.

Jamal Hassan al Moosawi, secretary general of the National Museum, said the opening of the Oman Gallery at the National Museum in Nairobi is part of the cultural diplomacy pursued by the National Museum, and based on the memorandum of partnership that was signed last year in Muscat.

Photo : Muscat Daily.

EGYPT

New discoveries at Esna Temple

The Egyptian and German research team has restored ancient Egyptian ceiling reliefs featuring signs of the zodiac and a sky chart including Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The reliefs were located in a temple dedicated to the Egyptian god Khnum.

Photo: Zodiac sign Sagittarius in the temple of Esna in Egypt. Copyrights: Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

IRAQ

Britain returns 5,000 antiquities to Iraq

The pieces, which have been in Britain for about 100 years, will be restored and archived by the University of Munich beforehand.

Photo: copyrights Al Mayadeen.

Festivals Heritage

MOROCCO

International Festival "Casablanca Heritage"

The ninth edition ends on 18 March, celebrating heritage and humanity. The president of the association Casablanca Heritage, Taoufik Sarhane, explains that the purpose of this event is to promote the preservation of Moroccan heritage as well as to raise awareness of the young generation towards this heritage. The idea is also to build bridges between the different North African countries on these issues, highlighting the participation of Libya in this edition.

The opening ceremony was marked by the organisation of a scientific symposium on heritage and humanity and the role of heritage in the development of Maghreb countries with the participation of Moroccan and Libyan specialists. A tribute was also paid to Fouad Zbadi in recognition of his contributions to the promotion, enhancement and preservation of authentic Moroccan musical art.

Photo: cover of the book "Le Livre Noir de la Ville Blanche" by Mouna Hachim.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Sea World Abu Dhabi

A new water park will open its doors on 23 May in the United Arab Emirates. The park will explore marine life. This giant aquarium will present nearly 150 species including sharks, manta rays, sea turtles, reptiles, amphibians, ... It will be built on five levels with a total surface area of 183,000 square metres.

Photo : WAM.

Exhibitions

MOROCCO

The exhibition of the Sira Annabaouia

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO) has indicated that the international exhibition currently hosted in its headquarters in Rabat will be open during Ramadan, before Iftar from 12pm to 3pm and after Iftar from 9pm to 1am.

This exhibition, which started on 28 November 2022, is the result of a partnership between ICESCO, the Muslim World League and the Rabita Mohammadia des Oulémas. It aims to highlight the message of Islam and is held for the first time outside Saudi Arabia.

Photo : copyrights MAP.

MOROCCO

National Water Week

From 18 to 25 March, twenty-two Moroccan cities are celebrating the fourth edition of this event which aims to "accelerate change", which is the theme of this 2023 National Water Week.

The event coincides with the celebration of World Water Day (22 March) and the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York (22 to 24 March).

Several activities are planned, such as the organisation of outings in the nine water basins of the Kingdom, as well as the implementation of projects around water management, like the IWRM (Integrated Water Resources Management) project.

Photo : copyrights 2m.

ALGERIA

The National Office for Culture and Information's special Ramadan cultural programme

The institution has planned a programme of chaâbi and Andalusian music, theatre performances, exhibitions, and recitals of In Chad and poetry, in its halls in Algiers, Tipasa, Constantine, Oran, Boumerdes and Béjaia. Some fifty shows involving nine hundred artists are planned until 18 April.

In addition, an exhibition dedicated to Algerian cultural monuments will open on 23 March at the Abdelwahab-Salim cultural complex in Chenoua, Tipasa.

LEBANON

Fabienne Touma launches an online platform dedicated to Lebanese artists

The platform, "Elfan", aims to highlight the Lebanese artistic production. Following her multiple approaches, Fabienne Touma has already included more than 40 Lebanese artists that she has classified, in a first step, in seven categories: photographers, illustrators, painters, urban artists, tattoo artists, decorative art (mosaic, ceramics, calligraphy) and designers. In a second stage, it will also include singers, musicians, actors, film-makers, etc.

The objective is to promote Lebanese talents, but also, if they wish, to involve them in various projects organised by the association. The first of these activities will be a debate organised on March 25, in Paris. It will focus on the meaning and significance of the street art works (graffiti, giant frescoes or others) that appeared in the city centre and streets of Beirut during the October 2019 uprising, constituting a sort of open-air "museum" of street art. Several Lebanese urban artists will speak on the subject: Kabrit, Ivan Debs, Selim Mawad, Ashekman, Marie Joe Ayoub, Eps, Hady Baydoun, Ghaleb Hawila and the film journalist Salim Saab.

Heritage Cultural Projects

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Abu Dhabi, the new city of light?

Abu Dhabi's Ministry of Culture and Tourism is launching a public art initiative to transform the emirate's public spaces and landscapes. The programme includes a festival of lights and a biennial event.

Public Art Abu Dhabi will also integrate works by local and international artists in the city's public spaces, always in various forms: sculptures, installations, digital art, murals, etc. They will aim to feed the reflection on the cultural identity of the capital.

The flagship event of this initiative is the biennial event which will transform the capital into an open-air museum. The biennial will be co-organised by Reem Fadda and

independent curator Galit Eilat. The first biennial will be held in November 2024 in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Dhafra.

Photo: Public Art Abu Dhabi unveiled its first installation, a multimedia piece entitled "Wave" by the D'strict collective. Copyrights: Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism.

Cultural Projects

MOROCCO

The first University of Essaouira

A partnership agreement providing for the setting up of two engineering school classes in innovative fields has been signed between Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech, the Foundation for Research, Development and Innovation in Science and Engineering and the Industrial Systems Engineering School in Casablanca. This agreement aims to give more chances to baccalaureate holders from the province to access training in innovative fields.

The conclusion of this agreement represents "a founding act that will allow us to say that this last step in the renaissance and refoundation of Essaouira has been taken and will trigger another dynamic that will give all the chances to the children of the province who will no longer be forced to go into exile" - André Azoulay, King's advisor.

Photo : copyrights 2m.

Sport

MOROCCO

CasablancaRun

To encourage the practice of sports, the weekend of 18 and 19 March will see the second edition of the "CasablancaRun" event. Participants have the opportunity to explore places such as the Bouskoura forest, the Arab League Park, the Isesco Park, the Corniche, the Hermitage Park, the Hassan II Mosque walk, the Anfa Park, ...

The event offers sports activities: running, walking, jogging, and fitness. These activities are supervised by groups of runners, sports coaches and national champions.

Photo : copyrights 2m.

Sport

ARAB WORLD, SAUDI ARABIA

Camel Cup

The world's most popular camel race was held in AlUla from 14 to 17 March. This was the first time the region hosted the competition, which was organised under the patronage of Saudi Prince MBS. The presence of American music producer Swizz Beatz and actor Will Smith caused a buzz on social networks.

Photo: Experience AlUla.

Sport

MOROCCO

The joint bid of Morocco, Spain and Portugal to host the 2030 Football World Cup

This bid, announced by King Mohammed VI, is a new page of cooperation according to the head of government, Aziz Akhannouch. This joint bid, unprecedented in the history of football, is intended to be "the junction between Africa and Europe", to quote the sovereign.

In addition, the Confederation of African Football awarded its Excellence Prize for outstanding achievements in the year 2022 to King Mohammed VI in Kigali.

Sport

MOROCCO

Youssef Assouik wins WMC World Championship

The Moroccan Youssef Assouik has won the WMC world championship in muay-thai in the 72.5 kg category in Nice.

This is in addition to the titles won by the Moroccan champion with the Moroccan Muay Thai team, including the gold medal at the 2022 World Amateur Muay Thai Championship in Abu Dhabi. He also won the Arab Championship in Abu Dhabi in March, as well as the WMC European Championship last December in Sweden.

Photo : copyrights 2m.

Sport

MOROCCO

Atlas Lionesses crowned champions of North African Union tournament

The Moroccan women's under-20 football team won the North African Union tournament in Tunisia, after beating Egypt (1-0) in a match counting for the third and last day of the tournament.

Photo : copyrights 2m.

Obituaries Heritage

EGYPT

Departure of the intellectual Helmi Shaarawi

The Egyptian thinker, who specialised in Afro-Arab heritage, died.

Photo: copyrights Al Mayadeen.

Literature Obituaries

IRAQ

Departure of Abdul Rahman Majeed al-Rubaie

The Iraqi author has died. He was one of the major figures of contemporary Iraqi literature.

Photo: Al Araby Al Jadeed.

TUNISIA

Departure of Abdelghani Ben Tara

The Tunisian actor died on 17 March. He was known for his role in the TV series "Maktoub" by Sami Fehri.