

Three Generations of Graduates

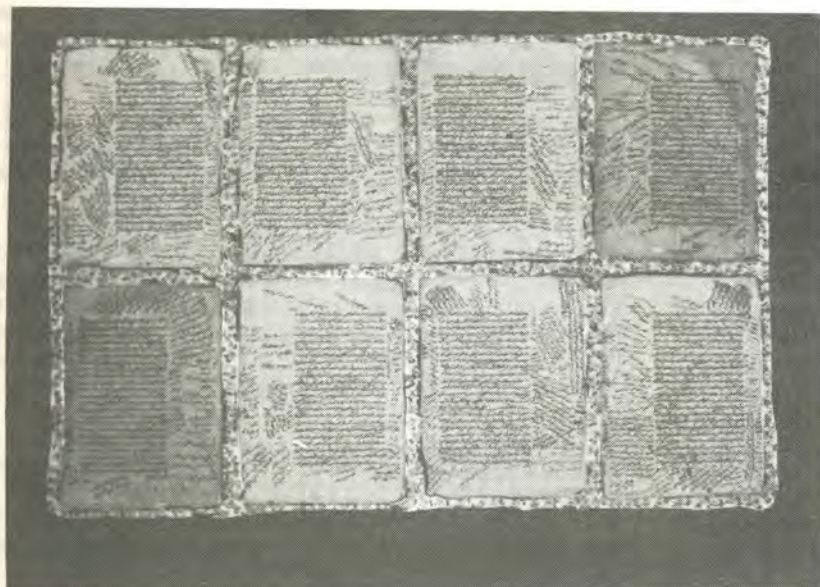
Great painters are distinguished from ordinary ones by their inner vision, originality and innovation; they achieve this by years of strenuous work and experiments in the different media: charcoal, oil, water color, gouache, acrylic and others. One may be born with a talent but it is not enough, hence the importance of art education on the college level: to widen the scope of students, sharpen their inner vision and give them the opportunity to venture into the exciting and unfamiliar territory in the realm of the art. This important role is played by the Department of Fine Arts at Beirut University College.

Three Generations of Graduates was the theme of the art exhibit presented by the Alumni Association of Beirut University College in collaboration with the Department of Fine Arts, thanks to Mrs. Naziha Hamza Knio, President of the Alumni Association and Miss Mehranguise Irani, the dedicated Chairman of the Department of Fine Arts and others who worked very hard for the success of this artistic event.

The art exhibit was held at Sheikh Zayed Hall on April 26 to May 3, 1988. Dean Raja Hajjar gave a short speech at the opening ceremony, thanking all those who contributed and helped to bring about the exhibit and show the importance of art education through fifty years at B.U.C.

According to Miss Irani the idea behind the exhibit is threefold: 1) to show that Lebanon continues to live and hope for a better future; 2) to display the result of fifty years of art education at B.U.C.; and 3) to be a nucleus for a larger moving exhibit throughout the Arab World.

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1. Joumana Husseini Bayazid
2. Elsie Houry



Miss Mehranquise Irani

Were the works of only fifteen artists enough to cover three generations of artists who graduated from B.U.C.?

“Certainly not”, said Miss Irani, “but many difficulties were involved in obtaining a greater representation due to the absence of the artists. Consequently very few of their works could be found in Beirut. We exhibited what was available. Another obstacle we faced is the limited place at B.U.C. The Hall is not large enough to exhibit the works of more than fifteen artists. We hope in future to arrange for bigger exhibits that would really cover the works of three generations of graduate artists whose number is certainly much more than fifteen”.

Miss Irani even expressed her wish for the publication of a book about artists, especially those who are becoming internationally known such as: Dana Hammoud, Doris Mukabaa, Ginan Bashou, Wisam Beydoun, and Ghada Kaddumi, among others, who specialized in Islamic art and works in Kuwait.

Miss Irani was asked if she had other wishes or goals for the future. “Yes”, said Miss Irani, “I dream of a museum of modern art in Lebanon. Although this is not the right time to dream due to the present situation in Lebanon, but one cannot but hope for a better future in which some of our dreams can be realized”.

The art exhibit included the works of older and younger artists. Among the older graduates were: Salwa Rawda Shukair (one sculpture and three oil paintings); Jumana Huseini, Malika Afnan, Samia Osseiran, Suha Tukan, Naziha Hamza Knio and Elsie Hourri. These artists have been fully written about in the book “Women Artists in Lebanon” by Helen Khal, published by the Institute for Women’s Studies in the Arab World, at B.U.C. and available at the Institute (see p.19 book review)

What interested me most at the exhibit were the works of the younger generation of artists — the future artists, as I may call them. Although some of them are still working on their M.F.A. in the United States like Ginan Bashou (some of her etchings were exhibited), and Ghada Jamal, whose sensitive work was represented by water colour and gouaches (self-portraits, still life and landscape). May Hamaoui, who teaches at the Hamaoui Art Center paints the female body showing the beauty and elegance of its curves. Lulu Baasiri is presently preparing her third individual exhibition in Beirut. She stresses mainly on the liberation of the female body as in “Birth of a Dream” and “Call of a Mirror.”

Nazik Mikati teaches at the Hariri Secondary School and plans for her M.F.A. in the United States next year. She shows a sure conventional brush. Her work includes gouaches, monotypes and collage.

Hibat Balaa Bawab is also an art teacher at B.U.C. and winner of the first prize for the design of Lebanese currency. The two oil paintings exhibited portrays the Lebanese war namely: “Cry for Liberty” and “Arise”.

Najah Taher is another artist of the new generation. Her water colors “Bride I” and “Bride II” show emotions such as anxiety and the nervousness a bride feels before the marriage ceremony.

Unfortunately the works of Dana Hammoud — who taught art at B.U.C. and A.U.B. in 1986-87, now living and working in California — were not available except for one acrylic painting that shows her arabesque style which reflects the atmosphere of the orient with its warm colors and beautiful arcades.

I would like to conclude by extending my congratulations and best wishes to the Alumni Association and the Department of Fine Arts at Beirut University College. May all their aspirations and dreams materialize when Beirut regains its role as the art center of the Middle East.

Nuha Tabbara Hammoud

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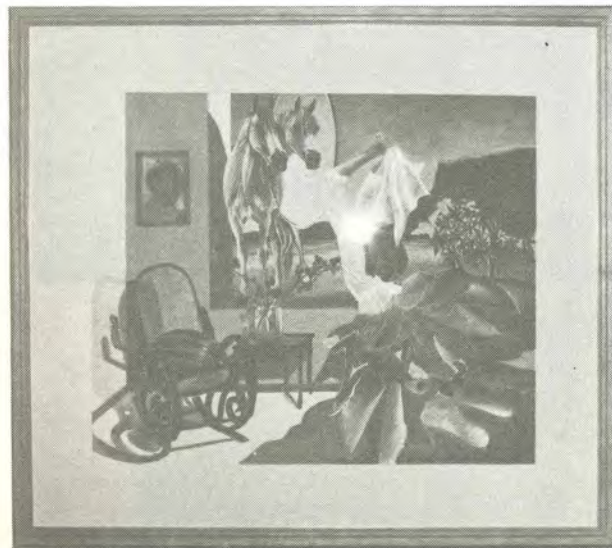


- 3. Hibat Bala Bawab
- 4. Naziha Knio
- 5. Lulu Baasiri
- 6. May Hamaoui

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