

“BeMA Residency- Jezzine ” repositions “Water” at the center of the artistic and social dynamics

Other April 28, 2017



Under the leadership of APEAL (Association for the Promotion and Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon) and with the collaboration of Temporary . Art . Platform (T.A.P), “BeMA” (the Beirut Museum of Art) has unveiled its second edition of Artists-in-Residence program as part of the museum’s outreach mission, during a press conference held at the Al Dente Restaurant in Achrafieh.

Between May 1 and May 31, 2017, the southern city of Jezzine will host the art residency program initiated by BeMa and T.A.P in their efforts to support contemporary art practices while engaging local communities across Lebanon through contextual art projects.

Implemented with the support of Fondation Robert Matta and with the partnership of the Municipality of Jezzine, The Union of Jezzine Municipalities, SOILS Permaculture Association Lebanon, and the Jezzine Hub, this year’s residency program is curated by Amanda Abi Khalil, and revolves around the theme of “Water”, one of

the most abused elements in today's world, and specifically in Lebanon where this resource is somehow taken for granted regardless of its temporary rarity.

Coordinated by Ali El Darsa, this year's program is hosting 6 artists whose cultural practices share the concerns of the residency. The artists are: Mo Abdulla, Suzy Halajian, Christine Kettaneh, Ashraf Mtaweh, Hussein Nasreddine, and Mahmoud Safadi. The resident artists will work with the local community of Jezzine on the different perceptions of water.

"Choosing this rurally-preserved mountain city to explore water both artistically and socially takes us back to the roots: life, that finds its roots in water; and community that finds its roots in the history and heritage of its country, from its biggest cities to the smallest border village. Our aim here is to break the standardized urban monopolization of art and to encourage the activation of artistic environments outside the cities, as well as open artistic communication channels between these different geo-artistic environments" said Nada El Khoury, Artistic Vice- President of APEAL, before adding: " This project expresses BeMA's core mission, being a platform that advances social interaction and furthers a culture of creativity while decentralizing artistic and cultural practices beyond the borders of the capital" said Nada El Khoury, Artistic Vice-President of APEAL.

El Khoury also defined what would represent a novelty in this year's residency format "through the attempt of leaving a tangible trace materializing in a collective artwork, or in a community project whose seed is going to be sown by the artists and reaped by the village".

Khalil Harfouche, Mayor of Jezzine and president the Union of Jezzine Municipalities described this initiative as "an opportunity to implement the plan actionned since 2012 through founding Jezzine Hub as a cultural center working on enhancing the role of local organizations, clubs, and all active individuals in the social, cultural and even sports fields". Harfouche also thanked APEAL and T.A.P "for choosing Jezzine as a destination for this special program", adding that "it is essential for the Jezzine community to be on board this enriching activity, this is why Jezzine Municipality and the Unions of Jezzine Municipalities will do everything in hand to guarantee the success of this program from its very first day until its closure". "This will be done through encouraging all residents to be part of the activities", concluded Harfouche who said that "this residency program will act as a cornerstone for the artistic and cultural development of Jezzine and the area, proving that development is essential, but has no value if it does not go in parallel with developing the human's, cultural and artistic capacities".

The choice of the city of Jezzine is a great inspiration to this year's theme because of the natural association of the name of Jezzine with its well renowned waterfalls, but also because of the abundance of its water resources stemming from dams, rivers, lakes and streams. In addition to being a necessary resource, water in Jezzine is associated with nature and is considered an important social and cultural element bringing people together.

Amanda Abi Khalil, curator of the program reiterated that "this second collaboration with Apeal on a residency program is a great new opportunity for artists and cultural practitioners to research and develop their practices in a context-responsive and participatory manner. Jezzine is the inspiration behind the choice of the theme 'water' and we will work, hand in hand with the community on addressing the many facets stemming from environmental and social concerns, to more philosophical and conceptual readings".

This year's program has been designed as an opportunity to put forward a plan that will enrich the residency with events and workshops addressing the theme of water in collaboration with local partners, guest-artists and speakers targeting both the resident artists and Jezzine's community. SOILS, the 2017 partner and the only permaculture association in Lebanon located in Saidoun, will have an instrumental role in addressing the residency's needs in terms of research on the region and the introduction of permaculture practice.

About BeMA:

One of the most significant developments for Lebanese art and culture in a generation, Beirut Museum of Art (BeMA), is a new museum set to launch in Beirut in 2020.

Envisioned as a cultural hub highlighting modern and contemporary art from Lebanon and the region, BeMA will encourage Lebanese artistic creation while fostering dialogue and cross-cultural collaborations.

In addition to housing an extensive collection of modern and contemporary art, the museum will create opportunities for the production of new works through artist residencies, commissions and cultural partnerships. Committed to nurturing a dynamic and creative civil society, it will also host cultural and educational programs.

An independent institution, BeMA will be a site for discourse, creativity, academic research, and public education, engaging local communities.

Drawing inspiration from the city itself, the museum's innovative design was developed by one of Lebanon's leading architecture houses Hala Wardé / HW Architecture following an independently juried competitions.
