



**BEIRUT  
DESIGN  
FAIR**

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2017

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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# 3 Questions for Bénédicte Colpin

**Special advisor for Beirut Design Fair**

**Today, Beirut is described as an outstanding «incubator» for a variety of artistic fields. In your opinion, what place does design occupy in this landscape, and what makes Beirut unique among other cities and places in the world?**

Beirut has always occupied a special place, thanks to its geographical position, its history, its way of interacting with the rest of the world. These factors make it a truly exceptional spot, both in reality and in the collective imagination. It's a city in perpetual reconstruction, and this type of urgency always inspires creativity. Creators are inevitably influenced by this immense cultural richness, along with Beirut's particular form of cosmopolitanism. There exists in Beirut a way of understanding the world that isn't simply a façade or a function of modern hyper-connectedness: it's something that is truly lived. Most creators in Beirut have studied abroad or in highly regarded local design schools (Alba, Usek or Lau), and while they're focused on Lebanon, they radiate internationally. It's an ultra-connected, highly cultured scene that's proud of its freedom.

**There is a significant, global Lebanese diaspora that is a driving force behind Beirut's creativity. In**

**terms of design, who are the major figures in France, Europe and the rest of the world?**

This is another aspect of Beirut that makes it such a unique place. In addition to a local scene with undeniable influence, the city also benefits from a diaspora spread throughout the world: people who are at once integrated into their adopted cultures while remaining attached to their country of origin, in one way or another. Whether these creators are based in Lebanon or elsewhere, Beirut remains the anchor. And this is true for all the celebrities in the industry, be it Chahan Minassian, Aline d'Amman Asmar, Karim Habib, Karen Chekerdjian, david/nicholas, Nada Debs, Marc Baroud, Charles Kalpakian, Bernard Khoury or Rabih Kayrouz - to mention only the best-known.

In terms of style, this by no means implies that Middle-Eastern archetypes are omnipresent. Quite the contrary: Lebanon is, by definition, a place of confluence between West and East. No, there exist a variety of styles. On the other hand, what unites all creators in Beirut is their permanent search for authenticity, freedom, quality and singularity. From Paris to New York, from London to São Paulo, the great designers, interior architects, and architects distill this unique culture and lifestyle

**For decades, Beirut and Lebanon have offered a unique network of craftsmanship. Many designers have come to the country to produce objects and projects. Could you outline the general history of this phenomenon ?**

Unlike other countries in the Middle East, Beirut has very active artisans in the fields of metalworking, ceramics, glass, wood, etc. The presence of these artisans and craftsmen stems directly from the demand for their skills. The Lebanese value quality, buyers are present, that the city is in perpetual construction and reconstruction - all of these factors keep this culture of craftsmanship alive. Artisans work in the same way as creators. They excel in their art and gather other skills from neighboring countries to complement their expertise. This attitude of openness, flexibility and community is one of the city's strong points, and the close dialogue that exists between artisans and designers enhances the quality of the local scene.

For several days and in a single location, BEIRUT DESIGN FAIR will serve as a catalyst for these creative energies, while showcasing the richness Beirut's design scene - both locally and internationally based. It will allow design lovers from Beirut and elsewhere to acquire exceptional

pieces that testify to the quality of contemporary design in the city and region. In addition, the fact that BEIRUT DESIGN FAIR will take place at the same time as BEIRUT ART FAIR enhances the event and heightens the excitement for its debut edition in September 2017.

# CONTACTS

## Who's who

### ORGANIZATION

**GUILLAUME TASLÉ D'HÉLIAND**

*Founder & Fair Director*

+961 76 711 990

+33 6 72 50 14 36

[gth@beirut-design-fair.com](mailto:gth@beirut-design-fair.com)

**HALA MOUBARAK**

*Head of Exhibitors Relations*

+961 3 925 230

[hmbk@beirut-design-fair.com](mailto:hmbk@beirut-design-fair.com)

**BÉNÉDICTE COLPIN / LIGHTBOARD - PARIS**

*Special Advisor*

### MEDIA RELATIONS

**PHILIPPE FOUCHARD FILIPPI & RAJESH MITTAL**

FOUCHARD FILIPPI COMMUNICATIONS

*Europe, America & Asia*

+33 1 53 28 87 53

[phff@fouchardfilippi.com](mailto:phff@fouchardfilippi.com)

[rmittal@fouchardfilippi.com](mailto:rmittal@fouchardfilippi.com)

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**INSTAGRAM/beirutdesignfair**

# BEIRUT DESIGN FAIR

is organised by

**CEDRALYS SARL**

11 Madrassat el-Salam Street  
Samaha II Building - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Ashrafieh, Beirut  
LEBANON

**[beirut-design-fair.com](http://beirut-design-fair.com)**