

AGENDA

LEBANON

THEATER

'Room 202'
Metro al-Madina, Saroulla Building, Hamra
Opens Sept. 20, doors open at 9 p.m.
Ticketing: 76-309-363
In Rawan Halawi's latest, two strangers, Halawi and Tarek Tamim, meet by chance, become engaged by chance and separate by chance. What binds them is an unconventional relationship that seems like a traditional marriage.

'Jogging'
Gulbenkian Theater, LAU Beirut, Qoreitem Sept. 28
Fresh from the Edinburgh Fringe, where she won the Vertebrae Prize for best actor, Hanane Hajj Ali reprises her one-woman play about Hanan, a 50-something Lebanese actor and citizen, who exercises daily to avoid osteoporosis, obesity and depression. While walking through Beirut, she revisits her dreams, desires, hopes, disillusionments, characters and the several versions of classical villain/heroine Medea she's played.

'36 Abbas Street, Haifa'
Masrah al-Madina, Hamra Sept. 28 to Oct. 15, 8:30 p.m. 01-341-470
The play tells the story of the Rafa family, Palestinians who stayed in Palestine and became hostages to fate, becoming citizens of the Jewish state of Israel. It is also the story of the Abu Ghaida family, Palestinians who were forced to leave and left to wander all corners of the world in search of a country they could call their own.

FILM

'German Film Week'
Metropolis Cinema-Sofit Sept. 21 to Oct. 1 01-204-080
This year's cycle will present seven contemporary, internationally acclaimed German-language films. This year's homage section will pay tribute to German entertainment icon Marlene Dietrich (1901-1992). All films are in German with English subtitles.

MUSIC

Omar Kamal
Palais des Congres, Dbayeh Sept. 28, 8:30 p.m. 01-999-666
In a fundraising event you won't forget, "Sinatra al-Arab" will belt out tunes in a variety of styles, including tunes by Frank Sinatra, Michael Jackson, as well as Arab greats such as Abdul-Wahab and Fairouz.

ART

'Photography at Work'
Beirut Art Center, Jisr al-Wati Through Sept. 29 01-397-018
This exhibition of work by late-American artist Allan Sekula – an influential photographer, writer, filmmaker, theorist and critic – features over 50 photographic works, slide shows and videos selected from the breadth of his artistic practice, and revisited through a set of questions that have informed his work and that continue to be relevant today.

JUST A THOUGHT

Nothing is worth more than this day.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)
Poet, dramatist, novelist, memoirist, critic

INTERVIEW

Goethe-Institut celebrates reopening

Completion of new Gemmayzeh residence to be feted with packed cultural program

By Maghie Ghali
The Daily Star

BEIRUT: After five years of renovations, the Goethe-Institut Lebanon is celebrating the completion of its new residence in Gemmayzeh with a packed cultural program and a new media lounge.

The official reopening is scheduled for Sept. 28, when the institute will hold a Grosse Party (big party), with a lineup of regional musicians, German cuisine and – in the spirit of cultural exchange – a live artistic collaboration between Beirut and Berlin.

"Cultural dialogue is a two-way street and feedback to Germany is an important concern for us. We want to bring artistic positions from Lebanon and showcase them to a German audience, not just teach German in Lebanon," Mani Pournaghi, Goethe-Institut Lebanon's director told The Daily Star.

"As part of the party, there will be a link to Berlin, via a digital 'calligraphic' performance, where a graffiti artist in Berlin will be creating a work at the same time as an artist in Beirut. They will be communicating live, via the screen," he said.

Many believe the institute is still situated in its old Manara location, though those offices shut seven years ago. "It's super important to let everyone know that we're now here in Gemmayzeh," Pournaghi said. "Now the main services of the Goethe-Institut and access to our interactive media lounge are again reunited under one roof."

"Before [the renovations] we were running about 80 percent of our programs in other locations, like the Sacre-Coeur School next door. Now we hope to be able to run more of it in-house."

The year's program has been split into three categories – language, culture and information services.

The cultural program is focused on creating long-term collaborations and exploring new ideas through artistic exchange, starting



The Bibbus mobile library gives children in underprivileged areas access to over 2,000 Arabic-language titles.

with the German Film Week (Sept. 21 to Oct. 1) and the fourth edition of Talents Beirut (Sept. 21-25).

"We have put together a program of films that showcases a fine selection of current, internationally acclaimed German movies," Pournaghi said. "The opening film is 'In the Fade,' which was just nominated as the German entry to the Oscar race 2018."

"In the frame of the German Film Week is Beirut Talents," he added, "a training program for young Arab filmmakers from the region. For four days they can attend master classes, workshops and peer-to-peer coaching. It's about capacity-building and strengthening the culture section, not only in Lebanon but also in the region."

Also supporting budding film-

makers is Backstory, a film residency program for Arab and German artists held in collaboration with Beirut Art Residency and Metropolis Cinema. According to Pournaghi, it's a chance for them to improve their careers through mentoring and having access to equipment needed to edit their work.

According to Hindeja Farah, the first secretary at the German Embassy, they have been stressing the importance of cultural exchange in their foreign policy.

"We are thinking about creating spaces for discourse and exchange, to enable people to talk to each other, not for people to talk about each other," Farah told The Daily Star. "The Goethe-Institut is the most important part of that. It is not only a state-of-the-art building but I was

also impressed by the sheer turnout of language classes and examinations already happening."

Later in October the media lounge will host an exhibition of 25 newly commissioned photos by photographers Johann Clausen and Alexander Graesser.

"[The show will] showcase photographic research about the similarities between body and architecture," Pournaghi said. "They will be here for three weeks and [will also involve] Lebanese dancers and architects."

The Laboratory of Arts program will also be working with the institute, offering a support program for Syrian artists. An initiative launched by Ettijhat Independent Culture, it offers grants which aim to create a supportive and free environment for creative practices.

As part of the new information services, the media lounge includes over 2,000 media items in four languages. The institute also plans projections from their library of 400 DVDs. The multipurpose space will be used for writing workshops, readings and exhibitions.

An extension of this is the Bibbus, a mobile library of over 2,000 Arabic-language children's books, which will have three to four weekly stops in underprivileged areas around Lebanon.

"It will be bringing access to culture service to areas that don't usually have that much access," Pournaghi said. "They'll be going round Tripoli, Saida and the Bekaa Valley."

For information on the full program, visit <https://www.goethe.de/ins/le/en/index.html>.

Monet's 'secret' art collection on show for first time

By Antoine Froidefond
Agence France Presse

PARIS: The "secret" art collection amassed by Claude Monet, the father of impressionism, is on display for the first time in Paris, 90 years after the great painter's death.

French art historians spent four years tracking down the startling collection of work by contemporaries including Renoir, Cezanne, Pissarro and Delacroix that Monet secretly bought.

"I am selfish," the artist once told journalists who called on him at his country home at Giverny in Normandy. "My collection is for myself only ... and for a few friends."

"We knew really very little about the collection," said Marianne Mathieu, one of the curators of the show at the Marmottan Monet Museum, which has brought together the bulk

of the collection. "Monet didn't speak about his private life and kept his art collection just as private."

He kept the paintings upstairs in his private apartments at Giverny far from prying eyes, Mathieu said, and he didn't keep records of what he bought. While the great and good came to visit him as he painted his famous water lilies, only a privileged few were allowed a peek at the canvases he kept for himself.

An inventory was taken by experts when Monet died in 1926 but it was destroyed during World War II. So Mathieu and her colleague Dominique Lobstein had to hunt down the 120 works, which included several by Manet and Boudin and more than 20 albums of prints by the Japanese artist Hokusai.

Monet began building his collection when he was still on the breadline with gifts from other painter friends like Renoir and Manet. Even

Love of art Beirut Art Week gets started



BEIRUT: Artist Nayla Romanos Iliya photographs her sculpture "Hobb," 2017, mounted as part of Beirut Art Week, which opened Tuesday. Running through Sept. 26, the event sets out to bring contemporary art to Downtown Beirut. Its program includes 27 works that, as its organizers put it, "highlight the cultural heritage of Beirut, deployed in public spaces and in some of the city's most prestigious shops." – The Daily Star

then his mania for privacy was evident. He was reluctant to sit for Manet with his wife and model Camille, and in the unfinished "The

Painter Monet in His Studio" that Manet later gave him, his face is only sketched.

His beloved Camille died of tuberculosis in 1879 with her husband immortalizing her on her deathbed. Poignantly, Monet kept a Renoir picture of her with their son to his dying day.

Mathieu said the artist was a "determined and secretive" collector who was not averse to digging in his heels, particularly when he traded works with his contemporaries.

When he lent Pissarro 15,000 francs to buy a house, he demanded his acclaimed 1891 painting "Peasant Women Planting Stakes" in return. Pissarro's wife Julie, to whom the painter had already gifted it, would not let it go. A standoff ensued that Monet eventually won.

The struggle was all the more surprising, Mathieu told AFP, given that the painting was more in the neo-impressionist style of Seurat and Signac, whom Monet had pointedly refused to exhibit alongside. "This shows there was a dichotomy," she said, "between what he said publicly and what he collected."

In fact, Monet kept four watercolors by Signac until his death.

Clearly, however, he was not overly fond of Degas, acquiring only one small pastel by the aristocratic

artist who had cold-shouldered him from his own enormous collection.

As soon as he had the cash, Monet began collecting work by his "masters" – Delacroix, Boudin and Corot – although he did not acknowledge their influence on his work until late in his life.

From the 1890s onward as he became rich and famous, Mathieu added, Monet concentrated his efforts buying on works by Renoir and Cezanne.

Tellingly, for the privacy of his own rooms at Giverny, he bought a series of nudes from Renoir, a subject he never dared tackle himself.

He also lashed out on Orientalist works, paying 10,000 francs – a small fortune in 1881 – for Renoir's "The Mosque (Arab Festival)."

Most of the works in the show come from the Marmottan Monet Museum's own vaults, which hold more Monets than any other gallery in the world.

The curators also managed to persuade the Sao Paulo Museum of Art to lend them the first of the 12 Cezannes Monet acquired, including the rarely seen "The Negro Scipio," whose title grates on modern ears.

"Monet Collectionneur" runs at the Marmottan Monet Museum through Jan. 14, 2018. For more, see www.marmottan.fr/uk



Claude Monet's "The Villas In Bordighera," 1884, from Monet Collectionneur.