

AGENDA

LEBANON

THEATER

**‘Not Long Ago’**  
*Masrah al-Madina, Hamra*  
Oct. 19-20, 8:30 p.m.  
Lebanon’s first European Theatre Festival continues Nidal Ashkar’s autobiographical play, based on her childhood during the Civil War.

PERFORMANCE

**‘Our Vast Dreams’**  
*Dar El-Nimer, Clemenceau*  
Oct. 19, 6 p.m.  
Young Palestinians and Syrians residing in Ain al-Hilwe camp, al-Bus Camp and around Saida, will present the fruit of an intense three-month training program in theater entitled “SIBA” that was directed and managed by Minwal Theatre Company.

MUSIC

**Feu! Chatterton**  
*MusicHall Waterfront, Downtown*  
Oct. 17, 8 p.m.  
ticketingboxoffice.com  
French pop-rock group Feu! Chatterton will be performing their world tour show with a warmup set from Medea Azouri.

ART

**‘The Experience of Light’**  
*Sursock Museum, Ashrafieh*  
Opening Oct. 18, 6 p.m.  
This retrospective show by Joseph Sassine’s was produced in the ‘70s, and is inspired by elements of Middle Eastern history, particularly the Phoenician and Byzantine civilizations, with an original pictorial language in an abstract and modern style.

**‘A Hint of Nature’**  
*Sin al-Fil Municipality Office*  
Opening Oct. 17, 6 p.m.  
Anthony Abdelkarim’s paintings are inspired by nature and the beauty of landscapes. Part of the profits will go to support IDRAAC’s mental health awareness activities.

**‘Robert Messarra’**  
*Villa Audi, Ashrafieh*  
Opening Oct. 25, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Curated by Aida Cherfan, this retrospective of Robert Messarra’s works looks at his evolution from 1944 to 2012.

**‘Analogy to Human Life’**  
*Saleh Barakat Gallery, Clemenceau*  
Until Oct. 27, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Tagreed Darghouth’s paintings feature instruments of violence which comment on the expropriation of Palestinian land and the decimation of human populations.

PHOTOGRAPHY

**‘Le Chariot de Farah’**  
*Maison Rabih Kayrouz, Port District*  
Oct. 18, 6 p.m.  
Carla Henoud’s photo series tells stories from three generations of people on Beirut’s Corniche, linked by a juice cart and their passion for the city and the sea. Followed by a photo book signing.

**‘La Poesie des Ruines’**  
*Tourist Info Office, Byblos*  
Until Oct. 24, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Rania Azar Berbery’s photo exhibition centers on an abandoned building in Hazmieh, dating back to the 1890s.

JUST A THOUGHT

In my experience, if you have to keep the lavatory door shut by extending your left leg, it’s modern architecture.

Nancy Banks-Smith  
(1929 -)  
Television and radio critic

INTERVIEW

Tripoli’s forgotten fair basks in glow

Unfinished work by renowned architect Oscar Niemeyer has caught UNESCO’s eye

By Maghie Ghali  
The Daily Star

BEIRUT: The 15 monumental structures that make up Tripoli’s Rashid Karami International Fair have been largely forgotten. For years the site has been closed but for rare arts interventions, exhibitions and tours by visiting architects, keen to witness this unfinished work of renowned Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer.

The deteriorating modernist experiment has now caught the eye of UNESCO and the Getty Foundation, which last week announced that the complex was the first Lebanese site to be added to their Keeping It Modern initiative. A conservation grant of \$1.7million has been allocated to 11 international sites, including the Tripoli fairground.

“Since 2014, Keeping It Modern has supported 54 grant projects of outstanding architectural significance that contribute to advancing conservation practice globally,” Getty Foundation senior program officer Antoine Wilmering told The Daily Star. “Supported projects focus on the creation of conservation management plans that guide long-term maintenance and conservation policies, the thorough investigation of building conditions, and the testing and analysis of modern materials.”

The first stone of Tripoli’s Permanent International Fairground was laid in October 1963 and the site remained incomplete as the country slipped into civil war in 1975. Intended to be a commercial and touristic hub for the country, Niemeyer’s futuristic structures – one of which resembles an early Starship Enterprise – were planned to be exhibition pavilions, theaters, museums, recreation areas and residences.

The site was opened to the public this summer for “Cycles of Collapsing Progress,” a contemporary art exhibition curated by STU-DIOCUR/Art’s Karina el-Helou in partnership with UNESCO. The show served to reignite some curiosity about the location and its history.

“[The fair] is both architecturally and historically significant,” Wilmering said. “Also, the city of Tripoli has been a very responsible custodian, as the fairground has been preserved relatively well



Oscar Niemeyer’s Permanent International Fairground in Tripoli is now, after long efforts, being considered for full UNESCO World Heritage List status.

despite the decades of civil war.

“[It] was recommended for support based on the following criteria: the architectural significance of the site, the strength of the project proposal and its potential to have an impact on the field and advance the conservation of modern architecture,” he explained, “the qualifications of the project team members in relation to the work plan, and the potential ... to serve as models for the conservation of other 20th-century buildings and sites.”

UNESCO also announced that the fair has been accepted onto the Indicative World Heritage List – a significant step forward after long efforts – that means the site is now being considered for full World Heritage List status.

“Putting a site on this list is the first necessary step before proceeding to nomination,” UNESCO’s

Lebanon Ambassador Sahar Baasiri told The Daily Star. “What follows is completing the nomination file with all the needed documentation and maps to be submitted to the World Heritage Center and this is what Lebanon is working on now.

“The [grant] is very important because it will help in the conservation efforts of the Tripoli Fair,” she added. “The fair is a living expression of the world’s cultural heritage, as well as the history of modernity and the role of Lebanon in it. We hope that this masterpiece will soon be on the World Heritage List.”

The 11 other sites receiving a Keeping It Modern grant include The National Schools of Art of Havana, Georgia’s Chess Palace and Alpine Club, the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri (which Niemeyer emulated in his Tripoli ensemble) and the History Museum of Bosnia

and Herzegovina in Sarajevo.

The Rashid Karami Fair will be given \$225,000 to create a management and conservation plan and to explore the possibilities for adaptive reuse that respect Niemeyer’s original vision, Wilmering said. In the next two years a team of local and international consultants, engineers and architects will work closely with UNESCO on developing this plan.

“Future use(s) for the site will be determined by the owners/custodians, local authorities and experts, and the government,” Wilmering elaborated. “The conservation management plan will build a deeper understanding of the site’s current and future conservation and maintenance needs. The plan will become a valuable tool and ... we hope that the plan will serve as a ‘roadmap’ to inform the possibilities and limitation of any future use of the site.”

Alongside the new grantees, the Getty Foundation announced the launch of their online library portal, which will be used for sharing the technical reports and conservation plans that are the result of completed Keeping It Modern projects.

“These reports are excellent, and will be a valuable resource for specialists in the field,” Wilmering said. “The first 20 projects have completed their work, resulting in an equal number of in-depth studies and plans for the preservation of modern architecture.”

“The experts leading these projects are spreading awareness about the need for research-based planning for modern buildings,” he added, “and are themselves forming new international networks, which helps focus attention to the importance of preserving modern architectural heritage.”

Rembrandt’s ‘The Night Watch’ to be restored, live and online

By Danny Kemp  
Agence France Presse

AMSTERDAM: Like watching paint dry? Soon art lovers will be able to watch one of the world’s most famous paintings being restored, live and online.

Rembrandt’s masterpiece “The Night Watch” will undergo a years-long, multimillion-dollar overhaul at Amsterdam’s Rijksmuseum under the full gaze of the public, its general director announced Tuesday.

Starting in July 2019, this unique project will let art lovers see behind the normally secretive process as the Dutch master’s 1642 tableau is brought back to its full glory.

“‘The Night Watch’ by Rembrandt is one of the most famous paintings in the world and we feel we have to preserve it for future generations,” Rijksmuseum General Director Taco Dibbits told AFP.

“Over 2 million people a year come to see ‘The Night Watch.’ It’s a painting that everybody loves, and we feel that the world has the right to see what we will do with it.”

The last major restoration work was carried out 40 years ago after a mentally ill man slashed the painting with a knife.

Since then, experts have noticed a white haze appear on parts of “The Night Watch,” especially in the area around the knife damage, where it is bleaching out the figure of a small dog.

Billed as the biggest in the Rijksmuseum’s history, the restoration will be carried out behind a huge glass case so that museum visitors can see experts carry out their painstaking work.

The regeneration of the piece, which hangs in the museum’s “Gallery of Honor,” will be livestreamed on the internet so that people around the world can see it being restored, centimeter by centimeter. “Conservation is usually



Equipment for analyzing the painting’s condition is set next to “The Night Watch.”

done behind closed doors,” Dibbits noted, “but this is such an important painting we feel that the public who owns it has the right to see it and we want to share this very important moment.”

It was in 1642 that Frans Banninck Cocq, the mayor and leader of the civic guard of Amsterdam, commissioned Rembrandt van Rijn to paint the picture of the officers and other members of the militia heading out on the night watch.

Over the last 3 1/2 centuries, the painting has endured several moves, restoration attempts and even an escape from the Nazis.

In the 1700s the painting had large chunks cut from each side during a move to Amsterdam Town Hall, followed by the clearing of “multiple layers of boiled oil and varnishes.” A century later “The

Night Watch” underwent a series of attempts to “regenerate” the varnish and remove its yellowish tint.

Then in September 1939 the painting was evacuated from the Rijksmuseum along with 30,000 other artworks as the gunmen of Nazi Germany closed in. When in 1945 it was returned from its last hiding place in a cave in Maastricht in the southern Netherlands, it needed major restoration.

The painting’s travails were not over. The 1975 attack saw a disturbed man slash the painting 12 times, with the marks of the deepest cuts still being visible today. The museum decided to carry out a major restoration then, only to see a man spray acid on it in 1990.

Recently, however, new problems emerged. “We noticed that over the past years there’s a white

glare that appeared on the bottom part of the painting,” Dibbits said.

“We want to be able to understand what that is.”

But restoring “The Night Watch” will not be cheap or quick.

“That will cost several millions,” Dibbits said, adding that the museum would also be looking for private funding. “I’m very confident people will want to contribute to it because we all want to restore it for future generations.”

“The Night Watch” will be the centerpiece of an exhibition marking the 350th anniversary of Rembrandt’s death, starting in February 2019, before restoration work begins in full in July.

“As we say in Dutch, conserving paintings is a monk’s job,” Dibbits said, “it takes a lot of patience, so it might be several years.”

Hawking warns education and science in critical danger

LONDON: Stephen Hawking spoke from beyond the grave Monday to warn that science and education are under threat around the world.

The words of the scientist, who died in March at 76, were broadcast at a London launch event for his final book “Brief Answers To The Big Questions.”

Hawking warned education and science are “in danger now more than ever before.” He cited U.S. President Donald Trump’s election and the U.K.’s 2016 Brexit vote as part of “a global revolt against experts and that includes scientists.”

‘It matters that you don’t give up ... Shape the future’

Acknowledging science had yet to overcome major challenges for the world – including climate change, overpopulation, species extinction, deforestation and the degradation of the oceans – the physicist still urged young people “to look up at the stars and not down at your feet.”

“Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist,” he said. “It matters that you don’t give up. Unleash your imagination. Shape the future.”

Hawking lived for more than five decades with motor neuron disease that left him paralyzed, communicating through a voice-generating computer. In June, his ashes were buried in Westminster Abbey, between the graves of Charles Darwin and Isaac Newton.

Hawking’s daughter Lucy, said hearing her father’s unmistakable voice had been “very emotional.”

“I turned away, because I had tears forming in my eyes,” she said. “I feel sometimes like he’s still here because we talk about him and we hear his voice and we see images of him, and then we have the reminder that he’s left us.” – AP