L’âge d’or du TRAIN AU LIBAN

BERLIN’S magnificent museums

ESCAPADE
de rêve en Sicile

LA DOLCE VITA
Atelier Cherine Khadra

 المدينة الحمراء
LEBANESE Design
with a spring in its step

House of Today is a non-profit ORGANIZATION that identifies, NURTURES, mentors, CURATES, showcases and connects LEBANESE product DESIGNERS to create a RELATIONSHIP with DESIGN experts, REGIONALLY and GLOBALLY. In this SPRING issue of Cedar Wings, we first look back at HOUSE OF TODAY’S fourth BIENNALE celebration of the FINEST Lebanese CONTEMPORARY DESIGN. We also look in on two NEW YORK galleries that hosted some of our favorite DESIGNERS, and tip our hats to CONGRATULATE another two favorites who have recently seen their work added to the PERMANENT COLLECTION of a leading design INSTITUTION.

House of Today Design BIENNALE WRAP

The 21 artists who comprised the handpicked cadre for the main body of the biennale represented the most prominent and promising of the country’s contemporary product designers. Some have been with House of Today since their journey began six years ago, while some are new and showing for the first time.

The opening evening saw two headline events that we look back upon as undoubted highlights of 2018’s show:

Craftporn Conference: an initiative of Chérine Maghraby Tayeb in collaboration with the journalist and critic Anne-France Berthelot, a panel of influential global designers, each the acknowledged leader in their field and including Humberto Campana, Evan Snyderman, Peter Marigold, Pascale Mussard, Bernard Khoury plus Formafantasma’s Andrea Tomarchi, explored and illuminated the many facets of the theme Craftporn by unveiling the singularities of their creative process, in which craftsmanship and their dashing approach are always essential.

Khalil Khoury Showcase: a performance and installation by Bernard Khoury, which recounted the fabulous story of an impossible modernity. Not a retrospective, nor an objective account of the modern history of our territory, this was Bernard’s story of his father and architect of the modern movement, Khalil Khoury, and his passion for aeronautical engineering, painting, hunting, politics, industrial design, architecture and, above all, the female figure.

In parallel, House of Today’s The SHOP, in collaboration with WallpaperSTORE®, unveiled an offering of home and office products. This unique collaboration further outlined their joint commitment to nurture and showcase internationally the strong design talents found in Lebanon.

The show exhibited pieces that chart the transformative nature of the celestial body through materials that evoke concepts of both form and void.

Their Monocle series centered around the representation of large masses of dense matter and referenced the equilibrium of mass and light in a star through a mix of materials including wood, marble and bronze juxtaposed against transparent glass. Constellation drew inspiration in the new life of a star and the explosion phenomenon. Low tables rendered in travertine feature clean lines and undisturbed surfaces that are understood to represent the new beginnings of a celestial body.

Najla El Zein – TRANSITION

ANOTHER OF BEIRUT’S CURRENT GENERATION OF PRE-EMINENT DESIGN TALENTS ALSO STARTED HER YEAR IN NEW YORK, THIS TIME AT FRIEDMAN BENDA. WITH TRANSITION, DEVELOPED OVER TWO YEARS, NAILA EL ZEIN MARKED THE DEBUT PRESENTATION OF THREE NEW SERIES: DISTORTION, FRAGMENTED PILLAR AND SEDUCTION.

Organic and gestural, her objects act as various, embodiments of El Zein’s personal journey.
Distortion – through its indirect references to the pregnant form – illustrates stages of the body’s transformation. Made real through a series of concrete benches, these highly contoured silhouettes create a sense of femininity and sensuality while sharing a surrealistic sense of dislocation. Through its series of interactive sculptures made of plaster and sand, Fragmented Pillar “symbolizes the disturbance of one’s foundation,” says El Zein. “Strong, erect and imposing, the pillar is the mother structure of any given entity. A disruption as such results in the fragility of the pillar’s fundamental function, characterized by its revealed fragments.” Seduction synthesizes abstraction and representation. While depicting human interaction and connection between figures in varying degrees of proximity, El Zein’s stone-sculpted forms explore a range of states from reverie to desire.

El Zein’s Friedman Benda shows on April 13.

david/nicolas - SUPERNOVA

TWO OF BEIRUT’S MOST HICLTY TALENTED AND EQUALLY PROLIFIC DESIGNERS, DAVID WATFORD and NICOLAS MOLLALEM, GOT THEIR YEAR OFF TO A STELLAR BEGINNING WITH A SOLO SHOW OF NEW WORKS AT CARPENTERS WORKSHOP GALLERY IN NEW YORK.

For Supernova, the Beirut-based duo brought together two distinct works: Constellation and Monocle, each an interpretation of a post-explosion phenomenon. Through a collection of tables, cabinets and rags, david/nicolas built upon their fascination with time and the universe to create a retro-futuristic ensemble that speaks to the beauty of regeneration.
Lebanese Designers at LONDON’S V&A

LONDON’S VICTORIA & ALBERT (V&A) MUSEUM RECENTLY ADDED PIECES BY LEBANON’S NATALIE KHAYAT AND NAILA EL ZEIN TO ITS PERMANENT COLLECTION.

Natalie Khayat, Untitled from The Eye Above the Well series (2015)

A survivor of a 2012 car bomb close to her Beirut studio, Khayat created the series The Eye Above the Well (2015) as a result of that experience, examining ideas of the unexpected, of damage, of resilience and of repair. The piece represents the result of therapeutic experimentation as she embraced the act of pulling and pushing, stretching the pieces, wrapping her arms around the vessels to transport them, cutting and tearing the work and letting the pieces sweat and deform in order to reconstruct.

Najla El Zein’s Distortion and Seduction from her first solo exhibition, Transition (2019)

El Zein’s two pieces, Distortion and Seduction, from her first solo exhibition Transition (2019), stress the importance in the expression of anti-object, derived by her personal observations and experiences, influenced by themes such as the unconscious, sexuality, femininity and desire.

The pieces Distortion and Seduction were part of her first solo show—Transition—at New York’s Friedman Benda gallery. You can find a fuller look at her work and the show on the previous page.