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# Beirut unveils a new modern art museum, here's what you need to know

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**JASON LEMON**  
ARTICLE AUTHOR



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If you haven't heard, Beirut is getting a new modern art museum.

Renderings of the Beirut Museum of Art (BeMA) were revealed this week, after an international jury announced the winner of the architectural competition for the designs of the museum. Here are 6 things you should know about the new museum.

## 1. Lebanese architect Hala

# Wardé of HW Architecture will head the project



Source: Beirut Museum of Art

Based in Paris, Wardé was born in Beirut.

“I am delighted and honored to realize my first major project in the city of Beirut where I was born, on such an exceptional site,” Hala Wardé said, according to Arch Daily.

“This museum program ... will allow us to create a new cultural and social space with a garden and amphitheater, and will single out this artistic territory with a strong and recognizable urban beacon, which through its multiple expressions, will belong to the new urban landscape of the city.”

## 2. Wardé's design is inspired by Italian campaniles and Arabic minarets





Source: HW Architecture

The museum will feature a slender tower rising upwards 124 meters.

The jury praised Wardé's design saying they admired the "the way it creates a succession of varied landscapes and spaces where art and society can come together. The connections between garden, amphitheater, exhibition spaces and roof garden have been well considered and offer a continuous visitor experience that lends itself to both exhibiting art and engaging with the community."

### 3. Globally renowned architect Zaha Hadid was part of the jury that selected the final design



Source: Wikimedia

Chaired by Lord Peter Palumbo, the all-star jury included architects Rem Koolhaas, Lord Richard Rogers, George Arbid, Dr. Farès el-Dahdah and Dr. Rodolphe El-Khoury, as well as Serpentine Galleries curators Hans Ulrich Obrist and Dame Julia Peyton-Jones. Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid was part of the jury until her death in 2015, remaining an honorary member posthumously.

"It is a moving coincidence to receive this news as the architectural world is gathered in London to honor Zaha Hadid, an inspiration to women and architects

worldwide, who was originally a member of this competition's jury," Wardé said. "I am thinking of her today with great affection."

## 4. The museum will be built near Beirut's infamous civil war era "green line"



Source: HW Architecture

To be constructed on land owned by Université Saint Joseph, the site is centrally located at the heart of the city. A long term lease agreement has been signed with the university, allowing the construction of the museum on a portion of the land and future educational and residential facilities on the remainder.

"Situated adjacent to the demarcation line of the country's devastating civil war, the new museum aims to be a unifying national platform that will bring together diverse populations and narratives as well as strengthen civil society and participation," Rita Nammour, president of the Association for the Promotion and Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon, said, according to The Architects Newspaper.

## 5. 2,300 pieces of art will span from the early 1900s to the present



Source: Facebook/Sursock Museum

The collection will include more than 2,300 pieces of art, including some 470 pieces from Lebanese artists. One thousand works of art have already been selected to be part of the museum's permanent collection. Many of these works of art are already hanging on the walls of the country's presidential palace, the parliament and other government buildings.

The museum's first exhibition is slated for 2020.

## 6. BeMA adds to Lebanon's growing development of museums and cultural institutions





Source: Facebook/Sursock Museum

Last year, Beirut’s Sursock Museum reopened after nine years of renovations. Just this month, the basement

exhibition rooms of the Beirut National Museum reopened to the public for the first time since the civil war ended in 1990.

“[The museum] will be an anchor within Beirut’s new ‘museum mile,’ home to the National Museum and Museum of Lebanese Prehistory, the Mineral Museum (MiM), and will soon include Beit Beirut (House of Beirut), and Metropolis Center,” Nammous said.

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