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## An initiative by BeMA - Shou Hayda gives museum artistic objects a new life through modern audio storytelling

(What's up ?) 2 weeks ago



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"ShouHayda?" (What is this?) is a new contemporary art initiative by the Beirut Museum of Art BeMA using an interactive methodology to bring life to items displayed in the National Museum. The outcome of the project is an audio guide made of recordings telling stories about Beirut residents reflecting their own imagination and interpretation about each artistic object regardless of its history, its initial function and the reason for its presence at the museum.

This project initiated by BeMA as part of its continuous efforts to engage local communities in contemporary art, is in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, the

Directorate General of Antiquities, the National Museum and Temporary.Art.Platform (T.A.P).

"ShouHayda?" is based on a series of workshops that took place during three days at the National Museum. Those sessions were an opportunity to link the past to the present through an artistic experiment that reveals itself in the eyes of Beirut residents based on their own imagined scenarios reviving the artistic objects and artifacts born from their realities and lived experiences.

The workshops were directed by artist Anabel Daou, who ensured an interactive and engaging methodology of their implementation. Practically, the participants were asked specific questions triggering their imagination in an attempt to revive archeological items by having them embody the artistic objects, speak on their behalf, express their feelings, ambitions, worries, opinions, and even measure the awareness they have of their real economic, cultural and artistic value and the extent of their resistance and uniqueness.

These experimental exercises were recorded prior to their editing and their compiling as an audio guide featuring the voices of two prominent Lebanese actors George Khabbaz and Julia Kassar. This outcome will reflect the perception Beirut residents have of the items displayed in the National Museum, and the extent to which they interrelate with their daily social, political, economical, ethical and cultural lives.

"The guide will be launched in the framework of the international day of museums (Journée Internationales des Musées) organized by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) on May 18, 2018 under the theme: "Hyperconnected museums: New approaches, new publics". From this date, the audio guide will be available at the museum, and ready for download through a website, and it will also be compatible with different devices ranging from smartphones to laptops and tablets", stated Anabel Daou.

Sandra Abou Nader, Founding Member of BeMA and Vice President of the Association for the Promotion and Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon (APEAL) said that this project is "one of a series of initiatives launched by BeMA aiming at making art more accessible, and transforming museums into spaces that transcend the work of artists, curators and historians, to a more experimental space involving the museums visitors in the artistic process". "This is the ultimate mission of BeMA, bringing art to the masses and promoting museums, archeology and culture", added Abou Nader before concluding that "today's initiative aims at creating a new timeless approach to art and items displayed in museums, giving them a new life through personal and more modern stories and interpretations".

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