

THE BEIRUT EXPERIENCE

Educational Worksheet

b. BEIRUT ART CENTER
مركز بيروت للفن

The idea behind the exhibition:

The exhibition was organised by two curators from Switzerland, **Jean-Paul Felley** and **Olivier Kaeser**. After being invited to Beirut, they selected artists from all over the world to create an artwork about Beirut. The artists spent one week here a year ago, then had a year to think about their project. They came back in October to produce and present their completed projects.



For **Eric Hattan's** work, Beyroots, the artist noticed old chairs on which people sat outside on the pavement and street corners. The chairs had all been carefully yet unconventionally repaired by their owners. For his installation, Eric was forced to engage with Beirutis and try to bargain his way to owning these idiosyncratic objects. The chairs maintain traces of their owners, not only through the different ways the chairs were mended, but even through the physical imprint of the owners' bodies.

Eric also noticed that although chairs are usually very portable, these had been rooted to the same spot for many years. Can you see how he translated this idea visually in the installation?

For Eric, these chairs provide a small portrait of Beirut.

As part of **Eric Hattan's** other work, Time Unplugged, the artist presents a video that was taken by his father in Beirut in the 1960s.

The story behind the trip is amazing: Eric's father was an electrician. He won a competition organised by the company he worked for, in which the person who sold the most number of washing machines won a trip to Beirut. He borrowed a video camera from his neighbour and filmed the trip.

Eric remembers seeing the film as a child. He himself was invited to Beirut by chance to be in this exhibition.

Can you spot a bus in Eric's father's film?

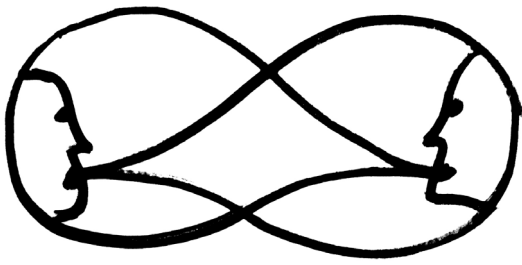
This is also a work about time passing. Can you see the other video in the bus that shows the passing of time?



Latifa Echakhch took a story from the comic books 'Charile Brown', based on a poem from the First World War by John McCrae, 'In Flanders Fields', as inspiration for her work. The story goes that the blood from the people who died on the Belgian battlefields was absorbed by the earth with then bloomed red poppies. A poppy has since become a symbol for a soldier who died during the First World War (1914-1918).

While visiting Beirut last year, Latifa noticed the redness of the earth here. This brought to mind the story of the poppies, and resonated with Latifa's thoughts on Lebanon's recent wars.

She therefore sculpted the red earth of Beirut into poppies.



Look at **Dan Perjovschi's** drawings on the wall or on the postcards at the front door.

Pick a drawing and try to describe the point the artist is making in a few sentences below:

Have you noticed how with a few simple, eloquent lines, the artist succeeds in depicting ideas that are complicated and take many words to be described. These drawings could be described as visual maxims.

Marc Bauer's work is about a walk he took Beirut when he visited the city last year. The first thing he noticed was the number of people playing the video game 'Call of Duty'.

After researching the game he noticed something strange about the images used in the graphics.

Can you recognise something familiar in this picture?



The rest of Marc Bauer's work presented here is about a walk along the corniche. The images that Marc presents are half physical portrait, like the images he sees on the street, and half built from memory, such as his drawing of Magritte's painting. This is linked by a text that is half travel diary and half poetic imagining. Read the text and look at the images and decide which are factual representation and which built from memory.

In **Estafania Peñafiel Loiza's** work, she presents a video taken outside the Carlton Hotel in Beirut. She used a 'negative' version of the video (where white is replaced by black and vice versa) and has screened it onto fluorescent paint. The paint absorbs the white light from the video and when the video is cut, it keeps emitting the image.

What does the fluorescent paint absorb least from the video? Why do you think that is?

Tip: try standing in front of the projection and see the effect of your shadow on the paint.

Find **Mark Lewis's** video, Beirut.



Watch the film carefully. **Did you notice that the whole film is one continuous shot?**

How do you think the artist manages to achieve this?

Now, go to the reception desk. Ask for one of the invitation cards and look at the picture. This will show you how Mark managed this technical feat.



Adrien Missika's video is about a building in Tripoli built by a famous Brazilian Modernist architect called Oscar Niemeyer. The building was being built between 1968 and 1975 when the Civil War started in Lebanon, so it was never completed. The building has not been used since.

In the video, Adrien depicts an encounter between a man and the building. As the man moves around the dome, he uses its architecture to make it resonate: he plays the building like an instrument. Adrien also commissioned an artist to make original music that was played during filming.

What do you think this building was supposed to be?

