



Archives and Special Collections Department,  
American University of Beirut  
Beirut, Lebanon  
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## **George Cyr Costume Collection, 1930s**

A Finding Aid to the Collection at the University Libraries, AUB  
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## **Descriptive Summary**

**Call No.:** Ph:GC:1930s

**Library catalog ID:** [b26190965](#)

**Record Creator:** Cyr, Georges, 1881-1964.

**Collection Title:** George Cyr Costume Collection, 1930s

**Collection Dates:** 1930s

**Physical Description:** 7 plates; watercolors; 34x25 cm

## **Administrative Information**

**Source:** N/A

**Access Restrictions:** The collection can be used within the premises of the Archives and Special Collections Department, Jafet Memorial Library, American University of Beirut.

**Photocopying Restriction:** No photocopying restriction except for fragile material.

**Preferred Citation:** George Cyr Costume Collection, 1930s, Ph:21:1930s/1-7, American University of Beirut/Library Archives.

## **Scope and Content**

This small collection consists of seven reproductions of watercolors which are important records of ethnic communities in Lebanon and Syria by Georges Cyr, in 1930s: Kurd porters; Bedouin women; Homs midwife; Kurd street sweeper; merchant of Damascus; Druze chief; Hauranese bride; bridegrooms of Djebel Druze; sheik; and others; all in distinctive dress.

## **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged in two series:

**Series I:** Lebanon

**Series II:** Syria

## **Subject Headings**

Costume -- Lebanon.

Costume -- Syria.

## **Biographical Sketch**

Georges Cyr was born in Montgeron (France), in 1881. He started his artistic career on the advice of the painter Guillaumin. As from 1924, Cyr was exhibiting at the Salon des Independents in Paris. In 1934, following an unhappy emotional experience, he decided to leave France and tour the Middle East and the Far East. Having spent a few weeks in Beirut, he fell in love with the city and decided to settle in Ain El Mraisse. His studio was so popular it was viewed by many as an art school and it became the favorite meeting place of artists like Shafic Abboud, Elie Kanaan, Omar Onsi, Aouad, Moustafa Farroukh, Basbous brothers and others. Cyr was not only a painter, he also worked with mosaics, ceramics, and stained glass. He taught painting and history of art, wrote

numerous essays and lectured on the subject. Many see him as the true pioneer of modern art in Lebanon.

Cyr held an important exhibition in the St. Georges Hotel in 1935. This was followed by another at the Stade du Chayla, Beirut in 1953. In 1965, Brigitte Shehadeh organized a retrospective exhibition of the artist's work at the Vendome Hotel in Beirut.

An entire room dedicated to the works of Georges Cyr can be seen in the Havre Museum in France. Cyr was awarded the Lebanese National Order of the Cedar. He died in Beirut in 1964.<sup>1</sup>

## Container List

### Series I: Lebanon

- Kurd Street-sweeper, Beyrouth كردية بثياب العمل في بيروت
- Lebanese Cheikh of Akkar وجيه من عكار

### Series II: Syria

- Peasant woman of the Hama Plain فلاحه من سهول حماه
- Syrian Bedouin woman بدوية سورية
- A Homs midwife قابله حمصية
- "Hauranese" bride عروسة حورانیه
- Merchant of the Damascus suburbs البائع المتجول في دمشق

## Related Material

### Archival Collection

- Evelyne Bustros Collection, 1878-1971, [A:305.4.1](#), Box 2 File 6: Costumes orientaux, Georges Cyr - New York (photocopié à Londres d'après originaux).
- Salvador Arnita Collection, 1952-1980, [AA: 6.2.1](#), Box 1 File 2: His wife: Yusra Jawhariyah Arnita, الالبسة الشعبية العربية في فلسطين

### Book

- Abi Zeyd, F. (1942). *Nouveaux poems*. Beyrouth: Syrie et l'Orient [J 848:A167n](#)
- Aboukheir, E. (). *Poesie*. Beirut: Dar An-Nahar [CA 848.995:A155p](#)
- Choukassizian, A. (1993). *Still life in Lebanese art*. Beirut: Beirut University College, Alumni Association [CA 758.409:S857s](#)
- Cyr, G., & Bustros, E. (n.d.). *Lebanese and Syrian costumes*. Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique
- Kanaan, E. (2011). *Elie Kanaan: la lumière colorée*. Achrafieh, Beyrouth: Fondation Audi [CA 759.95692:K161e](#)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.onefineart.com/artists/painters/Georges-Cyr>

## Poster

- Lutfi Lutfi Posters Collection, [Ps:LL:2000s](#)
- "L'Eau dans l'œuvre de Georges Cyr. Du 12 au 30 mai au CCF de Beyrouth, [1979]. [Ps:2001d/174](#)

## Digital Resources

- [Palestine Costume Archive-Staff Blog](#)
- [Dalloul Art Foundation: Georges Cyr, Lebanon \(1881 - 1964\)](#)