

For Immediate Release



Exhibition for Georges Daoud Corm opens at AUB Art Gallery

Beirut, Lebanon- 22/11/2013 -The American University of Beirut Art Gallery inaugurated on November 21, 2013, a new exhibition, "Georges Daoud Corm 1896-1971: Lebanese Painterly Humanism," which will run until April 19, 2014.

The exhibition, which displays the works of Lebanese painter, writer and cultural activist Georges Daoud Corm, is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from noon to 6pm. It includes paintings and drawings - some of which have never been exhibited before -- and a 1966 French essay on art and civilization, republished specifically for this exhibit in Arabic and English.

Attending the official opening were former President Emile Lahoud, former Finance Minister Georges Corm, the late painter's son, Dr. Samir Saleeby, who donated an important collection of Lebanese paintings to AUB last year, members of the Corm family, and a host of art lovers.

Rather than mount a show of Corm's numerous paintings and drawings, the AUB Art Gallery made a selection of Corm's works with one theme in mind: a reflection upon Corm's aesthetic position, expressed in his art and also in his writings. His "Essai sur l'art et la civilisation de ce temps" (written in two stages during the 1960s), can be called a manifesto of painterly humanism. In it, Corm clearly enunciates his aesthetic and intellectual position, which can be broadly defined as a European humanism firmly anchored in Christian ethics. The exhibit has been realized thanks to the generosity and foresight of Dr. Georges G. Corm, the painter's son, who has taken care of the collection in times of war and peace, and who has actively promoted the work of his father through numerous exhibitions and publications.

"The main scope of this exhibition is to make the art and writings of Georges D. Corm known to artists, scholars and to the wider public," said Octavian Esanu, AUB Art Galleries curator. "The question of whether artists should revere and build upon the heritage of the past, or criticize and even utterly reject it, has been posed and reposed for centuries. In his art and writings, Corm delivered a harsh critique of modernist art and avant-garde aesthetics; he also believed that the Orient, and Lebanon in particular, could become a guardian of European classical art assaulted in the 20th century by the international avant-garde movements. We regard Corm's critique - formulated from a humanist standpoint - as an inevitable component in the process of artistic modernization of the Middle East and Lebanon, whether we agree with it or not."

In addition to his artistic and aesthetic values, Corm also possessed a cultural activism based in humanist and spiritual values. Thanks to his tireless efforts and contributions, Lebanon has today such cultural institutions as l'Ecole Nationale de Musique, the Musée de la Ville de Beyrouth, the Société des Amis de l'Art as well as many other political and cultural initiatives devoted to the promotion of a Lebanese identity and culture.

For his son, Georges Corm, an economist, historian and former finance minister, it is fitting to hold his father's exhibit at AUB, particularly since the University has been working hard to promote Lebanese art and to create a museum for the arts. "These are projects that my father was pushing for ever since he came back in 1922 from Paris, where he studied painting at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts," Corm said.

Moreover, the late Corm had extensively corresponded with the University in the 1950s, in an attempt to stimulate it to establish an art department. "All this has now been done, and I am proud that my father's influence may have contributed to this achievement," noted Corm. "What AUB is doing to preserve the Lebanese artistic heritage for the benefit of the Lebanese people is a bold initiative that makes us swell with pride and emotion."

In fact, Corm noted, what allows a small nation to exist and be respected is "not its military might or its huge economic achievements, but its culture and artistic creativity... Lebanon's writers, poets, artists are not only Lebanon's engine for survival, but they have made Lebanon famous all over the world."

"Dr. Corm's ambitions parallel the mission of AUB," said AUB President Peter Dorman, at the official opening of the exhibit. "We are committed to the preservation and promotion of the arts and Lebanon's cultural heritage, because at AUB, not only do we believe in educating people IN the arts, but also believe that exposure TO and experience OF the arts and humanities are essential for a civilized, open, and tolerant society."

The exhibition was also made possible by AROPE Insurance, the exclusive insurance partner for the AUB art exhibitions and collections, and UPS, the event transportation partner.

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AUB Art Gallery address:

AUB Art Gallery,
Sidani Street (Off-Campus Women's Dormitory Building), Hamra, Beirut
T: 961-(0)1-350000 ext. 4345

For more information please contact:

Maha Al-Azar, Director of News and Information, ma110@aub.edu.lb,
01-75 96 85

Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

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