

### AGENDA

#### LEBANON

##### FILM

'Parviz Kimiavi screening weekend'

Beirut Art Center, Jisr al-Wati  
March 27-29, 8 p.m.  
01-397-018

This screening program is dedicated to the "New Wave" in Iranian cinema from the 1970s to present, particularly the works of filmmaker Parviz Kimiavi.

##### MUSIC

'2 Nights Underground'

The Bus Station, Mar Mikhael  
March 27-29, 8 p.m.  
www.presella.com

Red Bull Music Academy Presents two nights of live music and DJs. Friday features a diverse live selection from the Middle East, covering sounds from Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait and the UAE. Saturday features a lineup of international DJs.

'Sama'

Babel Theater, Hamra  
March 27-28, 8:30 p.m.  
01-481-072

For the first time in Beirut, Granada-based group Al-Firdaus Ensemble will be performing their unique synthesis of Western classical, Celtic and Flamenco traditions fused with Arabic, Turkish and Andalusí sufi music.

'Sacred Easter Concert'

St. Louis Cathedral, Capuchin, Zoqaq al-Blat  
March 31, 8:30 p.m.

Selectum des Arts presents a program of Mozart and Schubert, featuring pianist Tatiana Pimakhoury accompanied by Quatuor Musique del Tempo

##### OPEN HOUSE

'Museums Night'

Various locations around Lebanon

March 27, until 11 p.m.

Ten Lebanese museums – including the National Museum, AUB Archaeological Museum, USJ's Museum of Prehistory, Sidon's Debbane House and Villa Audi – will participate in this special late-night opening.

##### ART

'Opening(s)'

Alice Mogabgab Gallery, Sassine, Ashrafieh  
Through March 27

03-210-424

This exhibition presents a set of three works by Paris-based Lebanese artist Fadia Haddad, a large painting on canvas with two preparatory drawings made in 1995.

'Delve'

The Artwork Shop, Adonis Street, Hamra  
Through March 28

01-749-646

This solo exhibition presents work by Sarah Khayat.

##### THEATER

'The Rape'

Irwin Theater, Lebanese American University, Hamra  
Through March 28, 8:30 p.m.  
01-786-464

Written by Syrian playwright Saadallah Wannous, "The Rape" blends a constellation of political, social and military themes, including the use of rape in interrogations.

### REVIEW

# Tanya Traboulsi's skeptical glances of 'home'

By Jim Quilty  
The Daily Star

**B**EIRUT: One of the things families do, it's said, is to stage collective memories for entertainment. Digital media no doubt abets this practice, if it persists at all, but last century this sort of ritual recollection was performed using more rudimentary media.

Family albums warehoused fading Polaroids of cousins, vulnerable beneath dated haircuts and styles. Super-8mm films embarrassed teenagers with evidence of younger selves, inconsolably weeping in a paddling pool. Fueled by a third G&T, Sunday-evening fathers loaded slides of family vacations into projector reels.

The slideshows projected photos that sampled shards of landscape – defiant of the instamatic's blinkered lens – and mobs of ecstatic strangers packed so tightly into the frame as to displace all traces of context.

Images of slides were never thrown upon the wall. At Art Factum gallery nowadays, a slide projector is doing exactly that – casting images of slides (cardboard frames and all, photographed against a neutral surface) upon one gallery wall.

Nearby, an array of family heirlooms is on display. Postcards are scattered among objects – an antique Austrian passport, a Lebanese telephone bill, a tin of talcum powder. There is a letter handwritten in Arabic and another typed in German, recorded on a receipt-like mimeographed copy of the original.

The objects in turn cohabit with a black-and-white portrait of a mother, an 8mm film reel, a VHS tape, a diary.

Made to be handled, these objects are here encased within a pair of vitrines, rendered as images by the intervening panes of glass. As such, they reiterate the aesthetic of the sideshow of slides, suggesting an ambivalent alienation from the depiction of place, and the sentimentality that landscape and memory conspire to dredge up.

Located near Art Factum's front door, the slideshow and vitrines set the critical tone of "Lost Strange Things: on not finding home," a solo exhibition of photographic work by Tanya Traboulsi. Accompanying the show is a monograph of the same title, which reinterprets the photographer's work and complements it with introductory and concluding essays by Beirut arts writer Lara Badran and artist-curator Bariaa Mourad.

Traboulsi's second solo show at Art Factum, "Lost Strange Things" opened earlier this month, and was shut for a week while the gallery relocated to Art Dubai. The show's since reopened to the public.

The new show comes on the heels of "Something Borrowed," the photo-sound series she contributed to "Under Construction," the 2014 iteration of Exposure, the Beirut Art

Center's emerging artists show.

Like some of her previous work – most notably "Seules," which captures identical pairs of young women (the photographer herself) in various postures of silent companionship – the photographic element of "Something Borrowed" was based on self-representation.

Though she does appear in a couple of the pictures here, the figure of the photographer is secondary in this show, which could be read as a taciturn visual essay on place.

Like the mementos mori that pre-occupy the first stage of the exhibition, Traboulsi's own photos were taken in Lebanon and Austria – the two homes she's known best – in 2013-14.

Whether Lebanese or Austrian, most of these shots are landscapes, including several seaside tableaux from Beirut and northern Lebanon. When human figures do feature in some photos, they tend to be alienated from the lens – whether because sheer distance has reduced them to landscape features, or because they appear oblivious to the camera.

In "Lara," the model is wedged into the corner formed by the intersection of two concrete half walls. The location and the prevailing weather conditions have made her red skirt billow like a drivers'-side air bag. The combination of weather and landscape no doubt accentuated her determinedly off-frame stare.

Though the Austrian landscapes do tend to be more verdant than those taken in Lebanon, the photos don't reproduce clichés about Lebanon's disregard for its natural environment. The dominant feature of the series, rather, is the sense of alienation that pervades in even the most natural-looking scene.

Gazing upon "Conversations without a Context," for instance, a Beirut resident will note the familiar

Manara scene – a concrete "beach" upon which are arrayed white plastic chairs and other seating. In the background, sprawls the detritus of real estate development, crowding out the landmark Ottoman-era villa and gardens known as "the pink house."

Looking more closely, the most striking feature of the photo is the absence of human beings. The theme is reiterated in "No Illusions," which juxtaposes an abandoned-looking

outdoor café with the seaside sprawl of nearby Raouche.

In "Brabeum," one of Traboulsi's

Austrian tableaux, contented-looking weekend picnickers loll in the grass. All seem oblivious to the squat tower rising out of the ground among them, like a menacing grain silo or the observation tower of an alien occupation, conjured from science fiction in the middle of last century. The dating, at least, is not far off, as the alien-looking structure is a World War II flak tower, used to protect Nazi lands from aerial bombardment.

The landscape aesthetic winks back from the lone interior shot in this exhibition. "First Songs" is a photo of what appears to be the artist's bed, a blanket and pillow thrown aside as if the sleeper had just been awoken from a nap.

Presiding over the scene is a framed black-and-white photo of a smiling woman, familiar here from the first stages of this exhibition.

As if mindful of the landscape motif that unifies the show, the pillow slip is decorated in a minute floral design.

Landscapes do have a way of being internalized.

Tanya Traboulsi's "Lost Strange Things: on not finding home" is up at Art Factum through April 11. For more information see <http://www.artfactumgallery.com/>.



Photo by Tanya Traboulsi



One of the family photos worked into 'Lost Strange Things.'



Both expo and book place Traboulsi's photos in the context of older media.



"Radetzkystrasse," Austria 2014.



"Lara," Lebanon 2014.



"No illusions," Lebanon 2013.

### JUST A THOUGHT

There is nothing like staying at home for real comfort.

Jane Austen  
(1775-1817)  
English novelist