THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2014

AGENDA

LEBANON THEATER

'La Promesse de l'Aube' Theatre Monnot, next to St, Joseph's Church June 19-21, 8:30 p.m. 01-421-870 Based on the novel of the same name by two-time Prix Goncourt winner Romain Gary, and adapted for the stage and directed by Bruno Abraham Kremer and Corine Juresco, the feted "Promise at Dawn" recalls Romain Gary's growing up in Russia and France with his mother in the years before the Second World War. In French.

ART

'Inside Out'

STATION, Jisr al-Wati June 19, 6 p.m. until midnight 03-491-875

For one night only, artist Paula Chinine's debut exhibition will present artworks that tackle themes of confusion, forgetfulness and emptiness, posing the question: "What would we do and feel if we could see one another from inside out?"

'Let There Be Art'

ARTLAB, Gouraud St, Gemmayzeh, first right after St. Nicolas stairs Through June 25, Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; 3-7 p.m. www.art-lab.me This exhibition features work from Lumiere Group, comprised of emerging artists from France, Iran, Lebanon and Syria.

'Kabis'

Mark Hachem Gallery, Salloum Street, BCD Through June 30 01-999-313 Houmam al-Sayed would like his public to fall into his paintings, integrate themselves with his characters and assume the same perception that begs for the recognition that is lost between truth and illusion

REVIEW

Immortality on display, in 54 boxes

Ashkal Alwan's latest exhibition gives artists chance to comment on death and memory

By Jim Quilty The Daily Sta

EIRUT: When the living recall the dead with fondness, as sometimes happens, it's not unusual to honor their memory. Memorials can be as idiosyncratic as the imagination of the one doing the remembering. Take the case of the "Orvillecopter." At the 2012 edition of KunstRai,

Amsterdam's annual art fair, Dutch artist Bart Jansen unveiled a work he described as a memorial to his beloved cat, Orville. The artist had stuffed the beast – its pelt stretched out like a miniature tiger-skin rug – and mounted propellers on its four paws. With the aid of a remote control, Jansen's memorial gave the gift of flight to his former feline friend.

The work had its detractors. While some found the concept playful and charming – gleefully glutting social media with photos of the air-borne Orville – those with more conservative sensibilities derided Jansen's gesture as a stunt. Sentimental cat lovers condemned the

work as a form of animal abuse. As its title suggests, "A Museum of Immortality," the exhibition now gracing the central hall of Ashkal Alwan's Home Workspace, is a study of that most radical form of memorial: resurrection.

Anton Vidokle, one of two resident professors at the Homeworks academy this year, organized this noncurated show, issuing an open call to artists – a cosmopolitan roster of Homeworks academy students and teachers - to create an installation

immortalizing a extinct individual. Of the 60 proposals, organizers selected 54 by pulling names from a hat. The only formal restriction on the contributions was that each work must fit within one of the 54 vitrines created to display them: wooden boxes – usually glass-front-ed or glass-topped – whose dimen-sions approximate those of a coffin. A wide array of media has been

brought to bear in this exhibition. There are objects and the odd USBcomputer interface - and one work is exclusively tactile – but images and texts predominate. The latter range from handwritten notes to excerpts of



An installation view of "A Museum of Immortality."

texts to novels. The former include original and reproduced sketches, paintings and photographs, though this being a postgraduate school of contemporary art - visitors will find a variety of video screens as well.

Though each component is prominently numbered (1-54), the show is not numerically arranged. Consequently it's the modular design – credited to Nikolaus Hirsch and Michel Mueller - that conditions how works are received. Individual pieces can be absorbed both in their own terms and in juxtaposition with adjacent works.

One cluster, for instance, includes works by Jalal Toufic (who shares the professorial burden with Vidokle) and his collaboration with Graziella Rizkallah Toufic.

Toufic chose to reiterate his 41-minute, 2006 video "Mother and Son; or, That Obscure Object of Desire (Scenes from an Anamorphic Double Feature)," which inter-weaves audio and video elements of two apparently quite distinct films – Aleksandr Sukurov's 1997 "Mother and Son" and Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho," from 1960. Shards of both films move across a flat-screen monitor, which shares its vitrine with the carcass of a wasp.

Above and to the right is Rizkallah Toufic's "Victoria Rizkallah; or, The Sticking Out Hair." A far more inti-mate video work (playing out on a tablet screen), it juxtaposes shots of the deceased Rizkallah's open casket with scenes in which a tweezerswielding young woman removes unwanted hairs from the still-living Rizkallah's face. Alongside the tablet, a few white face hairs adorn a square of black foam, alongside a pair of tweezers.

No restrictions were imposed upon the selection of personages. Some artists chose more or less obscure historical persons.

Stefan Bakmand Andersen's compilation of images of, and texts by and about, a thinker from antiquity called Stephanus of Byzantium has a

patina of Google about it. Amal Issa's "Hope This Letter Finds You Well," on the other hand, is an affecting altar to Abdel-Nasser Issa (1957-76), a relative killed at the start of Lebanon's Civil War. His mortal remains rest in the cemetery of Shatila Camp, but a bureaucratic error misplaced his precise location. For his "How to Say Goodbye,"

Tony Chakar has stacked within a

vitrine the collection of cassette tapes he can no longer use, thanks to the updated technology in his new car.

Mingling aspects of archive, library and trash can, Octavian Esanu's "Untitled" seeks to resur-rect the community of people that constitutes a particular individual (again himself), "including things made, produced, listed, documented or simply thrown away by people

and beings that surround me." The premise of "A Museum of Immortality," as proposed by art critic and media theorist Boris Groys, is the idiosyncratic model of memorial proposed by Russian philosopher Nikolai Fyodorovich Fedorov (1828-1903).

Fedorov saw mortality as the principal bane to the perfectibility of mankind, one that all of humanity should be unified in struggling against - the Common Cause, as he termed it - and was an advocate of bending scientific research to the task of radically extending life spans, with the goal of physical immortality and resurrection of the dead.

Given these premises, the single most entertaining work in this show is Alicja Rogalska's "The Droste Effect (Lebanese Mormon Society)," which juxtaposes a contemporary view of immortality with that of Fedorov.

It takes its cue from a Wired magazine report that in a secure, subterranean vault, the "Mormon Church has squirreled away the world's largest collection of genealogical material: more than 2 million microfilm reels ... [holding] around 2 bil-lion names, a sizable portion of the total number of people who have ambled through recorded history."

Rogalska's vitrine holds a tabletsized screen relating, with lacerating wit, the research initiative inspired by her discovery. She inquired whether the Mormon

vault included the name of Nikolai Fyodorovich Fedorov. As it does not, she undertakes a conversation with churchmen about whether he ought to be included. This amusing dialogue is represented in subtitles across a Google Maps-style search for the location of the church's Utah vault.

They don't appear to have understood the joke.

"A Museum of Immortality" is up at Ashkal Alwan's Home Workspace until July 18. For more information, please see ashkalalwan.org

'Beirut-New York' twentytwentyone gallery,

Tabet Building, Salim Bustros St, Mar Nicolas Opens June 20, 5 p.m. 03-777-177 This decorative art and design space opens with a group show featuring work by Eric Peyret, Peben, and **URNEWYORK.**

MUSIC

Abdel Rahman El Bacha

St. Joseph's Church, Jesuit Fathers, off Monnot June 20, 8:30 p.m. Under the baton of Harout Fazlian, the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra accompanies the Lebanese-born pianist in a program of works by Beethoven and Moussorgski.

'Hishik Bishik'

Metro al-Madina, Saroulla Building, -2, Hamra Street June 19-21, 9:30 p.m. For detailed schedule, see http://metromadina.com Now in its second year on stage, this immensely popular homage to the profane cabaret culture of early 20thcentury Egypt celebrates Arab femininity, and features the dance of Randa Makhoul and the vocal work of Yasmina Fayed and Lina Sahab.

JUST A THOUGHT

I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve it through not dying.

> Woody Allen (1935 -) U.S. actor, director, screenwriter, comedian, musician and playwright



A giant lion roars before a frayed Greek flag on a graffito by BANE on a wall of a primary school in Athens.

'Hulk' trash? Art Basel employees inspect a Koons



BASEL, Switzerland: Three Art Basel employees gaze at "Hulk," at a work by U.S. artist Jeff Koons Tuesdy during the art fair's preview day that is open to the public June 19-22. Over 300 leading galleries from North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa show work from great masters of modern and contemporary art to the latest generation of emerging stars. Every artistic medium is represented: paintings, sculpture, installations, videos, multiples, prints, photography, and performance

In Athens, street art vents anger over austerity

By Hélène Colliopoulou Agence France Press

ATHENS: A giant lion roars against the backdrop of a battered Greek flag in wall art covering the side of a school building in a working-class Athens suburb.

The creation is one of many examples of street art across the Greek capital expressing the despair of ordinary people after four years of government belt-tightening at the behest of international creditors.

The artist, BANE, is among around 60 contributors to Athens' second annual street art festival, using some 30 public buildings in the run-down districts of Nikaia, Rentis and Tavros as their canvases.

Several of the works defy the three-month festival's title "Crisis, What Crisis?" apparently aimed at steering artists away from the gloom of soaring unemployment and sweeping poverty with Greece beginning to make timid steps toward recovery.

"The notion of reconquering public space predates the crisis," argues a young artist who uses the pen name This Is Opium.

Among foreign participants in the festival is Franck Duval of France,

festival is Franck Duval of France, originally a collage artist who took up street art in 2006. "We are all pay-ing for this crisis," he said, "whether in Greece or elsewhere." Duval is taking part for a second time and helped paint a mural inspired by "Zorba the Greek." "The walls of Athens," he said, "deserve a little more color and joy." little more color and joy.

"We seek to evoke reactions, no longer just in studios but outside," said Panos Haralambous, a vice dean of the Athens School of Fine Arts which is staging the event. "Art is not just for the few."

Street art has "exploded in the city these past six years," he continued. "It is a form of protest that takes the artist out of his studio. Young people are looking for ways to express themselves in hard times, and street art is an ideal vehicle for that.'

Greece stood on the brink of bankruptcy in 2010 when international lenders came to the rescue with the first of two bailout packages totaling \$330 billion.

In exchange, Athens was forced to undertake drastic reforms including wage, pension and job cuts to bring down its runaway public deficit prompting often violent protests.

Organizer Gogo Kolivira described the artists' brief as "interpreting the news in the public space" but with a view to generating "optimism and hope."

'It is a form of protest that takes the artist out of his studio'

"The aim," said fine arts student Sotiris Gardiakos, "is to keep street art a vital part of the city.'

Last year's works, now on display at the School of Fine Arts, were over-whelmingly inspired by the anti-austerity protests that rocked the country between 2010 and 2012.

One piece depicts a malnourished child with the slogan "Need Food, Not Football" stenciled across his distended belly, while another titled "Death of Euros" shows six men car-rying a stack of oversized euros, evoking pallbearers carrying a coffin.

The event, which enjoys support from the French, Israeli and Swiss embassies, closes at the end of June with a photo exhibition of graffiti and slogans that have appeared across Athens since the start of the crisis in 2010.

Separately, the private Onassis Foundation is currently showcasing some 40 street art works including spray-painted cars in a show titled "No Respect."