

This year BAC adopted a dual leadership, with an administrative director and an artistic director. BAC opened a call for an experienced and innovative artistic director who will work towards the vision of the center for the coming years, yet one who will also give a new breath to the center, connecting it strongly to the local artistic community and the city's realities.

After receiving several worthy applicants, we are happy to announce the new artistic director position of Beirut Art Center is filled by a duo of great Lebanese artists, Haig Aivazian and Ahmad Ghossein.

Below are Haig and Ahmad's statements upon officially accepting their role:

“As practicing artists, we come to the BAC as we come to our own practices: with playful desire, but also many urgent questions. How can we gather an arsenal of aesthetic, conceptual, political and relational tools which would allow us —cultural workers, thinkers, activists and others— to imagine and build new ways of being and thinking together? And how can such collective thought be firmly grounded in the context of Beirut, while avoiding provincial navel gazing and self-fetishisation? We want to look at Beirut as an object of study and a viewfinder to think through the problems of the world.

It is certainly no cause for self-congratulation, but Beirut is in some kind of dark epicentre, and the downward spiral connects the dots of the Anthropocene, with the global migrant crisis, with repressive state tactics, with modern warfare, with speculative capitalism, with exploitative labour, with, with, with... What may sound like a string of depressing artworld buzzwords suddenly finds its full-fledged meaning in Beirut, and is part and parcel of our everyday.

The BAC itself rubs elbows with its surroundings in triangular formation: one elbow rubs with the social hotbed of the Sunday Market, another with the beacon of environmental disaster that is the river, and a third elbow rubs with the frontierland of Beirut's latest wave of gentrification. And so, for all of the wrong reasons, and for many good ones, the BAC is well placed to become a model for other institutions worldwide, in presenting a responsive infrastructure that is light on its feet. We imagine the BAC to offer creative platforms for difficult conversations. We imagine it as being part and parcel of this neighbourhood, a place of many diverse audiences. We also imagine the BAC as a place for invigorating, and inspiring artistic explorations.”

- Haig Aivazian

“Given its central position in the art scene, our goal is to have the Beirut Art Center be the chain-link tying contemporary art to the wider cultural scene, and to echo the social and political preoccupations of the city.

In line with the spirit of our proposal, we want the BAC to be a contributor to the production of cultural knowledge, be an incubator for all local artists and be open to debates in arts and politics.

In addition to being a place dedicated to exhibitions, we want the BAC to develop a program of workshops held by artists, activists, intellectuals and academics. A platform for contemporary film, music, dance, theater and performance, through which to reflect on ongoing changes in the Arab world, and deconstruct the functionings of power and how it is exercised on precarious bodies.

Through such strategies of display and knowledge production, we aim to examine the complexities of Beirut and how these may echo the broader socio-political landscape of the region.”

- Ahmad Ghossein