

PRESS RELEASE

Beirut, September 26, 2023 - The Rotating Art exhibition entitled « Armonia de Dos Mundos » was launched by Banque BEMO on Tuesday September 26 at the Spanish Embassy in Lebanon, in collaboration with the Gibran National Committee, Gabriel Rizkallah Art Consultancy and Commercial Insurance. The opening ceremony welcomed artists, art galleries, private collectors and the media. The event brings together 45 emerging and renowned artists with stylistic influences that bridge the worlds of Orient and Occident.

His Excellency, the Spanish Ambassador to Lebanon, Mr. Jesús I. Santos Aguado, conveyed his thanks to Banque BEMO and its partners for having made this event possible, and warmly welcomed all guests to the Palais Chehab, which is an outstanding example of the harmonious relations between Lebanon and Spain. He pointed out that the Palais Chehab is opening its doors today and over the next few days to reveal to the Lebanese audience the works of renowned contemporary artists as well as valuable sketches by Gibran Khalil Gibran.

His Excellency ended his speech by expressing his gratitude to the guests for embarking on this artistic journey, adding: « *We hope you will find inspiration and perhaps even a new perspective within these walls. Enjoy the Rotating Art Exhibition and may it leave a deep impression on your heart and mind.* » Finally, he extended his thanks to the exhibition's curator, Mr. Gabriel Rizkallah, for his efforts, as well as to Mrs. Joumana Hobeika and the entire logistics and communications team, not forgetting the Embassy's cultural team. He also emphasized that this collaboration was in itself a concrete demonstration of the close ties between our two countries. He concluded by highlighting Mrs. Fabienne Daher's musical contribution to this special evening.

During the ceremony, Dr. Riad Obegi, Chairman of the Board and General Manager of Banque BEMO, thanked the Ambassador for his hospitality, noting that « *most of the people of Lebanese origin live in the Spanish-speaking world, and the ties between Lebanon and Spain are heartfelt* ». He added: « *The idea of Rotating Art is to freely and randomly lend artworks to friends of Rotating Art, creating a community of lenders and borrowers of artistic pieces, without any exclusion criteria or financial distinction, totally based on generosity. A work of art is like a child, according to Gibran: "it belongs not to the artist, nor to the owner, but to life."* Dr. Obegi concluded: « *Let's fight for a better Lebanon, ethical and noble, shaped by the suffering of humanity's values.* »

The curator of the exhibition, Mr. Gabriel Rizkallah, «*thanked the Ambassador for welcoming us to his residence, on the land of Spain, and for giving this artistic, historical and cultural exhibition an unparalleled setting: the Chehab Palace*». He continued «*Paul Claudel said: the West looks at the sea, the East looks at the mountains. The most insolent challenge that these two worlds have launched is that of harmony. But without differences, there is no harmony. And without art, there is no life. Spain has given the world unparalleled artistic geniuses*».

In his speech, Mr. Fady Rahmé, President of Gibran National Committee, declared: « *We love Gibran, his "The Prophet", and his numerous writings, because the subjects they evoke stir us to the very depths of our being and raise questions by providing – although the author wrote at the beginning of the 20th century – answers born from ideas that will form the foundations of 21st century thought. He heralds concepts such as love, dialogue between religions and cultures, the right to difference, the complementarity of pluralistic communities, the vital connection between the two worlds, etc. In a way, Gibran is the forerunner of Lebanon's message of freedom.* » Mr. Rahmé added: «*That's why, among*

other reasons, he has a rightful place in this event, which reminds us of this fundamental dimension of our Lebanese identity ... that of being a bridge between two worlds. »

Mrs. Coralie Zaccar, Assistant General Manager at Commercial Insurance commented: « *We are extremely proud of our collaboration with Banque BEMO and the Spanish Embassy, in partnership with Gibran National Committee, for the Rotating Art exhibition entitled "Armonia de Dos Mundos". Khalil Gibran, Lebanese artist and writer, embodies the harmonious fusion of Western and Eastern art in his work. Commercial Insurance's mission is to preserve cultural and artistic heritage. We aim to instill creativity, promote social cohesion and to actively contribute to education. »*

The speeches were followed by a performance given by Lebanese singer Fabienne Daher and Joseph Geagea, director of the Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum, who commented on some sketches from the Prophet's book.

The event ended with a guided tour of the Rotating Art exhibition, where the artists exchanged their emotions and ideas with the guests...

Banque BEMO once again reaffirms its commitment made at the beginning of the year: « 2023 is the year of Revival. »