

**WE
DESIGN
BEIRUT**

**METIERS
D'ARTS**

ABROYAN FACTORY

Abroyan Factory is an old abandoned textile factory, covering 14000 square meters built in three stages between the forties and the seventies. Anchored in the themes of legacy, revival, continuity and healing, the Craft's hub will serve as an homage to Lebanon's illustrious craftsmanship heritage, highlighting the artisans' dynamic movements and the transformative power of their craft, bridging past and present to inspire the future.





METIERS D'ART

Métiers d'Art is a celebration of craftsmanship in its rawest form, stripped of commercial constraints and presented as a living, evolving process.

It explores traditional Lebanese craft through an innovative lens, pairing artisans with renowned creatives, to push the limits of technique, material, and form. Rather than highlighting finished products, this exhibition puts the process at the forefront, with craft demonstrated in real-time, inviting visitors into the heart of creation. The focus is on the countless hours of skill, discipline, and tradition behind every stroke, weave, and mold.

The collaborative nature of this experiment sparks a dynamic dialogue between heritage and contemporary reinvention, blending tradition with fresh perspectives, challenging assumptions, and exploring new possibilities that push the boundaries of each discipline.

By shedding light on the invisible labor and intimate and tactile nature of craft, the Metiers d'Art showcase shifts the traditional paradigm from object to artistry. In this living atelier, craftsmanship is experienced in its purest and most transformative form. It is a tribute to the hands that shape, mold and innovate, ensuring that craft thrives not only survives, continuously evolving into new and unexpected realms.

TERRAFORMA (CLAY)

DESIGN AND SCENOGRAPHY MÜLLER APRAHAMIAN

This exhibition takes place in the teinturerie of Abroyan: a longitudinal space with wooden floors, high ceilings, and a rhythm of repetitive windows and beams that carry the memory of its industrial past. Once a place of dyeing, drying, and transformation, the room with its raised wooden floors that once saw a dance of water and air now becomes the stage for a further dialogue between earth and fire, glass and clay, industry and craft.

On one side, a live glassblowing installation brings the act of making into the exhibition itself. Artisans transform molten sand into vessels and forms conjured through fire and breath. On the other, an artist installation explores clay through the five elements; water, earth, air, fire, and ether, the human touch, to create works that move between the industrial and the handmade.

Unifying the two is TERRAFORMA, a large-scale installation made from the architectural and everyday terracotta products of MULLER Industries. Floor tiles, roof tiles, claustra, and wares are assembled into a vibrant, playful surface; part carpet, part manufactured geology. It begins as an ordered floor-cover beneath the glassblowing furnace and workstations, and gradually morphs into a seemingly chaotic field of unexpected patterns and textures, a pixelated landscape that runs across the room and culminates in the emergence of an earthenware garden, where the properties of the material and industrial geometries give rise to surprising forms through sculptural clay works.



MATERIAL MEMORY (CLAY)

Multidisciplinary Artist Tamar Hadechian

Material Memory emerges from an intentional collaboration with Muller Industries. Produced in dialogue with the factory, the installation bridges industry and art, grounding itself in the materiality of local clay and the knowledge embedded in its making.

It unfolds as a journey through the five elemental forces that shape transformation. The work begins with a performative act with raw clay, an embodied gesture that binds body, labor, and earth. From this ground, interactive sculptures unfold, each evoking elemental forces that guide clay's transformation: water as flexibility and containment, air as breath and transition, and ether as the space of unnoticed memories. Visitors are invited to engage with these works, making the installation an active field where material, elements, and human presence intertwine.

The gathering of elements culminates with fire, which closes the work through the clay figure of the strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), a humble Mediterranean species that survives fire through its underground trunk. Its unseen core holds memory and the potential for return, echoing human histories shaped by rupture, forced adaptation, and quiet continuities beneath disruption. Here fire is not rebirth or triumph, but threshold—an unstable in-between where clay is permanently transformed, inscribing memory into matter. It is a force that asks: What remains? What begins? And what stories will we choose to carry forward?

Supported by Müller Industries



REFRACTED HERITAGE, OF FIRE & SAND

REVIVING LEBANON'S GLASSBLOWING TRADITIONS

Design & Curation Tessa Sakhi

Glassblowing Coordinator Nisrine Khalifeh

Glassblowing Artisans Abbas Khalifeh, Ali Khalifeh,

Mahmoud Khalifeh & Hussein Khalifeh

Flameworking Artisan Boutros Sawaya

Flameworking Assistants Wael Moujaes and Norma Rehbani

Refracted Heritage, of Fire and Sand is a cultural initiative curated by Tessa Sakhi as part of the second edition of We Design Beirut. Set within the historic Abroyan Factory, this year's edition presents an interactive exhibition showcasing Lebanese artisanship in motion, prioritizing awareness, education and collective experience.

This initiative seeks to revive Lebanon's traditional craft of glassblowing as a cultural art form, support local artisans, and create a space for knowledge-sharing between artisans, designers, and the broader audience. The glass exhibition centers on Lebanon's last remaining glassblowers, featuring live demonstrations with temporary, primitive furnaces built on-site from brick and clay, educational workshops, and a collaborative glass installation that evolves and takes shape as they perform.

By revealing the process rather than the final outcome, we hope to nurture appreciation for the labor, skill, and material fragility that define the glass artistry, as well as cultivate public engagement, interest and intergenerational curiosity that may lead to its preservation, sustainability and growth. In a time when Lebanon faces cultural and economic crises threatening its intangible heritage, these craftspeople continue to preserve and persevere, building their own rudimentary furnaces and recycling discarded glass with remarkable resilience and devotion.



IN ASSEMBLY

PATTERNS AT PLAY (MARQUETRY)

Design & Curation Studio Nada Debs

Artisan Nabil Haswani

In Assembly draws on the intricate craft of wood marquetry, found on traditional backgammon games, to create an immersive installation that celebrates connection and play. At its heart is Master craftsman Nabil Haswani, his expertise in marquetry making is highlighted both through live making and through the display of Funquetry and Marquetry Mania collections, early experiments that marked the beginning of his collaboration with Studio Nada Debs and the modernization of the craft.

The installation unfolds as a journey through time, scale and medium, presented through a series of spaces, each offering a different perspective on the craft.

A reimagined gathering space is formed using modular geometric blocks, inviting visitors to arrange seating compositions and enjoy playing on traditional backgammon boards. To better understand the craft process, the public is given the opportunity to play and create a collective piece, a structure that will later be transformed into products, feeding back into regional craft ecosystems.

Exploring how technology can expand the possibilities of handcraft, we have collaborated with TRAME and Art Blocks, a creative design studio making objects that bridge the digital and physical realms. Here is an opportunity to design a backgammon game virtually!

Ultimately, In Assembly becomes a living assemblage of interactions where craftsmanship, technology, and community converge through shared rituals and creative play.

Technology integration sponsored by Flying Submarine.



WICKERSCAPE

OSEZ L'OSIER

(RATTAN)

DESIGN & CURATION MARIAGROUP

ARTISAN Rattan Hun

This installation presents a focused exploration of rattan craftsmanship, developed in collaboration with Rattan Hun. Conceived as a spatial narrative, the intervention invites the public to engage with the various experiments that have shaped our approach to scenography.

By working exclusively with a single material—rattan—and interpreting the site through a singular lens, we have concentrated our design process around the creation of wicker seating. The space is imagined as a theater, where different types of seats are arranged in relation to a central projection screen. The seating varies in height, from low stools at the front to taller structures toward the back, all unified by a continuous floor rug, also woven in wicker.

This mono-material expression transforms the installation into a performative environment. Here, the crafted objects are not only functional seats but also integral components of the scenography. As visitors take their place within the space, they become active participants—completing the installation through their presence and interaction.



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