



THE SAMIR KASSIR FOUNDATION

THE BEIRUT SPRING FESTIVAL 2015

The Tenth Commemoration of Samir Kassir's Assassination

May 3 – June 6, 2015



About the Samir Kassir Foundation



Samir Kassir was assassinated on June 2, 2005 in Beirut. The tragic death of this journalist and writer was one of many attempts to silence Lebanese free thinkers, put an end to the Independence Intifada, and prevent Beirut's winds of liberty from spreading across the region. Samir Kassir, who wrote Beirut's history, has therefore become a part of that very history.

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The model of intellectual renaissance embodied by Samir Kassir during his life and at the moment of his death, through his articles and academic research, has placed him at the avant-garde of Lebanese and Arab opinion leaders who have paid their life to fight tyranny and lead their country to freedom and independence.

Committed to Samir Kassir's values and aspirations, and believing in the need to renew the Arab culture through freedom of expression, several intellectuals and friends of Samir Kassir established the Samir Kassir Foundation on February 1, 2006.

The Samir Kassir Foundation is a non-profit civic organization, working within civil society and cultural circles to spread democratic culture in Lebanon and the Arab world, encourage new talents of free press, and build the movement for a cultural, democratic and secular renewal. These are the conditions to lift the Arab populations out of their state of despair.

The Samir Kassir Foundation's mission is built around three pillars:

- Preserving, translating and spreading Samir Kassir's literary, academic and journalistic heritage.
- Promoting cultural freedom and free thought, through conferences, specialized seminars and an annual art festival providing all social categories with access to international cultural expression, through the **Beirut Spring Festival**.
- Defending media freedom, through monitoring and documenting violations perpetrated against journalists and media professionals, building the capacity of young journalists and awarding prizes to new talents, through the **SKeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom**.

The Foundation is involved in all what honors Samir Kassir's memory and contributes to the fulfillment of his thrive for freedom and renaissance. These were the two aspirations to which Samir Kassir dedicated his life.

About the Beirut Spring Festival

The Beirut Spring Festival, created and launched in 2009 by the Samir Kassir Foundation, is inspired by the title of one of Samir Kassir's last articles, shortly before his assassination in 2005.

This event is unique both in its concept and content. The goals of the Festival and its particular character have generated such a warm welcome from the public.

The Beirut Spring Festival is the first of its kind in Beirut. The Festival features multidisciplinary international performances (theater, music, dance, conferences...) revolving around the themes of tolerance and cultural diversity, especially in societies facing violence and injustice. The Festival has featured, since its creation, no less than 35 exclusive one-night performances in different venues across Beirut.

The Festival supports contemporary art creation and energizes Lebanon's cultural and artistic life, built on the belief that art is the ultimate way to tolerance.

The Festival thrives on the young generation's interest in maintaining ties with the vision and thoughts of Samir Kassir.

The free admission to the Festival provides all categories of the Lebanese society with unrestricted access to original, non commercial art performances, avant-garde debates and exclusive opportunities for networking, exchanging ideas and discovering new cultural and intellectual trends.

The Tenth Commemoration of Samir Kassir's Assassination



Samir Kassir spent his career writing about people's thrive for freedom and democracy, and the reforms that are desperately needed in the Arab world to bring about change and prosperity.

Samir Kassir had foreseen the Damascus Spring, believed in the potentials of the Arab people and predicted the demise of ruling republican dynasties. More than any other intellectual, he demonstrated the deep links between the Palestinian's dream of a free statehood with the establishment of a democratic regime in Syria and with Lebanon's sustainable independence. Moreover, Samir Kassir reconciled two concepts that were historically seen as antagonistic: Lebanon's sovereignty on the one hand and Lebanon's commitment to broader Arab liberation causes on the other hand.

The ten years that followed Samir Kassir's assassination have probably been the most eventful in the Arab world. Regimes have fallen; others are still clinging to power by perpetrating horrendous crimes against their populations. Information technologies have changed the way Arab citizens communicate and take part in public life. A few dreams have been fulfilled; most others are still in the making.

On the occasion of the tenth commemoration of Samir Kassir's assassination, the Samir Kassir Foundation will organize the largest, most diverse Beirut Spring Festival ever.

The 2015 edition of the Festival will be, at the same time, an opportunity to:

- Remember Samir Kassir as one of the most visionary Arab intellectuals;
- Pay tribute to Beirut, which – like no other cities – has defined what resilience means;
- Reflect on themes and values that Samir Kassir cherished; and
- Look at the future of the struggle for change, freedom and democracy in the region.

The 2015 Beirut Spring Festival will last one month, starting on May 3, declared World Press Freedom Day by the United Nations. It will also mark what would have been Samir Kassir's 55th birthday on May 4, Lebanon's Press Martyrs' Day on May 6, and Samir Kassir's assassination on June 2.

Tribute to Samir Kassir and Beirut

Large-scale multi-disciplinary sound and light show

Martyrs' Square – Downtown Beirut – June 6, 9:00 PM



The heart of Beirut, Martyrs' Square, the An-Nahar building and all the surrounding buildings will be covered by an unprecedented glitz. Thousands of lights and images will be projected to commemorate Samir Kassir's legacy and celebrate Beirut.

Lights and images will create new horizons for hope in a Square that witnessed Lebanon's darkest moments and most glorious days. The show will emphasize the struggle for freedom, humanist values and progressive thinking that have defined Beirut over the years.

It will allow people to rediscover their capital; the events that marked its history and what influenced Samir Kassir's political and intellectual endeavors.

Several Lebanese, Arab and international artists will take part in the show, **created and conceived by Ivan Caracalla**, to embody the unique cross-cultural nature of both Samir Kassir and the Beirut Spring Festival. In addition to the lights and images, the show will include live musical and stage performances.

The lights of that night will spread across the entire city. The show will send the message that the flame of liberty will forever shine over Beirut and through each person and institution that embrace Samir Kassir's memory.

My Light Is Your Light

An installation by Alaa Minawi

Samir Kassir Square – Downtown Beirut – May 4, 8:00 PM



When people are forced to leave their cities, they do not only leave their homes, belongings, schools, favorite toys, and friends and neighbors behind... They actually leave their skin organs and their memories. They transform into outlines of a radiating light. They walk, whispering one thing: “My light is your light...”

Alaa Minawi’s latest light installation has been premiered at the third edition of the Amsterdam Light Festival in November 2014. The installation entitled “My light is your light” is one of 30 different installations that have been selected out of over 360 concepts presented by artists from around the world.

“My light is your light” is a tribute to the Syrian refugees who have been going through extremely painful humanitarian conditions. It is also a tribute to all refugees in the last 100 years, who transform into a radiating outline of a human once they are forced out from home, for their story craves to shine on throughout the world.

This idea has been presented in the form of a light installation with six human-scale statues created in outlines from custom-made neon lights. The six figures represent a family made of a father, a mother, a grandfather, an aunt and two children. A family that has been walking for years and it seems as though the youngest of all has found something interesting. It is an installation that reflects both harshness and aspects of hope. These six figures will find themselves crossing paths with passers-by in Beirut, from May 4 to June 4.

Samir Kassir in Movies

Documentaries and short movies on Samir Kassir

Salle Montaigne – Institut français du Liban – May 9, 5:30 PM



Prominent filmmakers and writers paid tribute to Samir Kassir shortly after his assassination. Their documentaries and short movies shed light on Samir Kassir's vision, career, personal life and political values. Each movie captured aspects of Samir Kassir's ideas and personality that the general public may have not known.

The Beirut Spring Festival will feature three documentaries that were produced and broadcast in the months following Samir Kassir's assassination, including but not limited to:

- A movie by the late Syrian world-acclaimed filmmaker Omar Amiralay.
- A movie by the Lebanese filmmaker Greta Nawfal.
- A movie by the Lebanese photographer and filmmaker Talal Khoury.

The Beirut Spring Festival will also feature a world premiere: **a tribute to Samir Kassir by his own daughter** and young filmmaker **Liana Kassir**, presented for the first time on the occasion of the tenth commemoration.

One Day in Beirut

Public photo exhibit by FRAME

Beirut Souks – May 14, 8:00 PM



One Day in Beirut is a public exhibit representing the perspectives of more than 100 photographers on 12 themes. All of the photos were captured in the city of Beirut on September 27, 2014, between 10 AM and 10 PM during the second edition of the Beirut Photo Marathon.



The Beirut Photo Marathon is the first of its kind collective documentation project in Lebanon organized by FRAME.

Photographers were free to choose the location of their photos within the administrative boundaries of Beirut and captured one picture for every theme, which they submitted to the FRAME team at checkpoints across the city.

The collection of photos depicts a day in the life of Beirut; a photographic dissection of our surroundings and perceptions captured spontaneously. The collection is a truthful reflection of the city in its many forms with the hope that others will observe this richness and diversity as well. In that spirit, the collection is meant to be seen as a whole; a co-created artwork piecing together and laying bare an ever-changing city through the lenses of 100 image-makers.

Take notice of patterns, similarities and contradictions. These photos tell our story; a story of one day in Beirut, where it is up to you to determine what is worth looking at and what we have the right to observe.

The exhibition will run until June 4.

The Change-Makers Forum

Gathering those who make the Middle East a better place USJ
Campus de l'Innovation et du Sport – May 24, 10:00 AM



The Change-Makers Forum will gather 30 to 40 Lebanese and Arab non-governmental organizations, social entrepreneurs, cultural collectives and citizen groups that are working every day to make their countries more democratic, more tolerant, more prosperous, and more enjoyable places for all their citizens.

The Forum, held in the heart of the avant-garde architecture of Université St-Joseph's Campus de l'Innovation et du Sport, will give each group a dedicated space to exhibit their publications, products and any materials they wish to display. The Forum will be an opportunity for all the change-makers to connect, exchange experiences and build bridges. The public will have the chance to meet those who create the positive change that we all long for and find ways of contributing positively to the work of these groups.

Participating organizations will also have the opportunity to speak up, hold public projections, artistic performances and any other activity that will highlight their goals and achievements.

The Beirut Ideas

Discussing freedom of expression and democratic change

On the occasion of the 2015 Beirut Spring Festival, the SKeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom will host, in cooperation with international partners, a series of panel discussions on central challenges facing freedom of expression and democratic change in the region.

The topics of the debates, entitled “The Beirut Ideas”, stem from Samir Kassir’s writings and from the experience of the SKeyes Center in training journalists and exploring new trends in the world of media and communications. (Names of speakers may be subject to modification).

1- Defending Press Freedom Today: New Tools, New Challenges

Press Syndicate – Ain el-Tineh – May 3, 6:30 PM



Press freedom is not doing well. The last few years were the deadliest for journalists, especially in the Middle East, where more than 90 percent of the crimes remain unpunished. Press freedom defenders are facing today multi-layered challenges: How to protect journalists who cannot afford expensive safety trainings and protective equipment? How to deal with budget constraints and donor fatigue? How to safeguard freedom of expression in legislation and in practice?

Speakers: Sarah Giaziri (Rory Peck Trust, UK/Libya); (Jodie Ginsberg (Index on Censorship, UK); Cheryl Gould (Committee to Protect Journalists, USA); Ayman Mhanna (SKeyes Center, Lebanon)

Moderator: Hanin Ghaddar (NOW Media, Atlantic Council, Lebanon)

2- Healing Memories and Building the Future

USJ Campus de l'Innovation et du Sport – May 5, 6:30 PM



Without coming to terms with its past, a society cannot build its future. Drawing from the experiences of many countries that established mechanisms to deal with memory, such as Spain, Chile and Northern Ireland, this panel will look at what has not been done in Lebanon and the results of the political choice of amnesty and amnesia. The debate will also shed light on measures that can be established to ensure that post-conflict Syria can undergo a sustainable truth and reconciliation process.

Speakers: Ziyad Baroud (former Minister of the Interior and Municipalities, Lebanon); Josefina Cuesta Bustillo (University of Salamanca, Spain); Luciano Fouilloux (Museum of Memory, the National Institute for Human Rights, Chile); Jane Morrice (former Deputy-Speaker of the Northern Irish Parliament, UK)

Moderator: Carmen Abou Jaoudé (International Center for Transitional Justice, Lebanon)

3- Freedom and Privacy: the Impossible Equation?

USJ Campus de l'Innovation et du Sport – May 7, 6:30 PM



Billions of individuals across the globe live connected. Each person today produces and generates tons of data. The world has already moved to the “Internet of things” era with more connected devices in everyone’s daily life. The panel will try to address key questions: Who gets the data? Who has the ability to decipher it? How is the data commoditized? What implication does this new form of connectivity have on people’s personal and public freedom and on political systems? How do “good guys” and “bad guys” use the data?

Speakers: Kevin Collier (Daily Dot, USA); Reem Al-Masri (7iber.com, Jordan); Sascha Meinrath (X-Lab,

USA); Mohamad Najem (Social Media Exchange, Lebanon)

Moderator: Kelli Arena (Global Center for Journalism and Democracy, USA)

4- Culture amid War: the Syrian Experiment

Dawawine, Gemmayzé (TBC) – May 8, 6:30 PM



Since the eruption of the conflict in Syria, many Syrians have chosen arts as a channel to express their feelings, after forty years of oppression and four years of war. The works of Syrian artists are a reflection of history, of suffering, of doubts but they also carry a glimpse of hope and an opportunity to live, for a moment, in a different, more peaceful environment. The panel will highlight remarkable Syrian artistic experiences and discuss the importance of arts and culture at times of war.

Speakers: Ali Al-Atassi (Bidayat, Syria); Ziad Majed (American University of Paris, Lebanon); Raghad Mardini (Art Residence Aley, Syria)

Moderator: Hanan Kassab Hassan (University St-Joseph, Syria)

5- Palestine and the Changing Times in the Arab World

Mahmoud Darwish Museum, Ramallah & Dawawine, Gemmayzé (TBC) – May 12, 6:30 PM



Palestine was historically the “central cause” of the Arab world. Even after the inception of the shaky post-Oslo peace process, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remained the main item in Middle East news. However, with the Arab uprisings of 2010-2011 much of the attention shifted to other places, both at the level of international media and Arab populations alike. After a full day of

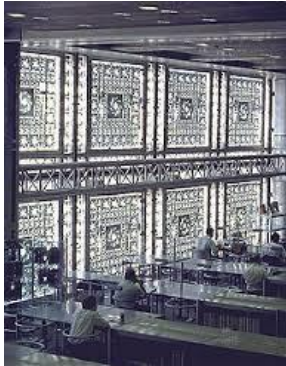
events commemorating Samir Kassir at the Mahmoud Darwish Museum in Ramallah, the panel will debate whether Palestine is still today at the center of Arab priorities and the prospects of the Palestinian struggle for freedom and independence.

Speakers: Yasser Abd Rabbo (Mahmoud Darwish Foundation, Palestine); Hussein El-Sheikh (Minister of Civil Affairs, Palestine); Ahmad Al-Tibi (Arab Member of Knesset, Palestine); Ziad El-Sayegh (Civic Influence Hub, Lebanon)

Moderator: Gisèle Khoury (Samir Kassir Foundation, Lebanon)

6- France in the Arab World and the Arab World in France

Salle Montaigne, Institut français du Liban – May 13, 6:30 PM



As described in Samir Kassir and Farouk Mardam-Bey's book "*Itinéraires de Paris à Jérusalem*" (Itineraries from Paris to Jerusalem), France and the Arab world have had a deep, intricate and multi-layered history, marked by partnership, knowledge and mistrust. Samir Kassir, also a French national, was a well-heard voice in French media and political circles and served as a strong ambassador for the Arab people's dreams of freedom and democracy. The panel will discuss the state of the French-Arab ties today and in the coming years.

Speakers: Karim Emile Bitar (Centre national pour la recherche scientifique, France/Lebanon); François Burgat (Institut français du Proche-Orient, France); Patrice Paoli (French Ambassador to Lebanon, France); Marc Saikali (France 24, France/Lebanon)

Moderator: Vanessa Burgraff (France 24, France)

7- Telling the Syrian Story to the International Public Opinion

USJ Campus des Sciences Sociales, Huvelin, Amphitheatre A – May 15

Part I- Film projection: "The Dublin Pitfall" by Rime El-Jadidi – 5:00 PM



"The Dublin Pitfall" is a documentary addressing the consequences of the Syrian refugees' migration to Europe. The film narrates the struggle of individuals who made the perilous journey of leaving their homes fleeing war only to face harsher conditions in their host country. The film was shot during a three-week trip across Bulgaria in April 2014. The director, Morocco's Rime El-Jadidi, worked as a one-woman band on a tiny budget, relying on the hospitality and help of

Bulgarians and Syrians to make this film.

Part II- Panel discussion – 6:30 PM



Despite more than 200,000 deaths and one of the largest displacement crises in the world, the international public opinion has not demonstrated the same level of interest in the Syrian war than other previous conflicts. At the same time, the Syrian conflict has been widely covered in books, articles and reports, many of which won prestigious awards. The international public's focus seems limited to the rise of radical Islamism in Syria and to the

plight of kidnapped western journalists. The panel will discuss why the Syrian story is not resonating enough and what other channels to shed light on the tragedy are still available.

Speakers: Daniel Beaulieu (Syria Deeply, Canada); Leila Nachawati Rego (Syria Untold, Syria); Christoph Reuter (Der Spiegel, Germany); James Sadri (The Syria Campaign, UK)

Moderator: Ruth Sherlock (The Telegraph, UK)

8- Democracy and the Military Challenge: “*Aaskar Aala Meen*”

Carnegie Middle East Center, Downtown Beirut – May 21, 4:30 PM



In his 2004 “*Aaskar Aala Meen*” Samir Kassir explains and decries the control of intelligence services and security apparatuses over the political, public and social life in the Arab world. After the 2010-2011 Arab uprisings against dictatorships and the subsequent rise and demise of Islamist forces, the military is playing again a fundamental role; Egypt being the clearest example. The panel will discuss the perspectives of democratization in the Middle East and the relationship between the political class and the military in nascent democracies.

Speakers: Rania Barrak (Military Academy, Tunisia); Hala Mustafa (Al-Ahram Center for Political Studies, Egypt); Jean Oghassabian (Member of Parliament, Lebanon); Yazid Sayigh (Carnegie Middle East Center, Palestine)
Moderator: Nabil Bou Monsef (An-Nahar, Lebanon)

9- Syria’s Democracy and Lebanon’s Independence

USJ Campus de l’Innovation et du Sport – May 5, 6:30 PM



In 2004, Samir Kassir published a book entitled “Syria’s Democracy and Lebanon’s Independence: Searching for the Damascus Spring”. In this book, he argued that Lebanon will never achieve independence as long as Syria is not governed by a truly democratic regime. Every day that has passed since the publication of this book proved the accuracy of Samir Kassir’s analysis. The debate will shed light on the intricate relations between Lebanon and Syria, at all levels, at all times and in all circumstances.

Speakers: Hala Codmani (Writer, Syria); Antoine Haddad (Democratic Renewal Movement, Lebanon); Farid Khazen (Member of Parliament, Lebanon); Elias Khoury (Samir Kassir Foundation, Lebanon)
Moderator: Imad Marmal (As-Safir, Lebanon)

10- Democracy and the Religious Challenge

USJ Campus de l’Innovation et du Sport – May 5

Part I- Film projection: “Lights on darkness” by Diana Moukalled – 5:00 PM

In the three-part series “Lights on Darkness”, Diana Moukalled sheds light on radical Islam by visiting three countries: Iraq, Jordan and Egypt. In the first episode (that will be shown during the session), which takes place in Iraq, she shows how Al-Qaida resorts to women and children to carry out suicide bombings. This series is produced by Firehorse.

Part II- Panel discussion – 6:30 PM



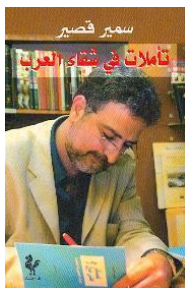
After the Arab revolutions, Islamist forces have played a fundamental role and attracted millions of new voters and supporters. In reaction, religious minorities have been requesting international protection and special statuses. The process towards equal citizenship is still at its early phases and is facing, on a daily basis, lethal challenges. The panel will discuss whether democracy can accommodate religious-based forces without facing the risk of its own extinction.

Speakers: Abbas Halabi (Islamic Christian Dialogue Committee, Lebanon); Nabila Hamza (Equality and Parity, Tunisia); Sven Speer (Forum Offene Religionspolitik, Germany)

Moderator: Carine Torbey (BBC, Lebanon)

11- Being Arab: the Arab Malaise Ten Years Later – Keynote Address

USJ Campus de l'Innovation et du Sport – May 5, 6:30 PM



In his book “Being Arab”, Samir Kassir calls on the people of the Middle East to reject both Western double standards and Islamism in order to take the future into their own hands. Samir Kassir states that the crisis in Arab identity lies in the failure to come to terms with modernity, turning instead to false solutions such as pan-Arabism and Islamism. Passionately written and brilliantly argued, this rallying cry for change has now been heard by millions. Marwan Muasher will discuss what has changed since the publication of the book and assess the current state of the Arab malaise.

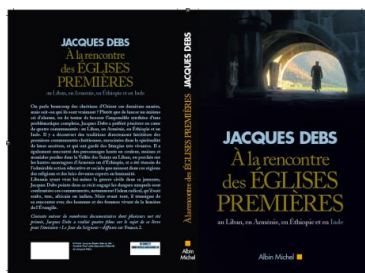
Speaker: Marwan Muasher (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Jordan) – *Introduced by* Andrew

Mikhael (Queen's University Belfast, Lebanon/Ireland)

Moderator: Gisèle Khoury (Samir Kassir Foundation, Lebanon)

12- Film projection: “A la rencontre des Eglises Premières »

USJ Campus de l'Innovation et du Sport – May 5, 6:30 PM



This movie takes us to the discovery of churches evangelized by the Apostles themselves. Having evolved in the East in a hostile environment, the survival of these churches today is a miracle. Each is located at the border of a particular culture. Jacques Debs shared the life philosophy of these churches made of mysticism and charity. It is a movie with a stunning aesthetic magnified by Zad Moultaqa's music.

Speakers: Jacques Debs (Filmmaker, Lebanon); Samir Frangieh (Former Member of Parliament, Lebanon); Saoud Mawla (Writer, Lebanon)

Moderator: Michel Hajji Georgiou (L'Orient-Le Jour, Lebanon)

13- Cultural Diplomacy: When Universal Values Meet the Micro-Local

Salle Montaigne, Institut français du Liban – May 13, 6:30 PM



International institutions working in the field of relief and political development usually come to a country going through conflict and difficult political transitions; then leave. Inversely, international cultural centers and institutes have very often a much longer presence on the ground. Their interaction with local artists, teachers and thinkers allow them to develop a different understanding of realities and a better informed viewpoint on the future of societies. The discussion will focus on the role of these institutions within the current changing times, amid a growing debate between supporters of universal values and proponents of cultural relativism.

Speakers: Antonin Baudry (Institut français, France); Eduardo Lopez Busquets (Casa Arabe, Spain); Graham Sheffield (British Council, UK)

Moderator: Nora Joumblatt (Beiteddine Festival, Lebanon)