



RestART Beirut

ريستارت بيروت

Fund for the Safeguard of Art and Collections in Beirut





On **August 4th 2020**, an explosion of unprecedented proportions in an urban setting during peacetime ravaged the port of Beirut. The explosion **took hundreds of innocent lives and left thousands in a precarious situation, while also disfiguring the city's historic districts.**

Gemmayzé, Mar Mikhaél, Achrafieh are names which resonate deeply with Beirut's inhabitants, their names forever engraved in the city's long history and home to an incredibly rich cultural heritage. These districts house within their walls **the tangible and intangible heritage** which gives Beirut its unique character, shaped over millenia ever since the time of the first Phoenicians.

This part of the city combines modern and contemporary architecture with older built heritage. It is this contrast, this urban palimpsest, that today defines the identity of the city of Beirut and its rebirth following the end of the civil war. The explosion not only **partially destroyed already fragile and endangered heritage sites**, but also **endangered the art collections these buildings housed**. The restoration of these districts, while striving to preserve the unique social fabric which make them so unique is undoubtedly one of the most daunting challenges facing Beirut, rendered even more difficult by the complex political, economical and health situation. But this complex task also represents a unique opportunity to unite the city's diverse and traumatised community around a common goal, a chance to celebrate their rich shared history in a shared effort of rebirth.

With these considerations in mind, the projects undertaken by **RestART Beirut** aim to contribute to the renovation effort in the following ways:

- ▶ **Promoting Education** – we aim to raise public awareness of the city's unique heritage, to encourage the transmission of the know-how and promote Architectural and Artistic education to a young public.
- ▶ **Encouraging the Local Economy** – by supporting and encouraging the revival of ancient Lebanese crafts and the creation of an economically viable activity in this sector.
- ▶ **Fostering International Cooperation** via the transnational partnerships needed to complete the projects (between institutions, universities, private companies or individuals from the diaspora and beyond).

The reconstruction of Beirut represents a **society project: the convergence of a myriad of individual efforts**, ranging from volunteering work to crowd financing in the service of a noble goal: **writing together a new chapter in the history of the city.**

The transformation of the private Sursock Palace **in a Center of Culture, Education and Artistic dissemination**

In the aftermath of the explosion, one place became a symbol of the scale of the destruction and its incomprehensible nature – **the Sursock Palace and its ravaged art collection**. The chaotic and painful images of its fragile artefacts broken and lying among piles of rubble, exposed to the elements, **shocked the inhabitants of Beirut and the world at large**.

The palace and its vast surrounding gardens have a **strong symbolic value, representing one of the last surviving vestiges of the Golden Age of Beirut in the 19th century** and, undoubtedly, its most remarkable expression.

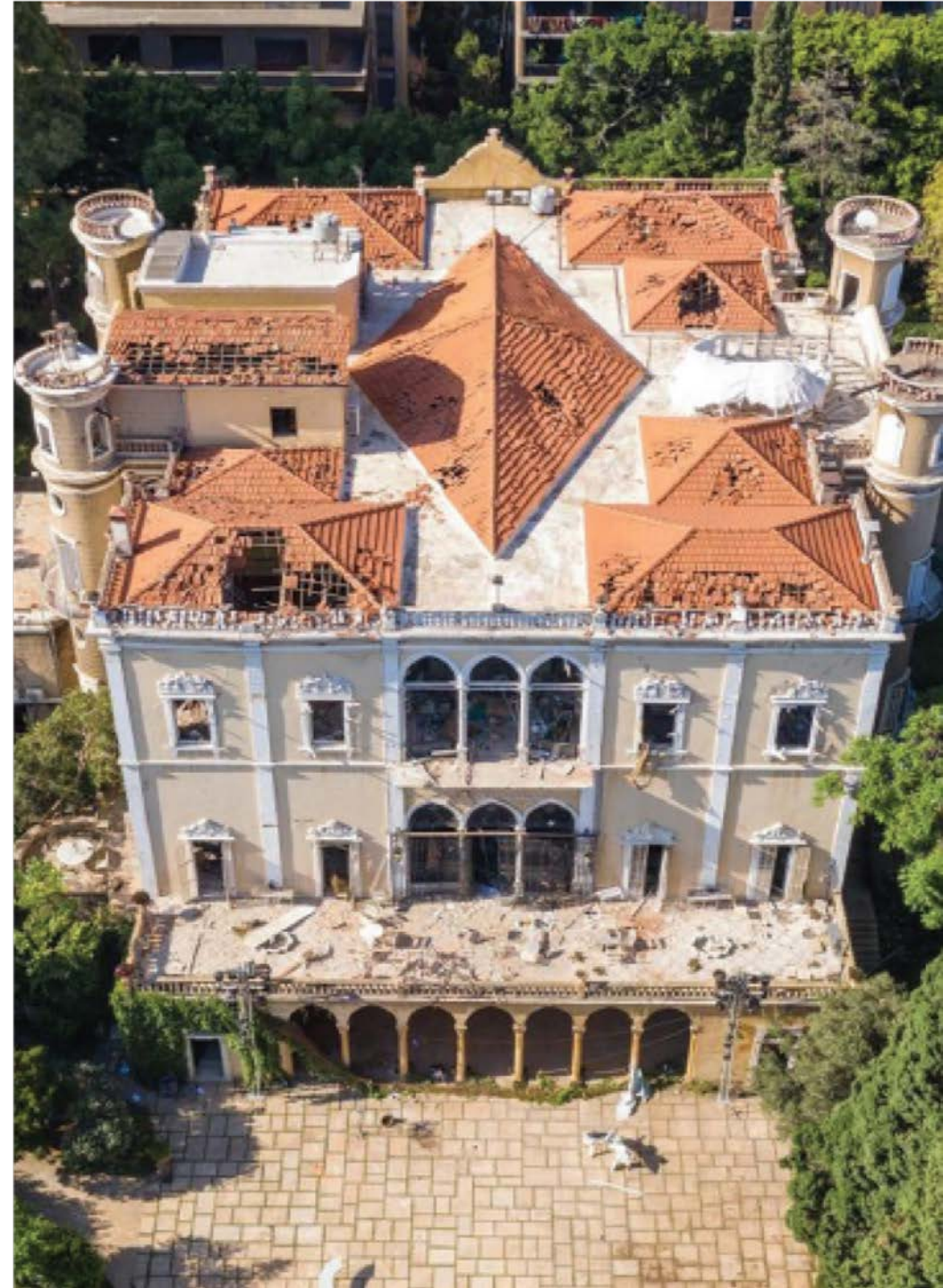
This palace is **the most majestic example of a private house in Beirut**, with its multitude of ceremonial rooms dotted around an extraordinary oriental dar which crosses the house from one end to the other, its wide galleries and its exceptional double spiral staircase. **The extravagance of Ottoman decors is intertwined with the elegance of 19th century European styles** in an eclecticism also reflected in the large collection of paintings, furniture and decorative *objets d'art*.

The house reflects the image of the family who made it its home since its construction in 1850. **The Sursock-Cochranes represent a living link between East and West**, their family history spanning from Belfast to Constantinople via Rome and Alexandria. The family played a prominent part in the history of the country itself as well as that of the entire region. Today, the current owners wish to honour Lady Cochrane's legacy of Philanthropy by **restoring the palace and its collections and turning it into a museum open to the public..**

Maintaining the authenticity of Beirut's heritage, by raising awareness, encourage the **transformation of societal challenges into positive outcomes**. It increases cohesion and general wellbeing. Cultural heritage rehabilitation is a major contributor to social cohesion, civic spirit and an efficient way of **bringing communities together**. Moreover, the societal and economic benefits of cultural heritage rehabilitation are seen as innovative stimulants for **economic growth, employment and education** and are linked to a wide range of **traditional and innovative industries**. They impact both the local and national economy.

The Sursock Palace Museum will act as a **cultural centre, housing resident artists, restoration workshops, concerts, conferences and exhibitions**. The project aims to reinforce the role which heritage can play within the social-economic fabric of the city by generating jobs, fostering cultural activity and contributing to **enhance Beirut's international reputation**.

- This Palace and Cultural Centre from which educational and historical awareness will radiate throughout Beirut aims to become a driver for economic and social development in the city.





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Based in Europe, RestART Beirut will be the official international fundraising vehicle for the project, while also providing the necessary technical expertise required for its implementation. The Fund's priorities are as follows:

- ▶ **Support education** with international and local exchanges in the field of conservation, art, and cultural heritage preservation.
- ▶ Create a **long-term socio-economic impact** with the establishment of new expertise and new employment necessary for the restoration and conservation of the collections.
- ▶ Contribute to the overall **Sursock Palace Museum and Cultural Centre project** (validation, monitoring, implementation, coordination and management)
- ▶ **Support local artist in residencies**, restoration workshops, organisation of concerts and exhibitions, etc.) in connection with the promotion of education and culture in Lebanon and the dissemination of art expertise and conservation practices to other collections.

The establishment of our structure, under the aegis of the King Baudouin Foundation of Belgium will guarantee rigorous financial oversight and total transparency of the usage of the funds. The structure will also allow our patrons **to benefit from significant tax deductions, both in Europe and North America.**





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Expected Outcome

The main objective of the project is the safeguard of Beirut Art collections and the creation of cultural and art restoration centre with educational purposes. Our pilot project: the safeguard of the Sursock Palace collections, its transformation into a cultural venue open to the public and the establishment of local and international artists residencies. In parallel, we identified on-site concrete set of activities:

Activity 1

Emergency Measures for the Protection of the Collection

- ▶ Identifying highest risks items
- ▶ Supporting emergency needs to protect the collections (adequate storage, handling and packaging, environmental control)

Activity 2

Inventory and Technical Assessment

- ▶ Designing and equipping a secured area dedicated to conservation work
- ▶ Identifying the type of items in the collections (documentation, research, photographic campaign, etc. ...)
- ▶ Developing a systematic database and framework to review the condition of items of the collection (glossary of useful terms, reports, archiving, etc. ...)
- ▶ Evaluating costs for conservation interventions and long-term preservation and display

Activity 3

Museology Planning

- ▶ Short listing of museum experts and team
- ▶ Defining a museum concept
- ▶ Preparing a master plan and establishing budget
- ▶ Displaying proper museology for the collections according to international standards



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Activity 4

Conservation Intervention Campaign

- ▶ Prioritising interventions on specific objects of the collection
- ▶ Bridging international expertise with local know-how
- ▶ Establishing conservation and restoration studios
- ▶ Organising educational workshops
- ▶ Long-term assessment and conditions for transmission of knowledge and professional skills

Activity 5

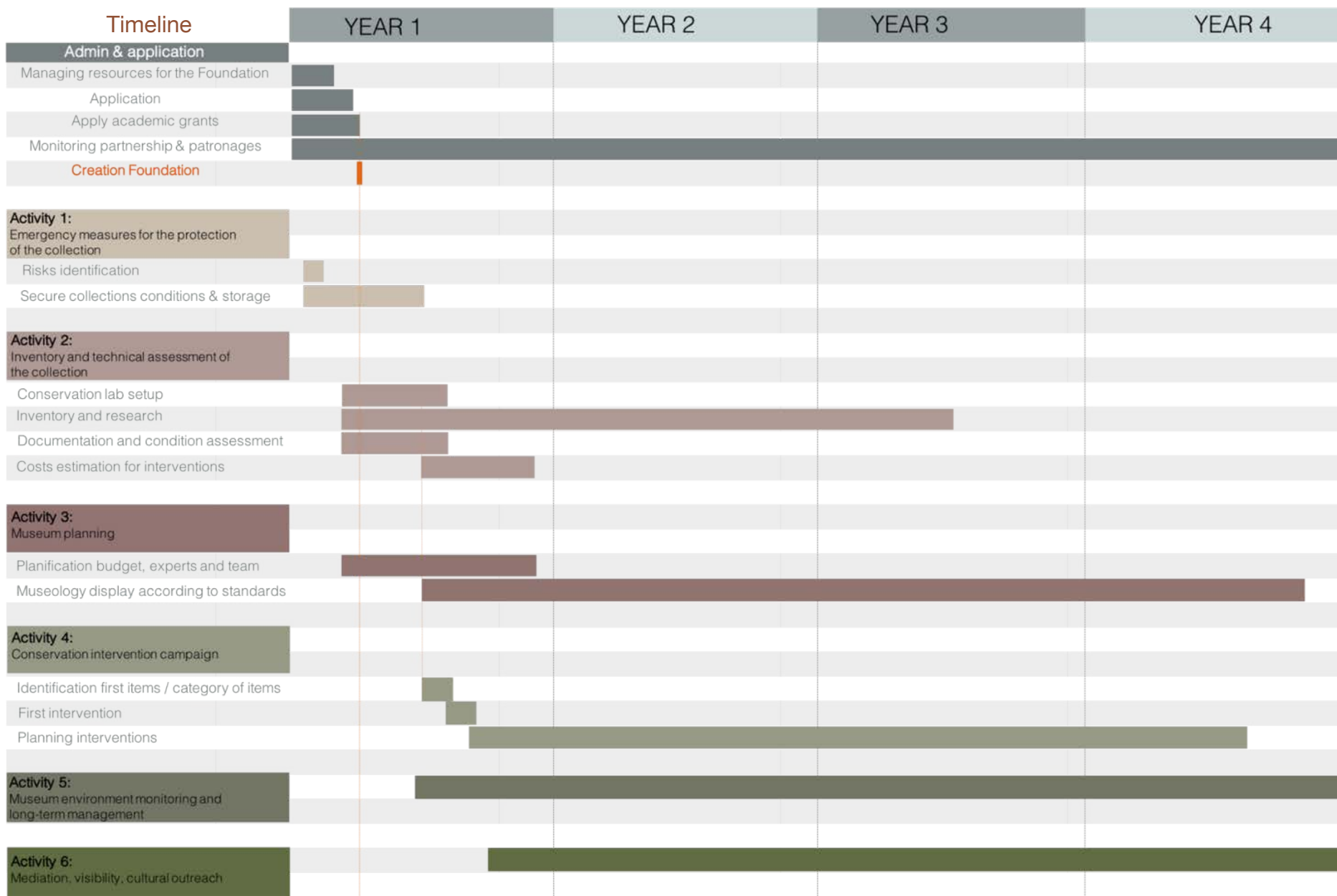
Monitoring environment and long-term management

- ▶ Minimising the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collection:
- ▶ Identifying the conditions in which museum collections are displayed, stored, used, including (temperature, relative humidity, light, pollution, pests)
- ▶ Determining and managing the level of control of the environment for the collections (carpet, tapestry, painting, porcelains, etc....)
- ▶ Choosing a separate room for fragile items with specific conditions
- ▶ Keeping condition stable across the museum
- ▶ Deciding upon the frequency at which results are recorded and try to maintain a regular logging program
- ▶ Training of permanent staff (equipment maintenance, etc....)

Activity 6

Mediation, visibility, cultural outreach

- ▶ Accompanying and supporting the design of the “Outreach program”
- ▶ Raising awareness of the project and results through conferences, videos, published materials and via the web in coordination with local and international actors
- ▶ Supporting Artists residencies with the help of local and international partnerships (from traditional artisan to modern and contemporary art exhibitions)



RestART Beirut

Founding committee



Joseph El Hayek, Beirut, Lebanon

Currently staffed at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Beirut. Formerly serving the British Embassy Beirut. Extensive experience in PR, Events, Protocol and General Affairs as well as in Art and Culture. Founder and President of Lebanon Opera Society. Member of several philanthropic and cultural associations.



Didier Goossens, Luxembourg, Luxembourg

Currently Head of Communications at the Luxembourg National Research Fund. Prior to the FNR, 10 years of experience gathered in two of the main concert halls in Europe, the Wiener Konzerthaus and the Philharmonie Luxembourg, serving as Head of Marketing & Communication and Press Officer respectively. Extended experience in media relations, campaign creation, culture and science communication, as well as building bridges towards political decision makers. Art amateur and collector, music passionate.



Laurent Lise-Cabasset, Paris, France

Architect, former administrator of Paris Opera Patrons. Member of several cultural patronage programs (Centre Pompidou, Comité Français pour la sauvegarde de Venise, AROP).



Pierre-Henri Ollier, Paris, France

Planned Giving Officer at American Hospital of Paris. Jurist, Civil Law Notary, fundraiser and philanthropy expert. Co-founder of Argo Think Tank, writer, film director.



Alex Dramu, London, United Kingdom

Financier, in charge of Asset Raising and Institutional Business Development for Europe and the Middle East for hedge fund Lutetia Capital. Extensive experience in Fundraising, Marketing and Event organisation. Art collector, involved in Heritage Preservation and Cultural Diplomacy. Member of the Honorary Support Committee for the Paris Opera Opening Gala.



Marie Eve Didier, PhD, Lausanne, Switzerland

Physicist, engineer in optical methods for art works conservation and characterisation, founder of MATIS: Monitoring Art with Technology Innovation and Science. Former board member and event coordinator at Juvenilia, the European Friends of the Opera Association. Young Patron of various festivals and active in Women in Science.

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Committees

- ▶ Honorary Committee
An Honorary Patron shall be someone who, due to her/his public achievement, exemplification of outstanding leadership and social standing, can help the Fund achieve its mission by enhancing the Fund's credibility, expanding its network and modelling different ideals of leadership.
- ▶ Executive Committee
Day-to-day management, prospecting, events, decisions.
- ▶ Scientific Committee
Validation and follow up of executions
- ▶ Coordination and management
HR, PR, communication and management on site
- ▶ Education Committee
Students' sponsorships, local expertise and long-term employments



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Members and Patrons Management

- ▶ Major Donors
Important donations, entry to the honorary committee
- ▶ Corporate Donations
Direct or indirect fundraising and skill sponsorship
- ▶ Institutions and Universities
Academic partnerships
- ▶ Individual Donations
Small donations and event participants





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Fund for the safeguard of Art and Collections in Beirut

Contacts

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For fundraising and donations:
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When thinking of Beirut, what springs to mind is the **extraordinary resilience of its inhabitants**, who have always been able to recover from the multiple dramatic events which have marked the long history of the country. It is this strength of character and this energy that **RestART Beirut** wishes to showcase in this project, whose main purpose is not only **restoring the past** but also **laying the groundwork for Beirut's future artistic life**.

