

# Outlook

04

## NEWS

### (De)-dolarize the fees?

The recent campus protests against the dollarization of AUB expenses

06

## PERSONALITY OF THE WEEK

### Nadia Aboulhosn

Outlook Interviews Nadia Aboulhosn! Aboulhosn is an American Lebanese Plus-size model, fashion blogger, and designer from Orlando, Florida. She is known for designing fashion lines and has been featured in many magazines, including Vogue Italia.

08

## OPINIONS

### The Screams for Change

The foundation of a working government is trust. What to do when that base shatters? Rebuild.

10

## LIFESTYLE

### Staying sane during the October Revolution

As exciting as it is to be involved in such a historical time, it is also stressful for all of us. It is crucial that we find productive ways to cope with the stress and give support to those who need it.

12

## ARTS & CULTURE

### Pop and Politics

The integration of Pop Culture in the Electoral Process

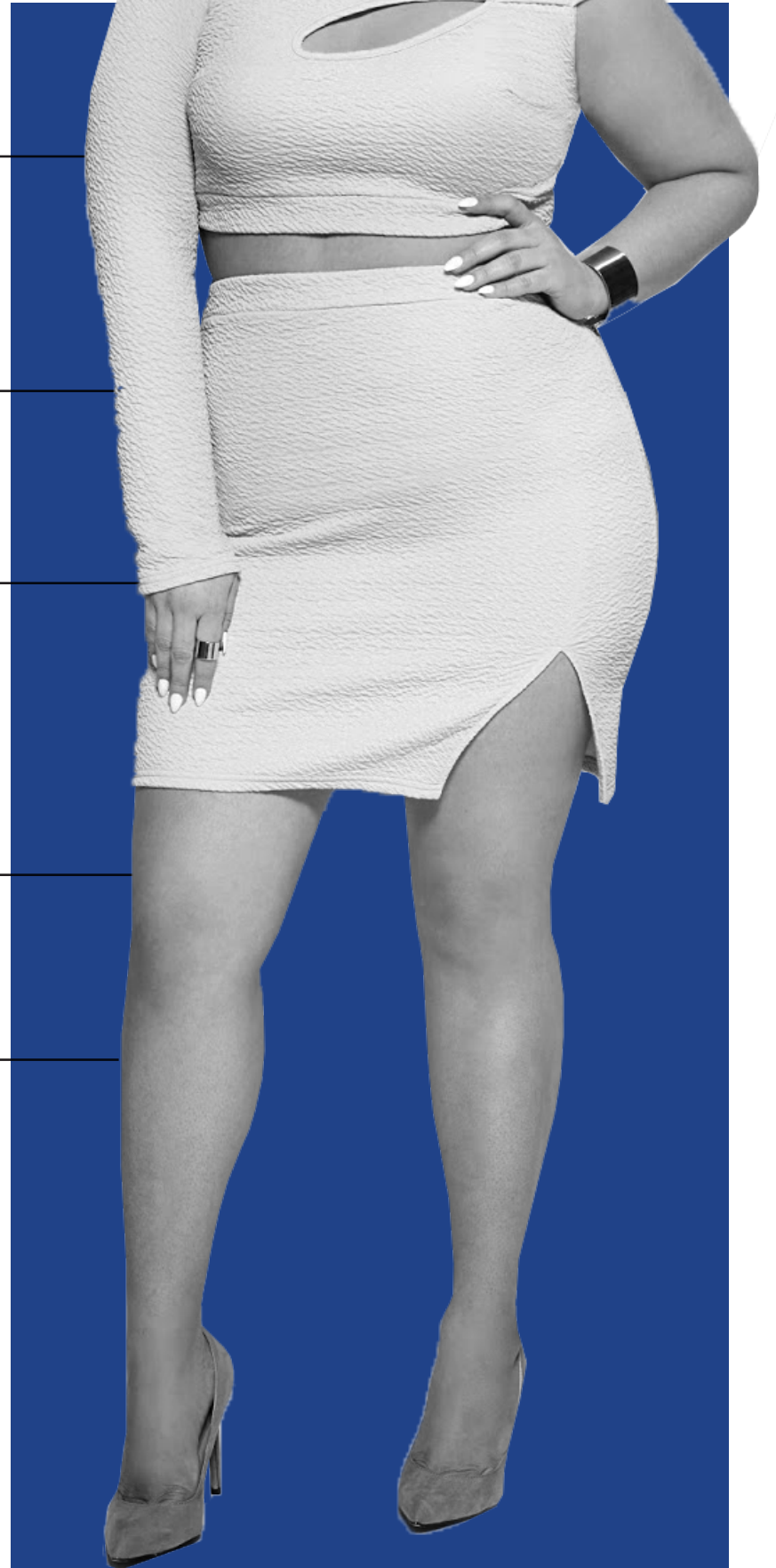
## SENIOR EDITOR'S NOTE

*Caline Pechdimaljian*

### No, We're Not Beautiful

My childhood bedroom was filled with mirrors. A whole closet had enormous slabs of reflective glass that I stood in front of time and time again. It's where I would ogle at my own reflection, liking what I see at times and wishing I could change the reflection staring back at me at others. The mirrors watched me grow and metamorphose. Through them, I saw how the world saw me.

**Read more > 02**



**Nadia Aboulhosn**

Article on page 06

Outlook team

**Chairperson**  
Dean Talal Nizameddin

**Editor in Chief**  
Hayat Abdallah

**Senior Editor**  
Caline Pechdimaljian

**Junior Editors**  
Maeve Lane  
Mohammad Al Kaaki  
Michel Salamouni  
Aya Sawaya  
Sarah Moritz  
Grace Mouannes  
Celine Aljamil

**Proofreaders**  
Dania El Abyad  
Raghad El Ghali

**Contributing Writers**  
Celine Dibo  
Fatima Moussa  
Sabine Bou Saba  
Mira Awar  
Anna Brown  
Abbas Mahfouze  
Zeina Al-Khalik  
Marwa Salameh  
Christopher Chalhoub  
Darius Shams

**Graphic Designers**  
Myriam Saniour  
Alissa Zibara  
Sara Kadi

EDITOR'S NOTE | Hayat Abdallah

You enter University with a plan in mind: I'm going to excel in my major, have many friends, attend many parties, graduate with honors, and get a great job. Then you promptly get a reality check. This one course isn't as easy as it seems and you're not doing so well. You'd socialize if you had time to—but all you do is study. After attending your major courses you might have started thinking, and wondering, that this major isn't what you want to do in life. You see other students doing well, doing more than well and then start comparing yourself to them—making you anxious.

Now, you might have not gone through the above—but most of us have gone through some of them. These are universal experiences that we have the honor of enduring in University.

I am not in a place to advise (.actually at my emotional capacity..) but what I can do is speak the truth of what happens eventually. After the dark clouds disperse, which they will, and the sun rises.

You might end up withdrawing from the course, failing, or most likely—actually doing well. This is because the ground you stand on is stable but the expectations you place upon yourself are not. Burdening yourself with being the best rarely ends well, try being your best and working as hard as you personally can—not working as hard as the classes' ace.

Confusion is natural. We're all confused, all the time—especially now. Your life isn't a set plan with clear paths and timelines. It isn't a utopia and what you plan will not always succeed—besides, where's the fun in predictability? What you choose as a major is important, of course—you're paying a hefty price for an education in this degree.

But if you feel disconnected, detached, and uninterested in this major—you can leave, whatever you're paying right now is less than the remorse you'll feel for the whole of your professional career. Above all else though, talk to someone. Talk to your parents, to your friends, to your professors, to your advisors—base your decision off clarity and determination. Do not stifle yourself for fear of society and what society might think, not because that doesn't matter—but do it as a service for yourself. Choose yourself over society.

In the end, there is no end. There is no 'my life is over if I fail this course', life goes on. The troubles of today—as cliché as it sounds—are really the fond, funny memories of tomorrow. Just relax, breathe, study well, and know that no matter what happens: you're okay and you'll be fine.

SENIOR EDITOR'S NOTE | Caline Pechdimaljian  
No, We're Not Beautiful

Note Disclaimer: This piece is a resubmission of mine from a Spring 2019 issue of Outlook, that I had to pull out due to its relevance with the general focus of this issue on body positivity. With the beautiful Nadia Abulhosn gracing our Character of the Week feature, and us celebrating and reclaiming our bodies once again, I deemed it only but reasonable to pull this out of my archives and do it justice yet again. Take this with a grain of salt, as always, but definitely mark my words as I relay so onto you.

My childhood bedroom was filled with mirrors. A whole closet had enormous slabs of reflective glass that I stood in front of time and time again. It's where I would ogle at my own reflection, liking what I see at times and wishing I could change the reflection staring back at me at others. The mirrors watched me grow and metamorphose. Through them, I saw how the world saw me.

Yet, as any normal girl of the times, the mirrors brought forth some the worst insecurities in me. I idolized beauty so much that these mirrors fed into this obsession. To me, beauty meant power over others, as we've long been taught that this universal virtue is king. I would look for ways to change my face, going to far as the stretch out my checks and even pucker up my lips.

Eventually, these mirrors went away with renovations, only to have a small mirror now placed near my vanity. Yet, the idolization and obsession with beauty stayed, and it's embedded in each and every one of us. We were always taught, "everyone is beautiful." As if to include this universal power and make it inclusive to all, makes it all the less restraining to our very own insecurities. These insecurities stem from this very absurd notion.

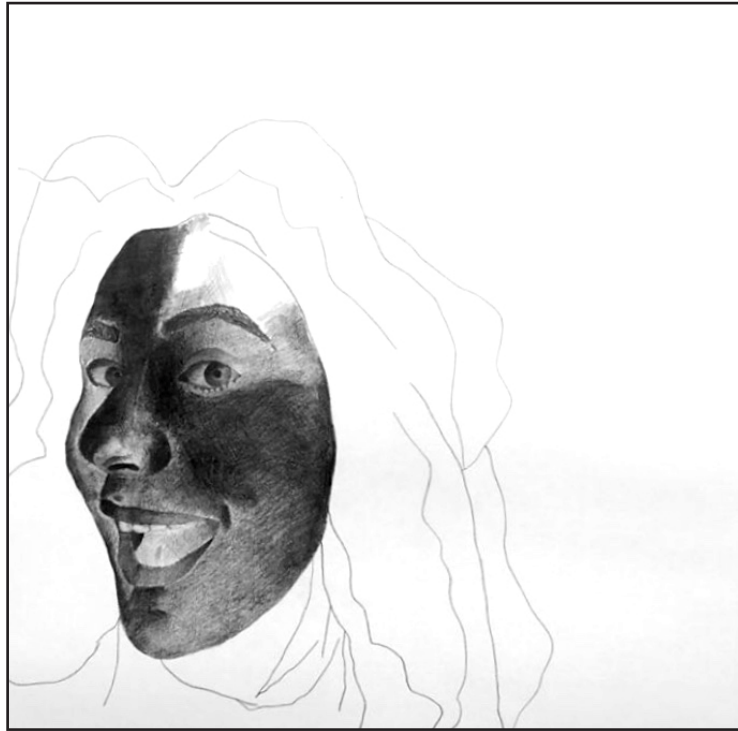
Let me be the one to say that we don't have to be beautiful. When we grow up finding refuge in this saying, we train ourselves into believing something that is actually harmful to our very own images of ourselves. As we try to measure up to that, a more freeing thought is to actually negate this. What if we actually stop prioritizing our aesthetics above so much of our lives? It would buy us so much more time and spent energy to acknowledge that this beauty standard is not in fact universal, more so a morsel of something a select few are actually born with. Yet again, this would still take us back to conclusions and would take us much to free ourselves of norms we literally grew up nurturing.

After stowing away the large mirror, I started focusing on the actual potential within me - the potential that did not rely on how I looked. Letting go of aesthetic norms, which we intrinsically and unconsciously measure up to, can be especially eye opening as it paves way to appreciate the better things in life that we can actually control and even change. This would entail a focus on the relationships around us, the arts, and physical manifestations humans occupy their lives with and sometimes dedicate a good chunk of their time to. Nonetheless this certainly doesn't mean turning a blind eye to self care and love. Instead, exercising a habit of self acceptance of who we are, and not how beautiful we are, paves way to leading the good habits that make us enjoy the best of life and ourselves. This could manifest itself in the way we dress and how good it makes us feel, and it would importantly keep us away from buying into the norms and trends that take over our very own manifestations of standardized "beauty".

Students' Works



Ghalia Khalili - Graphic Design



Nour Asmar - Graphic Design



Amal Ghamloosh - Graphic Design

Create & share with us to get the chance to be featured in the next issue

**Disclaimer** Outlook is a weekly publication of the American University of Beirut (AUB) and represents the voice of the student body. It is an independent, non-affiliated publication that favors no ethnic, religious or political group. All columns, articles and reports are the property of Outlook and do not necessarily represent the views of Outlook or the AUB community. Outlook welcomes all contributions. Authors are asked to please include their full name, major, ranking and contact information for verification. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any way, shape or form without the written consent of Outlook and/or higher authorities. Outlook reserves the right to edit all material.



## (De-)dollarize the fees?

*The recent campus protests against the dollarization of AUB expenses*

**Mohammad Kaaki and Hayat Abdallah – local news junior editor and editor-in-chief, respectively**

During the summer of 2019, a decision to dollarize AUB tuition, housing and other expenses was enacted. The decision coincided with AUB's enlistment in the common application. Ever since, the decision has been the target of mass condemnation, mostly originating from AUB's student body. Students denounced the decision as untimely, given Lebanon's economic crisis and prevalent fears of a currency devaluation. On the 20th of November, crowds of students gathered before college hall to demand the reversal of this decision. A letter of demands was also written to AUB's president, Fadlo Khuri. In his latest correspondence, President Khuri mentioned that he

is working alongside the financial teams and the Board of Trustees, situated in New York, to ensure a plan that will help current enrolled students with their financial and psychological burdens. The President voiced no intentions to reverse this decision in his correspondence, however. The past few days have been rife with student movements and protests against the dollarization of the tuition—leading the Dean of student of Affairs, Dr. Nezameddine, to organize a meeting with a group of students, and the Provost, Mohammad Haralji. We will provide updates from the meeting when the time comes. In the meantime, we encourage you to watch our latest video on Instagram @AUBOutlook. At the beginning of the semester, we, Outlook, interviewed the President on the dollarization of AUB's fees. It is our understanding

that there is a lot of confusion surrounding this move from the administration. In the hopes of addressing this confusion, we have provided information on this interview. This was released in Outlook's first issue, but we shall reiterate it for the sake of clarity and relevance: Why did the administration decide to dollarize fees? “AUB entered the ‘Common App’ with the intention to host more international students, aiming to increase our international students to 30% of AUB's student population. The ‘Common App’ indicated it was disadvantageous to list fees in a local currency, so AUB altered the listing of fees from the Lebanese Pound (LBP hereafter) to the US Dollar. Simultaneously, AUB has upheld the right of students to pay in LBP, at the prevailing exchange rate on the date of payment.”

Is this a new development? “No, this has been in development for a couple of years now—and was not unbeknownst to the Central bank and several other ministries: Economic, Finance, Public Health, and Higher Education.” How is the University willing to help students? “The administration is willing to devise payment plans that span beyond University years, give loan amnesty, and work with universities abroad to create new job opportunities.” In conclusion, the dollarization of fees is a matter of much complexity. Whether this decision runs counter to the best interests of the AUB community or not, the administration is working diligently to accommodate for all the needs of the student body.



## The Lebanese financial dilemma

*Some of the factors responsible for Lebanon's financial crisis*

**Mohammad Kaaki | Local news junior editor**

For the sixth consecutive week, Lebanon is beset by mass protests. As the country advances towards an uncertain future, the deteriorating economic situation continually compounds this uncertainty.

The economic situation is visibly abysmal; countless people are without employment; fears of a drastic currency devaluation linger and may yet materialize; more than 25% of the populace earns less than \$266 per month, classified as the poverty line in Lebanon. These dismal realities are some of the many Lebanon must embrace and endure.

For almost two decades, the Lebanese economy has been kept on life support through a number of factors. The currency peg, introduced in 1997, and remittances from Lebanese diaspora are notable factors. However, the diminishing presence of said factors

critically endangers the economy. The currency peg is crucial to an economy dependent on imports, mostly purchased in dollars. Imports constituted for approximately 32% of Lebanon's GDP in 2017, emphasizing the magnitude of their stake in the economy. Previously, the vast reserves of dollars in the economy enabled the preservation of the exchange rate of 1500LL/ \$1. At present, a fatal shortage of dollars persists, jeopardizing the preservation of the pegged rate. As confidence in the Lira wanes, market exchange rates continue to climb beyond the authorized rate of 1500LL/\$1. Consequently, the influx of vital imports is in peril, further heightening public anxiety.

Remittances from Lebanese diaspora are a source of immense economic benefit to Lebanon. In

2017, remittances from diaspora to their families in Lebanon totaled \$7.2 bn, approximately 13% of the GDP. Lebanese expats residing in the Persian Gulf contributed to between 43 - 60% of incoming remittances in 2015. However, this figure has since declined, mostly due to an economic slowdown in the Gulf region. To worsen matters, intermittent bank closures in the past month have stemmed the tide of cash inflows. Remittances helped propel the sails of the Lebanese economy, but it appears the sails have long lost their source of propulsion.

As the financial situation becomes increasingly precarious, haphazard measures have been taken by banks to prevent economic collapse. The success of said measures is questionable at best. Restrictions on ATM withdrawals

and cash transfers, both conducted in dollars, have been imposed. Banks actively prevent capital flight, resorting to capital control measures to accomplish this. Ironically, capital control is a blatant violation of the laissez-faire traditions embodied within the Lebanese constitution. These desperate measures have incited much panic. Nonetheless, Salim Sfeir, chairman of the ABL (Association of Banks in Lebanon), has assured the safety of depositors' money.

Riad Saleme, governor of the central bank, recently stated that no haircuts or lowering of credit card ceilings would occur on depositors' accounts. Salameh also remarked that interest rates on dollar deposits would decrease. Many suspect that interest rates were raised earlier in the year to lure investors to deposit dollars.

By luring investors, the banking sector would alleviate the dwindling availability of dollars in the country. Such financial schemes are ubiquitous in Lebanon's banking sector. Naturally, these schemes only served to suffocate Lebanon's ailing economy.

The state of the Lebanese economy is indeed appalling. Only time will reveal the final destination the economy is heading towards.

## Impeachment is the Democrats' Game

*With the second week of hearings finishing up, all witnesses and bombshells have been squarely against the President.*

**Anna Brown | Staff Writer**

**These first two weeks of impeachment hearings have left Republicans scrambling, as witnesses decimate their defenses of Trump.**

This is a time of uncertainty for the United States, and both its internal affairs and international relations appear fragile. The Trump administration's erratic and inconsistent foreign policy stance is largely contributing to the precariousness of the US' foreign relations, seen recently with the US government's dramatic shift in its stance on Israeli settlements on the West Bank which, as of 18th November, it no longer considers illegal.

This has caused the deterioration in relations with several US allies – in fact, the move marks the rejection of a 2016 United Nations resolution, which states that settlements on the West Bank are a ‘flagrant violation of international law’. Furthermore, the US has recently threatened its relationship with Lebanon as an ally

after the White House froze 105 million dollars of military aid to the Lebanese Armed Forces on 1st November.

Yet, internal rivalries in the US seem to be even more complex than those on the international stage at this moment in time. On 24th September, Nancy Pelosi announced that the US House of Representatives would be opening up a formal impeachment inquiry against the President, and since then the investigation has taken off with remarkable speed and intensity. Private testimonies to House officials began in mid-October, with key witnesses such as Fiona Hill and Gordon Sondland testifying in closed door meetings in the Capitol.

On 31st October, the House voted to move impeachment hearings from closed-door depositions to open hearings. Just over a week ago, on 13th November, these hearings began with State Department officials Bill Taylor and George Kent. They spoke about their increasing worries over the investigation that Ukraine

was being forced to launch in exchange for US military aid. Taylor dropped the first big bombshell of the public investigations, informing the committee of a phone call involving Donald Trump, in which he asked EU ambassador Gordon Sondland about the investigations.

The hearings continued to move on, with former ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, testifying on 15th November. She gave a chilling testimony about what the State Department looks like under Trump. She spoke at length about how she had been forced out of her job and her name publicly slandered by the US President.

20th November marked the biggest day in the impeachment hearings thus far, with former ambassador to the UN, Gordon Sondland, taking the stand. Sondland has been a key witness for Democrats, and he delivered on Wednesday. The biggest moment from his testimony occurred during his opening statements when, in a prepared remark, he said, “Was there a quid pro quo?”

As I testified previously, with regard to the requested White House call and White House meeting, the answer is yes.” This of course is very significant when it comes to the Democrats' case, as Sondland has a first hand account of what transpired after the infamous 25th July call, and has publicly deemed it an example of a quid pro quo.

Finally, 21st November saw testimony from Former National Security Council senior director Fiona Hill, and David Holmes, a top aide in the United States Embassy in Kiev. Hill talked about how the Trump administration has systematically undermined the normal US diplomatic process in pursuit of a shadow foreign policy. Holmes shared a similar narrative, stating that he was ‘convinced’ that the military aid had been withheld from Ukraine as part of the quid pro quo for President Trump. Both witnesses gave incredibly clarifying accounts of the administration's wrongdoing.

Throughout these two weeks of damning testimonies, the President has taken to Twitter to proclaim his innocence, as well as slandering all who have taken the stand. So far, the impeachment investigations and hearings have left the Democrats with the upper hand, but who knows how public opinion and the investigation will fare as the hearings proceed.

## Anti-government protests in Iran and Iraq

*Civil discontent in both of the neighbouring countries has led to violent demonstrations*

**Maeve Lane | International News Editor**

**It is irrefutable that the people of both Iraq and Iran, like the people of Lebanon, are standing up against corrupt governments in order to secure a better, fairer future for themselves**

On the 1st of October 2019, tens of thousands of Iraqis, who had organised on social media, came together to protest against the corruption, unemployment and governmental inefficiency which has prevailed in the country for decades. The protests have continued to the present day having accumulated hundreds of thousands of participants across the country and, regrettably, having left over 300 people dead as well as 8,000 injured. Over this violent period, the government has simultaneously aggravated protesters with their use of brute force and their sporadic suspension of Internet access, while also attempting to appease them, as seen for example with Prime Minister Adel Abdul

Mahdi's 13-point recovery plan, released in mid-October.

Yet the government has failed to silence the discontented protesters and, rather, the government's inept handling of the protests has led the initial frustrations with government corruption and inefficiency to escalate into calls to overthrow the administration and to stop Iranian intervention in Iraq. Yet neither Iraqi officials nor their overlords in Iran appear inclined to compromise. After more than fifty days of protests in Iraq, an ever-increasing death toll, and few signs of a willingness to compromise by the Iraqi government, there are growing fears among demonstrators of what is to come if their calls for change fail.

Meanwhile in Iran, anti-government protests also rage, and are being met with perhaps an even more severe government response than the Iraqis. On 14th November, nationwide demonstrations erupted in Iran the day after the government announced an abrupt spike in gas prices (up to a 300% increase in some cases), and a proposal for rationing schemes.

In response to the demonstrations, the Iranian government swiftly ordered a total suspension of Internet access, with a view to making it harder for the protesters to organise themselves and, additionally, to block information to the outside world on the events in Iran. For this reason, it has been very difficult for the media to get a full picture of what is happening there. However, according to a human rights group, Amnesty International, Iranian security forces have been using excessive and lethal force to crush the protests and set the minimum death toll at 106 after just four days of protests.

On 20th November, six days after the demonstrations began, President Hassan Rouhani claimed victory over the protests in the country. The veracity of the claim that the protests have ended is still unclear given the near-total shutdown of Internet has halted the flow of information out of the country, however work on the restoration of Internet access in Iran is, according to a cyberspace official, ‘gradually being restored’

and full access should be returned within two days, providing a clearer picture of the Iranian situation. Rouhani blamed foreign enemies, including “reactionary regional regimes, the Zionists, and the Americans”, for the recent unrest, while the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini added that “both friends and foes should know that we have repelled the enemy”.

It is irrefutable that the people of both Iraq and Iran, like the

people of Lebanon, are standing up against corrupt governments in order to secure a better, fairer future for themselves. All news we get must be taken with a grain of salt, as we see how news of Lebanon's protests reached the west. That being said, we will always support power to the people in Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran--no matter how the authorities and media tend to downplay it.







Lydia Hudgens photography

Nadia Aboulhosn is an American fashion blogger, model, and designer from Orlando, Florida. She is best known for designing clothing lines for boohoo.com, Addition Elle, and Lord & Taylor. Aboulhosn has been featured in many magazines, including Vogue Italia, Refinery29, and BuzzFeed. She is of Lebanese descent. Originally from the big town of Btekhnay in Mount Lebanon.

# Nadia Aboulhosn

## Blogger, Designer, Model

**Hayat Abdallah |**  
**Editor-in-Chief**

Q: How were you received by the Arab-American community when you first started your career? Have they presented any challenges? To what extent did they encourage you, if any?

A: I've really had nothing but love from the Arab-American community. Especially 10 years ago when I began on social media, I just think people wanted to see themselves in someone else. They wanted to feel like they could relate to something and feel represented in the fashion industry.

Q: You're averse to being labelled as a role model. How is that?

A: I didn't want to be labeled a role model at all a few years ago. I wanted to be myself, unapologetically, without feeling the need to be perfect for someone looking up to me. It's a cycle of unrealistic expectations sometimes. I'm just a normal, everyday girl who makes decisions based on what I think is best for me in that moment. In life, I'll make mistakes and I'll also make great decisions. I would hate for someone to make a

bad decision for themselves because they were emulating me. What is for me may not be for someone else. I think people expect celebrities to always be great role models and when they don't reach that expectation of what other people think they should be, then they're looked down upon. I'd rather people accept me for what I am. Now that I'm older, I do recognize that young people and peers may sometimes look up to me so I really do try to be the best version of myself. I'm not entirely against being labeled that anymore because I do believe certain things about me are admirable but I feel that I might always be hesitant to call myself one.

Q: What advice do you have for young women entering the modeling business and not looking like "traditional" models?

A: My advice would be to be authentic to yourself. You may get a bunch of No's before you get a yes. What they're looking for now may not be what they're looking for a month from now. The most brands or agencies can do is say no. I'm okay with hearing No's, it's upsetting at first but I never take it as a final answer. And most importantly, what other people are doing around you doesn't take

away from what you're capable of accomplishing or doing. This isn't a competition.

Q: Do you visit Lebanon often? What is your favorite thing about Lebanon?

A: I went in 2014 and it was absolutely gorgeous. I stayed a few nights in Hamra and then stayed in my family's town Btekhnay. I'm planning on hopefully going back in Summer 2020 to visit. All of it is beautiful from the food, people, scenery, and I can't wait to see more. There's just the sense of wanting to learn as much as you can while there, especially being from America. I take so much pride in who I am and where my dad originated from.

Q: What is 'home' to you?

A: Home is anywhere I feel most comfortable at. Some times life can get so hectic so I feel more a sense of home when I'm around people I love. Being with my parents usually makes me feel at home even though it's not really my house and we live in different states.

Q: What do you feel about the label 'Plus-sized'?

A: I use to question why the industry even needed the label plus size. I saw myself as a model, not a plus size model. Growing up, all I wanted

was accessible clothing in my size so I didn't understand why clothing brands had separate sections for plus sizes. If I saw something in size 0, I wanted it in my size too. Clothing brands should have size inclusivity and the plus label could be eliminated if they carried all sizes. But it's not really about what I personally think because for some people, the term plus size is empowering and an easier way to navigate while shopping.

Q: You started your blog in 2010, how did your audience change/grow since then? And what did you do prior to running your blog, designing, and modeling full-time?

A: Before my blog, I was working at a small Middle Eastern restaurant in a Mall food court. I had worked there from age 14-22. I was going to college full time to get my Associates in Arts degree. I began my blog half way through college. I would go to class full time, go to work, then after work, I'd stay up late working on my blog. Thankfully, my blog started getting recognition. I began modeling here and there, building my portfolio, and working on making a name for myself. My audience grew with me which was amazing to see. I remember being so excited to have

12 followers on my website. I think I was a fresh face back then that people felt they could relate to.

Q: Lebanon has a very narrow body image for women, with diet products and drugs being best-sellers here—how would you come to convince Lebanese society otherwise, seeing your success as 'plus-sized' woman—in both personal life and career?

A: I think there are so many cultures and countries that have a narrow body image for women. It happens in magazines, on TV, in the work place, on social media, on the street. It's everywhere. I would just hope that everyone tries to love themselves for who they are, whatever journey they're on. Each of us are so unique in our own way and we have to stop comparing and giving so much power to what other people think of us.

Q: You collaborated with 'Fashion To Figure' recently, and released admittedly stunning pieces, but would you consider targeting Lebanese women in selling your designs? (FTF does not ship to Lebanon)

A: Yes! Of course, I'd love to. At the moment, FTF is definitely working on being able to ship to different countries outside of the U.S.



# OPINIONS

## ON Body Positivity

## ON Jafet

## ON Unheard voices

## ON Restricted Student Life

■ **To Hell With Body-Shaming**  
*Mira Awar | Staff Writer*

Let us start with a simple question: how much is too much? Ask someone what he or she thinks of someone’s body, and you are most likely to hear “too”. Too skinny, too fat, too tall for a woman, too short for a man, too flat, too big, too muscular... The list is endless, but who sets the standard for comparison? With models and athletic influencers flooding social media, it is difficult not to feel insecure or uncomfortable in one’s skin. If Ronaldo’s abs and Jen Selter’s butt are our standards for comparison, accepting and cherishing our bodies would be almost impossible. When did we go wrong and started thinking that there is an ideal body to which we should compare others to? When we started thinking that the greater your number of followers on social media, the more attractive you become. As Gerrard Butler accurately phrased it, people are now searching for their own personalized “walking checklist”. Is he tall? Does she have cellulite on her thighs? Are his shoulders wide? Do her stretch marks show? Body positivity is a movement that encourages self-love necessary for both physical and mental health. Research has shown that having a negative opinion of one’s own body could lead to unhealthy diets, depression, and other destructive problems. While men make face criticism and often have issues concerning their bodies, or maybe even because of it, women face more societal pressure concerning their bodies. Men find it difficult to believe that what they see on the internet does not accurately depict reality. Numerous tools can be used to make things seem prettier than they are; with body makeup, tape, oil, professional cameras, and editing applications, anyone can look “hot”. Basically, the body type that men search for these days rarely even exists—it is a digital creation that is being admired and praised at the expense of authentic beauty. While body-shaming is unfortunately still common, it is becoming less prevalent. Recently, magazines and brands have started encouraging female body diversity; brands such as Inamorata and Aerie feature women of all different sizes and have stopped editing their models’ bodies in photographs. Plus-size models like Ashley Graham and Nadia Abulhosn and vitiligo model Winnie Harlow have made significant progress in bringing back women’s self-confidence and self-love. How much is too much, too little, or sufficient? Nobody knows, and nobody can, for no such thing exists. The beauty in our bodies blooms when we take good care of them, accept them, and love them regardless of their size. Be it a man or a woman: people are not objects. I am not a product in which you weigh pros and the cons. Perhaps it is time to change your objective from having what is considered beautiful to finding the beauty in what you have.

■ **Jafet: Loud vs White Room**  
*Sabine Bou Saba | Staff Writer*

Only a month in, and as the tables get filled and reserved within the first two to three hours of opening its door, Jafet already feels like the “It” restaurant all the students are trying to get into. I have personally been avoiding studying in the university library, although I find the White Room to be my perfect study spot. It is physically impossible for me to get my favorite table after 8 AM (yes, I do have a favorite table), it is always a mystery to know if your stuff will still be there when you come back from class, in addition to the everlasting parade of people walking up and down the aisles looking for a place to study. Although students often complain about the number of reserved tables, I think this is kind of warranted for. When you study for most of the day, but then have to get to class and have lunch, doesn’t it seem impractical to clean out your table and set it back up when you come back to study? You would also have to haul your books, laptop, coffee tumbler and whatever else you bring with you around the university all day long. I don’t think that the problem lies in our reserving the tables, unless it is done for a long period of time and without the intention to actually study there. That being said, there’s no denying that we need more study rooms: it is physically impossible for you to find a quiet place to study past a certain point in the day. It’s not clear, however, whether the students would be willing to give up Loud as their hangout spot, in order to create more study space in Jafet. A lot of people actually prefer the less silent and more casual atmosphere of that room. The students who enjoy Jafet Loud, don’t seem to be the same ones as those who like to have more quiet study rooms, and removing that room would undoubtedly upset them. But, is it really in the right place? Out of all buildings, in Jafet Library? The function of a library isn’t to provide hang out spots and, honestly, having a huge room called “Loud” in a library does seem kind of like an oxymoron to me. The campus and Bliss Street provide a variety of hang-out spots as is, and we do need additional study rooms that would logically be placed in the library. However, the number of people crammed into that room on a daily basis does say something about the students’ opinion on the matter though: don’t turn Loud into White Room 2.0!

■ **The Screams for Change and the Unheard Voices**  
*Celine Dibo | Staff Writer*

Who would have thought that after decades of theft and corruption, our generation would witness the collapse of a castle of lies? It is undeniable that we have seen great acts of love and courage these past few weeks. Indeed, the Lebanese are fighters. When women hold hands, creating a shield to protect the masses, when people rally to create a human chain to show unity, others are encouraged to join the fight. However, not everyone is ready to pay the consequences, and worse, many cannot afford to. Lebanon is entering a state of emergency, and the outcome is unpredictable. The foundation of a working government is trust. What to do when that base shatters? Rebuild. Sadly, we don’t have the resources to do so. At the brink of an economic crisis, everything that’s happening was expected: citizens would want to drain their bank accounts, taking refuge in the safety of dollars. During this month, productivity was low, it is increasingly difficult to import supplies and food, and one must be aware of what he gives up. Education is our sharpest knife. That is why I do not believe TV stations should pass around a microphone on the streets 24/7. They must be tools of information, through political programs which can guide the people. There are always two sides to a coin. In this case, one side was put forward, while the other one did not get the chance to appear. It is not a good call to stop all activities and freeze the country; such actions hurt citizens more than politicians. It is not right to close roads or harm the environment by burning tires. These are acts of indirect violence, and they harm allies first. The pressure must not only appear on the streets, but it must also be a constant control over decision makers to enforce and write laws that will assure growth and stability. We have also witnessed increasing peer pressure in universities and workplaces. It is difficult to have a point of view opposing the revolution. If you refrain others from speaking up and bringing fresh ideas to the mix, are you any better than the people you want to dethrone? When oppressed, minorities want to rebel or leave. These voices might be the key to many problems, but right now, they’re pressured into silence.

Not everyone is marching and holding catchy slogans — many fight to bring change in their own way. Opening schools and universities does not equal supporting the system. It means educating youth, no matter the challenges and struggles. The past is long gone, and every second matters. We cannot live in denial of what will come. Dark days are on their way, and we will have to sacrifice a lot to stay afloat. For our generation, these events are not only a privilege and a promise for a better future, but they are also a wake-up call.

■ **Restricted Student Life**  
*Fatima Moussa | Staff Writer*

For weeks now, Lebanon has been revolting, the streets have not been this full for ages, and the sounds of the people cannot and will not be silenced. In light of what’s happening, AUB has taken an honorable stand by closing its doors through most of the revolution and allowing students to take over the streets, practice their right of protest, and make their voices heard. As we come back to AUB, we come back with more power, but we come back restricted. The American University of Beirut, the same one that takes pride in “delivering a world-class education, while supporting the right of free speech and expression” according to our administration, has restricted and suspended all events on campus until further notice. Proposals are not to be accepted from any club or society, and it is unsure of when clubs and societies will be able to start submitting proposals – that already take long enough to be processed – for acceptance. Why should AUB students refer to unofficial means to hold events when they can hold these events with the approval of the administration, the same one that calls for us to partake actively in the student life? The student body has never been more paralyzed, and when the time has come for us to be holding events, to educate ourselves on how to revolt, to deal with the pressure that came with the days of political unrest, and to re-activate student life, we have been denied the right to do so. This is not only about bake-sale stands and trivia nights. It goes far beyond that. It extends to the lectures that group intellectuals together to come up with analysis and formulate opinions on controversial topics. It extends to panels, ones that allow us to learn the mistakes of those who were before us. And finally, it extends to debates that remind us, participants and crowd, of who we are, what we root for, and serve as a reminder of the existence of the other. What makes AUB the safe space it is, is its ability to create a smaller Lebanon for all of us AUBites to be ourselves in and, more importantly, to freely express our opinions in. By suspending all student activities on campus, and with the absence of a current student board, do we have a voice, or are we silenced now more than ever? And from this, we should ask ourselves: When AUB is advocating for us to take on the streets and make our voices heard, is it afraid that we take on the campus and turn it into our new revolution?



# How Protesters Are Taking Urban Design into Their Own Hands (and why this matters)

**Sarah Moritz | Lifestyle Editor**

Urban design is an integral part of how a city chooses to present itself globally while reflecting priorities domestically. It is an unfortunate reflection then, of the country's *laissez-faire* attitude, that what was meant to serve as a public space – the modern, picturesque, and concrete downtown – caters primarily (if not entirely) to the wealthy local and global minority, while alienating the majority of those who live here.

To those living in places where there are ample public spaces, try to imagine life without any of them (large public parks, for example). Not only is Lebanon void of these welcoming spaces, but citizens are living in a country with an institutionalized system specifically designed to maintain inequality and separation among citizens, where neighbourhoods and villages are still commonly seen as divided by religion. Even if people wanted to naturalize a fluidity of exchange between class or sect, the structure of the system and urban design serve as significant challenges from doing so in any significant way.

Memory and urban space are linked, and Lebanon's past – being spatially divided by military barricades, fractured by competing militias, symbolically and literally marked by religious symbols, insignia, posters, political graffiti, and other religious-political

propaganda, where balconies and windows were transformed from parts of living spaces into places of war and back again – is very much a living memory today through wounded physical infrastructure, lasting physical marks, and neighbourhood connotations.

In a country where sectarian identity still dictates where many choose to live, even if some (or most) would prefer to live harmoniously together, the still-present realities from a divisive past combined with an institutionalized sectarian present, make it very difficult for those in Lebanon to move forward together.

Which is one reason why these protests have taken such a significant meaning. While fighting against corruption, those mobilizing have used this time to take back their land throughout the country. Once closed-off buildings have been turned into multi-use spaces, and streets and parking lots into places to eat, smoke shisha, listen, and dance to live music, or to watch live dancers and performers. Micro-communities have been created in the forms of campsites to ensure people are present around the clock, while physical homes, complete with furniture, have been erected in the middle of streets and intersections, providing a space for open-air house parties and living spaces to ensure the continual, peaceful, blockage of traffic. There are even yoga classes being held on main roads and intersections.

Through these creative actions, protestors have been able to carve public spaces out for themselves, providing a space free from the physical barriers of neighbourhood segregation, breaking down the institutional segregation that the government has created, allowing for a sense of community and solidarity as citizens under a united flag. Every day the people continue to mobilize, is another day people are voicing their collective refusal to be subjected to injustice at the hands of their government.



## Staying Sane During the October Revolution

**Zeina Al-Khalil**

As we all know, Lebanese people are standing united under a common goal: the abolition of sectarianism. The protests – now collectively known as the “October Revolution” – have undoubtedly impacted every Lebanese citizen, both positively and negatively. On the one hand, we not only have hope that positive changes are coming, but also are fighting for these changes under one flag, as a united country. While the fate of this revolution is yet to be known, one cannot help but feel a little optimistic. On the other hand, we underestimate the anxiety this unpredictable situation has brought with it. With university closing and re-opening unexpectedly, mid-terms postponed or cancelled, deadlines pushed, and the term being pushed into December, students are bound to feel concerned about their academic future. As exciting as it is to be involved in such a historical time, it is also stressful for all of us. It is crucial that we find productive ways to cope with the stress and give support to those who need it.

The uncertainty that has come with the October revolution has been extremely tough on many. Students are unaware of what the future holds for them, let alone those who call Lebanon home, who are wondering what this time may mean for their country. As a

result, it has become increasingly difficult to focus on studies and adhere to a specific study schedule. Things can change overnight, and most certainly are. With the untimely death of the revolution's martyrs, such as Hussein Al- Attar and Alaa Abou Fakher, and arrests and detaining of other protesters, we can no longer be sure what direction this revolution will take. Will it remain as peaceful as protestors claim it to be? Or will violence and bloodshed overpower our attempts at keeping it this way? There is definitely fear of our peaceful protests turning into a battlefield that is beyond our control. We are confused, sad, and agitated. We can no longer think straight. At this point, it seems as though the only thing left to do is live day by day. Many are convinced that the best option is finding a balance between studying and protesting. As tempted as we may be to use this time to study and get work done, we must not forget our duties as Lebanese citizens, and as people who support the cause. We must fight for our rights. We must continue standing by our brothers and sisters as they protest for better days.

“Kelna bel hawa sawa” is a phrase commonly used in Lebanon that translates to “we are all in this together”. Reminding ourselves and others that these feelings are normal is necessary for us to come to terms with the situation. We must remember that most students

are probably in the same mindset as us at the moment. Below are some tips on how to cope with it all, given by AUB students themselves!

- “We don't know what might happen, so stressing over the unknown won't do you any good. Try your best to live day by day and hope for the better.”
- “No change will happen overnight. We need to be patient and stay focused on our ultimate goal. Kellon ya3ne kellon!”
- “Don't stay calm, express yourselves on the streets!”
- “Think about what you can do. If your answer is nothing, then stop worrying, and if you have an answer, go do that.”
- “Just stay safe and turn off the TV.”

Whatever you choose to do, and however you choose to react to these events, just remember that you are not alone. We will make it out alive eventually, it will just take time, patience, and continuous solidarity.

# Consent and Rape Culture

**Darius Shams | Staff Writer**

Throughout the past few years, topics on sexual assault have been prominently discussed, essentially due to the rise of the #MeToo movement. It all started with the numerous cases brought forth of celebrities taking advantage of their star power, most of whom were proven guilty of several sexual offense charges. Sexual assault has always been an issue in society, though according to the ‘National Sexual Violence Resources Center,’ an astonishing 63% of sexual assaults aren't even reported to the police, and less than 25% of the perpetrators are convicted, 1/5 women have been raped, and a third of all women have been sexually assaulted in some form or another. These shockingly appalling statistics reflect the prominence of sex crimes in western countries that have a more progressive and developed judicial systems compared to Eastern societies where very little is done to help these victims. In most cases, the victim is afraid to speak up due to the fear of judgement of their friends and family, fearing the repercussions of the culturally conservative eastern standards.

Very few cases are taken into consideration, due to the narrow perspectives of what people assume sexual assault entails. There is a variety of myths about sexual assault such as: “Sexual assaults don't happen that often. Men are not victims of sexual assault. Revealing clothing or behaving in a provocative manner is supposedly ‘asking for it,’ denying that rape cannot happen between partners, and utilizing an individual's sexual past against them to fundamentally have your way with them.”

## Sex Ed: When will we learn?

**Grace Mouannes | International arts & culture junior editor**

In 1995, United Nations institutions and a multitude of experts under the administration of the Educational Center for Research and Development put together a course for eighth graders to be taught about puberty, sex, contraception and everything one needs to better explore a healthy sex life. This course was supposed to be implemented in the Lebanese curriculum, but it faced severe backlash and was deemed too “western” and “immoral”.

Sex education proves to be an essential component of modern-day education. This is traced back first to teenagers often feeling disoriented when they reach puberty due to a general confusion regarding their metamorphosing bodies. There is something to be said about society shaming women for their menstrual cycle and making it a taboo subject, not often talked about and dismissed. This is where sex education is a great way for everyone to learn the biology behind periods and their importance in one's life.

More so, a lot of people don't know how to have sex. Sex has also been rendered such a taboo subject that some couples don't know how to have intercourse, with the help of sex education people will be able to learn how to go about discovering their sexual preferences. Teenagers, especially female teenagers, will accept that masturbating is okay and is a way to know their needs in order to have a better sex life. Sex education is also crucial in the fight against negative LGBTQ+ attitudes. With sex education, teens will learn that not everything follows a heteronormative, binary model and that it is okay to navigate your sexuality. Heterosexuality is not the default sexuality. In addition, learning more about contraceptives will help prevent many

These statements are used repetitively to justify the actions of the perpetrator, who is typically a member of your family or a close friend. “Till this day in Lebanon, marital rape is not considered a convictable crime.

I was inspired to open up a dialogue after hearing multiple stories from people I know and are close to me about their assault experiences, and not a single one of them got justice for what had happened. As a fellow college student, parties are a prominent aspect of our social lives, where individuals let loose due to alcohol consumption, many of whom are taken advantage of in their intoxicated state. Many of the victims under the influence may be unable to say no and are not properly aware of their surroundings and their body language is often ignored. According to the statistics of Women's Health, over eleven million women in the United States have been raped under the influence, high, or as a result of being slipped rape drugs such as Roupaline. Side effects of Roupaline are amnesia, intense relaxation, and is considered to be a sedative, in most cases others assume that it was the alcohol that made the individual pass out, acting as if the victim made the choice to become intoxicated to a severe degree. It is never your fault, it is essential to open up a dialogue, and conceptions revolving around sexual assault may be controversial but anyone who has been a victim to such actions, you are not alone, and it is crucial to ask for help when needed.

unwanted pregnancies and will in turn prevent unsafe abortions – made unsafe because of their illegal status.

Last but not least, sex education is needed to teach people about safe ways to have sex. Sex education will shed the light on the necessity of getting tested, using appropriate protection, and communicating with one's partner about sexually transmitted infections. In a report “National health statistics report in Lebanon” by the Institute of Health Management and Social Protection at Saint-Joseph University, it is noted that in 2009, in a sample of 7560 female participants, only 53.7% use contraception when engaging in sexual activities. This speaks volumes on the number of reported cases of STIs in Lebanon. In 2018, for example, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's annual Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance Report, there were 1.7 million cases of chlamydia, 580,000 cases of gonorrhea and 35,000 cases of primary and secondary syphilis.

By teaching sex education, the stigma around sex slowly fades, which gives more opportunities for people to explore themselves and others with consent. More importantly, this encourages survivors of sexual harassment and/or rape to speak up, as they will be less shamed when society understands that victims are not at fault. Sex education is the much-needed step this country needs to take on its path to better education, equality and justice.

Note: if you need to get tested places such as Marsa, a local NGO, can help. For any questions that you might have about these topics, you can call the A project, a secure hotline that can help answer any range of question.





# Sum of its Notes

Abbas Mahfouze | Staff Writer

After about half an hour of performing, the band goes backstage for an intermission. A few moments pass and a whiteboard is wheeled onstage. Sabbah emerges from the curtains donning a jellabiya and Oud instrument as Hawi follows. Sabbah proceeds to offer a humorous and questionably accurate explanation of Mohamad Abdel Wahab's "مضناك جفاه مرقده". The two subsequently perform their rendition of the piece before the rest of the band joins them for the rest of the show.

It is through this type of self-aware humor and performance that the band truly sets itself apart.

Fer'et Aa Nota, a band composed of Petra Hawi, Bassel Hamadeh, Ali Sabbah, Zaher Hamadeh, Jihad Zgheib and Raghid Jureidini, merges eclectic influences and styles to offer a completely unique portrait of modern Lebanese youth culture.

Their on-stage antics pave way for their stellar musical performance. Traditional Arab scales intertwine with Charlie Parker-worthy saxophone solos. Vocalist Hawi, commands the crowd by reinventing the allure and charm of traditional Arab performers, fitting with the image of a modern, independent woman; the band constantly interacts with the audience.

As an interlude, they would always have an interesting or informative comment up their sleeve about

whatever song they're playing next, mixed with banter. Band members never force their interactions with the audience, which adds to how natural their performance feels, giving the impression that the audience is within a private hangout and rehearsal session.

After a 2-year hiatus, Fer'et Aa Nota made their way back to Metro Al Madina. The dimly lit underground theater was where the band released their first album, Hijazz, back in 2014. Aa Nota had pioneered, and has continued to elaborate and reinvent, their musical style as a fine balance of occidental and oriental music. This isn't Massari singing Fairuz or Snoop Dogg collaborating with Tamer Hosny, mind you. The band seamlessly integrates Arab musical conventions and scales into a Western playing style and instrumentation.

While rigorous rehearsal sessions have guaranteed that each member's performance synchronizes perfectly into their compositions, Fer'et Aa Nota are at their greatest when improvising. There is an allure of Bebop in the band's tendency to reduce their playing to a looping melody over which each member can play freely.

Whether it's Hawi's spectacular vocal range which continuously morphs itself to fit the tune, operatic and haunting at moments, humorous and sharp at others; or how Hamadeh can turn pressing keys on a piano to deeply moving melodies; or Sabbah's roaring

guitar solos, think of Mark Knopfler and Farid El-Atrach playing a 4-handed guitar; or Hamadeh hopping around the stage as he delivers incredible bass lines one after the other; or Zgheib's perfectly timed percussion whose rhythm could make Whiplash's Fletcher doubt his own musical timing; or Jureidini's soulful and contemplative saxophone playing, capable of transforming Metro Al Madina into a New York jazz club in just a few notes. Fer'et Aa Nota is much more than the sum of its parts, the band combines the bursting creative energy of each member to create something that goes much beyond.



“The band seamlessly integrates Arab musical conventions and scales into a Western playing style and instrumentation.”

# Let There Be Theories!

An overview of conspiracy theories in the revolution

Mohammad Kaaki | Local News Junior Editor

Periods of civil upheaval in this era are incomplete without the circulation of conspiracy theories, just like birthday parties are incomplete without cake.

Piecing together chunks of available information to form theories consistent with one's image of the political situation is a consoling process to some speculators. However, a different bunch do not seek consolation, and may have intentions more nefarious in nature. Others are compelled by their hubris to speculate on the situation. After all, it takes a stroke of genius to invent theories encompassing the intricacy of the political situation over a 2-hour shisha session.

Regardless of any underlying motivations, all theories have impacted society over the course of the years, way beyond the October 17 Revolution. Individuals unqualified to critically reflect on the delicate political situation have found themselves at the forefront of forming conspiracy theories. Conspiracy theories are part of the Lebanese culture and they have been accepted by some because of the consistent gaps in information created by secretive and obscure politicians. These theories travel through all

mediums, be it social media platforms or televised interviews, and in so they are legitimized.

Comical theories, for instance, are in no short supply. Oftentimes, such theories are formed without the intention of providing comic relief. These theories inevitably become one of the many forms of entertainment present in the revolution. The theory about foreign municipalities funding the revolution is an exemplar of comical conspiracy theories. This soon was used as a tool of resistance by civilians, as they incorporated it into their chants and announced that they are the only funders of the revolution.

Unfortunately, numerous conspiracy theories are especially dangerous if they are believed. Such theories appear plausible to the intended recipients, typically prompting them to take a certain course of action. For instance, during the very first few days of the Thawra and occasionally, Whatsapp messages spread about gangs from different sects approaching Amin Mosque or Riad AlSolh square, threatening to cause harm onto the protestors, accomplishing the objectives of the theorizers by instilling fear. The influence of said theories are truly pernicious.

Some conspiracy theories may be thoroughly grounded in facts but overlook aspects or

information necessary to complete the image. It is possible for a conspiracy theory to be true. Nonetheless, all theories should be subject to careful scrutiny. After all, information, false or true alike, yields the capacity to bring about considerable change.



# ‘Tell me Who I am’: The Moral Question

What do you do when you're the only one in charge of the truth? Is information really yours if it concerns someone else?

Christopher Chalhoub, Staff Writer

Tell me who I am is a documentary featuring Alex and Marcus Lewis, twins who have had to take a rather interesting turn in life. When he was eighteen, Alex got into a coma induced by a motorcycle accident. When he woke up, he had lost all recollection of his memory. He did not know who he was, who his parents were, he only knew one thing, one person: his brother Marcus. And Marcus would be the only person he trusts.

This gives Marcus a huge responsibility: he has to reconstruct his brother's life. This should come easy, shouldn't it? This should start off by teaching one about the basics: words, behaviors, social traditions then move to recalling family holidays, birthdays, and life firsts. Marcus drew a beautiful picture of their childhood: he showed Alex pictures of summer vacations to France, trips to the beach and described a loving, caring and thoughtful mother. But all these memories were nothing but lies. Marcus ended up constructing this whole new life for him and his twin, not for the pleasure of manipulating his brother's life but to protect Alex and himself from the horrible truth: sexual abuse. Their mother was actually a

pedophile, who sexually abused both her children up until they were fourteen.

Was it ethical for Marcus to lie? He was the only stable element in Alex's life. Anything Marcus said, Alex would believe, why wouldn't he? He didn't trust anyone else, Marcus was his twin, and they both shared the same childhood. In the documentary, Marcus explains his reasons behind omitting such important facts about his brother's life: he did not want to give these awful memories back to Alex and he wanted to believe it never happened. It was both a selfish and selfless act. When considering the motives and the memories, it is hard to decide whether he was right or not, it is not an easy situation.

Whenever someone has some kind of power over the other's beliefs, an important moral dilemma emerges. We encounter these situations on a day-to-day basis, but they are not as life changing as the brothers' story. This points to bigger issues such as media censorship and propaganda. Is it ethical for the media to impose censorship on part of the truth? Such power cannot be given to anyone.

Tell me who I am is available on Netflix.



“Marcus ended up constructing this whole new life for him and his twin, not for the pleasure of manipulating his brother's life but to protect Alex and himself from the horrible truth: sexual abuse.”

# Pop and Politics: The integration of Pop Culture in the Electoral Process

Elections are times of high tension when everything seems to be magnified. Candidates must keep up with strategies to satisfy their respective audience and get their ideologies across. One strategy is doing so through creative expression and art, specifically music to their benefit.

Marwa Salameh | Staff Writer

The election of Donald Trump has proven that any person can run for office – and win – as long as they have fame and political strategies in their arsenal. It comes to no one's surprise, after the 2016 presidential elections, the United States has witnessed an increase in the number of celebrities who are voicing their interest in joining the next presidential race (Kanye West, Dan Bilzerian to name a few). Even though candidacy is yet to be officially confirmed regarding celebrities running for 2020 elections, they still play a prominent role in politics.

One way is through candidates and their music. Candidates' official playlists are filled with songs that reflect their political ideologies, in one way or another. For example, Bernie Sanders' playlist composed of music revolving around themes of giving power to the people- quite literally- with songs like: 'Power to the People' by John Lennon. The music reflects Sanders's sense of democratic socialism, portrays his campaign's themes and highlights them. Music, thus, is used in a way to appeal to the voters in a manner that leaves a prominent mark in their subconscious regarding the candidate, for songs' lyrics are more likely to be stuck in one's brain rather than the points they made during the presidential debate. Presence of celebrities is not only restricted to their art. Take Hillary

Clinton for instance, in the final Friday of the 2016 elections her campaign was filled with A-list stars like Beyoncé and Jay Z.

Celebrity politics has been on the rise in the past years and it could possibly shift tables with the increased percentage of young voters; here is where celebrities' influence is on full display.

According to a study by Hollander, young voters in particular tend to seek political information from non-traditional sources like celebrities. Thus, it makes sense to see celebrities leading the candidates' campaign crusades; ensuring candidate's voices reach a bigger and more diverse audience. Moreover, having a celebrity actively participating in one's campaign taps on evolutionary psychology's justification for likes and dislikes. By being associated with a famously liked and idolized celebrity, candidates appear more approachable and easier to like which in turn ensures them more votes.

With the 2020 US presidential elections getting near, politics are still being treated in the way of selling a product to mass consumers who deem pop culture more interesting than political issues. So, until your favorite celebrity runs for presidency, keep a lookout for their appearance in the campaigns.