

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

MEZZANINE

by
NAYLA SAMER HAMZE

An Undergraduate Graphic Design Research Project
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts
to the Department of Architecture and Design
of the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
May 2021

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

UNDERGRADUATE SENIOR PROJECT
IN
GRAPHIC DESIGN
SUBMITTAL FORM

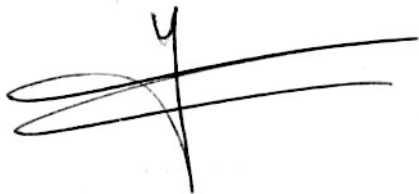
MEZZANINE

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NAYLA HAMZE

GD 406/407 – FINAL YEAR THESIS I & PROJECT
[FALL/SPRING 2020-2021]

ADVISOR: YARA KHOURY NAMMOUR

Approved by Thesis Advisor:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a vertical line on the right side that intersects with several horizontal and curved strokes on the left side.

[Signature]

Yara Khoury Nammour, Assistant Professor
Architecture and Design

Date of Thesis final presentation: May 11, 2021

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- ArDT Project (Architecture Design Thesis)
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 Three years from the date of submission of my project.

*Nayla
Hamze*

May 27 2021

Signature

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge everyone who played a role in my academic accomplishments; from my family, to supportive friends, my advisor and all professors who lent a helping hand.

ABSTRACT

Title: Mezzanine

Prior to the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, the Lebanese theatre community and scene in Lebanon was very much booming. The war took quite a toll on this art form; leading to a lack of documentation, funding, heightened censorship, and an overall decrease of opportunities for the Lebanese theatre community.

Today, in 2021, despite a crashing economy and global pandemic, the local theatre community manages to silently strive, however, it does not have the audience that it deserves. This research project proposes to give this community a voice through a digital platform. The digital realm allows communities to reach their audiences and users through the simple tap of a button.

Mezzanine is an unpublished website that aims to further expose the contemporary Lebanese theatre scene, whilst archiving the poorly documented local theatrical material of the past. This platform offers an archive containing a wide variety of plays from the 1940's till today - allowing the user to filter their options as they please. Users can discover local theatrical happenings through the events section, and read about this community within the blog. Finally, the platform offers a history section in the form of a digital timeline, giving this history the recognition and exposure it deserves.

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project inspiration

Prior to the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, Beirut was known to be an art and culture hub in the Arab world. It was at its prime in terms of music, plays, film, literature and all other forms of art. Unfortunately, this era was cut short shortly after the war ended, resulting in a lack of documentation of a lot of this artistic production, lack of preservation of art and cultural centers, and decreased funding for the arts. Today, the theatre scene in Lebanon suffers due to it being a neglected art; it is no longer easily accessible as a form of entertainment to the public.

On that premise, I began to research ways in which theatre can be accessible to a wider audience, and came across 'mobile theatre'. Essentially, mobile theatre's are theatre's that do not have a fixed space, they utilize public spaces in order to perform, making them accessible everywhere, to all people. I quickly learnt that local theatre-based entities in Beirut tend to lack in number, and in funding. Therefore, I found that creating the identity of a fictitious mobile theatre based in Lebanon, would be an easily accessible and cost-efficient way to revive this art form in the country.

This design research process led me to expand beyond a physical tangible identity. I found that going digital would allow for the exposure of contemporary artists and archives from the past to reach the audience in an even faster manner.

project inspiration



project development

Rebranding an existing permanently closed/abandoned theatre

PROS:

Brings back nostalgia for visitors

CONS:

Existing history of the theatre can be limiting

Creating my own entity is more exciting

Re-branding would require the entity to physically re-open

Lack of cost efficiency

Branding the identity of my own fictional mobile theatre

PROS:

Mobility allows for use of public spaces as the stage, rather than a fixed auditorium

CONS:

Lack of cost efficiency

Might be too alien to the public sphere

Lack of accessibility for many

Funding issues

Online platform: archival website of past and present performances

PROS:

Accessibility for all audiences and exposure for all theatre practitioners

Fastest way to reach users nowadays

Could archive both audio and visually recorded performances

Bookings online

CONS:

Limits audience to only those who have access to the internet

case studies

ZOUKAK THEATRE COMPANY - Studio in Karantina

- Non-hierarchical structure
- Theatrical interventions
- They focus on marginalized fractions of society
- Main themes: Gender, sexuality, history, power and religion, death and immortality, childhood and violence, re-enactment.

MINWAL THEATRE COMPANY - No fixed place

- Implement performances everywhere
- Create programs for the youth to be more engaged with theatre

MASRAH AL MADINA - HAMRA STREET

- Furthering Hamra's cultural and art-scene revival.
- "Contributed to transforming Lebanese theatre from its elitism to a more accessible and popular form".

AFAC (Not a theatre, but a fund for arts & culture)

- Support individual artists, writers, researchers, intellectuals, as well as organizations from the Arab region working in the field of arts and culture.
- They support all sorts of theatre performances, the one above is "The Confession" by Syrian playwright Wael Kadour.

GRAND TEATRO INTERVENTION 2020

- This intervention was a tribute to theatre and Beirut
- It was a projection of an opera performance on a curtain in the abandoned Grand Teatro, Downtown
- A utilization of public space
- "Since the 1975 civil war, the Beirut based Grand Theatre had been stripped to its bare skeleton due to deliberate infrastructure damage and has been left to dwindle ever since. There was no attempt to resurrect it. Many locals didn't even know of the space until the 2019 revolution forced open its barriers"

case studies

I conducted an interview with 2 past members of the AUB theatre club (Omar Zaa'tara and Razan Abuismail) to challenge the idea of theatre in public spaces. Important points include:

Omar Zaa'tara:

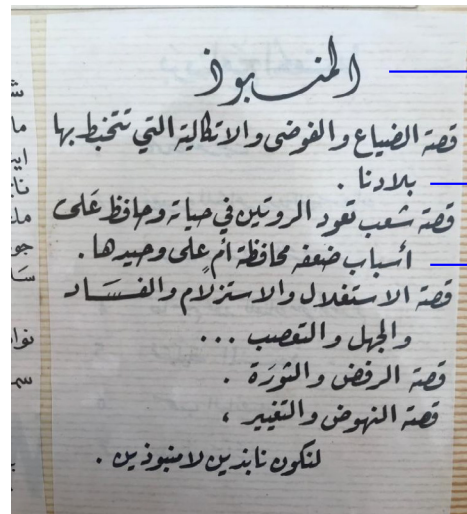
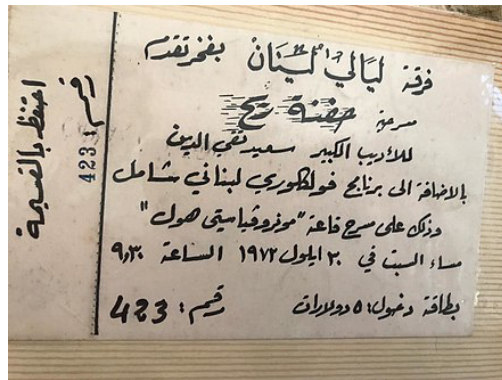
- I believe theatre needs to adapt to people. It needs to adapt to communities and how communities are. So, I believe when you bring a piece or art, a performance, you need to see what the community wants/understands/thinks and do something based on that, because you're creating it for them.
- Here in the UK, there's so much support. There's a lot of money invested in the arts. It's great, because you can make your project freely and perfect it. But in Beirut, because we lack resources, you start thinking out of the box. How can I use the resources that I have to make something?
- Every single space can be a theatre. I've only ever had one play on an actual conventional stage. I've produced plays in classrooms, in living rooms...

Razan Abuismail:

- You always have to be creative in Lebanon to come up with places to use as theatrical spaces for performances. I once produced a play that took place in Nicely 103.
- Your space of choice should fit well with the theme of your performance. Second, you have to think of the logistics, is it doable and realistic to transform this space? And third, think of your target audience. How far is it? Not everyone in Lebanon has a car. Lot's of students only attend events within walking distance. How much are you charging for your tickets? Are you charging for your tickets at all?

arab theatrical visual language

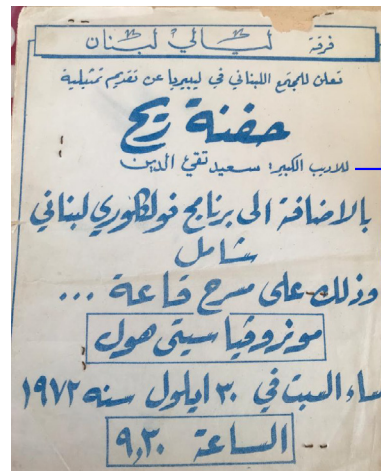
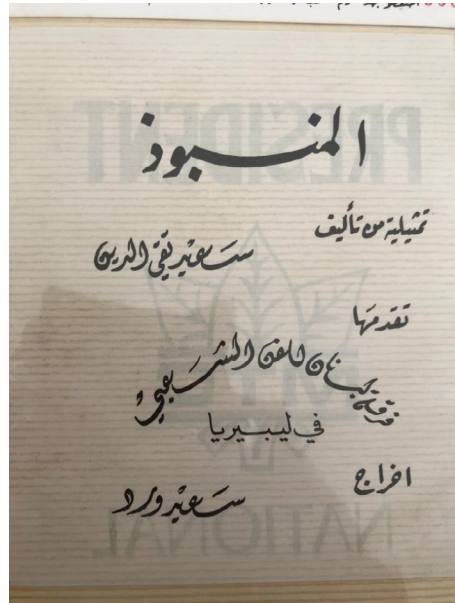
Old Lebanese press ads and tickets, these are for the shows of local playwright Said Takieddine (he died in 1960)



nastaaliq

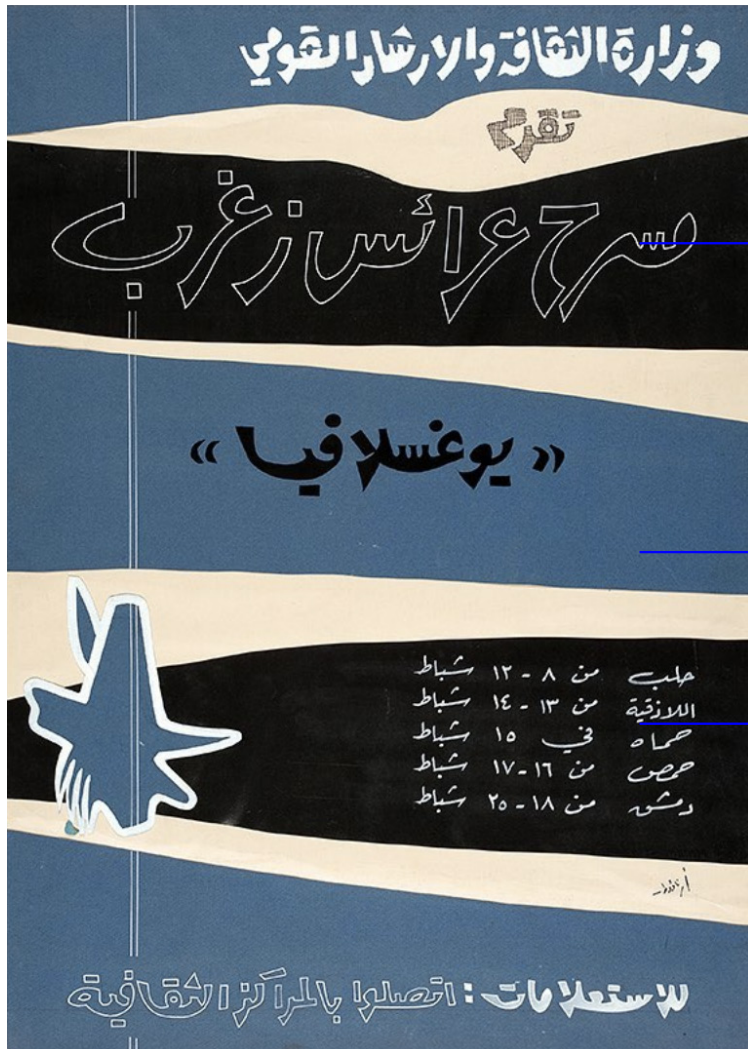
ruqaa

hand written, completely typographic



black/blue and white

Posters from Syria



مسرح عرائس زغرب

custom
lettering

3 colors

handwrit-
ten
details



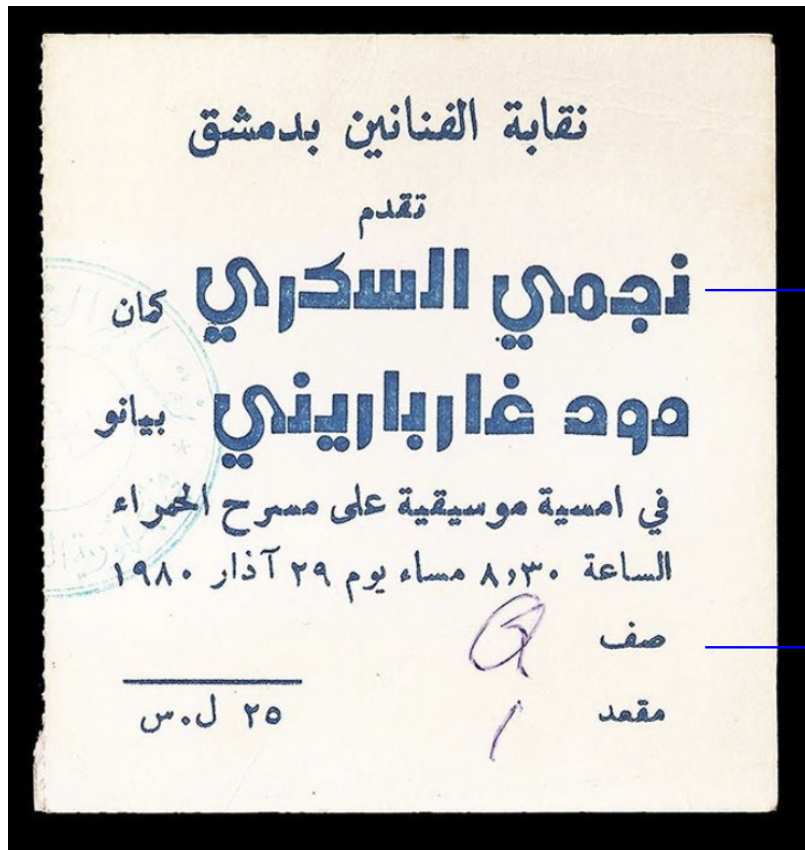
paint
texture

lettering

hand
written

الفخ، ١٩٦٢

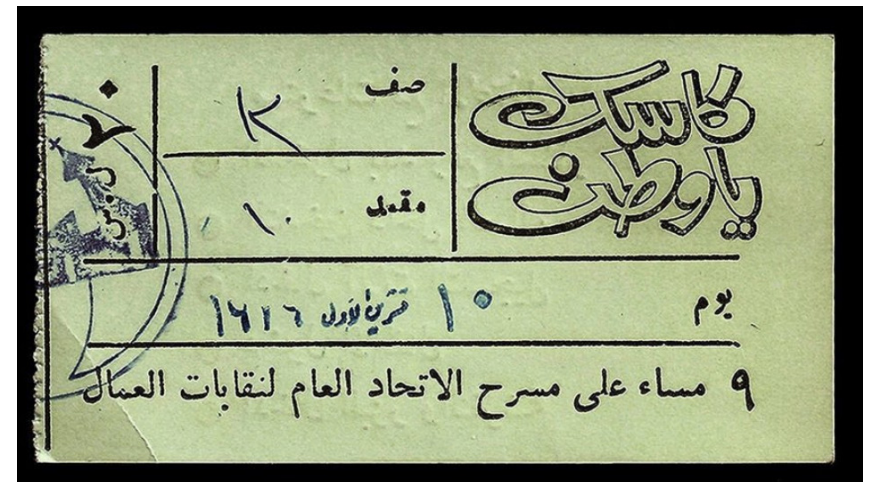
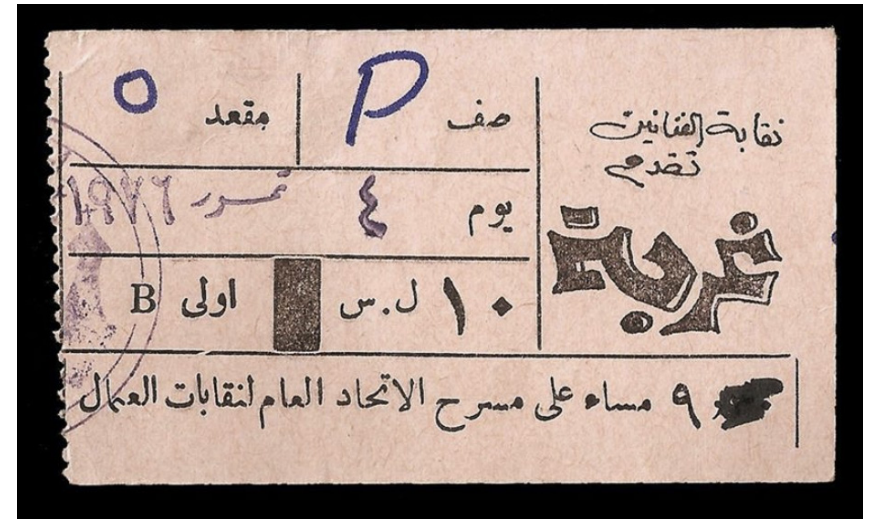
Tickets



disconnected

handwritten details (seat and row)

Concert ticket, damascus, 1980



Press ads



typographic, minimal illustration

Theatre announcement in Lebanon, 1957



No arabic, looks like it could be an ad for the US

Cinema rivoli press ad

Architecture of some abandoned theatres in Lebanon
The architectural elements could develop into visual graphic references

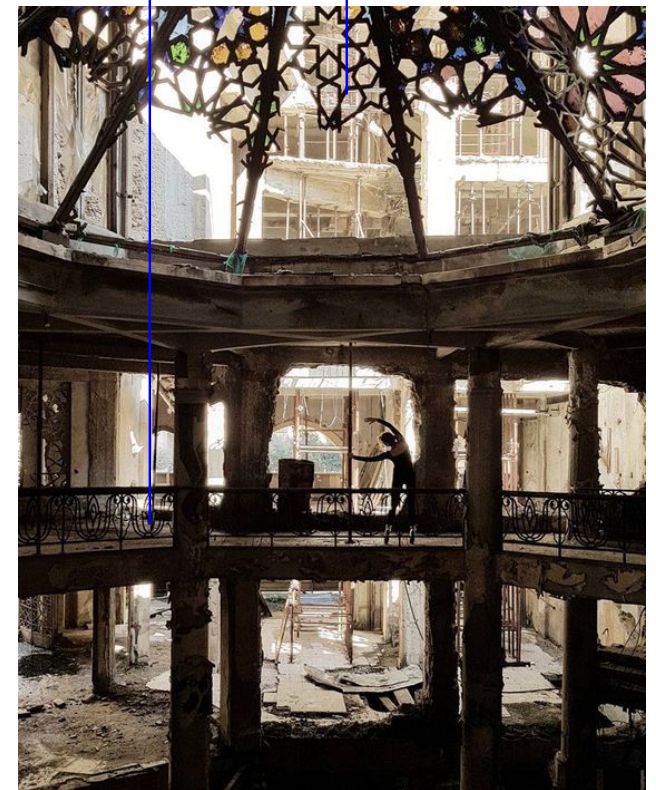


Cinema Rivoli, Tyre



floral window patterns

Grand Teatro, Downtown



patterns on the balconies
arabesque elements

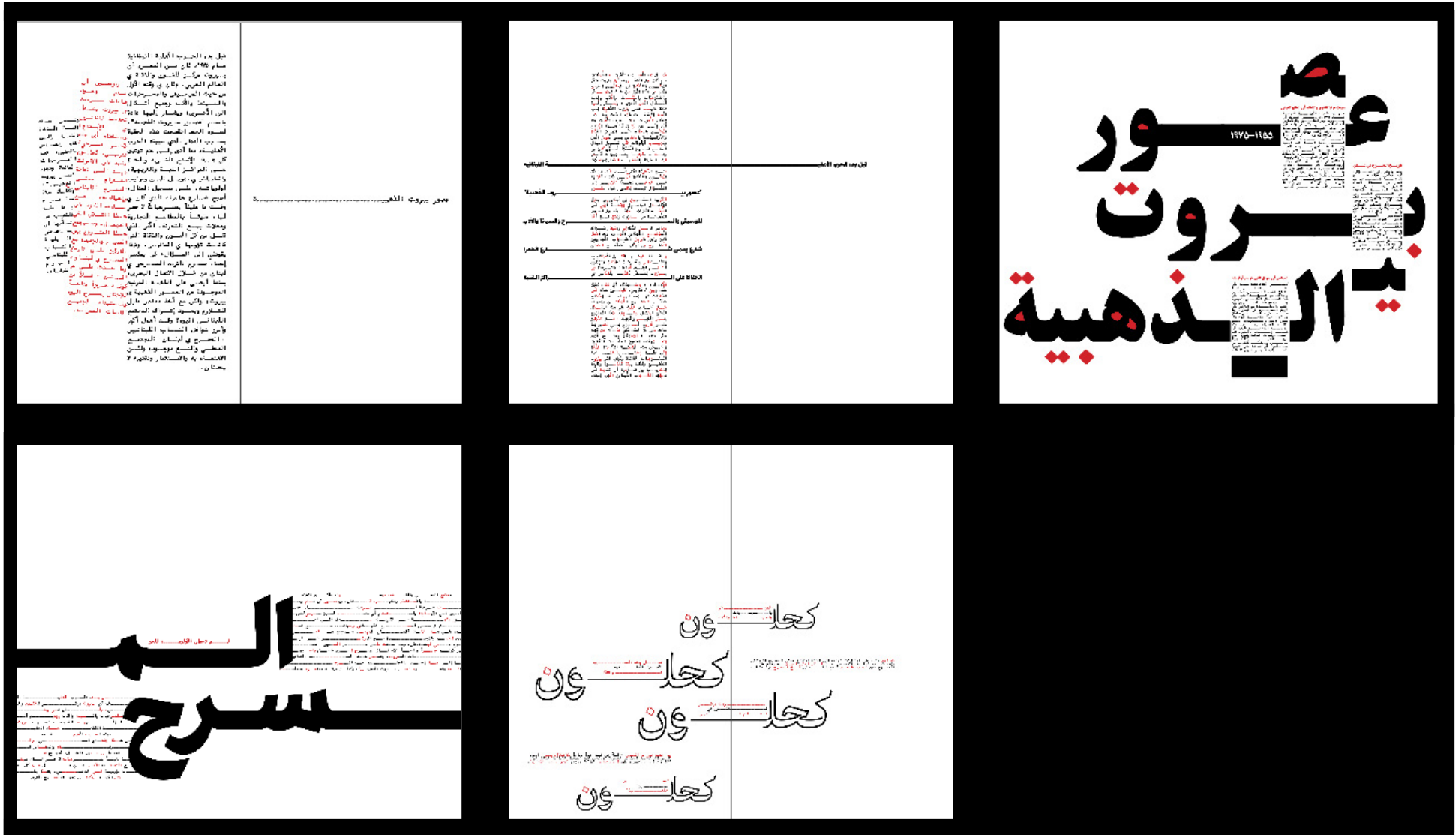
Also Grand Teatro

sketches and experimentation



كجالتون

كجالتون



مسرح بيروت

الفن

مسرحيات

السينما

بيروت

مسيح

قبل بدء **الحرب الأهلية** اللبناني عام 1975، كان من المعروف أن بيروت مركز الفنون والثقافة في العالم العربي، وكان في وقته الأول من حيث الموسيقى والمسرحيات والسينما والأدب وجميع أشكال الفنون الأخرى؛ ونشأ إلهاماً عادة باسم **عشور بيروت الذهبية**. لسوء الحظ انقضت هذه الحقبة بسبب الحرب الذي سببته الحرب الأهلية، مما أدى إلى عدم توزيع كل هذا الإبداع الفني، والحفاظ على المراكز الفنية والترفيهية، وانخفاض في تمويل الفن وترسيخ **أولوياته** على سبيل المثال أصبح شارع **حامرا** الذي كان في وقت سابق مليئاً **بمسرحيات** لا حصر لها، مليئاً بالمطاعم التجارية وملاهي بيع **التجزئة**، الأمر الذي قلل من كل الفنون و**الثقافة** التي كانت تزدهر في الماضي. وهذا يؤدي إلى السؤال: كيف يمكن إحياء المسرحية المسرحية في لبنان من خلال **الاتصال** المسرحي، بينما يُعفى عن اللغة العربية الموجودة من العصر الذهبية في **بيروت**، ولكن مع أخذ معاصر فاسل للتأزم ويعود إلى المجتمع اللبناني اليوم؟ وقد أجدهم أكبر وأبرز شواغل الشباب اللبنانيين - **المسرح في لبنان**، المجتمع المحلي والشعف موجود، ولكن الاهتمام به والاستثمار والتقديره لا يحدثان، ويعتقدون أن عدم وجود **فضاءات مسرحية** في بيروت يشكل تحدياً للفنانين في الإبداع واستخدام **أدب** فضاء كجزء **مسرحي** للتعبير كطموح منسوبة على الإنترنت كهدف التي أعادة اختراع تعنى المسرح اللبناني وإحيائه، مع تسليط الضوء على هذا الشكل الفني **المجهول**، وسيجمع هذا المشروع بين الفن والتجديد مع التركيز على تاريخ المسرح في لبنان، وما حدث على المسرح - فضاء عن كونه مجرد مكاناً للاحتفال بمسرح اليوم **وإستهدافه** لجميع الفئات العمرية، وتسعى هذه **المنصة** الثانية اللغة إلى خلق إحساس بالجنس، تضم المسرحيات القياسية، وتضم "عشور بيروت الذهبية"، وكذلك لغة **معاصرة** وقابلة للتقريب من شأنها أن تعاقبة على **قائمة الشباب** اللبناني اليوم لئلا.

الموسيقى والمسرحيات والسينما والأدب

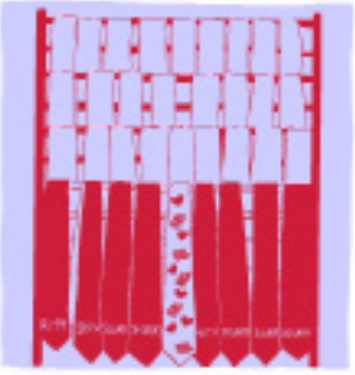
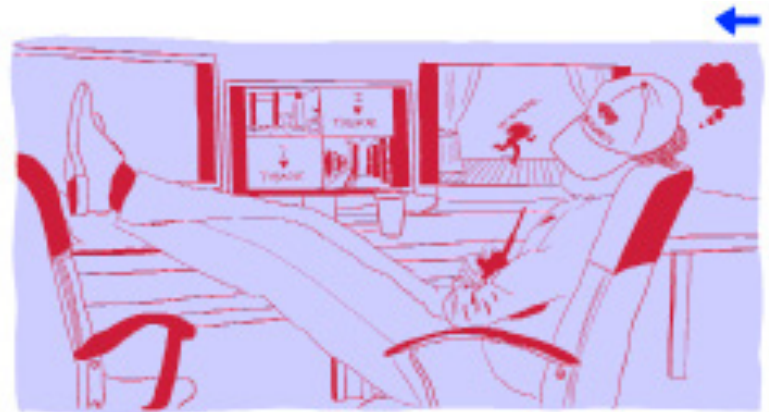
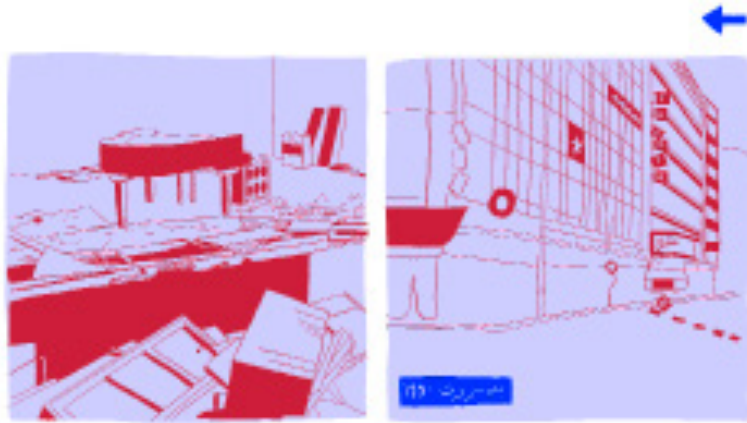
1900-1950

مهلت مسرحية - **النقاش**
 طريق - **بطل** - **مطلوع**
 رح المسرح - **رح**
 كلاً ما لوقد - **الترفيه**
 لبتا على - **الاعتراض**
 لي لل - **كنيسة**
 يتبع - **للقبالفنون**
 رحية - **فسي** - **نهاية**
 ام الدراسات - **قامت**
 ات بي - **البروت**
 اج مسرحي - **فسي** - **عام**

رغم الحرب الأهلية

By the early seventies, at least five theatrical companies had gained mass appeal in Lebanon. Roger Assaf, Nidal Achkar, and Antoine and Latifa Moutaka were experimenting with avant garde theatre in the early 1970s. The internationally renowned Caracalla Dance Theatre was founded in 1970. Romeo Lahoud produced a series of musicals starring, Salwa Al Katrib, such as Singof Singof in 1974 and Bint El Jabal in 1977. The Rahbani brothers also continued staging musicals, like Ya'ish Ya' ish (1970) and Sahn al-Nawm (1971), especially at the Piccadilly Theater on Hamra Street. Despite the war, theatrical productions continued albeit moving from Beirut to safer locations in the northern suburbs and the coastal city of Jounieh. A series of plays that centered around the folkloric character, the fool of Chanay, were produced by Nabih Abou Al Hosen and staged at the theatre of Casino du Liban. Also, Romeo Lahoud continued to produce musicals with Salwa Al Katrib and so did the Rahbani brothers who introduced new singers to the public, the sisters Ronza and Fadia Tom.

1970-1980



Naming process

زمن	خيالي
حكواتي	شهرزاد
برواز	فكرة
خشبه	ميزانين
الوسط	كاراجوز
صندوق الفرجة	حكايات
بداية	إطار
ستار	بالليل

The lowest, closest balcony in a theatre, panoramic view, bilingual

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میزانین میزانی



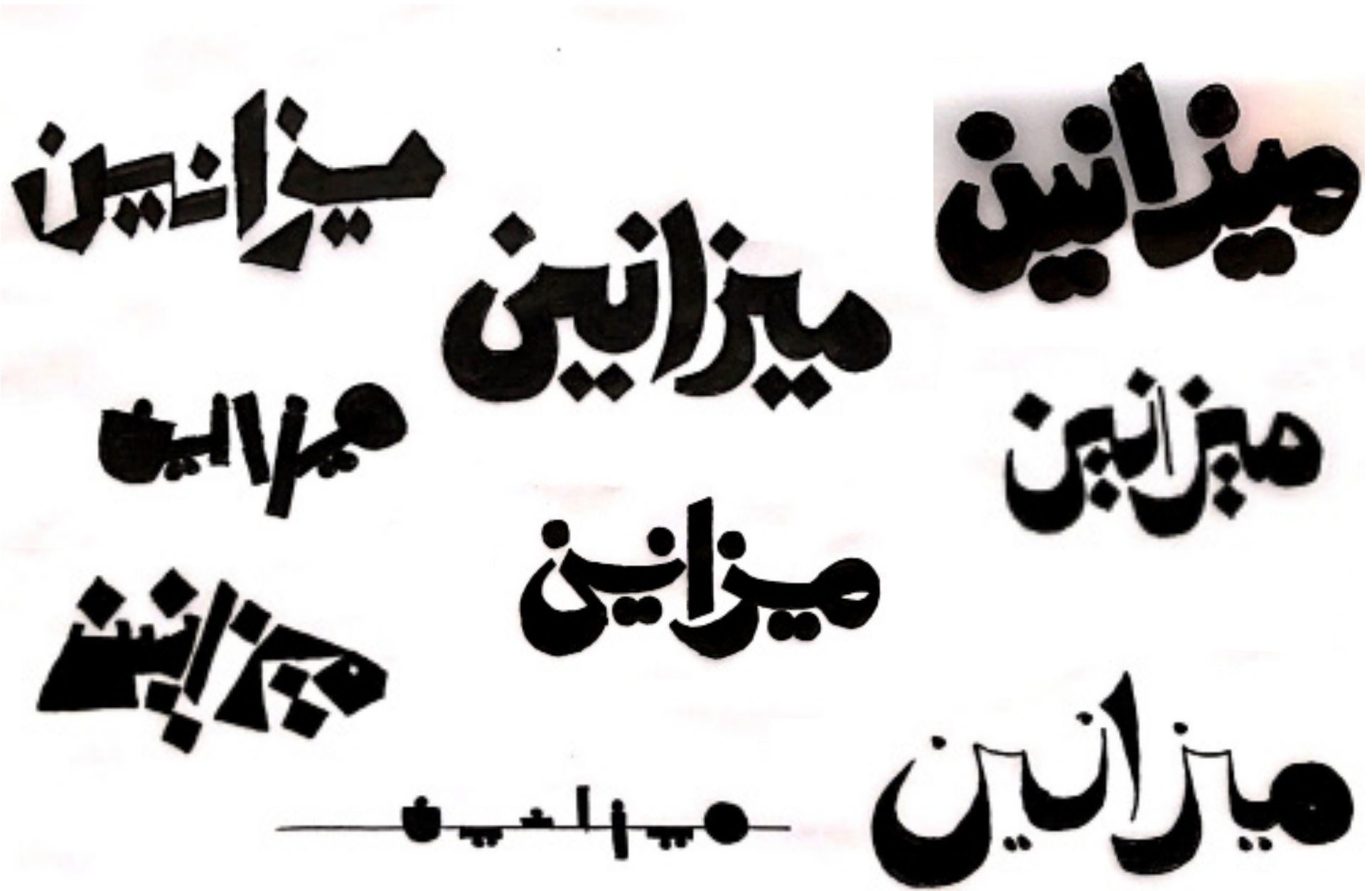
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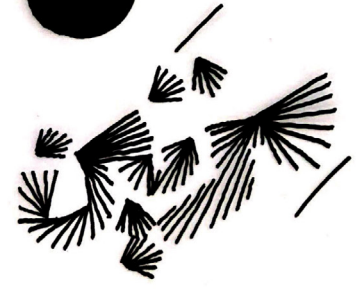
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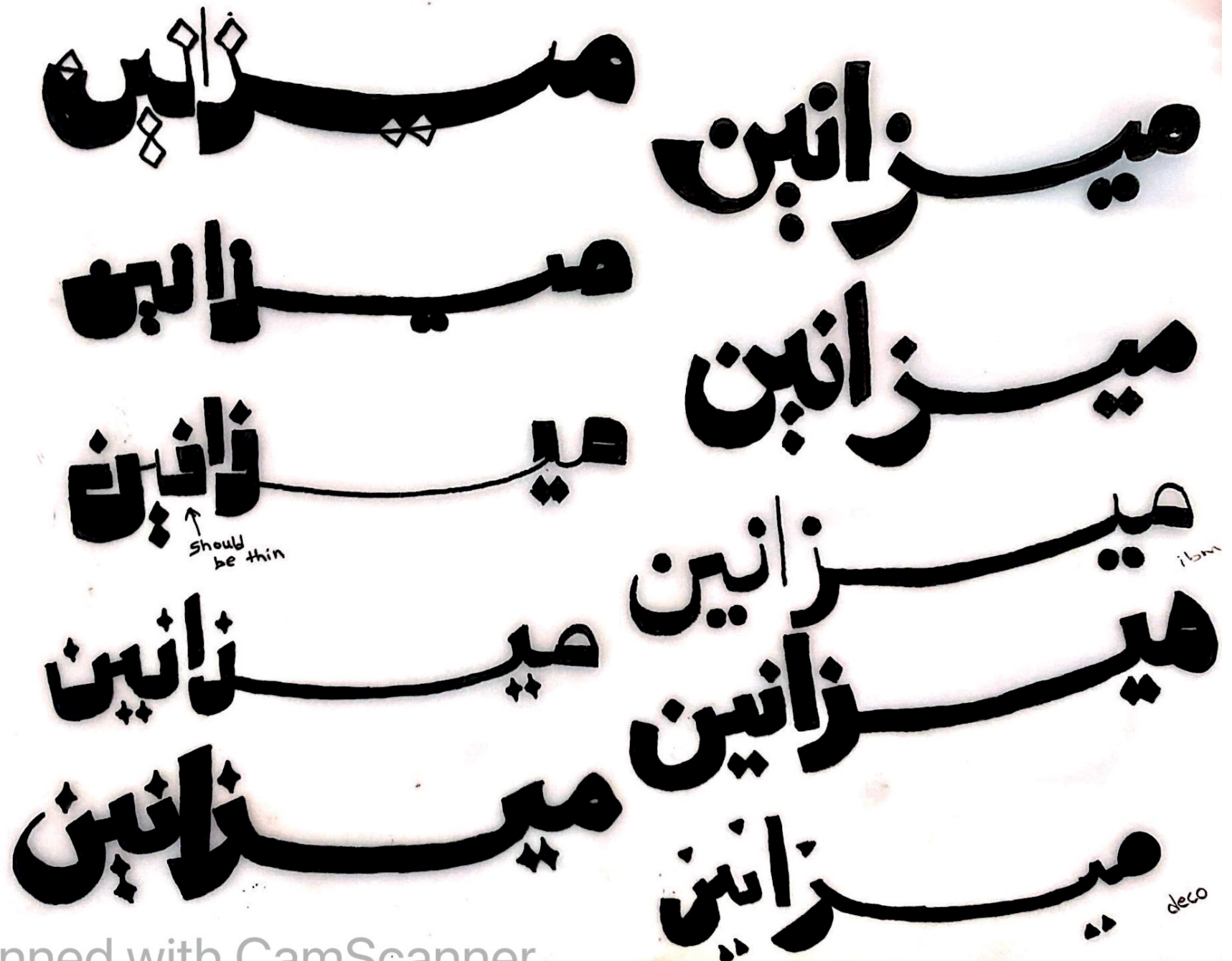
مَزِينِي

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Scanned with CamScanner

with CamScanner







مِزَانِيْن

مِزَانِيْن mezzanine

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mezzanine

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mezzanine
mezzanine.com

mezzanine

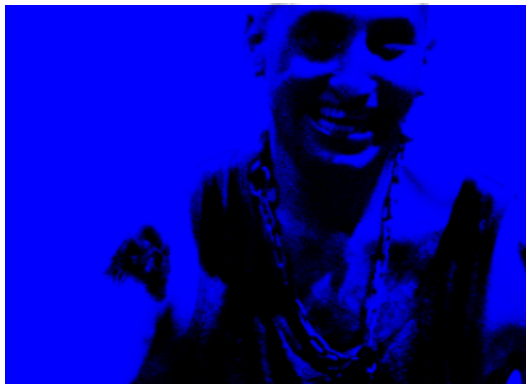
mezzanine

mezzanine

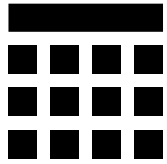
Final bilingual logotype



Treatment of images



Iconography and platform details



Date



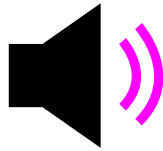
Search



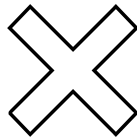
Filter



Time



Audio



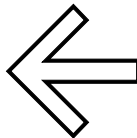
Close



Location



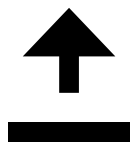
Video



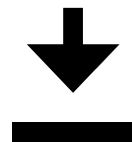
Right/left



Ticket



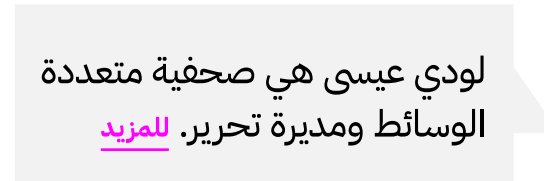
Share



Download



Location



Biography

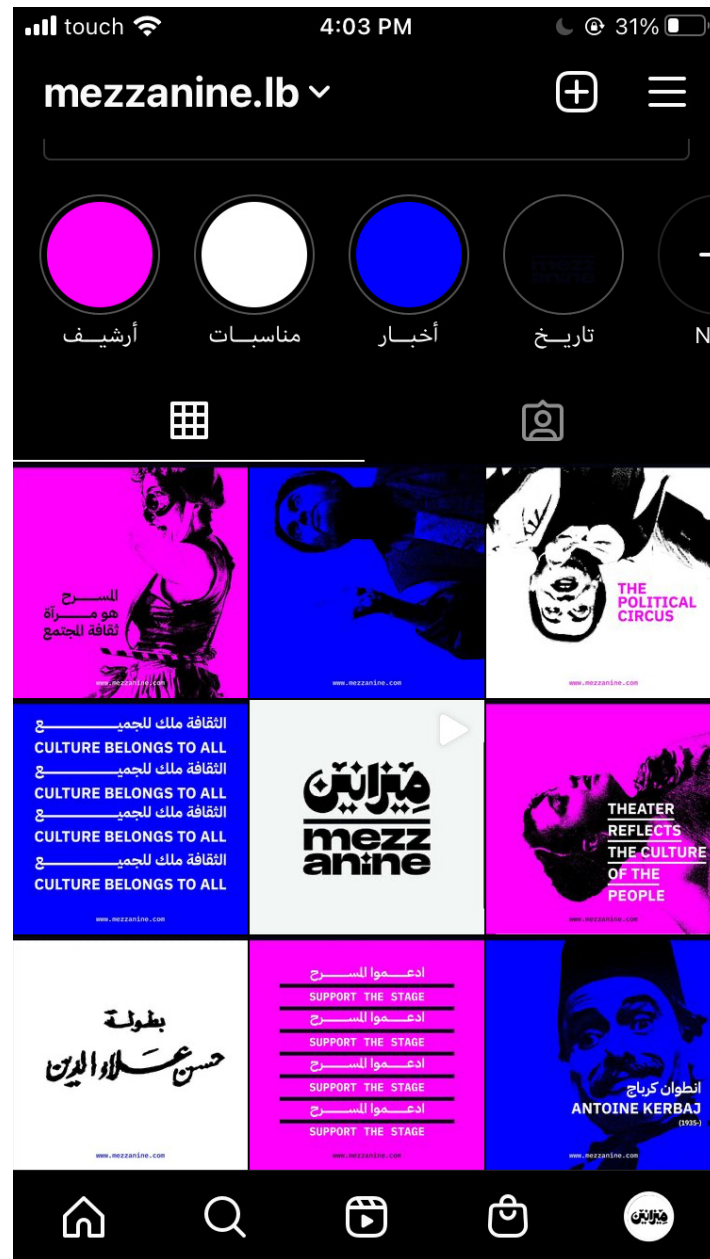
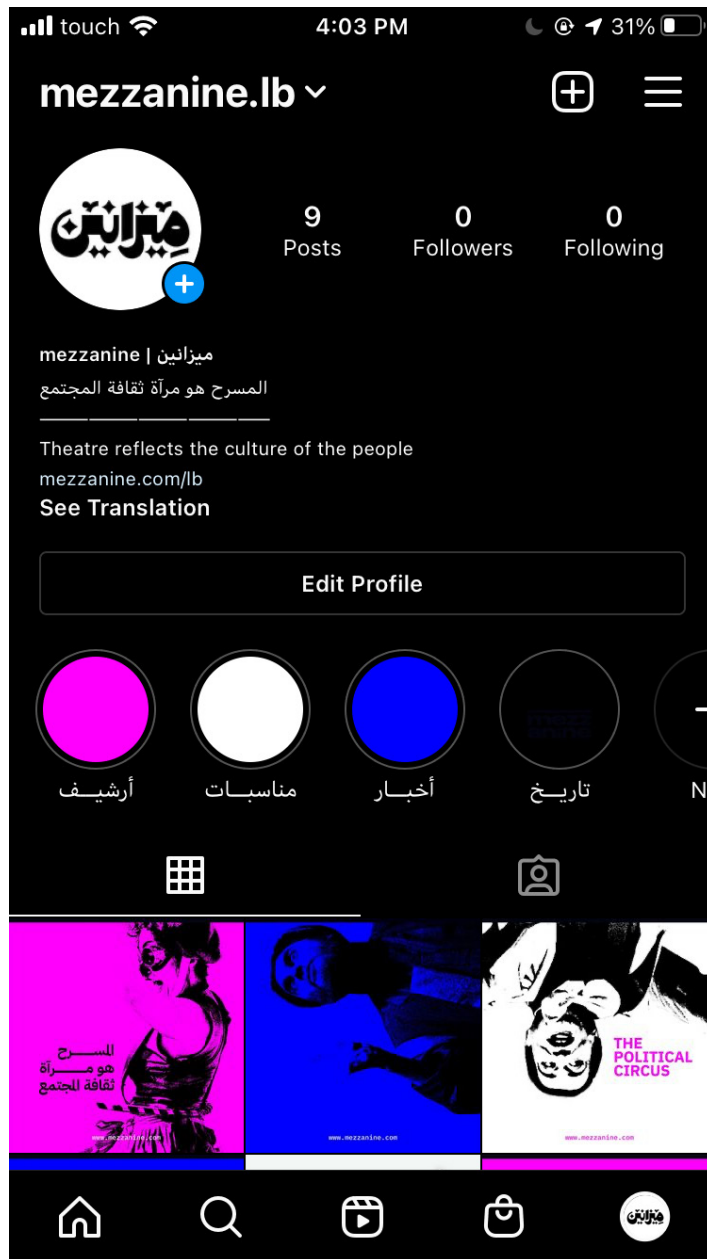


Share article

Responsive devices



Social media



final project

The final unpublished website is in the form of a screen-recorded video of a full experience of the website. The final product is a prototype Arabic version of this bilingual platform.