



AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUB Press Introducing *Leaving/Staying*: A Visual Exploration of Lebanese Migration

The American University of Beirut (AUB) Press announced its new release, *Leaving/Staying*. This book dives into the complex lexicon of Lebanese migration, exploring twelve colloquial words that capture the choices, tensions, and realities of staying or leaving. Taught by renowned artist Jana Traboulsi, third-year graphic design students at the American University of Beirut developed this collaborative project as part of their Visual Theory seminar. The project combines theory, critical thought, and creativity within a practical framework, expanding the traditional role of graphic design into a tool for social and cultural analysis.

The result is a culmination of students' dissection of words like *paspōr*, *barra*, *ṭār*, and *ṭalle* which feature prominently in this lexicon, each presented through visual storytelling that reflects the nuanced meanings of migration for people in Lebanon. Each word was chosen and interpreted by students through in-class brainstorming, leading to unique pictograms that illustrate layered connotations. By pairing unrelated news headlines with images to offer fresh perspectives, students examined the media's role in migration narratives and designed social media carousels that communicate each word's story through visual language. The result is a reimagined vocabulary that captures Lebanese migration experiences in ways both accessible and impactful for those who have grappled with the concept of leaving versus staying.

Enriched with daily expressions, local literature, and academic insights, the lexicon includes words like *waṣṣṭ* (suggesting care or dependency) and *qārib* (symbolizing perilous migration) alongside a transcribed lecture from designer Marwan Kaabour. Together, these contributions reveal each word's significance within Lebanon's social fabric and its diaspora. By weaving words, images, and context, *Leaving/Staying* invites readers to see how language—both verbal and visual—mediates the Lebanese migration experience, offering a nuanced perspective on movement, resilience, and identity.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 750 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 8000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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