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Product Designer Najla El Zein Pays Tribute To Beirut

By Ayesha S. Shehmir
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Helping to rebuild lives and homes in Beirut, artist and product designer Najla El Zein's newest series has now been collected the world over

In an attempt to provide relief to victims of the devastating August explosions in Beirut, product designer Najla El Zein has created 6.07 – a series which pays tribute to her beloved city and the nobility and strength of its people.

Made from plaster sand, the 30-piece collection is named after the exact time of the blast. “Lebanon was not at war and no one was prepared for this tragedy,” says Najla. “At this specific time, lives of thousands of people have changed forever. I wish to pay tribute to Beirut, a city that made me become the woman and artist that I am today.”

The last piece from the collection has just been sold, and all proceeds raised will be donated between Beb w’ Shebbek, a local NGO helping provide doors and windows to displaced families; Beirut Heritage Initiative, an organisation restoring buildings built between 1860 and 1930 and Beit el Baraka, a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing food, medical services and education.



Najla El Zein. 6.07. 2020. Plaster sand. 26x29.5x15.2cm. Edition of 30

“In addition, proceeds of two pieces were also donated to the crowdfunding campaign called ‘Got to have Milk’ by Rania Abboud who provided milk to children,” shares [Najla](#). “Unfortunately, even the most basic needs are not affordable anymore due to the current financial crisis and the political turmoil.”

An emotional relief for Najla, the design process followed the philosophy of Lebanese filmmaker and art historian, Gregory Buchakjian, who once said: “The reconstruction is not only a reconstruction of the stones. It is a reconstruction of the hearts and the minds of the people.”

The touching project was a collaboration between Najla and [New York-based Friedman Benda](#), a gallery who helped to raise awareness through their wide platform. “Indeed, it was said to me by one of the acquirers that the first function of art is to transcend history and its tragedies, which I find to be so beautifully put,” expresses Najla.

“It is heart-warming to see the contribution from all of these wonderful people who have acquired the pieces, from all over the world. Qatar Museums acquired multiple ones with the only objective of supporting the cause through the means of art. I am very grateful.” [najlaelzein.com](#)