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Remembering Helen Khal

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Jean-Marie Cook, Office of Communications | media@aub.edu.lb |

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The vibrant personality of painter, art critic, and author Helen Khal lived again in a memorial celebration held in Assembly Hall on May 20, 2010, the first anniversary of her death in 2009.

Throughout the memorial, images of the artist's life and work were shown on two large TV screens on either side of the stage in Assembly Hall. The clips, taken from two interviews with Future and NBN TV shortly before her death, showed Khal painting, walking around her rooftop apartment in Ain Mreisse, and giving her views on art, painting, and the purpose of life to the interviewer.



The speakers all emphasized Helen Khal's extraordinary human warmth

Speakers revisited Khal's extraordinary personality and the wide range of her talents. Not only was she a gifted and dedicated painter; she was also a writer with a singular aptitude for choosing the right word, a gift which lent exceptional vitality to her art criticism.

First speaker President Peter Dorman, introduced by mistress of ceremonies Lina Michalani, recalled Khal's teaching at AUB from 1967 to 1976, and noted two former students currently among the faculty--Leila Musfy of Architecture and Design and painting instructor Afaf Zurayk of the Department of Fine Arts and Art History.

Other speakers included friends and colleagues: Laila Baroody, president of AUB's President's Club; former student Professor Musfy of the Department of Architecture and Design; Cesar Nammour, art collector and critic, and author of an upcoming book on Khal's art criticism; Jean-Marie Cook, retired member of the English Department; and Vice President Emeritus and painter Samir Tabet. Tarik al-Khal spoke of his personal relationship with his mother.

Extolling Khal's painting and writing, the speakers all emphasized her extraordinary human warmth, her generosity in friendship, and her enthusiasm for life.



Helen Khal taught painting for almost ten years at AUB

Not only did Helen Khal teach painting for almost ten years at AUB, but she also served in later years as copy editor of *AUBulletin Today* (now known as the *AUB Bulletin*) and AUB's alumni magazine *MainGate*.

The memorial for Khal was followed by a reception and exhibition of some of her paintings at Agial Gallery.

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