

2015

US scientists from University of California find evidence life on earth may have begun 4.1 billion years ago

1987

Black Monday: Dow Jones stock index falls 508.32 points (22%), 4½ times the previous daily record

1943

Streptomycin, the first antibiotic remedy for tuberculosis, is isolated by researchers at Rutgers University



1926

Russian Politburo throws out Leon Trotsky and his followers



21-year-old Lebanese poet Rabab Chamseddine holds the trophy she received after winning the Beirut Poetry Slam 2018, Beirut

Beirut has hosted previous slam competitions, but this year's event offered something new. The winner of the slam will travel to Paris next year to participate in the World Poetry Slam: the first ever Middle Eastern representative to compete at the event, going up against poets from Australia to Germany. Chamseddine will be this representative, after winning over the audience and judges with her performance of "Not Your Type of Woman" and "To Honey," heartfelt original poems exploring the complexities and fluctuations of identity in the Middle East. The prospect of performing next year at the world slam as the Middle East's first ever representative brings the young artist both anticipation and anxiety. Despite her dedication, the 21-year-old is conscious of entering an international stage unaccustomed to performers like herself

...tive writing class. "I wasn't that confident about it," Chamseddine said, "but I performed in front of my class and got amazing feedback."

From that day forward, Chamseddine dove into poetry, writing about her identity, family, country and beliefs.

Lisa Luxx, a British-Syrian poet and one of the judges, said of Chamseddine, "She had urgency, she really meant it, she needed to say it, she was speaking with purpose, she wasn't just speaking because she feels like writing a poem."

Before performing her final poem, "Not Your Type of Woman," Chamseddine asked the audience, "Have you ever been in love with someone and no one gets it?" The question received a unanimous 'Yes!' from the young artistic Beirut crowd.

Her poem explores a deeply private love, her tone almost taboo. It opens:

Halfway through the poem she reveals, "I'm in love with a woman and her name is so safe in my

mouth ... Beirut."

"I don't see [Beirut] as a city," Chamseddine explained. "I see it as a person who is trying to be understood. Maybe that is why I have such a connection to it, because I too want to be understood."

She criticized those who complain about it, saying, "People say Beirut is so shitty, there are so many problems, there is so much garbage here. [but] Beirut is not doing a thing. You are ruining the city."

Luxx, who moved to Beirut only a few months ago, attested to the effect of Chamseddine's performance: "It had everything that made up a poem that just never left your system."

She added, "For me, she is talking to the Western world, to the people who told me, 'Don't go there, Beirut is dangerous.'"

Chamseddine's first poem, "To Honey," was a reflection on faith and family. She told Al-Monitor, "I always bring my family and religion into

my poems, because these are two things that are a part of my identity, and I am still trying to figure out who I am."

She added that despite her introverted nature, these complex and controversial subjects can be questioned and challenged through her art. "Not all truths are to be told," she said. "There are somethings that can [only] be expressed through poetry."

The prospect of performing next year at the world slam as the Middle East's first ever representative brings the young artist both anticipation and anxiety.

"It is exciting, but it is a huge responsibility," Chamseddine said, "You are coming from a place that people don't understand. People have such huge misconceptions about Beirut and about the Middle East. You need to make sure you are just perfect."

Despite her dedication, the 21-year-old is con-

scious of entering an international stage unaccustomed to performers like herself. "The veil adds an extra thing," she said, gesturing to her hijab. "With the rise of Islamophobia and all this, it is kind of hard to find your way in the world. Even in Lebanon you have this problem. So what about the West?"

However, the judges are confident that Chamseddine's voice will cut through the preconceptions that surround her homeland. "I don't think she yet sees the impact she is going to have," said Luxx. "The important socio-political work that her poems [are] going to do."

CASE



...en alike – with a presentation based around her grand installation 'Throne'

poral Growth," which recalls the artist/architect duo's acclaimed work at this year's Architecture Biennale in Venice. For the Kingdom's first participation at the renowned architecture show, Bricklab designed and created the Saudi pavilion, which highlighted the rapid urban development the country has experienced over the past half-century.

Their Uckermark work – a three-sided structure made of cornstalks – invites the spectator to enter, sit and ponder the effects of modern agricultural practices on society in the region; development has many sides to it and needs careful curating.

Lina Gazzaz impressed viewers – adults and children alike – with a presentation based around her grand installation "Throne" on the borders of the serene lake Oberuckersee. Draped inside, leading up to a magnificent old tree, Gazzaz chose a long, red carpet to adorn a dramatic setting that could have been taken from a fairy tale. The tree not only remained alive after being split open by a lightning strike years ago, but it was transformed into what appears to be a natural throne.

Alluding to iconic red drapery featured in medieval art by using it to adorn this site of natural beauty, which has its own dramatic story to tell, the artist brilliantly fulfilled this festival's Land Art objective in a most aesthetic way.