New Private Library
In Sha’lan

Beverly Levine

Maktabat Etana opened in October 2009 just a few steps from Byblos Bank in Sha'lan. An easy walk from the IFPO, the beautifully furnished, temperature-controlled library sits in a quiet three-story building and has hundreds of books in English and Arabic, including a special selection donated by BASMA, a Syrian charitable organization dedicated to supporting families with child cancer survivors. The BASMA collection is small but growing, and includes both English and Arabic-language books on cancer, health, and non-profit management and fund-raising.

Academic books, popular novels, and a small collection of DVDs are sold on the ground floor, and the second floor is dedicated to both academic and popular books. The non-circulating collection includes studies in fine arts, theater, philosophy, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, law, politics, economics, linguistics, communications, applied sciences, history, religion, Orientalism, literary criticism, and poetry. There is also a modest selection of English language novels and short stories, including CS Lewis and JK Rowling, and Arabic translations of novels and academic works from George Orwell and Fyodor Dostoevsky to Michel Foucault. English language selections also include academic studies such as Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities and Mohanty, Russo, and Torres’ edited volume Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism (Indiana UP, 1991) as well as works on jazz, bluegrass, and rock & roll.

The library has a strong commitment to education and art, and welcomes children to their weekly arts activities. Etana also hosts routine lectures and film screenings.

Interested patrons may come to the library to purchase a daily pass for reference privileges for 75 SYP or a monthly pass for 750 SYP. You need not be a current student or teacher to access the library's collection.

For more information and to see photos of the library, visit Etana online at http://www.etanabooks.com/ or their English language site at http://www.etanabooks.com/en/

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