The idea of a National Museum for Lebanon dates back to 1923, when the first “committee of friends” was put together. Members of that committee included Alfred Sarsock, Manius Hamemoglon, Albert Bassoul, Omar Danyk, Camille Eddé, Ali Joumblat, Henri Pharaon, Georges Vassyk, Assaad Yane, Hassan Makhrzami, Joseph Farhi, Georges Corm, Jean Debs, Wafik Baydoun, and Jacques Tabet.

Following a design competition, architect Antoine Nahas was commissioned the project in 1930. A second architect by the name of Prince Béjaghou was to closely collaborate on the project. The site for the museum’s eventual construction was donated by the municipality of Beirut and work was completed in 1937. The National Museum’s inauguration, scheduled for 1938, never occurred due to world war events of the time. A small opening ceremony took place on the 25th of March 1942.