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Dima Srouji  
*Charts for a Resurrection*

Opening Reception  
Tuesday, 7 May 2024 | 6 – 9 PM  
On view: 8 May – 6 July 2024

[Dubai, 22 April 2024] –Lawrie Shabibi is delighted to announce the first-ever solo exhibition for artist, architect and researcher Dima Srouji titled *Charts for a Resurrection*, set to open on 7 May 2024.

Srouji's work lies in the expanded context of interdisciplinary research projects. It acts as a form of political commentary and as a place-making or un-making tool. Srouji collaborates closely with archaeologists, anthropologists, glass blowers and sound designers to develop her architectural projects, installations, product designs, and writing. Working across a diverse range of media including glass, text, archival materials, maps, and film, Srouji questions ideas of identity and globalisation through historic strata and space, in connection to the spirit of a place and displacement. Interested in the ground, objects, displacement, restitution, forgeries, and living archives, Srouji looks for potential ruptures in the ground where imaginary liberation is possible.

The exhibition is conceived as two distinct spaces, the larger *terrain* and the more intimate *chapel*, comprising installations and archival prints that intertwine historical artefacts with imaginary archaeological sites.

In the larger space, stone carved windows with coloured glass inlay imagine future archaeological monuments in the Palestinian landscape constructed with the traditional technique of *Qamariya* windows, often found in mosques and churches in Palestine, Yemen, and Egypt.

*Maternal Labour*, a series of prints on aluminum, celebrates the real women often labelled as “basket girls” who were hired by western institutions in the 20th century to excavate the land that they owned and cultivated for centuries to extract valuable artefacts that were then displaced.

A nine square grid installation mounted on the wall reveals partially excavated glass vessels as if an excavation is underway. Known as the Kenyon technique named after British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon, the grid method was often used in excavations to remove one strata at a time from top to bottom. The glass vessels are ghostly replicas of the originals, grave goods, which were often excavated by western archaeologists from ancient tombs.

Most of the vessels, dug up by the Palestinian basket girls were perfume bottles and cosmetic vessels used to access the afterlife.

Composed of suspended hand-blown glass sculptures, the title *The Red River* refers to the Belus River, which some historical narratives claim was the source of the sand for the first glass objects. Red refers to the water's colour, polluted by nearby industry, including the military factory Rafael Advanced Defense Systems. This river features prominently in personal stories such as that of Srouji's displaced grandmother-and in the larger memory of Palestine, part of the artist's projects with archaeologists, anthropologists, and artisans in exploring cultural heritage, history, and memory in Palestine.

A more intimate darkened, apsed space evokes a *chapel*, adorned with floating replicas of archeological vessels that were historically used as gifts to the dead for their afterlives. Here, amidst the unfolding tragedy in Palestine, the chapel serves as a sanctuary for mourning and meditation, fostering healing and envisioning the afterlives of the departed while imagining the future of a liberated Palestine through its fictional archaeological artefacts.

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dima Srouji (b. 1990, Palestine) is a graduate of the Yale School of Architecture and currently leads the MA City Design studios at the Royal College of Art.

Srouji explores the ground as a deep space of rich cultural weight. She works with glass, text, archives, maps, plaster casts, and film, understanding each as an evocative object and emotional companion that helps her question what cultural heritage and public space mean in the larger context of the Middle East and a focused lens on Palestine. Her projects are developed closely with archaeologists, anthropologists, sound designers, and glassblowers.

She has exhibited her work at Sharjah Art Biennial (15), Islamic Art Biennial, Jeddah, Sharjah Architecture Triennial, Corning Museum of Glass, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Art Dubai, Dubai Design Week, the Victoria & Albert Museum, London Design Festival, The Palestinian Museum, and the Qattan Foundation. She has lived and practiced in London, New Haven at Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, Milan at Cino Zucchi Architetti, and Ramallah at the Riwaq Center for Architectural Conservation.

Srouji was the 2022-2023 Jameel Fellow at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

Her work is part of the permanent collections at the Corning Museum of Glass and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

#### ABOUT THE GALLERY

Lawrie Shabibi was founded in 2010 and opened its doors in early 2011 in Alserkal Avenue, located within the light industrial warehouse district of Al Quoz in Dubai. Following the relocation of several renowned galleries, this quickly became the hub of contemporary art in the region, and we have been a forerunner in the development of this contemporary art scene.

The gallery's initial focus was on the practices of emerging contemporary artists from the Middle East and North Africa (the "Global South"), and in the last five years we introduced artists from other regions and generations, yet with the same focus on the "underrepresented". A major focus remains the support of artists from the diaspora who create work in all media to explore issues such as identity, memory, history and socio-political issues specific to the diasporic experience.

Another part of the programme is to organise art historical exhibitions, working with an older generation of artists. Of note are the historic shows presented for the Moroccan pioneer Mohamed Melehi (1936-2020) and most recently Iraqi/French Mehdi Moutashar (b.1943) and Mona Saudi (1945-2022) – at fairs that include Frieze Masters in London, Abu Dhabi Art and Artissima in Turin, showing works from the 1950s – 1980s. We also work closely with museums and have successfully placed works with The Guggenheim, Tate Modern, Centre Pompidou, The British Museum, Dallas Museum of Art, LACMA and the Cincinnati Art Museum. By integrating older (and less discovered) artists with younger artists we create a context and depth to the programme which we consider important when working with underrepresented regions.

For more information on Lawrie Shabibi please visit:

[www.lawrieshabibi.com](http://www.lawrieshabibi.com)

## PRESS INQUIRIES

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