

Lawrie Shabibi
Unit 21, Alserkal Avenue, Al Quoz 1
P.O. Box 123901, Dubai, UAE
T | +971 (4) 346 9906
F | +971 (4) 346 9902
E | info@lawrieshabibi.com

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Alia Ahmad
Aspects [مظاهر]

Opening Reception
Wednesday, 18 September 2024 | 6 – 9 PM
On view: 19 September – 22 October 2024

[Dubai, 22 August 2024] – Lawrie Shabibi is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition in the UAE of Saudi Arabian artist Alia Ahmad. *Aspects* [مظاهر], presenting a new body of paintings and watercolours.

She seeks, in *Aspects* to peel back the layers in order to expose her personal vocabulary. Ahmad's point of departure - the rapidly changing environment of her home city, Riyadh, where traditional ways of life existing alongside industrialisation and modernisation, where native plant life and cultural art forms thrive within one of the world's fastest growing urban settings. This provides fertile ground for exploration. Ahmad's segmented compositions, with their tonal contrasts, modulated colours, sinewy brushwork and gestural forms provide a sense of constant growth.

Ahmad's new works are of an intimate scale. She deconstructs the various elements that make up her world. With abstracted vegetal, floral, geometric shapes and motifs sometimes resembling stones, flowers, and others webs or micro-structures, she creates her own lexicon of forms.

Some paintings, square in format, feature a single motif. Akin to the fragmentary patterns seen on embroidered offcuts of a textile or wall murals, here she gives a glimpse of an infinite geometry, that might unfold far beyond the borders of the works themselves, into boundless space.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Raised in Riyadh, Alia Ahmad (b. 1996) graduated from King's College London with a BA in Digital Culture in 2018 and recently completed her Master's at the Royal College of Art. Concentrating on painting, she employs various media to explore the convergence of memory, place, and landscape within her visual and written practice.

Ahmad's colour palette is influenced by an upbringing in Riyadh's industrial/desert landscape. A majority of her paintings represent the different placid dreamscapes, with linear impressions of the Saudi landscape. The visual language of the paintings plays on the tense contradiction that exists between the extreme emptiness of place and its lush characteristics.

Using drawings made in a specific place, she focuses on key aspects such as local flora in a chosen environment. She has recently been looking into a way to play with perspective in the landscape by placing an emphasis on the temporal nature of day and night. Her works examine the point at which she lightly touches upon distinct parts of the land.

Her solo exhibitions include Albion Jeune, London, UK (2024); White Cube, Paris, France (2024); Massimo de Carlo, Paris, France (2023), Hafez Gallery, Jeddah, KSA (2022); Gallery Bawa, Kuwait City, Kuwait (2021). She has exhibited in several group exhibitions including 'After Rain' at the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale, Riyadh, KSA (2024); 'In the Shadow' at White Cube, London, UK (2023); 'Considering Female Abstraction' at the Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas, Texas, USA (2023), 'Memory Deposit', Fena Al-Awwal, Riyadh, KSA (2022), 'Make It Public: Memory Collective', Design Museum, London, UK (2020), among others.

Alia Ahmad lives and works in Riyadh.

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

PRESS INQUIRIES

For press inquiries please contact:

Sarah Aiman

E. sarah@lawrieshabibi.com

T. +971 4 346 9906