

PRESS RELEASE***Unfixed Ground*****18 April – 9 May 2026****Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai**

Unfixed Ground is a group exhibition that approaches ground as something continuously produced: fractured, inscribed, and held in tension between erasure and persistence. The exhibition features works by **Mandy El Sayegh** (b. 1985, Malaysian–British), **Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim** (b. 1962, Emirati), **Omar Al Gurg** (b. 1995, Emirati), **Rand Abdul Jabbar** (b. 1990, Iraqi), **Dima Srouji** (b. 1990, Palestinian) and **Asad Faulwell** (b. 1982, Iranian–American).

The works by **Mandy El–Sayegh**, **Omar Al Gurg**, and **Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim** enter into dialogue through a shared engagement with landscape as a shifting and inscribed condition. Across painting, photography, and sculptural form, surfaces register traces of movement, accumulation, and erosion, where markings operate as both physical imprints and systems of meaning. Grids, cartographic fragments, and gestural inscriptions recur as structuring elements, loosening into layered fields in which information, memory, and environment intersect. Forms emerge through repetition and variation, while images and objects remain suspended between observation and abstraction, suggesting ground as an active and continuously reconfigured surface.

This dialogue extends into the practices of **Rand Abdul Jabbar**, **Dima Srouji**, and **Asad Faulwell**, where the focus shifts toward histories that are accumulated, fragmented, and rearticulated. Working across assemblage, archival materials, and painting, their practices engage with memory as something constructed through processes of retrieval and reinterpretation. Layers of material and reference unfold through research, ornament, and reconstruction, as visual languages drawn from archaeology, cultural heritage, and decorative traditions are brought into contemporary alignment. Together, their works sustain a tension between presence and absence, holding histories in suspension while allowing meaning to remain open, contingent, and continuously reconfigured.

The first space is shaped by an engagement with landscape as a shifting and inscribed condition, where markings operate as traces of movement, memory, and transformation. Across the works, surfaces become sites through which geographies are registered and reconfigured, holding evidence of both physical terrain and its symbolic reconstruction. Within this context, **Mandy El-Sayegh's** compositions incorporate screen-printed renderings of maps, tyre marks, and grid structures, situating the ground as a layered field of information in which systems of mapping and circulation intersect.

This attention to surface as a site of accumulation extends into the photographic practice of **Omar Al Gurg**, whose images focus on quiet moments and subtle shifts within everyday landscapes, capturing transient conditions shaped by light, atmosphere, and environment.

In parallel, **Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim** develops forms derived from the natural world, employing a personal language of repeated marks, inscriptions, and abstract symbols that register time and place through processes of meditative repetition. Together, these works approach ground as an active and evolving surface, continuously marked, altered, and reimagined.

The second space shifts toward a more human-centred and historically inflected register, where ground is understood through its relation to memory, narrative, and cultural inheritance. Here, practices engage with histories that are fragmented, reconstructed, and held in tension between absence and presence. **Rand Abdul Jabbar** draws on archaeology, mythology, and material culture through extensive research in archives and museum collections, producing works that reconstruct accumulations of past events as they intersect with personal experience.

This engagement with layered histories resonates with the work of **Dima Srouji**, who examines identity, displacement, and globalisation through materials such as glass, text, and archival fragments, using them to question cultural heritage and public space within the context of the Middle East, particularly Palestine.

In dialogue with these approaches, **Asad Faulwell** constructs densely patterned, mixed-media paintings that draw on visual traditions of religious iconography and cultural ornamentation, incorporating motifs derived from Islamic textiles, architecture, mosaics, and illuminated manuscripts. His works engage with postcolonial histories, addressing questions of memory, absence, and power through layered and immersive compositions. Together, the works in this space foreground the ways in which histories are constructed, interrupted, and rearticulated, situating ground as a site shaped as much by human experience as by material presence.

Anchoring the exhibition is **Rand Abdul Jabbar's** colossal bronze sculpture *where myths are born of mud and desire (palm)*, first commissioned for Desert X AIUla in 2024, whose dense, earthen presence consolidates the exhibition's central concerns by embodying ground not only as a physical substrate but as a focal point of narrative and transformation.

Together, these works attend to what remains: traces, residues, and partial structures that persist over time. Fragmentation is not resolved but held, allowing meaning to stay open and active. *Unfixed Ground* moves between density and stillness, accumulation and pause. It reflects on how ground—whether material, political, or symbolic—is continually made and remade. In this context, instability becomes generative: a condition through which forms are shaped, undone, and sustained.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary art gallery housed in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. The gallery supports the long-term development of the careers of young international contemporary artists with a focus on those from the Middle East and North Africa. The gallery also organises art historical exhibitions working with an older generation of artists from the region. Liaising with curators, institutions, museums and collectors the gallery has successfully introduced international artists to the region whilst at the same time presenting Middle Eastern artists to the international contemporary art community. By holding a regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, Lawrie Shabibi has been a forerunner in the development of the contemporary art scene in Dubai.

For more information on Lawrie Shabibi please visit: www.lawrieshabibi.com

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