

PRESS RELEASE

Lawrie Shabibi at Art Dubai 2026
Booth C8
May 14 – 17, 2026
Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai, UAE

For Art Dubai 2026, we bring together a diverse group of artists including **Mona Saudi** (1945–2022, Jordanian–Palestinian), **Nabil Nahas** (b. 1949, Lebanese), **Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim** (b. 1962, Emirati), **Omar Al Gurg** (b. 1995, Emirati), **Farhad Ahrarnia** (b. 1971, British–Iranian), **Saif Azzuz** (b. 1987, Libyan–Yurok), **Ishmael Randall-Weeks** (b. 1976, US/Peruvian), **James Clar** (b. 1979, US/Filipino) and **Hamra Abbas** (b. 1976, Pakistani). Working across sculpture, painting, installation, photography, and works on paper, the artists engage with natural landscapes, geological forms, organic structures, and built environments through practices rooted in material exploration and processes of transformation.

Centring the presentation is *Woman / River* by **Mona Saudi**, one of the leading sculptors of her generation in the Arab world, whose practice was defined by a lifelong commitment to stone. The sculpture reflects many of the central concerns of Saudi's oeuvre, particularly her engagement with organic form, movement, and the relationship between the human body and the natural world. Bringing together two recurring motifs within her practice—the feminine form and the river—the work approaches both less as literal subjects than as elemental forces connected to growth, continuity, and transformation.

Nabil Nahas has recently opened his spectacular installation *Don't Get Me Wrong*, at the Lebanese Pavilion at the 61st Venice Biennale. The project explores the relationship between man, nature, and

the cosmos, offering a visual and spiritual experience that transforms the spectacular into a vehicle for introspection. At Art Dubai we show one of his richly textured cosmos paintings, a work which engages geometry scale, chaos and biological references, presenting a mesmerizing window into the infinite.

Saif Azzuz's paintings blend abstraction and surrealism through a dynamic, process-driven approach that reflects both artistic experimentation and cultural narratives. Working on both sides of the canvas with a wet-on-wet technique, he builds layered landscapes by flipping the painting back and forth, allowing pigments to bleed through unpredictably. This method balances control and chance, mirroring the tension between human intention and natural forces. The unseen labor of painting the canvas's reverse becomes a metaphor for the often-invisible stewardship of Indigenous communities over their land, embedding themes of care and resilience into the work itself. The resulting compositions—alive with organic, liquid-like forms—resist containment, their vibrant energy pushing against the frame in a visual defiance of colonial boundaries.

Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim's work is rooted in a lifelong relationship with the landscape of Khorfakkan, where the Gulf of Oman meets the Hajar Mountains. Working across paintings, he creates forms that appear as if unearthed rather than constructed, often resembling tools, bones, or organic fragments, developed through repeated gestures and the use of simple materials over several decades. As part of the first generation of contemporary artists in the United Arab Emirates, his practice reflects a sustained engagement with memory, place, and the passage of time, while his works on paper develop a personal language of marks and inscriptions that record duration through meditative repetition.

Omar Al Gurg's photographic practice explores observation, memory, and environment through images that focus on subtle shifts within everyday landscapes. Developed through a largely self-taught process, his work is defined by a careful attention to light, and atmosphere, often capturing fleeting conditions that might otherwise pass unnoticed. Drawing on his surroundings in the UAE, his photographs document natural and urban environments with restraint, emphasising stillness and duration while revealing moments of quiet transformation embedded within daily life.

Farhad Ahrarnia's practice engages with questions of cultural production and art historical narrative through references to diverse craft traditions and visual languages, including the Saqqakhana school, Russian Constructivism, and Surrealism. On view at the fair are works from *The Dig* series, in which silver-coated copper shovels are engraved and embossed with motifs drawn from Egyptian artefacts and archaeological relics. Through these works, Ahrarnia reflects on excavation, preservation, and the cyclical processes through which objects are lost, rediscovered, and reinterpreted across time.

James Clar explores the conceptual potential of light and technology through sculptural installations, video, and electronic media. Drawing on architectural lighting, digital processes, and electronic media, Clar constructs controlled visual environments that merge elements of design, film,

and technology. At the booth, *Parol #1*, a light work based on the Filipino parol lantern, a star-shaped Christmas decoration historically linked to the Philippines' Spanish and American colonial periods. Referencing the North Star as a symbol of navigation and way-finding, the work reflects on light as both a physical and symbolic guide, connecting ideas of movement, memory, and collective identity that recur throughout the presentation.

Ishmael Randall-Weeks works across installation, sculpture, video, and works on paper, constructing objects and environments from found and recycled materials, including books, metal, and architectural fragments. His works often resemble functional structures while remaining deliberately non-operational, examining systems of labour, production, and urban development. On view at the fair is his *Chalkboard* screen series, which draws on the architectural legacies of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus while exploring the material language of chalkboard, concrete, copper etching, brass hinges, and compressed sands from Samaca. Through shifting screen-like structures and references to pre-Columbian systems of communication, including Quipu knot traditions, the works reflect on adaptability, memory, and the transmission of knowledge across material and cultural histories.

Hamra Abbas mastery of marble inlay (pietra dura), a decorative technique that involves the precise cutting and assembling of coloured stones, results in complex and intricate pictorial compositions, most often depicting nature and natural phenomena. Repositioning this ornamental practice within a contemporary artistic framework, Abbas extends its visual and conceptual possibilities beyond its traditional architectural function. Through this lens, Abbas examines the symbolic role of nature within architectural language, exploring how colour, pattern, and material surface contribute to constructed visions of the natural world. Abbas' *Tree Studies* series, originally commissioned for the Louvre Abu Dhabi as part of the Richard Mille Art Prize exhibition Art Here 2025, reflects her ongoing engagement with material and craft.

Together, the presentation brings into dialogue a range of practices that engage with material, landscape, and cultural memory through distinct yet intersecting approaches, reflecting a shared interest in how form emerges through process and how meaning is constructed through sustained engagement with place, history, and the act of making.

Dima Srouji and Mounir Fatmi in *Moving* – a co-curated programme by Art Dubai × Alserkal

Alongside the booth presentation, Mounir Fatmi and Dima Srouji will participate in *Moving*, a co-curated programme presented by Art Dubai 2026 and Alserkal Avenue. Building on the ongoing collaboration between the two institutions, the programme brings together moving image works by artists represented by Alserkal Avenue galleries participating in the fair. Structured around ideas of repetition, gesture, and duration, *Moving* examines how meaning emerges gradually through sequences of actions and images unfolding over time. The programme is presented across both sites and will be on view from 14–17 May 2026.

Presented within *Moving: Spirit*, Mounir Fatmi's *The White Matter* reflects on memory, technological progress, and media obsolescence, drawing parallels between neurological systems and contemporary networks of communication. Shown as part of *Moving: Force*, Dima Srouji's *Always a Waiting Market* juxtaposes archival American canned food advertisements with imagery connected to Palestinian displacement following the 1967 war, examining the movement of consumer culture across landscapes shaped by conflict and forced migration.

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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