



PRESS RELEASE

Lawrie Shabibi at Frieze Masters 2026
Maliheh Afnan | Booth S-22 | *Spotlight*
October 14 – 18, 2026
The Regent's Park, London, UK

For Frieze Masters 2026, Lawrie Shabibi returns to the fair's Spotlight section with a solo presentation of Maliheh Afnan (1935–2016) organised in collaboration with the Estate of Maliheh Afnan.

"The presentation marks the gallery's first dedicated presentation of Afnan's work since 2016 and comes at a moment of renewed institutional attention to her practice with recent acquisitions by the The Courtauld Gallery and Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris and work currently on view in the permanent collections at Tate Modern." Asmaa Al-Shabibi

Born in Haifa, Palestine, to a family of Persian descent, Afnan lived and worked across the Middle East, Europe and the United States eventually settling in London. Her experience of displacement and exile, and her position between Arab, Persian and Western cultural traditions, informed a practice concerned with memory and place and the traces left by personal and collective histories. Working across painting, drawing and mixed media, Afnan developed a distinctive visual language in which layers of text, calligraphic forms, fragmented figures and worn surfaces evoke the passage of time and the instability of memory. Her works often occupy a space between legibility and abstraction, transforming personal and cultural references into complex, atmospheric compositions that resist a single reading.

The booth highlights the development of her practice from the 1970s to the 1990s: we are particularly pleased to include a rare 1970s work from her *Torched* series, paintings on cardboard made in response to the Lebanese Civil War, together with select portraits, *Personnages*, that were the subject of her 2019 solo at the MAN Museum Sardinia.

"Frieze Masters offers an opportunity to reconsider Afnan's singular contribution to post-war art and to place her practice within a broader international art-historical context. It continues Lawrie Shabibi's longstanding commitment to bringing greater visibility to underrepresented female artists from the Middle East and to place them within the context of dominant modern and contemporary art narratives." William Lawrie

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maliheh Afnan (1935–2016) was born in Haifa to Persian parents and lived in Beirut, Washington DC, Kuwait, Paris and London. She received a BA from the American University of Beirut in 1955 and an MA in Fine Arts from the Corcoran School of Art, Washington DC, in 1962.

Afnan exhibited widely throughout Europe, the Middle East and the United States. Solo exhibitions include *Personnages*, MAN Museo d'Arte Provincia di Nuoro, Sardinia (2019); *Tracing Memories*, Art Dubai Modern (2016); *Speak Memory*, Rose Issa Projects, London (2013); *Traces, Faces, Places*, Rose Issa Projects, London (2010); *Selected Works*, England & Co, London (2006); and *Maliheh Afnan: Retrospective*, England & Co, London (2000). Her work has also been included in major group exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery, London; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; The Courtauld Gallery, London; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Sharjah Art Museum; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; the British Museum, London; and the Barbican Centre, London.

Her work has been the subject of several publications, including *Maliheh Afnan: Traces, Faces, Places* (Al Saqi Books & Beyond Art Productions, 2010) and *Familiar Faces* (Rose Issa Projects, 2013).

Her work is held in major public collections including Tate, London; the British Museum, London; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; The Courtauld Institute of Art, London; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; The Written Art Collection, Germany; and the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.

Maliheh Afnan passed away in London in 2016.

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