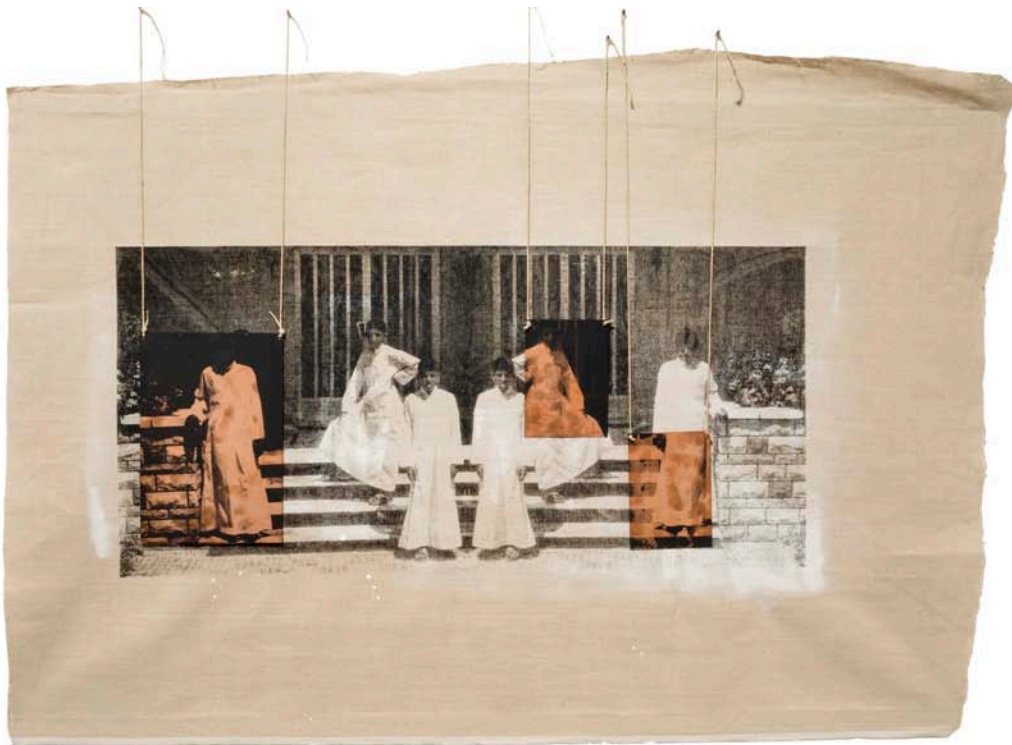


Sabrina Amrani is pleased to present the first solo show in Spain by Manal Al Dowayan.

The exhibition *And I, Will I Forget?* displays a selection of works from an eponymous series that delves into the transience of memory and the act of reappropriating narratives.

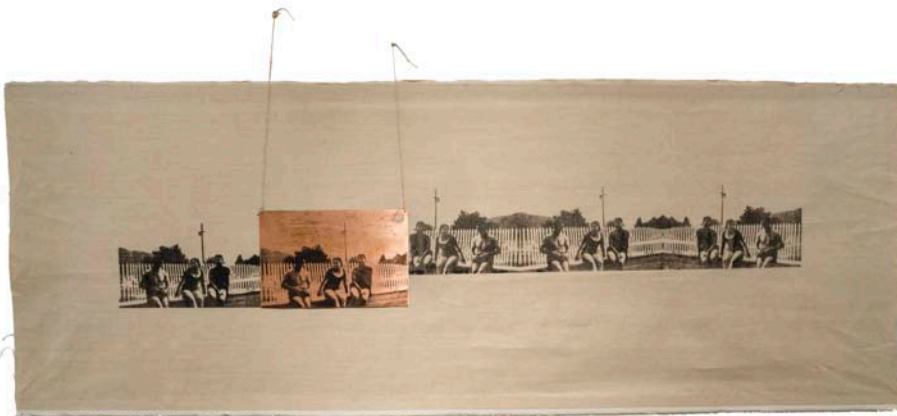


The Boys, 2015. Paint and silkscreen ink on canvas and copper. 140 x 101 cm.

Sabrina Amrani is pleased to present the first solo show in Spain by Manal Al Dowayan. The exhibition *And I, Will I Forget?* displays a selection of works from an eponymous series that delves into the transience of memory and the act of reappropriating narratives. The silkscreens on board, canvas, paper, aluminium and copper plates are inspired by her father's journey from Saudi Arabia to the USA in the 1960s-1970s.

An expansion of her former works, *And I, Will I Forget?* invites the viewer to explore the mechanisms of memory and the means to counter erasure and disappearance. These themes are dear to Al Dowayan, whose practice is marked by an eagerness to create pieces about formless and invisible phenomena: oblivion and its opposite, remembering.

When she was 12, her father gave her a tin box containing 1,000 Kodachrome slides that he had taken between 1962 –leaving Saudi Arabia to the USA– and 1973 when his daughter was born. He documented his new environment for his family and reciprocally took pictures of Saudi girls and boys dressed in their best attire to keep with him and share with his friends in the USA. For his daughter, they were simple toys she would play with and classify. At 19, understanding the images were an attempt to bridge the gap of a radical disconnection from home, Al Dowayan faced silence. Her father had started to deteriorate into Alzheimer and was not able to answer her questions. It became impossible to decipher the locations and identify the protagonists. Were the images developed at some point? The prints never survived. The slides remained as custodians of an enigmatic memory with no recorded history.



Poolside I, 2015. Silkscreen ink on canvas and copper. 184 x 69 cm.

In 2015, during a residency at the Rauschenberg Foundation in Florida, the artist decided to reappropriate and transform the photographs by injecting a new narrative into them. The result is a body of works at the threshold of fact and fiction, of remembrance and invention: the collection gathered eventually reflects her own, personal, journey through the images of someone else. Her father's pictures now have an existence and a space to communicate from. The technique and medium chosen echo this quest: the works are accessible, unframed, open to the eye and to the senses –touchable, foldable, alive. The encounter is affected by the raw materiality of the silkscreens laid bare, challenging what we see.



Solitary Car, 2015. Silkscreen ink on paper. 75x51 cm.

And I, Will I Forget? is a tessellation of multilayered memories and stories as the use of copper and metal evokes. Inspired by Robert Rauschenberg, who extensively played with appropriation, the artist interestingly used the same copper stock as him – transferring some of his own memory into the pieces. Al Dowayan has printed some images repeatedly, almost obsessively, referencing the functioning of memory and its different intensities. Depending on the moment, we remember things with more or less details, lighter, darker, distinct or blurred. Memories evolve, navigating between ellipsis and sparkles. Sometimes we are unable to recall the past; conversely, unexpectedly and in a burst, flashes help us reassemble forgotten details. The materials used (copper, canvas, paper, aluminium) convey these ideas. The fact the same image is printed several times on multiple media offers different readings of the same memory. Depending on the tones and textures, the repeated, overlapping and re-looped photographs seem to be frozen images, moving images or almost anomalies. They can be seen from afar or disclosed in a close up. The exploration of memory's frailty is consistent with most of Al Dowayan's previous works such as "If I Forget You, Don't Forget Me" (2012). By way of portraits, she photographed objects that men and women from oil families kept throughout

their whole life –objects that came to embody their energy, presence and aura. Her pieces remind us how frail we are as humans. No matter how much we collect and document, our memory is threatened with being lost at any moment.



The Mermaid, 2015. Silkscreen ink on aluminum. 70 x 45 cm.

One of the images in *And I, Will I Forget?* is a mermaid that evokes a kind of melancholy. The artist discovered a missing piece of the puzzle when she learned it was the Little Mermaid sculpture found in Copenhagen's port. Back in the 1960s, when young Saudis were sent out on scholarships to study in the USA they transited through Europe. Trying to understand what her father was feeling during that period, she realised in-betweenness is a crucial thread tying together the collection. Al Dowayan is fascinated by the high potentiality of liminality, in the sense of a space where we become neutral to our past and future. In Copenhagen, her father was probably in this transitory moment; he might have been scared or brave –a very human situation. Who hasn't felt so when moving from one country to another on a new adventure?

Her father's emotions resonate with contemporary migration movements and elicit reflection on the impact they have on memory, heritage

and oral transmission. The first week he was in the USA, the artist's father was photographed as a cowboy. Immediately he was introduced to a new culture and needed to blend in. His past was forgotten, but as soon as he came back to Saudi Arabia he had to become fully Saudi again, prove his belonging to the land. He was part of the first generation to undertake that cross-cultural journey, which might explain the numerous photographs of monuments, cars and natural wonders such as forests, waterfalls and lakes. Coming from the desert, he could not fathom the idea of pools full of water with people swimming in them. These images and jazz and blues records are what he brought back home with him –tiny hints of how it felt to be in-between spaces and experiencing the joy, excitement, loss and alienation that come with migration.



Flying Saucer, 2015. Canvas, photo, copper, string. 135 x 105 cm.

Going beyond the generational gap, the delicate pieces of *And I, Will I Forget?* recover the emotions embedded in the photographs of Al Dawayan's father and offer to share a timeless human experience. They speak of the longevity of migratory movements and of humanity's attempts to archive memory. With time passing by, there is always uncertainty. Memories and stories are subjected to continuous changes and adjustments. Wisely, Al Dawayan embraces storytelling against vacuum, creation against forgetting and life against disappearance.

Text by Clelia Coussonnet

‘And I, will I forget?’ Opening

11 January. 5.00-10 p.m.

‘And I, will I forget?’ Opening hours

Runs through 26 February 2017

Tue-Fri: 11.00 a.m.-7 p.m. / Sat: 11.00 a.m.-2.30 p.m.

‘And I, will I forget?’ Opening hours during ARCOMadrid

Wed 22 February: 10.00 a.m.-9 p.m.

Thu 23 February: 10.00 a.m.-9 p.m.

Fri 24 February: 10.00 a.m.-9 p.m.

Sat 25 February: 10.00 a.m.-9 p.m.

Sun 26 February: 11.00 a.m. - 2.30 p.m.

‘And I, will I forget?’ ARCOgallery Walk

Fri 24 February. 5 p.m.

‘And I, will I forget?’ ARCOgallery Brunch

Sat 25 February. 10.00 a.m.-2.30 p.m.

‘And I, will I forget?’ Closing Brunch

Sun 26 February. 11.00 a.m.-2.30 p.m.

A selection of works from Manal AlDowayan’s *And I, will I forget?* series, not in display in this exhibition, will be shown at ARCOMadrid in February, The Armory Show in March and Art Brussels in April.

About the artist

Embracing diverse media, Manal AlDowayan's work encompasses black and white photography, sculpture, video, sound, neon and large-scale participatory installations. Her artistic practice revolves around themes of active forgetting, archives and collective memory, with large focus on the state of Saudi women and their representation.

She has documented social groups like the oil men and women of Saudi Arabia in her project, *If I Forget You Don't Forget Me*, and has addressed the impact of mass media on propagating intentional erasing of identities in her project *Crash*, highlighting the unnamed Saudi teachers dying in car crashes across Saudi Arabia. Her participatory projects have attracted hundreds of women to use art as a new platform to address social injustice like in the projects *Tree of Guardians*, *Esmi-My Name*, and *Suspended Together*.

In 2014 she was a recipient of a research Fellowship from NYU AD and was invited in early 2015 to the Robert Rauschenberg Residency in Captiva, Florida. Manal has shown her work in Prospect 3 New Orleans - The American Biennale (2014/15), in collateral shows at the Venice Biennale (in 2009 and 2011), and at Museums around the world like Gawngju Museum in South Korea, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, The Victoria and Albert Museum in UK, and Mathaf Museum of Modern Arab Art in Qatar. Her artwork is part of public collections at The British Museum, Los Angeles County Museum (LACMA), Louisiana Museum of Modern Art and Mathaf, amongst others.

Manal is currently showing her work in the group exhibition 'Barjeel Art Foundation. Imperfect Chronology - Mapping the Contemporary II' at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, UK. In 2017 she will have a solo show at Rojas + Rubenstein Projects in Miami, USA and will be part of the show 'Safar' for 21,39 Jeddah Arts festival, curated by Sam Bardouil and Till Fellrath in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Manal's work 'Tree of Guardians' will be showcased in the exhibition 'Banyan' curated by Munira AlSayegh in Abu Dhabi, UAE. She was also part of the group show 'Looking at the World around you. Contemporary works from Qatar Museums' in 2016 at Fundación Banco Santander in Madrid, Spain.