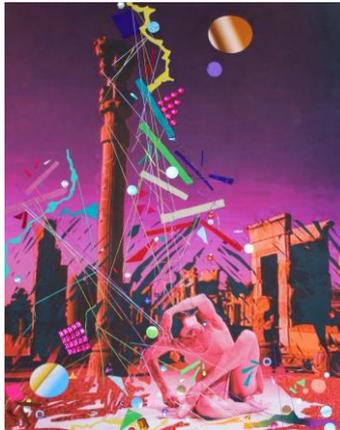


**PRESS RELEASE**

**LAWRIE SHABIBI AT ABU DHABI ART 2015**

Manarat Al Saadiyat, Saadiyat Cultural District, Abu Dhabi  
17 November Press/VIP Opening 18-21 November Public days



Lawrie Shabibi is delighted to announce its return to Abu Dhabi Art in the Modern, Contemporary & Design section with a booth presentation of gallery artists Maliheh Afnan, Farhad Ahrarnia, Shaikha Al-Mazrou, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Driss Ouadahi, Nathaniel Rackowe and Mona Saudi. From this multi-generational group, the works selected explore themes of abstraction and figuration, modernity and antiquity, and the illusion of change.

For the first time the gallery will be presenting work by Maliheh Afnan and Farhad Ahrarnia. Afnan, born in 1935 to Persian parents in Haifa, Palestine, works with paper on an intimate scale to create mesmerizing layers, overlapping patterns, calligraphic scrawls and figures in her paintings. Showing at the fair will be a recent work entitled *Veiled Nonsense*, in which a fine gauze is superimposed over her signature glyphs.

Farhad Ahrarnia, a multi-disciplinary artist who divides his time between Shiraz and Sheffield, presents works from his embroidered textile on canvas series for which he is known. In *The Grace of Unbecoming, Between Force and Meaning, a Moment, Caught, No. 1* he depicts archival images of early Twentieth-century Western dancers in Egyptian-style dress and in *Stage On Fire* he depicts an Iranian ballet dancer superimposed over the ruins of Persepolis, overset with embroidered motifs that recall those of Kandinsky.

Continuing the theme of antiquity and continuity, Mona Saudi's black marble *The Nile Obelisk* combines three major motifs of ancient times— the female form, the river and the pyramidal monument, whilst *The Seed*, carved from the characteristic Lebanese yellow stone, is a powerful symbol of fertility and becoming.

Shaikha Al Mazrou's *Tension 1* on the other hand plays on notions of monumentality and the formal aspects of minimalism, notably materialism, exploring the gap between perception and reality.

Rackowe's new DG series of light sculptures employs layers of dichroic glass, a material which displays two different colours by undergoing a colour change in certain lighting conditions. Depending on one's standpoint, hues of blue or magenta change from yellow to green.

Rounding out the booth are a group of highly abstracted urban landscapes by Driss Ouadahi and *Spic and Span in June*, one of Nadia Kaabi-Linke's few fully abstract works.

## Artist Biographies:

**Maliheh Afnan's** (b. Haifa, 1935) work both reflects and transcends the many cultural references that have informed a life spent between the Middle East, America and Europe. She graduated with a BA from the American University of Beirut in 1955 and an MA in Fine Arts from the Corcoran School of Art in 1962. Afnan has participated in several solo shows including *Speak Memory*, Rose Issa Projects, London (2013); *Traces, Faces, Places*, Rose Issa Projects, London (2010); *Selected Works: 1960-2006*, England & Co, London (2006) and *Maliheh Afnan: Retrospective*, England & Co, London (2000); Galerie Mouvances, Paris (1996); Galerie 10 Bonaparte, Paris (1994) and Leighton House Museum, London (1993). She has participated in several group exhibitions including ones at Cultuurcentrum Brugge, Belgium (2014); Boghossian Foundation, Brussels (2013); Kurhaus Kolonnade, Wiesbaden (2011); Beirut Exhibition Center, Beirut, (2011); Martin Gropius Bau Museum, Berlin (2009); Courtauld Institute of Art, London (2008); European Parliament, Brussels (2008); Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; The State Hermitage Museum, St.Petersburg, (2007-08) and The British Museum, London (1991). Afnan's works are in the public collections of The Metropolitan Museum, New York; Akram Ojeh Foundation, Paris; BAI Bank Collection, Paris; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris and The British Museum, London.

**Farhad Ahrarnia's** (b. 1971, Shiraz) practice comprises a diverse range of meticulously crafted works which cover questions of ideological narratives, national identity and inter-cultural exchange. Farhad Ahrarnia holds a degree in Experimental and Documentary Film Theory and Practice from the Northern Media School, Sheffield Hallam University, England. Ahrarnia exhibited in several solo shows such as *A Dish Fit for the Gods*, Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai, 2015; *Stage on Fire*, Rose Issa Projects, London, 2014; *Canary in a Coal Mine*, Rose Issa Projects, London, 2014 and *Stitched*, Leighton House Museum in collaboration with Rose Issa Projects, London, 2008. Recent group shows include *Open Your Eyes*, Rose Issa Projects, London, 2014; *Embroideremania*, Hinterland Kunst Art for Vienna Art Week, 2013; *Bringing the War Home*, Winchester School of Art, 2013; *The Beginning of Thinking is Geometric*, Maraya Art centre-Barjeel foundation, Sharjah, 2013; *Aks: pictorial representations from Iran*, Rose Issa Projects, London, 2012; *Comet together*, Edge of Arabia, London, 2012; *Migrasophia*, Maraya Contemporary Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE, 2012. His work is in the public collections of the Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford; Harewood House, Leeds; and the British Museum, London. He currently lives between Shiraz and Sheffield.

**Shaikha Al Mazrou's** (b. UAE, 1988) practice is anchored in history of art, borrowing formally from minimalism and intellectually from conceptual art. She received her Master's degree in 2014 at the Chelsea College of Fine Art, University of the Arts, London where she was awarded the prestigious MFA Student Prize. In the same year, she was one of five international artists commissioned by the Arab Fund for Art & Culture to produce a public artwork in Dubai as part of their event *Make Art Possible*. The public sculpture entitled *Stand Here* is composed of scaffolding tubes in primary. Prior to that Al Mazrou studied at the College of Fine Arts and Design, University of Sharjah where she is currently a Sculpture Lecturer. She has exhibited in group exhibitions at Art Dubai Contemporary, Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai, UAE, 2015; DUCTAC, Dubai, UAE, 20015; Fowler Museum UCLA, Los Angeles, USA, 2015; the 1st International Arezzo Biennial of Art, Italy, 2013; Art Dubai, UAE, 2013; the 14th Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh, 2010; Sharjah Art Museum, UAE, 2010 and the Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt, Germany 2010. Al Mazrou also took part in residency programs at the Delfina Foundation, London in collaboration with Tashkeel, Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, Bastakiya, Dubai. She currently lives and works in the UAE.

**Nadia Kaabi-Linke** (b. Tunis, 1978) is a Russian-Tunisian artist who studied at the University of Fine Arts in Tunis (1999) before receiving a PhD from the Sorbonne University in Paris (2008). Her work is embedded in urban contexts, intertwined with memory and geographically and politically constructed identities. Recent solo shows include *Walk the Line*, Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, 2015; *FAHRENHEIT311: Seven Legends of Machismo*, Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai, 2015; *No Frills*, Cristina Guerra Contemporary, Lisbon, 2015; *The Future Rewound and the Cabinet of Souls*, Mosaic Rooms, London, 2014; *Stranded, preso por fios*, Foundation Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 2014 and *In confinement my desolate mind desires*, Experimenter, ArtBasel Hong Kong, 2014. She has participated in group exhibitions most recently at at Bardo Museum, Carthage, 2015; Galerie ISA, Mumbai, 2015; Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Haverford College, Pennsylvania, 2014; Savvy Contemporary, Berlin, 2014; Etopia Center for Art and Technology, Zaragoza, 2014; Villa Datriis, Paris, 2014;

Château de Penthes, Geneva, 2014; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, 2014; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2013; the Liverpool Biennial, UK, 2012; the 54th Venice Biennial, Venice, 2011 and the 9th Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah, 2009. Her works are part of several public and private collections including the Burger Collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York; M+, Museum of Visual Culture Hong Kong and the Samdani Art Foundation, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Kaabi-Linke lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

**Driss Ouadahi** (b. Casablanca, 1959) takes as his subject matter the built environment of urban alienation - sterile modernist public housing developments, wire netting and underground passageways. He paints works of paradoxical beauty using this stark urbanism as his springboard. Born in Casablanca, Morocco, of Algerian parents in 1959, Driss Ouadahi grew up in Algeria. He studied at the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux Arts d'Alger before enrolling and subsequently graduating from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Ouadahi has held solo exhibitions in Dubai, New York, San Francisco, Düsseldorf, Germany, and Istres, France. He has also taken part in a number of group exhibitions such as 25 Ans de Créativité Arabe, Institut de Monde Arabe, Paris; Le Retour, 3ème Festival International d'Art Contemporain d'Alger; Magreb: Dos Orillas, Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid; Future of a Promise at Venice Biennale 54; Cairo Biennial 12, and CU Art Museum, University of Colorado in Boulder. His work is in the public collections of the Herbert-Weisenburger-Stiftung, Rastatt, Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf; Nadour Collection; Barjeel Art Collection, Sharjah, UAE; Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Geneva and Stadtsparkeasse Baden-Baden. Ouadahi was awarded several prizes including the Centre d'Art Contemporain, Istres, Marseille (2003) and the Grand Prix Léopold Sédar Senghor Prize at the 11th edition of Dak'Art, the Biennial of Contemporary African Art in Dakar, Senegal (2014). Ouadahi currently lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany.

**Nathaniel Rackowe** (b. London, 1975) light sculptures are designed to recreate the experience of navigating the city around us. His works are abstracted impressions of today's metropolitan experience evoked through the vicissitudes of light as it fluctuates throughout the city. Rackowe was born in 1975 and graduated from the Slade with a M.F.A in sculpture. Rackowe's selected solo shows include *Radiant Trajectory*, Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai, 2015; *The Consequence of Light*, Bodson Gallery, Brussels, 2014; *Reflections on Space*, BISCHOFF/WEISS, London, 2013; Spin NY, EDUN, New York, 2013 and a solo project for Art Cologne, Germany, 2012. Recent group shows include ones at Bangkok Art and Cultural Centre, Bangkok, 2014; Galerie Bertrand Grimont, Paris, 2013; Lumiere, Light Festival of Durham, 2013; Grand Palais, Paris, 2013; The Double Illums Bolighus, Copenhagen, 2013 and the Royal Academy Summer Show, London, 2012. Rackowe's public art projects include Black Shed Expanded (BSE), Sculpture by the Sea, Aarhus; Black Cube, DEN FRIE Centre of Contemporary Art, Copenhagen; Spin, Lima; RP3, Economist Plaza with the Contemporary Arts Society, London and LP4, Victoria Station, London. His works are in notable public collections including CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation), Miami; Jumex Collection, Mexico; Museum of Modern Art, Lima; LVMH Collection, Museum of New Art, Tasmania, Australia; David Roberts Collection, London, UK; UK Government Art Collection, London, UK; Hauser & Wirth Collection, Zurich, Switzerland; and Ernst & Young Collection, London, UK. Rackowe lives and works in London.

**Mona Saudi** (b. Amman, 1945) sculpts mainly in stone. Her forms are full of vitality, beauty and a clear sense of equilibrium. Always starting with basic shapes, the square, circle, cylinder, rectangle, she goes on to give them movement, a life of their own – either repeating their forms, varying their depths or heights or cutting them across one another to create modern, abstract forms expressing themes of life force and creation. Saudi studied Sculpture at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Saudi has participated in solo exhibitions at Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai; Europia Gallery, Paris; The Mosaic Rooms, London; Jacaranda Images Gallery, Amman, and Quartier des Arts, Beirut. She has also exhibited in several group exhibitions including Abu Dhabi Art, Abu Dhabi, 2014; Salon d'Automne, Sursok Museum, Beirut; International Cairo Biennale, Cairo; Les Ateliers Arabes, UNESCO, Beirut; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC and Arab Contemporary Artists, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris. Her works are in notable international collections including the National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington DC, and the Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah. Saudi lives and works between Beirut, Lebanon and Amman, Jordan.

## **About Lawrie Shabibi**

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary art gallery housed 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 organizes 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 presented Middle Eastern artists to the international contemporary arts community. By holding a regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, Lawrie Shabibi has in the space of five years been a forerunner in the development of the contemporary art scene in Dubai.

The gallery represents Hamra Abbas, Adel Abidin, Maliheh Afnan, Farhad Ahrarnia, Wafaa Bilal, Asad Faulwell, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Taus Makhacheva, Nabil Nahas, Driss Ouadahi, Shahpour Pouyan, Nathaniel Rackowe, Marwan Sahmarani, Larissa Sansour and Mona Saudi.

For information on Lawrie Shabibi please visit: [www.lawrieshabibi.com](http://www.lawrieshabibi.com)

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