



PRESS RELEASE

Naked Sweet Potato | Abdullah Al Saadi | Frieze Abu Dhabi 2026



Abdullah Al Saadi, *Naked Sweet Potato 15*, 2025, acrylic on rolled canvas, 122 x 60 cm

Aisha Alabbar Gallery at Frieze Abu Dhabi 2026

Abdullah Al Saadi

Naked Sweet Potato

Global Futures, curated by Tarini Malik

Booth: G2

Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi

Preview: 19 November | Public: 20–22 November 2026

Aisha Alabbar Gallery brings new works from Abdullah Al Saadi's ongoing series *Naked Sweet Potato* to the inaugural Frieze Abu Dhabi, in a solo presentation in Global Futures, curated by Tarini Malik. First shown at the UAE National Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011, *Naked Sweet Potato* is one of the most significant bodies of work by a pioneering Emirati artist, brought to the fair by one of the first women-led Emirati galleries.

The series takes an everyday yet deeply personal object as its point of departure. Over the years, Al Saadi has returned to it in drawing, painting, sculpture, stone engraving and jewellery, alongside collected and archival material. The sweet potato is enlarged, fragmented and reimagined, moving between the recognisable and the abstract. What sets the work apart is this sustained attention to a single, seemingly ordinary object, and Al Saadi's ability to keep finding new possibilities within it.

The works are also rooted in place. The sweet potato becomes a way into Al Saadi's reflections on childhood, family and the land around Khor Fakkan, where walking and collecting have long been

Aisha Alabbar Gallery

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central to his practice. The project is less a study of a plant than an ongoing way of looking, one that turns something familiar into a source of memory, imagination and discovery.

On the booth, Al Saadi continues *Naked Sweet Potato* in a single installation of new works made in 2025 and 2026: paintings in acrylic on stretched and rolled canvas, and *Goddesses of the Naked Sweet Potato* (ربات الفندال العاري), a group of ceramic sculptures of female figures in varying sizes. He develops each piece through repetition and variation, so the work grows gradually rather than arriving at a fixed conclusion. Fifteen years on from Venice, the series still reveals how much can be found in an object we might otherwise pass without notice.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Abdullah Al Saadi (b. 1967, Khor Fakkan, UAE) is a pioneering Emirati artist who has shaped the contemporary art scene in the UAE. Drawing on his personal life, family history and the environment around him, his practice spans painting, drawing, sculpture, performance and photography, lengthy artists' notebooks, the collection and systematic categorisation of found objects and the invention of new alphabets.

Al Saadi represented the UAE at the 60th Venice Biennale in 2024 with *Abdullah Al Saadi: Sites of Memory, Sites of Amnesia*. His solo exhibition *Al-Toubay* was held at Sharjah Art Foundation in 2014, and his work has been included in Sharjah Biennial, the São Paulo Biennial (2004), *Here and Elsewhere* at the New Museum, New York (2014) and *1980–Today: Exhibitions in the United Arab Emirates* at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015). He holds a bachelor's degree in English literature from the United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain (1993) and studied Japanese painting at Kyoto Seika University, Japan, from 1994 to 1996. He lives and works in Khor Fakkan.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Established in 2018, Aisha Alabbar Gallery is a leading platform for contemporary and modern art in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Rooted in a strong curatorial vision, the gallery is dedicated to presenting a diverse roster of emerging and established artists from the UAE, the wider MENA region, and the international art world. With a particular focus on fostering dialogue between local artistic practices and global contemporary discourse, the gallery aims to contribute meaningfully to the evolving narrative of art in the region.

As one of the first women-led Emirati galleries, Aisha Alabbar Gallery has played a pioneering role in championing the voices and practices of artists who are redefining the cultural landscape. We take pride in our commitment to nurturing talent through thoughtfully curated exhibitions, artist-led initiatives, and strategic collaborations with leading curators, institutions, and cultural organisations both regionally and internationally.

PRESS ENQUIRIES

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