



## Chill: Summer in the City

In collaboration with Iris Art Advisory

**Artists: Ahmed Emad, Lama Alshenaifi, Safeya Sharif, and Yosra Emamizadeh**

**7 June – 31 August 2022**

Aisha Alabbar Gallery eases into the summer season with “Chill: Summer in the City,” a group exhibition in collaboration with Iris Art Advisory, featuring works by Ahmed Emad, Lama Alshenaifi, Safeya Sharif and Yosra Emamizadeh.

Summer in the UAE is not always the stereotypical fantasy where one chills on the beach and sips an icy drink by a palm tree. Instead, as the mercury passes above 40 degrees Celsius, residents are on the hunt from one air-conditioned environment to the next. Best described as a habitat that cultivates dreams, our vibrant cities change pace and drive society to look inwards. Indoor spaces transform into cool capsules that defy the heat and push the limits of imagination. This exhibition brings together four artists who aim to cool you down.

When it’s blazing hot outside, come to the gallery for a cool, refreshing take on the *ideal* summer escape. The four young artists inspire a calm and reflective summer season. In a series of large-scale paintings, self-taught **Ahmed** places unstable structures and figures in strange situations. The central figures are surrounded by bright but fading colours, representing the artist’s deep inner thoughts and reflections. Saudi artist **Lama**, creator of “IDONTGIVEABLAH,” paints unfiltered humorous text-based paintings. Her works are a playful “on-trend” thought process showing the line between chaos and balance through stone-cold satire. **Safeya**’s printmaking series consists of light-toned paper that, upon closer examination, appears to be embossed with subtle illustrated compositions. She explores alternate realities, such as daydreaming, revealing the whimsical mayhem within the mind. Lastly, **Yosra**’s drawings of ripe fruits embrace that moment before they spoil, reminding us to “enjoy our ice cream before it melts.” With an element of nostalgia and how time passes us by, her works are a subtle reminder to cherish the moment.

“Chill: Summer in the City” takes us from our immediate surroundings with refreshing ideas, inspiring a contemplative break from the summer heat while looking forward to cooler days ahead.



## **About the artists**

### **Ahmed Emad**

Ahmed Emad (b. Dubai, 1993) is a self-taught Emirati artist. With a background in civil engineering, Ahmed develops concepts inspired by building material, such as steel bars, concrete, and industrial scraps. He looks at the functions of these materials, which can be viewed as constructive or fatal, in relation to aspects of the mind, life and society. Ahmed often uses a mixture of mediums like pastels, charcoal, and acrylics to create dynamic layers, while intentionally allowing each medium space to move and eventually settle. Therefore, his works appear raw and his gestures are intuitive and expressive. Ahmed's work focuses on existential themes, taking inspiration from surrealists such as Salvador Dali and Diego Rivera.

Ahmed held a number of solo exhibitions, including *Media Ecstasy*, FN Designs, Dubai, UAE (2019); *Portraits of Chaos*, Coffee Architecture, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2018); and *Novel Insight into Art*, Hamdan Innovation Incubator, Dubai, UAE (2015). He has participated in exhibitions in the UAE, including *Mkkan*, Sikka Art & Design Festival, Dubai, UAE (2022); *NFT | IRL*, Firetti Contemporary, Dubai UAE (2021); *Performing Contemporary*, Festember, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2019); Ras Al Khaimah Youth Council Art Exhibition, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE (2018); *Color Debate*, University of Sharjah, UAE (2016). Ahmed holds a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Sharjah.

### **Lama Alshenaifi**

Lama Alshenaifi (b. Riyadh, 2000) is a self-taught artist and creator of the concept "IDONTGIVEABLAH". The concept, which is prevalent throughout her practice, encourages creating fearlessly without any judgement. Lama sees people and social trends and practices as an important source of inspiration in her work that encompasses abstract and text-based drawings, paintings, and installations. Through her work, the artist aims to inspire and start constructive conversations on topics sometimes seen as critical due to social constraints or judgement. Lama's work is the definition of chaos and balance combined, in which she believes that the state between surrender and discipline creates the flow of ideas behind her works.

Lama has recently participated in exhibitions in Riyadh including *Personage 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Art Exhibition* (2021) and *The Playground Eid Campaign* (2021). Additionally, she has displayed several installation works across Saudi Arabia,



in venues such as Hodai Café, Ad Diriyah (2022), Switchers Restaurant, Ad Diriyah (2022), La Gray Store, Riyadh (2021), and Arpina Restaurant, Riyadh (2021). Lama has collaborated with a number of fashion brands in the Gulf, including Bucketbox, Riyadh (2022), Mazrood, Riyadh (2021-2022), Ravel, Riyadh (2020), Astro, Khobar (2020), and Pong, Kuwait (2020).

## **Safeya Sharif**

Safeya Sharif (b. Dubai, 1999) is a multidisciplinary Emirati artist based in Dubai. Her practice incorporates a variety of mediums, including printmaking, photography, painting, book structure, and graphic design. Safeya explores the complexities of the mind and how it could be altered. She portrays a shifted reality, that is either influenced or subjected in surreal playful Compositions which capture realities interrupted by hallucinations and concluded conception such as day dreaming.

Safeya holds a BFA in Visual Art from Zayed University. She participated in a number of exhibitions in the UAE and internationally, including *Psychedelic Surrealism*, Quoz Art Festival (2022); *Looking Elsewhere*, Zayed University Urban Satellite Space at the Foundry, Dubai, UAE (2021), *The Emerald Print Exchange* (2021), Karin Clarke Gallery, Eugene, OR (2021), and 6X6, Rochester Contemporary Art Center, Rochester, NY (2021).

More recently, Safeya worked as an Artist Assistant to Emirati artist and printmaker Salama Nasib. She did an internship at Richemont, Cartier as part of the Arts & Culture Department, working directly with the Paris team. Safeya has also been a part of the Peer Assistant Leadership Program (PALs) at Zayed University.

## **Yosra Emamizadeh**

Yosra Emamizadeh (b. Pennsylvania, USA, 1987) is an artist based in Dubai. She started drawing from a young age while growing up in Tehran. After completing her studies at the American University of Beirut, she attended the Angel Academy of Art in Florence to study classical drawing, and later earned her master's degree in Museum Studies from Harvard University.

Yosra has developed a devotional and faith-based approach to her painting practice, which often encompasses elements from Islamic art and sacred geometry. In her recent series of still life drawings and paintings, she explores the passing of time by tracing moments in the life of fruits and placing them



within texturised backdrops that combine elements from nature and geometry. While many see still lifes rooted in philosophical ideas of memento mori, where the focus is on the signs of death's rapid approach, the artist's perspective is not geared towards the finality of death but rather the time in between.

In 2021, Yosra presented "Nafs", a solo exhibition part of the 24<sup>th</sup> Sharjah Islamic Festival at the Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, UAE. She has participated in several exhibitions in the UAE and USA, including *The Philosophy of Food*, Tashkeel, Dubai (2022); *Isolated, But Not Alone*, The Aerogramme Center for Arts and Culture, USA (2021); *Made in Tashkeel*, Tashkeel, Dubai (2021 and 2019); and *Nasty Women Boston*, Laconia Gallery, Boston, MA (2017). Yosra co-curated *Reclamation Exhibition I & II: Emerging Female Artists of New England*, Sommerville, MA, USA (2015). Her works are in private collections in the UAE and abroad.

### **About Aisha Alabbar Gallery**

Aisha Alabbar Gallery is one of the first Emirati-led galleries in Dubai focused on contemporary and modern art by Emirati, local, and regional artists. Founded in November 2018 and located in Al Quoz, the gallery seeks to further the practices of emerging and established artists, who are the inspiration for the gallery's diverse range of programming.

Dedicated to locally based artists and producing five innovative exhibitions per year, Aisha Alabbar Gallery has built a reputation not only for rigorous exhibition presentation but also for collaborations with renowned curators, investing considerable resources in bringing the practices of pioneering artists to the contemporary stage.

A commitment to education and community strengthens the gallery's exhibition programme. Each show is accompanied by workshops and seminars with the purpose of engaging diverse audiences. The gallery seeks to contribute to a lasting, evolving UAE arts ecosystem through its exhibitions, accompanying programming and commissioned, in-depth publications.

### **About Iris Art Advisory**

Iris Art Advisory is a premier art consultancy firm based in the United Arab Emirates, founded by Lateefa Bin Hamoodah and Maryam Al Falasi. The Founders are avid art collectors who both share a common academic



background in art history and archeology gained from the Sorbonne Abu Dhabi.

Our Founders had a longing for creating a unique and unequalled platform that would cater to the eminent desire of the acquisition of art in the region specifically and the globe generally. Iris offers an all-encompassing service through our profuse global connections with artists and galleries with the aim of ensuring the best artworks for our clients.

Iris came to life with the strong belief of our distinguished and incomparable 'eye for art.'. The founders are driven by discovering new emerging artists globally in addition to established artists to ensure Iris displays access to both primary and secondary markets.

### **Editor's note**

Exhibition title: Chill: Summer in the City

Artists: Ahmed Emad, Lama Alshenaifi, Safeya Sharif, Yosra Emamizadeh

Exhibition duration: 7 June – 31 August 2022

Exhibition opening: 7 June 2022, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at Aisha Alabbar Gallery

Private viewing booking: email to [info@aishaalabbar.art](mailto:info@aishaalabbar.art) or call +971 4 344 7747

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