



Press Release

square: not square | Eman Al Hashemi
15 September – 5 November 2022

[Dubai, 5 September 2022] Aisha Alabbar Gallery is pleased to present *square: not square*, Eman Al Hashemi's first solo exhibition at the gallery. In this exhibition, the multidisciplinary Emirati artist addresses the effects of waiting by isolating different square-based objects and utensils from their everyday usage and subjecting them to surreal, slightly funny tests of time and multiplicity.

In multiple series of works made in ceramics, stitched and compressed paper, and concertinaed books, the artworks highlight the differences that emerge from sameness. Square plates are stacked up, squares form uneven grids, and spoons sit alongside each other in a parody of identical manufacture. For Eman, the repetition of objects speaks not to the purity of mathematics but to the contextual reality of life. By carefully making every work herself, she emphasises individuation and difference in what are ostensibly identical objects.

The Dubai-born artist is currently in her second year of studying ceramics at RISD in Providence, Rhode Island, after being part of SEAF Cohort 5 and studying fine art at the University of Sharjah's Fine Arts and Design College. Her practice is marked by the formalism in materials that emerged over the past five years in the UAE, as artists moved away from found items and Pop idioms and towards studio-based work governed by concepts of perception, investigation into the properties of materials, and geometric principles. For Eman, this interest in formalism brings with it a commitment to manual production, such that her time producing the work becomes part of the project's enquiry around time as constituent material, impacting and affecting the physical stuff of the object itself. In *Sliding Tablecloth* (2018), for example, she presents a laborious act of production that makes mockery of the order suggested by geometry, where she stitched together coloured squares into a fragile, ephemeral tablecloth, like a softer, more magical version of the 20th century's austere grid.

The artist examines the essence of the grid, the square, applying it as the backbone of several projects, such as the architectural *Unfinished Towers* (2019–21), that are ceramic versions of buildings whose sides are formed of melting, sagging windows, as if following the methodical desire of a grid to its logical conclusion (four sides, four grids) and ending with something not abstract but indifferently quotidian; the unfinished towers that dot neighbourhoods in the midst of change.

With its anthropomorphism of the “waiting” object, Eman's work is also marked by a literary conceit and self-awareness that seeps in at the edges. She shows that material properties, environmental conditions, and the boredom – and meditative freedom – of repetition all bear on the making and even reception of a work. If the twentieth century was led by the form of the grid, Eman reminds us that the grid must be formed of something: whether paper, ceramics, fabric, or the time the artist and viewer put in.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Eman Al Hashemi (b. Dubai, 1993) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice revolves around impossible tasks, repetition, productivity, inefficiency, and reimagined objects and shapes through sculpture, prints, drawings, and artist books. Inspired by the ideas surrounding mass production, value, relationships to objects, hoarding, consumerism, and sentimental value, the artist questions what it means for mundane everyday objects, like a brick on the side of the road or a spoon in a drawer, to be idly placed in an environment that focuses on productivity, constant chaos and noise. Her practice is marked by the formalism and interest in materials that emerged over the past five years in the UAE, as artists moved away from found item and Pop idioms and towards studio-based work governed by concepts of perception, investigation into the properties of materials, and geometric principles.

Eman had a solo exhibition titled *square: not square* at Aisha Alabbar Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2022). Additionally, she participated in a number of acclaimed exhibitions at home and abroad, including *Portrait of a Nation II: Beyond Narratives*, Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2022); *RISD Ceramics Biennial*, Sol Koffler Gallery, Providence, RI, USA (2021); *Made in Tashkeel*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2021, 2019, 2016); *Convergence: 36th Emirates Fine Arts Society Annual Exhibition*, Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, UAE (2019); *Youth Takeover*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, UAE (2019); *Emirati Traditional Games*, Al Qattara Center, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2019); *Sikka*, House 40, Dubai, UAE (2019); *Community and Critique: SEAF Cohort 5*, Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2018); *Mini Print Prize Exhibition (Printmakers Council)*, Morley Gallery, London, UK (2017); *Portrait of A Nation*, Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation (ADMAF), me Collectors Room Berlin / Stiftung Olbricht, Berlin, Germany (2017); *Transition (Reconnecting Art)*, Menier Gallery, London, UK (2017); *International Miniature Print Exhibition*, Bankside Gallery, London, UK (2017); *Biennial International Miniature Print Exhibition (BIMPE) IX*, Federation Gallery, Vancouver, BC; Dungrave Print Workshop and Gallery, Vancouver, BC; UBC Okanagan Gallery, Kelowna, BC; SNAP, Edmonton, AB, Canada (2017); *Two Parts*, Lombard Street Gallery, Margate, UK (2016); *4th International Emerging Artist Award Gallery Show*, TAG bxl, Brussels, Belgium (2016); *Show at the Fair Award Exhibition*, World Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE (2016); *Portrait of a Nation*, Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation (ADMAF), Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2016); *International Emerging Artist Award - Qlocktwo Artist Edition Award*, MB&F MAD Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2016); *Immerse at THE BEACH Award Exhibition*, The Beach, Dubai, UAE (2016); *The 4th Wharepuke International Open Printmaking Show*, Art at Wharepuke, Kerikeri, New Zealand (2015); *50 Years of Artists Prints*, Bankside Gallery, London, UK (2015); *National Original Print Exhibition*, Bankside Gallery, London, UK (2015); *Making an Impression Book*, Printmaker's Council, London, UK (2015); *EXIT Show 10*, University of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE (2015); *Sheikha Manal Young Artist Award Shortlisted*, City Walk, Dubai, UAE (2015); and *12th Lessedra World Art Print Annual - Mini Print 2013*, Lessedra Gallery, Sofia, Bulgaria (2013).

Eman was part of Cohort 5 of the Sheikha Salama Emerging Artists Fellowship (SEAF), Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Foundation (SHF), in partnership with Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Abu Dhabi, UAE (2018), in addition to being part of other residency programmes like Forsa School, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE (2019 - 20); Facebook's Global Artist in Residence Program, Dubai, UAE (2017); and East Carolina University and University of Sharjah Exchange Program (2014). She is the recipient of the Printmaking Today Mini Print Editorial Prize, London, UK (2018) and the 4th International Emerging Artist Award, Dubai, UAE (2016). Her works are in various UAE and international collections, including Abu Dhabi Executive Office, ADMAF, Art Jameel Collection, and Victoria & Albert Museum.



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Eman is currently in her second year of studying towards an MFA in Ceramics at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Providence, RI, USA (2023). She has a BFA from the University of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE (2016).

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Founded in 2018 in Alquoz, 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. 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 UAE-based artists and producing five innovative exhibitions per year, Aisha Alabbar Gallery has built a reputation for rigorous exhibition presentations and for collaborations with renowned curators and organisations, investing considerable resources in bringing the practices of artists in The UAE to the contemporary stage.

A commitment to education and community strengthens the gallery's exhibition programme. Each show is accompanied by immersive activations, talks, and workshops 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.

NOTE TO EDITOR

Exhibition: square: not square

Artist: Eman Al Hashemi

Exhibition Opening: 15 September 2022, 6 - 8 pm

Exhibition Duration: 15 September - 5 November 2022

To book a private tour, please email info@aishaalabbar.art or call +971 4 344 7747

PRESS ENQUIRIES

For more information, please contact:

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