



## **Press Print! | Group Printmaking Exhibition**

**Artists: Azim Al Ghusein, Brian Gonzales, Diego Mendoza, Hala El Abora, Ji-Hye Kim, Khalid Mezaina, Safeya Sharif, and Salama Nasib**

31 May – 7 September 2023

Aisha Alabbar Gallery is delighted to welcome summer with *Press Print!*, a group exhibition featuring work by 8 UAE-based artists: Azim Al Ghusein, Brian Gonzales, Diego Mendoza, Hala El Abora, Ji-Hye Kim, Khalid Mezaina, Safeya Sharif, and Salama Nasib.

*Press Print!* highlights printmaking practices in the UAE, demonstrating the inherent experimental potential and various techniques available to artists working today. Looking at the multitude of contemporary approaches, the artists explore a variety of subjects and create space for ideas, technology, and process. There will be an active public programme that includes a reading group, a series of talks about each artists' work and collecting practices. Unique to the exhibition is a Print Exchange, a collection of limited edition prints by each of the 8-participating artists available for purchase.

Dubai-based illustrator and printmaker, **Azim Al Ghusein** experiments with image making methods and materials outside the conventional studio. Made using linocut, tetrapak drypoint and risograph techniques, Azim's prints are thoughtful explorations of the capacity for sharing (and caring), distribution, and hospitality. UAE-based American printmaker and lecturer, **Brian Gonzales** presents a new series of CMYK screenprints depicting irrational compositions and vibrant colour schemes. The abstract prints that mark the artist's sixth year in the UAE belong to Brian's wider narrative unraveling endless enigmas. In a new series of etchings and screenprints, **Diego Mendoza** explores culture induced concepts of masculinity by layering multiple image transfer methods to create pattern compositions of overlapping imagery. With visual references to mythological, current, and cross-cultural representations of the subject, Diego portrays changing spectrums of measuring masculinity. **Hala El Abora** takes an experimental and interdisciplinary approach to materialise her printmaking process beyond the surface. Inspired by archiving practices, Hala's work explores acts of preservation, merging the real and imaginary into permanent objects facing the test of time. **Ji-Hye Kim** conveys the question of self-identity by reflecting on the properties of the UAE's rocky mountains against natural occurrences, such as rain and wind. In new large-scale monoprints, the artist traces the textures of these mountains as if recalling their memories and transformation overtime. Emirati artist **Khalid Mezaina** presents a new body of mixed media prints on paper and fabric, drawing from his research on regional and historical talismanic practices. In these works, Khalid repetitively uses simple shape stamps to compose images of movement rituals, such as dancing. **Safeya Sharif** explores the concept of selective memory in a new series of embossed and linocut prints. By isolating selected scenes of her signature endless hallways, Safeya highlights the correlation between memory and imagination. **Salama Nasib** presents a new series of prints as part of her continued exploration of memory. In this playful series, Salama looks at childhood desires to play, collaging a print illustration of her family home's slide against screenprinted backdrops of the past.



## EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

<p><b>Talk: Printmaking Introduction</b> By Ji-Hye Kim</p> <p>Wednesday, 31 May 2023 6 pm - 6:30 pm Aisha Alabbar Gallery</p>	<p><b>Reading Group</b> Facilitated by Ivan Knapp</p> <p>Thursday, 8, 15, and 22 June 2023 7 pm - 8 pm Aisha Alabbar Gallery</p>	<p><b>Storytelling Sunday</b> With Suzy Sikorski of Mid East Art</p> <p>Sunday, 11 June 2023 4 pm - 6 pm Aisha Alabbar Gallery</p>
<p><b>Talk: Introducing the International Print Community</b> By Brian Gonzales</p> <p>Tuesday, 13 June 2023 7 pm - 8 pm Aisha Alabbar Gallery</p>	<p><b>Artists Talk I</b> With Brian Gonzales, Diego mendoza, Hala El Abora, and ji-Hye Kim</p> <p>Wednesday, 5 July 2023 7 pm - 8 pm Aisha Alabbar Gallery</p>	<p><b>Artists Talk II</b> With Azim Al Ghusein, Khalid Mezaina, Safeya Sharif, and Salama Nasib</p> <p>Wednesday, 12 July 2023 7 pm - 8 pm Aisha Alabbar Gallery</p>
<p><b>Talk: Collecting Prints</b> By Maha Alsharif</p> <p>Wednesday, 19 July 2023 7 pm - 8 pm Aisha Alabbar Gallery</p>		<p><b>For more details, please visit:</b> <a href="https://www.aishaalabbar.art/events">https://www.aishaalabbar.art/events</a></p>

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Azim Al Ghusein** (b. Abu Dhabi, 1989) is an artist and illustrator living and working in Dubai. His studio practice involves comics, illustration and kinds of making that allow him to consider sharing (and caring), distribution and hospitality more thoughtfully.

Azim has exhibited work in *The Alumni Return*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2019); *Phone Home*, EFA Project Space, New York City, NY, USA (2019); *Intima' - Tanmiyah*, The Firestation, Doha, Qatar (2019); *Rose Arcade: Anise Hyssop*, 64-09 Woodside Ave, Queens, NY, USA (2018); *MFA Thesis Exhibition*, The Anderson Gallery, VCU, VA, USA (2018); *L'HeauxspitaliTEA*, VCU FAB Gallery, VA, USA (2017); *Made in Tashkeel*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2016); *Art: Process and Practice*, Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2015); *RCA Secret Dubai*, Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE (2015); *Sikka*, Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood, Dubai, UAE (2013, 2014); *Art Dubai Projects: MAG*, Mobile Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2013); *Sheikha Manal Young Artist Awards*, Dubai Ladies Club, Dubai, UAE (2012); and *Brave New World*, The Ara Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2011).

Azim has received a number of grants and awards, including the Salama Emerging Artist Fellowship (SEAF) Faculty Fellowship, Salama bint Hamdan AlNahyan Foundation, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2019); MFA Residency Program, VCUQatar, Doha, Qatar (2018); E.I.Kirkland Scholarship, VCU Arts, Richmond, VA (2017); Graduate Teaching Assistantship, VCU Arts, Richmond, VA (2016); and the Salama Emerging Artist Fellowship (SEAF), Salama bint Hamdan AlNahyan Foundation, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2014).

Azim holds a BFA in Visual Communication from the American University of Dubai (2011), a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA (2012), and a MFA in Printmaking from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, USA (2018). He currently works as the Library and Research manager at Jameel Arts Centre in Dubai.



**Brian Gonzales** (b. Santa Monica, 1985) is a Sharjah-based artist and educator. Through his printmaking practice, Brian expresses ideas and creative impulses waiting to be untangled and understood. His recent works comprise variable iterations experimenting with surreal textures, compositions, and representations through print.

Brian's recent exhibitions include *Nostalgia*, Ayyam Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2023); *Calculating Chaos*, Rewaq Gallery, University of Sharjah, Sharjah UAE; University of Wisconsin - Madison, WI; 103 Exhibition Space, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA (2022); *From The Vault*, Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE (2021); *Brian Gonzales: A Private Collection of Printed Matters*, Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE (2021); *Umbra: New Prints For A Dark Age*, International Print Center New York, New York, NY (2020); *Public Art - Mural*, Escela Rutil Mixta Jose Dionisio Cardoza, San Pedro Copan, Honduras (2018); *Anomaly (Public Art Installation)*, Moore Square, Raleigh, NC (2017); *Some Assembly Required*, Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR (2016); and *61st Annual Juried Exhibition*, Durham Arts Council, Durham, NC (2015). Brian's prints are part of Zuckerman Museum of Art, Southern Graphics Council International Prints Collection and Archive, University of Colorado Special Collections, Herron School of Art and Design Library Archive, East Carolina University Print Archive, University of Sharjah - College of Fine Arts and Design Archive, City of Raleigh Municipal Art Collection, and Drive-by Press Print Archive.

Brian received his BFA from East Carolina University in Greenville, NC (2008) and his MFA from the Herron School of Art and Design in Indianapolis, IN (2012). Before moving to the UAE in 2016, Brian was a Research Fellow at Supergraphic and Super G Print Lab in Durham, NC (2013 - 2016). He currently lives in Sharjah and teaches drawing and printmaking at the University of Sharjah, College of Arts and Design. In addition to being an artist, Brian is also an avid collector of fine art prints and printed ephemera with a personal collection of over 500 prints.

**Diego Mendoza** (b. Mexico City, 1988) is a Dubai-based printmaker and educator. Diego's printmaking practice focuses on etching and screen printing, exploring representations of masculinity and questioning his own place within it. Through critical inquiries, he investigates human iconography that transcends cultural time, collaging imagery from historical, current, and cross-cultural sources to highlight conventions and conformity.

Diego holds a BFA in Painting and Printmaking from Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar (2014) and a MA in Educational Leadership from Framingham State University, USA (2018). Among his recent exhibitions are *Press Print!*, Aisha Alabbar Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2023); *9 In Hand Press 2023 Print Exchange*, Pennsylvania, USA (2023); *Authentic Marks 2023*, Dubai Design District, Dubai, UAE (2023); and *VCUarts Alumni Anniversary Exhibition*, Doha, Qatar (2023). Diego has also been working in education for youth since 2015, teaching art history, visual arts, literature and philosophy in Mexico, Indonesia, Tanzania and the UAE. His expertise and interest in knowledge-exchange has led to several printmaking workshops and courses covering a wide range of techniques, from relief printing to RISO printing. He has been working as an Education & Outreach Coordinator at Tashkeel, Dubai since 2021.

**Hala El Abora** (b. Amman, 1999) is a Palestinian Jordanian artist based in Dubai. Her practice is driven by her obsession with the concept of non-ephemerality, permanence, and the desperate need to preserve. She explores the act and process of archiving, the act of making forms concrete, and negotiating deterioration. In her work, intimate embroideries resonate against rigid and enduring mediums such as resin, plastic and metal to embody experiences of yearning that cannot otherwise be made physical.

Hala's work was showcased at several exhibitions, including *Nostalgia*, Ayyam Gallery, Dubai, UAE; *Getting Over the Color Green*, Engage101, Dubai, UAE (2023); *Xposure International Photography Festival*, Sharjah, UAE (2023); *While The Coffee Grounds Settle*, Gotham Gallery, Washington, DC, USA (2022); *Calculating Chaos*, Rewaq Gallery, University of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE (2022); *SGC International Conference*, University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA (2022); *Confluence II*, Universiti Sains Malaysia, IE Art Projects, Malaysia (2022); *Exit 16*, The Studio Gallery, Sharjah, UAE (2021); *Palestine 101*, University of Toronto, Canada (2020); and *Identity*, Rewaq Gallery, University of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE (2020).



Hala has been awarded the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award (2023) alongside her team, and is currently a member of Jameel Arts Youth Assembly (2022 - present). Hala was also part of *Confluence*, a virtual residency by Universiti Sains Malaysia (2022). She holds a BFA from University of Sharjah (2021).

**Ji-Hye Kim** (b. Seoul, 1980) is a printmaker and artist who has lived in Dubai since 2007. With an academic background in printmaking, Ji-Hye's work conveys the question of self-identity using metaphors from natural occurrences. Her most recent work explores the resilience of the UAE's rocky mountains against acts of nature, such as wind and rain, that shave and carve these mountains, causing slight change to the surface, yet the mountains remain unaffected.

Ji-Hye is currently taking part in Tashkeel's Critical Practice Programme, Dubai, UAE (2023). She recently had a solo presentation at the 24th Sharjah Islamic Arts Festival, Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, UAE (2021). Ji-Hye had a solo exhibition at the Radisson Red Hotel, Dubai, UAE (2021). Additionally, her works have been a part of several exhibitions, including *10th and 11th Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival*, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE (2022, 2023); *We x Each Other = We Are*, Korean Cultural Centre, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2023); *NBF Art Exhibition*, Capital Club, Dubai, UAE (2022); *Made in Tashkeel*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2021, 2022); *The Philosophy of Food*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2022); *4th Miniature Printmaking Exhibition: Authentic Marks & Glow*, Dubai Design District, Dubai, UAE (2022); *COVID Conversations*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2020).

Ji-Hye is the winner of Radisson Hotel's International Women's Day Competition (2021). She was shortlisted for the National Bank of Fujairah (NBF) Art Competition (2022) and the Emirati Futurism Award (2021). In 2022, she co-founded and became the inaugural president of the Korean UAE Art & Content Association (KUACA).

Ji-Hye holds an MA in Digital Art from University of the Arts, London (2005) and BA in Printmaking from Hongik University, Seoul (2003).

**Khalid Mezaina** (b. Dubai, 1985) is an Emirati illustrator, textile artist and printmaker. His practice explores contextual narratives, stories and relationships in places of constant change. Through an experimental and practical approach, the artist illustrates past memories and present observations, reflecting imaginative states of being. Khalid's observations range from a curiosity for regional and historical talismanic practices to observations of a contemporary city like Dubai, that is in a constant state of transformation. His work is playful, often drawing inspiration from comic books, dance and pop music, ceremonial textiles and costumes, and stories about the human condition.

Khalid was part of several international programmes and exhibitions, including Jameel Library Commissions: *In Search of Magic*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, UAE (2022 - 2023); *Press Print!*, Aisha Alabbar Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2023); *Fashcultivate*, UAE Cultural Week, Pallati i Kongreseve, Tirana, Albania (2022); *Ink With Hope*, KED Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon (2022); *Delusions & Errors*, Shelter Art Space, Cairo, Egypt (2022); *Sharjah Guest of Honour*, Bologna Children's Book Fair, Bologna, Italy (2022); *Portrait of a Nation II: Beyond Narratives*, Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2022); *UAE Year of the 50th*, Permanent Mission of the UAE to the UN, NY, USA (2021); *Made in Tashkeel*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2021, 2019, 2016, 2014, 2008); *Scripts and Calligraphy: A Timeless Journey*, National Museum in Riyadh, KSA (2021); Cultural Foundation Art Residency, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2020); *Nomadic Traces: Journey of Arabian Scripts*, Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2019); *DRAK: Design Ras Al Khor*, Dubai Design Week, Dubai, UAE (2018); *Weltformat Graphic Design Festival*, Lucern, Switzerland (2018); *RISD Textiles*, The Gallery at 200 Lex, New York Design Center, USA (2018); *From Barcelona to Abu Dhabi: Works from the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) in Dialogue with the Emirates*, Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2018); *The Whole Nine Yards: Textiles Graduate Biennial Show*, Sol Koffler Gallery, RI, USA (2018); *Portrait of a Nation*, ME Collectors Room Berlin, Berlin, Germany (2017); *Emirati Expressions: Conventions of Arts*, Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2015); *Art: Process & Practice*, Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2015); *UAE Pavilion*, Milan World Expo, Milan, Italy (2015); *The Post Oriental Odyssey*, The Mine, Dubai, UAE (2015); Salama bint Hamdan Emerging Artists Fellowship (SEAF), Abu Dhabi, UAE (2015); *Past Forward* (a traveling exhibition commissioned by the UAE Embassy and the Meridian International Center in Washington, DC), Washington, DC, Texas, Los Angeles, CA, Michigan, and Chicago, IL, USA (2014 - 2015);



*What Do You Hear?*, Sikka, Dubai, UAE (2014); *The Present*, Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE (2012); *Crossing the Line*, Langford 120, Melbourne, Australia (2012); *MinD - City's Dialogue*, Dubai Community Theatre & Arts Centre (DUCTAC), Dubai, UAE (2011); Delfina Foundation Residency, London, UK (2011)

Khalid holds a BS in Visual Communications, American University of Sharjah (2006) and MFA in Textiles, Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) (2018). Khalid worked as a graphic designer and projects coordinator at a number of institutions in the UAE, including Sharjah Art Foundation and Tashkeel in Dubai.

**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 *Chill: Summer in the City*, Aisha Alabbar Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2022); *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.

**Salama Nasib** (b. Dubai, 1988) is a printmaker whose practice is intimate, meditative, and interactive. Her work explores the subject of memory and its ideas, including remembering, forgetting, and false memories. The personal struggle of holding on to precious memories has strongly influenced her practice. For her, printmaking is a meditative medium that engages the body and mind in meticulous and laborious processes, allowing space to innovate techniques and ideas. Her recent research takes images from old family photo albums to reference the past. She transitions from the past to the future using multiple layering and applications of various print techniques, including photolithography, solar printing, and blind embossing. These works also involve voice recording as an added layer to the prints, in what she describes as spoken memories. With this sound component alongside the prints, Salama creates immersive dialogues and rich sensory experiences.

Salama received an MA in Print from the Royal College of Art, London, UK, in 2018. Additionally, she was part of the inaugural Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Emerging Artist Fellowship (SEAF), graduating in 2014. More recently, in 2019, Salama was an Artist in Residence at Dundee Contemporary Arts in Dundee, Scotland. The artist received the Augustus Martin Prize for Print and Innovation in 2018. Salama is an instructor of Visual Arts at Zayed University in Dubai.

Salama has participated in several exhibitions in the UAE and internationally, including *Dubai, Dundee*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2019); *The Magical Number Two Plus or Minus Seven*, Meem Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2019); *Emirati Traditional Games* (commissioned by DCT), Al Qattara Arts Centre, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2018); *Royal College of Art Show 2018*, London, UK (2018); *Mem(e)ri*, RCA Dyson Gallery, London, UK (2018); *Crescent/Interscent*, Sagar House, London, UK (2018); *The Woven Heritage International Miniature Printmaking Show*, A4 Space, Dubai, UAE (2017); *Kharareef*, Sikka, Dubai, UAE (2017); *Art Nomads – Made in the Emirates*, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin, Germany (2016); *Ramadanization*, Ductac, Dubai, UAE; *Portrait of a Nation*, ADMAF, Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2016); *Art: Process & Practice*, Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2015); *Made in Tashkeel*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2015); *Past Forward* (a traveling exhibition commissioned by the UAE Embassy and the Meridian International Center in Washington, DC), Washington, DC, Texas, Los Angeles, CA, Michigan, and Chicago, IL, USA (2014 – 2015); *UAE Culture and Heritage*, Rira Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2013); *40 Poems from the Desert*, Ara Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2012); *PrintExchange*, The Printmaking Center of New Jersey, New Jersey, USA (2011); *As The*



*Saying Goes*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2011); *InPrint@HAUS*, The Open Studio, Toronto, Canada (2010); *Culture Days Print Show*, InPrint Collective Studios, Toronto, Canada (2010); *Fakie*, Shelter, Dubai, UAE (2010); *Portrait of a Generation*, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE (2010); Bastakiya Art Fair, Dubai, UAE (2010); and Galleria 3D, Venice Biennale, Mestre, Italy (2009).

Salama's work is in several UAE collections, including ADMAF, Abu Dhabi; UAE Ministry of Culture and Youth, Abu Dhabi; UAE Ministry of Presidential Affairs; and Embassy of the UAE in Washington, DC.

## **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: Press Print!

Artists: Azim Al Ghussein, Brian Gonzales, Diego Mendoza, Hala El Abora, Ji-Hye Kim, Khalid Mezaina, Safeya Sharif, and Salama Nasib

Exhibition opening: Wednesday, 31 May 2023, 6 – 9 pm

Exhibition duration: 31 May – 7 September 2023

To book a private tour, please email [info@aishaalabbar.art](mailto:info@aishaalabbar.art) or call +971 4 344 7747

## **PRESS ENQUIRIES**

For more information, please contact:

Tia Tannous, Gallery Assistant

E: [tia@aishaalabbar.art](mailto:tia@aishaalabbar.art)

M: +971 54 442 6598

T: +971 4 344 7747