



Sara Ahli

BORN

1993 Alabama, USA
Lives and works in Dubai, UAE and Providence, USA

EDUCATION

2024 MFA, Rhode Island School of Design Providence, USA
2015 BFA, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA, USA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021 A Placeless Place, The Foundry, Dubai, UAE

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2026 *Barzakh*, Sharjah Calligraphy Biennale"12", Sharjah, UAE
Memory Palace, OPEN Gallery, Providence, RI USA
When the Familiar Becomes Unfamiliar, Ministry of Culture, Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

2025 *Becoming Embodied*, Zepster Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, USA
Whispers of the Past, Sotheby's, Dubai, UAE
The Rhythm of Existence, Aisha Al Abbar Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE
A Floor Plan of Echoes, Stedman Lofts, Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A

2024 *Embodied Recollection*, Dye House, Providence, USA
Glass Triennial, Woods Gerry Gallery, Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A
The Grad Thesis Show, The Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, U.S.A

2023 *The Space in Between*, Memorial Hall, Rhode Island, USA

2022 *While the Coffee Grounds Settle*, Fathom Gallery, Washington DC, USA
Either - Or, The Sol Koffler Gallery, Rhode Island, USA
Sikka Art and Design Festival, Dubai, UAE
Group Exhibition at Villa Aumedan, Iris Art Advisory, Dubai, UAE
The Quest, Aisha Alabbar Gallery, Dubai, UAE

2021 *Made in the Emirates*, ENGAGE 101, Sotheby's Dubai, UAE
A Placeless Place, ENGAGE 101, The Foundry, Dubai, UAE

2020 *Community & Critique*, Salama bint Hamdan Emerging Artists Fellowship Cohort 6, Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi, UAE

2019 *The Youth Takeover*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, UAE

SELECTED WORKSHOPS & RESIDENCIES

2026 Ajeto Glass, xxxx, Czech Republic
Penland School of Craft, North Carolina, USA
Vertigo Art Residency, Susa, Italy
OOM Glass Atelier, Venice, Italy

2024 Workshop in Kiln Casting, Penland School of Craft, North Carolina, USA



FELLOWSHIPS | AWARDS & RECOGNITION

2025	The National Grant for Culture & Creativity, UAE
2024	Italiacamp EMEA, Dubai Hub for Made in Italy, Digital Artist Cultural Exchange Program, Rome, Italy
2019	Salama bint Hamdan Emerging Artists Fellowship, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2015	CCA Fashion Department Library Research Award, SF, California, USA
2014	Finalist, Student Design Award, The Royal Society of Arts, London, UK

PUBLICATIONS & ACHIEVEMENTS

2021	Emirati Artist Sara Ahli On Her Experimental Sculptural Practice, Harper's Bazaar Arabia
2015	Featured Designer, Thesis Runway Collection, California Apparel News

BIOGRAPHY

Sara Aref Ahli (b. 1993, Alabama) is an Emirati and Colombian American visual artist and designer living and working between Dubai, UAE, and Providence, Rhode Island. Ahli's interdisciplinary practice spans fashion, sculpture, installation, and glass, exploring themes of body, memory, and home.

By engaging with materiality as a narrative, Ahli explores intersections between memory, home, and the body. Her work delves into the physicality and labour of making, investigating vulnerability, thresholds, and resilience of the human form.

"Involuntary memories resurface as visual fragments, echoing stories of my past. I undergo an artistic archaeology, excavating these hidden interiors to the surface. Through an embodied practice of shaping glass, I explore physicality and labour, uncovering thresholds of both body and material."

Her practice emphasizes this embodiment, where shaping glass shapes the body itself. Choreographing a dialogue between body and material, Sara shapes glass in a way that reflects the ephemeral nature of memory. She views tools as extended limbs, assembling, distorting, and conforming molten glass, while recognizing the body as a repository for memory and home as a curator of lived experiences.

Ahli explores the body's thresholds and the fluidity of memory through glass, a dynamic medium that reflects the fragility and resilience of human experience. By reconstructing and reshaping spaces from memory, she creates ephemeral, dream-like portals that blur the lines between creation and deconstruction. She examines how fragments of memory and place, layered and repeated, form a delicate architecture of lived experience, questioning the boundaries between the real, the imagined, and the forgotten.

Sara's artist career includes recent exhibitions such as Barzakh at Sharjah Calligraphy Bienale (2026), Memory Palace at Open Gallery(2026), When the Familiar Becomes Unfamiliar, organised by the UAE's Ministry of Culture and presented in Art Dubai (2026), Sotheby's Whispers of the Past (2025), The Rhythm of Existence at Aisha Al Abbar Art Dubai (Dubai, UAE, 2025) and A Floor Plan of Echoes at Stedman Lofts (Providence, Rhode Island, 2025). In 2024, she presented Embodied Recollection at the Dye House (Providence, USA, 2024); participated in The Grad Thesis Show at the Rhode Island Convention Center (Providence, USA, 2024); and was part of the Glass Triennial at Woods Gerry Gallery (Providence, Rhode Island, 2024). Previous showcases include The Space in Between at Memorial Hall (Rhode Island, 2023); While the Coffee Grounds Settle at Fathom Gallery (Washington DC, 2022); Either – Or at The Sol Koffler Gallery (Rhode Island, 2022); and exhibitions at Sikka Art and Design Festival (Dubai, UAE, 2022); Villa Aumedan, Iris Art Advisory (Dubai, UAE, 2022); and The Quest at Aisha Alabbar Gallery (Dubai, UAE, 2022). Her earlier work was featured in Made in the Emirates – ENGAGE 101 at Sotheby's (Dubai, UAE, 2021); and her debut solo show A Placeless Place – ENGAGE 101 at The Foundry (Dubai, UAE, 2021); as well as Community & Critique at Warehouse 421 (Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2020). In 2020, she completed the Salama bint Hamdan Emerging Artists Fellowship (SEAF) as part of Cohort 7 in collaboration with the Rhode Island School of Design.

Sara holds a Master of Fine Arts in Glass from RISD (2024) and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fashion Design from the California College of the Arts, San Francisco (2015).