



## 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

2024 *Embodied Recollection*, Dye House, Providence, USA  
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  
2014 *Discarded to Divine*, de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA, USA

### SELECTED WORKSHOPS

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

### FELLOWSHIPS | AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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  
2017 Finalist and Exhibitor Tryano presents Bespoke Abu Dhabi, 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



## Bio

**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, Sara explores intersections between memory, home, and the body. Her work delves into the physicality and labor of making, investigating vulnerability, thresholds, and resilience of the human form. In her artistic statement, she reflects:

*"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 labor, 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 her debut solo exhibition, *A Placeless Place at The Foundry*, Dubai, in 2021, and showcases at prominent venues such as the Sikka Art & Design Festival (Dubai, 2022), Aisha Alabbar Gallery (Dubai, 2022), *Made in the Emirates* at Sotheby's (Dubai, 2021), and *Community & Critique* at Warehouse 421 (Abu Dhabi, 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).