



## **The Scent of Memories | Najat Makki**

13 September - 2 November 2023

Aisha Alabbar Gallery is delighted to present *The Scent of Memories*, Najat Makki's second solo exhibition with the gallery. Najat is a pioneering figure within the local art community, and her profound insights into the relationship between colour and the memories associated with specific places have significantly enriched the depth and diversity of her expression.



Najat Makki, *Untitled 185*, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 120 cm x 80 cm

In this new body of work, she layers colours on top of each other to create intense sensory experiences in her paintings by challenging the limits of colour's impact on our senses. Her recent works on fabric include contemporary interpretations and adaptations of the dot and paisley design from traditional fabrics.

"The Scent of Memories" serves as a testament to Makki's daring and inventive approach, consistently pushing the boundaries of her practice by exploring new techniques and mediums.

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Najat Makki (b. Dubai, 1956) is a pioneering Emirati artist best known for her curiosity for color and dreamlike, abstracted depictions of the natural landscape in the UAE. What started as childlike wonder led her to Cairo, where she graduated with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in relief sculpture and metal from the College of Fine Arts (1982 and 1998, respectively). Upon returning to the UAE, the colorist and painter started exploring fluorescent paints through her work in scenography for children at the Ministry of Education, introducing the Gulf to a style of abstract painting that is characterized primarily by large fields of flat, solid color, spread across, creating areas of unbroken surface and a flat picture plane. Her use of this material in contemporary art contexts created an unconventional viewing experience, often accompanied by UV-A lights that elevate matter from canvas in lurid dimensionality. This experimentation first debuted in her solo exhibition at Al Wasl Club in Dubai in 1987, marking a turning point in her career and gaining her regional recognition. Makki later returned to the Egyptian capital to pursue a doctorate degree, making her the first Emirati woman to formally specialize in the philosophy of art (2001), adding a theoretical dimension to her practical aptitude and visual flair.



Makki has exhibited widely in her home country but also internationally in Egypt, France, Germany, India, Jordan, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Her works are in the permanent collections of the Sharjah Art Museum, the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Cultural Foundation in Dubai, Women's Museum in Dubai and the Ministry of Culture and Youth in Abu Dhabi, among many. Makki was the only female artist among the 15 showing at 1980 – Today: Exhibitions in the UAE, the National Pavilion UAE, the 56th Venice Biennale (2015) curated by Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, and had an acclaimed retrospective at the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi entitled Luminescence (2019). She is a current member of the Dubai Cultural Council, the Emirates Plastic Arts Society and Art Friends Society. A multi-award-winning artist, she has received the Emirates Appreciation Award (2015), the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development's National Award for Arts, Sciences, and Literature (2008), Gulf Cooperation Council Biennial Award (1998), Sultan Bin Owais Cultural Award (1994), Jury Award, First session of Sharjah Biennial (1993), in addition to several excellence and merit certificates.

### **ABOUT THE GALLERY**

Aisha Alabbar Gallery was founded in 2018 and is a platform that promotes Pioneering Emirati, local and regional artists who communicate their innovative techniques through a diverse range of artistic genres.

The gallery is a multidisciplinary space that not only exhibits the work of artists, but also welcomes the exploration of fashion, cinema and all creative concepts. With ongoing workshops that cover multiple creative disciplines, as well as regular meet ups, talks and events, the gallery is a hub to freely engage in discussion, debate and discovery.

Founder and owner, Aisha Alabbar is recognized as a strong advocate for her ongoing contribution to the local art scene. She is also an established photographer, documenting her journey, growth and emotions through the use of photographic images.

For more information on Aisha Alabbar Gallery please visit: <https://www.aishaalabbarartgallery.com>

### **NOTE TO EDITOR**

Exhibition: The Scent of Memories

Artist: Najat Makki

Exhibition opening: Wednesday, 13 September 2023 | 6 - 9 pm

Exhibition duration: 13 September – 2 November 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

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