

‘Chill’ by Aisha Alabbar Gallery and Iris Art Advisory helps cool you down

24 Jun 2022



Lama Alshenaifi's work titled Strawberry Cow.

Muhammad Yusuf, *Features Writer*

Aisha Alabbar Gallery eases into the summer season with “Chill: Summer in the City,” a group exhibition in collaboration with Iris Art Advisory, featuring works by Ahmed Emad, Lama Alshenaifi, Safeya Sharif and Yosra Emamizadeh (June 7 – Aug. 31).

Summer in the UAE is not always the stereotypical fantasy where one chills on the beach and sips an icy drink under a palm tree. Instead, as the mercury crosses 40 degree Celsius, residents are on the move from one air-conditioned environment to the next.

Perhaps the condition could also be one which cultivates dreams – sunny summer is also the time when our vibrant cities change pace, driving society to look inwards.

Indoor spaces transform into cool capsules that (try to) defy the heat and push the boundaries of creativity's envelopes.

The Aisha Alabbar Gallery exhibition brings together four artists who aim to cool you down. So, when it is blazing hot outside, enter it for a bracing, refreshing take on an ideal summer escape. The four young artists exhibiting attempt to inspire a calm and reflective summer season.

READ MORE

[George Harrison's widow talks of life and death through poetry](#)

['Stranger Things' star Shannon Purser has spoken out about a lack of body diversity in Hollywood](#)

[Tom Hanks jokes about why he loves crashing weddings](#)

In a series of large-scale paintings, self-taught Emad places unstable structures and figures in strange situations.

The central figures are surrounded by bright but fading colours, representing his inner thoughts and reflections. Saudi artist Alshenaifi, creator of “IDONTGIVEABLAH,” paints unfiltered humorous text-based paintings.

Her works are a playful “ontrend” thought process, showing the line between chaos and balance, through stone-cold satire.

Sharif's printmaking series consists of light-toned paper that, upon closer examination, appears to be embossed with subtle illustrated compositions. She explores alternate realities, such as daydreaming, revealing the whimsical mayhem within the mind. Lastly, Emamizadeh's drawings of ripe fruits embrace the moment just before they spoil, reminding us to “enjoy our ice cream before it melts.”

With an element of nostalgia and how time passes us by, the works are a subtle reminder to cherish the moment. “Chill” takes us from our immediate surroundings with refreshing ideas, encouraging a contemplative break from the summer heat, while looking forward to cooler days ahead. Emad (b. Dubai, 1993) is a self-taught Emirati artist. With a background in civil engineering, he develops concepts inspired by building material, such as steel bars, concrete and industrial scraps. The artist

looks at the functions of these materials, which can be viewed as constructive or fatal, in relation to aspects of the mind, life and society. He often uses a mixture of mediums such as pastels, charcoal and acrylics to create dynamic layers, while allowing each medium space to move and settle.



Safeya Sharif's embossing on paper titled Phasing Through Projection.

So his works appear raw while his gestures are intuitive and expressive. The work focuses on existential themes, taking inspiration from surrealists such as Salvador Dali and Diego Rivera. Alshenaifi (b. Riyadh, 2000) is a self-taught artist and creator of the concept "IDONTGIVEABLAH". The idea, which is prevalent throughout her practice, encourages creating fearlessly sans judgement. She sees people and social trends and practices as an important source of inspiration and her work encompasses abstract and text-based drawings, paintings and installations.

It is an amalgamation of chaos and balance combined, where the state between surrender and discipline, creates the flow of ideas.

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.

She explores the complexities of the mind and how it could be altered, portraying shifting realities in surreal and playful compositions. The works also depict actualities interrupted by hallucinations and day dreaming.

Emamizadeh (b. Pennsylvania, USA, 1987) is an artist based in Dubai. She started

drawing from a young age while growing up in Tehran.

After completing her studies at the American University of Beirut, she attended the Angel Academy of Art in Florence to study classical drawing, and later earned her Master's degree in Museum Studies from Harvard University. She has developed a devotional and faith-based approach to her painting practice, which often encompasses elements from Islamic art and sacred geometry.

In her recent series of still life drawings and paintings, she explores the passing of time by tracing moments in the life of fruits and placing them in texturised backdrops that combine elements from nature and geometry. While many see still lifes as rooted in the philosophical ideas of memento mori, where the focus is on the signs of death's rapid approach, the artist's perspective is not geared towards the finality of death, but rather the time in between. 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.

Founded in 2018 and located in Al Quoz, it seeks to further the practices of emerging and established artists – they are the inspiration for its diverse range of programming. Iris Art Advisory is an art consultancy firm based in the UAE, founded by Lateefa Bin Hamoodah and Maryam Al Falasi. The founders are avid art collectors who share a common academic background in art history and archaeology gained from the Sorbonne Abu Dhabi.

“Iris came to life with the strong belief of our distinguished and incomparable ‘eye for art’” they say. They would like to discover new and emerging artists globally, besides established artists. Iris enjoys accessibility to both primary and secondary markets.

Artist

UAE



Related articles
