



## Safeya Sharif

### BORN

1999                      Dubai, UAE  
Lives and works in Dubai, UAE

### EDUCATION

2025                      MFA, Fine Arts and Media, NYUAD, Abu Dhabi, UAE  
2021                      BFA, Visual Arts, Zayed University, Dubai, UAE

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2024                      Abu Dhabi Art, Aisha Alabbar Gallery, Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, UAE  
*Pressure Points*, MFA Year One Exhibition, NYUAD, Abu Dhabi, UAE  
*12th edition of Sikka Art and Design Festival*, Al Shindagha Dubai, UAE

2023                      *Press Print!*, Aisha Alabbar Gallery, Dubai, UAE  
*Time and Identity* at Al Safa Arts and Design Library, Dubai

2022                      *Chill: Summer in the City*, Aisha Alabbar Gallery, Dubai, UAE  
*Psychedelic Surrealism*, Quoz Art Festival, Dubai, UAE

2021                      *ShowCACE: Senior Exhibition* (Zayed University), Dubai Design District, Dubai, UAE  
*Looking Elsewhere*, Zayed University Urban Satellite Space, Dubai, UAE  
*The Emerald Print Exchange*, Karin Clarke Gallery, Eugene, OR, USA  
6X6, Rochester Contemporary Art Center, Rochester, NY, USA

### PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

2021 - 2023              Artist Assistant to professor Salama Nasib



## Biography

**Safeya M.R. Sharif** (b. 1999, Dubai) is an Emirati artist whose practice explores abstraction, spatial representation, and questions of authenticity within hyperreality. Safeya's work bridges the gap between reality and imagination, inviting audiences into spaces where familiarity and abstraction collide. She disrupts traditional painting through unconventional materials, such as linoleum cutouts and canvas stretchers, expanding her practice into sculptural forms. Her visual language often incorporates doors and hallways, symbolizing safety and territory, yet rendered powerless when removed from their functional contexts. Working across mediums like printmaking, painting, and installation, her art reflects themes of depth, void spaces, and subjective interpretation. Influenced by the Supports/Surfaces movement, Safeya's pieces frequently take on a self-referential quality, delving into memory and internal signifiers.

Safeya's work explores the intersection of familiarity within abstraction and the intuitive process, delving into the complexities of mindless abstraction. Through art created without explicit intention, recognizable elements undergo transformation, challenging conventional boundaries. Inspired by Baudrillard's *Simulacra*, her practice blurs the line between reality and imagination, constructing a unique realm where the real and the represented converge, forming a distinct reality apart from its origin. This convergence of familiarity and abstraction adds layers of meaning, prompting viewers to question authenticity and explore subjective interpretations in a visually saturated world.

Her work has been exhibited both in the UAE and internationally, including *Pressure Points* at Project Space, NYUAD (2024); *Sikka Arts and Design Al Shindagha Editions*, Dubai (2024); *Time and Identity* at Al Safa Arts and Design Library, Dubai (2023); *Press Print!* at Aisha Alabbar Gallery, Dubai (2023); *Chill: Summer in the City* at Aisha Alabbar Gallery (2022); *Psychedelic Surrealism* at Quoz Art Festival (2022); and *Looking Elsewhere* at Zayed University Urban Satellite Space, Foundry, Dubai (2021). Additionally, she has participated in *The Emerald Print Exchange* at Karin Clarke Gallery, Eugene, OR (2021), and *6X6* at Rochester Contemporary Art Center, NY (2021).

Safeya is currently pursuing an MFA at NYU Abu Dhabi and holds a BFA in Visual Art from Zayed University, Dubai.



## **Artist Statement:**

Safeya's work explores the intersection of familiarity within abstraction and the intuitive process, delving into the complexities of mindless abstraction. Through art created without explicit intention or thoughtfulness, recognizable elements undergo transformation, challenging conventional boundaries. Inspired by Baudrillard's *\*Simulacra\**, where simulations replace the real and lead to the hyperreal, Safeya's work blurs the line between reality and imagination, constructing a unique realm where the real and the represented converge and form a distinct reality apart from the origin.

This convergence of familiarity and abstraction adds layers of meaning, prompting viewers to question authenticity and explore subjective interpretations in a visually saturated world. The recurring motif of doors serves as entry points for viewers, with no objective destinations but rather subjective spaces navigated through recollection or imagination. Emphasizing perspective, Safeya engages with spatial representation, inviting viewers into known yet ambiguous abstraction and challenging conventional spatial expectations to foster active contemplation.

The exploration of depth on flat surfaces is expressed through varied mediums, spatial narratives, construction techniques, and mark-making, depicting void spaces that encourage a sense of immersion. In the current body of work, Safeya explores these concepts with canvas stretchers inspired by linoleum cutouts, transforming them into frames stretched and molded into sculptural forms, resembling windows into endless doorways. Additionally, a series of embossed prints mimics the process of recalling familiar narratives. Working primarily with raw canvas fabric and archival paper, Safeya references the *\*Supports/Surfaces\** movement, focusing on works that are self-referential, where the painting is both the object and subject, free from external narratives.

The work is a nuanced journey shaped by intuition, personal experience, and memory. Familiarity intertwines with abstract compositions, bridging the known and unknown and inviting viewers to construct personal narratives. In this dynamic space, where truth is subjective and meaning is continuously constructed, Safeya challenges traditional boundaries, offering a visual experience that anchors viewers in the familiar while inviting exploration in the abstract. Through these complexities, subjective interpretations thrive, shaping narratives in the evolving realm of contemporary art.