

6 new art exhibitions to see in Dubai this autumn: from unseen Mohamed Melehi works to reflections on Indian history

The UAE art scene faces a new season after a difficult few months instigated by the pandemic



A work by Tagreed Darghouth from her upcoming Toys and Trophies: From Zeus' Pandora to Barbie Doll exhibition at Tabari Artspace. Courtesy the artist and Tabari Artspace



Alexandra Chaves
September 2, 2020

For better or for worse, we've made it to September. The UAE's art scene has endured a difficult few months with closures and cancellations affecting the incomes of artists and gallery owners alike.

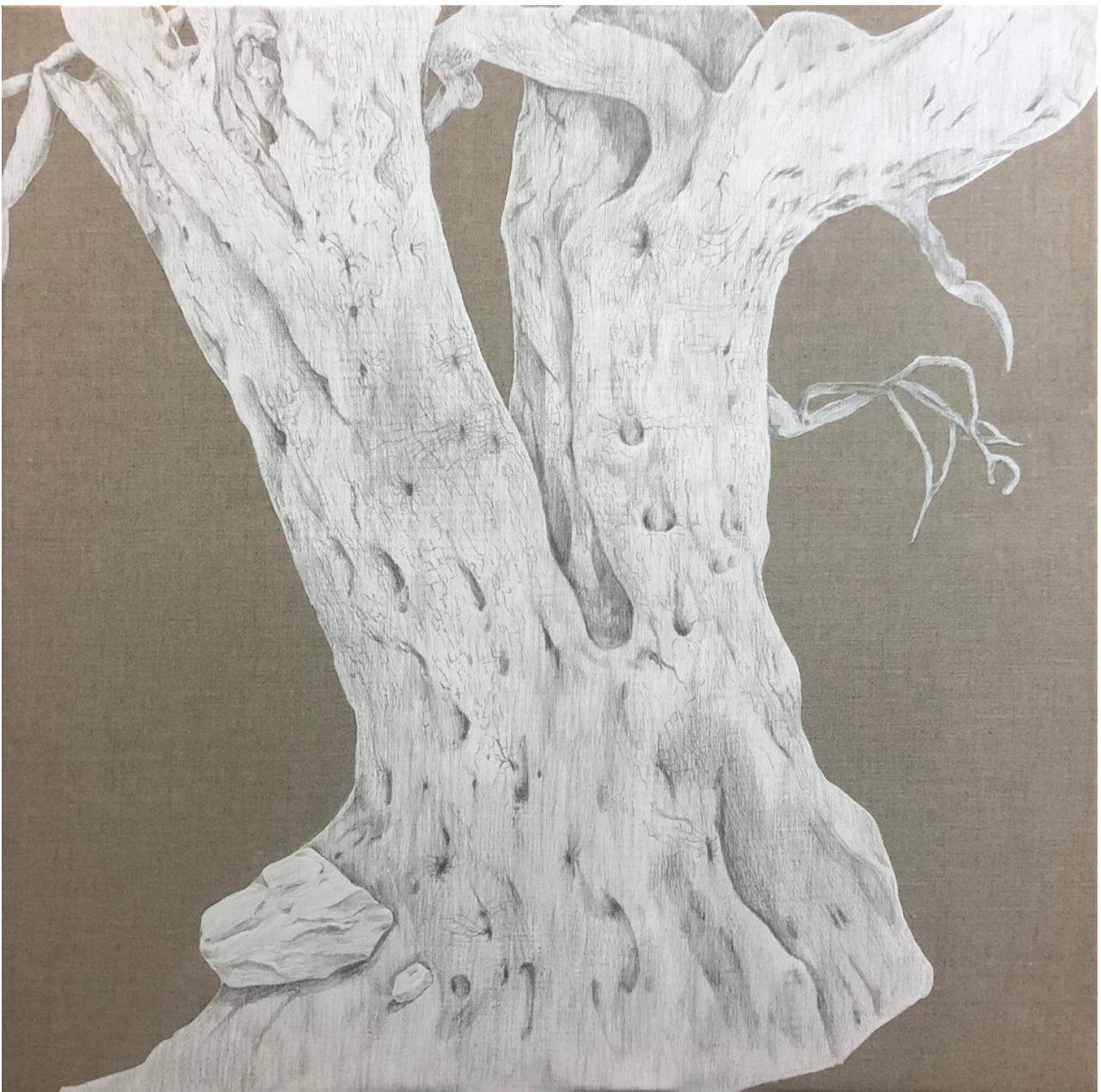
Over the summer, museums and galleries have gradually reopened their doors, inviting art lovers back into their spaces, albeit with limited capacity. Despite Dubai's biggest art moment being cancelled in March because of the pandemic ,

the industry is eager to bounce back as a new season begins.

While a number of shows have been extended well into the rest of the year, there are a few new ones to add to your calendar. Here's what to see.

Every Soiled Page

Ishara Art Foundation, an institution dedicated to South Asian art that launched in March 2019, will present a group show that explores art's role in shaping our collective memory. The show's title, *Every Soiled Page*, is taken from a poem by Pakistani author Faiz Ahmad Faiz, written during his time as a political prisoner in the 1950s.



Praneet Soi 'Olive Tree IV' (2020). Courtesy Ishara Art Foundation

The exhibition considers how art can serve as a record of resistance. Curated by Sabih Ahmed, *Every Soiled Page* includes works by Anju Dodiya, Astha Butail, Neha Choksi, Praneet Soi and Sunil Padwal, as well as a newly commissioned performance installation by Inder Salim.

Saturday, September 19 to Saturday, December 19; Ishara Art Foundation, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai; ishara.org

New Waves: Mohamed Melehi and the Casablanca Art School

This major show on the Casablanca Art School was originally scheduled for March, but was postponed to September because of the pandemic.

From 1964 to 1974, Mohamed Melehi and a group of artists spearheaded a radical movement that influenced arts education in Morocco, encouraging students to look beyond western art history and focus on local production. *New Waves* tells the story of the Casablanca Art School, the group's moniker, and traces Melehi's career through paintings and archival photography. It will reveal the artist's crucial role in developing postcolonial Moroccan art and Arab Modernist art.

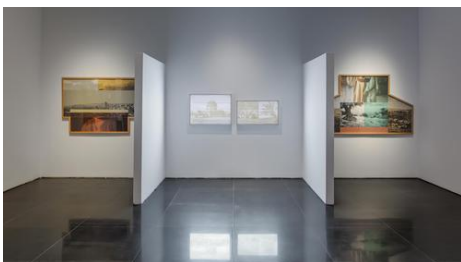


A work by Mohamed Melehi. Courtesy Alserkal

Curated by Morad Montazami and Madeleine de Colnet, the show will present previously unseen works by Melehi, including a collection of his documentary photography from 30 years of travel. Works by Farid Belkahia, Mohamed Chaba and Hossein Miloudi will also be on display.

Saturday, 19 September, to Saturday, October 10; Concrete, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai; alserkalavenue.ae

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Memory Drum

Emirati artist Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim's second solo exhibition at Lawrie Shabibi will feature a series of paintings and sculptures created since March. The conceptual artist is a pioneering figure in the UAE art scene, having

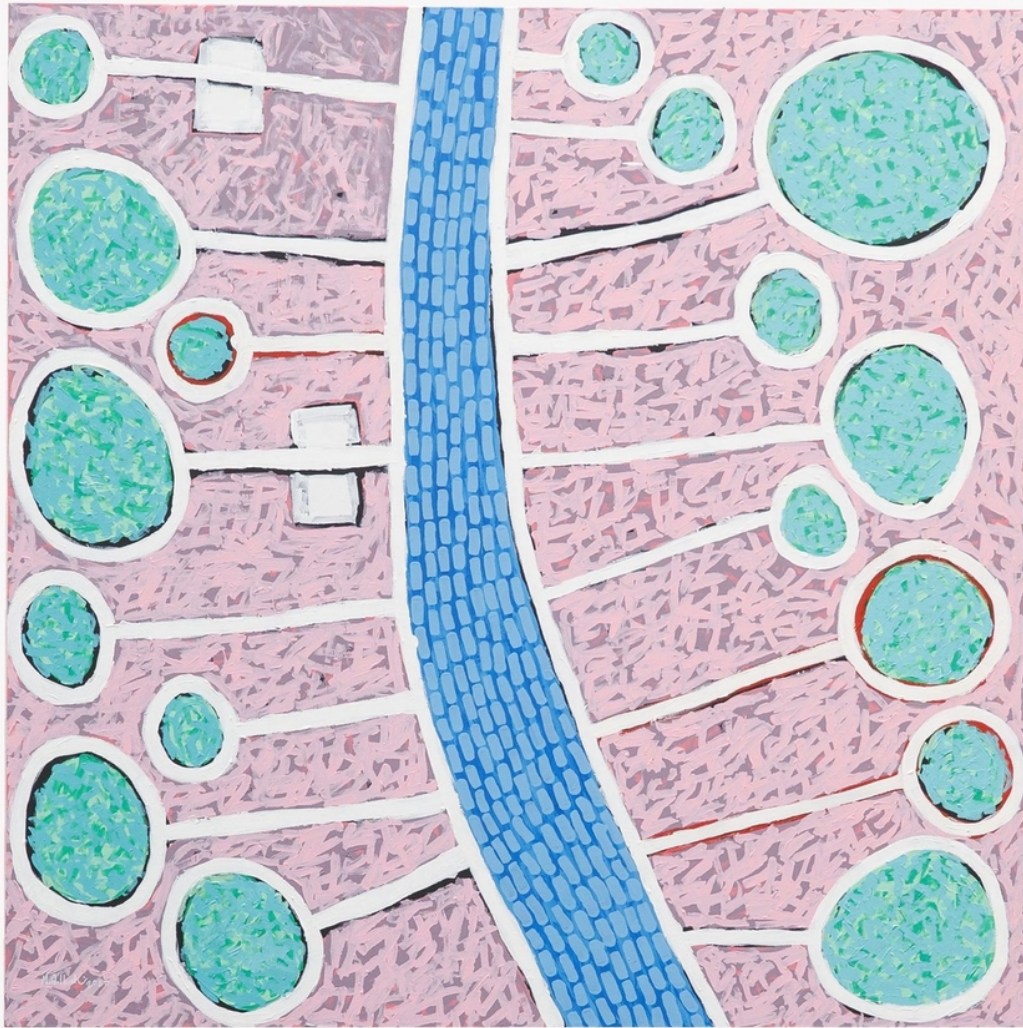
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worked alongside Abdullah Al Saadi, Hussain Sharif, Mohammed Kazem and Hassan Sharif, in the 1980s.

Born in Khor Fakkan, Ibrahim has long been influenced by the landscape of the Hajar Mountains and his work demonstrates his connection to the natural land. His latest paintings bear his signature circle motifs, which are influenced by ancient markings found on the mountainside.

From Saturday, September 19, Lawrie Shabibi, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai; lawrieshabibi.com



Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim, 'Blue Boulevard' (2020). Courtesy the artist and Lawrie Shabibi

On Stones and Palimpsests

For her new solo show at Green Art Gallery, Hera Buyukstacyan investigates how history can be erased territorially and culturally, taking the Partition of India in 1947 as one example. In her work *Infinite Nectar*, produced for the Lahore Biennial 2020, she studies Sikh heritage buildings that were abandoned during the Partition, seeing them as spaces that bear the histories and urban transformations of that period.

The Turkish artist's *Reveries of an Underground Forest* will also be on view. The sculptural installation looks at the forest and riverbeds of Canada's indigenous peoples that were destroyed as the city of Toronto was being built in the 1800s.

Saturday, September 19 to Wednesday, November 7; Green Art Gallery, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai; gagallery.com



Video still from 'Infinite Nectar' by Hera Buyukstacyan, in curatorial collaboration with Haajra Haider Karrar. Courtesy the artist and Green Art Gallery Dubai

The Last Days of Soft Machine

Austrian artist Philip Mueller continues to expand the universe around his 2017 *Black Flamingo Sad Boys* series, which features characters that made their way from the Alps to the Italian island of Santo Stefano. In 2019, Mueller presented *Beach Resort Tiberio*, which imagined these characters now living in wild abandon on the island.

In *The Last Days of Soft Machine* the latest and last iteration of the resort series, the artist shows the undoing of these figures in a final celebration of excess. In one painting, *Dogdays at Santo Stefano*, the characters live out their last days of revelry in vandalised and neglected structures.

Monday, September 28, to Wednesday, November 4; Carbon 12, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai; carbon12dubai.com



Philip Mueller, 'Dogdays at Santo Stefano' (2020). Courtesy the artist and Carbon 12, Dubai

Toys and Trophies: From Zeus' Pandora to Barbie Doll

Lebanese artist Tagreed Darghouth's works in this new solo exhibition at Tabari Artspace were completed in the aftermath of the Beirut explosion, which damaged her studio in Mar Mikhael. Her new paintings centre on the notion of feminine

beauty and the male gaze, drawing from references in Greek mythology and modern-day representations of women.

In this body of work, Darghouth, who has often addressed social issues in her practice, reflects on her own experiences as a woman and considers gender dynamics present in everyday life, both online and offline.

Tabari Artspace will donate 10 per cent of the proceeds from sales to the Lebanese Red Cross.

From Tuesday, October 20; Tabari Artspace, DIFC, Dubai; tabariartspace.com

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