



EXHIBITION

BUILDINGS IN BLOOM

Architecture from around the world gets elevated
with nature's dreamy touch in a digitally-enhanced
photography series now exhibiting in Dubai

DURING THE RENAISSANCE ERA, A PARTICULAR METHOD OF painting emerged. It was called Capriccio and became a popular way to imbue archaeological ruins with a sense of fictional fantasy. A new exhibition at Leila Heller Gallery in Dubai pays tribute to this creative technique, merging historically significant architecture and interiors with whimsical flowers. The project, titled *The Wild Within*, by Dutch-Canadian artist Ryan Koopmans and Swedish artist Alice Wexell, involves photographing these spaces and then integrating 3D-sculpted foliage into the images. "We breathe new life into architectural spaces and envision a world where nature

and structure coexist in delicate, dreamlike balance," explains Wexell. "Flowers appear throughout the series as a recurring motif, representing life's fleeting cycle from seed to bloom to decay. In these works, we preserve their transience and extend their beauty beyond time's natural limits."

Even Abu Dhabi's very own Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque gets the floral treatment in the project, with its white and gold pillars surrounded by lush greenery and romantic blooms. In addition to still images, video installations depict the poetic majesty of the series. Rebirth and renewal are key themes explored, as the artists envision the most beautiful parts of nature staking their claims on man-made spaces. "Our travels take us to different places such as Azerbaijani spas, Turkish temples and Lebanese villas – structures that carry layers of history and memory," shares Koopmans. "We document, scan and later reimagine them with digital vegetation that brings quiet vitality back into their stillness."

The Wild Within is exhibiting at Leila Heller Gallery till January 2026