

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Art Dubai
May 14th – 17th, 2026



Farideh Lashai, *Untitled*; 1998; oil on canvas; 110 x 160 cm.

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce its participation in Art Dubai Special Edition 2026 with presentations in both the Contemporary and Modern sections of the fair, along with two large-scale installations in the public fair space.

The Contemporary booth (A13) features a selection of works by artists Aref Montazeri, Arash Nazari, Ayad Alkadhi, Azza Al Qubaisi, Bahar Sabzevari, Behrang Samadzadegan, Canan, Darvish Fakhr, Douglas White, Kevork Mourad, Maryam Lamei, Mehdi Farhadian, Melis Buyruk, Morteza Darehbaghi, Morteza Khosravi, Naeemeh Kazemi, Parinaz Eleish Gharagozlou, Reza Derakshani, Roya Akhavan Shahabi, Ryan Koopmans & Alice Wexell, Soraya Sharghi, and Sultan Bin Fahad.

The presentation examines the shifting intersections between mythology, memory, displacement, and materiality through painting, sculpture, textile, multimedia, and installation. Drawing inspiration from regional histories and contemporary realities, the booth reflects on the persistence of cultural narratives amid rapidly changing social and political landscapes. Themes of exile, spirituality, environmental transformation, and emotional resilience emerge across the works, creating a layered dialogue between tradition and experimentation.

Maryam Lamei continues her exploration of Persian visual traditions through richly textured compositions that merge historical techniques with contemporary abstraction. Mehdi Farhadian's surreal and psychologically charged paintings blur the boundaries between reality and dream, inviting viewers into enigmatic narrative worlds. Darvish Fakhr's expressive portraiture reflects a lifelong engagement with identity, memory, and cultural hybridity, while Parinaz Eleish Gharagozlou explores storytelling and nostalgia through emotionally resonant mixed-media works.

Azza Al Qubaisi's sculptural practice draws from Emirati heritage and material culture, transforming industrial materials into poetic contemporary forms. Morteza Darehbaghi investigates the balance between geometric and organic forms, inspired by urban structures and Persian decorative traditions. Naeemeh Kazemi's paintings contemplate her anxieties within dreamlike landscapes populated by motifs from nature and mythology.

Ayad Alkadhi's layered canvases engage with themes of conflict, spirituality, and collective memory through the integration of Arabic calligraphy and newspaper imagery. Bahar Sabzevari's narrative paintings examine identity and personal history through references to Persian mythology and cultural symbolism. Melis Buyruk's porcelain sculptures evoke fragile ecosystems and the fractured relationship between humanity and nature, balancing delicacy with monumentality.

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The presentation also includes works by Turkish artist Canan, whose multidisciplinary practice reinterprets mythology, folklore, feminism, and spirituality through richly symbolic imagery. Kevork Mourad's immersive sculptural installation combines architecture, memory, and migration through intricately hand-cut forms that appear suspended between drawing and sculpture. Ryan Koopmans and Alice Wexell present a time-based media work exploring architecture, technology, and speculative futures within the urban landscape of the region.

Sultan Bin Fahad's work reflects on language, faith, and devotional practices through intricate beadwork compositions, while Reza Derakshani's paintings merge abstraction and Persian poetic traditions in richly layered surfaces. Aref Montazeri's mirror sculptures challenge conventional approaches to materiality and perception, transforming reflective surfaces into immersive spatial experiences. Soraya Sharghi's psychologically charged figurative works investigate introspection, solitude, and emotional transformation.

The Contemporary booth further highlights the practices of Roya Akhavan Shahabi, whose paintings explore concealment and vulnerability through layered figurative abstraction; Douglas White, known for sculptural works crafted from reclaimed materials; Behrang Samadzadegan, whose paintings and works on paper investigate contemporary Iranian narratives; Morteza Khosravi's expressive compositions inspired by cinema and cultural memory; and Arash Nazari's paintings, which reinterpret Persian miniature traditions through a contemporary visual language.

The Modern booth (A10), presented under Zamaniyat, offers a focused historical presentation celebrating key figures of modern art from the Middle East and South Asia, featuring works by Marcos Grigorian, Farideh Lashai, Jehangir Vazifdar, and Wassef Boutros-Ghali.

Marcos Grigorian, one of the pioneering figures of Iranian modernism, is represented through his iconic "earthworks," where cracked earth surfaces become meditations on landscape, identity, and materiality. Farideh Lashai's poetic and deeply introspective works bridge painting, printmaking, and literature, reflecting her engagement with memory, politics, and Persian cultural heritage.

Jehangir Vazifdar, a pioneering modernist associated with India's post-independence abstraction movement, presents works that explore geometry, rhythm, and color through both painting and drawing. Egyptian artist Wassef Boutros-Ghali's vibrant abstract compositions reflect a lyrical engagement with landscape, architecture, and Mediterranean light through expressive forms and color fields.

In addition to the presentations in the Modern and Contemporary sections of the fair, the public spaces will also feature two large-scale installations of Sudarshan Shetty and Kevork Mourad. Sudarshan Shetty's works explore architectural forms and cultural elements of the Indian subcontinent by incorporating teak wood, lanterns, a patio pond and a wooden sofa. Kevork Mourad's installations rise from Armenian ancestral past, evoking memory and displacement with floating, tower-like forms that honor shared histories and imagine a borderless, timeless sense of home.

Through these presentations, Leila Heller Gallery continues its commitment to fostering cross-cultural dialogue and presenting artists whose practices challenge conventional boundaries while engaging deeply with the histories and narratives of the region.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over four decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western, Central Asian, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European, and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 16,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East. In addition to presenting a dynamic exhibition schedule, Leila Heller Gallery actively organizes shows with world renowned curators, hosts educational panels and film screenings, and produces catalogs and books with scholarly essays. Each year the gallery participates in major international art fairs and stages off-site projects as a platform for exploring new conversations within a wider context of galleries, artists and institutions. Gallery artists have consistently participated in international museum exhibitions and biennials and are included in leading institutional collections worldwide.