

stories over art

middle east & beyond

October 2025
#16

ART & DESIGN | ARCHITECTURE | FASHION | INTERVIEWS | COMMENTARY | FILM | MUSIC | PERFORMANCE | PHOTOGRAPHY | FEATURES | REVIEWS

EDITOR'S NOTE



Blind Date Market: Chapters & Canvases | October 13, 2025

Very candidly, this month's edit note is dedicated to showcasing what we believe in—and hopefully, it will also serve as an invitation for you to collaborate with us, as a magazine, and with the many members of our team.

Every big thing begins with a huge risk and a bit of courage. Over my years in the UAE, I've always put myself right at the front—jumping in, knowing that even to fail, one has to start somewhere.

I've collaborated with artists across genres, giving them a free hand to work with my books. Each time, the question was: what can be done? A book and a canvas—what can be done? A comedian and a book—what can be done? A theater stage and a book—what can be done? Each time, I've answered by building a community, an event that brought words, actors, patterns, strokes, colours, laughs, and tears under one roof.

This October will be no different. (More in the inside pages.) At an event called Blind Date Market: Chapters & Canvases | October 13, 2025, you'll get to experience Blind Date

with Books & Paintings—signed books by yours truly, a UAE-based author, and original mini artworks by local artists, wrapped in brown paper, waiting for your intuition to reveal the perfect pairing.

We hope to see you there, as we proudly serve as media partners for the event. And of course, I get a chance to meet you—my readers—over words and art.

P.S.: In an era of ChatGPT and Paywalls, we're daring to create original content and offer it to our readers without a fee. Your support would go a long way. Subscribe to the portal and meet us on social media as well.



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INTERVIEW

ZAHRA JEWANJEE

Zahra's work explores organized chaos through collective behaviours shaped by the need for belonging and protection. Drawing from science, Sufism, and mythology, she examines how group dynamics both connect and disconnect.

Using abstraction, she has created a coded language, "Zuban-e-Kursi (the language of a chair)," to explore structure, spontaneity, and entropic narratives that reflect human behavior, offering a visual poetry and an anthropological response that challenges fixed boundaries.



INTERVIEW

What's your earliest memory of creating art?

Maybe when I was ten, not studying for exams and drawing instead!

If you could collaborate with any artist, living or dead, who would it be and why?

Hieronymus Bosch – for his uncanny ability to foresee human folly and offer razor-sharp social observations that still resonate today.

What's the weirdest thing you've ever used as a medium/tool/platform in your artwork?

Cultivating microbes and orchestrating ant movement using bait to create controlled, collective formations.

How do you come up with the titles for your pieces?

My titles hint at the broader ideas underlying each work. They act as subtle entry points rather than literal explanations.

What's the most unusual source of inspiration you've ever had?

My fascination with natural systems led me to grow microbes in a lab and observe their behavior under a microscope. This curiosity pushed me into pseudo-scientific spaces, testing the boundaries of where an artist can belong.

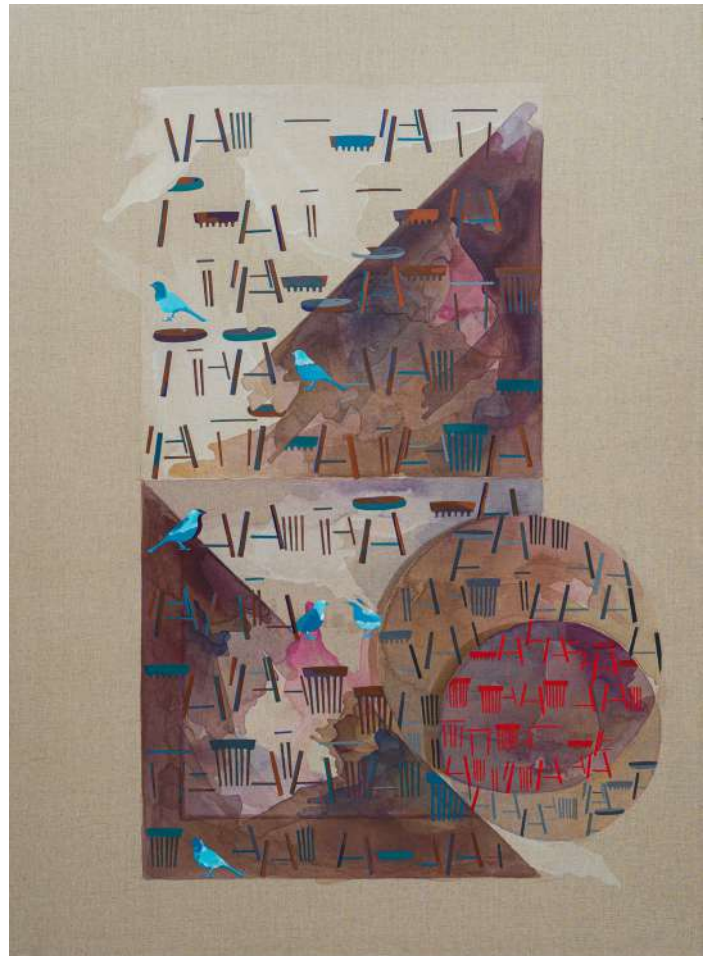
If you could only use three colors for the rest of your life, which would you choose?

Blue, Ochre, and Black

What piece of art do you take the most pride in and why?

I take pride in inventing my own coded system called Zuban-e-Kursi (the language of a chair). It uses deconstructed chair parts to mimic organized chaos, which I can now write proficiently. This language becomes a device for generating algorithmic environments in my paintings, referencing ecological systems whose logic may not be immediately knowable, yet always carries a symbiotic purpose.

Do you have any quirky rituals or habits



Zahra Jewanjee. Two for the show. Acrylic, Oil on Linen Dimensions_ 36 x 46 inches. Courtesy of the artist ,2024

when you're in your creative zone?

Tea, I must have a cup of tea to begin working on anything!

If your art had a soundtrack, what would be the top three songs on it?

It keeps changing, but recently...

Shard by Michael Brook

Ti Piwanda Tarien by Allan Faqeer

Take me to church by Sinead O Connor

What's your favorite art-related joke or pun?

Is this art???

How do you deal with a creative block?

I travel and I read!

What's the most memorable reaction



GHAF II

someone has had to your work?

When Mona Saudi saw my work for the first time at Art Dubai, she waited patiently in a large crowd just to tell me, “Never change and never stop.” Her words still echo in my mind whenever a reminder is necessary.

If you could turn any book into a piece of art, which one would it be?

Conference of the Birds by Fariduddin Attar

What’s one piece of advice you’d give to Artificial Intelligence aspiring to replace ARTISTS?

Art is not just an imitation – it’s your mind, body, and soul at play with agency and intuition! This is what will be lacking as far as AI is concerned. They cannot inject spirit into



Zahra Jewanjee. Title_ Next time, ill bring one for you Medium_ Acrylic, oil on raw linen 46x46 inches 2024. Courtesy of the artist



Zahra Jewanjee. Ghaf. Acrylic, oil on linen. 18x24 inches. 2025. Courtesy of the artist

their making.

What do you think you'd be doing if you weren't an artist?

I can do many things if I set my mind to it, but painting is where my heart is!

What's the strangest place you've ever found inspiration for a piece?

In Canelobre Caves, Alicante, Spain.

Can you describe your art in three words?

Assemblage, Entropy, and Agency

What's your favorite part of the process of creating art?

I am very curious, so the 'discovering of things' and figuring out a way to emulate

them.

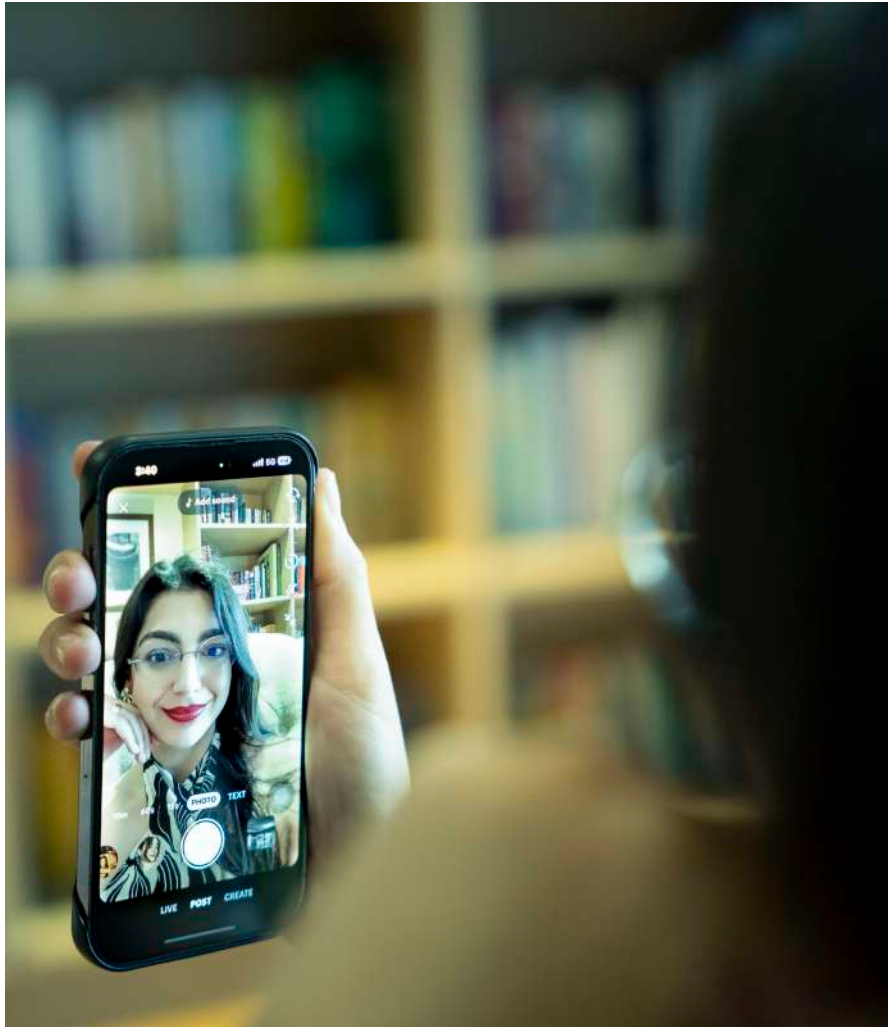
If you could have your artwork displayed anywhere in the world, where would it be?

A retrospective in the Guggenheim would be nice while I am alive!

What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you as an artist?

That I am a tree hugger!

She recently participated in an open studio residency at NIKA Project Space in Dubai, where her work was presented as part of a group exhibition titled Rooted Echoes in September.



DUBAI: GAME. SET. MATCH — THE ACTORS STOLE THE SHOW

A witty, fast-paced play where friendships, secrets, and smartphones collide

Credits

Directed by Satya Baskaran | Assistant Director Meghana Dhawan | Adapted by Sid Abbas | Produced by Tall Tales Production & Cross Bronx Studio

Having recently watched the Bollywood version (Khel Khel Mein, 2024) on an OTT platform—and, many moons ago, the original Italian version (Perfect Strangers, 2016)—one approaches yet another adaptation with a degree of curiosity, especially when it comes to live performance. The Italian film has inspired countless adaptations across stage and

screen worldwide, and now finds its way to Dubai in a Tall Tales Production in association with Cross Brox Studio, adapted by Sid Abbas. The staging of the Game. Set. Match (GSM) adds to the growing repertoire of works brought to local audiences, and it was heartening to see the Playhouse Studio Theatre, Mall of the Emirates, host a full house for the



September 12, 2025, evening show. The play ran on the weekend, with a matinee show included.

The multi-national cast—a hallmark of Tall Tales—was a delight. Familiar names such as director Satya Baskaran, Priyanka Johri, Gabriela Ioana, Meghana Dhawan, and Ryan Durand shared the stage with newer faces (at least for me), including Ziyad Bangara, Jenni Schmidt, Reem Tarifi, and Mahmoud Basyoni. Asad Raza Khan, a long-standing figure in Dubai's theatre scene, remains steadfast in his commitment to the stage.

The venue itself, in its third avatar (once DUCTAC, later Art For All, now The New Covent Garden), is always a pleasure to return to. Much remains unchanged, except perhaps the missing Costa that once defined the foyer—but the short, scenic walk from the Mall of the Emirates parking to the separate entrance still carries its magic.

A few elements of the staging may not have fully landed—the constant switching of lights to indicate settings in the opening minutes, for instance, distracted more than they clarified. The set, generously supported by a home furnishings brand, looked inviting but didn't fully convey the "luxury tennis club suite" that the script calls for. That said, one must also acknowledge the financial realities of local productions: these are labors of love, often mounted by passionate creators outside of their day jobs, and the effort to bring such stories alive is commendable.

As always, audience etiquette makes a difference. A gentle reminder to silence phones and refrain from conversations mid-show would have elevated the experience for everyone. Ironically, the chatter about which Bollywood actor played which role in the film adaptation only underlined the play's own message about the omnipresence of our phones and the double-edged sword of constant connectivity.

Yes, the plot is familiar—and for many, the twists were already known—but this placed a special responsibility on the actors, who rose to the challenge brilliantly. Each character was owned with energy and precision:

- Amir (Asad Raza Khan) was at his natural best.
- Airah (Priyanka Johri) complemented him perfectly.
- Yara (Reem Tarifi) owned the role with confidence.
- Jad (Mahmoud Basyoni) nailed the comic timing and facial expressions.
- Stuart (Ryan Durand) brought the right dose of goofiness.
- Lizzie (Jenni Schmidt) was fun and engaging.
- Max (Ziyad Bangara) played suave effortlessly.
- Gretchen (Gabriela Ioana) delivered with frolic.

The subtle Arabic touches and Dubai-flavored humor were welcome additions—throw in a "yalla" or a "habibi" and the audience lights up, a reminder that adaptations can still feel bespoke to the city we



live in.

The only lingering thought is this: while Dubai's theatre community is brimming with talent, one can only long for the day when more original scripts grace the stage. Ticket sales often lean toward familiar names—be it Shakespeare, Bollywood inspirations, or global adaptations. Yet, productions like *GSM* keep the momentum alive and remind us of the appetite for live theatre here. Having watched multiple productions across the UAE, one can't help but wish for that extra wow factor to match the talent on stage. Perhaps it's a question of resources, exposure, or broader support, but at times, many productions feel reminiscent of their earlier runs. The consistency is admirable, yet as audiences, we find ourselves hoping the directors will push further, take bolder risks, and surprise us with something truly unforgettable.

At its heart, *Game. Set. Match* was a playful yet piercing mirror to our times—where public lives collide with private ones, and secrets, confessions, and hilariously disastrous messages tumble out when our phones are laid bare. The production may not have had a “wow” factor in terms of scale, but it did in terms of performance. The actors were unquestionably the highlight, and in the end, it is their craft that ensured the audience left both entertained and reflective.

More on the script:

What happens when public lives collide with

private ones—and secret lives slip into the mix—over a game that's anything but innocent? *Game. Set. Match* unfolds in the plush setting of a luxury tennis club suite, where seven longtime friends reunite for a destination wedding. A seemingly playful challenge—placing their phones on the table for all to see—quickly turns into digital Russian roulette. Messages, calls, and secrets spill out, igniting a cocktail of confessions, affairs, and hilariously disastrous texting. The result is a sharp, funny, and unexpectedly poignant reminder of how pings, dings, and unread notifications rule our lives. Whether you've been in a relationship, wrestled with a group chat, or sent a message you instantly regretted, this play will feel uncomfortably—and entertainingly—close to home.



Purva Grover is an author, journalist, and creative entrepreneur. She is the founder-editor of storiesoverart.com, a sanctuary for all who find solace, inspiration, and purpose in art. In a world that often overlooks the significance of art, she stands firm in her belief that it is essential, more so than anything else.



David Morris Mosaico emerald choker

JEWELS OF THE WORLD RETURNS TO SAUDI ARABIA FOR AUTUMN 25

Jewels of the World is set to return to Saudi Arabia with two prestigious events in Riyadh and Jeddah, bringing together a diverse array of leading international and regional jewelry and watch brands in a dazzling display of craftsmanship. Following the success of its showcases in Riyadh and Al Khobar in May, the exhibition will take place in the capital from October 3 to 7 at a new venue, the Four Seasons Hotel Riyadh, before moving to the

Hilton Hotel Jeddah from October 11 to 14.

2025 marks the first time Jewels of the World has staged four editions across three cities, driven by Saudi Arabia's growing demand for luxury goods—and discerning consumers' appreciation for exquisite jewelry. The event's dual-season format not only reflects the sophistication of the Kingdom's flourishing market but also an increased desire for more personalized and interactive high-



DE BEERS—STILL LIFE TALISMAN PENDANT

end shopping experiences.

This October, Jewels of the World will welcome over 100 jewelry houses from 20 countries across the world—including countless returning names as well as those making their debut, such as David Morris, De Beers, Chatila, and Pasquale Bruni, among others.

From Italy to the US, Switzerland to the UK, from inspiring Saudi Arabian designers and budding Middle Eastern talents, a captivating range of everyday fine jewelry, statement pieces, high jewelry, bridal sets, and extraordinary gemstones will be presented

alongside timeless watches. Visitors will have access to jewels exclusively flown into the Kingdom, all available to purchase with certification upon request by Danat—Bahrain Institute for Pearls and Gemstones.

Representing a significant share of the Middle East's luxury market, Saudi Arabia is undergoing rapid transformation, and with its growth comes a surge in tourism, hospitality, leisure, and retailtainment offerings, which are multiplying in line with Vision 2030.



Chatila 8581 - i

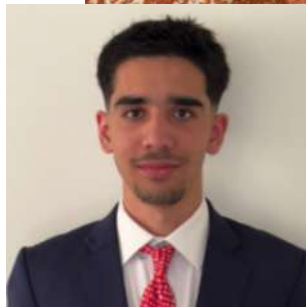
BECAUSE WE CARE

A team of 17-year-old UAE students, Yuvaan Sawlani, Ayaan Mohammed, Moulik Savla, and Atharva Mehra, have unveiled their innovative seating solution, CareChair, designed to transform classroom experiences for neurodiverse students. The noble idea was inspired by the talented students' shared observational research on students with ADHD and other sensory challenges, who often struggle to stay focused and engaged in a classroom setting. According to a 2023 study published by Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal, about 4 percent of school-aged children in the UAE are diagnosed with ADHD. By cleverly combining empathy-driven design features with functionality, the students created a chair that addresses challenges faced by overwhelmed students, reducing restlessness and fostering inclusivity and confidence in learners.

The CareChair features an extended seat base that enables flexible seating positions, built-in fidget toys to reduce stress, and interchangeable sensory tools that can be customised to suit different student needs. Importantly, all sensory elements are crafted from recycled materials, including the fidget spinner and recycled Rubik's cube, reinforcing the team's commitment to sustainability alongside inclusivity. Designed in the shape of a friendly bear, CareChair provides a comforting and nurturing presence for students, featuring tactile elements such as grippy rubber pads and calming stimulation that support students' engagement in class lessons.

"Our mission is to make classrooms more inclusive by removing barriers to engagement for neurodiverse children. The CareChair empowers students to regulate their energy and emotions, allowing for minimal disruption to in-class learning. It creates a space where students can feel calm, safe, and confident to learn," says Sawlani.

Initial beta testing with students has shown promising results. One user highlighted how the spacious design allowed for greater comfort and movement, while the discreet fidget features helped them stay focused without drawing attention. Teachers also reported a calmer classroom environment, with improved



Yuvaan Sawlani



participation and reduced restlessness.

The students plan to first integrate the CareChair as part of a phased rollout in Arcadia schools in the UAE, including Arcadia British School in Jumeirah Village Triangle and Arcadia Global School in Al Furjan. The CareChair will be placed across the school's counselor offices and select classrooms before expanding to other schools across the UAE. The inspiring team of young inventors' long-term vision is to position the chair as a benchmark standard for all learning environments.

The journey to creating the CareChair was not without challenges. Balancing functionality with comfort required creating multiple prototypes and market research sessions with students and teachers.

"We wanted to make sure the chair was not bulky or intimidating, but flexible to the needs of its user, and through the process of trial and error, we were able to refine the design to strike the right balance," adds Mohammed.

For the team, the most rewarding moment has been seeing the chair in use. "Watching students interact with the CareChair and hearing that it genuinely improved their focus and confidence showed us that this is more than just a school project – it is a product that can change lives. This journey has taught us that true innovation in education comes from designing with empathy. Even small changes in the classroom can transform how students with special needs engage and learn," concludes Savla.



DESIGN COUNCIL ABU DHABI LAUNCHES POTTERY & CERAMICS DESIGN RESIDENCY

Residency reinforces their commitment to design innovation, cultural heritage, and empowering
UAE-based creatives



The Design Council Abu Dhabi (DCAD) is pleased to announce the launch of its second residency cycle: the DCAD Pottery & Ceramics Design Residency Program, a pioneering initiative focused on heritage-driven product design and cross-cultural creative exchange. Developed and produced by Gushcloud International, this six-month residency is presented in partnership with Italian porcelain brand Ginori 1735 and will be hosted at the Abu Dhabi-based workshop MAKE.

Althea Lim, Group CEO and Co-Founder of Gushcloud International, said, “We are proud to facilitate this partnership and continue fostering a world-class creative ecosystem in Abu Dhabi. This residency reinforces the region’s role in global design dialogue and offers real pathways for talent to emerge on the world stage.”

Under the chairwomanship of Her Highness Shaikha Shamsa Bint Hamdan Bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, DCAD continues to foster design excellence in the UAE by empowering emerging designers through immersive educational programs rooted in sustainability, innovation, and Emirati cultural heritage.

The new residency program will welcome 10–15 UAE nationals and UAE residents, male and female, specializing in ceramics or pottery, who will undergo training in both traditional and contemporary ceramic design techniques. Through a curriculum that combines studio practice, sustainability, design theory, and masterclasses – including a two-hour special session led by Ginori 1735 Creative Director – participants will develop original ceramic collections inspired by regional and Italian craft traditions. The program will culminate in a public Capstone Exhibition in late 2026, where residents will showcase their work to the press, patrons, and collectors. Select top talents will also be awarded a prestigious internship opportunity at Ginori 1735’s Florence headquarters in late 2026.

This new initiative not only supports the UAE’s growing creative economy but also highlights Abu Dhabi’s position as a global destination for cross-cultural design dialogue. The partnership with Ginori 1735, a legacy brand known for its craftsmanship and contemporary artistry, bridges centuries-old ceramic heritage with the next generation of design leadership.

The Design Council Abu Dhabi (DCAD) is committed to enhancing Abu Dhabi’s creative economy by fostering cross-cultural dialogue in design. Ginori 1735 has been one of the leading global brands in the field of luxury and lifestyle for three centuries, expressing Italian excellence in pure porcelain and design. MAKE is a welcoming community of entrepreneurs, designers, artists, DIY enthusiasts, hobbyists, learners, and doers. Gushcloud International is a global creator management and licensing company powered by AI.

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LITERATURE

BLIND DATE MARKET: WHEN BOOKS MEET CANVASES

Experience Blind Date with Books & Paintings—signed books by a UAE-based author and original mini artworks by local artists, wrapped in brown paper, waiting for your intuition to reveal the perfect pairing.

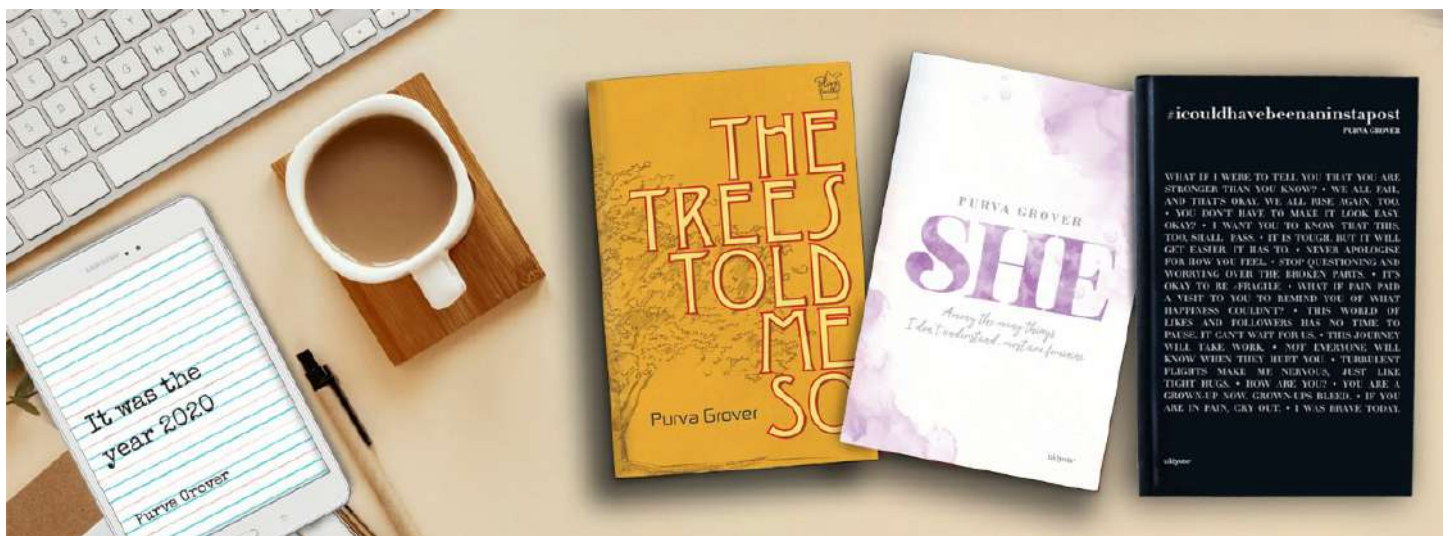
Not every love story begins with a face—sometimes it starts with brown paper. This October, Dubai will witness one such story unfold at Blind Date Market: Chapters & Canvases, a three-day celebration where art, books, and relationships intertwine.

From October 13 to 15, 2025, Qube Art Frames in Al Quoz will transform into a vibrant arts-and-literature marketplace. The event is the brainchild of Dubai-based author Purva Grover, in collaboration with Qube Art Frames and curated by Bhairavi Mistry, Noora, The Divine Spark. Together, they've brought together a diverse group of UAE-based artists, each contributing original works to an exhibition that is as soulful as it is surprising.

So, what does a Blind Date Market mean? Guests will be invited to trust instinct over judgment. Signed books by Purva Grover—including *The Trees Told Me So*, *She* (in seven languages), and *#icouldhavebeenaninstapost*—will be paired with miniature original artworks by over ten participating artists. Each pairing will be wrapped in rustic brown paper, with only subtle hints—colors, feelings, fragrances—scribbled outside. Only once purchased will the contents be revealed, making every discovery intimate, unexpected,



Signed books by Purva Grover—including *The Trees Told Me So*, *She* (in seven languages), and *#icouldhavebeenaninstapost*—will be paired with miniature original artworks by over ten participating artists.



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and deeply personal. A book-and-canvas duo will be priced at AED 300, while individual books (AED 100) and artworks (AED 150) will also be available.

But Blind Date Market is more than wrapped treasures. The gallery will hum with activity:

- A Curated Reading Corner with cozy seating and free coffee, inviting visitors to linger over words.
- Pop-up readings by Purva Grover and live painting sessions by artists, keeping the experience dynamic.
- A community wall for guests to leave notes, sketches, or mini-stories.
- Impromptu cultural conversations led by the author, artists, gallery representatives, and curators.

The names behind the canvases are as diverse as Dubai itself—Ghia Haddad (UAE), Isabelle Alves da Silva Neves (Mauritius), Moones Ben Romdhane (Tunisia), Honeylin Habal (Philippines), Gomathi Shiva (India), Manisha Andrade (India), Kiran Kumar (India), Chandralekha Dubey (India), Jaya Phulwani (India), Prasadini Deshpande (India), Kristabel Yap (Philippines), Prachi Kulkarni (India)—each bringing unique perspectives and strokes.

The opening night on October 13 at 7:30 PM promises to be a gathering of creativity and community. Guests can RSVP via email or social media, though walk-ins are welcome. The exhibition will then run on October 14 and 15, from 9 AM to 6 PM, offering ample opportunity to browse, discover, and collect both miniature and large artworks, all available for sale.

Behind the event are three visionaries. Purva Grover, an author, journalist, and storyteller, recipient of the UAE Golden Visa for her contributions to literature, continues to

craft books and experiences that blend wit, honesty, and raw emotion. Qube Art Frames, with its scale and craftsmanship, redefines how people experience art—accessible yet timeless. And Noora, The Divine Spark, curates cultural moments that blend art, storytelling, and soul.

Together, they've created a market where books and canvases don't just sit pretty—they tell stories, spark conversations, and invite you to discover a pairing that feels uniquely yours.

So, this October, trust your intuition. Let a brown paper package choose you. And who knows? Your next love story—with words, art, or both—might just begin at



Blind Date Market: Chapters & Canvases.

Qube Art Frames | Gallery, Al Quoz 3, Dubai

October 13–15, 2025

Opening Night: October 13, 7:30 PM

Art & Literature Exhibition Dates:
October 13–15, 2025



Manisha Andrade – India



Isabelle Alves da Silva Neves – Mauritius



Honeylin Habal - Philippines
HONEYLIN
'2025



Chandralekha Dubey - India



Gomathi Shiva - India

THE ABU DHABI ART FAIR IS BACK IN NOVEMBER

The 2025 edition highlights dynamic art scenes from Nigeria, the Gulf region, and Türkiye, whilst welcoming first-time participants from Algeria, Senegal, the Netherlands, Peru and Tanzania, underscoring the fair's growing global influence.

Under the esteemed patronage of His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, and organized by the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), the Abu Dhabi Art Fair returns this year from 19 to 23 November for its 17th edition with over 140 galleries from 52 cities across 37 countries participating. The 2025 edition highlights dynamic art scenes from Nigeria, the Gulf region, and Türkiye, whilst welcoming first-time participants from Algeria, Senegal, the Netherlands, Peru, and Tanzania, underscoring the fair's growing global influence.

Since its launch in 2009, the fair has become the largest in the region, attracting leading international galleries, including Pace,

Richard Saltoun Gallery, Mennour, Hanart TZ Gallery, and ATHR. This year, they are joined by debut exhibitors such as Loft Art Gallery, RGR, Pedro Cera, and EQTNA Rare Books. The number of exhibitors has surged 40% compared to last year, reflecting Abu Dhabi's rising stature in both institutional and private collecting circles.

H.E. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, stated: "The upcoming edition of Abu Dhabi Art Fair promises to be the most ambitious yet, featuring a record number of galleries from around the world. Over the years, the fair has evolved into the region's most influential platform for art and ideas, a cultural moment where the UAE's pioneering spirit engages with the global art community. Each edition advances our mission



The Gulf Region - Gallery Isabelle
- Insect (2015)



Focus The Gulf Region Sector -
Albareh Art Gallery - The Lady
and the Moon



Modern & Contemporary Sector -
GALERIE FARAH FAKHRI







Modern & Contemporary Sector – Galeria RGR

to foster Abu Dhabi's vibrant creative ecosystem, connecting artists, collectors, and audiences in a dialogue that transcends borders, encourages meaningful exchange, and sparks new possibilities."

Dyala Nusseibeh, Director of Abu Dhabi Art, stated: "This dynamic line-up of over 140 galleries from 37 countries reflects the UAE's maturing art market, the growing collector base in Abu Dhabi, and strong government-led investment in our creative and cultural industries, driving unprecedented growth across the sector. Our curatorial focus continues to centre under-represented art histories and foster equity in global art narratives through the platform of the fair. From pioneers of the Peruvian Amazon, Venezuela and Brazil to modernists from Türkiye, artists from Nigeria's Osogbo art movement, Khaleeji trailblazers, modern artists from North Africa, and leading artists from China, this year's fair resonates with the globally impactful, museum-led vision shaping Saadiyat Island's cultural identity."

Global Focus Sectors

This year's fair features curated Focus sectors that amplify diverse art narratives:

Nigeria Spotlight: In collaboration with the Ministry of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy, this section

spotlights seven pioneering galleries from Nigeria, showcasing the strength and dynamism of the country's contemporary art scene. As one of Africa's leading cultural hubs, Nigeria continues to shape global conversations through bold, narrative-driven works that explore identity, politics, history, and place. The Focus sector at Abu Dhabi Art forms part of the country's Nigeria Everywhere initiative, which aims to increase global exposure of Nigerian creativity, particularly in new and emerging regions, by spotlighting the diversity and excellence of its cultural output.

Participating galleries will showcase a diverse range of emerging and established artists whose practices are grounded in local realities while engaging with global discourse. From mixed-media explorations to figurative painting and conceptual installations, the works reflect the innovation, depth, and urgency that define contemporary Nigerian art today. Participating galleries include SOTO Gallery, AMG Projects, returning exhibitor kó, O'DA Gallery, 1897 Gallery, Windsor Gallery, Ishara Gallery, and a special project with MADhouse by Tikera Africa.

Modern Türkiye

Curated by Doris Benhalegua Karako, this new focus section under the global focus sectors showcases rarely seen



Modern Türkiye – Art on Istanbul Gallery – Burhan Doğançay – OMO

works by modern masters. Participating galleries include:

- DG Art Gallery and Projects (featuring works by Fahrelnissa Zeid)
- Art On Istanbul Gallery (spotlighting Burhan Doğançay)
- BüroSarigedik (presenting Gülsün Karamustafa and Cengiz Çekil)

The Gulf Region: Galleries presenting leading Khaleeji artists include:

- Gallery Isabelle (Hassan Sharif, Mohammed Kazem, and Alia Zaal)
- Wusum Gallery (Tarek Darwish)
- Hunna Art (Alymamah Rashed, Joud Fahmy, and Zayn Qahtani)
- SAPAR Contemporary (Rashid Al-Khalifa)
- Iris Projects (Nasser Al Salem, Juma Al Haj and Shamsa Al Omaira)
- Hafez Gallery (Sami Al Marzoogi, Sara Alabdali and Raeda Ashour)
- Albareh Art Gallery (Nasser Al Yousif)

Additionally, the Collectors' Salon, curated by Roxane Zand (former Deputy Chair, Sotheby's Middle East), returns

with a strong lineup including Kent Antiques, Daniel Crouch Rare Books, INLIBRIS, Almine Rech, and Perrotin.

Aldar Returns as Partner and Launches Aldar Hall at Manarat Al Saadiyat

Aldar will return as a leading Partner for the fair and will unveil a newly repurposed space at the entrance to Manarat Al Saadiyat, Aldar Hall, to support the fair's rapid expansion. This new space will host galleries participating in the Gulf Focus section, as well as those from across West Asia and North Africa (WANA). Aldar Hall will also feature two new participants from West Africa. Notable first-time exhibitors in Aldar Hall include Loft Art Gallery and Comptoir de Mines Galerie (Morocco), Yosr Ben Ammar Gallery (Tunisia) as well as OH GALLERY (Senegal) and Galerie Farah Fakhri (Ivory Coast), amongst others.

Abu Dhabi Art expands beyond the notion of a traditional art fair, in placing strong emphasis on a diverse public engagement programme, including art installations and exhibitions, talks, and events that take place in different locations throughout the year. The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) drives the sustainable growth of Abu Dhabi's culture and tourism sectors and its creative industries, fuelling economic progress and helping to achieve Abu Dhabi's wider global ambitions.

stories over art

middle east & beyond

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AlUla is best known for its UNESCO World Heritage Site, Hegra, its ancient kingdoms like Dadan, and landmark venues such as Maraya. Yet, nature remains at the heart of its story. Where else in the Middle East have you recently experienced a beautiful blend of art, nature, and culture? Tell us about it.

AlUla's Sharaan National Park has recorded the critically endangered Ruppell's vulture (*Gyps rueppelli*) soaring above, marking only the second documented sighting of the species in Saudi Arabia. The dramatic bird, renowned as the highest-flying species in the world (recorded at 11,300 metres), was filmed in August 2025 by Sharaan's ranger team.

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