

MANAL ALDOWAYAN

Few artists understand metamorphosis as keenly as Saudi artist Manal AlDowayan. Long invested in interrogating the gender-biased customs that impact the condition of women in Saudi Arabia, AlDowayan is a sensitive yet critical witness to the cultural transformations engulfing the Kingdom. Her practice, formally speaking, regularly shifts and evolves—from the assertive black and white photographic portraits of highly skilled working women in her early *I Am* series (2005), to the research-driven *Crash* (2014), documenting media silence on fatal road accidents involving commuting female schoolteachers. Equally recognized for her work in sound, neon, and sculpture, AlDowayan is perhaps best known for the participatory installations *Suspended Together* (2011) and *Esmi - My Name* (2012), the result of workshops offering channels for thousands of women in the Kingdom to address unjust social customs, and more recently, *Now You See Me, Now You Don't* (2020), land art for Desert X AlUla. AlDowayan's practice navigates a territory where the personal and the political overlap. Her works spring from lived experiences—these intimate encounters with social injustice, the pangs of memory and forgetting. Yet her pieces are consistently galvanizing, sparking identification and engagement, particularly among women around the world. Her voice is strong, and it resonates.

Unsurprisingly, the artist's gaze unravels the expected tensions running through the fiber of Saudi society—public vs private, traditional vs modern, community vs world. But as the Kingdom races towards further change, AlDowayan's artistic engagement with this new metamorphosis promises to be bolder and more incisive than ever.

In 2022, AlDowayan participates in Ad-Diriyah Biennale, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and the Northern Alps Festival, Omachi, Japan in 2021. She has exhibited extensively, including at the British Museum and the V&A (2021), at 21'39 Jeddah Arts (2022, 2020 and 2017), Boghossian Foundation, Brussels (2018), The Aga Khan Museum (2018), *Crude*, the inaugural exhibition of Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai (2019), Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (2016). Her works are held in the collections of The British Museum, London; King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, Dhahran; Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH).

She holds a master's degree in Systems Analysis and Design and an MA in Contemporary Art Practice in Public Spheres from the Royal College of Art, London. Born in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia in 1973, AlDowayan currently lives and works between London, Dhahran and Dubai.

EDUCATION

- 2018 MA, Contemporary Art Practice in Public Spheres, Royal College of Art, London
- 2003 MSC, Information Systems Analysis and Design, London Metropolitan University, London

RESIDENCY

- 2015 Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, Captiva
- 2014 The Project Room, MATHAF Museum of Modern Arab Art, Doha
- 2011 The Townhouse Gallery, Cairo
- 2010 Cuadro Gallery Residency Program Dubai
- 2009 Delfina Foundation, London

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *The Eternal Return of the Same*, Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, Dubai
The Eternal Return of the Same, Cromwell Place, London
- 2019 *Watch Before You Fall*, Sabrina Amrani Gallery, Madrid
- 2018 *Suspended Together*, The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto
- 2017 *I am here: Manal Aldowayan*, Rojas + Rubenstein Projects, Miami
And I, will I forget? Sabrina Amrani Gallery, Madrid 2016 *And I, will I forget?* NYU, New York City
- 2014 *Crash*, Cuadro Art Gallery, Dubai
- 2013 *Journey of Belongings*, Athr Gallery, Jeddah
The State of Disappearance, Cuadro Art Gallery, Dubai
- 2012 *If I Forget You Don't Forget Me*, Cuadro Fine Art Gallery, Dubai

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *What Lies Within*, Maraya Center in Al Ula, Saudi Arabia
Photo Jeddah, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
21,39 Jeddah Arts, curated by Venetia Porter, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Portrait of a Nation II: Beyond Narratives, commissioned by ADMAF, Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi
- 2021 *Illuminate: A Noor Riyadh Capsule*, Hayy Jameel, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Feeling the Stones, Ad-Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale curated by Philip Tinari, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Unhidden/Unseeable, Taehwa River Eco Art Festival (TAEF21), Ulsan, Korea
Northern Alps Art Festival, Omachi, Japan
Here, Now, Misk Art Institute, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Reflections: contemporary art of the Middle East and North Africa, The British Museum, London
Contemporary Ceramic Art from the Middle East, Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Light Upon Light, Light Art Since the 1960s, Noor Riyadh curated by Susan Davidson and Raneem Zaki Farsi, Riyadh Art, Riyadh
Breaking the Monument, curated by Santiago Olmo and Fernando Gomes de la Cuesta, Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea, Spain
- 2020 *Desert X AlUla*, Alula
I Love You Urgently, 21'39 Jeddah Arts, Jeddah
- 2019 *Your Voice Matters*, curated by Mirjam Westen, Museum Arnhem, The Netherlands
- 2018 *Crude*, curated by Murtaza Vali, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai *Melancholia*, curated by Louma Salamé, Boghossian Foundation, Brussels
- 2017 *100 Masterpieces of Modern and Contemporary Art*, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris
Bayn - The in-between, Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi
Safar, 21'39 Jeddah Arts, Jeddah
Imperfect Chronology – Mapping the Contemporary Li, Whitechapel Gallery, London
- 2016 *Genera#ion: Contemporary Art from Saudi Arabia*, Minnesota Street Project, San Francisco
Illumination - New contemporary art, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark
Looking at the World Around You, Contemporary Works from Qatar Museums, Sala de Arte Santander, Madrid
Earth and Ever After, 21'39 Jeddah Arts, Jeddah
- 2015 *Islamic Art Now, Contemporary Art of the Middle East*, LA County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles
Home Ground, AGA Khan Museum, Toronto
What is Home?, Pump House Gallery, London
- 2014 *P.3: Prospect*, New Orleans: Notes for Now, American Biennale, New Orleans
Mualgat, 21'39 Jeddah Arts, Jeddah
Fotofest Biennial, Houston

- Songs of Love and Songs of Loss*, Gwangju Art Museum, Gwangju *The Other and Me* - Sharjah International Photography Exhibition, Sharjah Museum, Sharjah
Paintings, Sculptures & Projects Garden, mathaf Museum of Modern Arab Art, Doha
Now Babylon, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark
- 2013 *Light from the Middle East*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London 2012 *A Subtle Perfume*, CAN Foundation, Seoul
I Am, Harnessing 21st Century Challenges: A Focus on Women, Clinton Foundation, Arkansas
We Need to Talk, Edge of Arabia, Jeddah
#Cometotgether, Edge of Arabia, London
- 2011 *Metropolis: City Life in the Urban Age*, The Noorderlicht Festival, Groningen
The Future of a Promise, Venice Biennale, Venice

COLLECTIONS

King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, Dhahran
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk
The British Museum, London
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles
mathaf Museum of Modern Arab Art, Doha
Jordan Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman
Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation, London
Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH), Abu Dhabi
Nadour Foundation, Berlin
Barjeel Foundation, Sharjah

PUBLICATIONS

The Eternal Return of the Same, exhibition catalogue, Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde
If I Forget You, Don't Forget Me, Cuadro Publications, Dubai
Summer Autumn Winter ... and Spring: Conversations with Artists from the Arab World, by Sam Bardouil and Till Fellrath, Skira Publishing Group
Crude, Jameel Art Center, Dubai, UAE
Subversive Ceramics, Bloomsbury Academic, London
Do it (in Arabic), Sharjah Art Foundation
Imperfect Chronology: Arab Art to the Contemporary- Works from Barjeel Foundation, Whitechapel Gallery, London
Home Ground Contemporary Art from the Barjeel Art Foundation, The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto
If I Forget You, Don't Forget Me, Cuadro Publications, Dubai
Prospect.3: Notes For Now, Prestel Publishing
View From Inside - Contemporary Arab Photography, FotoFest Publishing *Light from the Middle East: New Photography*, V&A Publishing
Arab Photography Now, Kehrer Verlag Publishing
Metropolis: City Life in the Urban Age, Noorderlicht Publishing