

BLOUIN ARTINFO

TOP 5 SHOWS IN DUBAI'S AL QUOZ THIS JANUARY

by Rosalyn D'Mello



Detail from Asad Faulwell's "Les Femmes d'Alger" series
(Asad Faulwell/Lawrie Shabibi)

If you have enough will power to tear yourself away from Dubai's spectacular malls, which are nothing short of monumental odes to consumerism, make a trip to **Al Quoz** at [Alserkal Avenue](#), the city's premier art district. This industrial area is a veritable culture hub — it is home to 20 art galleries, creative studios, and private museums. On Saturday, January 11, five prominent galleries will open new shows while the others in the area will keep their doors open for you to witness their ongoing shows. The atmosphere is usually electric, and the exquisite art on display will ensure a rewarding experience.

BLOUIN ARTINFO India gives you a quick preview of five shows slated to open January 11, at 5pm.

Carbon 12

Unit 37, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8

Rui Chafes and Ralf Ziervogel, “Black Rainbow”

“Black Rainbow” brings together Portuguese artist Rui Chafes’ nebulous, anthropomorphic matte black sculptures alongside German artist Ralf Ziervogel’s meticulous drawings in what promises to be a show that “derails” the viewer. “Chafes’ sculptures are familiar, but clarity remains on the tip of your tongue. The nearer you are, the denser the black, the sharper the steel edges tense against the induced gentle contouring,” says the press release. “Ziervogel’s careful geometrics begin to reveal into words and phrases... representations of a hostile, introverted, fixated tedium. The tone shifts slowly; serenity reveals itself to be melancholy, subtly turns controlled restraint, the repetition, previously an ode to its inspiration, now obsessive.”

Until March 10

Gallery Isabelle Van Den Eynde

Unit 17, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8

Nargess Hashemi, “The Pleasure in Bordeom”

For her third Dubai solo, Iranian artist Nargess Hashemi deviates from her trajectory of figurative works focused on domesticity and everyday life in modern Tehran, to showcase her experiments with the act of doodling using absolutely basic materials and graph paper. “Hashemi adopts a commonly unfocussed and subliminal practice and refines it, resulting in artworks of great sophistication and complexity,” the press release informs. The practice of doodling has, since Hashemi first indulged in it during tedious car journeys and extended visits with family and friends, become a lifelong obsession. The show’s poetic title is derived from an essay by art historian E.H. Gombrich, in which he explores the psychology behind doodling as well as its artistic merit and significance. “In her new works, “Home, Carpet, and Rug,” Nargess Hashemi explores the endless permutations of this experimental approach, meticulously occupying 1mmx1mm squares of the graph paper or using the textile knotting technique of macramé.”

Until February 27

Green Art Gallery

Unit 28, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8

Ross Chisholm, “Testament”

For his Middle East debut, British artist Ross Chisholm draws inspiration from 18th-century British artists such as [Thomas Gainsborough](#) and Joshua Reynolds to create historical images with a modern twang. “Ranging from 18th-Century British society portraits and genre scenes to 1970s vacation snapshots sourced from flea markets, Chisholm distorts traditional portraiture with interventions and various manipulations — such as injecting geometric abstraction, combining figures from different centuries, or even updating a noblewoman’s fashion with 1980s punk accents,” says the press release. Highly contemporary, these meditations on the process of making and unmaking, and simultaneous dialoguing with the past and superimposing upon its imagery flourishes of the present, speak of dislocation and ambiguity. In playing with chronology, the artist becomes the purveyor of new mythologies.

Until March 10

Grey Noise

Unit 24, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8

Iqra Tanveer, "Light of a Distant Day"

An examination of human perception and the ability to map dualities of the possible and impossible thought-impressions onto the material world, this solo by Pakistani artist Iqra Tanveer uses the medium of photography to illustrate light as material. "While photographs such as 'Enlightenment' and 'Now You See It' appear to be based on a sculptural enquiry given their rough substance and focus on three-dimensional objects, Tanveer insists that a painterly instinct guides her choices of subject matter and representation," says the press release, highlighting that this nuance is significant, "for just as painting operates by freezing impressions, spaces, and objects into two-dimensional form, Tanveer's photographs, videos, and installations, depend on a similar flattening of dimensionality. In order to capture light as subject matter, Tanveer accepts its compromised representation." Tanveer is interested in the presence of light, which is the consequence of the objects that produce it, its contrasts, and its illumination of physical material, and, through her artistic intervention, transforms light into another form in order for it to be seen.

Until February 27

Lawrie Shabibi

Unit 21, Alserkal Avenue

Asad Faulwell, "Bed of Broken Mirrors"

This show marks American artist Asad Faulwell's first solo at Lawrie Shabibi and will feature his ongoing series "Les Femmes d'Alger," which references the French Orientalist painting tradition, specifically, Delacroix's famous 1834 painting of the same name as the series' title and Picasso's subsequent homage to it in 1954. "Whilst those artists depicted Algerian women as exotic, sexual objects, Faulwell draws his inspiration from Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers*, paying homage to their largely forgotten legacy: their fight against French occupation during the 1954-1966 Algerian war of independence," says the press release. Faulwell reminds us of the 10,000 plus Algerian women who fought as equals alongside men, operating clandestinely, compelled to renounce any sense of home and family, often even sacrificing their lives. "Faulwell's elaborately painted and collaged work employs imagery both beautiful and macabre. Sumptuously colored and patterned surfaces form the backdrops for his large-scale female portraits depicted in monochrome, wounded and bleeding, sometimes emanating rays or tears from their eyes."

Until February 12

Al Quoz is a quick cab ride away from the Noor Islamic Bank Metro Station, right behind Times Square Mall. For more details on other ongoing shows in the vicinity, visit the [Alserkal Avenue website](#).