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# The art of the matter

Art Week is awash with dozens of high-quality exhibitions by top artists, but which ones to see? **Anna Seaman** picks the 10 shows you absolutely cannot miss

## 1 If I Leave, Where Will I Go?

East Wing, Limestone House, DIFC  
Until April 7

This show addresses one of the most pertinent issues of the moment – migration. The exhibition features the work of Leila Alaoui, the brilliant photographer who was killed during the terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso in January. Her work, titled *Crossings*, reflects on experiences of sub-Saharan migrants headed to Europe. Tanya Habjouqa's series, *Tomorrow There Will Be Apricots*, and Omar Imam's *Live Love Refugee* both focus on the crisis facing refugees in Syria and Lebanon.

• Visit [www.east-wing.org](http://www.east-wing.org)

## 2 Diana Al Hadid, Phantom Limb

New York University Abu Dhabi Art Gallery  
Until May 28

The first solo show in the Arab world for this 34-year-old Syrian-born, New York-based artist is as haunting as the title suggests. Al Hadid evokes the Renaissance era with her sculptures, which are characterised by drips that become forms – made from polymer gypsum and plaster. The exhibition's title comes from the central work of the same name, which, like much of Al Hadid's work, is inspired by visceral memory and an obsession with decay. Beautiful and technically marvellous.

• Visit [nyuad.nyu.edu](http://nyuad.nyu.edu)

## 3 3:16

Cuadro Gallery, DIFC  
Tomorrow until April 14

It's three for the price of one at Cuadro this month. The gallery is hosting three solo shows from very different artists. Saudi Manal Al Dowayan's photographic series *And I, Will I Forget?* explores her childhood memories. Bahrain-based Camille Zakharia, who has been working with the medium of collage for 25 years, presents *Shifting Boundaries*, which blurs colours, lines, and



1. Leila Alaoui's *Crossings*; 2. Diana Al Hadid's *Phantom Limb*; 3. *Shifting Boundaries* by Camille Zakharia; 4. Farideh Lashai's *Pomegranate, Blue*; 5. Athier Mousawi's *Machine Hearts 4*; 6. *Another Day Lost* by Issam Kourbaj; 7. YZ Kami's Rumi, *The Book of Shams e Tabrizi*; 8. Hassan Hajjaj's *M's Back*; 9. *Seher Shah's Untitled*; 10. *Rooster and Flower* by Elham Moadinia. Courtesy Leila Alaoui and East Wing; Markus Wörgötter; Camille Zakharia and Cuadro Gallery; Estate of Farideh Lashai; Athier Mousawi and Ayyam Gallery; Mathew Hodgkin; Rob McKeeve / Gagosian Gallery and Leila Heller Gallery; Hassan Hajjaj and The Third Line; Seher Shah and Green Art Gallery; Elham Moadinia and Showcase Gallery

patterns to reflect the Middle East's shifting political realities. Azerbaijan's Faig Ahmed is exhibiting more of his stunning carpet works in a series called *Black Sheep*, where the traditional structure of woven carpets becomes playfully fluid.

• Visit [www.cuadroart.com](http://www.cuadroart.com)

## 4 Farideh Lashai – Exhibition

Bait Al Serkal, Sharjah Art Foundation  
Until May 14

Farideh Lashai was one of the most important female Iranian modern artists of her time. Since her death in 2013, there have been many tributes to her, not least the first comprehensive monographic exhibition of her work in Tehran last year. Through the lens of the artist's personal journey, viewers are introduced to Iran's social, intellectual, and political history. Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi has curated this important retrospective, which will run for three months and also features Lashai's video-on-canvas projection.

• Visit [nyuad.nyu.edu](http://nyuad.nyu.edu)

## 5 Athier: Machine Hearts

Ayyam Gallery, Alserkal Avenue  
Tomorrow until May 30

Inspired by a quote by comedy actor Charlie Chaplin in 1940, British-Iraqi artist Athier Mousawi's latest work addresses the mentality of war. At the outset of the Second World War, Chaplin appealed to "soldiers with machine hearts and minds" to remember their love of humanity. Mousawi's exhibition features large-scale, semi-abstract paintings that depict the workings of these so-called machine hearts in vivid colours and angular shapes.

• Visit [www.ayyamgallery.com](http://www.ayyamgallery.com)

## 6 Issam Kourbaj, Another Day Lost

Warehouse 47, Alserkal Avenue  
Tomorrow until Saturday

This pop-art project by the Syrian-born, UK-based artist Issam Kourbaj features a series of installations highlighting the crisis in Syria and is a visual and chilling reminder of one of the worst tragedies of our times. "Camps"



are constructed out of waste materials, with tents marked with black lines and mourning ribbons, all encircled by a "fence" of used matches. The matches represents the days lost since the beginning of the Syrian uprising, and the number will be added to during the display period.

• Visit [www.alserkalavenue.ae](http://www.alserkalavenue.ae)

## 7 YZ Kami: White Domes

Leila Heller Gallery, Alserkal Avenue  
Until April 26

If minimalist, geometric works appeal to you, check out YZ Kami's new show. The Iranian-American artist's works exude an ethereal air and are spectacular additions to several institutional collections worldwide. Filling all three spaces of what is already the region's largest gallery, this show is monumental. Highlights include his floor-based sculptural work, *The Book of Shams e Tabrizi*, which is based on a love sonnet by Rumi, and the title piece, *White Dome*, which is composed in ink and acrylic on raw linen.

• Visit [alserkalavenue.ae](http://alserkalavenue.ae)

## 8 La Salle de Gym des Femmes Arabes

The Third Line, Alserkal Avenue  
Tomorrow to April 16

Street fashion meets pop culture meets a hijab captured in a frame of soup cans. This type of juxtaposition of East and West, and kitsch versus tradition, is what defines Hassan Hajjaj's work. His latest series – the title of which translates into "gym for Arab women" – is a continuation of his depiction of Arab women who are as much part of their traditional Moroccan societies as they are contemporary society. He also inverts gender norms by featuring female figures of strength in places where hyper-masculine imagery is normally featured.

• Visit [www.thethirdline.com](http://www.thethirdline.com)

## 9 The Lightness of Mass

Green Art Gallery, Alserkal Avenue  
Tomorrow until May 9

A fascination with architectural space and the inward emotions that they trigger is at the centre of this conceptually intriguing



show. Given her background as a professional architect, Seher Shah's preoccupation with structure, plans and buildings is unsurprising – but what is interesting in this show is that she manages to disperse the heaviness and brutality of those forms (hence the title). The show, which is Shah's first solo in Dubai, includes works on paper, photography and sculpture.

• Visit [alserkalavenue.ae](http://alserkalavenue.ae)

## 10 Welcome to the Party

Showcase Gallery, Alserkal Avenue  
Tomorrow until May 14

Iranian artist Elham Moadinia has painted over windows, a selection of Iranian fabrics, and wooden doors reclaimed from Ras Al Khaimah as a metaphor for the recent lifting of US sanctions in Iran, fusing them with modern influences to summarise the situation of a whole generation of people who were born in Iran after the revolution.

• Visit [www.showcaseuae.com](http://www.showcaseuae.com)

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