

Art Basel Basel
premiere section
BOOTH P12

selma feriani

press release

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Rituals of Fracture

Monia Ben Hamouda, Mohamed Amine Hamouda, and Nidhal Chamekh

Selma Feriani Gallery is pleased to present *Rituals of Fracture*. This curated project sheds focus on our local contemporary expression, exploring the poetics of fracture, both materially and conceptually, bringing together the works of three contemporary Tunisian artists: Monia Ben Hamouda, Mohamed Amine Hamouda, and Nidhal Chamekh. Positioned at the intermediacy of personal and collective histories, their individual practices meditate on rifts and continuities through notions of identity, ecology, and politics. Through Ben Hamouda's large-scale, sculptural-like paintings, Chamekh's charged assemblages, and Hamouda's ecological interventions, our proposed installation considers how fracture becomes a critical tool for inquiry and creation through polyphonic lenses.

At the center of the booth, Monia Ben Hamouda presents a monumental, wall-sized painting split across two canvases. Her work navigates generational Muslim heritage through a visceral, performative process, using spices, soil, and clay to create gestural compositions that evoke ritual, protection, and transformation. The large-scale, wall-sized painting explores the narrative construction of art history and articulates links between architecture, physical and spiritual protection, sacred imagery, and space. Painted through the force of spices thrown onto the canvas and grounded in soil and clay, they operate at the intersection of love and sacrifice, crisis and fragmentation, and ancestral memory.

Extending this material language, Mohamed Amine Hamouda's practice engages with the fragile ecosystem of the Gabès oasis—the only maritime oasis in the Mediterranean. Through handmade paper works produced from vegetal waste, wool, cactus pulp, and native fibres, he foregrounds cycles of degradation and regeneration. His installations, often structured around the recurring motif of the palm tree, function as both landscape and self-portrait—embodying an endangered environment while proposing new imaginaries rooted in memory and resilience.

In dialogue, Nidhal Chamekh's *Frictions* series interrogates historical and cultural constructions through assemblage. Drawing from Greco-Roman sculpture and African mask traditions, his hybrid forms challenge inherited hierarchies of representation. Carved wood, sculptural fragments, and patinated surfaces converge in dissonant compositions, exposing tensions between archaeological and ethnographic categorizations. Through these juxtapositions, Chamekh disrupts dominant narratives and reveals the complexities of cultural hybridity and historical continuity.

PRESS MATERIAL

*Available for distribution

Courtesy of Selma Feriani
Gallery and the artists

Biographies

Monia Ben Hamouda

Born 1991. Milan, Italy

Lives and works between al-Qayrawan, Tunisia and Milan, Italy

Monia Ben Hamouda is a Tunisian-Italian visual artist.

Following the belief that each individual is inextricably connected to their family tree and the psychological universe of their ancestors, Ben Hamouda attempts to master her influences in a contemporary and constantly changing landscape. Born into a Muslim community as the daughter of an Islamic calligrapher, she navigates and confronts her generational heritage through what she calls a shamanic process – creating works that act as gestural exorcisms of the expectations placed upon her by tradition and the politicized present, drawing their power from the urgency of expression. Her visual language, which translates into a broad range of formal approaches, is steeped in cultural-religious symbology and rituals.

Ben Hamouda's work has been shown in several international institutions and biennials, such as the 14th edition of the Taipei Biennial (2025), Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan; Museo Casa Rusca, Locarno, Switzerland; MUSEION Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Bolzano, Italy; MACRO – Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome, and MAXXI National Museum of 21st Century Art, Italy.

Her works can be found in public collections such as MAXXI, Rome; FRAC Bretagne, Rennes; Museion, Bolzano; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; TBA21 Thyssen - Bornemisza Collection, Madrid; and FRAC Corsica, Corse.

She earned a BFA at Brera Academy of Fine Art in Milan and is currently an Affiliated artist resident at the American Academy in Rome. She was awarded with the Maxxi Bvlgari Prize (2024), the Vordemberge-Gildewart Foundation Grant (2024), the Fondazione Merz Prize (2024), the Museion Audience Award (2024), the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2022), the Italian Council for Contemporary Art (2023; 2024).

Mohamed Amine Hamouda

Born 1981. Gabes, Tunisia

Lives and works in Gabes, Tunisia

Mohamed Amine Hamouda has been developing a body of work closely linked to the Gabès oasis over the years, reflecting on the current state of degradation of this ecosystem. Through painting, collages, and installations, he seeks to explore the aesthetic potential of materials sourced from this environment and to develop a range of materials and a vocabulary extracted directly from the fibre. His works on handmade paper, his pigmented fibre compositions, and his tapestries draw their plasticity and materiality directly from the oases of his region. As both an artist and a scenographer, Mohamed Amine Hamouda's research explores the botanical, maritime and natural resources of Gabès to create works that document and interpret the threatening situation of the region's biodiversity and ecosystem as a result of industrial intervention. In doing so, he aims to generate new possibilities and responses to social, environmental, and economic challenges. Working alongside his local community, his research questions the dominant narratives inherent in colonialism and post-independence, as well as the prevailing forces that dictate established practices.

He holds an MA in Art Sciences and Techniques from the Higher Institute of Arts and Crafts of Gabes where he currently teaches.

Since 2010, Mohamed Amine has been actively exhibiting in Tunisia and internationally, including Morocco, Greece, China, Turkey, Germany, and Kuwait. His solo exhibitions include "Transcendance" (2016, Gabès), "A Fleur de Papier" (2018, Elbirou, Sousse), and "Transe-Papier" (2019, Institut Supérieur des Arts et Métiers, Gabès). He received the second prize at the Biennale des Artistes Arabes in Kuwait in 2019. More recently, he showcased his work in "Ragata... The Silk Road" and "Fire and Embers" in the joint exhibition Hirafen in 2023. He was also awarded the 2024 RDC Art Collection prize.

Nidhal Chamekh

Born 1985. Dahmani, Tunisia

Lives and works between Paris, France and Tunis, Tunisia

Nidhal Chamekh's practice reflects on the times that we inhabit. Working across drawing, sculpture, and installations, his artwork is situated at the intersection of the biographic and the political, the lived and the historical, the event and the archive. His oeuvres dissect the constitution of our contemporary identity. Chamekh has developed a language that challenges history and politics in their broader sense. He performs his fragmentary research to convey an ambiguous atmosphere, shifting between the experience and the violence of the individual representation. He represents an imperceptible space between a silent violence mirroring an intimate experience of trauma, dissecting the constitution of our contemporary identity.

He graduated from the School of Fine Arts in Tunis and the University of Sorbonne in Paris. Between 2021 and 2022, he was a fellow at Villa Medici French Academy in Rome, Italy where his artistic project sought to introduce Rome's archaeological heritage and the marginalized cultural production of the City's exiles, in a process of montage where present and past are jointly defined.

Chamekh's work has been shown in several internationally renowned institutions and biennials, including MAC the Museum of Contemporary art Lyon, France; The 12th edition of Bamako Encounters Photography Biennial (2019), Mali; Venice Biennial (2015), Italy; Aichi Triennale (2016), Japan; Yinchuan Biennial (2016), China; The Drawing Room, London, UK; Modern Art Oxford, UK; Skissernas Museum, Lund, Sweden; Frac Lorraine, France; Dream City Biennial, Tunis, Tunisia.

His works can be found in many prestigious collections of art, including FRAC Centre, Orléans, France; British Museum, London, U.K.; Blachère Foundation, France; Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, U.S.A.; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, UAE; Fondation H, Antananarivo, Madagascar; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, France; Centre National Des Arts Plastiques (CNAP), Paris, France; Fatma Kilani Collection, Tunis, Tunisia.

Chamekh has also been featured in the book *African Art Now* by Osei Bonsou, co-published by the Tate publishing and Ilex.

Notes to Editors

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About the gallery

A contemporary art gallery and leading international platform based between Tunis and London that supports the growing art infrastructure in Tunisia and North Africa, offering artists a global platform within a nurturing environment and with exceptional local and international curation.

Founded by Selma Feriani in 2009 in London and then in Sidi Bou Saïd, Tunis, in 2013 under Selma Feriani Gallery, the gallery is today a leading international art gallery with locations in Tunis, Tunisia and London, United Kingdom, representing twenty-two artists. For the last 15 years, its ongoing mission has been to seek out both emerging and established contemporary artists from the MENA region and beyond, supporting their long-term career development and facilitating their recognition financially, critically and historically. To date, the gallery has presented a progressive, politically and socially conscious programme, organising critically acclaimed exhibitions, installing public interventions internationally, presenting ambitious solo shows and participating in major art fairs around the world. Providing a platform for ongoing discourse between Europe and Africa, Selma Feriani's aim is to create balanced opportunities for exploration, research and exchange between the two continents, for artists, professionals and the public, while nurturing a cross-cultural link between Western and Global South contemporary art practices. The gallery is behind the practice development of artists such as Maha Malluh, Nidhal Chamekh, Malek Gnaoui, M'barek Bouhchichi, Massinissa Selmani, Elena Damiani and Nicene Kossentini.

By supporting the growing art infrastructure in Tunisia and North Africa, the gallery offers artists a global platform within a nurturing environment and with exceptional local and international curation. A cultural hub that places Tunisia on the contemporary art map while revitalising its cultural legacies.

In January 2024, the gallery relocated to the La Goulette Industrial Zone, launching a new purpose-built, museum-standard space in the rapidly growing Tunis Lake district, becoming Selma Feriani's primary address. The first commercial space of its kind in North Africa, it is designed by architect Chacha Atallah and spans 2000sqm. Boasting 800sqm of museum-quality exhibition space across three rooms, a library and bookshop and an annual outdoor sculpture commission in its adjoining garden, the gallery hosts rich public and education programmes placing particular emphasis on local communities. The introduction of the new institutional-standard exhibition space champions the further growth of a meaningful cultural network for emerging and established artists from Tunisia and beyond.

Beyond its exhibition programme, Selma Feriani produces a range of cultural content, including talks, workshops, Basement Sessions (projections and performances), and collaborations with Archivart on its masterclass program.

Established in 2021, L'Atelier by Selma Feriani is a residency and research space in Bhar Lazrag, Tunis, supporting local and international artists through four annual residencies and cultural programming that encourages experimentation and cross-cultural exchange.