

Selma Feriani Gallery new exhibitions in its Tunis location.

Selma Feriani Gallery presents three parallel exhibitions at its Tunis space, opening on 12 February 2026. Across the gallery's main space, mezzanine, and basement, the programme brings together distinct yet resonant artistic positions through a solo exhibition by Nadia Ayari, *Oblivion Rains: Notations of Gravity, Light, and Resistance*, curated by Fawz Kabra; a solo exhibition by Nidhal Chamekh, *Frictions*, in the mezzanine; and a video installation by Elyes Jeridi, *Chronicles of a Vagabond*, presented as part of the Basement Sessions and curated by Nicène Kossentini.

Main Space

This solo exhibition by Nadia Ayari in the main space marks her first solo presentation in Tunis, a meaningful return to her native city. Curated by Fawz Kabra, *Oblivion Rains: Notations of Gravity, Light, and Resistance* presents painting as an act of resistance and survival. Stylized botanical protagonists negotiate gravity, light, and chaos within charged and saturated atmospheres, operating as notations in a visual score, and registering rhythm, momentum, and time. Together, the works trace an expansive narrative about perception and persistence, revealing how color, motion, and compositional rupture can hold truth against the pull of oblivion.

Mezzanine

Frictions brings together a new body of sculptures and collages by Nidhal Chamekh that explores history, cultural hybridity, and the tensions in inherited forms. Extending the inquiries initiated in his 2024 exhibition *Et Si Carthage?*, the works interrogate existing hierarchies that assign meaning and value to objects. Through reworked materials and images charged with historical and symbolic weight, Chamekh explore how dominant narratives and colonial legacies shape and distort understanding of culture, memory, and identity.

Basement

Curated by Nicène Kossentini, this new iteration of the Basement Session presents *Chronicles of a Vagabond* (2024) by Elyes Jeridi, an experimental video exploring the notion of wandering in the digital age. The work sketches the portrait of a contemporary vagabond, both witness and dreamer of a world in motion.

MAIN SPACE

NADIA AYARI: OBLIVION RAINS: NOTATIONS OF GRAVITY, LIGHT, AND RESISTANCE

curated by **Fawz Kabra**

a solo exhibition

12 February 2026 — 18 April 2026



Nadia Ayari, *Teeth III*, 2025 (detail), oil on linen- Courtesy of Selma Feriani Gallery and the artist.

About the Artist

Born 1981

Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York

Nadia Ayari is a Tunisian American painter known for her distinctively textured paintings that balance abstraction and figuration while exploring themes of survival. Her work often negotiates the personal and the political. Employing a set of protagonists inspired by the flora of her native North Africa, she creates compositions that are visual representations of our Anthropocene condition. She renders these scenes in thick, methodically applied oil-paint to give the characters and the plastic space they inhabit substantial skin, making them physically relatable.

Ayari moved to the United States in 2000, earning a Bachelor's degree in Art History from Boston University and a Master's degree of Fine Arts in Painting from the Rhode Island School of Design.

Nadia Ayari's work has been shown in several international renowned institutions and biennials, including MoMA PS1, New York, US; Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, US; Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden, Marrakech, Morocco; State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece; American University Museum, DC, US); 12th Cairo Biennial (2010), Cairo, Egypt; 3rd Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2011), Thessaloniki, Greece.

Ayari's work can be found in many prestigious collections such as the Collection Pinault, Paris, France; the Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon; The X Museum, Beijing, China; The Salamoun Collection, Dubai, UAE; The Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Tunis, Tunisia; The Scantland Collection, Columbus, Ohio; Fundación Medianoche, Grenada, Spain; Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden, Marrakesh, Morocco; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE; State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece; Saatchi Collection, London, UK.

About the Curator

Fawz Kabra is a curator and writer. She is co-founder of Brief Histories, a curatorial project and publishing platform currently based in New York. She has curated exhibitions at the Brooklyn Public Library; Columbia University Wallach Art Gallery, New York; the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, NY; e-flux Screening Room, New York; BRIC Arts and Media House, Brooklyn; and the Palestinian Museum, Ramallah; and was Assistant Curator, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. Kabra has organized symposia at Global Art Forum 13, Dubai and The Armory Show, New York. Her writing and interviews appear in various exhibition catalogues as well as *Art Papers*, *Canvas*, *e-flux Film*, *Ibraaz*, and *Ocula*. Kabra's editorial projects include *Through the Ruins: Talks on Human Rights & the Arts* (2023), published by the Center for Human Rights and the Arts, Bard College. She is visiting faculty at CCS Bard, and Curator of the Art and Design Gallery at Fashion Institute of Technology, New York.

About the Exhibition

"Big droplets of oblivion," Nadia Ayari remarks in relation to her new body of work, describing painting as a way of resisting them. For Ayari, painting is not simply a means of expression but a mode of atmospheric survival, a practice that pushes back against chaos, violence, inertia, and the world's continual unmaking. Each canvas becomes a site of negotiation between order and disorder, between the sharp-edged precision of her protagonists, weaponized flowers, leaves, branches, and the underlying discord coursing beneath the surface.

In Ayari's exhibition *Oblivion Rains: Notations of Gravity, Light, and Resistance*, repetition turns into rhythm, and rhythm becomes a way of thinking about form as energy and momentum. Flowers, branches, and leaves register as pulse and tone in the space of the painting. The sequence of paintings unfolds like a score, each work marking a shift in tempo, from the held tension of a single bloom to the cascading force of a network of relations. Impastoed hues of manganese blue, dense magenta, and piercing yellow establish an atmospheric Field in which gestures hover, fall, and reassert themselves. The paintings carry time, allowing motion to function as a form of inscription, registering density through layers of brush strokes, sedimenting the material into a membrane-like surface.

Ayari's body of work extends a vocabulary that has been refined over time where stylized botanical figures, puncturing a saturated atmosphere are articulated through graphic imagery and rendered in contradictory directional light that sets her protagonists as alien and remote. Bold shapes emerge, allowing form and light to carry the tension of the painting. These elements offer a sharpened visual lexicon, where imagery and gestures become more abrupt, the stakes are more pronounced, and narratives are charged. The paintings become systems of notation, scripts within an expanding orchestration where Ayari's protagonists traverse the canvas in swift arcs and collisions: fluttering petals launched by an unseen force, the clack of branches ricocheting through luminous space, forms propelled across and beyond the pictorial field.

Color punctuates this rhythm through shifting registers of blue, orange, magenta, and yellow. The palette operates as both a destabilizing force and structural anchor. Ayari describes color as producing a bodily effect, "a feeling in the base of my tongue," that registers as either tension or release. This somatic sensitivity gives rise to grounds that are as psychological as they are atmospheric. Manganese blue, a pigment newly introduced into her practice and inflected with an icy transparency, alters the gravitational pull of her compositions, functioning like an emotional weather system. Pink becomes a problem of calibration: too dark and it recedes, too light and it floats free. Orange appears sparingly, deployed for its abrasive charge, as in *Drift I* and *Bound* (both 2025). In *Bound*, two flowers joined by a single stem are locked together at the center of the canvas, their connection at once sustaining and confining. By contrast, in *Drift I*, pink flowers and twisted leaves pass one another in flight. The protagonists appear to prepare to fight one another, failing to connect as they cross through a viscous orange field. Color contrasts emphasize their velocity, suggesting mass, energy, and a painterly analogue to gravitational waves.

Across the series, events unfold through the protagonists' folding, striking, twisting, drifting, and collision. Movement carries from one surface to the next, generating a narrative rhythm that extends beyond a single canvas. In earlier bodies of work, a solitary fold of the leaf or directional shift of a flower often served as the central event. In *Oblivion Rains*, gestures accumulate, overlap, and multiply. The logic is not causal but elastic, operating through montage of color, time, layering, and interruption.

Teeth I and Teeth II (both 2025), introduce pink flowers and pointed leaves erupting from rigid branches angled across the canvas. The forms evoke uncanny instruments of ritual as they spear, tumble, and catapult through space. The flowers themselves hover between the anthropomorphic and mechanical, their swelling black pistils alternately confronting or retreating into pink petals. At times they recall Ayari's earlier paintings of proliferations of eyes and pupils, and at others they suggest falling ordnance. Taut green leaves dance on their branches or penetrate the deadpan void, and off-edge cuts imply a continuation beyond the frame where forms have exited the system altogether, accelerating into an unseen plane.

Teeth III (2025) formalizes Ayari's system, folding two protagonists against a deep indigo blue, fluttering flower and twisted leaf, and doubling the sense of tension as they diagonally travel on rigid branches up and down and in and out of the canvas. Other works Ayari describes as having arrived to her almost fully formed, disrupting the relative control of earlier compositions. In *Fall* (2025), suspended at the brink of action, the branches, leaves, and flowers pause in mid-air within their manganese blue fields, while in *Twist II* (2025), a single branch curves in an infinite figure eight, a deep creased portal at the center of each leaf drives the gaze inward. *Drift II* (2025) captures intersecting forms and introduces a deeper spatial plane as the flowers, connected to their rigid branches and sturdy leaves enter and recede in space.

Throughout, light emerges as a narrative force, shifted off-center and heightening tension, as in *Teeth I* (2024). Lit from within, the flowers appear drawn downward by an invisible pull. Resistance ultimately defines both the content and the process of these paintings: the refusal to resolve, the struggle against predetermined outcomes, the willingness to reorient a composition after weeks of labor. As Ayari moves from one painting to the next, she reduces her use of solvent, allowing for density and accumulation. In *Spark I* (2025), built with layers of thick and minimally diluted paint, Ayari experiments with her solvent recipe, working on the single canvas for three months. She sets her protagonists upon a vivid yellow atmosphere, conjuring leaf, flower, and branch to hover, extending their stem to intertwine, making it difficult to determine where the journey leads and where one leaf begins and a flower ends. The branches cross and lock into one another as the stems spiral, their loops exit the surface of the canvas and return back into themselves. It is the gesture of elongating the stem that is the revelatory moment, where a new possibility opens formally and through the body of the work itself.

Binding the exhibition is an expanded field of narrative potential. Figures that once operated within controlled scenarios now inhabit a universe of multiple temporalities and unexpected truths. The intervals between paintings become as significant as the spaces within them. Ayari's palette absorbs fragments of lived memory. She recalls the hand-painted tiles in her uncle's hallway: delicate dots and lines forming diamond patterns, a frieze of musicians alternating with abstract motifs. These memories surface in repeated grounds and anchoring hues, while directional light and abrupt compositional cuts evoke a cinematic sensibility. Ayari asks what the term cinematic might have been before cinema as she locates motion within stillness, narrative within form, and duration within paint. *Oblivion Rains: A Notation of Gravity, Light and Resistance* unfolds as a constellation of notations. Each painting operates as a unit of affect, a measure of emotional weather, a beat in a choreography of resistance. Together they form the artist's expansive narrative, a story of forces, perception and a sustained luminous refusal to yield to the weight of oblivion.

By Fawz Kabra

MEZZANINE

NIDHAL CHAMEKH: *FRICTIONS*

a solo exhibition

12 February 2026 — 18 April 2026



Nidhal Chamekh, *Friction #6*, (detail), 2025, Plaster, wood and iron - Courtesy of Selma Feriani Gallery and the artist.

About the Artist

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 international 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, 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.

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About the Exhibition

Frictions is a series of sculptures and original collages that extends and builds upon Chamekh's 2024 solo exhibition, *Et Si Carthage?*, investigating historical narratives, representation, and cultural hybridity. The series begins with a detail from the installation *The King and the Mask* (2024), in which an ivory mask is placed to the left of the body and adorned with a fragment of Roman sculpture that extends its features, creating a figure at once hybrid and amorphous, yet forming a physiognomic whole that feels strangely familiar. The assemblages in *Frictions* restage this process across multiple variations, consistently bringing together two key elements: Greco-Roman sculpture and the African "mask." At times, carved wooden sections join sculpted heads; at others, fragments of statuary are affixed to wooden objects, shaped and patinated by hand. Alongside these sculptural works, a group of drawings further develops these encounters, translating the same formal and conceptual tensions onto paper.

From these encounters arise dissonant variations, frictions in the sense described by Édouard Glissant¹. The works strain inherited taxonomies: white sculptures and Black masks — the former housed in archaeological museums; the latter relegated to ethnographic collections. Clean cuts through wood or marble heighten the feeling of a forced, discordant union. Yet continuities emerge: features flow from one fragment to another, sometimes mirroring each other, unsettling the cultural register that elevates some forms as artistic models while dismissing others as "naïve art." In doing so, the work challenges anatomical rationality and seeks to break free from a coercive representational system.

The first *Frictions* assemblage was made from fragments unused in earlier installations. It features the head of Roman emperor Caracalla, a copy of the Farnese bust likely carved around 212 CE, found in the Baths of Caracalla and now at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. The mask is likely a replica of a Dan wooden sculpture from Ivory Coast. In the same year, Caracalla issued the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, granting Roman citizenship to all free men in the Empire, marking a major milestone in Roman history. Fascist historiography later cast this edict as Rome's downfall, giving citizenship to all conquered peoples, claiming it enabled the rise of a "lower race" and promoted miscegenation, seen as

¹ While Glissant primarily addresses the Creole cultures of the Caribbean, his notion of creolization extends further: a broader dynamic of formation and (re)birth born of cultural encounters — composite cultures that can only be voiced through the multiplicity of their origins.

a source of physical and moral decay. The first issue of *La Difesa della Razza* (1938) exemplifies this: with a photo of Caracalla's bust facing Augustus's bears the caption, "The somatic traits of the semi-barbarian Caracalla sufficiently illustrate the main motive of his ruinous edict." This contrast reflects fascist beliefs that physical appearance reveals moral character: Caracalla, the "hot-tempered and bloodthirsty foreigner," embodies decay; Augustus, balance and grandeur. Such interpretations of antiquity continue to shape contemporary debates in art, scholarship, and especially popular culture. Ridley Scott's recent *Gladiator II* illustrates this: its Venetian-blond Caracalla, stripped of his African heritage, perpetuates myths about Africa and the so-called "good" Roman emperors.

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BASEMENT

ELYES JERIDI: *CHRONICLES OF A VAGABOND*

curated by Nicène Kossentini

a video installation

12 February 2026 — 14 March 2026



Elyes Jeridi, *Chronicles of a Vagabond* (2024), HD video still - Courtesy of Selma Feriani Gallery and the artist.

About the Artist

Born 1992. Sousse, Tunisia

Lives and works in Tunis, Tunisia

Elyes Jeridi is a filmmaker and researcher whose practice focuses on film essay, experimental cinema and authorial documentary. He holds a degree in English Literature and Civilization from the University of Letters in Sousse, a degree in Film Directing from ISAMM, Tunis, and a Master's in Cinema from the University of Caen Normandie, France.

His short film *Fabula* received the Serge Daney Prize in Paris, was nominated at the La Première Fois Festival in Marseille, and received a special mention at the Khouribga African Cinema Festival.

Alongside his artistic work, Jeridi teaches film history, film analysis, and editing theory. He is currently preparing a doctoral thesis titled *Fragments of Life: Love, Loss, and Violence in the Cinema of Jia Zhangke, Diao Yinan, and Lou Ye*, examining the work of China's Sixth Generation filmmakers.

About the Curator

Born 1976, Sfax, Tunisia

Lives and works Tunis, Tunisia and Paris, France

The work of Nicène Kossentini is an invitation to experience a symbiosis with a space of life that is both close and uncertain. Playing with black and white contrasts and zones of semi-visibility, Kossentini creates singular and minimalist environments. Her photographs and videos track the traces of sites and surfaces on the verge of disappearance, hypnotizing the spectator to look ahead to an imminent event. Her videos, photographs, sculptures, works on paper and paintings question current events in the world. In this perspective, she always shifts towards the search for aesthetics, beauty, and poetry in order to confront cold violence. Kossentini's research area draws its resources from her family history, intimate and intergenerational tradition of storytelling, as well as Arabic poetry, literature and philosophy.

Kossentini graduated with a degree in Applied Arts from the Fine Art Institute of Tunis, Tunisia and pursued Advanced Studies in Art from Marc Bloch University, Strasbourg, France. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Experimental Cinema at the University of Tunis, Tunisia.

About the Exhibition

Synopsis

Chronicles of a Vagabond follows a lone wanderer who walks without destination, carrying stories rather than belongings. As he moves through anonymous landscapes, he speaks, remembers, and invents stories born from encounters, silences, and the slow rhythm of the road.

The film unfolds as a series of fragments: moments observed, words shared, gestures repeated. Walking becomes a way of thinking, and storytelling a way of inhabiting the world. There is no plot, only movement; no goal, only presence.

Neither confession nor fiction, *Chronicles of a Vagabond* is a simple act of passing through an invitation to listen to a voice in motion, and to follow the fragile thread of stories that emerge while walking.

Details

Runtime: 47'59"

Episode 0 – Prologue : 4'20"

Episode 1 : 5'32"

Episode 2 : 6'26"

Episode 3 : 8'33"

Episode 4 : 9'15"

Episode 5 : 7'31"

Episode 6 : 6'22"

Year: 2024

Credit

Music

Ghassan Saliba – Bethebbini
Cheb Adjel – Deбри Alia Ya Lyem
Audio K – Blinkity Blank
Baxter Dury – Happy Soup
Hany Shaker – Aali Dahkeya
SILOS – Sunshine
Soap and Skin – Voyage Voyage (Cover)
Ellioth Smith – Needle In The Hay
Neon Tibet – You Need The Drugs
Westbam feat Richard Butler - You Need The Drugs
Nina Simone – Mr Bojangles
I Monster – Who Is She?
Wael Kfoury – Layl w Raad
Tatu – All the Things She Said

Image

Youtube videos found footage

Texts

Excerpts from Fernando Pessoa poems

Notes to Editors

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About the gallery

A contemporary art gallery 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

Established in 2013 in London and then in Sidi Bou Saïd, Tunis, Selma Feriani's 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. 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.

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. Founded in 2021, the gallery's residency programme, L'Atelier, is an integral part of its mission to nurture and showcase artists wishing to springboard their careers and regularly organises and participates in not-for-profit activities such as screenings, workshops, education programmes, and talks in collaboration with various institutions and art organizations.

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. In January 2024, the gallery launches 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 2000m². 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 will host 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.