

the sun is for everyone

the moon is for you

A solo exhibition by Noor Al Suwaidi

25 May to 4 June 2023

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the sun is for everyone

the moon is for you

A solo exhibition by Noor Al Suwaidi

Text by Myrna Ayad

There is an inescapable sense of love and longing in Noor Al Suwaidi's latest body of work, *the sun is for everyone, the moon is for you*, an exhibition whose title at once evokes an impression of tenderness for another. It leaves audiences aware that there is one who is singled out, who is deserving of the moon – that very symbol of adoration, referenced in poetry and cultures from time immemorial as a representation of love. This now begs the question: who is this being worthy of the moon, this other who merits that which symbolises undying and steadfast love? "It could be another person or just yourself," says Al Suwaidi.

The Emirati artist's first solo show since 2014 presents nine paintings on canvas in varying sizes, and a collection of collage works, the latter marking her freshman foray with the medium. She had explored collage during her undergraduate study at the American University of Washington DC, where she focused on Studio Art between (2001-2004). It was during this time that Al Suwaidi also took up classes in sculpture, a choice she says, that helped her tremendously. "Those courses in sculpture taught me to look and see, and made me a better drawer and painter," she says. "And it was through them that I moved towards abstraction." One would venture so far as to say that her collage pieces are sculptural – there is something about the act of cutting and casting that compellingly comes through in Al Suwaidi's construction of these conceptual works. Figurative and abstract all at once – a characteristic of her practice – the collages, she says, do not offer her the ability to wholly influence their composition. "I can't mix colours or improvise, so the collage controls me, and once it's done, it's done," she says.

And yet, though the hegemony and colour scheme of Al Suwaidi's collage differs from that of her paintings, the mediums share an almost indistinguishable aesthetic, and both provoke the eye's movement to flow in a similar manner. Where the paintings appear softer, courtesy of a soothing colour palette, the collages are crisp, possessing an almost unambiguous composition. Nonetheless, for all the collages' sharpness, and the paintings' smoothness, they remain dreamlike and wondrous, sharing a visual aesthetic appeal in terms of their arrangement.

Considering Al Suwaidi's calming and reinvigorated colour palette, something about this collection of paintings feels like a reconciliation. After all, among the moon's countless attributes is its symbolism of cycles. It very much feels and looks like a process and Al Suwaidi acknowledges this. "Sometimes there is something harmonious in these works, and other times a tension appears," she says. A lot of this is also about *what* viewers see, and in typical Al Suwaidi fashion, she turns this to the audience.

There is no end to what one may find in her paintings, and each glance can offer a new chronicle. Is there a boisterous gathering in *Everyone*, or is the party behind the apparent face on the left? Is there an embrace in *Sunset in Capri*, or are we looking at the vista of the Italian Riviera? Is the woman in *Fairy tale* in a state of ecstasy or is that an aerial view of a terrain? "I started realising that the paintings looked like maps and rivers and terrains. When looking at the canvases, a terrain may become visible," adds Al Suwaidi. "The moon has terrains on it, whereas the sun does not."

Her process of creation is one that is entirely governed by spontaneity, beginning with the mixing of her own colours and a liberty in the brushstroke's movement. To put it simply, she lets her intuition guide her. "It just happens. I don't plan anything and it's all a very natural flow," explains Al Suwaidi. "As the eye traces across the canvas, there is both, a harmony, and a tension. Every time you look, you will find a new moment. And that is precisely the same for me, both in the making of these works and in re-looking at them."

Al Suwaidi offers yet another layer of interpretation to her paintings: script. Details in *Valentine, Always Time for Love 1* and *2* and *Sicilian Summer* allude to the appearance of Arabic lettering – an exercise born during her time in the USA when, during classes on figuration drawing, Al Suwaidi scribbled notes in Arabic. At the time, those art classes took place facing a dance studio and amidst course material that covered Degas's ballerinas and Toulouse-Lautrec's Parisian scenes, she explored the body's movement. "I began to see parallels between the cursive nature of Arabic handwriting and the curves of the body," she recalls. "Though the body was challenging for me to depict, I found it aesthetically pleasing and sensual with all its lines and curves. I liked the concept of timelessness; that, at any time and at any period, the figure will always be the figure." Her female forms looked confident and sensual; her colours more studied, and as she delved into literature, citing the works of William Somerset Maugham and Jane Austen, among others, portraits began to appear.

She began to abstract the figure and discreetly infuse it with script, a practice that she continues. This new set of paintings, however, marks a departure from previous works through the presence of negative space – a new aspect of her oeuvre. It affirms a confidence in allowing the canvas such exposure, as though in so doing, there is an acceptance of this vulnerability. "The palette changes and in letting some of the raw canvas show, the negative space looks positive," she says. "I don't feel like everything needs to be covered."

Like Rorschach ink drawings, Al Suwaidi's paintings provoke the imagination and allow audiences to impose their own narratives. A continuation of a visual language that she has developed over the years, she confirms that the paintings "are explorations of figures, shapes and colours that are inspired by characters, portraits and terrains." What does one find in these spaces? The truth is, it's all about love and who that love is for is a question posed to the viewer.



NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Everyone

2023

Acrylic on canvas

160 x 110

[NAS23-1]

US\$ 17,500

For all sales inquiries, please contact
Kristen Narara | info@nooralsuwaidi.com | +971 50 3280 672



NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Sunset in Capri

2023

Acrylic on canvas

108x126

[NAS23-2]

US\$ 15,000

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Sweet Nothings

2023

Acrylic and pastel on canvas

103.5 x 103 cm

[NAS23-7]

US\$ 12,000

For all sales inquiries, please contact
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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Sicilian Summer

2023

Acrylic and pastel on canvas

108x103

[NAS23-3]

US\$ 12,000

For all sales inquiries, please contact
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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Fairytale

2023

Acrylic and pastel on canvas

105x108

[NAS23-4]

US\$ 12,000

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Always Time for Love I

2023

Acrylic and pastel on linen

100 x 100 cm

[NAS23-8]

US\$ 12,000

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Always Time for Love II

2023

Acrylic and pastel on linen

100 x 100 cm

[NAS23-9]

US\$ 12,000

For all sales inquiries, please contact

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Adore

2023

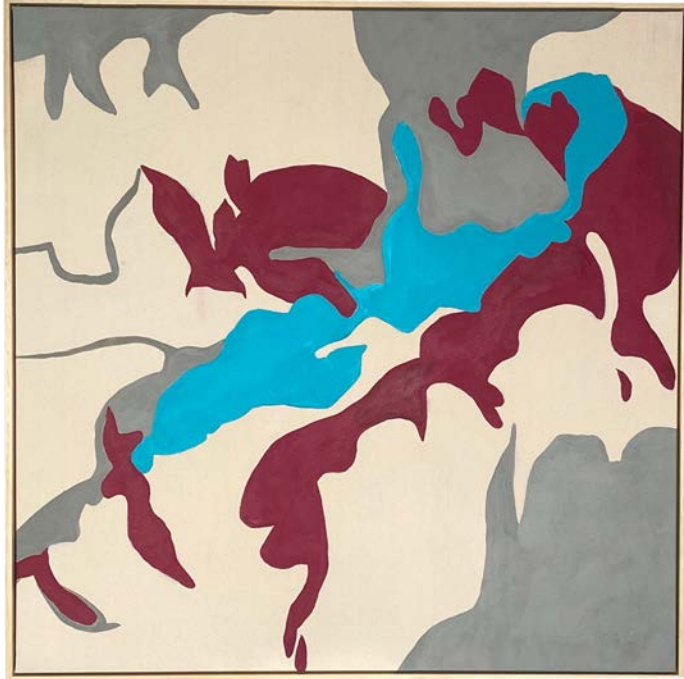
Acrylic and pastel on canvas

103.5 x 103 cm

[NAS23-6]

US\$ 12,000

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Valentine

Acrylic on canvas, 2023

103.5x103

[NAS23-5]

US\$ 12,000

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-BGE I

2023

Collage on paper

44 x 56.5 cm

[NAS23-21]

US\$ 2,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-BGE II

2023

Collage on paper

44 x 56.5 cm

[NAS23-22]

US\$ 2,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-BLU I

2023

Collage on paper

44 x 56.5 cm

[NAS23-23]

US\$ 2,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-BLU II

2023

Collage on paper

44 x 56.5 cm

[NAS23-24]

US\$ 2,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-PRP I

2023

Collage on paper

44 x 56.5 cm

[NAS23-27]

US\$ 2,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-PRP II

2023

Collage on paper

44 x 56.5 cm

[NAS23-28]

US\$ 2,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-PNK I

2023

Collage on paper

28.7 x 35 cm

[NAS23-25]

US\$ 1,200

For all sales inquiries, please contact
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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-PNK II

2023

Collage on paper

28.7 x 35 cm

[NAS23-26]

US\$ 1,200

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-BLK I

2023

Collage on paper

44 x 56.5 cm

[NAS23-18]

US\$ 2,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-BLK II

2023

Collage on paper

44 x 56.5 cm

[NAS23-19]

US\$ 2,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-BLK III

2023

Collage on paper

44 x 56.5 cm

[NAS23-20]

US\$ 2,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-BLK IV

2023

Collage on paper

59 x 79 cm

[NAS23-14]

US\$ 3,800

For all sales inquiries, please contact
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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-BLK V

2023

Collage on paper

59 x 79 cm

[NAS23-15]

US\$ 3,800

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-NVY I

2023

Collage on paper

72 x 57 cm

[NAS23-16]

US\$ 3,400

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NOOR AL SUWAIDI

Self Love-NVY II

2023

Collage on paper

72 x 57 cm

[NAS23-17]

US\$ 3,400

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BIOGRAPHY



Noor Al Suwaidi is an artist, curator and cultural producer with almost 20 years experience in the arts and creative industries.

Born in Abu Dhabi, Al Suwaidi graduated in 2004 with a bachelor's degree in studio art from American University in Washington, D.C. In 2009, she obtained a master's degree in curating contemporary design from Kingston University, London.

Known for her abstract, figurative painting, Al Suwaidi's visual language and masterful use of colour distinguishes her from her contemporaries. Her artwork has been exhibited in galleries in London, Berlin, Istanbul, Kuwait, and Washington, D.C., as well as across art venues within the United Arab Emirates.

Following her first solo exhibition titled "*Like Coral, I Create Clouds*" in 2011 at Cork Street Gallery in Mayfair, London, Al Suwaidi's work was then placed in the Christie's Auction—a first for female contemporary Emirati artists. Her works have subsequently been placed in prominent collections including Barjeel Art Foundation, Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation, and the private collection of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, among other significant private collections in the region.

In 2012, Al Suwaidi was nominated for the Emirates Woman Award: Artist Category, and awarded the L'official Artist of the Year Award.

Over the past decade, Al Suwaidi has participated in four international institutional and artist-led residencies across the USA, Europe and North Africa. These experiences have provided valuable opportunities to grow her practice, interact with peers and explore the cultural and institutional offerings from these regions.

Most recently Al Suwaidi has collaborated with Swiss watchmakers Swatch in celebration of the world's fair Expo 2020 in Dubai.

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