

50 GOLBORNE

EMAN ALI | BIOGRAPHY OCT 2024

ABOUT

Eman Ali is an Omani-Bahraini visual artist working across photography, AI, sculpture, text, installation, and sound. Based between Bahrain, Oman, and Kenya, her practice investigates the shifting relationships between visibility and erasure, intimacy and distance, history and the present.

Ali's work examines how memory, gender, and power shape visual and cultural narratives over time. Through research and image-making, she challenges systems of representation, navigating the space between documentation and speculation. Longing - whether for connection, belonging, or lost histories - runs through her work, shaping her engagement with both personal and collective memory.

Ali's practice resists fixed conclusions, moving fluidly between reality and fiction, record and imagination. Positioned as both an inquiry and a site of reinvention, her work disrupts dominant narratives, inviting a reconsideration of the systems that define what is seen, remembered, and ultimately forgotten.

The ongoing photographic project *Utendi*, which the artist is developing through residencies supported by 50 Golborne in the Lamu Archipelago, focuses on the expressions and interpretations of the female gender within the inherited, syncretic culture—seen in rituals, architecture, nature, and poetry—and how they are perceived by women in a rapidly changing society.

Ali's work has been exhibited at institutions such as *the Institut du Monde Arabe* (Paris), *The Middle East Institute* (Washington, D.C.), and the *Pinakothek der Moderne & ZIRKA* (Munich). She is currently a resident at Tokyo Arts and Space (TOKAS) in Japan, where her residency will culminate in a solo exhibition in Tokyo.

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EMAN ALI | CV

EDUCATION

- 2017 Royal College of Art, MA Photography (UK)
- 2008 Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, BA Graphic Design (UK)

ART FAIRS

- 2025 *Investec Cape Town Art Fair* (South Africa)
- 2024 *1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair* (London)
- 2024 *Foundations Fair, Artsy* (Online)
- 2023 *MENA Art Fair* (Brussels)
- 2022 *Paris Photo Fair* (France)
- 2020 *1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair* (London)
- 2020 *1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, New York* (Online)

BIENNALES

- 2019 *How To Build A Lagoon With Just A Bottle Of Wine*, Lagos Biennial (Nigeria) - Curated by Antawan Byrd, Tosin Oshinowo, and Oyinda Fakeye

SOLO SHOWS

- 2024 *The Earth Would Die If The Sun Stopped Kissing Her*, Reminders Photography Stronghold (Tokyo)
- 2019 *Utendi*, 50 Golborne Gallery (London)

GROUP SHOWS

- 2023 *Female in Focus*: Bridge and Tunnel Gallery (NYC)
- 2023 *Parfums d'Orient*, The Institut du Monde Arabe (Paris)
- 2023 *Elevison x Hunna Art*, Dubai International Financial Center (Dubai)
- 2023 *huna x Hunna Art*, Takhassusi (KSA)

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- 2023 *Millon Auction House, Salons du Trocadero (Paris)*
- 2023 *Der Greif: Past & Present, Pinakothek der Moderne & ZIRKA (Munich)*
- 2022 *Taipei Blockchain Week (Taiwan)*
- 2022 *Female in Focus 2022, Photofusion (London)*
- 2022 *The World Today, Madz Gallery (Florida)*
- 2022 *More Than Your Eyes Can See: Contemporary Photography from the Arab World, Middle East Institute (Washington D.C)*
- 2022 *NFT LA, SuperChief Gallery (LA)*
- 2022 *Vellum LA X Obscura: 'WHO WE ARE' Outdoor Billboard Exhibition, (LA)*
- 2022 *Serendipity, MIA Art Collection (Dubai)*
- 2022 *Pathways, Raffles The Palm (Dubai)*
- 2019 - 2020 *The Place I Call Home, Touring exhibition (UK + GCC)*
- 2017 *Behind The Portrait, Gulf Photo Plus (Dubai)*
- 2016 *Future Narratives, La Ira de Dios (Buenos Aries)*
- 2015 *The Devil May Care, The Noorderlicht Photogallery (The Hague)*
- 2014 *Recreational Purpose, Bahrain National Museum (Bahrain)*
- 2014 *SCHAU Festival (Dortmund)*
- 2013 *I Bought This For The Cover, Cob Gallery (London)*
- 2013 *Alwan 338, Al Riwaq Art Space (Bahrain)*
- 2011 *Documenting Muharraq, Bin Mattar House (Bahrain)*

TALKS

- 2025 *Panel Discussion | Softness and Sculpture - Moderated by Sarah Foryame, Tuwaiq Sculpture (Riyadh)*
- 2024 *Artist Talk | Open Studio, Tokyo Arts and Space (Tokyo)*
- 2024 *Artist Talk | Reminders Photography Stronghold Gallery (Tokyo)*
- 2019 *Artist Talk | Baraza, Swahili Studies Conference, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University (London)*
- 2019 *Artist Talk | In Conversation with Elsbeth Court, 50 Golborne Gallery (London)*

ARTIST RESIDENCIES

- 2024 *Avaissance Artist-in-Residence with Aaron Huey (Online, Season 2)*
- 2024 *Toyko Arts and Space (TOKAS), Tokyo*

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2016 *Future Narratives curated by Juliana Gontijo* - La Ira de Dios, Buenos Aires

PUBLICATIONS

2023 *Pictures & Songs* published by Booooooom

2022 *Who We Are 200* - Special Edition published by Setanta Books.

2022 *Kinfolk Travel: Slower Ways to See the World*

2019 *Succession* (Artist Book)

2016 *The Next 100: BMW Group book*

2014 *Recreational Purpose: Exhibition catalogue.* Bahrain National Museum

2012 *Background: Exhibition catalogue.* Bahrain's National Participation in the 13th international architecture exhibition at the La Biennale de Venezia

INVITATIONS

2018 *Plat(t)form*, Fotomuseum Winterthur (Switzerland)

RECOGNITIONS

2024 Winner, 24th Reminders Photography Stronghold Grant

2023 Nominated, C/O Berlin Talent Award 2024

2022 Shortlisted, PRIX BMW ART MAKERS 2023

2020 Winner (Single Image), Female in Focus Award, British Journal of Photography

2018 Shortlisted, Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize

2016 Shortlisted, European Photo Award

2013 Nominated, Foam Paul Huf Award

SELECTED CLIENTS & COMMISSIONS

The Institut de Monde Arabe, Amouage, BMW, Kinfolk, HAPAX, Ffotogallery Wales, Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA), The Standard Hotel, Selfridges

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PRESS

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