Tables Around
Six Proposals from Saudi Arabia
Press Kit

A group exhibition presented by Villa Hegra

On the 12th edition of Asia Now
20 — 24 October 2026
VIP Preview 19 October 2026

Curated by
Basmah Felemban & Gaël Charbau

La Monnaie de Paris
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فيلا الحجر
VILLA HEGRA

A group exhibition presented by Villa Hegra on the occasion of the AlUla Cultural Season in Paris

Featuring new works by

Raghad Al-Ahmed & Reem Olyan
Latifa AlBokhari
Reem Ali
Reem Al Nasser
Zahra Bundakji
Bashaer Hawsawi

What do you imagine when you think of a table?

Tables Around brings together six new proposals by seven women artists from Saudi Arabia, conceived specifically for Villa Hegra's presentation at Asia Now 2026, as part of AlUla's cultural season in Paris. Conceived by Artistic Directors Basmah Felemban and Gaël Charbau, the exhibition takes the table as its point of departure: an ordinary object that can also be a place of exchange, a working surface, a domestic architecture, a ritual site or a landscape in miniature.

A table organises relationships. It determines who sits, who serves, who watches and who waits; it can make hospitality possible, but may also reveal distance, hierarchy or absence. Once a meal, conversation or gathering has ended, it retains traces of what has taken place: objects left behind, gestures remembered, stories only partly told.

Across sculpture, textile, moving image, scent and crafted furniture, the artists approach this familiar form from distinct personal and cultural perspectives. Tables become sites of sensory experience, social encounter, inherited ritual and private memory; elsewhere, they appear as fragile structures, poetic architectures or elusive presences. Moving between the intimate and the collective, the works invite visitors to consider how everyday objects can hold and transmit histories.

Rather than proposing a single image of contemporary artistic practice in Saudi Arabia, *Tables Around* offers a set of situated perspectives: works shaped by individual research, lived experience and conversations with the present.

This event is part of the AlUla Cultural Season in Paris, presented by Arts AlUla, Villa Hegra and the French Agency for AlUla Development (Afalula). As part of the same programme, the AlUla Contemporary Art Museum presents *In the Bellies of the Rocks*, an exhibition by Saudi artist Ayman Zedani, at Paris Internationale (20–24 October 2026, preview on 19 October).

These events follow the exhibitions held during Paris Design Week at Lafayette Anticipations (*Life of Forms*, 8–13 September) and at the Institut du monde arabe (*AlUla: Designing from the Land*, 10–20 September), in which Villa Hegra participated.

Raghad Al-Ahmed & Reem Olyan

Harut and Marut, 2026

Mahogany wood & handcrafted marquetry inlay

Raghad Al-Ahmed



Reem Olyan



Raghad Al-Ahmed is an experimental multimedia artist and designer based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She graduated from King Abdulaziz University with a bachelor's degree in Interior Design and Furniture in 2016, and since then has cultivated a distinctive artistic practice that bridges disciplines and mediums. Her creative output spans collage, installation, sculpture, and digital film, each work serving as a vessel for layered narratives and profound cultural reflection.

Rooted deeply in her heritage, Raghad draws inspiration from her Hejazi tribal lineage in western Saudi Arabia. Her work intricately weaves together themes of cultural memory, spirituality, and personal identity. She often engages with the architectural and symbolic language of Islamic patterns, creating pieces that evoke both intimacy and universality while reimagining tradition in a contemporary lens.

The artist is deeply committed to giving back to the community by channelling production into initiatives that directly benefit people, particularly women, who often face challenges in finding job opportunities despite their immense talent as creators and designers.

Reem Olyan is a Palestinian architect, ceramic artist, and co-founder of Rejo Studio, a design studio based in Riyadh and Istanbul. Her practice focuses on bold, abstract furniture that bridges cultural heritage with contemporary expression. Her work has been showcased at global design platforms such as Milan Design Week, Dubai Design Week, and the Diriyah Biennale.

Latifa AlBokhari

***Breaking Bread*, 2026**

Sunprints on cotton, embroidery, video



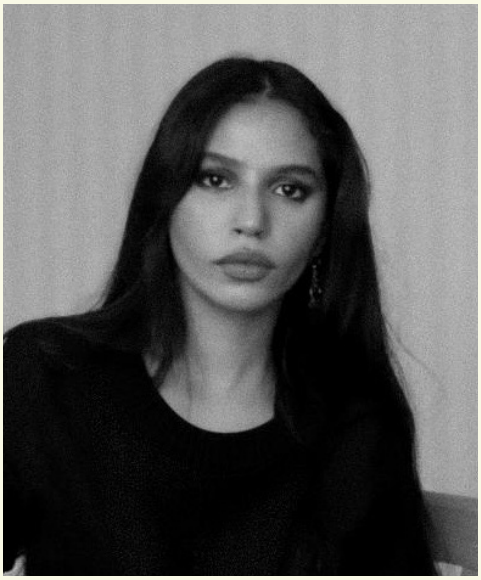
Latifa AlBokhari (b.1994) is a multidisciplinary artist working across photographic practices, installation, and textile. Through an ongoing reflection upon oneself and others alike, AlBokhari's practice documents the complexities of memory and nostalgia, building a perspective which redefines what it means to belong. Having spent a large part of her life abroad, helped spark her interest in visual ethnographic research.

Her bicultural experience underwrites how she sees and engages with the world, how she understands belonging, and where she seeks to build community. AlBokhari has been awarded the Kingdom Photography Award (2024), and she has exhibited her work across SWANA, Europe, and the United States.

Reem Ali

Her Mental Tools, 2026

Two-channel video installation, modified domestic table fan with kitchen-knife blades



Reem Ali (b. 1996) is a Saudi visual artist working across moving image, installation, photography, and text. Her practice investigates the psychological dimensions of domestic life, using ordinary objects and spaces to construct quiet yet unsettling encounters. Through restrained visual language, her work lingers on the unstable space where intimacy, contradiction, and survival coexist.

Reem Al-Nasser

A Ground of Gathering, 2026

Jasmine flowers, threads



Saudi artist Reem Al Nasser's work is informed by personal experiences and close obser-vations of movement, mobility and cultural change within her surroundings. Photography, Graffiti, video and sound installations bring forth untold stories, and delve into the rational, psychological obscurity and all that is perceived as complex and absurd in human nature. Reem's aphoristic and undeviating sensory installations capture and cast back the tension of unsettling complexities within the themes she explores.

Al Nasser's work relies heavily on anthropological research with an ethnographic visual approach. She focuses on practical social sciences as well as metaphysical ideas about time, space, and history. Al Nasser often puts herself on the forefront of case study to understand matters of culture, gender, social systems, and human relationships.

Al Nasser received her BA from Jazan University and completed her residency at Delfina Foundation, London, 2017. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions including: *YSA 60%*, Athr, Jeddah (2015); *Inshalla Everything Will Be Fixed* (2016); *Safar*, 21,39 Jeddah Arts, Jeddah (2017); *The Shift*, Mosaic Room, London (2017); *The Clocks Are Striking Thirteen*, Jeddah (2018); *Al Obour*, 21,39 Jeddah Arts, Jeddah (2019); *Out of Palace*, Athr, Jeddah (2019); *Together*, Madinah Art Center, Madinah (2019); *Walking Through Walls*, Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Germany (2019); *In The Presence of Truth*, Historical Jeddah (2019); and *Durational Portrait: A Brief Overview of Video Art in Saudi Arabia*, Athr Gallery, Jeddah (2020).



Zahra Bundakji

***Threshold*, 2026**

Metal, silicone sculpture



Zahra Bundakji (b. 1990, Jeddah) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice is grounded in fieldwork, visual ethnography, and long-term participant observation. She examines how meaning, values, and intention are communicated through shared social practices, often approaching the everyday as both material and site of observation.

Sculpture remains central to her work, while sound, performance, video, image, and found material enter as extensions of the research. Her work frequently considers non-verbal forms of communication through dance culture, hospitality, food, and other collective practices.

Alongside her studio practice, Bundakji works as a curator and cultural mediator, developing exhibitions and community-based programmes centred on access, multigenerational exchange, and shared learning. Across these contexts, she privileges situations over statements and co-creation over instruction, aiming to create conditions for meaning to emerge through encounter.

Bashaer Hawsawi

Her First Steps "Second Life", 2021 — 2026

Dry lemon, vintage table



Bashaer Hawsawi (b. 1992) is a Saudi artist and designer based in Jeddah. She holds a BFA in Sculpture and Ceramics from King Abdulaziz University (2015).

Working primarily with mixed media, found objects, and everyday materials, her practice explores cultural identity, cleansing, belonging, nostalgia, and the relationship between memory and daily life.

Drawing from her upbringing surrounded by materials, inherited practices, and family rituals, Hawsawi transforms familiar objects and traditional materials into contemporary forms. Her practice is driven by curiosity, experimentation, and a continuous exploration of how personal and collective memories are shaped through everyday life.



12th edition of ASIA NOW: Sentimental Value

For more than a decade, Asia NOW has worked to transcend the boundaries that have long defined Asia. The fair champions contemporary art from Asia and its diasporas, and it reaches beyond the role of marketplace or incubator to propose Asia not as a geography but as a methodology. At its heart lies the idea of Global Asias: a region shaped by exchanges, migrations and relationships that continuously redraw its borders.

For its 12th edition, Asia NOW unfolds around the theme of Sentimental Value. Soil holds the cycles of what is planted, harvested and displaced. In the same way, the objects and works we keep carry stories that exceed their material form. Their value is not always immediate or measurable: it accumulates through attachment, use, memory and even decay. This idea shapes the curatorial approach of the edition, which creates a space not only for transaction but for relationships, community and continuity.

Returning galleries embody this continuity, including Esther Schipper (Paris and Berlin), Kaikai Kiki Gallery (Tokyo), Sabrina Amrani (Madrid), Loy Contemporary (Singapore) and The Drawing Room (Manila). The fair also welcomes first-time participants such as VER Gallery (Bangkok), co-founded by Rirkrit Tiravanija, Double Square (Taipei) and Lux Feminae (New York). With Venice still resonating, Tala (Chicago) presents never-before-seen works by Jon Cuyson, who represented the Philippines at the Venice Biennale. THE (Bamberg) shows works by Nomin Bold, the artist representing Mongolia at the Mongolian Pavilion.

Asia is not a fixed point on the map. It lives in the movement between places, in the encounters between perspectives, and in what becomes possible when different Asias meet.

About Villa Hegra

Led by Feriel Fodil, Villa Hegra is the first Saudi-French cultural institution, based in AlUla, Saudi Arabia. Established through an intergovernmental agreement signed in 2021, it develops residencies and public programmes across visual arts, design, cinema, research, performing arts and the creative industries.

Villa Hegra supports sustained exchange between Saudi and French artists, practitioners and institutions through artist residencies, new commissions, exhibitions, public programmes and research collaborations, while bringing local knowledge and emerging voices into dialogue with international perspectives.

Opened in central AlUla in 2025, its 2,300-square-metre venue includes exhibition and workshop spaces, artist studios and residences, AlUla's first indoor cinema and its first performing arts studio.

Villa Hegra is a member of the Viva Villa global residency network, alongside Villa Medici (Rome), Villa Kujoyama (Kyoto), Casa de Velázquez (Madrid), Villa Albertine (United States) and Villa Swagatam (India).

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