

## ATHR Gallery Announces Three Exhibitions in Celebration of the 2025 Islamic Arts Biennale



### *Jeddah, Bride of the Sea: A Celebration of Cultural Connectivity and Contemporary Art*

**Jeddah, Saudi Arabia – January 07, 2025** – ATHR Gallery is delighted to announce an ambitious program marking its significant contribution to the highly anticipated 2025 *Islamic Arts Biennale* with ATHR Gallery artist Muhannad Shono as Contemporary Art Curator. Held in Jeddah—Saudi Arabia’s historic port city and cultural gateway— ATHR will present three solo exhibitions: *A Muslim Man* by Rami Farook, *Winter* By Ayman Yossri Daydban and *Nafs* by Lulua Alyahya exploring identity and belonging, along with an opening rooftop dinner themed *Jeddah, Bride of the Sea* on January 25th at 9 pm at ATHR gallery and closing on March 25th, 2025.

True to its name, meaning *grandmother* in Arabic, Jeddah embodies a legacy of connectivity that has long welcomed global spiritual pilgrims and creatives to its shores. In a city defined by cultural exchange, ATHR continues that tradition, serving as a vibrant hub of international collaboration while advancing the Kingdom’s contemporary art discourse on the global stage. From Jeddah’s storied public art sculptures of the 1970s to its current role in hosting the *Islamic Arts Biennale*, the city remains at the forefront of Saudi Arabia’s cultural renaissance.

ATHR proudly presents a dynamic lineup of three solo exhibitions showcasing its artists' diverse yet interconnected visions. *Alyahya's Saudi debut solo exhibition, Nafs (self)*, presents a series of paintings that playfully distort culturally familiar scenes and characters. The exhibition offers a space for encounter with the self— both that of the subject and the viewer, inviting an introspective engagement with works that bridge the personal and the collective.

Rami Farook’s *A Muslim Man* presents works including paintings, sculptures, prints, interventions, videos, performances, and installations. This docu-fictional immersive exhibition flows like a film, exploring the complex journey of a Muslim man’s relationship with God, faith, self, family, and society. This body of work reflects Farook’s multifaceted



role as an artist and curator. In dialogue with Farook's exhibition, *Winter* by Ayman Yossri Daydban expands on two of his earlier seminal works: *Ihramat* (2012) and *Muss* (1996). A leading figure in Saudi contemporary art, Daydban revisits the intricate patterns of the *ihram*, the plain white cloth worn by Muslim pilgrims, exploring its cultural and spiritual significance while examining themes of identity, isolation, and self-reflection. Each of the exhibitions will open on January 25th until March 25th at ATHR Gallery.

As a leading force shaping Saudi Arabia's contemporary art scene, ATHR's standout presence at the *Islamic Arts Biennale* underscores the gallery's commitment to advancing the Kingdom's cultural narrative and contributing to a thriving global art ecosystem enriched by shared opportunities.

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**About ATHR**

ATHR was founded in 2009 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, by Mohammed Hafiz and Hamza Serafi. From its onset it has been a pioneering gallery with global aspirations. We represent artists that have been the driving force of the gallery from the beginning and who have inspired our responsive mandate that evolves to accommodate the ever-changing local scene. We pride ourselves on being adaptive which has been a testament to our legacy that has spanned over a decade. Our diverse roster of artists work across multiple disciplines and subject matter from the more traditional such as painting and sculpture to more unconventional methods that echo the daring nature of the gallery. The subject matter they address also vary wildly covering a spectrum of narratives that vary from the personal scale to the macro-cultural. ATHR has expanded in the kingdom with three locations besides the original space; ATHR Al-Ula is the first contemporary art gallery in the historical city, and our newest outpost is ATHR JAX, an important space in Riyadh, which is the capital of Saudi

Arabia and an important art hub in the region. The opening of our Riyadh location is a long-awaited location expansion for ATHR beyond the western region of the kingdom. With our growth to the various outposts in the kingdom, the Jeddah location remains the largest space and continues to be the ATHR headquarters. ATHR has branched out to create the ATHR Foundation, with focus on developing emerging artists and art spaces. ATHR has also diversified its ventures to include AKTHR: an art services agency for the larger art industry in Saudi Arabia where we employ our experience to advise and develop.

### **Rami Farook**

Emirati, b. 1981

Lives and works in Dubai, UAE

Rami Farook is an interdisciplinary artist, curator, and producer. Self-taught, Rami's journey in art began in 2007 as a collector, gallerist, and patron with a purpose to be useful, honorable, and compassionate. His deep engagement with the conditions of art—its possibilities and responsibilities—directly informs his work. Rami thrives on collaboration, intervention, and experimentation, often executing his projects with emotional intensity and impulsivity.

Rami has participated in selected exhibitions including a solo show *A Muslim Man*, ATHR Gallery, Jeddah [2025]; solo: *reset/ finale/ untitled*, ATHR, Jeddah [2023]; a solo show in Art Dubai, *16 years later*, ATHR [2023]; he curated Young Saudi Artist 2023, *On Purpose*, for ATHR foundation in Diriyah; had a solo show curated by Ruba Al Sweel; *Items Discontinued*, Maisan 15, Dubai [2020]; a solo show, *Peace and Productivity*, Season, Seattle, [2017]; a group show curated by Reem Fadda, for *Sharjah Biennial's 2nd Act*, at Surssock Museum, Beirut, [2017]; *An Arab Artist's 1st Solo In America*, at Satellite Art Show during Art Basel Miami (2016); a producer, patron and artist at the Kochi Biennale [2012 & 2014]; and curated, *Grey Borders / Grey Frontiers* for Edge of Arabia during the Berlin Biennale [2010].

Farook's work was recently was acquired by the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and can be found in the Obayashi Private Collection, The Barajeel Foundation among others.

### **Ayman Yossri Daydban**

Saudi-Palestinian, b. 1966

Lives and works in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Born in 1966 in Ramallah, Palestine, Ayman Yossri Daydban is a Saudi-Palestinian artist whose work explores the intricacies of identity, belonging, and cultural heritage through a multidisciplinary approach. Currently based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Daydban's practice spans painting, photography, video, and printmaking. His artistic persona, reflected in his

last name "Daydban," which means "watchman" in Arabic, symbolizes his role as an observer of cultural narratives and national identity.

His work frequently engages with the tensions between East and West, addressing themes of alienation, migration, and the human condition through the use of text and cinematic imagery. Daydban's approach often involves juxtaposing found objects with elements of popular culture to evoke a sense of fractured identity and highlight the universal nature of displacement.

Over the years, Daydban has participated in numerous international exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale, the Diriyah Biennale, and Desert X AlUla. His works are held in prominent collections worldwide, such as the British Museum in London and the Green Box Museum in Amsterdam.

His exhibitions often reflect on the fluidity of national identity, raising questions about personal and collective belonging in an ever-globalized world. Ayman Yossri Daydban continues to create work that invites dialogue around cultural and existential themes, positioning his studio as a space for both introspection and cross-cultural exploration.

### **Lulua Alyahya**

Saudi, b.1998

Lives and works in Bahrain

Lulua Alyahya (b.1998) holds a BFA from the Slade School of Fine Art (UK) and an MFA from Goldsmiths, University of London (UK). Her paintings are sparsely composed of dislocated subjects, posing strange yet familiar accounts of culturally resonant archetypes. The depicted figures are often steeped in irony, candid and idle, situated against nondescript backgrounds.

Selected exhibitions include *Nafs* (solo exhibition), ATHR Gallery, Jeddah, KSA [2025]; *We Saw an Endless Cycle*, Hayy Jameel, Jeddah, KSA; *Aftershock*, Studio Chapple, London, UK [2024]; *The 7th Wall*, Alice Amati, London, UK [2024], *Sandbox*, SET Woolwich, London, UK [2023]; *Sludge* (solo exhibition), Quench Gallery, Margate, UK, [2022]; *Pygostyle*, The Residence Gallery, London, UK [2022]; *Roundabout*, ATHR Gallery, Jeddah, KSA [2021] and *Spacetoons*, ATHR Gallery, Jeddah, KSA [2021], *Widening the Gaze*, Slade Research Centre, London, UK [2018].

Alyahya's work has been acquired by The Ned, Doha.

She attended An Effort residency in the summer of 2023 in London, UK.