

OPERA GALLERY



*Untitled from Serenity Series, 2016, watercolour on paper,
152 x 205 cm | 59.8 x 80.7 in*

DUBAI

Abdulqader Al Rais Al Nayed

26 MARCH - 8 APRIL, 2026

January 2026—Opera Gallery Dubai is proud to present ‘Al Nayed’, a retrospective exhibition celebrating the life and legacy of Abdulqader Al Rais, one of the defining figures of contemporary art in the United Arab Emirates. The exhibition will run from 26 March to 8 April 2026.

Spanning more than five decades, ‘Al Nayed’ traces the evolution of an artist whose work has played a central role in shaping the UAE’s modern visual identity. Bridging heritage and modernity with rare authority, Al Rais’s paintings draw deeply on Emirati heritage, Islamic culture, and the striking interplay between the UAE’s natural landscapes and architecture.

The exhibition brings together seminal works from five of the artist’s celebrated series: *Alghaf*, inspired by the Ghaf tree, a national symbol of the UAE; *Calligraphy (Hurufiyya)*, where Arabic letters function as visual and spiritual forms; *Impressionism*, early depictions of UAE landscapes rendered with soft, atmospheric brushstrokes; *Albaa*, a distinctive series of watercolour on paper works; and *Abstract*, which combines geometric elements—most notably Al Rais’s signature squares—with landscape compositions.

Additionally, the exhibition will feature rare works from the artist’s private collection and debut a selection of previously unseen new works, underscoring the artist’s continued creative vitality. Seamlessly blending Arabic and Islamic aesthetics with contemporary abstraction, ‘Al Nayed’ captures the cultural transformation of the UAE without nostalgia.

“We are honoured to present ‘Al Nayed’ at Opera Gallery—an exhibition offering both a comprehensive and intimate view of the life of one of the UAE’s most influential artists,” said Sylvain Gaillard, Director of Opera Gallery Dubai. “In celebrating more than five decades of artistic practice, the exhibition also highlights Abdulqader Al Rais’s present and future work, affirming his continued innovation and enduring relevance.”

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(L-R) *My Dubai*, 2014, oil on canvas, 300 x 200 cm | 118.1 x 78.7 in; *Untitled from Yesteryear Series*, 2022, watercolour on paper, 255 x 155 cm | 100.4 x 61 in

About Abdulqader Al Rais

Abdulqader Al Rais (born 1951, Dubai, UAE) is a pioneering Emirati artist and one of the most influential figures in modern UAE art. He began his artistic career in the 1960s and is known for blending Impressionism, abstraction, and Arabic calligraphy (Hurufiyya). Al Rais has exhibited widely in the UAE and internationally, including at institutions such as Sharjah Art Museum, Louvre Abu Dhabi, Emirates Fine Arts Society and British Museum.

About Opera Gallery

Founded in Singapore in 1994, Opera Gallery has forged a network of galleries worldwide with locations in London, Paris, New York, Geneva, Madrid and Dubai, establishing itself as one of the leading forces within the international art market.

Headed by Gilles Dyan, Chairman and Founder, Opera Gallery specialises in modern, Post-War, and contemporary art. In addition, the gallery represents international emerging artists such as Andy Denzler, Pieter Obels and Gustavo Nazareno, alongside internationally recognised names such as Ron Arad, Manolo Valdés and Anselm Reyle.

For more than 30 years, Opera Gallery's mission has been to showcase the dynamic, innovative, and diverse expressions of modern and contemporary art through its ambitious yearly exhibition programming and collaborations with private collections and leading public institutions. Opera Gallery in Dubai is led by Sylvain Gaillard.

Press Contact

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Sun - Wed: 10 am - 10 pm

Thu: 10 am - Midnight

Fri: 2 pm - 9 pm

Sat: 11 am - 9 pm

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