



**Hanging Gardens**  
**Randa Maddah**

**12 September - 1 November, 2024**  
**Tabari Artspace, DIFC, Dubai**

Tabari Artspace is delighted to announce *Hanging Gardens* the inaugural solo exhibition of Syrian visual artist Randa Maddah who is now represented by the gallery. Maddah is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice spans painting, drawing, sculpture, video, and installation.

In her recent work, Maddah repurposes the vocabulary of traditional miniature paintings to depict dream-like scenes that negotiate themes of belonging, resilience, rootedness, rebirth, and renewal through natural elements. *Hanging Gardens* is a series initiated by Maddah in 2022 and further developed for this exhibition. The work embodies the notion of a spirit shaped by harsh and absurd realities, exploring themes of ecstasy, liberation, and reincarnation.

This latest body of work, consisting of oil on canvas paintings, is influenced by the belief in reincarnation prevalent in Maddah's region. This belief, which has long preoccupied Maddah, impacts the collective memory in the Golan Heights. Reflecting on transcendence and rebirth, Maddah suggests that the body is merely a garment the soul sheds to wear anew, offering hope that death is simply a gateway to a new life.





As a child, Maddah found solace in the nature of the Golan Heights, retreating there in times of turmoil. For Maddah, nature forms a sanctuary from pain and fear, enabling pure contemplation. The philosophy of reincarnation and her deep appreciation for the land are evident in her paintings. Maddah revisits the gardens of her youth, imagining them as metaphors for rebirth. In her compositions, circles symbolise beginnings and endings while natural elements—trees, grass, flowers, and hybrid, anamorphic creatures—express the liminal space between life and death, where complex emotions of ecstasy, liberation from fear, and a sense of futility converge.

Maddah's compositions vary in scale and extend across other mediums. Several smaller pieces (30 x 30 cm) are produced using hand-printing techniques and water-based inks. Accompanying these are three accordion-shaped art books filled with preparatory works that include hand printing, collage, sewing, and explorations in oil colour techniques.



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**Randa Maddah**  
**B. 1983**

Randa Maddah is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice spans painting, drawing, sculpture, video, and installation. A graduate of the Adham Ismail Center in Damascus, Maddah furthered her education at the Damascus University's Faculty of Fine Arts (2005) and the Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem. She holds a Master's degree in Fine Arts from the National School of Fine Arts in Paris (2020).

Maddah's work is deeply influenced by the political and social complexities of her homeland. Growing up in the Golan Heights, her art reflects the chaos and instability imposed by occupation. She critically engages with memory, displacement, and identity, often reflecting the shared sense of lost identity and damaged memory among the residents on both sides of the border. Maddah's art invites viewers to question and reflect on complex emotions and trauma, using visual documentation to process and reframe lived experiences. Her work remains a poignant commentary on the intersection of personal and collective histories, urging a deeper understanding of the human condition amidst political strife.

Her multidisciplinary output features elements of nature, floating objects, and circular motifs, symbolising the cyclical nature of existence and the return to origins. Recently, her works on canvas have evolved to express themes of sanctuary and liberation, inspired by the belief in reincarnation and the transformative power of nature.

A founding member of Fatiha Madrasa for Arts and Culture in the Golan Heights and l'association Portes ouvertes sur l'art in Paris, Maddah is committed to advancing intercultural dialogue and artistic exchange.

## ABOUT TABARI ARTSPACE

In 2003, at a time when the UAE art scene was still nascent, Tabari Artspace gallery was founded by Maliha Tabari in Dubai. With a twofold aim of preserving histories of craft emerging from the MENA region, while elevating young artists in the Gulf on a global stage, Tabari Artspace's forward-looking vision situates itself in the contemporary art world's dynamic moment. Tabari, who was trained as an artist herself, has re-envisioned the gallery since 2017 to bridge the storied past with an ever-changing present, with a program that juxtaposes the breadth of Arab heritage with the promise emerging artists hold for the future.

The foundations for this international outlook began with the realization that artists from the Arab region were noticeably absent in the West. Tabari's approach was to represent artists who were creating unique visual vocabularies in their medium and particular contexts. In Egypt, this included the late Adam Henein in sculpture and Omar El-Nagdi in abstract expressionism. In Lebanon, she worked with Hussein Madi before he became hailed for his talent of melding Cubism with Islamic abstraction. Tabari has also launched the careers of artists such as Saudi Arabian artist Ahmed Mater, Iranian artist Farhad Moshiri, Syrian artist Louay Kayyali, and Egyptian artists Mohamed Abla and Adel Siwi, before they became influential. By bridging mid-career artists with emerging talent, Tabari Artspace has succeeded in building an international collector base interested in the region's evolving artistic production across generations.

Moving fluidly between a platform for exhibition-making and artist mentorship, Tabari Artspace has taken an in-depth focus on GCC-specific, female-centered narratives, increasingly working with Kuwaiti, Emirati and Saudi artists such as Alymamah Rashed, Maitha Abdalla, Maha Aljarallah and Lulwah Al Homoud. Tabari Artspace's communal spirit extends to its all-women team, which nurtures and elevates artists who are overlooked at home, placing them in a broader historical context.

Now in its second decade of operation, the artists shown at Tabari Artspace offer a living visual archive of social change, contested borders and aesthetic movements in the region at large. Grounded in the cosmopolitan city of Dubai with a branch in Cromwell Place in London since 2015, the gallery lends visibility to its artists through international shows and residencies, as well as creative collaborations with other spaces. In line with its research-driven approach of enabling artists to grow, Tabari Artspace also functions as an incubator. It has recently partnered with the revamped boutique hotel La Serena in Forte Dei Marmi, launching an artist residency that serves as part-creative sanctuary, part-maker's studio. Located near neighboring marble and stone foundries, this art space offers sites of material exploration that resonate with the gallery's emphasis on contemporary craft.

Constantly embracing new discourses and amplifying the voices of women and youth, Tabari Artspace is committed to documenting and showcasing art practices in MENA, positioning them on a par with those on the international art scene. Its roster of artists have been exhibited in institutions and biennials including but not limited to: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Institut du Monde Arabe, Sharjah Art Museum, Venice Biennale, Sharjah Biennial, São Paulo Biennial, and are part of collections such as the Barjeel Art Foundation, British Museum, Dalloul Art Foundation, The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Lyon Biennale, The Khalid Shoman Collection, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art and Yale University Art Gallery.

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THANK YOU

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