

## Laila Abd Elrazaq: A Ω

Curator: Leah Abir

5.7-6.20.26

Laila Abd Elrazaq's works interrogate identity, self-reflection, loyalty, and betrayal within contemporary media. She adopts multiple roles and identities, reflecting on how notions of loyalty and belonging are being redefined and challenged. Death, too, becomes a mutable concept in Israel, merging with life and transforming into a new status. These opposites, life and death, form the core of the exhibition A Ω (Alpha and Omega), exploring beginnings and endings.

The exhibition presents video and text-based works. Its titular piece frames the funeral as rehearsal, not conclusion. The artist delivers a first-person, declarative text, shifting roles within the work. Beginning and end dissolve into a continuous present, death within life or life anticipating death, offering a strategy against being unprepared. Death here becomes a performance to be practiced, the funeral serves as documentation, not tragedy. Rehearsal insists on an active voice, rejecting inherited scripts of mourning. This approach arises in a context where death's social and economic value is increasing, yet expressions of grief are suppressed.

Abd Elrazaq does not inhabit characters. The loss of identity does not hold her back, and she confidently navigates the absurd spaces of personal history and artistic heritage. The works do not hide the discomfort of self-reflection, expressed through loss and the search for meaning from within the space of survival marked by contradiction (that is to say, life goes on). Her work explores resilience, metamorphosis, and the tension between personal evolution and societal expectation.

"Alpha and Omega" is also the title of a well-known series of lithographs (1908–1909) by Edvard Munch, in which Adam and Eve are reimagined as primordial beings who fully enact all their drives and emotions. Although Alpha ultimately kills Omega at the end of Munch's new Garden of Eden narrative, Omega's offspring, born of her traitorous affairs with various animals, go on to fill the earth. A further, chaotic extension beyond Alpha and Omega enters the realm of contemporary media with the "Omegaverse" ( $\alpha/\beta/\Omega$ ) - a term coined within the online fan fiction community, popularized on platforms like AO3 (formerly Wattpad), which categorizes social groups by hierarchical dominance and sexual drive.

Laila Abd Elrazaq (b. 1999, Haifa) is a graduate (with honors) of the Bachelor's and Master's of Fine Arts degrees at the University of Haifa, where she works as a lecturer today. She works with video, drawing, digital collage, text and sound. In 2026 she was awarded the Artist of the Mediterranean award by WAVA. Her work constructs complex networks of personal and collective identity within a media-dominated society. She interrogates personal narratives, gender, and collective trauma, critically examining the tension between social norms and shifting "self"hood. Satire and humor intersect with morbidity and vulnerability, capturing the nuanced challenges of contemporary self-formation.

Abd Elrazaq has presented solo shows at The Jerusalem Artists' House (curator: Rona Yefman) and CICA Museum in South Korea. This year, a new solo exhibition featuring her works opened at the Haifa Museum of Art (curator: Dr Kobi Ben-Meir). She has participated in various group exhibitions locally and internationally including the Haifa Museum of Art, Umm al-Fahm Gallery, Edmond de Rothschild Center in Tel Aviv, Friedensgasse in Zurich, ON public gallery in the Netherlands, the University of Michigan and Larnaca Biennale in Cyprus. She was a participant of the Edmond de Rothschild Fund's artist development program, and is a recipient of the late Walid Abu Shakra Prize awarded by Umm al-Fahm Gallery, the late Uri Katzenstein Prize for Excellence in the Bachelor of Fine Arts Program at the University of Haifa, and a scholarship from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation.