

LISSON

DANA AWARTANI



BIOGRAPHY

Dana Awartani engages in critical and contemporary reinterpretations of the forms, techniques, concepts and spatial constructs that shape Middle Eastern culture. Steeped in a multitude of historical references, especially Islamic and Arab art-making traditions, Awartani's practice straddles continuity and innovation, aesthetic experimentation and social relevance. Spanning painting, sculpture, performance and installation, Awartani's commitment to historically situated and locally sourced materials lends a rare sensitivity to urgent political concerns of gender, healing, cultural destruction and sustainability. Consistent throughout the artist's work has been her philosophical elaboration of geometric patterns as an alternative genealogy of abstraction.

In her ongoing series, *Come, let me heal your wounds. Let me mend your broken bones* (2019-2024) Awartani meditates on themes of sustainability and cultural destruction. The work is composed of naturally dyed silk fabrics, handmade in Kerala in south India, which have been stretched onto frames or draped in a serial manner. The fabrics are saturated with a multitude of natural herbs and spices with specific medicinal functions, but are also spliced and disrupted by tears and holes, which correspond to buildings or locations that have been subjected to sustained violence or outright destruction through war, colonialism or acts of terror. Mending these punctures through a process of darning, Awartani's work metaphorises possibilities of collective healing while recalling a venerable tradition of repairing and revering objects. Her material choices speak to the ethical and ecological terms of production and embody acts of resistance through the dual emphasis on artisanal production and indigenous knowledges. This approach can be seen in an earlier

performative work, *I went away and forgot you. A while ago I remembered. I remembered I'd forgotten you. I was dreaming* (2017), in which she sweeps away a pattern painstakingly created from handdyed sand to resemble a traditional tiled floor, seemingly in the name of progress.

Dana Awartani is a Palestinian-Saudi artist born in Jeddah in 1987. She lives and works between New York and Jeddah. She has a BA in Fine Art from Central St Martin's College of Art and Design, London and a Master's degree in Traditional Arts from The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, London. Dana Awartani has held solo exhibitions at Towner Museum, UK (2025); the Arnolfini, UK (2025); the Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, Australia (2024); the Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE (2018); Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit, USA (2017) and Athr Gallery, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (2015). Her works have also been featured in numerous group exhibitions, including Venice Biennale, Italy (2024); Sharjah Biennale 15, Sharjah, UAE (2023); Louvre Abu Dhabi, UAE (2022); Lyon Biennale, Lyon, France (2022); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, USA (2022); Desert X Al-Ula, Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia (2022); Diriyah Biennale, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (2021); BNKR, Munich, Germany (2021); British Museum, London, UK (2021); Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain (2020); Contemporary Art Biennial Sesc_Videobrasil, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2019); Cambridge Arts Gallery, Cambridge, USA (2018); Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, Australia (2018); United Nations, New York, USA (2017); The Mosaic Rooms, London, UK (2017); Institute of Arab and Islamic Art, New York, United States (2017); Minnesota Street Project, San Francisco, USA (2016); Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi, India (2016); Jewish Museum, New York, USA (2016); US Embassy, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (2015); Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2013). London, UK (2017); Institute of Arab and Islamic Art, New York, United States (2017); Minnesota Street Project, San Francisco, USA (2016); Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi, India (2016); Yinchuan Biennale, Museum of Contemporary Art, Yinchuan, China (2016); Jewish Museum, New York, USA (2016); US Embassy, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (2015); Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2013).