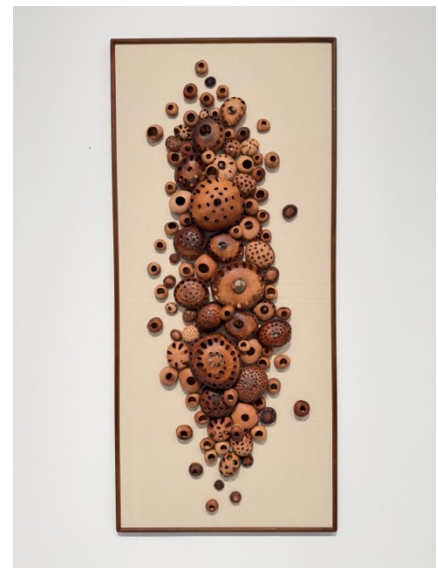
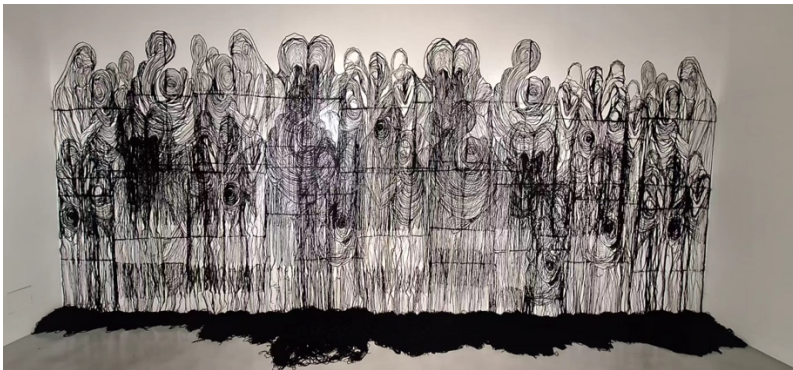


PearlLam Projects

Shanghai

ZAHRAH ALGHAMDI: Tender Ties

Vernissage Thursday, 17 September, 2026, 4–6pm
Exhibition dates 17 September–29 October, 2026 Monday–Saturday, 10:30am–7pm
Venue Pearl Lam Projects, 203, 2/F, 117 Xianggang Road, Shanghai, China



L: ZAHRAH ALGHAMDI b. 1977, **In the Fractures Between Bodies that Dissolve and Remain**, 2026, Installation, Dimensions variable

R: ZAHRAH ALGHAMDI b. 1977, **Mycelium Running 5**, 2026, Dyed leather on fabric, 180 x 80 cm (70 7/8 x 31 1/2 in.)

Images courtesy of the artist and Pearl Lam Projects

Shanghai—Rooted in the mountainous landscape of Al Baha in southwestern Saudi Arabia, the practice of Zahrah Alghamdi operates at the intersection of land art, material memory, and installation. Raised among traditional stone-and-mud agricultural communities where her grandfather was a landowner, Alghamdi treats her surroundings not merely as a site for intervention, but as an active repository of human emotion, labour, and heritage.

While mid-twentieth-century land art often favoured grand alterations of the terrain, Alghamdi develops an intimate, labour-intensive methodology. She gathers materials directly from her immediate environment—such as sand, rock, clay, leather, cotton, charcoal, and plaster—and subjects them to painstaking hand processes: moulding, dyeing, stitching, and layering. Rather than framing ecology

through an environmental agenda, her site-specific work centres on embodied memory, specifically the way physical landscapes, vernacular architecture, and human experiences negotiate with time, loss, and resilience. In an era marked by the rapid destruction of arable oases, Alghamdi's installations reassert a fundamental principle: that land belongs universally to humanity, bridging geographic and cultural divides with the human body as a fundamental unit for expressing vulnerability, strength, and collective belonging.

Alghamdi states her intention, "The human body is not a fixed image; instead, it is a shifting state between all human emotions, moving between strength and fragility, openness and withdrawal, belonging and solitude, joy and sorrow, as well as hope and despair. This exhibition can be seen as a series of visual confessions that reveal the human condition in its vulnerability and strength, in its presence and concealment, in moments of confrontation and in moments of silence. Every thread within these works resembles a trace of life, and every intersection between threads evokes a decision, a wound, or an encounter. The forms vary, yet the threads that construct them remain the same as if a single pulse flows through all of them, shaping moments of similarity and difference at the same time. With each figure we encounter, we begin to realise that the diversity of bodies does not erase the deeper truth that connects us: that we are all fragments of a larger entity, one that is constantly transforming."

Drawing references from the regional architecture of Asir that is built to endure mountain climates, traditional crafts like Al Sadu weaving, Al-Qatt Al-Asiri geometric wall art, and Arabic classical literature, Alghamdi investigates our psychological attachment with abandoned places and the interconnectivity across human relationships, organic matter, and ecosystems.

Embroidered Leather Piece (2026) simulates the surreal, wind-carved red rock towers of Al-Ula with celestial star clusters and delicate chamomile flower embroidery, celebrating the fragile biodiversity and cosmic mystery of the desert landscape. This work expresses a narrative wherein individual threads, rocks, and memories weave into an enduring universal existence.

Accumulated Silence (2026) is a painting stitched with water-soluble threads. As the fabric dissolves, the residual threads portray multiple human profiles consoling in an intimate moment. In *Streams Move Oceans* (2026), a wall installation of sporadically placed white knots maps the complex networks of human relationships, from filial ties to larger socio-cultural hierarchies, using pristine white fabric to symbolise healing and resolution amidst tension. Using charcoal, *Layers of Memory* (2026) visualises an interlocking pattern of human figures that speaks of the ties binding individuals together to form a larger social collective.

Mycelium Running 5 (2026) utilises hand-moulded burnt leather and cotton wool to construct organic, fungal-like clusters inspired by subterranean mycelial networks that penetrate the earth. *Echoes of the One in Many* (2026) consists of interlinked figures arranged in an endless circular orbit, forming a singular, breathing mass, erasing individual boundaries in favour of a shared humanity with a common root. The site-specific installation *Suspended Traces* (2026) features a delicate field of figures that exist between a material presence and a physical absence, where monochromatic expressions of intimacy, isolation, and tension cascade downward to suggest a quiet dissolution of individual figures that merge into a collective mountainous mass.

This critique of built environments continues in *Bodies in Quiet Reverie* (2026), where a large number of compressed human figures are enclosed within a circular space, reflecting the spatial pressures of rapid urbanisation and the ongoing compromise of individual agency in modern high-density settings. The *Geometric Dash* series reinterprets the vibrant interior wall-painting tradition of Al-Qatt Al-Asiri, a tradition practiced by local women using natural pigments, as contemporary abstract leather compartments evoke a longing for refuge.

Translating spontaneous line drawings into physical spatial presences, Alghamdi's textile works draw upon traditional Al Sadu weaving techniques, treating embroidery as a slow, contemplative act of recording unarticulated human emotions. In the installation *In the Fractures Between Bodies that Dissolve and Remain* (2026), dense fields of embroidered figures that emerge across suspended surfaces recall a pilgrimage, while long strands of thread descend toward the floor, gathering into heavy, unframed masses that give physical weight to collective memory, elevation, and eventual collapse. The *One Pulse, Many Lives* series (2026) features embroidered sketches transferred onto semi-transparent cotton fabric panels suspended like open archive pages. Here, the transparency of the cloth underscores the impermanence of emotional states, while the labour of stitching acts as an enduring gesture of preservation against disappearance.

This exhibition also presents archival photographs and a projection of Alghamdi's past iconic works. *What Lies Behind the Walls* (2019) is a projection documenting a monolithic wall constructed from stacked forms impregnated with local cement, soil, and pigments synthesising the vernacular of the artist's homeland with the arid topography of Palm Springs, California. The work evokes the emotional weight of physical boundaries and the potential of earth for universal transcendence.

Knots of the Past (2011) documents a performance held at the ancestral home of the artist's grandfather after his passing. Denied entry to this space, Alghamdi tied ropes together that descended from the door handle to the ground like roots as a gesture for connecting the present to the past. Despite the passage of time and the departure of those who once inhabited this sacred site, each knot represents a memory that remains attached to this locality. *Crying Houses* (2011) records the aftermath of the artist pouring water over the door, thereby washing away the dust accumulated over the years and allowing it to flow freely.

About Zahrah Alghamdi

Zahrah Alghamdi is a prominent Saudi Arabian land artist whose installations explore the emotional, social, and cultural ties between humanity and the earth. Born in Al-Baha—a mountainous region in southwestern Saudi Arabia—and based in Jeddah, her practice is deeply informed by her ancestral roots in traditional agricultural communities. Her lineage connects her to the stone-built architecture and rural lifestyles of Al-Baha, where her grandfather's role as a landowner inspired her ongoing interest in the boundaries between the body and the land.

Alghamdi was trained in Islamic art before completing a transformational period of study in the UK starting in 2007, where she earned her MA and PhD in Visual Arts from Coventry University. Her practice builds on the traditions of the 1960s and 1970s land art movement, creating immersive installations primarily outside the gallery context, as well as bringing earth materials into gallery spaces.

Rooted in phenomenology and the psychology of dwelling, Alghamdi's work investigates what is lost in memory amid rapid urbanisation. Rather than focusing on ecology, her art centres on embodied memories, cultural interconnectedness, and the core belief that land universally belongs to all people. She incorporates Saudi cultural traditions, drawing inspiration from regional vernaculars such as Asir architecture—characterised by fortress-like stone and mud-brick structures—and traditional crafts like Al Sadu weaving and Al-Qatt Al-Asiri geometric wall art.

Her labour-intensive process involves gathering site-specific natural materials—including sand, rock, clay, leather, cotton, charcoal, and gypsum plaster—to forge an intimate connection with her medium. Defined by directness, immediacy, and a lyrical quality, her works evoke the poignant nostalgia of abandoned places.

Alghamdi represented Saudi Arabia at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. Her work has been featured in major international projects, including Desert X AlUla, the Hayy Jameel Façade Commission, and Art Basel Unlimited. Her pieces are held in prestigious global collections, including the Centre Pompidou and the British Museum.

About Pearl Lam Projects

Pearl Lam Projects is an international programme of off-site exhibitions and artistic collaborations. Building on the gallery's permanent space in Shanghai, the programme operates across numerous cities, including Hong Kong, enabling the gallery to present work by and expand opportunities for its diverse roster of international artists beyond its year-round gallery programme.

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