

NOMA

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ALIA ALI: FLUX

Exploring Cultures at a Crossroads Through Textile and Photographs



Alia Ali, *Orange Palms*, *FLUX Series*, 2019. Pigment print mounted on aluminum dibond with UV laminate, 48 x 36 x 2 inches (framed). Courtesy of Galerie Peter Sillem © Alia Ali, 2019. Photo by Alia Ali

NEW ORLEANS, LA – The New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) presents *Alia Ali: FLUX*, the first major museum presentation of the work of Yemeni-Bosnian artist Alia Ali. On view February 21 through August 2, 2020, *FLUX* considers how politics, economics and histories collide in fabric patterns and techniques. Focusing on wax print fabric—a form with roots in Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Javanese, Dutch and African traditions—*FLUX* captures the way textiles move and migrate across different cultures.

“Alia Ali’s work shows how fabric both unites and divides us, drawing attention to the way textiles reflect politics and history,” said Susan Taylor, Montine McDaniel Director of NOMA. “We are delighted to present this series in NOMA’s Great Hall, emphasizing the coming together of the many different cultures represented in NOMA’s collection.”

FLUX includes ten shifting photographic portraits that portray people who are at once concealed and highly visible, their silhouettes warped by textile patterns, their faces covered over by vibrantly colored fabrics. Surrounded by hand-upholstered frames, Ali’s portraits convey both the intimacy of fabric—a material worn close to the body—and the way its seductive colors and prints often obscure the colonial histories and global economy of which fabric is a part. Reflecting on how wax print came into existence across borders on land and water, *FLUX* reveals how these histories are woven into the very processes and production of the wax print. Currently based

between Marrakech and Los Angeles, Ali's work draws upon research she has conducted while living between Yemen, the United States, Morocco, Vietnam, Bosnia, and Turkey. Her portraits evoke the cultural flux resulting from today's mass migrations and increasing geopolitical instability across the world.

"Fabrics are documents, and their motifs are a language--a place where histories, economics and creativity collide," said Alia Ali. "The word *text* comes from *textile*, but fabrics communicate beyond the written word, telling the stories of people, communities, and even entire cultures. It is an honor to mount my first museum exhibition in New Orleans, a city with its own rich textile traditions, and the place where I first began seeing myself as an artist, and where I still produce much of my work."

Alia Ali will discuss her work in conversation with exhibition curator Katie Pfohl at NOMA on Friday, March 13, 2020.

About the Artist

Alia Ali is a Yemeni-Bosnian-US multi-media artist. Having traveled to sixty-seven countries, lived in and between seven, and grown up among five languages, her most comfortable mode of communication is through image and multi-sensory mediums. Ali's aesthetic interests stem from people, place, and the processes which unite and divide us, all at once. Her work reflects on the politics and poetics of contested notions surrounding the topics of identity, physical borders, universality, mental/physical spaces of confinement, and the inherent dualism that exists in everything. Her work blurs the lines between what we claim to be objective and subjective, illusion and reality, truth and interpretation. Ali lives and works in Los Angeles and Marrakech.

Additional Information

[Press-approved images are available here](#)

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About NOMA and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden

The New Orleans Museum of Art, founded in 1910 by Isaac Delgado, houses more than 40,000 works of art encompassing 5,000 years of history. Works from the permanent collection, along with continuously changing special exhibitions, are on view in the museum's 46 galleries Tuesday through Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM, select Fridays from 10 AM to 9 PM, Saturdays from 10 AM to 5 PM and Sundays from 11 AM to 5 PM. NOMA offers docent-guided tours at 1 PM Tuesday - Sunday. The adjoining Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden features work by more than 85 artists, including several 20th and 21st-century master sculptors. NOMA's Besthoff Sculpture Garden is free and open to the public seven days a week: 10 AM to 6 PM. The New Orleans Museum of Art and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden are fully accessible to handicapped visitors and wheelchairs are available from the front desk. Museum admission is free on Wednesdays for Louisiana residents, courtesy of The Helis Foundation. Children 12 and under receive free admission. Teenagers (ages 13-19) receive free admission courtesy of The Helis Foundation.

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