



Yiti 1980 by Anwar Sonya



Mutrah cornice 1988 by Hassan Meer

An Omani-French joint photography exhibition, celebrating the 200th anniversary of the invention of photography, will be unveiled at Stal Gallery on April 15

A photography exhibition celebrating the 200th anniversary of the invention of photography has been organised by French Embassy in Oman, in collaboration with Stal Gallery, as part of the eighth edition of the 'French Week' 2026 programme.

Inauguration of the exhibition will take place at Stal Gallery on April 15 at 7pm, under the auspices of Dr Abdulmonam Al Hasani, former minister of Information. The opening ceremony will be attended by H E Nabil Hajlaoui, Ambassador of France in Oman, besides Luciano Rispoli, Sophie Villeret, and Juliette Yon of the French embassy, senior artist Hassan Meer, and Volodymyra Sobolevska of Stal Gallery.

H E Hajlaoui, states, "The French embassy and Stal Gallery are coming together to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the invention of photography by French engineer Nicéphore Niépce. As part of the French Week 2026 programme, the exhibition is a unique opportunity to explore the evolution of this art in the sultanate through the lenses of Omani and French photographers, besides innovative and inclusive ways to imagine photography."

"Some of the artists we present create photographic artworks AI-based or artworks to be experienced by both sighted and visually impaired audiences. We are proud to showcase historical and contemporary works made by these talented artists. Photography has been, and remains, one of the cornerstones of Omani-French cultural cooperation."

The exhibition features French photographer Emmy Culianez

# Eye to AI



Tabsel season in Sur Mibam 2020 by Qasim Al Farsi

alongside Omani photographers Hassan AlMeer, Anwar Sonya and Qasim Al Farsi, as well as emerging photographers Eman Ali, Abdulaziz Al Hosni, Sard Visual, Waheeb Al Wahaibi, Mahmood Al Zadjali, Ahmed Al Toqi and Ahmed Al

Hosni. Anwar Sonya, a leading figure in Oman's contemporary art scene and a participant in the 59th Venice Biennale (2022), and Art Paris-Abu Dhabi, 2007 and 2008, presents in this exhibition his photography, re-

flecting his long-term practice and artistic development.

Anwar Sonya's photography collection 'The Journey Across Oman (1970 - 2008)' is dedicated to the many years of journeys made by Anwar Sonya across Oman, reflect-

ing the natural, cultural, and social diversity in Jabal Akhdar, Salalah, Sur, Musandam, Wadi Al Alia, Batinah, Muscat, Seeb, Bahla, Nizwa, Yiti, Mutrah, Wadi Kabir.

### Traditions to modernity

"Through these photographs, Oman is revealed as a space of continuous movement in time - from traditional ways of life to modern development, from old roads and settlements to new cities and infrastructure," says art researcher and gallerist Volodymyra Sobolevska of Stal Gallery.

"Sonya's photography also shows the evolution of photography itself - 1980s - sepia-toned photographs reflecting the atmosphere of old Oman; 1990s - colour film photography representing a period of active change, and photography of 2000-2008 capturing contemporary life," Sobolevska added.

Hasan Meer's photograph was taken in the late 1980s, at the beginning of his journey with photography. During that time, he moved between Muscat and the interior of Oman, capturing scenes of everyday life and the surrounding landscape. His practice has since developed into a significant body of work, culminating in his participation in the 59th Venice Biennale (2022), where he presented his work as part of the Oman Pavilion.

"Through my lens, I was observing a society in transition, where

people, places, and traditions were slowly changing. These images reflect how I perceived those subtle transformations and the quiet dialogue between human presence and the land," says Meer.

The exhibition features Qasim Mohammed Said Al Farsi, a Drone Photo Awards 2021 winner, whose practice focuses on landscape architecture and travel photography, and who is affiliated with Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP) and the Photography Society of Oman.

### Imagining images

The aerial photography of Qasim Al Farsi 'The dream football playground in Sur (2022)' and 'Wadi Ghul Alhamra (2019)' explores and unveils the hidden geometry of Oman's terrain, transforming landscapes into powerful visual stories.

Photographs by Emmy Culianez are designed to be experienced by both sighted and visually impaired audiences (for blind people).

"Each photograph is accompanied by complementary elements - such as descriptions, narratives, or sensory components - allowing different ways of approaching the image. Created in the context of the bicentenary of photography, my project questions the idea of inclusion and explores how photography can be shared beyond vision alone. The exhibition invites visitors to experience images not only by seeing them, but also by imagining, listening, and feeling them," says Culianez.

Featuring emerging Omani photographers such as Eman Ali, Abdulaziz Al Hosni, Sard Visual, Waheeb Al Wahaibi, Mahmood Al Zadjali, Ahmed Al Toqi and Ahmed Al Hosni, the exhibition brings together diverse practices, including iPhone and AI photography, that reflect contemporary social, cultural and artistic transformations.

During the exhibition, Stal Gallery offers guided educational tours for schools, colleges, universities, and touristic groups, including adapted tours for visually impaired visitors.



Wadi ghul Alhamra by Qasim al Farsi



Ruwi teacher with kids, 1990s

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