

**GOWEN**  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

# NOUF ALJOWAYSIR SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VIDEO WORKS

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Public opening  
July 10  
from 5pm to 8pm

Opening hours:  
Tues-Friday: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
4 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
Saturday: 3 p.m.-5 p.m.

Press Release |

July 10 - 30 | 2026

The gallery is delighted to announce an inaugural solo presentation by Saudi artist and filmmaker **Nouf Aljowaysir** (b. 1993, Riyadh). On view at GOWEN's second gallery space, the show highlights selected works from the artist's *Salaf* (Ancestors) series in dialogue, for the first time, with her short film *Ana Min Wein? (Where Am I From?)*.

Specialising in new media, Nouf Aljowaysir examines the evolution of our behaviours and interactions with algorithms. By asking deliberate, intimate questions to artificial intelligence tools and diverting their conventional use, she reveals the logic behind their functioning and the capitalist motivations that shape their results.

Through her research, Aljowaysir questions her own history, reflecting on how these tools influence our ways of thinking and seeing, especially in relation to the limited visibility and recognition of her ancestors' cultural heritage within contemporary technological systems. Within the context of this autobiographical project, evocative of broader social realities, she revisits and analyses images drawn both from her own family archive and from historical representations, including Orientalist images from the Getty Museum's collections.

Her short film, one of a series of 'visual diaries' produced by the artist, constructs her genealogical journey using two different voices: her own and an AI narrator, offering a richer, contextual reading of her photographic works. Through these films, Aljowaysir explores themes of identity, origin and belonging, seeking answers to a perpetual question "*where are you from?*" Born in Saudi Arabia with family connections to Iraq, Aljowaysir moved at thirteen years old to the US. Explored in her film of the same name, this question is, for her, almost impossible to answer with clarity.

Nouf Aljowaysir, *Salaf #2095*, 2020,  
AI-Augmented Archival Image, 38 x 29.7 cm.  
Courtesy of Nouf Aljowaysir and GOWEN. © Nouf Aljowaysir.



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*“These are not just places you can point to on a map, search for on Google or look up in Wikipedia. They are also personal memories, smells, family ties and things that simply can’t be explained in a single sentence”.*

Aljowaysir converses with an AI system speaking in a British accent. As it asks where she comes from and attempts to interpret her responses, the artist interweaves personal stories and evocative imagery, exposing, through the connections automatically made by the technology, a Western-centric worldview, its prejudices about the Middle East, and the limitations of its factual understanding. The result is a deeply personal exploration of Aljowaysir’s genealogy and life history, unfolding into a compelling, confrontational and, at times, unsettling conversation about migration, identity, and the narratives that shape how we see ourselves and others.

Her *Salaf* series continues these explorations through the lens of AI and colonial archives. Drawing from a Getty Museum archive of more than 6,000 colonial-era photographs from the 1800s to early 1900s, the project uses AI tools to systematically remove the original subjects, transforming the collection into what she describes as an «absent dataset». These photographs, filtered through a Western colonial gaze, often depict staged and exoticized scenes that perpetuate reductive stereotypes. By processing these images through computer vision models, Aljowaysir exposes systemic biases embedded in AI - such as the misidentification of veiled women and the mislabeling of Bedouin figures with militaristic terms. These failures highlight broader issues related to prejudiced AI models, data collection, representation, and the selective preservation or exclusion of histories.

Nouf Aljowaysir, *Ana Min Wein? (Where Am I From?)*, 2022, Video (colour, sound), MP4 (digital camera, computer vision, object detection models, AI masking techniques), 12 min 29 sec. Courtesy of Nouf Aljowaysir and GOWEN. © Nouf Aljowaysir.



Installation View, *Lehnert & Landrock - Relecture d'une archive coloniale*, Photo Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland, 2025. © Khashayar Javanmardi.

The works in the *Ancestral Seeds* series incorporate newly generated images created with StyleGAN3, an advanced AI image generator trained on this biased dataset. The resulting figures are intentionally void, appearing as silhouettes that evoke Middle Eastern subjects yet lacking their stereotypical features. This absence invites viewers to reflect on what has been lost, omitted, or distorted, transforming erasure into a form of resistance. Rather than using AI to imagine the future, Aljowaysir turns it toward the past, challenging the ways in which technology reinforces orientalist narratives and offering a space for critical reinterpretation.

Recently invited to participate in Photo Elysée's 2025 critical reinterpretation of the photographic archives of the Lehnert & Landrock studio, Aljowaysir, through her considered use of AI, particularly how it prolongs and reinforces stereotypes associated with the representation of the Orient, brings a contemporary perspective to explore the history and legacy of colonial representations.

Selected works by Nouf Aljowaysir are currently on view at Arendt, Luxembourg in a collective exhibition *(E)FACE – Hidden Features* until September 1st, 2026.

### **About GOWEN LAB**

Situated two minutes from the main gallery, GOWEN LAB serves as a second project space for GOWEN, as well as offering possibilities for short-term artist residencies. Complementing the main gallery, GOWEN LAB accommodates small-scale, emerging sector or spontaneous presentations, artist talks, or as a possibility for extending exhibitions running at the gallery's principle space. GOWEN LAB is regularly offered to guest curators and artists, invited to bring fresh contributions to GOWEN's wider exhibition program.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST



**Nouf Aljowaysir** (b. 1993, Riyadh) specializes in new media. Based in New York, she studied computer architecture, human-machine interaction, and creative coding at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and New York University. Exhibitions include: 2026 – Solo presentation, GOWEN LAB, Geneva, Switzerland; (EF)FACE – *Hidden Features*, Arendt, Luxembourg - 2025 - *Imaging after Photography*, Moody Center for the Arts (Houston, TX); *Lehnert & Landrock: Revisiting a Colonial Archive*, Photo Elysée (Lausanne, Switzerland); Asia Now with Gazelli Art House (Paris, France); *Subject to Change*, Gazelli Art House (London, UK); *The World Through AI*, Jeu de Paume (Paris, France); *PROGRESS: ONX* Winter Exhibition (New York, NY), 2024 - East Window (Non-commercial gallery in Boulder, Colorado); *The Gazing Lens*, M+ Museum (Hong Kong); *Post Photography: The Uncanny Valley*, Palmer Gallery (London, UK), 2023 - Lumen Prize: Shortlisted Artists 2023, Annka Kultys Gallery (London, UK / Online), 2022 - Canary in the Synthetisphere, Forking Room Collective (Seoul, South Korea), 2021 - Criatech Festival (Lisbon, Portugal); Computer Vision Art Gallery, The Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (Online), 2020 - NeurIPS Conference for Creativity and Design (Online); Tribeca Film Festival (New York, NY); Marche Du Film, CannesXR (Online). Screenings include: 2025 - KIN Festival (New York, NY); Ancestral Computation, ArteEast (Online); Alternate Realities, MC2 – A digital-first channel by ArtReview and Nowness (Online); Elestiraha x Open Screen (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia); 421 Gallery (Abu Dhabi, UAE), 2024 - PAF: Diaries (Olomouc, Czech Republic); Cambridge University: Ancestral Intelligences: A Screening and Conversation (Cambridge, UK); DOXS RUHR Festival (Bochum, Germany); Film'On Festival (Brussels, Belgium); MUTA Festival (Lima, Peru); Het Documentaire Paviljoen, IDFA (Amsterdam); IceDocs Iceland Documentary Film Festival (Akranes, Iceland); Kunstmuseum Bochum, 'Die Verhältnisse zum Tanzen bringen' Exhibition (Bochum, Germany); Unarchive Found Footage Fest (Rome, Italy); Flatpack Festival, Minds & Machines: Creativity and AI (Birmingham, UK); Copenhagen International Documentary Festival (CPH:DOX): INTER:ACTIVE (Copenhagen, Denmark); International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH): Schools Programme (Geneva, Switzerland); Tamayo Museum & KADIST, Machine Yearning (Mexico City, Mexico), 2023 - New Museum & Rhizome, Neural Net Aesthetics (New York, NY); International Documentary Film Festival (IDFA), Competition for Youth Documentary on the 13+ section (Amsterdam, The Netherlands); KADIST & Centre Pompidou, The Future Isn't What It Used to Be (Paris, France); Somerset House, Click and Collect: Show me your dataset (London, UK).

Nouf Aljowaysir has been an artist-in-residence at ThoughtWorks Arts and Somerset House in London. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Jeu de Paume in Paris, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Museo Tamayo in Mexico City, M+ in Hong Kong, CPH:DOX in Copenhagen, and the Tribeca Film Festival in New York. Her film *Ana Min Wein? (Where Am I From?)* won the 2023 Lumen Prize in the moving image category and was broadcast by The New York Times – Op-Docs in June 2024. Her work is in the permanent collection of PHOTO ELYSEE, Lausanne, Switzerland. She has been represented by GOWEN since 2025.