

*Love Letters*

Diana Al-Hadid

14 May- 30 June, 2026

Galerie ISA is proud to welcome back Brooklyn-based, Syrian-American artist Diana Al-Hadid with her second solo show at the gallery titled *Love Letters*. In this latest iteration of her panel works, Al-Hadid explores mosaic glass tiles, layering new narratives into an innovative body of work that has been in the making over the past decade. This showcase represents both a departure and a continuation of Al-Hadid's liaisons with material and form marking an evolution from initial experiments with mosaic in 2018.

As the title suggests, the show unspools from stories of lovers, illicit trysts and forbidden entanglements, from various illustrated 15th and 16th century manuscripts like the Mughal art of the *Tutinama*. Al-Hadid's practice is at the confluence of intuition, myth, and memory. Her works reimagine inherited stories through a very individual lens, asking probing questions of agency, authorship and gaze, and allowing for continuous rewriting. In these highly polarized times, she blends culture and narrative with a continuing spotlight on female autonomy and the elusive nature of desire.

While it is near impossible to identify a specific starting point for Al-Hadid's works—her references range from historical, religious and art imagery, ancient manuscripts, female archetypes, folklore, cosmology, cartography and architecture—all deeply layered and richly interwoven into a distinctive practice. Her panels serve as an allegorical portal into history, providing a framework into discourse and culture today. They defy stylistic categorization with her use of contemporary sculptural materials like polymer gypsum and fiberglass alongside traditional ones like steel and plaster. Her panels are entrenched in the history of painting while also borrowing from sculptural processes, elevating and transforming complex compositions of pigment and metal leaf into the ethereal. Gestural brushwork and controlled dripping (creating an almost suspended, frozen physicality) simultaneously evokes the fluidity of Bernini's drapery and the jagged natural beauty of stalactites and stalagmites. This interplay between sharp and soft, is one of the many dualities and paradoxes that are central to her practice.

Although these works may look fractured, they are a result of compounding, of building additively, layer by layer, all by hand, while simultaneously engaging in explorations of material and process. It is why, in the past few years, Al-Hadid has been experimenting with mosaics, an integral part of her permanent installations at New York's Penn Station (2019, 2023). Given the dichotomies that exist in her practice—opacity and transparency, reflective and matte, ancient and cutting-edge—this evolution in materiality feels natural. Highly tactile, guided by human impulse and the human hand, her works remain grounded in a tradition that is singular and tethers the artist to the real world and real time.

The final outcomes—three dimensional forms that stand between al-fresco and tapestry—serve as a conduit, connecting and integrating the stories of the past and the present. They traverse time and periods, taking quantum leaps across eras and civilizations, to speak to a collective accumulation of histories, stories and traditions that we inherit and continue to tell.

With *Love Letters*, Al-Hadid continues to push the liminal spaces between chaos and control, ruin and creation, rigidity and fluidity, in a practice that fundamentally resists definition.

-Priyanka R. Khanna