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Nabil Nahas to Represent Lebanon at 2026 Venice Biennale

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Portrait of **NABIL NAHAS**. Photo by Farzad Owrang. Courtesy the artist and Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai.

On May 19, Dubai-based gallery Lawrie Shabibi revealed that Nabil Nahas will represent Lebanon at the 61st Venice Biennale, which is slated to open in April next year.

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Born in 1949 in Beirut, Nahas is an established artist known for his textured paintings of fractal, geometric patterns. His vibrant works merge the aesthetics of traditional Islamic art with American abstract expressionism, often depicting the cedars, olive trees, and palm trees of his homeland. Notably, he incorporates organic materials into his canvases (such as seashells and starfish) to capture the beauty of the natural world.

Nahas moved to the US in 1969 for his studies, earning an MFA from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, before returning to Lebanon nearly two decades later. He currently divides his time between Beirut and New York, and his works are held in the public collections of major institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, London's Tate Modern, and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

The co-organizers of the national pavilion—Paris-based nonprofit Lebanese Visual Art Association and French curator Nada Ghandour—remarked in a statement that Nahas's visual language “seamlessly blends abstraction and figuration.” The pavilion’s selection committee further noted that Nahas’s work “resonates with contemporary concerns while evoking both the spiritual and the material, the intimate and the cosmic.”

Joyce Jingyi Ge is an editorial intern at ArtAsiaPacific.

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