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PRESS RELEASE

WHEN THE GROUND WAS

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-- SARAH ALMEHAIRI

Shapes are like thoughts...

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In *When the Ground Was*, Sarah Almehairi takes us along for a walk. To be precise, Almehairi lays out a visual pathfinder across the gallery walls and floor, drawn from walks previously taken, allowing us to revisit trails she frequented and the pockets of temporary remarkableness she observed. The exhibition title constructs a timeline, but it is never clear if the works present a chronicle to observe or an invitation to join. It is, then, an exercise in navigating between the physical and the abstract act of movement and a provocation to find intimacy in the everyday.

In a range of works on paper, four series display embossed impressions, drawings, paintings, and collages. Each series begin with a poetic text, followed by a visual log of encounters in the different environments around the artist. Sculptural forms on the ground mimic the gallery floor colour as they recreate random shapes of missing bricks, irregular grass patches, and other formations forming the architecture of the walks. These works are punctuated by large paintings that lend their title to the exhibition: terrazzo-like abstract documentation that allows the artist to imagine manifold possibilities of worlds within worlds. Lines, shadows, patterns, grid breaks, broken shapes – familiarity and curiosity mix with play and contemplation.

The same path may be trodden countless times, yet none would be the same – not in stride or pace, nor in mood or encounter. The walk is a new poem, written across the land each time.

— *By Saira Ansari*