

Artnet

1 December 2025

4 Buzzy Emerging Artists to Watch for at Art Basel Miami Beach

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<https://news.artnet.com/market/emerging-artists-art-basel-miami-beach-2720465>



These rising talents are set to make striking debuts in Miami, unveiling fresh approaches to material, memory, and form.

As Art Basel Miami Beach is poised to open this week, we're spotlighting four must-know rising talents to keep an eye out for. Their practices run the gamut—from ethereal staged worlds to Brazilian beach bricolage, from memory-soaked abstraction to sculptural experiments in Lycra. Together, they offer a vivid snapshot of new voices.

Nour Malas

[Patron](#), Chicago, presenting in Galleries Sector; [Carbon 12](#), Dubai, presenting in Positions Sector

"Usually my work is a lot more intuitive and an expression of my present moment," said the painter Nour Malas of the four-panel work she made for her Dubai gallery, Carbon 12, for Art Basel Miami Beach. It is the first time that she is

working with a specific subject for her vibrantly washed canvases. "It was a more political take," she said. "I'm Syrian, and the regime fell a year ago. I wanted to make a painting that looked back from just before the beginning of the revolution—my childhood in Syria until the fall of the regime. That's what the painting is embodying."

One might think, at first glance, that Malas's works are pure abstraction but, barely perceptible in the currents of color, figures begin to coalesce. "When I'm painting and I'm thinking about certain things or I'm in a specific flow, it's going to bleed into everything," she explained. "It's a way of accessing my subconscious through mark-making and layering different lines and forms and gestures. Forms and figures start to come out."

A studio view of two large abstract paintings in vivid purples, greens, yellows, and oranges hung side by side on a white wall. In front of them sits a small wooden step stool with a paint-splattered cloth draped over it, on a paint-marked concrete floor.

Malas's esoteric, sylphlike world is a far cry from her student work. After getting an MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she moved to London to study sculpture at Goldsmiths. "I had a very conceptual, kind of humor-based work," she said. "Like I would make a tower of waffles and have a pipe through them and maple syrup would be dripping down. It was hyper-conceptual. I was obsessed with Claes Oldenburg and American Minimal sculptors."

Don't expect waffles, but sculpture might make a comeback for her. "I'm slowly starting to introduce sculpture back into my practice," Malas said, "but in a similar way that I approach painting—more intuitive, a tactile." Also on the horizon is a solo exhibition at Patron in May.

"The works that I'm making—I had to look back at my childhood and reflect on certain traumas," Malas explains. "It was about extracting memory. That is pushing me to continue in that path: what happens if I paint from a place of memory rather than the present moment? Even if time bleeds into itself. There is a continuation of trying to deal with past occurrences, experiences, feelings through painting."