

Press release

Mandy El-Sayegh

Jewel Tones

5 June—31 July 2026
Opening Thursday 4 June, 6—8pm

Performance: *Red Lady* by Mandy El-Sayegh and Alice Walter
Friday 5 June, 5pm

Thaddaeus Ropac Ely House, London
37 Dover Street, London, W1S 4NJ



Net-Grid (Quinacridone Opal), 2026
Oil and acrylic on canvas with silkscreened elements, 190 x 276 cm (74.75 x 108.63 in)

The artistic impulse feels like an urgent one. [...] It comes from this fear of erasure and wanting to preserve a type of history in a medium that can be looked after. So if I smuggle in those fragments and put it in a dominant tongue, it can be looked after [...] That is the hope.

— Mandy El-Sayegh

Thaddaeus Ropac London is pleased to present *Jewel Tones*, an immersive, site-specific exhibition by Mandy El-Sayegh, coinciding with London Gallery Weekend. Featuring a new body of paintings, installation and performance, the exhibition explores the machinations of consumerism and perceptions of luxury in the contemporary world.

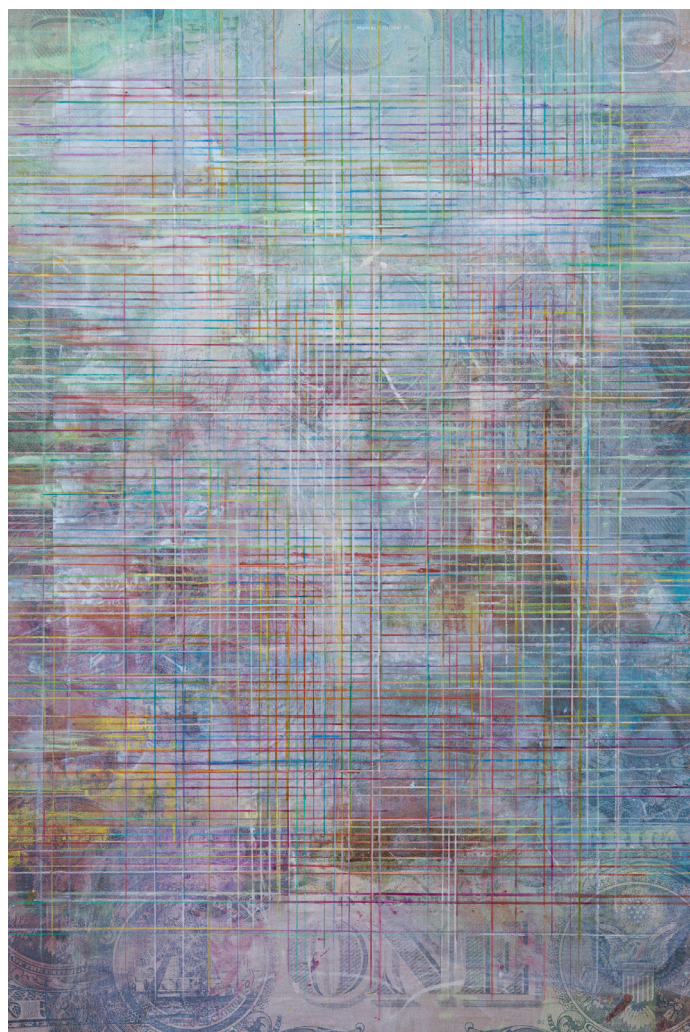
Known for her use of print and digital media as source material, El-Sayegh has in recent years created works that examine the collision of dissonant realities in published matter: between the reportage of violent geopolitical events on the one hand, and the promotion of luxury goods on the other. These juxtapositions appear side by side in the newspapers she collects, collages and silkscreens into her paintings, where advertisements for diamonds sit next to headlines reporting on unfolding wars and humanitarian crises. Through material processes of layering, fragmentation and assemblage, El-Sayegh considers not only the proliferation of this information, but also the unseen networks of influence and capital through which it circulates.

In *Jewel Tones*, the artist examines luxury as both an aesthetic and affective experience, co-opting its visual and cultural codes in order to slip veiled fragments of political reality into a space associated with exclusivity, beauty and aspiration. Luxury becomes a strategy of bypass and circumvention, allowing El-Sayegh to insert allusions to political unrest into the aesthetic cues used by private members' clubs and high-end department stores to cultivate desire. Incorporating glass chandeliers, upholstered furniture, Tiffany-blue walls, antique rugs and mirrors, alongside a sound work produced by Lily Oakes featuring sensuous recordings of leather and other luxury materials, the artist transforms the gallery into an enticing yet paranoid environment in which complex and unsettling truths belie shimmering, jewel-toned surfaces.

El-Sayegh unravels the dichotomy between consumption and production through two distinct spaces – the interior gallery room and the outside hallway. The exhibition begins by staging El-Sayegh's artistic process, inviting viewers to consider more broadly the mechanics of image production. On the first-floor landing, a series of printing screens – including those used to create the new body of paintings – are hung salon-style. The screens foreground the relationship between medium and message, introducing the exhibition's wider concern with how systems of mass production strip images of their affective power.



Compositional, 2026
Oil and acrylic on canvas with silkscreened elements
168 x 160 cm (66.13 x 63 in)



Net-Grid (Aquamarine and Lavender Opal), 2026
Oil and acrylic on canvas with silkscreened elements
190 x 130 cm (74.75 x 51.13 in)

In the transformed gallery space, a series of cool-toned, opalescent *Net-Grid* paintings initially appear harmonious and seductive, set against walls draped with printed linen – another nod towards the painting process and the image as material construction. Based on transparency studies of opals, the works experiment with superimposed layers of light, opacity and colour to produce iridescent, alluring surfaces that shift as the viewers move around them. Yet fragments of violence and unrest embedded within these layers gradually emerge, offering oblique glimpses into the turmoil El-Sayegh observes in the contemporary world. The exhibition conjures a landscape of fractured realities, suggesting how consumerism and luxury can be strategically employed to obfuscate, dissociate or distract attention.

In the hallway, vitrines collect the residual matter of El-Sayegh's image-making process, including paintbrushes, vodka bottles and rags, as well as ritual offerings such as candles. Juxtaposing ornate gold objects and perfume

bottles with imagery from forensic pathology books, the vitrines are saturated with phantasmatic desire. Entitled *Metabolism*, this series of assemblages draws on both museological and commercial modes of display, referencing the visual merchandising strategies that influence perceptions of value and consumption. Nearby, *Compositional* (2026) assembles remnants of several earlier paintings into a composite work. Collaged within it are era-defining media images – a photograph documenting torture at Abu Ghraib, Donald Trump on the cover of *Time* magazine and newspaper clippings reporting on Gaza dated 9th October 2023 – set against warm yellow tones that signify both canary diamonds and bodily waste.

The exhibition is accompanied by *Red Lady*, a collaborative performance developed with artist and medium Alice Walter. Conceived as an interruption-based work staged within the format of an artist talk, the performance employs collage as methodology, drawing on fragments from film, editorial fashion and post-war theatre. Through exaggerated self-presentation, disruptive dialogue and unsolicited intimacy, language and gesture gradually unravel into states of crisis. El-Sayegh and Walter invite the audience into a position of uncertain participation, echoing the exhibition's wider atmosphere of paranoia, dissociation and seduction.

About the artist

Mandy El-Sayegh (b. 1985, Malaysia) lives and works in London. She received her BA in Fine Art from the University of Westminster in 2007 and her MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art in 2009. Her first institutional solo show, the specially commissioned installation *Cite Your Sources*, took place at Chisenhale Gallery, London, in 2019. Her work has been exhibited widely, including at The Arts Club, London (2026); Space K, Seoul (2026); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2025); The Showroom, London (2025); Art Basel Parcours (2024); Overbeck-Gesellschaft - Kunstverein Lübeck (2023); Tichy Ocean Foundation, Zürich (2023); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2023); UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles (2022); Busan Biennale (2020); Sursock Museum, Beirut (2019); SculptureCenter, Long Island City (2019); The Mistake Room, Guadalajara (2018); Instituto de Visión, Bogotá (2018); Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing (2017); and the New York Art Book Fair at MoMA PS1, Queens (2016), among others.

In 2022, her work was featured in the *British Art Show*, the UK's largest touring exhibition of contemporary art,



Portrait of Mandy El-Sayegh, 2024
Photo: Abtin Eshraghi

followed by her participation in the Biennale Matter of Art, Prague. That same year, she took part in the performance festival *MOVE 2022: Culture club - Corps collectifs* at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, presenting her piece *En Masse* in collaboration with choreographer Alethia Antonia and composer Lily Oakes. Also in 2022, two of her works, *Net-Grid (my dad knows nothing)* (2020) and *Figured Ground* (2020), were acquired by Tate, UK, for its permanent collection. Her work is also held in major institutional collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami; and Start Museum, Shanghai. In 2017, she was shortlisted for the biannual Max Mara Art Prize for Women in collaboration with the Whitechapel Gallery, London.

Alice Walter (b. 1989, UK) is a multidisciplinary artist, writer and medium. She holds a BA in Fine Art, Film and Video from Central Saint Martins, UAL (2011) and an MFA from the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford (2020). Her creative practice combines collage, analogue video and performance-based writing, exploring themes of psycho-spiritual realities, invisibility and generational loss. Her first novel, *The Medium*, was published in 2024.

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