

OAKVILLE GALLERIES

Gairloch Gardens
1306 Lakeshore East, Oakville, ON L6J 1L6
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oakville Galleries Presents *To Fall, Patiently*, Ali Cherri's First Solo Exhibition in Canada

Oakville, ON – On view through October 3, 2026, Oakville Galleries' summer exhibition, ***To Fall, Patiently***, presents recent films, sculptures and paintings by internationally acclaimed artist **Ali Cherri** in Gairloch Gardens and at Centennial Square in Oakville, Ontario.

Ali Cherri (b.1976, Beirut; based in Paris) is known for a multidisciplinary practice that examines how histories of conflict, archaeology, and material culture shape contemporary understandings of identity, memory, and power. Winner of the Silver Lion at the 2022 Venice Biennale, Cherri has exhibited widely at leading international institutions; this presentation marks a significant moment for his work in Canada.

At the Gairloch Gallery, Ali Cherri presents a series of sculptural works that bring together fragments of history, material, and memory. Elegantly assembled from contrasting materials, these hybrid sculptures incorporate ancient artifacts acquired by the artist through auctions and marketplaces, raising questions about the circulation, valuation, and displacement of cultural objects across time and geography. A series of watercolours of prickly-pear cacti lining one of the gallery's walls, juxtaposes the plant's protective thorns with its luminous blossoms, creating a poignant metaphor for resilience, vulnerability, and endurance amid histories of violence and conflict. An immerse installation of the film *Of Men and Gods and Mud* explores the entangled relationships between human labour, mythology, and the environment in northern Sudan. Set in the shadow of the Merowe Dam, the work follows local brickmakers whose labour transforms earth and water into building materials. A neon sculpture *Les (Sur)Vivants* translated as "The Living" or "The Survivors", visible from both inside and outside the gallery, poetically evokes the precariousness of survival following catastrophe, extending Cherri's ongoing exploration of fragility, resilience, and the persistence of life amid destruction. Installed outdoors in the sculpture garden is the bronze sculpture *The Tree of Life*, which reinterprets ancient Assyrian reliefs depicting the sacred tree, examining the movement of symbols and narratives across cultures and centuries.

At the Centennial Gallery, Cherri presents the hypnotic film *The Watchman*, which follows Sergeant Bulut, a soldier stationed in a remote watchtower overlooking the militarized border zone between the Greek Cypriot south and the Turkish Cypriot north of Cyprus. As he spends his nights waiting for an enemy who never arrives, the film unfolds as a meditation on isolation, suspended time, and the psychological effects of living within a landscape shaped by

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unresolved conflict. Through a haunting blend of documentary and fiction, Cherri examines how borders are constructed and maintained, revealing the ways they shape ideas of sovereignty, identity, and collective memory.

Across our two gallery sites, the exhibition constructs a complex portrait of Cherri's thinking, where recurring motifs, materials, and narratives speak to one another across media. Together, the works build an understanding of the precarity of existence while affirming the persistence of memory, resilience, and the possibility of renewal.

The exhibition is accompanied by an audio tour recorded by Ali Cherri in English and French alongside an exhibition essay *Of Mud and Dreams* by curator Séamus Kealy.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Exploring different geographies of violence in his native Lebanon but also in the broader region, Ali Cherri (b.1976, Beirut) is a Paris-based artist with three decades of artistic practice spanning across film, performance, sculpture - in terra and bronze -, drawing, and installations, interrogating the ways in which political violence disseminates into people's bodies and the physical and cultural landscape. Shaped by the vibrant artistic scene of postwar Beirut in the 1990s, Cherri began to investigate the sensorial coproduction of reality between images of conflict, the urban fabric and his own body.

PRESS CONTACT

For additional information, to schedule an interview with the artist or curator, a personal tour with gallery staff, or request hi-res images, please contact:

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