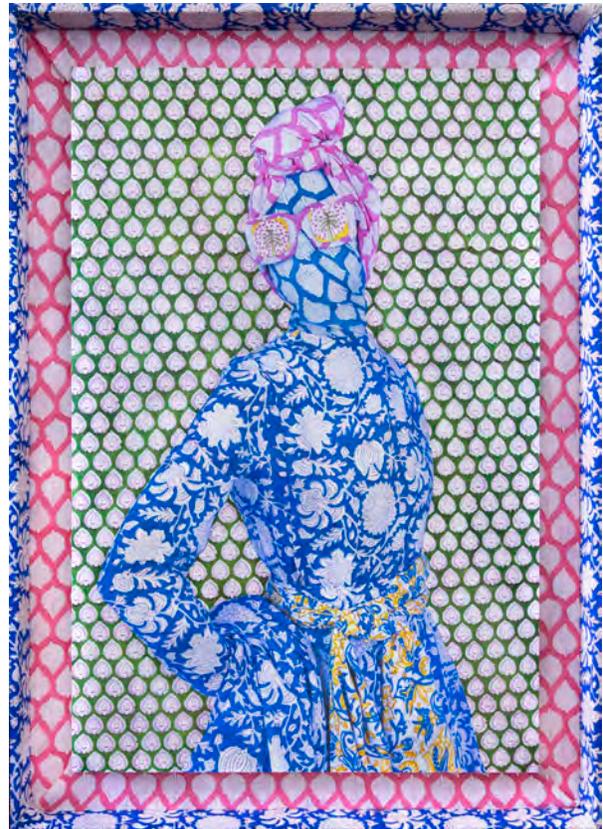


HOUSTON (JULY 30, 2022) — Foto Relevance is pleased to present *Blue Note*, the gallery's second solo exhibition of works by award-winning multidisciplinary artist Alia Ali. Featuring stunning works from the new LIBERTY and IKATIKAT (2022) series, as well as a selection of fresh works from other series, the exhibit showcases photographic works that see the artist camouflage her sitters in elaborately patterned fabrics. Concealing her subjects' identities in traditional (and often controversial) textiles, and thus anonymizing them, she exposes fraught global histories of colonialism, migration, and language through the richly-colored, enigmatic images.

Ali's work explores the myriad of connections which invisibly bind together pattern and textiles, linguistics and cartographies, peoples and expression. These serendipitous moments of interrelation are captured in the body language of the sitter, the subtle tilt of their head, the careful positioning of pattern draped over their body. Ali's new work is a love letter to those who taught her all she knows of this constellation - to her mother, to the fabric merchants in the marketplace, to the Master Artisans, to the keepers of knowledges, to the storytellers, to the tea makers, to the dyers, to the land. Ali shows that design cannot be divorced from context. Her work subverts the colonial gaze, presenting beauty rather than suffering, ancestral knowledge rather than contemporary trauma, empowerment of the multiple rather than the reduction into a singular. *Blue Note* will be on view at Foto Relevance from September 9 – November 12, 2022.



Alia Ali, *Blue Tides*, LIBERTY Series, 2022



Alia Ali, *Pink Palms*, LIBERTY Series, 2022

Baya Simons, The Guardian:

"She reveals how photography can cut through language to communicate the unsayable."

Jad Dahshan, Hyperallergic:

"From her earliest works, Ali has confronted colonial histories, challenged viewers' preconceived racial and gendered biases, and put pressure on borders both physical and conceptual."

Kaitlyn Miller, Houstonia Magazine:

"If language was something that went beyond words... multimedia artist Alia Ali has been aware of [this] her entire life. And it's one she's brought to Houston in Cartographies of Pattern, a photography exhibit that explores the intriguing ability textiles have both to unite and divide us in a way that defies words."

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Alia Ali (Arabic: عاليه علي) is an award-winning Yemeni-Bosnian-US multi-media global artist who has traveled to sixty-seven countries, lived in and between seven, and grown up among five languages. Her practice explores and rescinds accepted cultural binaries, challenges culturally sanctioned oppression, and confronts the dualistic barriers of conflicted notions of gender, politics, media, and citizenship. Her migrations have led her to process the world through interactive experiences and the belief that the damage of translation and interpretation of written language has disserved particular communities, resulting in the threat of their exclusion, rather than a means of understanding. Through her practice, Ali critiques linguistics and inherited political structures and narratives, while simultaneously attempting to counter the polarization and miscommunication that imperils communities across the world, encouraging viewers to confront their own prejudices. Working between language, photography, video, textile, and installation, Ali's work addresses the politicization of the body, histories of colonization, imperialism, sexism, and racism through projects that take pattern and textile as their primary motif.

A graduate of Wellesley College and the California Institute of the Arts, Ali lives and works in and between Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Marrakech, and recently concluded a residency at the Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program (RAiR) in New Mexico.

ABOUT FOTO RELEVANCE:

Since 2016, Foto Relevance cofounders Geoffrey C. Koslov and Bryn Larsen have focused on the exhibition and acquisition of museum-quality, contemporary fine art photography and photography-based work. Joined by Suzanne Zeller in 2019 who currently leads the program as Assistant Director, Foto Relevance is dedicated to providing a platform for an innovative selection of American and international photographic artists pushing the boundaries of photography. In addition to promoting the work of artists, Foto Relevance provides guidance, educating individual collectors and corporations in the acquisition and sale of art. Foto Relevance is a member of the Houston Art Gallery Association (HAGA). The gallery is located in the historic Museum District in Houston, Texas in close proximity to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Menil Collection, and the Houston Center for Photography.

Foto Relevance is currently open for walk-in hours Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11 am - 5 pm, or by appointment. This is subject to change as we stay current with local COVID-related advisories. Please call (713) 505-1499 or email info@fotorelevance.com for press and other inquiries.