

Jala Wahid
at Art-O-Rama, Marseille

28.08 -
30.08.2026

For Art-O-Rama, SOPHIE TAPPEINER presents a selection of works by Jala Wahid that considers how artefacts can be reimagined to address histories of colonial violence, displacement and loss.

In *Metaphysical Reunification* (2023) and *I Love Ancient Baby* (2023), Wahid treats the archaeological record not as a fixed account of the past, but as a ground for speculation and reconfiguration, where fragments, absences and surviving objects can form new relationships.

Metaphysical Reunification consists of 54 aluminium wall sculptures based on a deck of playing cards. The works take their starting point from a set of cards issued by the US Department of Defense in 2007, depicting archaeological sites and artefacts in Iraq and Afghanistan and offering guidance on their protection during the wars in the region. Wahid transforms this form of military cultural-heritage guidance into a speculative archive of her own, bringing together images of ancient Mesopotamian artefacts that today exist in different states and contexts: some preserved in Western collections, others lost or looted, and many separated from the places and histories to which they once belonged. Rather than reconstructing a lost whole, Wahid proposes a metaphysical reunification, bringing objects and histories separated by excavation, displacement, war and the structures of the museum into new constellations.

The logic of reassembly also runs through *I Love Ancient Baby*, first shown at GAK Bremen in 2023. In the video, museum objects, archaeological imagery, playing cards, sculpture, painting and light are brought together through montage. Ancient artefacts become carriers of emotions that exceed their historical distance, while the work moves between loss and retrieval, past and future, personal memory and collective history. Wahid connects these ancient forms to her deceased father and her future child, allowing death, birth and reincarnation to enter the archaeological archive.

The works suggest that the past need not only be recovered or reconstructed; it can also be reimagined. Wahid turns to play, fiction and affect as ways of negotiating fractured histories and creating new relationships between what survives, what has been displaced and what is absent. In this sense, the museum and the archive become not only places of preservation, but spaces in which other forms of connection—and other futures—can be imagined.

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Jala Wahid (*1988) works across sculpture, film, sound, and installation. Her practice explores the emotive potential of material and politics in relation to the legacy of empire and colonialism. Aesthetically alluring, sensual, and often delirious, her work establishes a counter-narrative to colonial rhetoric, bringing together contested histories and poetic expression. She examines the complexities of nationalism, history, iconography, and methods of archiving and existence.

Selected solo exhibitions include: *Ungovernable*, Sophie Tappeiner, Vienna (2026); *Pretend History*, Niru Ratnam, London (2024); *I Love Ancient Baby*, GAK, Bremen, *Conflagration*, Tramway, Glasgow, Hansard Gallery, Southampton; *Metaphysical Reunification*, SOPHIE TAPPEINER, Vienna, *Mock Kings*, Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg (2023); *Conflagration*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Newcastle, *AFTERMATH*, Niru Ratnam Gallery, London (2022); *Rock Fortress*, CAS Batumi, Batumi, *Cry Me a Waterfall*, Two Queens, Leicester (2021); *Rock Fortress*, E.A. Shared Space, Tbilisi (2020); *Newroz*, SOPHIE TAPPEINER, Vienna (2019).

Recently, her work has been included in group shows held at: Villa Medici, Rome, Gunika Nowik Gallery, Warsaw (2026); Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, High Line Channel, New York (2025); Primary, Nottingham, Nottingham (2024), Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, University of Leeds, Stavanger Kunstmuseum, Stavanger, Boskamp-Stiftung, Hohenlockstedt (2023), Goldsmiths CCA, London (2022), CAPC Museum, Bordeaux (2020) SculptureCenter, New York, Arnolfini, Bristol, De La Warr Pavillion, Bexhill (2019), Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2018).

In fall 2026, Wahid will have a solo show at Dock 20 in Lustenau.