



## They Always Appear

**Ibrahim El-Salahi**

*Curated by: Mohammed Rashid Al-Thani*

November 18, 2025 - April, 2026

### **Institute of Arab and Islamic Art**

22 Christopher St, New York NY, 10014

IAIA is honored to present *They Always Appear*, a selection of Ibrahim El-Salahi's seminal drawings and paintings created during his early career in the 1950s, 60s, 70's, and 80s. Born in Omdurman, Sudan in 1930, El-Salahi is a visionary modernist and cultural diplomat recognized for giving momentum to a cultural renaissance in the Arab-African world. As a creative and intellectual luminary, El-Salahi's early career was punctuated by prestigious educational and professional landmarks, including his study at the Slade School of Art in London, the UNESCO Fellowship in the global south, and the Rockefeller Fellowship at Columbia University in New York City. *They Always Appear* reveals the interwoven relationship between El-Salahi's works and Arab-African literary culture, layering imagination, spiritualism, figuration, abstraction, and symbolism. Uniting manifold mediums and conceptual chapters across four decades of El-Salahi's career, this exhibition unveils El-Salahi's unique aesthetic, an amalgamation of iconographies that hail from diverse civilizations, declaring a perennial and innovative perspective on global modernism.

*Bio: Born in Sudan in 1930, Ibrahim El-Salahi is one of the most important living African artists and a key figure in the development of African Modernism. El-Salahi grew up in Omdurman, Sudan and studied at the Slade School in London. On his return to Sudan in 1957, he established a new visual vocabulary, which arose from his own pioneering integration of Sudanese, Islamic, African, Arab and Western artistic traditions. Tate Modern's 2013 retrospective of El-Salahi's work was the Museum's first exhibition dedicated to Africa Modernism. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago; The National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; The British Museum, London; Tate Modern, London; The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, UAE; The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Newark Museum, Newark; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; The National Gallery, Berlin and many others.*



### **Mission**

The Institute of Arab and Islamic Art (IAIA) is an independent, non-profit center that promotes and advances the artistic and cultural dialogue between New York City and the Arab and Islamic worlds. Through outreach programs, a multidisciplinary exhibition space, a knowledge-building facility, residency program and an emphasis on collaborations with cultural organizations, IAIA provides a convivial, welcoming environment to learn about and engage with an often over-simplified culture.

### **Contact IAIA**

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