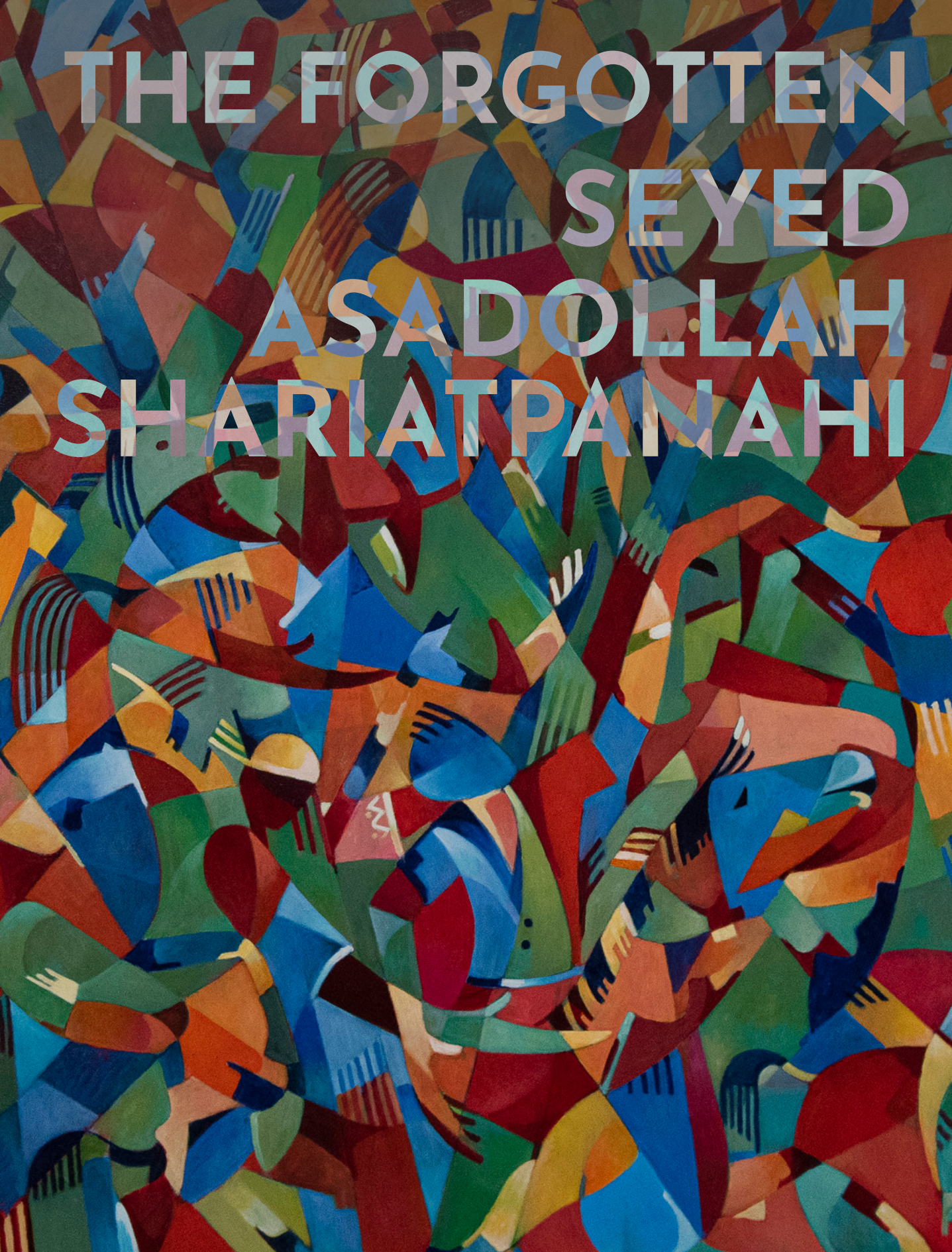




# THE FORGOTTEN SEYED ASADOLLAH SHARIATPANAHI

# SEYED ASADOLLAH SHARIATPANAH

## THE FORGOTTEN

October 23 - November 13, 2025

نگارخانه دانش  
d'Angers Art Gallery



## FORWARD

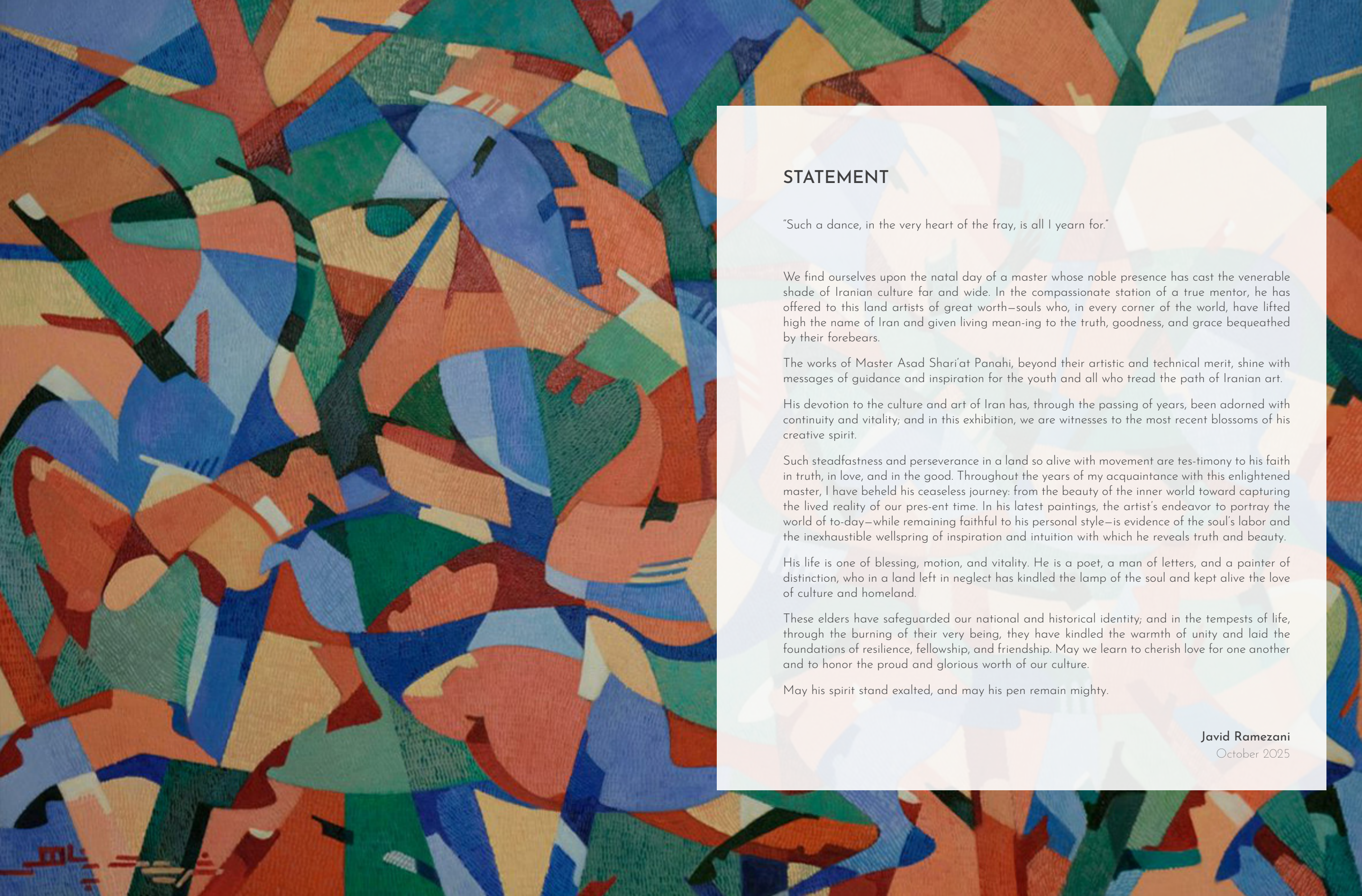
The works of Seyed Asadollah Shariatpanahi do not simply rest upon the wall – they descend into the soul of the gaze. He con-jures a world where color rises like a hidden breath from the earth, and forms move not by definition but by the orbit of intuition. His paintings do not narrate; they unveil. Each piece stands as a fron-tier between dream and tangibility – where the eye finds harmo-ny with imagination, and meaning, quiet yet insistent, emerges from beneath the hush of the image.

In this world, multiplicity is not dispersal – it is the pulse of exis-tence. Colors do not collide; they gather, like ancient elements, to form an alchemy neither clamorous nor mute. The forms recall unseen birds – unflown yet unbound, captive to no edge and obe-dient to no shape.

This exhibition is an invitation to stillness: to see slowly, and to hear what makes no sound. The viewer, before these works, is not a consumer of image, but its companion in breath. Shariatpanahi does not dictate meaning, nor display it, nor impose it – he opens its possibility. Each painting pauses at a threshold where meaning is not born, but remembered.

What lies before you is not merely a collection of paintings, but the reflection of a poetic way of being – the world, not interpret-ed, but dreamt anew.

**Mona Aziz**



## STATEMENT

“Such a dance, in the very heart of the fray, is all I yearn for.”

We find ourselves upon the natal day of a master whose noble presence has cast the venerable shade of Iranian culture far and wide. In the compassionate station of a true mentor, he has offered to this land artists of great worth—souls who, in every corner of the world, have lifted high the name of Iran and given living meaning to the truth, goodness, and grace bequeathed by their forebears.

The works of Master Asad Shari’at Panahi, beyond their artistic and technical merit, shine with messages of guidance and inspiration for the youth and all who tread the path of Iranian art.

His devotion to the culture and art of Iran has, through the passing of years, been adorned with continuity and vitality; and in this exhibition, we are witnesses to the most recent blossoms of his creative spirit.

Such steadfastness and perseverance in a land so alive with movement are testimony to his faith in truth, in love, and in the good. Throughout the years of my acquaintance with this enlightened master, I have beheld his ceaseless journey: from the beauty of the inner world toward capturing the lived reality of our present time. In his latest paintings, the artist’s endeavor to portray the world of to-day—while remaining faithful to his personal style—is evidence of the soul’s labor and the inexhaustible wellspring of inspiration and intuition with which he reveals truth and beauty.

His life is one of blessing, motion, and vitality. He is a poet, a man of letters, and a painter of distinction, who in a land left in neglect has kindled the lamp of the soul and kept alive the love of culture and homeland.

These elders have safeguarded our national and historical identity; and in the tempests of life, through the burning of their very being, they have kindled the warmth of unity and laid the foundations of resilience, fellowship, and friendship. May we learn to cherish love for one another and to honor the proud and glorious worth of our culture.

May his spirit stand exalted, and may his pen remain mighty.

Javid Ramezani

October 2025

Previous pages  
Freedom-II, 2018 (detail)

ART CRITIC  
TEXT



## The Painter for Earth

Javid Ramezani PhD.  
Art Critist / Curator

The English critic and theorist, Herbert Read once said in his *The Meaning of Art* that all arts aspire to the condition of music.

From the subjective perspective, he believed that music had the highest rank among all arts and crafts and the least material body, resulting in absence of objectification and commodification.

The intellectual and meaning-seeking artist can easily achieve the dominant conversation or the episteme of the period.

However, the journey of art and the central role of economy in the development of the contemporary civilization changed this prophecy. When the conceptual artists sounded the death knell of painting, they never thought that the movement would last no more than ten years and the eighties would begin with the resurrection of painting.

Today, painting is the most used medium among artists in the world. The first artistic action of the Paleolithic human was visual marking on cave walls and native habitats.

Modern painting entered Iranian society in the 1920s and in the 40s, College of Fine Arts at University of Tehran was established as the first art college in the Middle East with French teaching methods and Iranian and foreign professors.

This was the result of forty years of efforts by painters in forming the principles of modern painting, synthesizing them with the

five-thousand-year-old rich art of Iranian civilization.

The wave of art students and artists who studied at the college led to the creation of a local and national form genre of modern painting.

The fruit of all these labors is that today, modern Iranian painting has earned a well-established position at museums, galleries, and auctions internationally.

Asadollah Shariatpanahi is one of the first-generation Iranian modernist artists and he has had a crucial role in these changes.

He was born in 1938 in Semnan, Iran. His grandfather was a portrait artist of religious stories and his exposure to painting in his childhood, led to his falling in love with color and design. Since then, he became engrossed in a world of light, discovery, and natural intuition. He got employed as an art teacher after receiving his high school diploma which kept him connected with the world of art. However, his enthusiasm to fully perceive the world of color and form led him to enter College of Fine Arts in 1965 to continue his artistic journey in Tehran. Being from the same generation, Asadollah Shariatpanahi and Abbas Kiarostami and other internationally prominent artists such as Ali Akbar Sadeghi were classmates in college. Moreover, his influence made his hometown a center for a great number of distinguished Iranian painters and his students would make a long list. Today, this generation of art teachers has attracted much attention more than ever with the threat of environmental and biosocial risks as human beings are at the threshold of huge changes, requiring a review of the development of world. They were among the first people who entered the artistic discourse of the modern



world, Iranian artists who foregrounded nature and reminded the world the current risks of their local and global community.

Certainly, Poetry is the central art of Iranian civilization while it is cinema for the western civilization. Painting paved the way for the production, perception, and invention of representations. Despite this fact, Iranians based their pictorial productions on didactic literature that aimed to reform thinking and social structures through storytelling (even in cinema, reflected in Abbas Kiarostami's works). It is noteworthy that recognition of Khayyam, as an existential poet, or Rumi and Hafez in the modern world would not be possible without modernist Iranian art and resort to a new form to reminisce deep and timeless concepts.

The majority of Shariatpanahi's works are according to this principle both in form and theme. He is a master of the eastern and western history of art and the traces of Cubist and Futurist artists along with Iranian narrative art are evident in his paintings. Nonetheless, it is crucial to see how he has stepped in a different path than western artists, seeking to create beautiful and insightful Iranian themes. This has made him remain devoted to his local elements and narrate his homeland.

As an artist creating works within western forms, his artistic character seems different from the definition of art in this system. Throughout his life, he has had a peculiar relation with nature as a gardener and a mystical teacher, encouraging those around him to respect the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire according to Iranian teachings.

For years, he has understood through his intuitive system what is at the center of attention today in the western societies. A number of his works refer to the water crisis and environmental pollution; undoubtedly, his special attention to the human condition in today's world, negligence of natural habitats and Earth as living and active organisms cannot go without appreciation.

Shariatpanahi's themes mainly include social interactions, historical accounts and places, and representation of the disasters caused by industrial and economic development which forsake the limited resources of Earth and habitats. His aesthetic view is based on "Ishrāq" or "Illumination-ism" introduced by the prominent Iranian philosopher Shahāb ad-Dīn Suhrawardī in the twelfth century AD.

Suhrawardī has been considered the Plato of the east. He sees love, beauty, and sadness as the offspring of reason; for him, melancholy and pain are companions of love as he believes that one cannot achieve virtue and "kamāl" [perfection] but through love. In his view, love makes the body mortal and eternalizes the soul. For him, love is a limitless kindness flowing through the whole universe and reaching every creature whether material or immaterial. Truly, it is love that connects all creatures; if the soul is the essence of love, Ishrāq is what Suhrawardī calls the essence of universe. These concepts found their way into Iranian art and miniaturists saw flat colored surfaces possessing inner rising light, avoiding light and shade and depth in realistic painting.

The intellectual basis of Shariatpanahi's art is dependent on these concepts; he usually uses tinted colors and flat surfaces.

Lonely Gift, 2018 (detail)

In ethics, Suhrawardi is known as the revivor of Persian mysticism in the Islamic world (hikmat-i khusrawani) that sees the manifestation of God in light whose shining creates nature. In Shariatpanahi's paintings, broken surfaces such as broken mirrors reflect the truth of objects and manifestations.

Absence of shadows and the presence of inner light reveals the artist's genuine understanding of the physical truth of the universe. He has never attempted to superficially integrate western forms into Iranian painting, but rather has shown the worldview of eastern and western thinkers as the point of departure into the painting.

These approaches have influenced the works of distinguished Iranian modernist painters such as Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian (use of mirrors to create volume), Parviz Tanavoli (use of Persian calligraphy and flat painting surfaces). Today's Iranian and world art is indebted to artists as Shariatpanahi who has explored fathomless concepts of human life through eighty years of wholehearted unpretentious beautiful work, prophesying and recording the future dangers of human civilization.



Heaven is over our heads, 2019(detail)



INTERVIEW BY

ART REVEAL MAGAZINE

**What or who has had a remarkable everlasting impact on your works?**

Throughout my life I had the chance to work with many masers and learn from them. Masters such as Morteza Momayez, Behjat Sadr, Mohsen Vaziri-Moghaddam, Esmail Ashtiani, and Hooshang Seyhoun had a great impact on our generation and in transformation of Iranian art medium from a traditional context to a modern context. However, being influenced by Seyhoun, I was amongst those who insisted on authentic experiences in which the artist looks carefully at the elements and chooses them. In this evaluation of the elements, I have used many traditional elements but I have transformed them into a modern framework. Also in terms of form and color, I have been both impacted by miniature of Behzad and cubism of Picasso.

Aside from the form and context, and regarding the subjectivity of my artwork, I should say that I have always been a very sensitive person with extreme attachment to nature. Living in small town, in the old times, people had the chance to live near to nature and animals and that has had a great impact on me. Colors, lines and motives are originated from my visionary memories which have then transformed into forms that encompass my thoughts and messages. An artist who lives in the society

must be engaged with the society and its daily issues and concerns. I have never been detached from difficulties of people in my social context and I reflect them into my works though the context is originated from the nature. Therefore, the context is very much affected by my relation to nature, while the message and the subject of the artwork is related to my relation with the society. The social issues affect me a lot and make me to work and say instead of the speechless people. This is what I have chosen as a mission and thus when I see the society is suffering, I suffer too and this suffer will be the subject of my work.

**What is the most challenging part for you with the painting?  
What does your artwork represent?**

To me, the artwork is a means of conveying a message to my audience but the sociopolitical environment is not and has not been in favor of free and open communication of message for the artists. I have been punished and banned for many years for my political and social perspectives so I have learned to put my message in a veil. The most challenging part is to make sure that the message is understandable while it is not so clearly stated. The audience plays a role in perceiving the work and this hermeneutic



medium is always relied on the audience and the context in which he/she sees the work. That is challenging because I have to make sure that the message is conveyed but I can never make sure it is well understood.

Keeping the ambiguity in the work, and making it less visible for the audience while reflecting the concept in the work is very challenging and it is the basis of my artistic framework. This is the challenge I always encounter and I have to overcome for a work to excel.

Also when I start the work, I always have the fear of not being able to finish the work. It happens many of the times that I cannot sleep at night because I have the stress of what happens to the work. This is happening to me after fifty years of working and painting. This search for excellence and clarity and at the same time need for keeping the ambiguity in the artwork is my main challenge in the process of developing an artwork.

**What do you think is the importance and conception of art in the modern culture?**

Art in the nowadays life has a very high responsibility towards cultural reproduction. Artists can play a vital role in providing society with cultural products that makes the life of people meaningful and help them find a voice. The artist is able to attract attentions towards specific subjects to be thought through by society. They focus the lens on an issue, a case, a problem, a person in need of help, and it will be a collective subject for the society. However, the economic aspects of art

sometimes have negative impact on the artistic work and the role she/he plays in this context.

We are living in a world of rising conflicts and separation of people. The whole world is in conflict of interests and lives of people is losing meaning and people are demeaned. Spiritual needs of human being is not satisfied as much as material needs are being cared. Human being has turned into a huge consumption machine that turns all of the resources into nothingness. Meaningless adherence to survival while endangering the survival of other species which is also being accelerated by changing lifestyles due to technological transformations. I believe art plays a role in this context in line or against this vicious trend. In my works, I try to emphasize on diversity and unification of elements and colors. If you look into my works, you will never find human objects with any superiority in terms of color, gender, and even education. People are acting, but they are all connected to each other. Even in my critical works in which I am criticizing the power scheme and tyranny, I show that these people are all connected to one another in the social context. Thus in my own artwork I have always tried look into these cultural aspects and provide my audience an alternative or a critique to the status quo.

I do agree that artists, like other human beings, must be able to afford their lives, but if artistic work is done with the intention of merely making an earning for life, then the artist do not act in favor of cultural development. The artist, in my opinion, should be able to limit his/

her needs and not beyond essential ones. Agitated appetite to meet endless needs is one of the greatest issues of the modern man, and the artists can work to help the society understand the threat of this endless pursuit of needs' satisfaction and to do that, one should be able to walk the talk and restrain this needful existence and free oneself from that and try to help the people to do the same for a sustainable development and improving the wellbeing and quality of life for all of the people in the world. This is how I have lived all my life. Many of the artists, even the realists, focus on social issues and pains of the people and that is the main subject of their works and I believe this should be the main contribution of the artist in the social context in the modern world, I mean focusing on challenges and issues of the man in the modern era.

**What works do you like to do that has not been done because you did not have required budget or space to do?**

I like other areas of art like sculpture, ceramic art, and even architecture. Working with furnace and doing ceramic works as well as other artistic works such as music are areas that I like to do but I feel I do not have the time to do them too. Especially music is very important to as you can see in some of the works I have reflected this enthusiasm for music.

If I had the energy of my youth I was eager to elaborate my works more into bigger spaces and diverse materials. When I was younger, political obstacles refused me to do many of my ideas though still such restrictions in the social and political

context exist. Although I had the chance to immigrate and live outside Iran, to be free of these limitations, I have stayed. I have roots in this land and despite all of these restrictions, I have stayed and adapted myself to the environment and have tried to change the medium as much as I could. Thus geography is a very important aspect of my life. I wish I could reflect more of geographical perspectives and elements in my artwork.

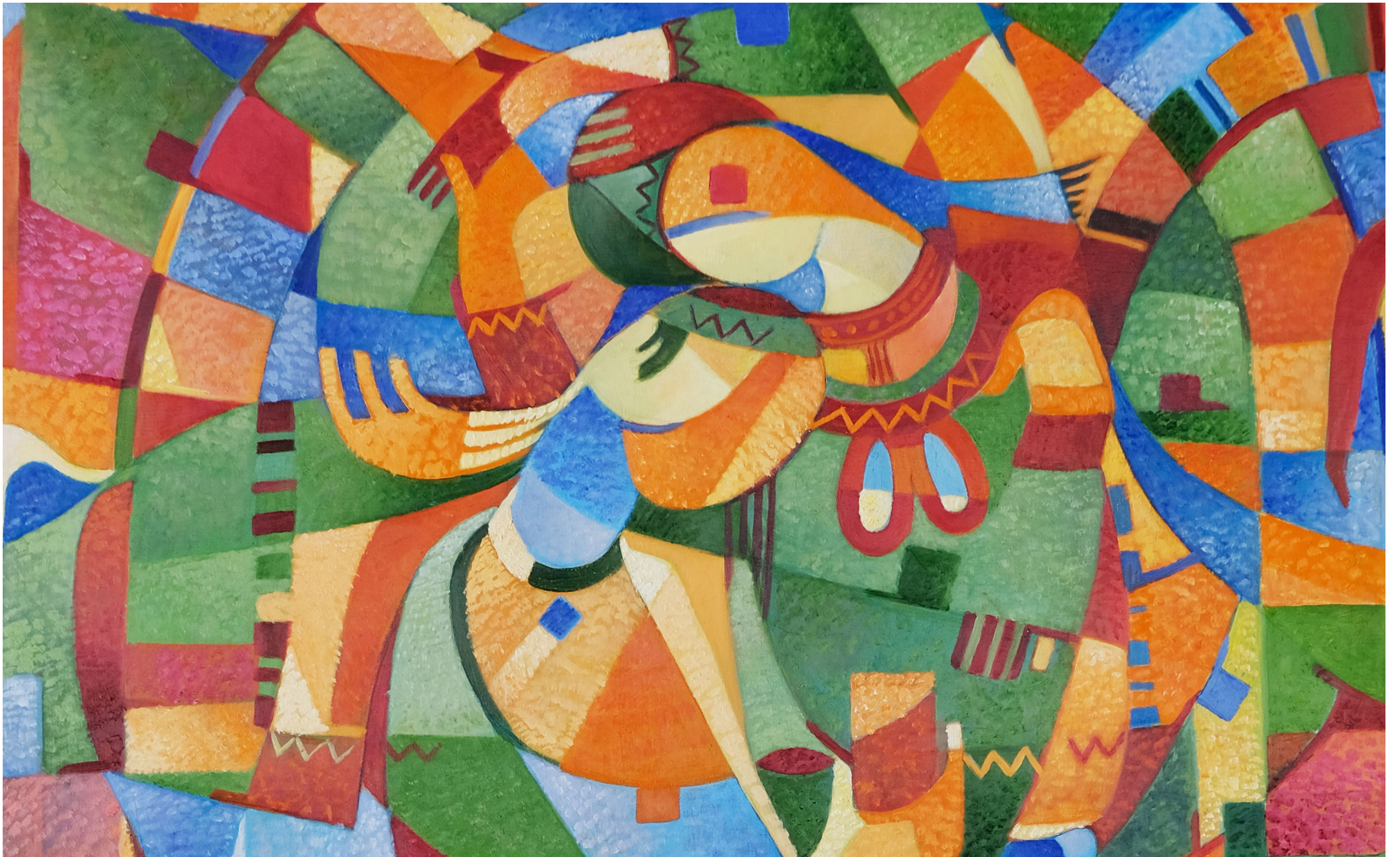
**What is the most impressive moment for you as an artist?**

Every artist finds a framework that shapes the context in which the message is being conveyed. It starts with developing the idea and for me, when I start with conceptualization of the work, the most impressive moment in the moment; the idea is formed into a harmonic mixture of colors, lines and objects. The work leads me in the process and elaborates itself on the canvas. When it finally is formed in between the dance of lines and colors with each other, it is like the very moment of the birth of a child and it is full of joy and makes me feel full of life. It does not happen at the beginning. It is started subjectively in my mind, but it then turns into an objective being, on the canvas throughout the process which pushes itself and reveals itself. Both me and the artwork, have simultaneous impact on reach other and in this dialogue between me and the artwork, in this mutual relationship, the work is progressively elaborated until it is framed and fully known to me and that is the very impressive moment for me.



Name three artists that you like them most.

I like many of the artists and I have been affected by their works. To name three of them, I can name Pablo Picasso because of his impact on the history of art and his lifestyle. Next I like Francisco Goya for his courage and his political resistance. And the third one is Honoré Daumier who has had a great impact on me with his works.



Previous pages  
Lonely Gift, 2018 (detail)

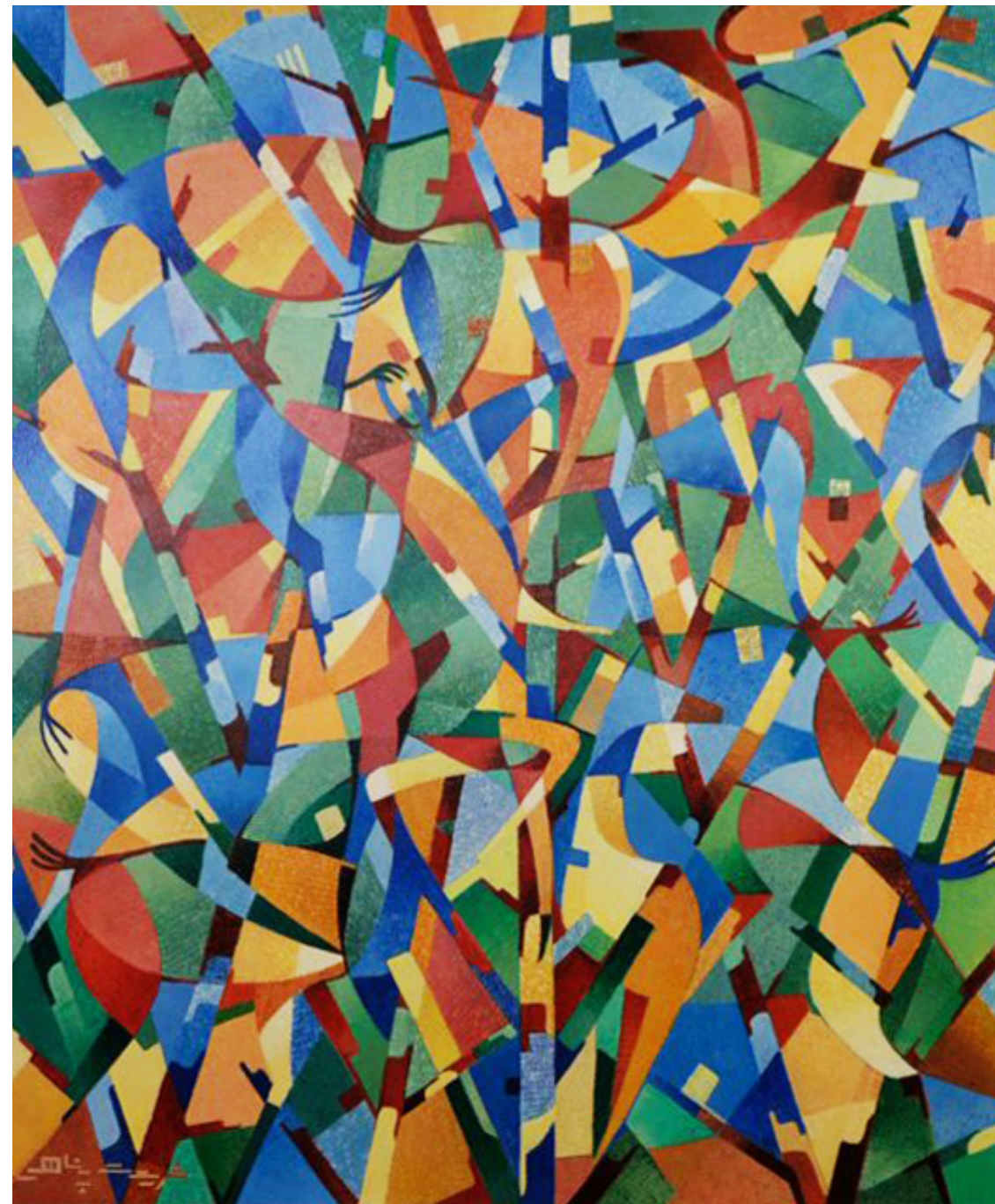
CURATED  
WORKS



Previous pages

**Untitled, 2021**

Oil on canvas, 300 x 180 cm.



**Gazelles-when the sun comes up, 2018**

Oil on canvas, 103 x 125 cm.



Previous pages  
**Untitled, 2024**  
Oil on canvas, 130 x 180 cm.



**Lonely Gift, 2018**  
Oil on canvas, 105 x 125 cm.



Previous pages  
**Untitled, 2024**  
Oil on canvas, 200 x 120 cm.





**Spring, 2019**  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm.

**Summer, 2019**  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm.

**Autumn, 2019**  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm.

**Winter, 2019**  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm.



Heaven is over our heads, 2019  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 150 cm.

ARTIST  
BIOGRAPHY



## SEYED ASADOLLAH SHARIATPANAHI

*(b.1938 - Iranian)*

Seyed Asadollah Shariatpanahi was born in Semnan (Iran) in 1938. At his childhood and under influence of his grandfather, who was a self taught artist, Seyed Asadollah fortified his inclination towards painting and art. When he was child, Shariatpanahi entered the circle of Esmā'il Ashtiani, a protégé of Kamal-ol-Molk , and became his student.

After getting his diploma in 1960, he was employed by the ministry of education and became a painting teacher in Semnan high schools in 1963.

In 1965, he entered Faculty of Fine Arts in Tehran University and studied art painting under Morteza Momay'yez, Seyhoun, Behjat Sadr, Vaziri-Moghaddam, and Javad Hamidi who are recognized as pioneers of the visual arts in Iran.

Between 1965-1967, under influence of Hooshang Seyhoon (who was an advocate of the traditional architecture in comparison to modern art that was new in Iran), he moved towards realism in his paintings. Seyed Asadollah became increasingly interested in portraiture and painted famous characters. Then, he was encouraged by his professors at university to utilize of modern techniques in painting. Thus, Seyed Asadollah experienced freedom of thought in art domains and acquired a free rein in their practice of art. In fact, in 1960s modernity was a new horizon in the sky of the Iranian art.

In 1969, when he finished his bachelor study, he returned to his home-town, Semnan, and started his job in the organization of education for Teachers. He also taught art at Center of Intellectual Training for Children and Teenagers, which led to the birth of a new generation of artists who now hold their own spectacular artistic positions.

From 1975 till 1996, he had been member of jury in the annual festival of arts painting, held by ministry of education in Iran, where the talented students were identified.

In his early work in 1970s and after completion of bachelor program, he was impacted by Cubism. Human body in a variety of different configurations and viewpoints was the main focus of his artworks which were analyzed, broken and deformed in a two-dimensional form in a greater context.

He continued this in the same manner until the Islamic Revolution in 1979, when Iranian society experienced profound changes in the political regime. Changes were experienced in every section of social life and the arts, including the visual arts, were no exception. During this period after revolution till the end of Iran-Iraq war, when revolutionary Islamic art was dominated, government was against any sort of modernism. His career was influenced by revolutionary excesses and he was banned for a year from serving in the organization of education. Shariatpanahi who was in his early way of professional career, had to put away all his paintings and stop painting to save his life.

In early 1990s, after the war ended, when Iranian society was ready to experience the post -revolutionary period in art and culture, Shariatpanahi did not find the society to be motivational and the extreme ideological medium in the society was still governing every aspect of social life.

In 1997, almost after 30 years of graduation from university, when reformists' period started and huge development in contemporary Iranian art happened by being connected to the world, Shariatpanahi benefited from a relaxation of the rules thus re-started his art paintings and now backed by 30 years' knowledge from traditional architecture, history of art in the world, as it was one of his lecture courses.

Seyed Asadollah Shariatpahi's work has been the subject of several solo and group exhibitions. His works are in several valuable collections worldwide. In 2015, his collection of painting was published in Iran in bilingual (Persian-English) called "The Veil of Clarity".

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

- 2021 Within and Wthout, Stavenger, Norway
- 2018 d'Angers Art Gallery, Semnan - Iran
- 2017 d'Angers Art Gallery, Semnan - Iran
- 2017 Iranian Artists Forum, Tehran - Iran
- 2017 Ebn-e-Sina Art Center, Tehran - Iran
- 2016 Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center, Tehran - Iran
- 2015 Koomesh Cultural Center of Semnan, Semnan - Iran
- 2013 Koomesh Cultural Center of Semnan, Semnan - Iran
- 2008 Koomesh Cultural Center of Semnan, Semnan - Iran
- 1970 6th Bahman Higher Education Center, Semnan - Iran

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITION

- 2021 Amenor Art Gallery, Stavenger, Norway
- 2019 DD Art Museum Izadshahr, Iran
- 2019 Charsouy-e-Honar, 11th Fajr Festival of Visual Art Tehtan, Iran
- 2018 d'Angers Gallery Semnan-Iran
- 2018 Sareban Gallery Tehran-Iran
- 2017 Society of Canadian artists-Online, Canada
- 2017 University of Semnan, Semnan-Iran
- 2016 Golestan Gallery Tehran - Iran
- 2016 Abstract Exhibition - Contemporary Art Gallery , Maryland - United States
- 2016 All Colors Exhibition - Contemporary Art Gallery, Maryland - United States
- 2016 Colors of Humanity Art Gallery, Everett - United States
- 2016 Contemporary Art Gallery, Annapolis-Maryland - United States
- 2003 Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran - Iran
- 1969 Naghsh Gallery Tehran - Iran

## PUBLICATION

- 2015 The Veil of Clarity, Avay-e-kelar publication

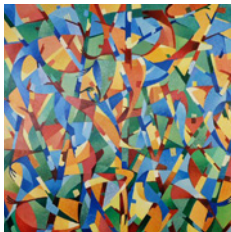


I N D E X



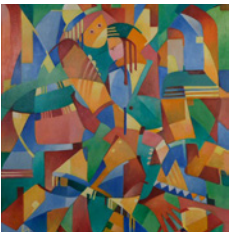
pp. 30 - 31

Untitled, 2021  
Oil on canvas, 300 x 180 cm.



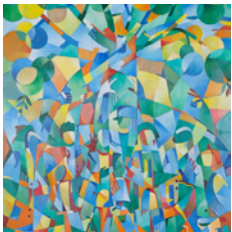
p. 33

Gazelles-when the sun comes up, 2018  
Oil on canvas, 103 x 125 cm.



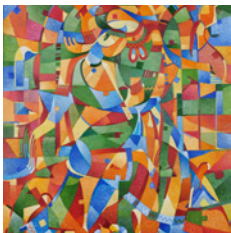
pp. 35

Untitled, 2024  
Oil on canvas, 130 x 180 cm.



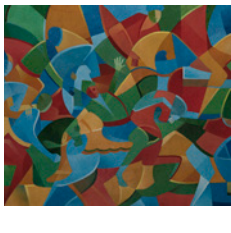
p. 46

Heaven is over our heads, 2019  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 150 cm.



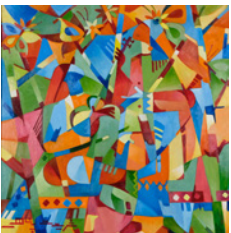
p. 37

Lonely Gift, 2018  
Oil on canvas, 105 x 125 cm.



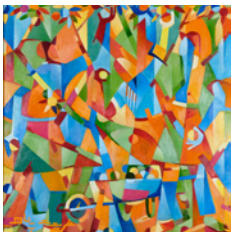
pp. 38 - 39

Untitled, 2024  
Oil on canvas, 200 x 120 cm.



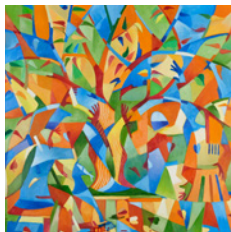
p. 42

Spring, 2019  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm.



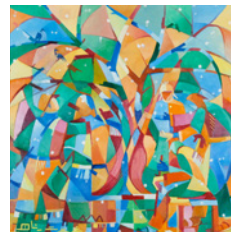
pp. 42

Summer, 2019  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm.



p. 43

Autumn, 2019  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm.



p. 43

Winter, 2019  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm.

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Seyed Asadollah Shariatpanahi and our art collectors who make such adventures possible.

The scenography has been conceived by

**Farzad Shariatpanahi**

Authors

**Dr. Javid Ramezani, Mona Aziz**

Pictures of the artworks

**Seyed Asadollah Shariatpanahi**

Designer

**Sajad Mirzakhani**

Proofreading

**Mona Aziz**

Cover

**Untitled, 2021**

Copyright

Published by d'Angers Gallery to coincide with 'The Forgotten', presenting works of Seyed Asadollah Shariatpanahi, 2025.

All rights reserved. Except for the purpose of review, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic , mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

