



HIDDEN WORDS

HADIEH SHAFIE



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Installation view at
The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD



HIDDEN WORDS

MARYAM EKHTIAR

Shafie's work is enigmatic. At a distance it resembles *millefiori* glass, at mid-distance it looks like velvet, and upon closer scrutiny the real materials and technique are revealed. Her compositions are constructed of strips of hand-painted paper, inscribed and coiled tightly into colorful miniature spools (what she calls *ketabs* or books). Countless spools are compactly laid next to each other and placed within a round, square or cordiform frame. The play of light on the surface of her compositions at different times of day adds an additional dimension to her work. Each spool contains the word, "eshgh" or "love" in Persian, of which only traces are visible. It is the inaccessibility of the word that makes her work so enticing.

Her work is all about process. She immerses herself to the fullest in the materiality of her medium, its properties, textures and colors. She "listens" to the process and is particularly intrigued by the occurrence of 'accidents' in the studio. She considers each of them an opportunity for exploration.

Shafie's compositions are intertwined with her personal history. She lived in Tehran during the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution. Her family left the country very suddenly in 1983. This made her question the many baffling events she experienced as a child. Surrounded by an atmosphere of dissent, fear and mistrust, she became pre-occupied with the idea of the "banned text." During this period, many texts were deemed subversive by the government. They were available only through the black market and exchanged and read clandestinely. She recalls one short story in particular *The Little Black Fish (Mahi-ye Siyah-i Kuchulu)* by Samad Behrangji. Shafie was also intrigued by the way people transported these texts and other valuables during the revolution. They hid them under clothes, veils, and inserted them into the lining of containers.

After moving to the United States, she continued to grapple with her childhood experiences and the reality of exile. She spent hours experimenting in her studio. At first, she photo-copied pages from *The Little Black Fish* and folded them and inserted them into the cracks of the wooden floor. Later, she repeatedly inscribed the paper with quotations from the book in her own hand-writing and eventually replaced the text of the book with the Persian word of her own choice, "eshgh." She enjoyed the repetitiveness of the process and even went through a phase in which she placed the inscribed strips into the slits of cut clothing, revealing only a partial view of the words.

While inserting inscribed strips of paper into the grooves and crevasses of her desk, she noticed a round hole which had been left empty by a missing bolt. This prompted her to roll a strip of paper into a scroll and push it into the hole. It was this very discovery that led to the creation of her first miniature inscribed paper scroll or *ketab*. She was fascinated by the fact that the text was hidden and only traces were visible evoking a sense of wonder about what may lie within.

In this way, the scroll became the medium of Shafie's choice. It was the answer to her quest for clarity. It combined the hidden word, the process of repetition and her love of color and came from a long and celebrated tradition of book-making and calligraphy in Iran. She was also drawn to the love of excess and abundance in Islamic art, the tendency to fill entire surfaces with repetitive pattern. In her compositions, this is manifested in the dense arrangement of the scrolls within the confines of an outer frame. One of the great moments of revelation for Shafie was when she first learned about the artists of the Saqqakhana movement, many of whom were pioneers of Iranian modernism. When asked about sources of inspiration in her work, she expressed her admiration for the work of Color Field and other American modernists, such as Barnett Newman, Agnes Martin and Eva Hesse who immerse themselves in the process of art making.

In creating her early compositions, she hand-painted the edges of each strip, inscribed it and rolled every scroll manually. She eventually realized that she could achieve the same result using a simple hand-tool and a knitting needle. She then added another step to the process—dipping the multi-colored coiled scrolls into a single color of ink. The idea of dipping the scrolls into ink evolved when she accidentally dropped one of them into a puddle of ink and realized that the ink washes over the colored paper creating gradations or hues of a single color with a striking visual effect.

Another studio accident that was later integrated into her work occurred while she was rolling one of her scrolls with the hand-tool and the center started to unravel producing a conical shape. She liked the prickly effect of the spikes and the way they protected the words hidden within and decided to create a work using this particular type of scroll. She observed the viewers' reaction to the texture and the unfinished quality of the surface and sometimes wondered whether they would be tempted to unravel the scroll and read the writing inside.



Spike 3 (Telesm series), 2012 (side view)
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
17 x 17 x 6 in / 43 x 43 x 15 cm
Private Collection, Bernardsville, NJ

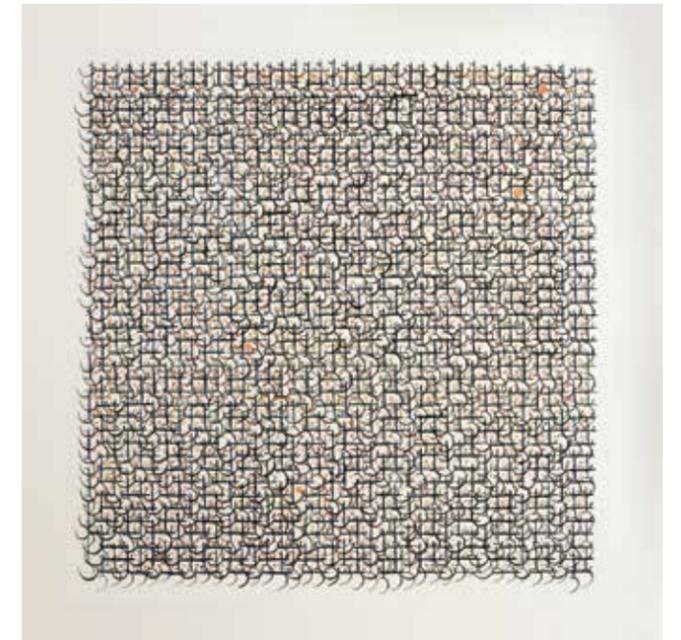
A group of Shafie's recent works are inspired by amulets, the apotropaic motifs and the shapes found in Turkmen and Afghan tribal jewelry, of which she herself has a collection. She was fascinated by the tribal lockets and amulet

holders which held texts, usually verses from the Qur'an or passages from a prayer book that were believed to carry talismanic properties. Such texts were either folded or rolled into a scroll and placed in lockets or miniature boxes. The varied bold shapes in tribal jewelry led her to use them in her own compositions. She thus created a series of heart-shaped or cordiform compositions that were based on those found in jewelry worn by Turkmen women. In this way, she inserted herself into a centuries-old narrative.

Her latest compositions play with the concept of unraveling the scrolls and revealing the words within. This experiment of finally unveiling the words that had been hidden for so long is expressed in the medium of ink drawings on paper.



Ghalb 3 "Heart" (Ketab series), 2013
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
48 x 23.75 x 4.5 in / 121.9 x 60.3 x 11.4 cm
Private Collection, Dubai, UAE



Grid 4, 2011
Ink and acrylic on Arches Paper
26 x 26 in / 66 x 66 cm
Private Collection, Dubai, UAE

In these she repeats the same word "eshgh," over and over again creating a rhythmic web of woven letters similar to those found in textiles that are decorated with repetitive patterns. Some of the compositions even contain fringes on one end of the grid-like composition.

Whether in the form of a scroll or a two-dimensional ink drawing, Shafie's calligraphic compositions record her permanent imprint as an artist on the material she loves most, paper. It is through this final process of unfolding and revealing the hidden word that Shafie both liberates herself and mesmerizes the viewer.

Maryam Ekhtiar is Associate Curator, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



“ESHGH” A WORD SO FULL OF COLOR IT MAKES US SPIN THYRZA NICHOLS GOODEVE

*When pen hastened to write,
On reaching the subject of love it split in twain.
When the discourse touched on the matter of love,
Pen was broken and paper torn.
-Rumi, 13 century Sufi poet*

*Colors spur us to philosophize.
-Ludwig Wittgenstein*

I am standing before *21600 pages* (2012) by Hadieh Shafie. Is this a painting I see before my eyes? What mass of circles, colors, patterns and perceptual hallucinations am I witnessing? Shades of red multiply into infinity. But in *Primary Yellow* (2012) or *Ultramarine Blue* (2012), red's siblings are also set into motion. No color is just itself; each is in conversation with its other—blue with orange, yellow with blue. Something physical is going on and it turns me on my head. Tactility turned into vision. I spin. They spin. Don't you?

From afar, the canvases appear flat, the circles read like two-dimensional conversations of various-sized spirals. We are in the hands of a master formalist—some kind of mad Color Field Op Art. The work has the clarity of Mondrian, the playfulness of Bridget Riley and the wisdom of Rothko. But it is Kenneth Noland who hangs in the wings as an art historical ghost. Or at least it is hard not to have that association. Shafie herself discusses the influences of Color Field painting on her work.

But it all depends on where you are because as you move towards these works (and they do ask you to move), one sees that the brilliantly colored circles are not flat but three-dimensional. They are spools of paper, “things” embedded in the space of the frame. This work is no simple paean to flatness as Clement Greenberg claimed for the Colored Field painters. Quite the opposite: not flatness but eloquent and searching topography.

Kenneth Noland painted stripes and circles. Hadieh Shafie takes strips (rather than stripes) of paper and writes “*Eshgh*”—meaning “love/passion” in Farsi on them, paints the

Opposite page:
21600 Pages, 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with
printed & hand-written Farsi text
“Eshgh” (Love/Passion),
48 x 48 x 3.5 in / 122 x 122 x 9 cm
Private Collection, Abu Dhabi, UAE



Primary Yellow, 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand-written Farsi text "Eshgh" (Love/Passion),
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

edges in various colors and winds them together by hand. She calls these strips pages and her spools books—ketab. They have various heights and widths. The wider the circle the more pages each ketab has. We are being asked to think of books, to read, where paper and language are at the center, a center that twirls around the Farsi word for love/passion.

Shafie was born in Iran, but her parents moved to London where she lived for two years until 1979 when, coincidentally to the Khomeini revolution, "My parents sent me and my brother back to Iran alone—I'm 9 he is 7." For the first three months she and her brother lived with their grand parents. The move was bewildering and life-changing. "I looked up and I saw a sea of black." She soon learned that she



UltraMarine Blue, 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand-written Farsi text "Eshgh" (Love/Passion),
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, Küsnacht am Rigi, Switzerland

must wear this black. In fact, she must cover herself from head to toe or be put in prison. (Her history parallels that of Marjane Satrapi author of the graphic novel *Persepolis* (2000-2003), which was made into a film in 2007.) Through a series of events, some luck, some the fortune of having relatives in Austria and America, she and her family moved to the States in 1983 when Shafie was 14 years old. She learned to be a woman, a teenager in America, after five crucial years in a culture—her own—where her body had to be enveloped in black cloth under threat of punishment by the government. Although in America, she no longer had to conceal herself—she could of course wear color—still this was no easy transition because the female body in the West is clothed in its own ideological hejab. As she grew into an artist, choosing painting and a degree

at Pratt, Shafie, like so many new immigrants, became a hybrid. One body two cultures.

In the late 90s, Shafie attended a performance of Whirling Dervishes at New York University that affected her profoundly. In fact, the physical and spiritual momentum of the whirling body was so intense she left New York for a few years to study performance art with performance theorist Kathy O'Dell at University of Maryland Baltimore County. During this time, she continued to paint to relax and think through ideas but her work was no longer confined to the flat surface, to the placing of paint onto a canvas. She was interested in moving through space.

Performance, or the less elegant "performativity," is an overworked term in these times we live in, most likely because we crave experiences that transform us. Performance refers to physicality, transformation, presence, event, and audience. It can be a way of demonstrating, of showing rather than telling. Its power lies in its connection to presence, to the fact that an action *has, will or is* occur(ing) in time. Like the "certificate of presence" that the photograph represents for Roland Barthes, the weight and import of performance is that it *is happening or happened*. That quality of "There she is! She is really there! At last, there she is!" he finds in the photograph of his mother. He even goes so far as to assign this quality of the photograph to his famous *punctum*, "A photograph's *punctum* is that accident [of photographic detail] which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me), ...for *punctum* is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole---and also a caste of the dice."² He says later: "I now know that there exists another *punctum* ... than the 'detail. This new *punctum*, which is no longer of form but of intensity, is Time, the lacerating emphasis of the *noeme* ('that-has-been'), its pure representation."³ It is why photography is impossible to separate from performance because performance history exists via photographic documentation and video recordings. (It also exists as memory and in oral and written histories.) What I am getting

at is that the performative act as a fact behind Shafie's work, i.e., the time her body has invested in writing out the word "*Eshgh*" with pen and ink, painting the edge, and then twirling the colored strips into rolls of various sizes, feeds and constitutes the work. It is the sting or speck that grabs us as we stand before her work.

"I looked up and I saw a sea of black."

Upon hearing her recount the memory of her arrival in Iran, one can't help but be struck by her description of "the sea of black" that first confronted her because color is such a presence in her work. Color is alive, even white is



Kenneth Noland, *Inside*, 1958
Magna on canvas
68.25 x 67.25 in / 173.4 x 170.7 cm
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution,
Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966
Photography by Lee Stalsworth

a cacophony. In fact, in *Spike 5*, 2013, the pages turn into spikes. They reach out to the viewer threatening to poke. White is not the non-color but the color of all color (literally).

In his book *What Color Is The Sacred?* Michael Taussig uses anthropology, surrealism, literature and science to explore color as a medium that breaks boundaries and challenges codes: “color comes across here as more a presence than a sign, more a force than a code...”⁴ Using the work of Walter Benjamin, William Burroughs and Marcel Proust, he explores the way color is alive “like an animal.” Burroughs and his friend Brion Gysin used to take color walks when they lived in Tangier. But Taussig is interested in the way color itself can be seen to “walk” in terms of being used to break down codes.

The idea here is that the very notion of a code be “cut up,” meaning that color is invoked so as to loosen the restraint of coding and that there is something about color that facilitates this, as if colors love to betray themselves, like yellow meaning gold, awesome, and holy, but also treason and cowardice, as well as having a long history in the Christian West to mark adulterous women, Jews, Muslims, prostitutes, heretics, witches, and executioners.”⁵

Color is not just a surface placed onto something but is the very medium of a bodily unconscious, by which he means “an approach to viewing, such that the self becomes part of that which is seen.”⁶ Color draws us in. We lose ourselves in color. Color can also be crime. It attacks that which is “normal.” It is a sign, within the colonialist and white imagination, of the “other”—native, African American, queer—basically anything that is opposed to what Taussig calls “the prison of Standard Western Subjectivity.” But it is not always just Western. The sects of Islamic fundamentalism who require the hejab to be black are also suffering from chromophobia, turning color into a threat.⁷

It is well known that in the history of Islamic art, the representational image is suppressed if not taboo because it is a sin to portray God. Abstraction is the norm. It is why calligraphy is such a prominent component of the visual art. Shafie draws upon this tradition in her remarkable grid drawings. Here the word *eshgh* and the weight of its tradition in Persian culture, is abstracted back into codes of Western high modernism: the grid. As with the reference to Color Field painting, there is a brilliant play between the most formal of histories (western high modernism) and the most emotive, personal, high-intensity content one could find: love. But it is not “love,” it is “*eshgh*” buried inside the body, her body, mixing with the high intensity colors of modernist training. What makes her work political is that the essence of her work is this word, untranslatable, abstract, prohibited yet repeated like a trauma. It is



Morris Louis, *Where*, 1960
Magna on canvas
99.38 x 142.5 in / 252.3 x 361.9 cm
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution,
Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966
Photography by Lee Stalsworth

the impossible word that erupts off the canvas into a topological cacophony, coming to rest hidden in a sea of whirling circles.

The Whirling Dervish originated as a response to the teachings of the Sufi poet Rumi who wrote about “*eshgh*” as yearning, gap, passion and pain. His poetry, like the work of the Color Field painters, is essential to Shafie’s. As we have seen, it is the meeting of these two traditions that produces the psychic and physical genius (in the literal sense) of her work. One might even go so far as to say the works’ politics, for this is a word that has so much history and potency, as a tradition of writing and of calligraphy (visual art) it not only breaks pens and tears pages as it does for Rumi but, in the hands of Hadieh Shafie makes us spin.

Thyrza Nichols Goodeve is an art writer who teaches at the School of Visual Arts in the MFA Art Practice Program.

¹Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 87.

²Barthes, 27.

³Barthes, 96

⁴Michael Taussig, *What Color Is the Sacred?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 6.

⁵Taussig, 28.

⁶Taussig, 14.

⁷Color is tolerated in rural contexts but for Shafie this was confusing when as a child she visited relatives outside of Tehran and saw women wearing colorful tribal clothing. It alarmed her. She turned to her Aunt and said, “But won’t they be punished?” [T: just a few suggestions.]





Spike 1 (Telesm series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed &
hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

Previous page:
Spike 1 (Telesm series), 2012 (detail)
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed &
hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY



Spike 5 (Telesm series), 2013
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
17 x 17 x 8 in / 43.2 x 43.2 x 20.3 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

Spike 5 (Telesm series), 2013 (side view)
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
17 x 17 x 8 in / 43.2 x 43.2 x 20.3 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

Abi Abi (Ketar series), 2013
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
36 x 36 x 3.5 in / 91.5 x 91.5 x 9 cm
Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY



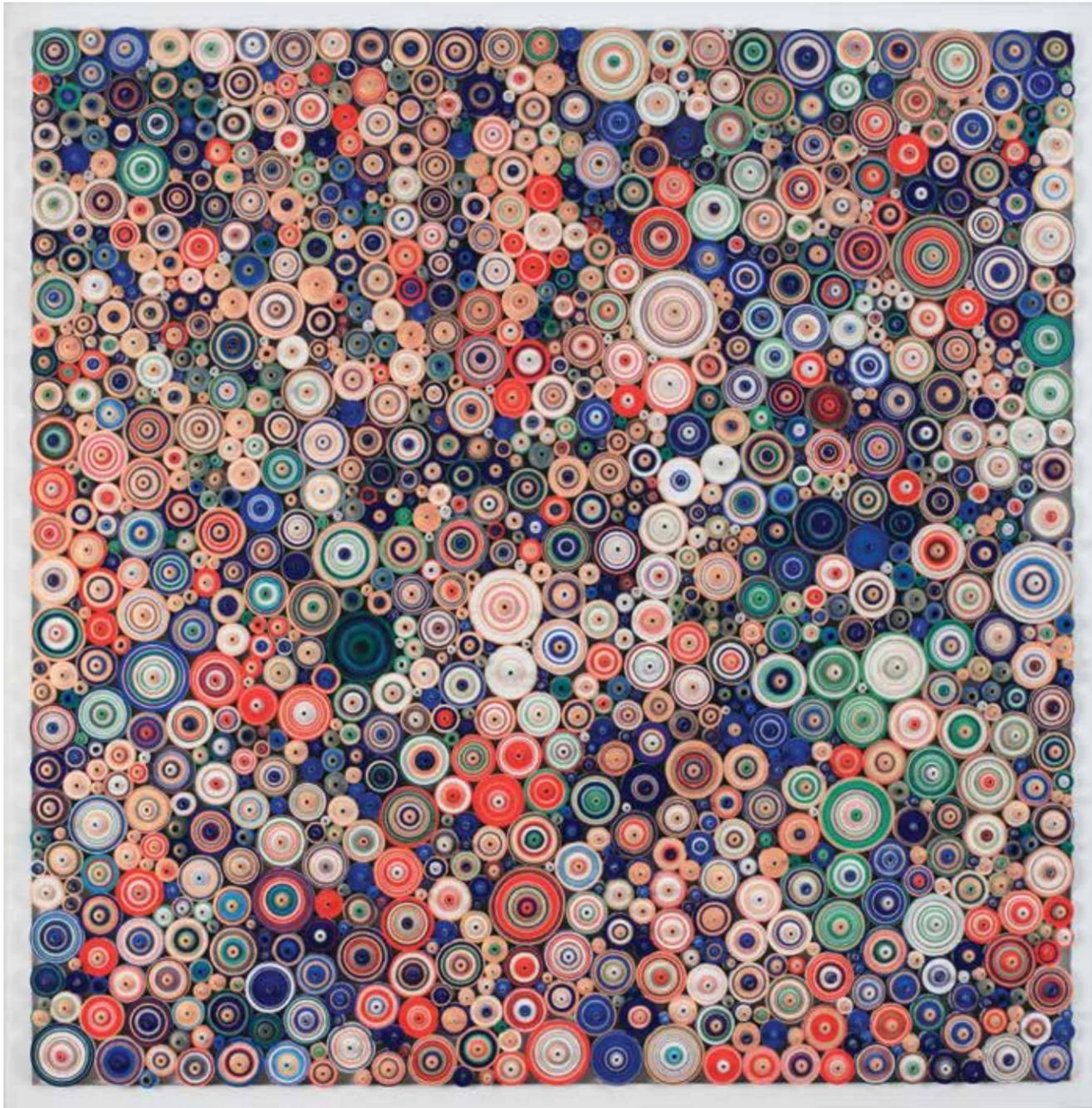


22500 Pages (Ketab series), 2011
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
48 x 48 x 3.5 in / 121.9 x 121.9 x 9 cm
Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
Exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum,
London as part of The Jameel Prize Exhibition



7 Colors: Magenta, Primary Yellow, Ultramarine Blue, Turquoise, White, Green & Gold (Telesm series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed & hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
36 x 36 x 4 in / 91.5 x 91.5 x 10.2 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

7 Colors: Magenta, Primary Yellow, Ultramarine Blue, Turquoise, White, Green & Gold (Telesm series), 2012 (side view)
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed & hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
36 x 36x 4 in / 91.5 x 91.5 x 10.2 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY



12025 Pages (*Telesm series*), 2013
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
30 x 30 x 4 in/ 76.2 x 76.2 x 10 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY



10400 Pages (Ketab series), 2011
Ink and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
30 x 30 x 3.5 in / 76.2 x 76.2 x 9 cm
Private Collection, Sarasota, Florida

Following page:
10400 Pages (Ketab series), 2011 (detail)
Ink and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
30 x 30 x 3.5 in / 76.2 x 76.2 x 9 cm
Private Collection, Sarasota, Florida





White (Ketab series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY



Gold (Ketab series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY



Yellow (Ketab series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, Long Island, NY



Blue (Ketab series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, Geneva, Switzerland



Turquoise (Ketab series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

Green (Ketab series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, Geneva, Switzerland

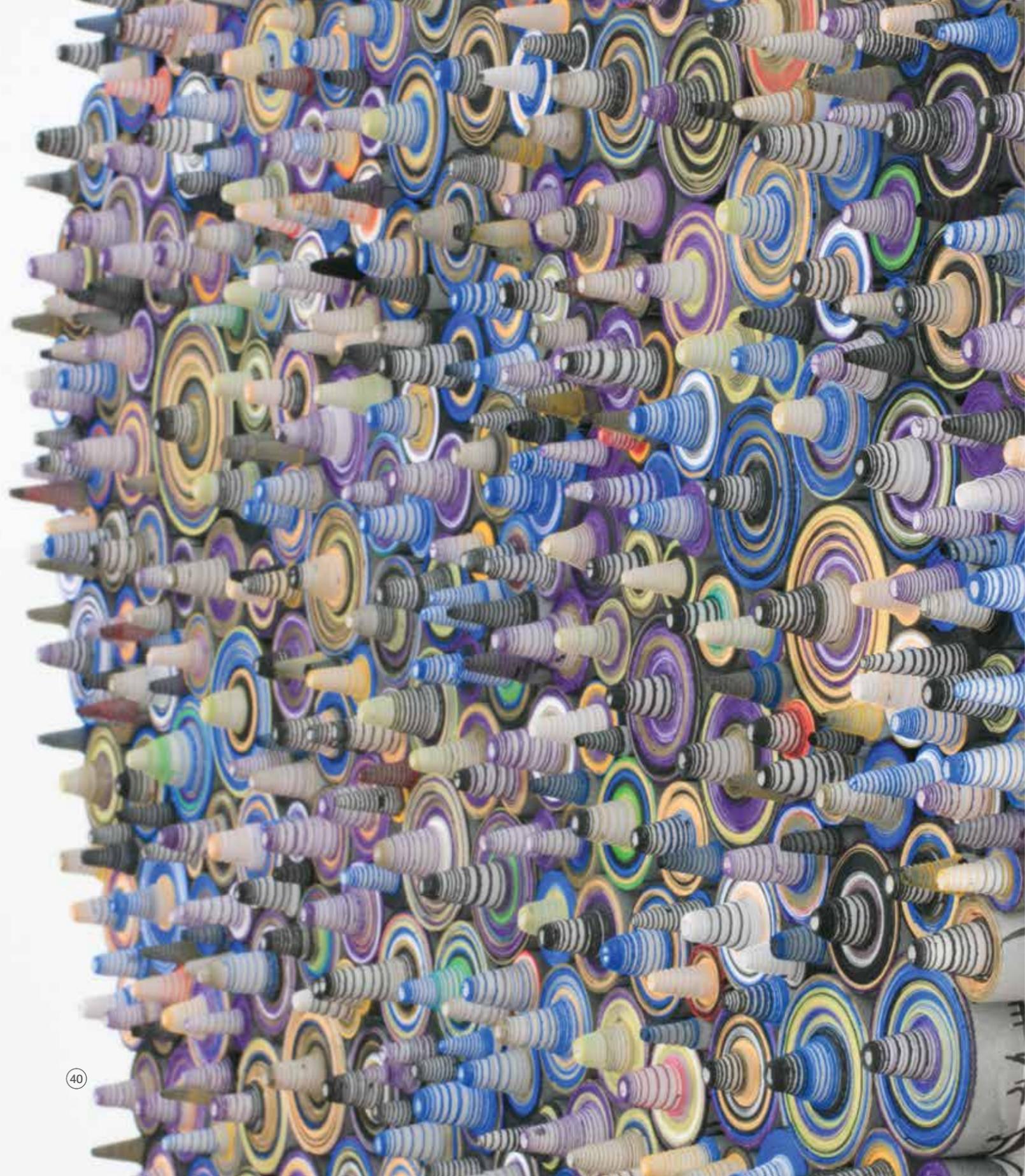
6 Colors: White, Turquoise, Green, Gold, Yellow & Blue (Ketab series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
36 x 36 x 3.5 in / 91.5 x 91.5 x 9 cm
Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College.
The Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College

Ghalb 1 "Heart" (Ketab series), 2013
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
30 x 12.5 x 3 in / 76.2 x 31.7 x 7.6 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY



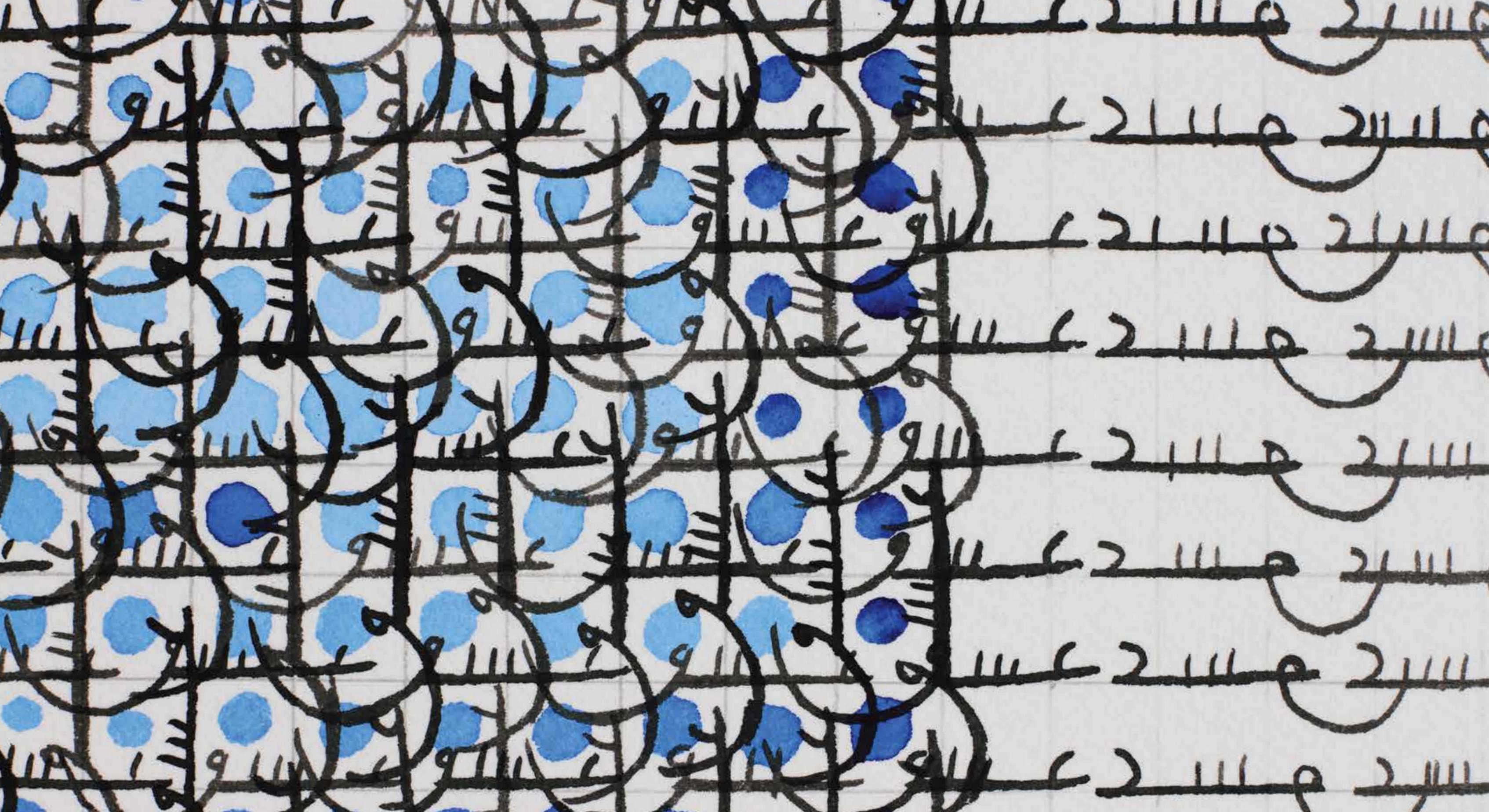


Ghalb 2 "Heart" (Ketab series), 2013
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
26.5 x 13.3 x 3 in / 67.3 x 33.8 x 7.6 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY



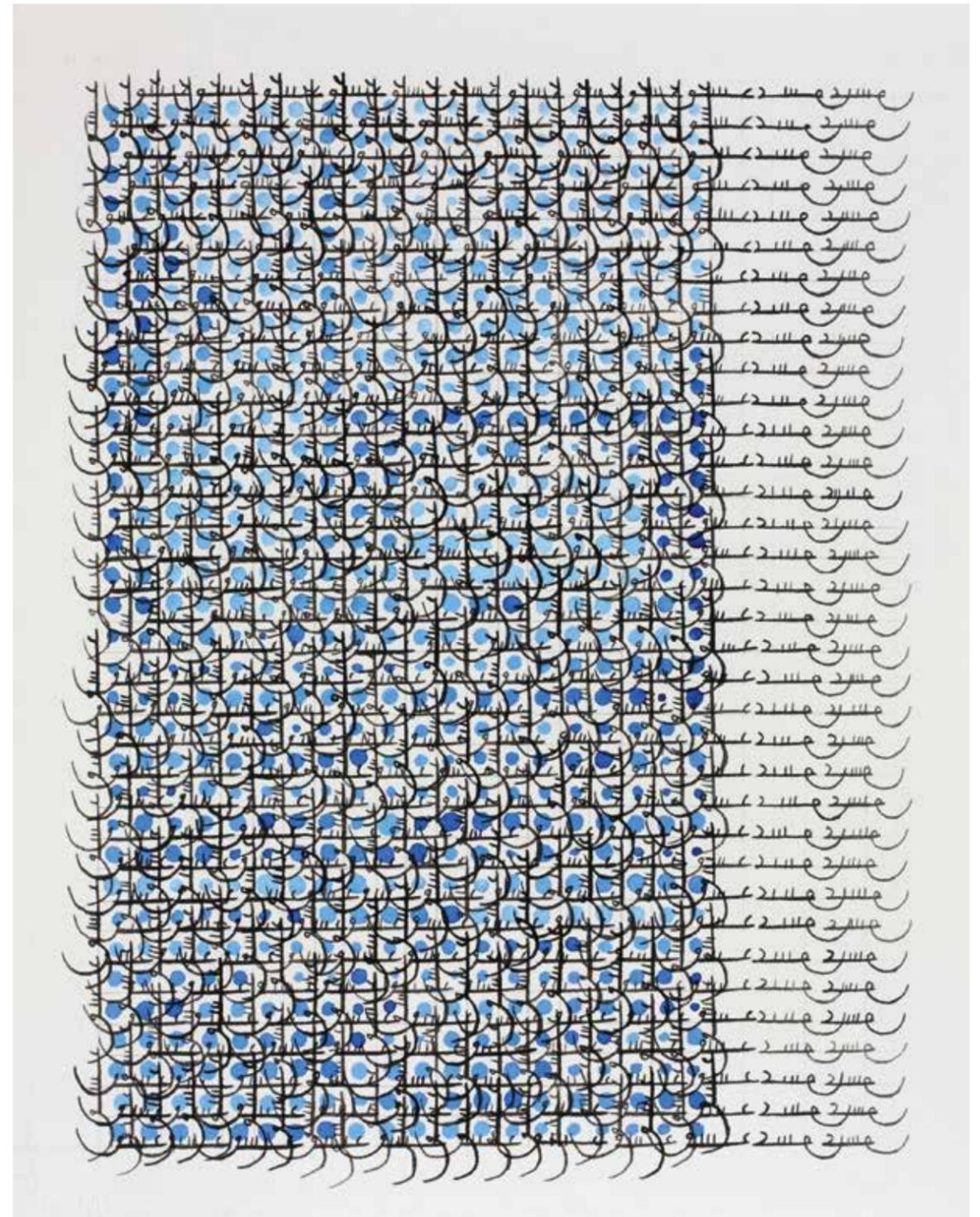
Ghalb 3 "Heart" (Ketar series), 2013
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
48 x 23.75 x 4.5 in / 121.9 x 60.3 x 11.4 cm
Private Collection, Dubai, UAE

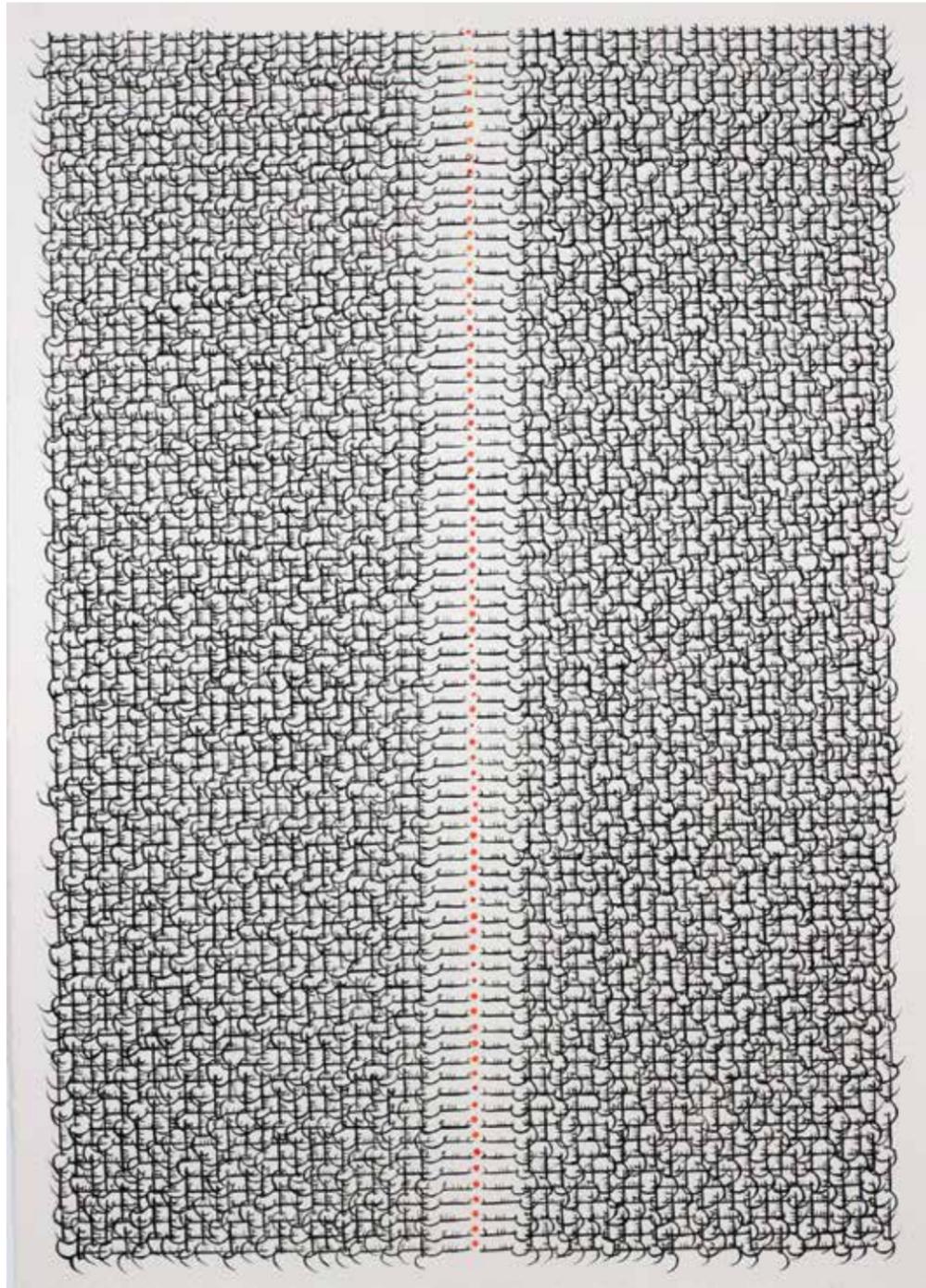
Ghalb 3 "Heart" (Ketar series), 2013 (side view)
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
48 x 23.75 x 4.5 in / 121.9 x 60.3 x 11.4 cm
Private Collection, Dubai, UAE



Grid 21, 2013
Ink and acrylic on Arches Paper
20.5 x 16.75 in / 52.1 x 42.5 cm
Courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum

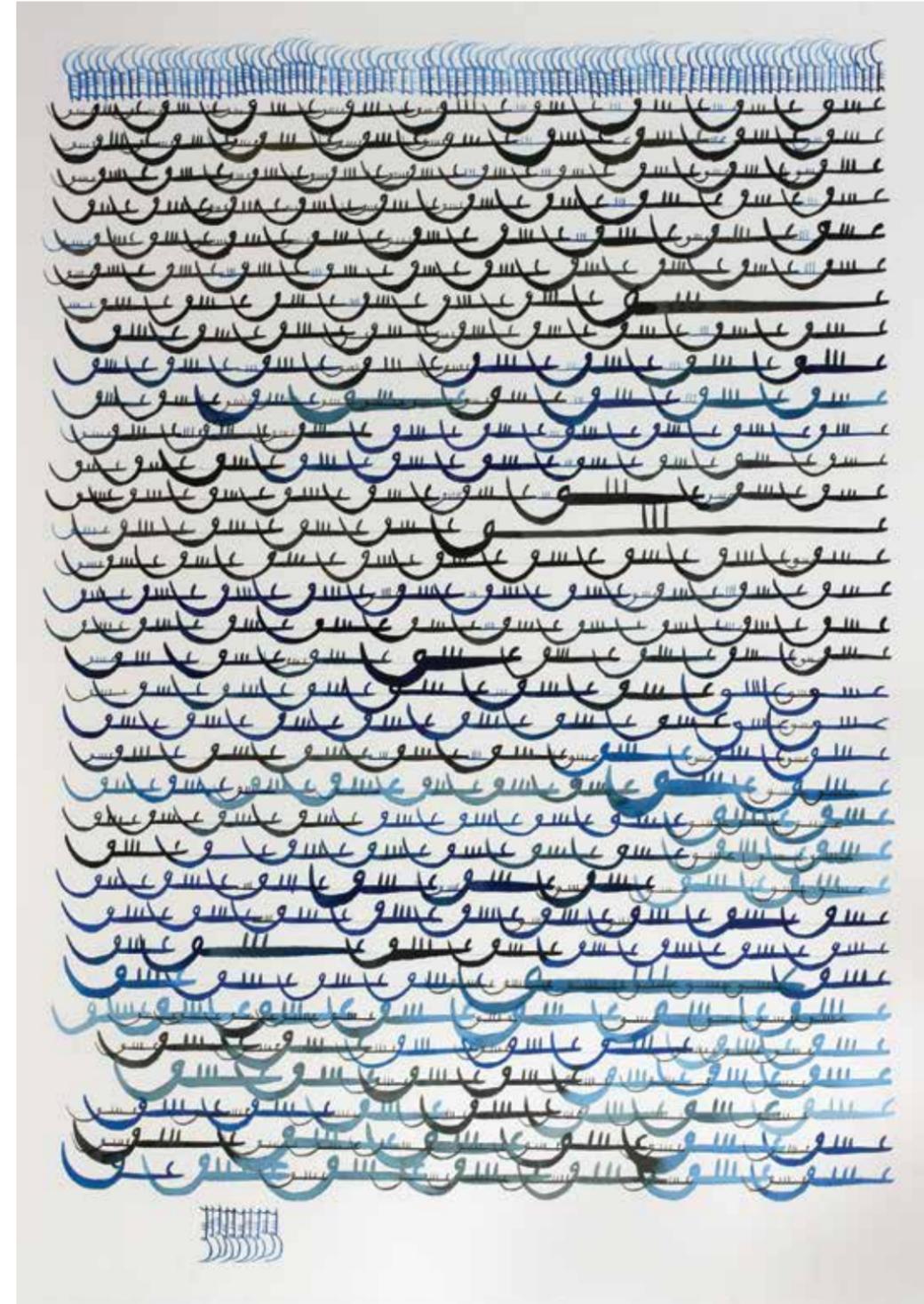
Previous page:
Grid 21, 2013 (detail)
Ink and acrylic on Arches Paper
20.5 x 16.75 in / 52.1 x 42.5 cm
Courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum

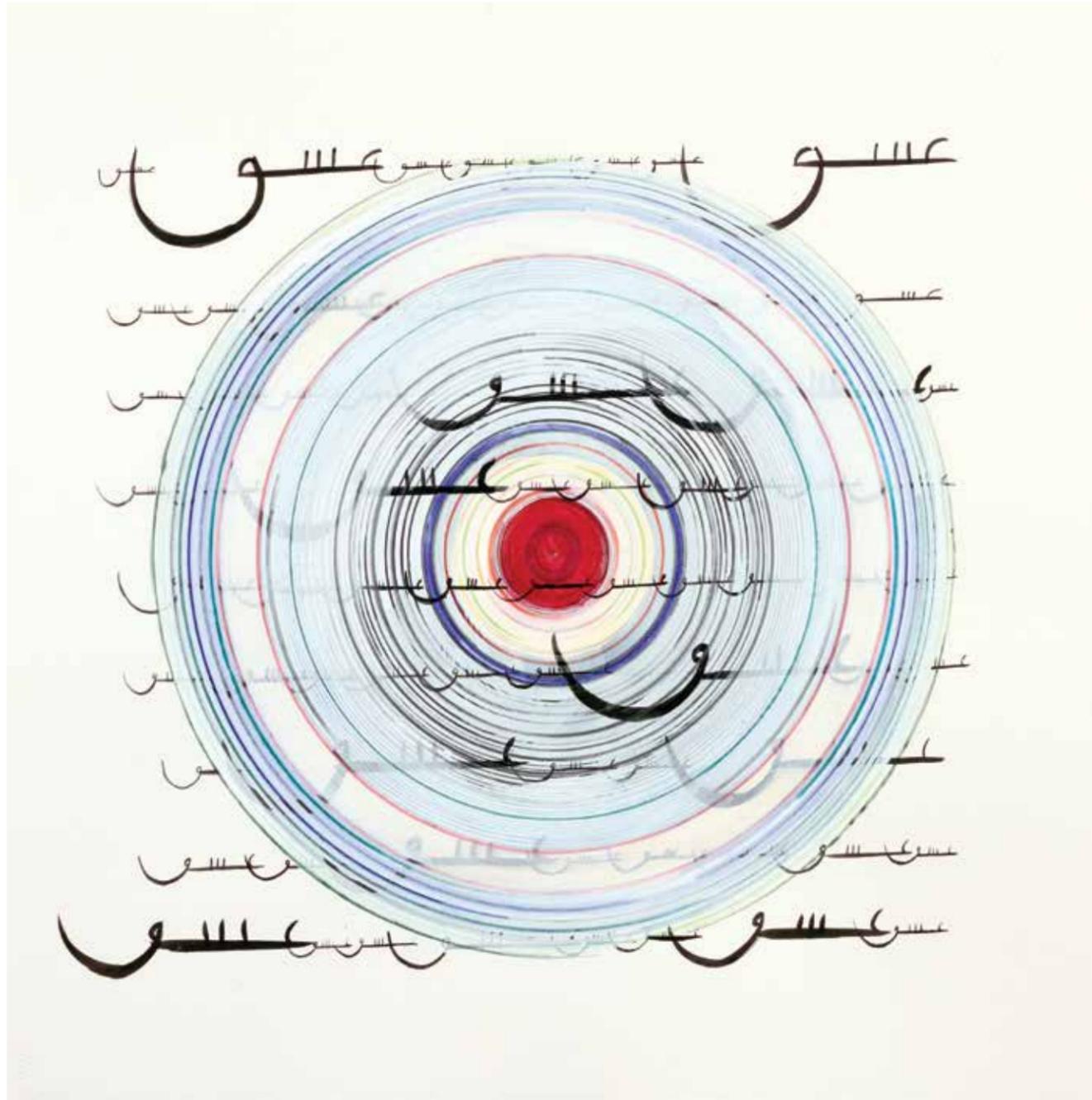




Grid 25, 2013
Ink and acrylic on Arches paper
41 x 29.5 in / 104 x 75 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

River, 2011
Ink and acrylic on Arches Paper
41 x 29.5 in / 104.1 x 74.9 cm
Private Collection, Philadelphia, PA

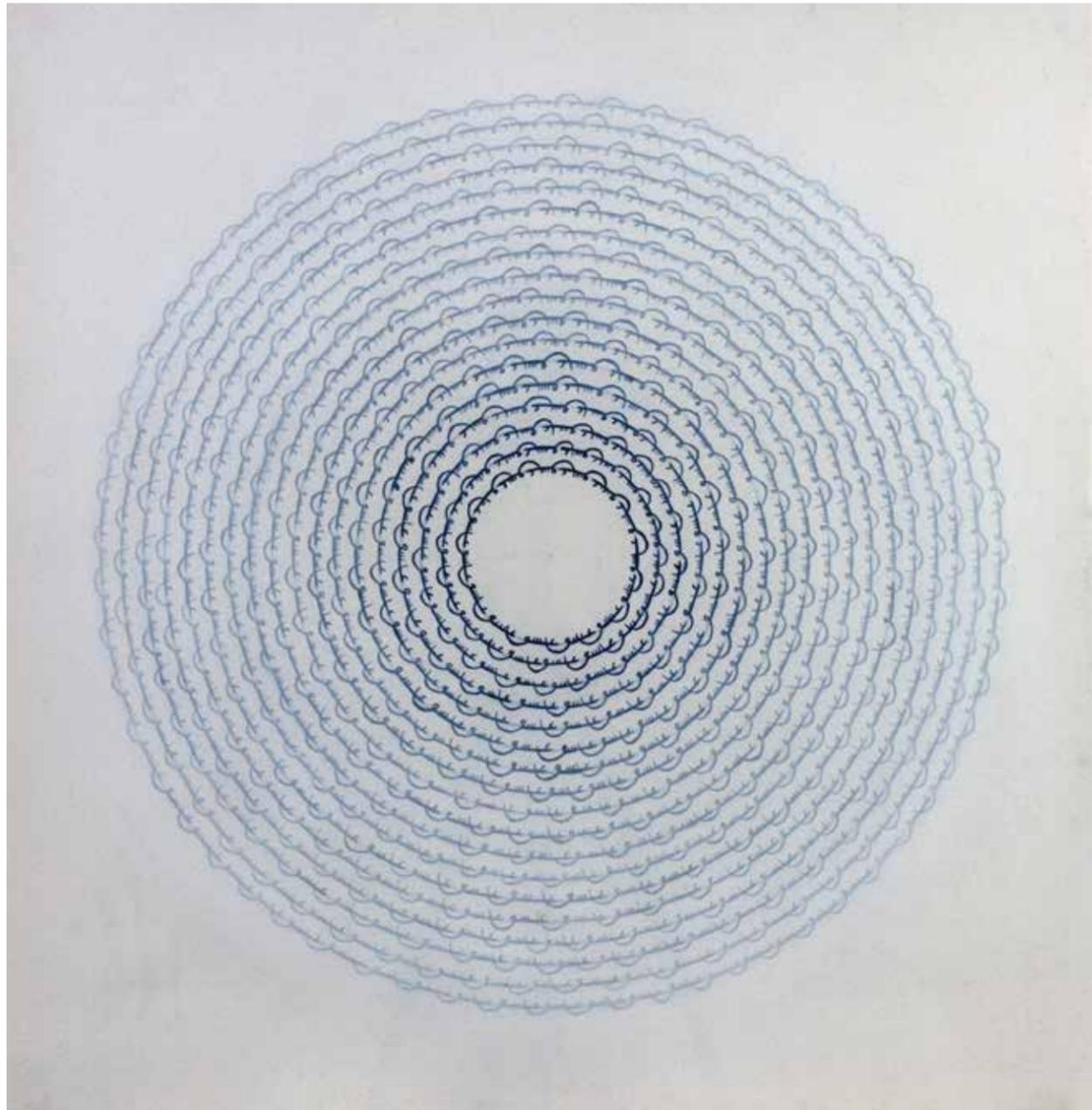




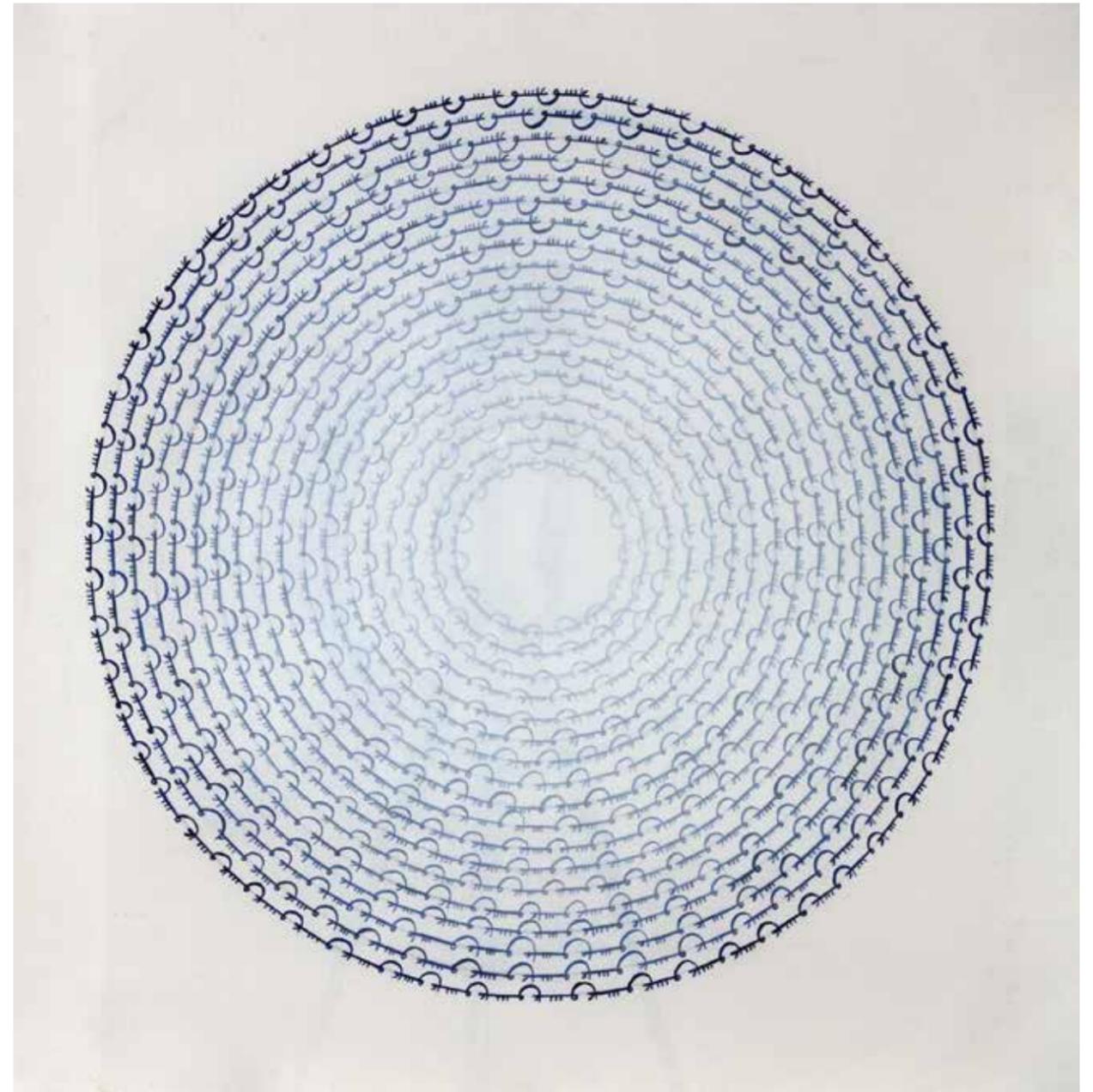
Flight, 2011
Acrylic on Arches Paper with hand written
Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
26 x 26 in / 66 x 66 cm
Private Collection, Dubai, UAE



Spin, 2011
Acrylic on Arches Paper with hand written
Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
26 x 26 in / 66 x 66 cm
Ramin Salsali Collection, Salsali Private Museum,
Alserkal Avenue Dubai, UAE



Radiate In, 2011
Acrylic on Arches Paper with hand written
Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
26 x 26 in / 66 x 66 cm
Private Collection, Metz, France



Radiate Out, 2011
Acrylic on Arches Paper with hand written
Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
26 x 26 in / 66 x 66 cm
Private Collection, Metz, France

87 Pages (Hybrid series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and Paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
48 x 48 x 3.5 in / 121.92 x 121.9 x 9 cm
Private Collection, Dubai, UAE

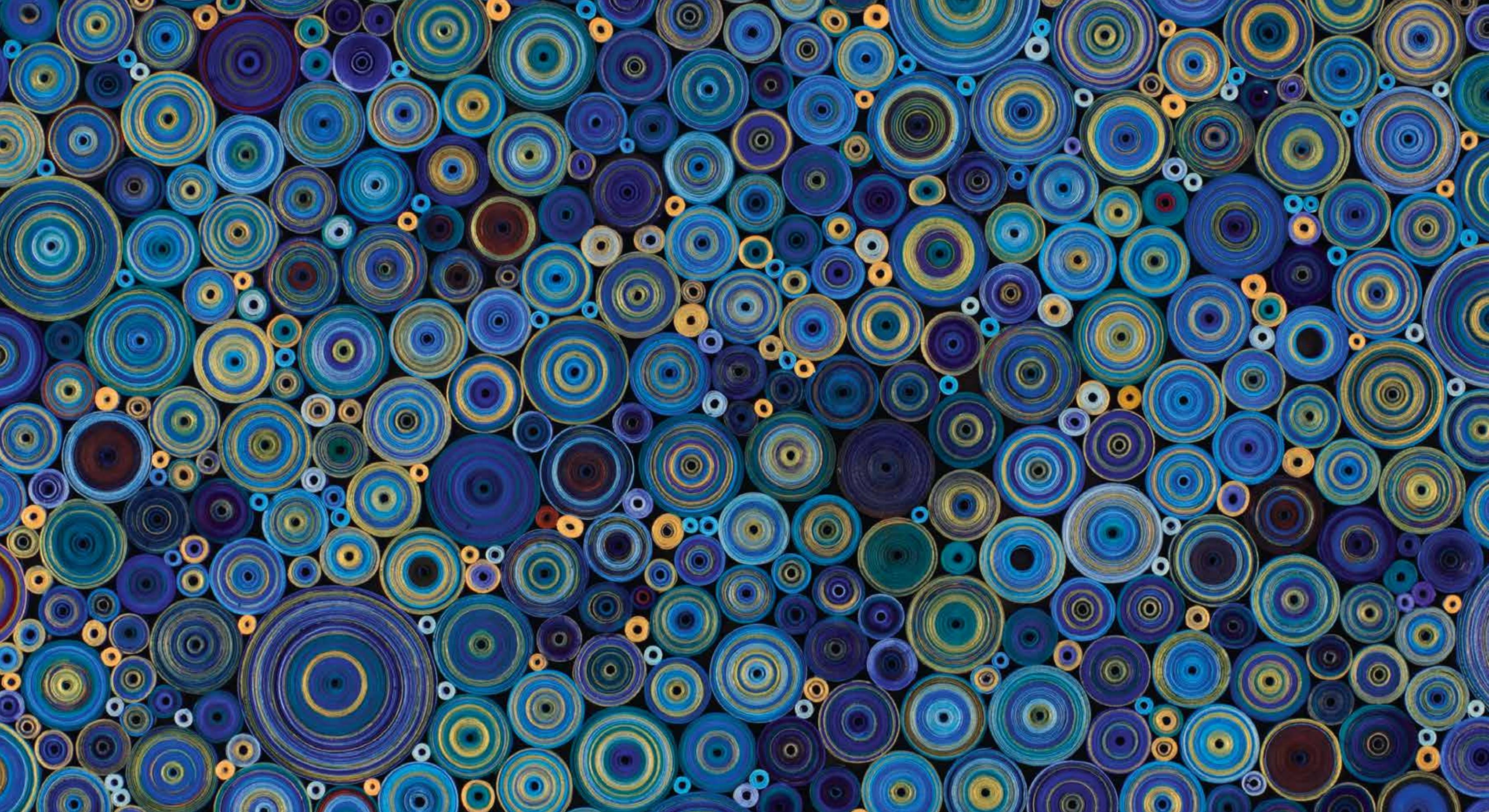
87 Pages (Hybrid series), 2012 (side view)
Ink, acrylic and Paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
48 x 48 x 3.5 in / 121.92 x 121.9 x 9 cm
Private Collection, Dubai, UAE



1599 Pages (Hybrid series), 2011
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
30 x 30 x 3.5 in / 76.2 x 76.2 x 9 cm
Private Collection, London, UK

Following page:
Abi Abi (Ketar series), 2013 (Detail)
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love"
36 x 36 in / 91.5 x 91.5 cm
Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY





HADIEH SHAFIE

B. 1969, Iran
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and Silver Spring, MD

EDUCATION

- 2004 Master of Fine Arts, Imaging and Digital Art, University of Maryland Baltimore County, MD
- 1999 Master of Fine Arts, Painting, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
- 1993 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 Solo exhibition, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY (forthcoming)
- 2011 *Ketabeh Eshghe (Book of Love)*, Pentimenti Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Ketab (Book), XVA Gallery, Dubai, UAE
Sweet Turning of the Page, Morton Fine Art, Washington DC
- 2009 *Paper Pattern Color Culture*, Pentimenti Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
- 2004 *The Little Black Fishes*, School 33 Art Center, Baltimore, MD
Spin, MFA Exhibition, CVAC, UMBC, Baltimore, MD

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 *Calligraffiti*, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
Spectra, San Diego State University Downtown Gallery, San Diego, CA
Summer Selects, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
Jameel Prize Exhibition (touring exhibition), San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, TX
Art Dubai, Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, UAE
The Armory Show, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
The Space Between: Contemporary perspectives on tradition and society, Middle East Center for the Arts (MECA), Jersey City, NJ
Jameel Prize Exhibition (touring exhibition), Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, Stanford, CA
- 2012 *Rock, Paper, Scissors*, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
Jameel Prize Exhibition (touring exhibition), Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France
Art Dubai, Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, Dubai, UAE
Pulse Art Fair, New York Pentimenti Gallery, New York, NY
Invitational Art Exhibition, Conley Art Gallery USC Fresno, California
Jameel Prize Exhibition (touring exhibition), *Casa Arabe*, Madrid, Spain
- 2011 Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Contemporary Istanbul, Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, Istanbul, Turkey

- Art Asia Miami, Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, Miami, FL
SHOW OFF! SPM Private Museum, Dubai UAE
Jameel Prize Exhibition (touring exhibition), Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK
Pulse Art Fair, Pentimenti Gallery, New York, NY

- Select: Washington Project for the Arts, Washington DC
- 2010 *Ritual: Form, Script and Gesture*, A Pop Up Project, Morton Fine Art, Washington DC
More of the best is yet to come, Pentimenti Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Sondheim Prize, Semi-Finalist Exhibition, MICA, Baltimore, MD
- 2009 *Hidden Wounds, Paper Bullets: Iranian Contemporary Art*, Grant Arts Central, Fullerton CA
Protocol: Syntax / Semantics, Gallery 4, Baltimore, MD
Baker Artist Awards Exhibition, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD
Women's Work, Civilian Art Place, Washington DC
- 2008 *Hidden and Revealed*, Maryland Art Place, Baltimore, MD
Full Circle, Rosenberg Gallery, Goucher College, Baltimore, MD
- 2007 *Changing Climate Changing Colors*, Abrons Art Center, New York, NY
- 2006 *Displacement*, Pyramid Atlantic, Silver Spring, MD

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2012 The Space Program, The Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation, Brooklyn, NY
- 2011 Jameel Prize, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK (Shortlisted)
Franz and Virginia Bader Fund, Washington DC
- 2010 Individual Artist Grant, Maryland State Arts Council
- 2009 Mary Sawyers Baker Award, William G. Baker Jr. Memorial Fund
- 2008 Individual Artist Grant, Maryland State Arts Council
- 2003 RTKL Grant in Visual Arts

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
- The British Museum, London, UK
- The Farjam Collection, Dubai, UAE
- Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK
- Salsali Private Museum, Dubai, UAE
- Bank of America, Corporate Collection, NC
- Art in Embassies, Public Collection, Dubai, UAE
- The Alford Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, Winter Park, FL

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- Elda Silva, "Islamic Tradition Meets Modern World in Exhibit," *The Houston Chronicle*, June 18 2013.
- "Leila Heller Gallery. The Armory Show 2013," *GalleryIntell.com*, March 2013.
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- Sabine B. Vogel, "Messen: Art Dubai," *Weltkunst*, no. 20 (March 2013). 102.
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- "5 Minutes with Hadieh Shafie," *Canvas Daily, Abu Dhabi Art Edition*, no. 4 (November 9-10 2012).
- "The Art of Script: Myriad Artworks Which Draw Inspiration from the Age-Old Practice of Calligraphy Reveal Contemporary Twists," *Canvas Daily, Abu Dhabi Art Edition*, no. 4 (November 9-10 2012).
- Ben Mirza, "Is Modern Art Really Rotten to the Core?" *HuffPost Culture UK*, October 23 2012.
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- "Best Photo of the Day," *Art Daily*, September 27 2011.
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- Tiffany Jow, "All Wound Up", *DC Magazine*, July/August 2011. 51.
- Christopher Lord, "Jameel Prize 2011 Shortlist Develops Art from Craftwork," *The National*, July 14 2011.
- Bruce Helander, "Artist To Watch", *The Art Economist* 1, no. 5 (2011): 72.
- Tara Heuser, "The Sweet Turning of the Page", *Pink Line Project*, June 1 2011.
- "Splashes of Color and Love," *The National*, 2011. 7.
- "Get your Fix," *Aquarius*, May 2011. 15.
- F. Lennox Campello, "Letter from Washington, DC," *American Contemporary Art Magazine*, March 2011. 28-29.
- Michael O'Sullivan, "Hadieh Shafie at Morton Fine Art," *The Washington Post*, Thursday, May 19 2011.
- John Anderson, "Hadieh Shafie at Morton Fine Art, Reviewed," *Washington City Paper*, May 9 2011.
- "Through 30 pieces in a group exhibition: 'Eshgh' and 'Love in a Time of Conflict' present a beautiful vision of life," *Al Ittihad*, April 23 2011.
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- Joseph Lanner, "Old Traditions, New Ideas," *Esquire Middle East*, April 2011. 48.
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- Emily Warner, "paperpatterncolorculture," *The Brooklyn Rail*, November 2009.



Lila, 2013
C-print
45 x 30 in / 114.3 x 76.2 cm

COVER:

Spike 5 (Telesm series), 2013 (side view detail)
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
17 x 17 x 8 in / 43.2 x 43.2 x 20.3 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

INSIDE COVER:

12025 Pages (Telesm series), 2013
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
30 x 30 in / 76.2 x 76.2 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

BACK COVER:

Spike 1 (Telesm series), 2012
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
12 x 12 x 3.5 in / 30.5 x 30.5 x 9 cm
Private Collection, New York, NY

INSIDE BACK COVER:

20900 Pages (Ketab series), 2012 (detail)
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed
& hand written Farsi Text Eshgh "Love/Passion"
48 x 48 x 3.5 in / 122 x 122 x 8.9 cm
Private Collection, Bahrain

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