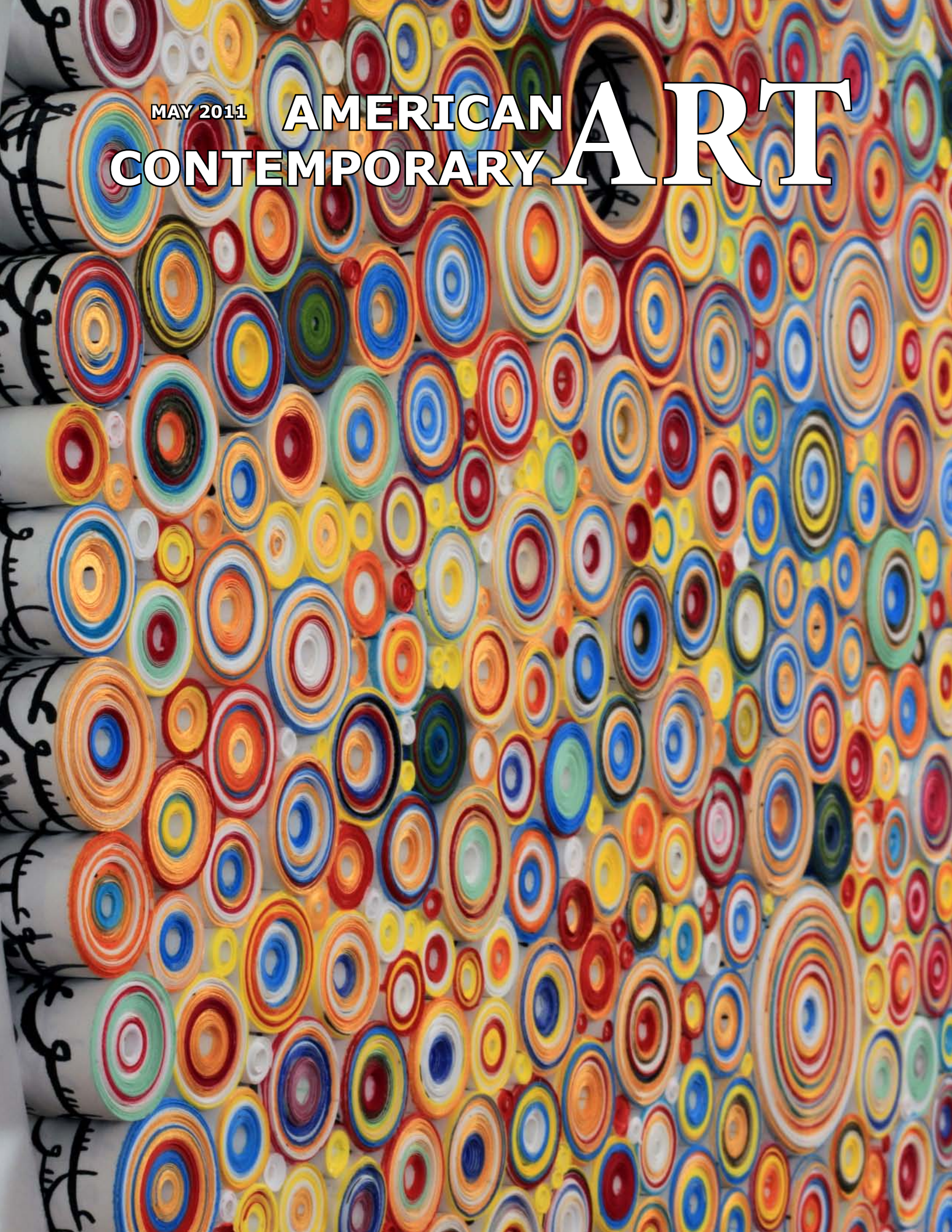


MAY 2011

AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY ART



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COVER IMAGE: Hadieh Shafie - **10400** - 2011, ink and paper with handwritten and printed Farsi text "eshghe" (love), 30"x30"x3.5. Courtesy of Morton Fine Art, Washington, DC. (See Page 15)

Letter from Washington, DC

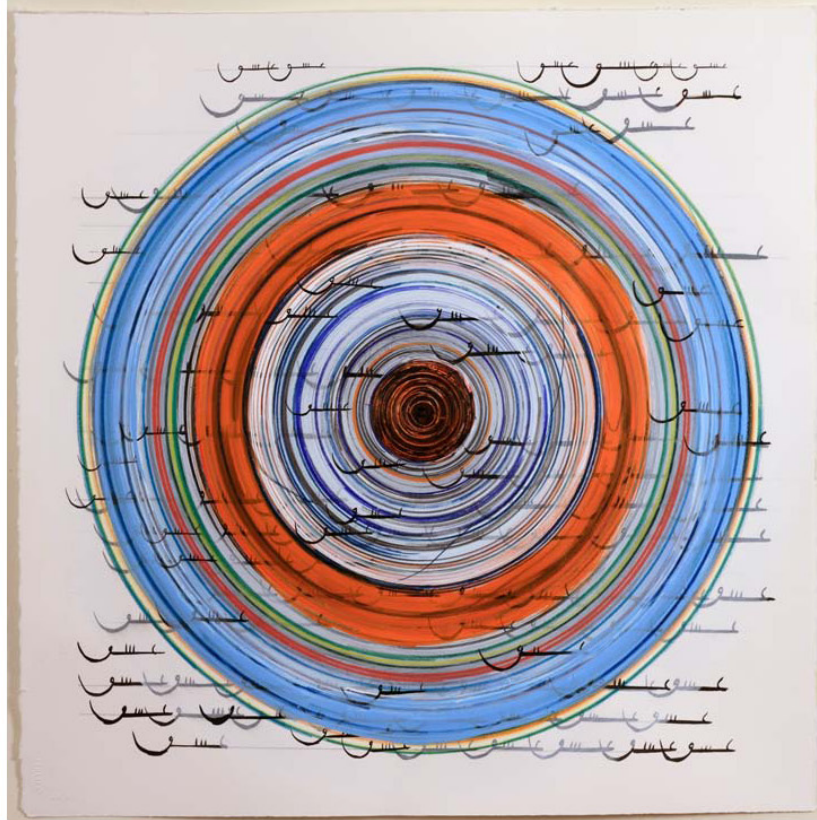
F. Lennox Campello

Around the District, artist Hadieh Shafie is on a good streak right now. To start, Bruce Helander, Editor-in-Chief of The Art Economist and a White House Fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts, recently picked ten artists to watch in an article for The Huffington Post and Hadieh Shafie was one of the chosen ten. Shafie is currently also nominated for the London's Victoria & Albert Museum's prestigious Jameel Prize 2011.

She recently received the Franz Bader Award in the DC region. Finally, this talented artist's solo exhibition titled *The Sweet Turning of the Page*, is currently on exhibition at Morton Fine Art (1781 Florida Ave, NW at 18th & U Street in DC) through June 3. This Iranian-born artist says that a constant element of her work has been "the significance of process, repetition and time all rooted in the influence of Islamic art & craft." Her ink and paper paintings

are the end result of tightly scrolled and brightly colored rolls of paper which often hide hand-written text by the artist. While one is initially tempted to associate her work with Op-Art, Hadieh's intelligent and coherent marriage of pure color with a deeply personal cultural branding, pushes her artwork beyond the pure eye candy of that mode and begins to explore the process of adding a new contemporary dialogue to what can be lossely described as Islamic-influenced art. There's something powerful in these works — the tightly coiled colored rolls hide words, much like women in

the tightly coiled world of many Islamic nations are forced to hide their words and opinions, especially in the brutal theocracy of her native Iran. There's an Orwellian aspect to these works with a touch of Washington Color School that makes them deliver an unique perspective to the spectacular artistic diversity of the nation's capital. It is no accident that Hadieh's works have come to national prominence originating from the DMV.



Elsewhere in DC, the Jerusalem Fund Gallery has a special exhibition titled *Breaching the Wall* through June 24, 2011. The gallery invited artists from around the U.S., including Rajie Cook, Mona El-Bayoumi, Najat El-Khairi, Elena Farsakh, Adib Fattal, John Halaka, Michael Keating, Ellen O'Grady, Ammar Qusaibaty, Mary Tuma and Helen Zughaib, to create a work of art reflecting their perceptions of the separation wall in Palestine. Interpreted

in painting, sculpture, video, photography, porcelain and other media, each artist's work speaks in their own unique voice to the theme of the exhibition. You like political art? Then, look for several of these artists to use their art to deliver their personal views, memories and political agendas, from the exceptionally uninformed, to the historically incorrect, to the haters who use words like "occupiers" in their statements, to the dreamers who hope for peace, rather than hate between the Biblical brothers who currently inhabit this historical land. Also look for the superbly talented Helen Zughaib and Rajie

Cook to steal this show. Jerusalem Fund Gallery is located in the Woodley Park area of Washington, Dc, at 2425 Virginia Ave NW.

Also in the District, a new exhibit called *The Illuminated Landscape* opened at the Edison Place Gallery in the Pepco building at 701 Ninth Street, NW in Washington, DC. Thirty members of the Washington Society of Landscape Painters have contributed their interpretations of the landscape for the show, which runs through May 27. The 4000-square-foot gallery is located near the National Portrait Gallery and the Gallery Place metro. The entrance to the Edison Place Gallery is on Eighth Street between G and H streets, directly behind the Pepco headquarters entrance.

In neighboring Alexandria, Dr. Jamie Smith, curator and partner of Conner Contemporary in Washington DC and Co-Director of (e)merge Art Fair, was the juror for their current show, which is titled *In The Flesh 3*, running through June 26. This is an exhibition that "examines contemporary figurative art. An all media exhibit that invites artists nationally and internationally to submit work for consideration that includes the human figure as its subject." As a fan of figurative art, I am really looking forward to see Dr. Smith's selections in the flesh (pun intended), but I am already willing to bet that our own DMV (DC/MD/VA) area artist Judith Peck will be amongst the best in this exhibition. Peck's enviable mastery of the painting medium, coupled with her ability to inject subtle psychological narrative into her work, makes this DMV artist one to keep an eye on.



(left page) Hadieh Shafie, *Flight II*, 2011, ink and acrylic on paper, 26"x26". (above right) Judith Peck, *Considering the Veil*; featured in *In the Flesh III* at Target Gallery (bottom right) installation view of *Breaching the Wall* at Jerusalem Fund Gallery.