



# Behrang Samadzadeh





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*The Missing Witness*

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.







Born and raised in a country where becoming engrossed with socio-political history is an inevitable burden upon birth, it is only natural for Behrang Samadzadegan to be immersed in the relationship between socio-political history and art for the past decade. He set to work by painting the recent past he had not experienced firsthand. Behrang tried to “imagine and recreate this history by painting its ambiguous and veiled aspects.” Later, he concluded, “at some point, history becomes a subjective incident for the artist in which fantasy and aesthetics play a more prominent role than historical truth.” Is a direct relationship between art and history even plausible? Or does the artist, similar to a historian, distort history? He decided that his work exploring history and then translating it into the language of painting, amounted to an unedited and distorted rendition of history, which again is not based on a historical testimony. Subsequently, the exhibition is titled “The Missing Witness”. Painting has always had an intrinsic correlation with the recording of historical events; However, even if art claims it attests to history, it is not an eyewitness. Instead, it depicts history by relying on subjectivity, making the result unedited and distorted.

Through intricate interwoven narratives, Behrang’s work draws a clear connection to the tradition of Iranian painting (or what is more commonly known as Persian Miniature Painting). This sentiment is echoed in the colorful margins with forms diverging from them, and the way his subject matter carries a trace of history while refusing devotion to historical facts. Moreover, Behrang devises vertical compositions inspired by a combination of seventeenth to nineteenth-century Western art and Iranian art, continuously paying homage to the tradition of Iranian painting. Like miniaturists of the past, the artist does not shy away from dipping his brush in bright colors. That being said, the color palette seems to, first and foremost, be a playground for the artist to amuse himself by whimsically exploring an array of colors.

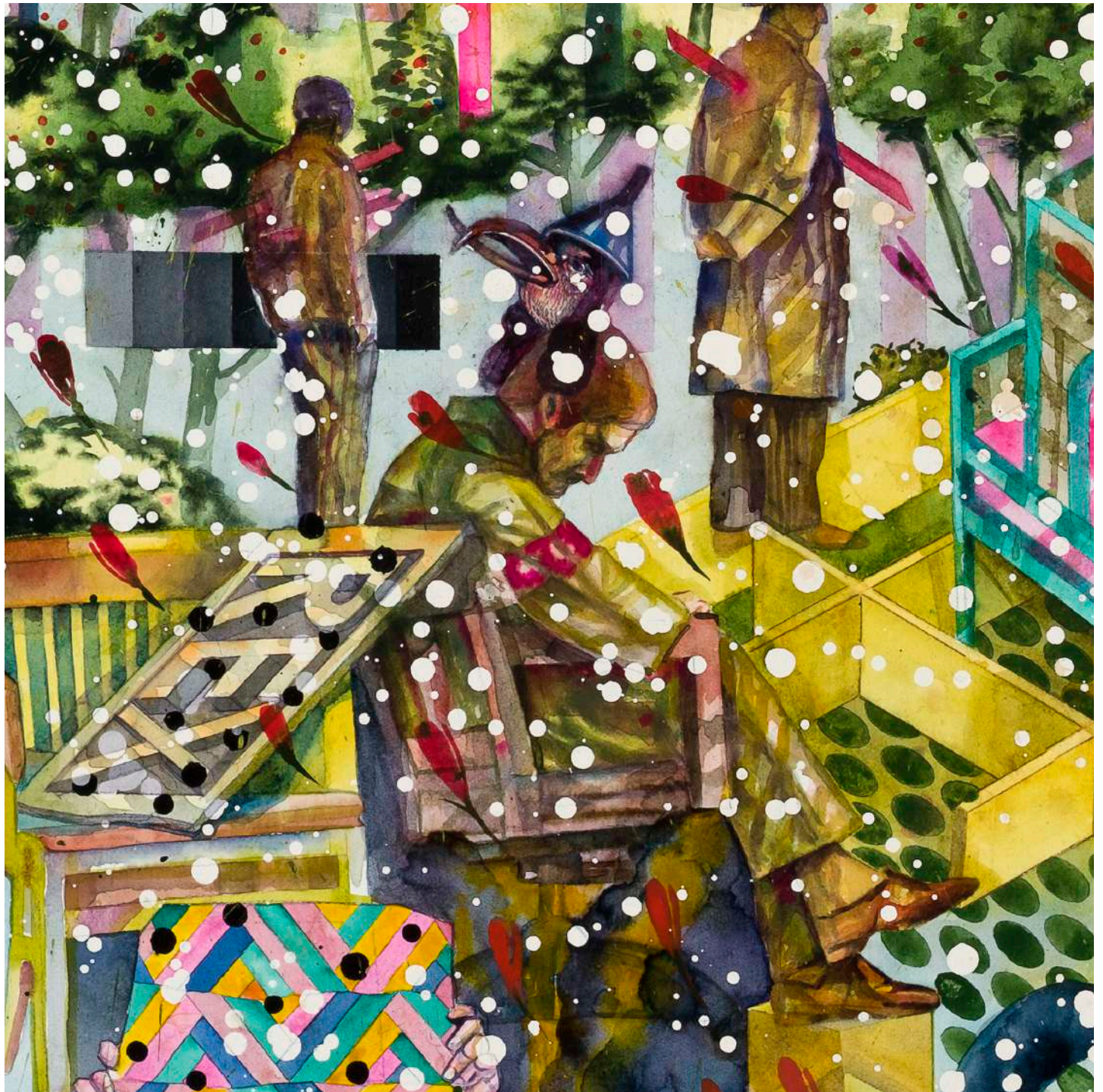
Behrang began painting large watercolors ten years ago to experience a more physical and intimate relationship with painting. Later, watercolor served as a metaphor for the movements in history. As he explains, “similar to any revolution or political movement in history, the painter may foresee the final desired outcome, but accidents and mistakes can deviate the artist from his original path. After every mistake, he is coerced to advance in the direction of the consequences following that error. For this reason, watercolor equates to history as it moves forward with predictions and swerves its course in response to every irreversible mistake that, comparable to history, cannot be erased, whitened, or reset.” Thus, the works of “The Missing Witness” collection are not concerned with reconstruction and representation, rather they are pursuing the historical progress created with watercolor resulting in an unedited and distorted history.

*By Yasmin Moshari*



*The Missing Witness*  
Watercolor on cotton paper  
2022  
160 x 130 cm



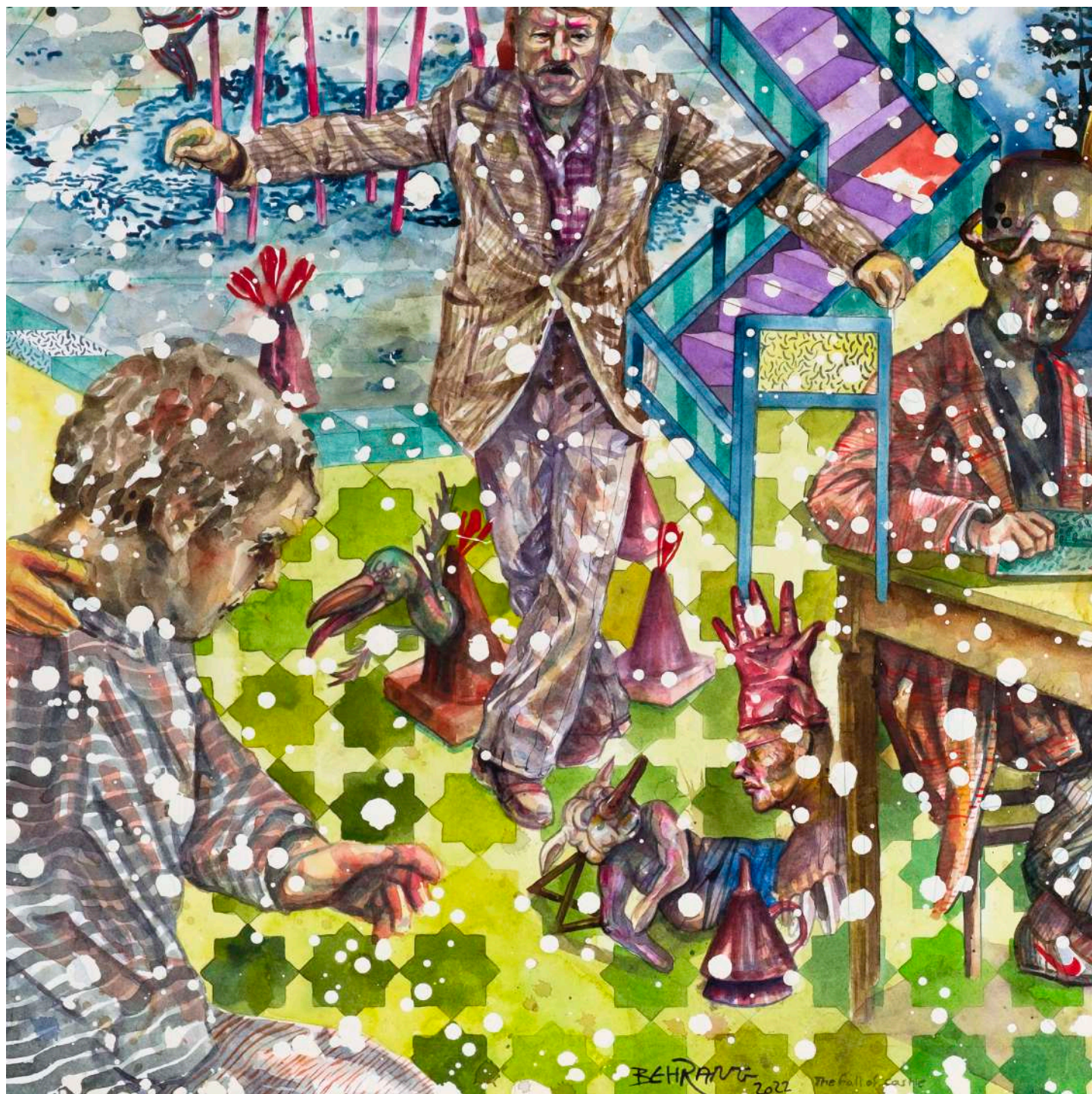






*The Fall of a Castle*  
Watercolor on cotton paper  
2022  
160 x 130 cm









*Liberty defeats demons*  
2022  
Watercolor on cotton paper  
140 x 200 cm









*Quaestio De Facto*  
(Question About Fact)  
2022  
Watercolor on cotton paper  
168 x 192 cm









*The Fall of a civilization*  
2022  
Watercolor on cotton paper  
128 x 183 cm









Mangolia  
2022  
Watercolor on cotton paper  
140 x 200 cm



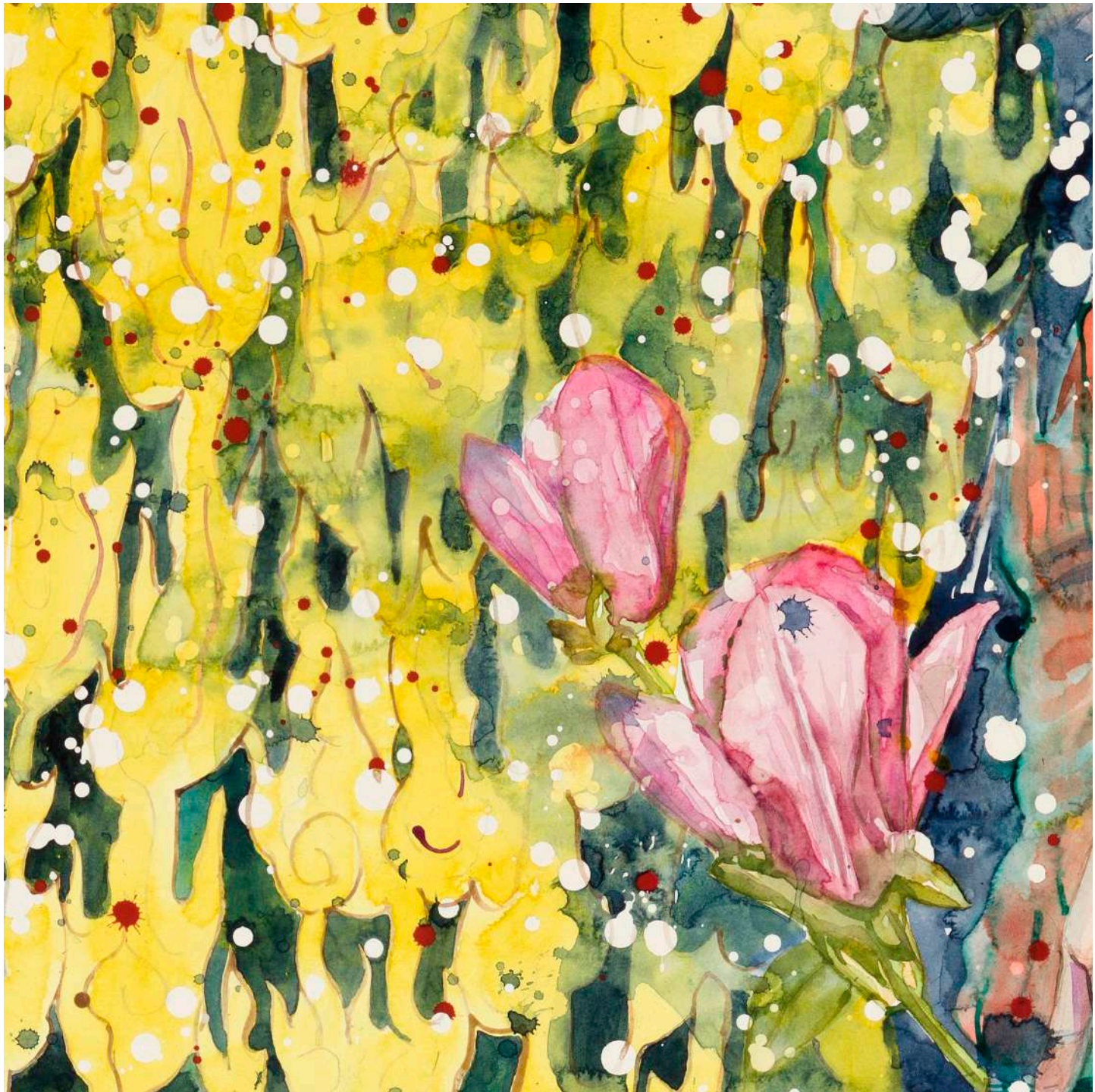




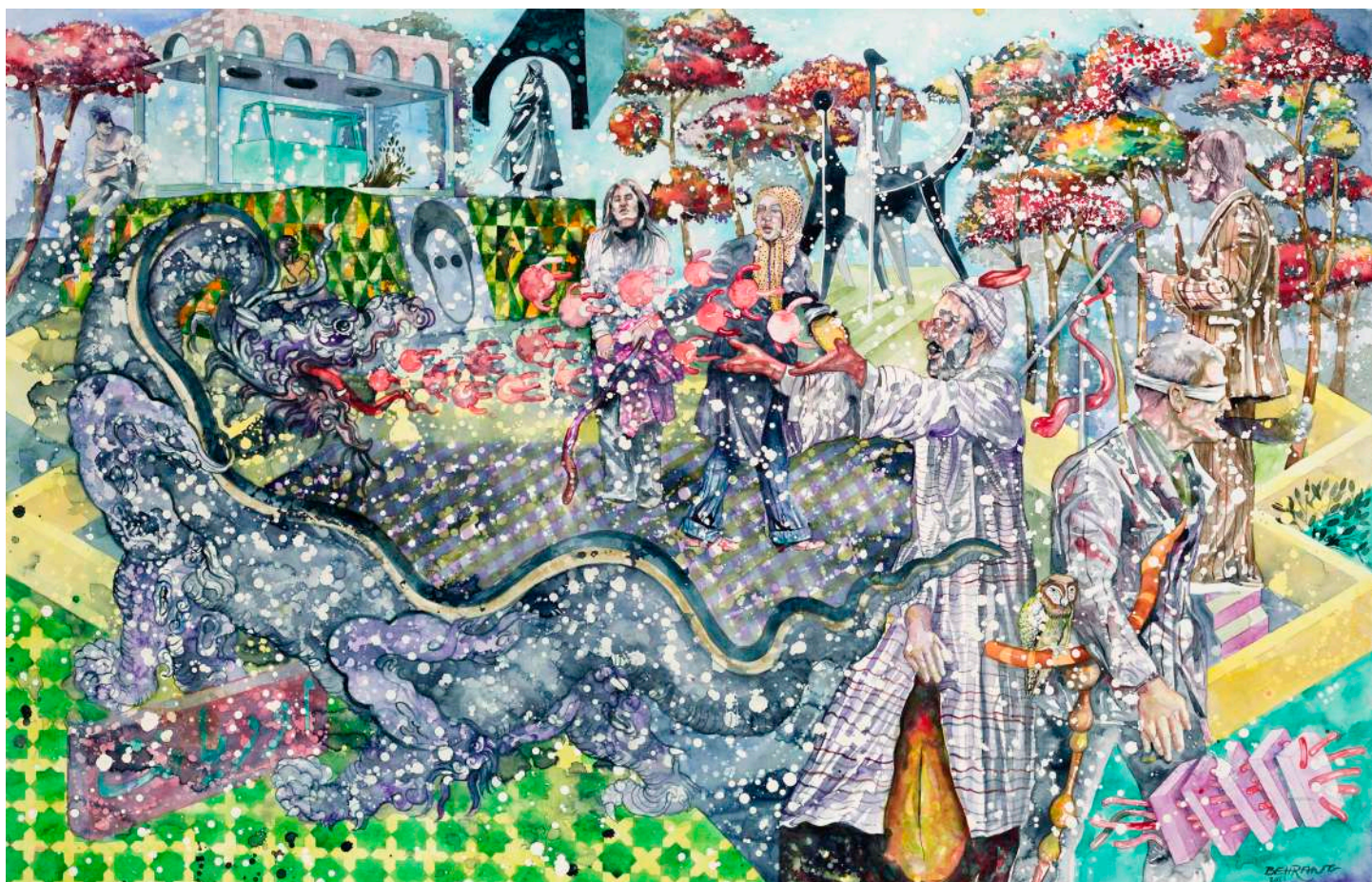


*Siavansh on Fire*  
2022  
Watercolor on cotton paper  
140 x 200 cm









Vice  
2022  
Watercolor on cotton paper  
140 x 200 cm







## BEHRANG SAMADZADEGAN

### BIOGRAPHY



Behrang Samadzadegan (b 1979 Tehran, Iran) learned the basics of art at a very young age. He received his BFA from the Tehran University of Arts and his MFA from Tehran Tarbiat Modares University. In 2008 he received the Golden Feather from the first International Media Art Forum for Youth in Cairo. In 2009 he received the Visiting Arts artist residency award in Spike Island, Bristol, United Kingdom. In 2012 he was awarded an artist residency from the Atelierhaus Salzamt Linz, Austria. He was also the recipient of the artist residency of the Cleveland Foundation Creative Fusion Artists Program, Cleveland, Ohio, USA. Since 2004 he has been giving lectures on art theory and holding workshops at the Sooreh University, Tehran University of Art, Aria Art Institute, and Mahe Mehr Cultural Art Institute. As a visiting artist, he taught at the Cleveland Institute of Art for a semester in 2015. He has been a jury member of the fourth Damonfar Biennial for Painting, the New Generation Annual for Painting, the Video Artist Festival of Isfahan, the Persbook Annual of Contemporary Arts, the Vista Prize, Versus Biennial, and the Mohsen Projects Open Call. In 2022 he curated the exhibition titled "Minimalism and Conceptual art in the mid-20th century" at the Tehran Museum Of Contemporary Art (Tehran MOCA). In his works, Behrang seeks to probe the possibility (or impossibility) of representing truth, identity, and history within the framework of aesthetic laws and to challenge the capacity of the image for displaying these concepts. As a scholar and curator, he enjoys discovering and studying new artistic phenomena and believes in rethinking and challenging the established rules and requirements of art. Painting has been Samadzadegan's main focus. The subject matters of his works are drawn from images and narratives of contemporary Iranian history, which he combines with fictional stories and the aesthetics of painting. His goal, however, is not to represent historical narratives. The image of history, he believes, is a personal matter created under the influence of visual and aesthetic stereotypes, a combination of confusion, chaos, and a futile quest for reaching unattainable truth.



## EDUCATION

- 2007 MFA in Painting from T.M.U- Tehran
- 2001 BFA in Painting from Iran Art University-Tehran
- 1996 Graduation from High school in graphic design

## AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

- 2008 Golden Feather, 1st International Media Art Festival (IMAFY), Cairo, Egypt
- 2009 Visiting Arts artist residency in Spike Island, Bristol, United Kingdom
- 2012 Artist residency, Atelierhaus Salzamt, Linz, Austria
- 2015 Cleveland Foundation Creative Fusion Artists Program, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2002 Requiems, Painting exhibition, Atbin gallery, Tehran
- 2005 The Post War Dream, Painting exhibition, Elahe gallery, Tehran
- 2006 H&H, heaven and hell, Digital illustrations, 13 Vanak gallery, Tehran  
Military Attendance, Painting exhibition, Gollestan gallery, Tehran
- 2009 Everything is just fine!, Aaran art gallery, Tehran
- 2011 Good Stories for Good Children, Aaran art gallery, Tehran  
Love in The time of unrest, XVA Gallery, Dubai
- 2013 Art of Impotency, Aaran art gallery, Tehran
- 2015 Heading Utopia, Zygote Press Inc, Cleveland, Ohio, USA
- 2018 The Chronicle of Cenmar's Descent in Kafka's Castle, Mohsen Gallery PASIO, Tehran
- 2021 HEADING UTOPIA; CHAPTER 2: THE SPRING THAT NEVER CAME, Mohsen Gallery, Tehran

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

- 2005 A consumption of justice (curated by Beral Madra), Diyarbakir Art center, Turkey
- 2006 5th Gyumri international art biennial, Armenia  
CONCHA suitcase show, Manila, Philippines
- 2007 Everything is going to be alright, Apartment Project, Istanbul, Turkey  
East by East, Video and film festival, the art institute of university of Chicago, USA  
First contemporary art biennale of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki - Greece
- 2014 The Other Side of Visibility, Mottahedan Projects, Dubai
- 2015 Tehran; virtual-real, Aaran art gallery, Tehran
- 2016 United nonsense, Creative Fusion Artists exhibition, Cleveland, Ohio



- 2007 Everything is going to be alright, Apartment Project, Istanbul, Turkey  
 East by East, Video and film festival, the art institute of university of Chicago, USA  
 First contemporary art biennale of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki - Greece  
 Bounded by, Basement gallery, Vienna - Austria  
 Second Video Festival, Contemporary Image Collective (CIC) Cairo- Egypt  
 Reloading images, Berlin-Tehran / Work in Progress 2007, A project by Reloading Images-Berlin,  
 in collaboration with Parkingallery Tehran-Berlin  
 CARAVAN, An exhibition of Iranian contemporary art, Shiraz Gallery, Venice-Italy
- 2008 Meeting with the Heterotopias: A selection from the 1st Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art",  
 February 9-March 30, 2008, Municipal Gallery of Larisa - G.I.Katsigras Museum, Larisa, Greece  
 The 1st International Media Art Forum for Youth "IMAFY"  
 Heterotopias. A selection from the 1st Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art" Belgrade cultural center  
 BREAKING NEWS, contemporary art from Middle East, F&A projects, Paris, France. HAPPY DAYS,  
 video and shorts from Middle East (49th Thessaloniki film festival), Thessaloniki, Greece.
- 2009 Iran inside out, Chelsea Art Museum, July 2009, New York, USA.  
 The Promise of Loss, Hilger Brot galley (curaor: Shaheen Merali), Vienna, Austria.  
 Golden Gates, Contemporary art from Middle East, Paris, France.
- 2010 The Promise of Loss, Arario gallery, January-February 2010, New York  
 Iran inside out, Farjam foundation, Dubai  
 ARTISTERIUM 3, Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia  
 Postcards from Tehran, 18th Street Art Center, Santa Monica, USA
- 2011 My super hero, Morano Kiang Gallery, Los Angeles, USA  
 Position Velocity Acceleration, XVA Gallery, Dubai
- 2012 Reflecting Reality", Vienna Art Week, Sigmund Freud Museum, Vienna  
 The state of in-Between, Atelierhaus Salzamt, Linz, Austria  
 Contemporary Iranian Art, New Albion Gallery, NSW, Australia
- 2014 The Other Side of Visibility, Mottahedan Projects, Dubai
- 2015 Tehran; virtual-real, Aaran art gallery, Tehran
- 2016 United nonsense, Creative Fusion Artists exhibition, Cleveland, Ohio  
 Iran X Cuba Beyond the Headlines, Rogue Space Chelsea, New York



## CURATOR

- 2010 Recognizable, an index of Iranian figurative painting during the 1990's  
Farevahar Gallery, Tehran
- 2011 Of blossoms and bullets, an index of Iranian young artists, Aaran gallery, Tehran
- 2012 Post-Pop, (an index of the Pop-like visual approaches in Iranian contemporary art within social-political contexts and concepts), Mah-e- Mehr Gallery, Tehran
- Untitled, an index of Iranian young artists, Aaran gallery, Tehran,
- 2015 Less is More, Aaran gallery, Tehran
- 2016 Suspended, Aaran gallery, Tehran
- 2018 EPISODE3: Hidden, Mohsen Art Gallery, Tehran
- 2022 Paper: A Field of Revelation, Bavan Art Gallery, Tehran
- 2022 Minimalism & Conceptual Art in the mid-20th century, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA)

## MEMBER OF JURY

- 2011 The 4th Damonfar Biennial for painting, Tehran
- 2012 The 7th New Generation (Nasl-e-No) Annual for painting, Tehran
- 2014 The 2nd Video Artist Festival, Isfahan
- 2016 The 6th Persbook Annual of contemporary arts, Tehran
- 2017 The 1st VISTA prize for contemporary arts, Tehran
- The 3rd Versus prize for painting, Tehran
- 2017 The 7th Persbook Annual of contemporary arts, Tehran,
- 2018 The 2nd VISTA prize for contemporary arts, Tehran
- The 1st Mohsen Projects award, Tehran
- 2019 The 3rd VISTA prize for contemporary arts, Tehran, 2019
- The 2nd Mohsen Projects award, Tehran
- 2021 The 4th VISTA prize for contemporary arts, Tehran
- Industrial Heritage Project, Dayhim Art Society (DAS), Tehran



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