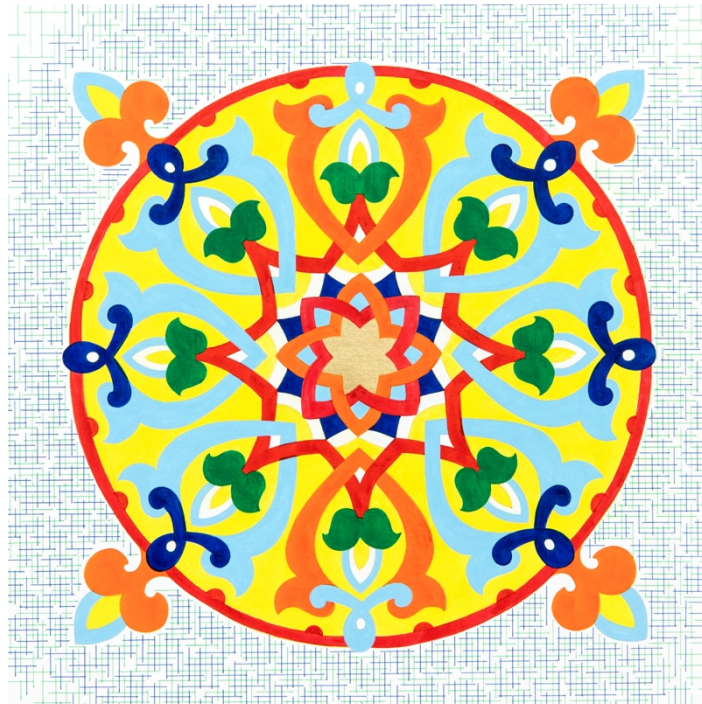


# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

*'Grace versus Strength: The Elements of Ornament'*

By

Shahzad Ghazi



Grace versus Strength VI, 2022  
(Gouach, Gold + Silver Leafing & Pen on Canvas, 53 x 84 cm)

"I felt the invention and design of pattern was a creative practice quite beyond me. But after years of investigation and study of books, motifs, geometric patterns and designs in mosques and historical buildings, I began to understand the formulas, codes and families in the world of patterns. Today I use these codes to speak in a secret language about subjects that I find impossible to clearly express in any other way."

- Shahzad Hassan Ghazi

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce artist Shahzad Ghazi's solo show *'Grace versus Strength: The Elements of Ornament'* opening on 30th May 2022.

Shahzad experiments with classic Islamic art and the modern art while focusing on the usage of ornaments, which he describes as "the elaboration of functionally complete objects for the sake of visual pleasure" The usage of ornaments in art, although an age old practice, for most of the twentieth century has been systematically excluded from mainstream Western art-practice as well as Asian art. Since the beginning of the Romantic Movement, we have tended to equate creativity with spontaneity, but in traditional ornament, visual effects rarely happen by accident. Ornament is labor-intensive by its glamour of shapes, forms and colors.

Fortunately, ornament usage is becoming acceptable again. Ornaments are intended, first and last, to give pleasure. It transforms the inessential into a theater for passion, beauty, and invention. Unlike traditional painting and sculpture, whose subject matter provides the key to their emotional tone, ornament communicates primarily through form. The only way to appreciate ornament is by contemplating it, and gaining a new understanding of the relation between functional and decorative form. This is exactly what we can find in Shahzad's works.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Shahzad Hassan Ghazi was born in 1983 in Lahore, Pakistan. In 2002 he began studying for his Fine Arts Diploma where he learnt skills of all arts and then got specialized in miniature painting, eventually becoming a master at the traditional practice. By 2005, he had completed his studies and began working at artist studios before getting his Bachelors in Fine Arts holding a SAARC Scholarship from the Beacon House National University, under the guidance of Rashid Rana and Salima Hashmi. Shahzad believes that the basic practice of art is important for creating any kind of art form including miniature painting which he has kept it alive in his works although many Pakistanis have now abandoned this part of their heritage since 1947.

Shahzad lives and works in Dubai, UAE and uses his art as a personal meditative practice in order to find balance and realize relationships spatially as well as interpersonally. He has dedicated his career to revitalizing the ancient traditions embedded within his own heritage and bringing them into the contemporary art world.

## ABOUT THE GALLERY:

Since its establishment over four decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western, Central Asian, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European, and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 16,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East.