

# MEHDI FARHADIAN





**MEHDI FARHADIAN**

*REVEALING THE UNSEEN*

The background is a complex, layered painting. The upper portion features a sky with swirling white and light blue clouds against a darker blue background. A large, dark bird with its wings spread is flying across the sky. Below the sky, there are dark, vertical silhouettes of what appear to be columns or pillars. In the lower half, there are more silhouettes of structures, possibly tents or huts, with some internal details visible. Various animals are depicted: a dark dog in the bottom left, a brown dog in the bottom right, and several other animals in the middle ground, including what looks like a horse or a large dog. The overall color palette is dominated by blues, whites, and dark silhouettes, creating a dreamlike and mysterious atmosphere.

## ***Revealing the Unseen***

History and imagination intertwine in this exhibition, which brings together a selection of my paintings from the past six years. For years, I have wandered through such a world across different bodies of work. In my mind, these paintings are illustrated moments from a travelogue to another land, a no-place within history, where the unseen becomes visible. Its objects, animals, and human figures appear as actors stepping onto a stage. The stage is at times architectural, at times a landscape, and at others interior spaces inspired by archival photographs. Visual sources drawn from diverse regional cultures, temporalities, and geographies function as living material that has shaped the layers of these works; within this process they acquire new meanings, and the pleasure of this search remains the primary motivation behind my practice.

# MEHDI FARHADIAN

Mehdi Farhadian's paintings effectively integrate abstract and figurative features to create dreamlike, visually stunning landscapes and city views, inhabited by people and animals commonly engaged in enigmatic acts. His personal style fuses realistic, expressive and fictional narratives, providing a potent vehicle for his highly personal subject matters, which typically demonstrate his deep concern for Iranian contemporary history. This historical approach addresses political highlights and the everyday life experienced collectively. His characteristic iconography originates from sources such as the overflowing vegetation of the Khazar bank in Northern Iran, famous Iranian buildings, and recent historical figures. It is this orchestrated variety that makes up Farhadian's entirely subjective and original imagery.

His style of painting combines a great respect for details with a powerful handling of contrasting visual effects achieved by pouring and dripping paint. By combining abstract and expressive techniques, his meticulous skill and particular subject matter have saved him a distinctive place in Iranian contemporary painting.

Mehdi Farhadian lives in an old, historically charged neighborhood in Tehran where he was born in 1980. He received his MA in painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran. Since 2010, he has taught painting and drawing at Elm o Farhang University, (Science and Culture), Tehran. Select exhibitions include ART CAPITAL (Comparison), Grand Palais, 2016, Paris (France); The Great Game, Iran Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia 2015, Venice (Italy); Magic of Persia, Royal College of Arts, 2011, London (UK); and Iran Inside Out, Chelsea Museum, 2009, New York.



Backbone  
2024  
Acrylic on Canvas  
120 x 150 cm



Quarrel in Garden  
2025  
Acrylic on canvas  
70 x 90 cm





Ballet in Three Acts  
2026  
Acrylic on Canvas  
420 x 150cm







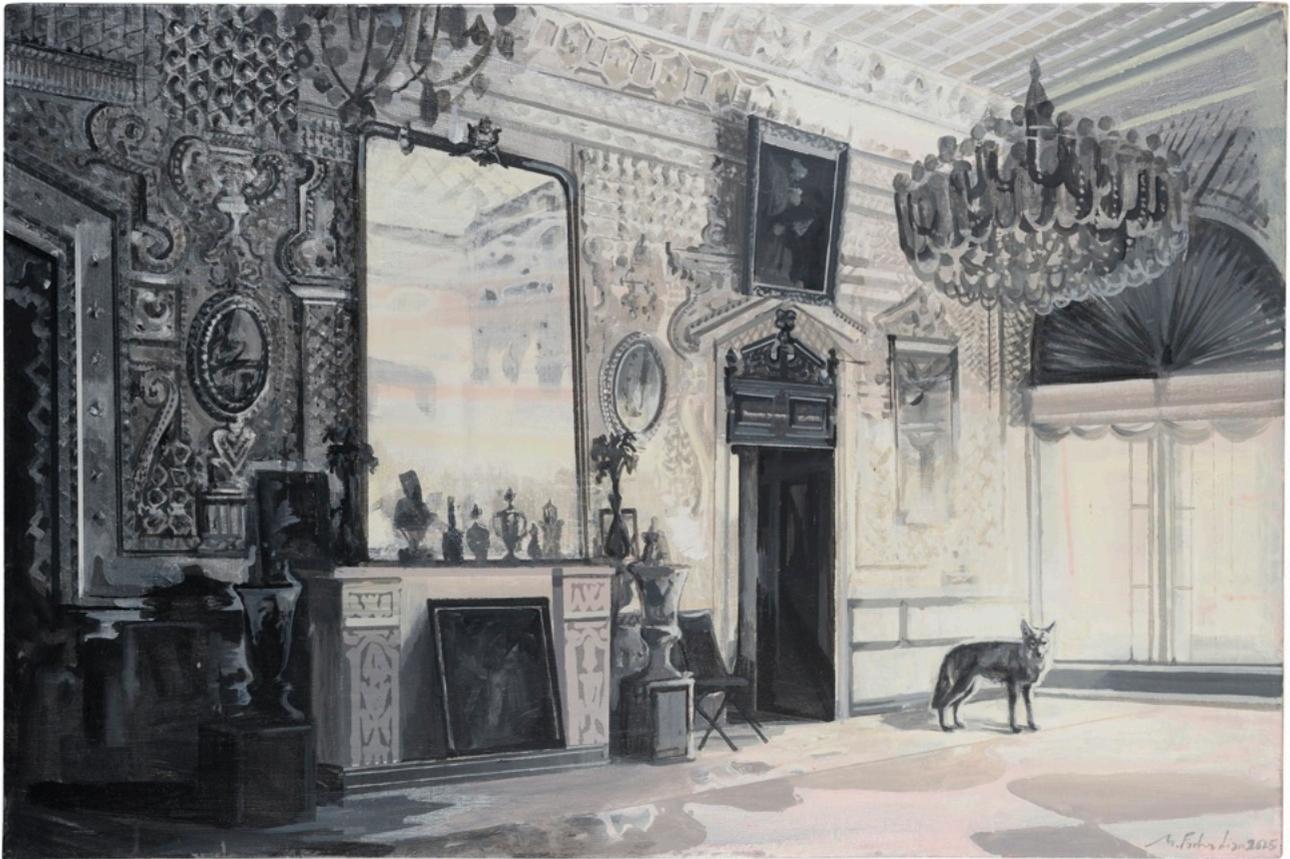
Ballet of War  
2022  
Acrylic on Canvas  
150 x 200 cm



Uninvited Guest  
2024  
Acrylic on Canvas  
130 x 180 cm



Burj Al Asad  
2026  
Acrylic on Canvas  
200 x 250 cm



Day Dream  
Acrylic on Canvas  
2025  
60 x 90 cm



Inflated Lion  
Acrylic on Canvas  
2018  
205 x 320 cm



Light & Sound  
2025  
Acrylic on Canvas  
250 x 200 cm







Mane of Fury  
2026  
Acrylic on Canvas  
150x200cm



Motherland  
Acrylic on Canvas  
2025  
250 x 200 cm



Only Pigeons are Righteous  
Acrylic on Canvas



Peace Memorial  
Acrylic on Canvas  
2025  
70 x 90 cm



Roudaki Hall  
Opera House  
Acrylic on Canvas  
2024  
180x



Sand Castle  
2026  
Acrylic on Canvas  
150 x 120 cm

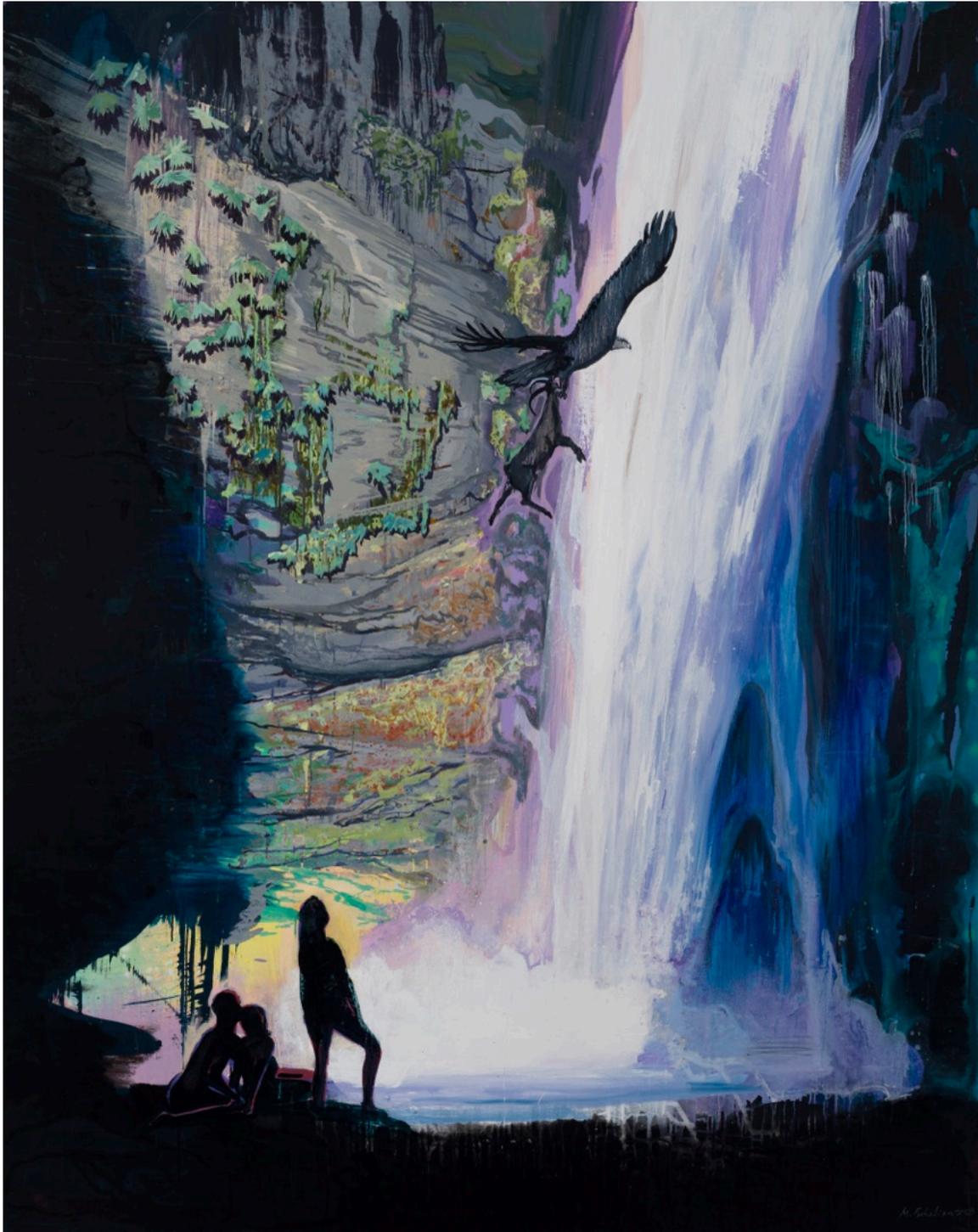






Warrior III  
2026  
Acrylic on Canvas  
200 x 250 cm





Witnessing  
2025  
Acrylic on Canvas  
250 x 200 cm



## Education

- 2005 BA Painting from Faculty of Fine Arts Tehran University-Tehran-Iran
- 2008 MA Painting from Faculty of Fine Arts Tehran University-Tehran-Iran

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2020 Twilight, Aaran Gallery, Tehran
- 2018 Parade Square, Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York New
- 2018 Watercolors , Richard Taittinger Gallery (Lower Level Gallery), New York
- 2016 Sanctums of Decision , Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York
- 2014 Fires & Flowers, Mah Art Gallery, Tehran
- 2013 A Miracle for the Whole World, Lawrie Shabibi Gallery, Dubai
- 2011 BAHARESTAN, Mah Art Gallery, Tehran
- 2009 Untitled, Mah Art Gallery, Tehran

## Group Exhibitions

- 2021 Reflections, Contemporary art of the Middle East & North Africa, The British Museum, London
- 2015 Iran Art Now!, Setareh Gallery, Dusseldorf
- 2016 ART CAPITAL ( Comparison ) Grand Palais, Paris
- 2012 The Sea, XVA Gallery, Dubai.
- 2011 MOPCAP Finalist Artist Exhibition-Royal College of Arts, London.
- 2011 MOPCAP Exhibition-Traffic Gallery-Dubai-UAE
- 2010 Landscape, Aaran Gallery, Tehran.
- 2010 To Paint Cinema, Mohsen Gallery, Tehran.
- 2009 In the Mood for Paper, F2 Gallery, Beijing.
- 2009. Iran Inside Out, Chelsea Museum, New York, USA.
- 2009 Iran on Paper, The last 10 Year, Aaran Gallery, Tehran.
- 2009 Iran/Painting/Now, Silk Road Gallery, Tehran.
- 2009 Iran Without Border, Galerie Almine Rech, Paris
- 2009 Movers & Shakers in Contemporary Iranian Art, LTMH Gallery, New York, USA.
- 2008 Art fair, Creek Art Fair, Dubai
- 2007 Radical Drawing 1, Azad art Gallery-Tehran.
- 2007. Radical Drawing 2, Tehran Gallery, University of Tehran.
- 2007 Four Yong Artists, Mah Art Gallery, Tehran.
- 2007 Song of Bulbuls (Nightingales) of the Oil-Rich Regions, Museum of Contemporary Art, Isfahan, Iran.
- 2005 Selected Contemporary Iranian Realist & Hyperrealist Art, Niavaran Cultural Center, Tehran.

## Biennale

- 2015 The Great Game, Iran pavilion, Venice Biennale

## Residency

- 2017 Summer Resident at Delfina Foundation, London
- 2013 Summer Resident at Cite internationale des arts, Paris

## **Permanent Collections**

2018 The British Museum, London

## **Teaching Experiences**

From 2010 Painting and drawing courses, Elm o Farhang (Science and Culture) University, Tehran.  
2005-2010 Painting and drawing courses, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tehran, Open public courses.

## **Bibliography**

DOWNEY, Anthony, Hamid Keshmirshakan, and Mark Irving. Different Sames: New Perspectives in Contemporary Iranian Art. Ed. Hossein Amirsadeghi. London: Thames & Hudson, 2009  
EIGNER, Saeb. Art of the Middle East: Modern and Contemporary Art of the Arab World and Iran. London: Merrell Publishers, 2010  
GRIGOR, Talinn . Contemporary Iranian Art: From the Street to the Studio. London: Reaktion Books, 2014  
KESHMIRSHEKAN, Hamid. Contemporary Iranian Art: New Perspectives. London: Saqi Books, 2014  
The Afkhami Collection Of Modern & Contemporary Iranian Art , Honar. London: Phaidon, 2017  
PORTER, Venetia, Natasha Morris & Charles Tripp. Reflections, Contemporary art of the Middle East and North Africa, Londo: The British Museum Press, 2020

## **Select Press**

DARABI Helia. "Beyond Nostalgia." Etemaad Newspaper, No. 1617. 17 February 2008  
HOMAYOUN EISLER, Maryam. Canvas, Vol. 7: April 2011  
AIMA, Rahel, "Darker Dreams", Canvas, November 2016, p. 84-89  
BALAGHI, Dr. Shiva, "Sanctums of Decision", Harper's Bazaar Arabia, Issue 25, Winter 2016, p. 88-89  
KARIMI, Dr. Pmela, "Mehdi Farhadian: The Painter of History's Blind Spots"  
Eternal Efforts to Stay Prepared for an Uncertain Future: Painter Mehdi Farhadian Talks to Alannah Farrell about His Latest Work, Art Fuse, 2018

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Front Cover image

Burj Al Asad

Acrylic on Canvas

2026

200 x 250 cm

Back cover image

Warrior III

Acrylic on Canvas

2026

200 x 250 cm

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