

Shahriar Ahmadi

Highlights 2008–2012



Shahriar Ahmadi — Untitled (Detail)
from *The Rice Sellers Arcade*, 2008
mixed media on canvas / 220 × 140 cm

Preface

by

Heidi &
Franz J. Leupi
AB Gallery
Switzerland



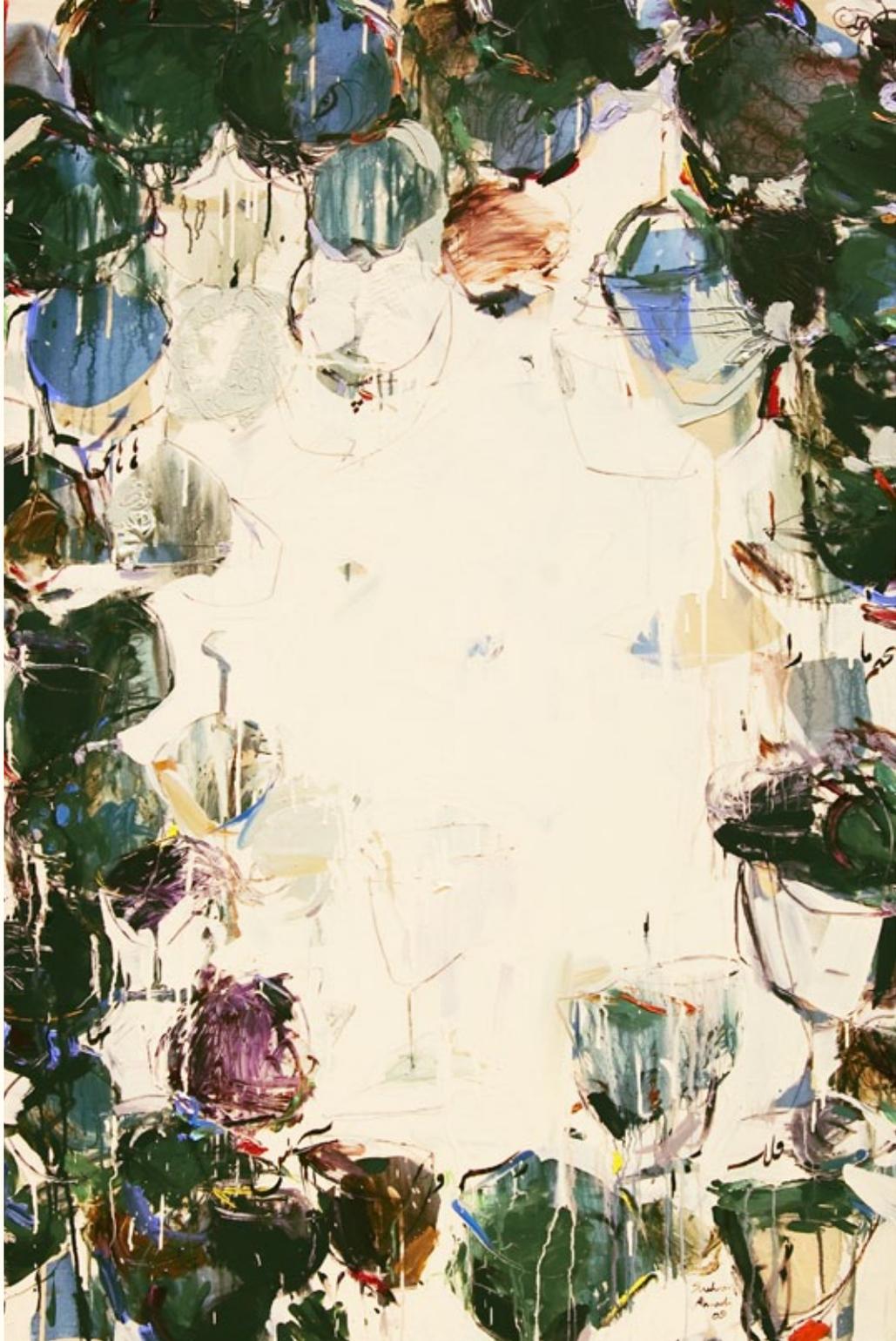
Shahriar Ahmadi — Untitled #2
from *Rumi in my Chalice* series, 2009
mixed media on canvas / 150 × 100 cm

When we saw Shahriar Ahmadi's works in 2008 for the first time, immediately, we were enthusiastic and impressed about the artist's unique expressive painting style filled with strong emotions. Spontaneously, we invited Shari — that is how we affectionately call him — to take part in an exhibition at our gallery that we used to have at that time. This was followed by further exhibitions and he became a very welcomed guest at our Artist-in-residence studio in Lucerne. During his residencies he created works that were never shown beyond Switzerland. Hence we are pleased to announce that the works shown in this exhibition find their way to a broader public for the

first time. Genuine rarities, brilliant works of his *Rumi series* along with works continuing this idea, but also works of his *Archaic Techniques Of Lovemaking* as well as *Kiss series* are part of this very special exhibition.

It is our pleasure to present for the first time a small cross-section selection of his most important works created in the five years, between 2008 and 2013, together in this show.

Shahriar Ahmadi — Untitled
from *Rumi* series, 2009
mixed media on canvas / 150 × 100 cm



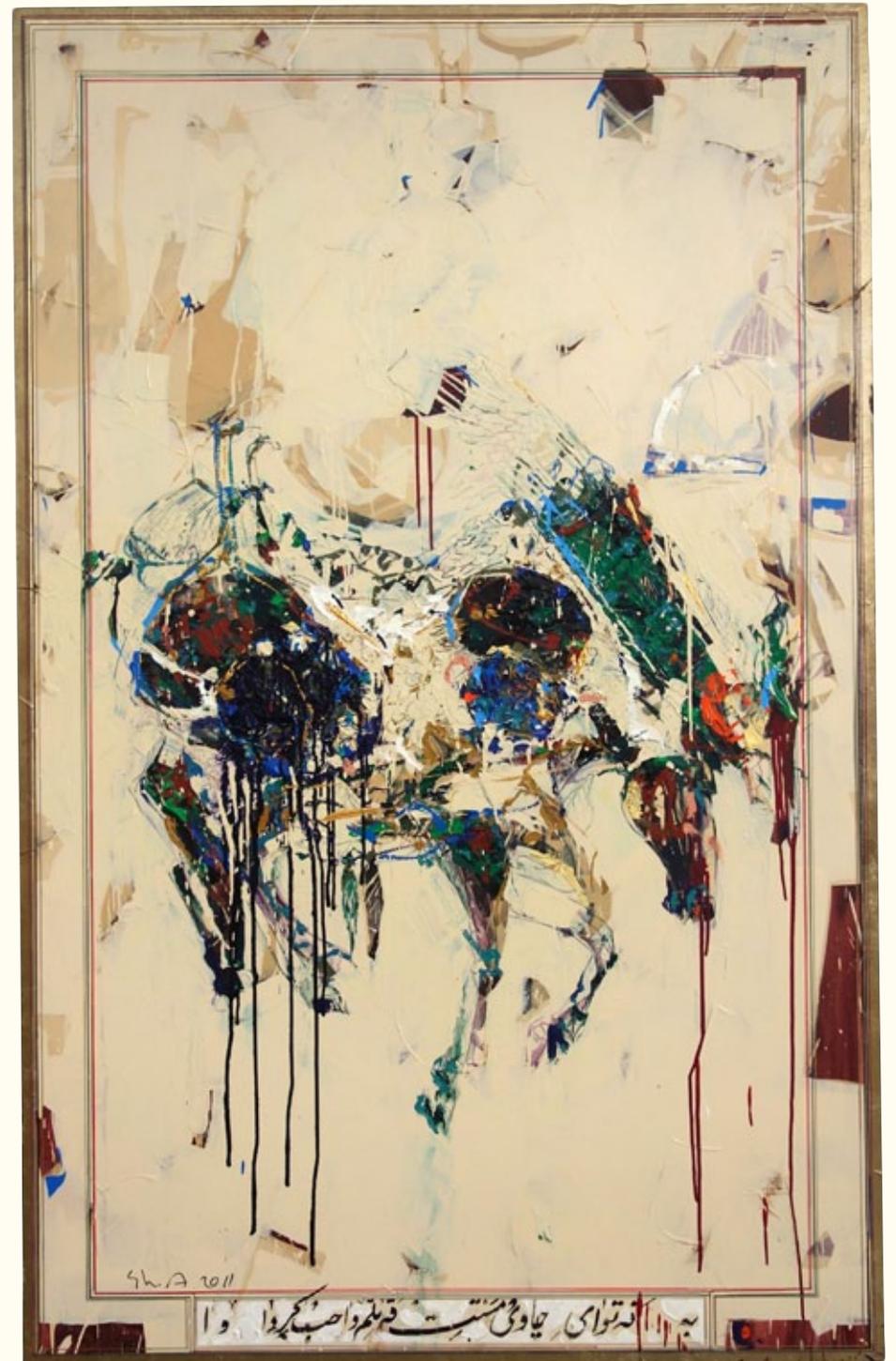


Shahriar Ahmadi — Untitled
from *Archaic Techniques of Lovemaking* series part 2, triptych, 2010
mixed media on canvas / triptych, 300 × 100 cm (150 × 100 cm each)



→ Shahriar Ahmadi ———— Untitled
 from *Archaic Techniques of Lovemaking* (diptych), 2010
 mixed media on canvas / diptych, 60 × 60 cm (60 × 30 cm each)

→ Shahriar Ahmadi ———— Untitled
 from *Archaic Techniques of Chemia* series, 2011
 mixed media on canvas / 220 × 140 cm





Shahriar Ahmadi — Untitled
from *Archaic Techniques of Lovemaking* series, triptych, 2010
mixed media on canvas / triptych, 260 × 585 cm (260 × 195 cm each)



Shahriar Ahmadi — Untitled
from *In the Midst of Nymphs*, 2009
mixed media on canvas / 150 × 100 cm



↑ Shahriar Ahmadi ———— **Untitled**
from *Archaic Techniques of Lovemaking* series, 2010
mixed media on canvas / 100 × 120 cm

→ Shahriar Ahmadi ———— **Shame**,
from *Archaic Techniques of Lovemaking* series, 2010
mixed media on canvas / 220 × 140 cm





Shahriar Ahmadi — Untitled
from *Archaic Techniques of Lovemaking* series, diptych, 2010
mixed media on canvas / diptych, 150 × 200 cm (150 × 100 cm each)

About

Shahriar Ahmadi

by

Morad Saghafi,
Tehran



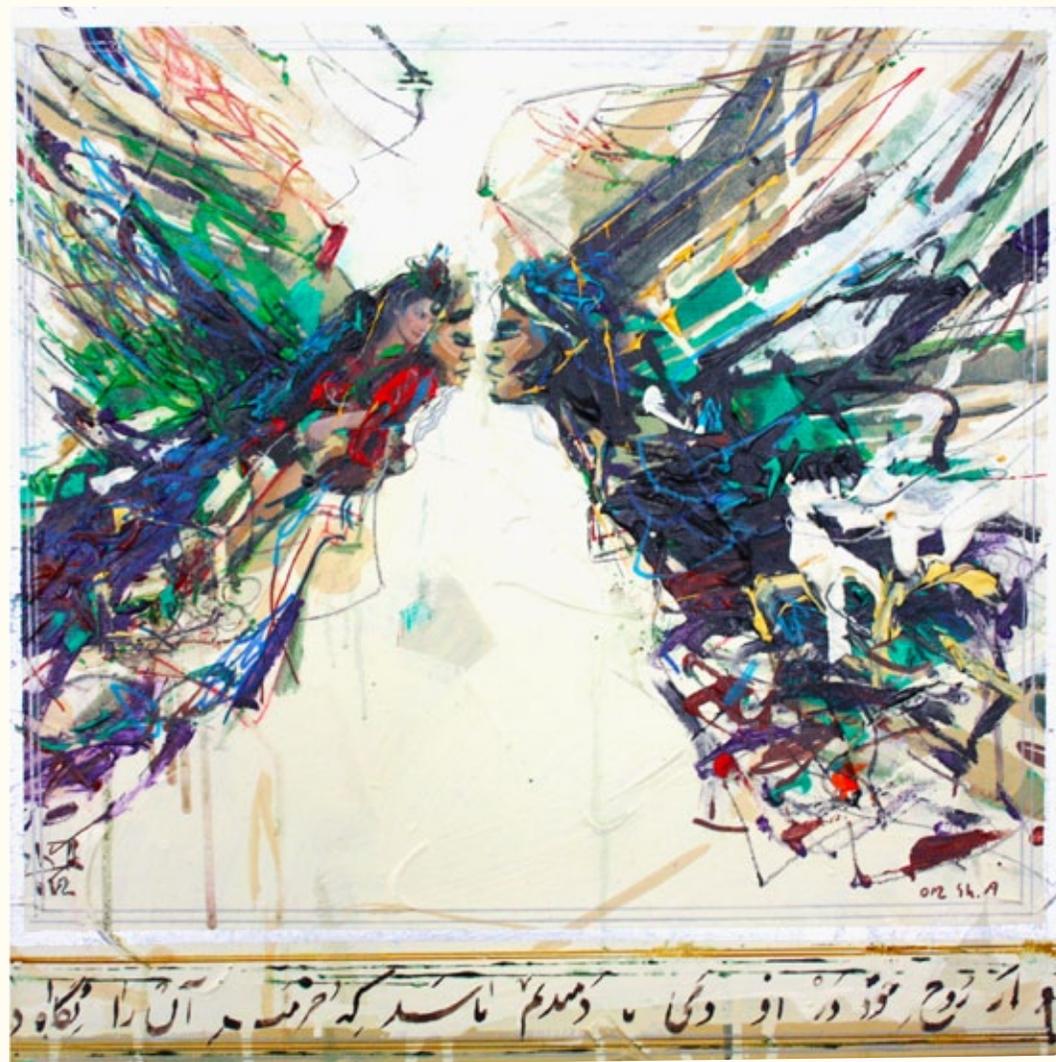
The appeal of illustrating Iranian gnosis with all its lyricism and complexity has always been an inspiration to Iranian painters and faced this land's painting with a tricky trial.

Many rose to the challenge but generally, not much was ever achieved; colors were used that assumingly belong to a mystical air and symbols such as squares and circles were incorporated to reflect the unity of existence in the perpetual search for truth. Shahriar Ahmadi is among the last painters to break a lance with this and he succeeded for he chose a totally different path. On the one hand, among the teachings of mysticism, he has focused on its redeeming satire, and on the other, he has given his heart to the personal feelings of taking the challenge.

Shahriar Ahmadi — Injection of Love 02
from *Archaic Techniques of Lovemaking* series Part 2, 2011
mixed media on canvas / 180 × 105 cm

The satire is shown through a kind of representation that borrows from figurative painting and makes use of expressionist elements, and his inner joy expressed

through abstraction. It is not unintentional if color, which acts as the link between the two mentioned worlds, is of such significance in Shahriar Ahmadi's paintings. The coexistence of the two worlds in his paintings enable him to draw on new and old, traditional and modern and religious and customary elements next to one other without least disparity. What makes Ahmadi — the painter of colors and contrasts — more competent is his ability to decide where a painting ends. Simple or intricate, small or large, familiar or unfamiliar, Ahmadi's paintings are all completed works.

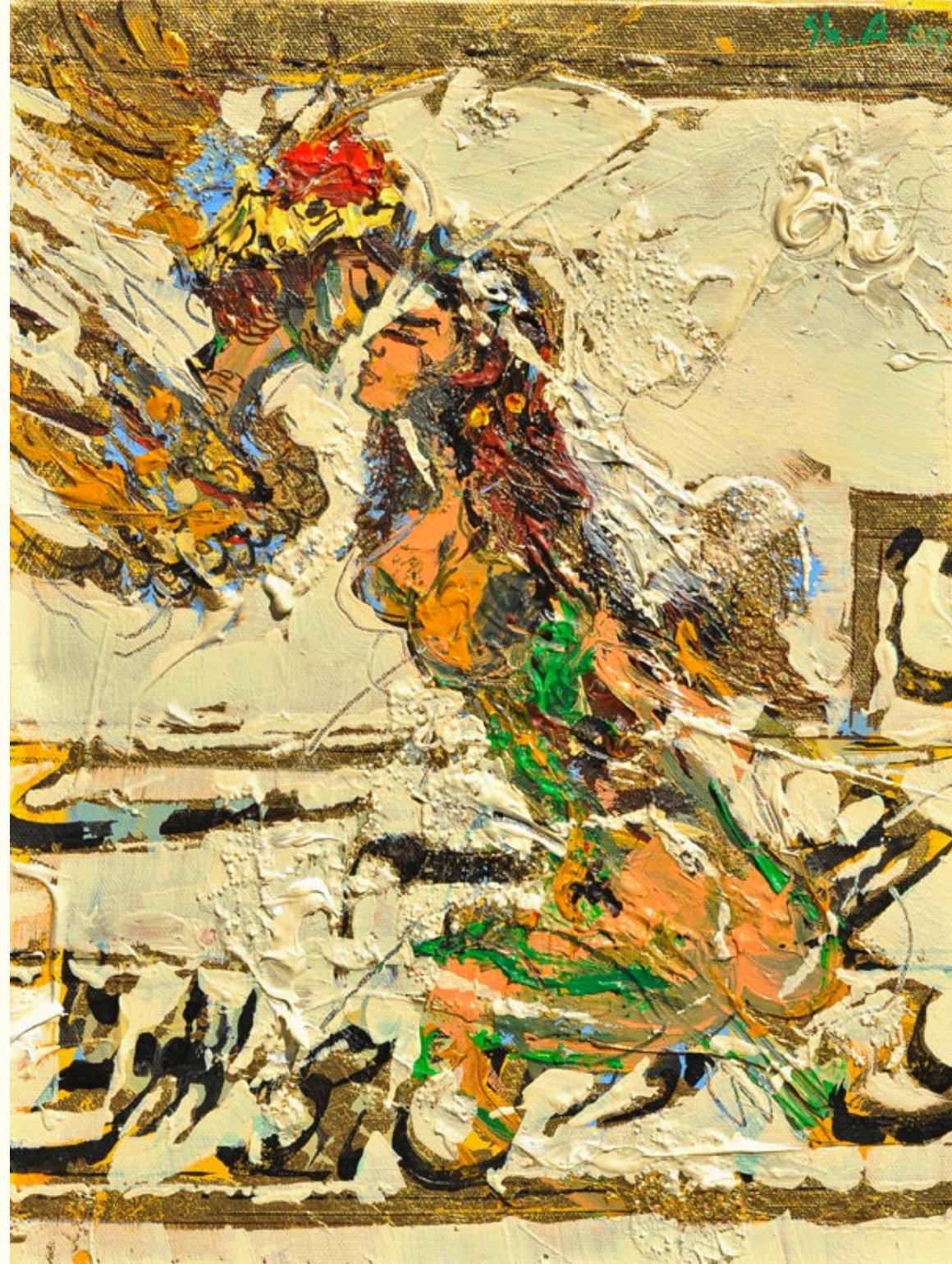


Shahriar Ahmadi — [Untitled](#)
from *Kiss* series, 2012
acrylic, pencil, gold leaf on canvas / 50 × 55 cm



→ Shahriar Ahmadi ———— **Untitled**
from *Kiss* series, 2012
acrylic, pencil, gold leaf on canvas / 95 × 60 cm

→ Shahriar Ahmadi ———— **Untitled**
from *Kiss* series, 2012
acrylic, pencil, gold leaf on canvas / 40 × 30 cm



Take us where we have never been before

by

Anna Fech

Shahriar Ahmadi — Untitled
from *Kiss* series, 2012
acrylic, pencil, gold leaf on canvas / 180 × 130 cm



Shahriar Ahmadi's engagement with art actually began with calligraphy, but then he realised that only through painting he could express himself truly. It gave him the experience of going beyond the limits of space and time, in which all his imagination could be kept in a single moment revealing all his secrets on the canvas in a way that could never be achieved only through words. Nevertheless, the written word in the form of ancient Persian literature still serves him as a rich source of inspiration and remained as hardly readable scribbles on the painting's surface, however, subordinating to the artist's fearless, passionate and expressive style. His favourite tools, in fact, are

his hands covering the canvas with dynamic colour traces materializing his imagination to the canvas.

Ahmadi dedicated one of his first series to his favourite poet Rumi, a Persian mystic of the 13th century and one of the greatest representatives of the Sufism.

Rumi's poetry amazes and astonishes until today, explaining Sufism not through difficult theory but by referring to objects and sceneries of the material world representing transcendental, higher ideas that mankind is striving for. In his verses he contemplates on the all-encompassing experience of love, that can be painful, however, always takes a pleasant ending derived from the believe everything has its origins in the divine love. Referring to Rumi and bringing poetry to life, Ahmadi integrates grapes symbolizing the wine, the ecstatic love potion and the chalice representing the open, receiving female shape, both, ultimately a reference of course to the divine love.

In his following series *Archaic Techniques of Lovemaking* he is more straightforward substituting the grapes and the chalices by lovers. On a first glance one could even overlook their intertwined bodies melting together through the impasto applied colour mass and capture the earthly love story that embodies on the meaning layer above the ecstatic mystical experience. In the same way he proceeds on the formal level, the sceneries are not clearly indicated rather abstract, leaving much freedom for the own associations. However, the viewer always unconsciously feels — if he



Shahriar Ahmadi — Untitled
from *In the Midst of Nymphs*, 2008
mixed media on canvas / 150 × 100 cm

is open to engage fully and completely with Ahmadi's art — the emotions and passion the canvases have been processed with.

Archaic Techniques of Chemia investigates the techniques of alchemy and the mankind's ultimate goal to find the great elixir. Alchemists spend their lifetime to find its two substances: the precious stone which turns everything into gold, and the elixir of youth or the elixir of life curing all disease and grants mankind immortality. For Shahriar, this is just another metaphor for the spiritual journey of man's soul towards discovering the truth. "In fact the great elixir is the same as love," he explains "If we take such a look at the world, we will achieve something as valuable as the precious stone or the elixir of youth. The most liberated look is the amorous look."

Such amorous look can be found in his most recent work series entitled *Kiss*. Inspired by the great Persian poets Hāfiz and Sa'dī, the artist depicts the lovers approaching each other slowly but never actually kissing. It is more about the magic moment before emphasising the strong attraction between the protagonists that are painted with spontaneous, eruptive brush strokes.

Once more, the depictions are talking about spiritual love, the driving force in striving for truth.

All of this series share the use of calligraphy in the form of loose scribbles pushed on the edges of the unreadable, beneath form. The fragments are taken out of the context, partly illegibly written thus used as a further visual medium along with his figurative depictions and not to describe or narrate as one might occasionally think. His tremendous achievement is to create an integral whole through a dynamic and stormy composition that bundles calligraphy and the actors on the canvas together resulting in sceneries filled with mystery ripping us out of the body and taking us where we have never been before.

August 2014

CV

Shariar Ahmadi (1979)
was born in Kamiaran, Iran.

Educational Background

- 2005 Master Degree, Art University, Tehran, Iran
- 2002 Bachelor Degree, Art University, Tehran, Iran
- 2001 Master Degree, Jahad Art University, Karaj, Iran
- 1997 Diploma in Painting, Boys' Academy of Fine Art, Kermanshah, Iran

Solo Show

- 2015 Highlights 2008–2012, AB Gallery Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2013 Shahriar Ahmadi Recent Works (2009–2013), Etemad Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2013 *Kiss*, AB GALLERY, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2011 *Archaic Techniques of Chemia*, AB GALLERY, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2011 *Miraj*, Etemad Gallery, Dubai, UAE
- 2010 *Archaic Techniques of Lovemaking*, AB GALLERY, Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2009 *At the Rice Seller's Arcade*, Etemad Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2008 *Rumi in my chalice (2)*, B21 Gallery, Dubai, UAE
- 2007 *Rumi in my chalice (1)*, Mah Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2006 *What is maddeh?*, Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2004 *The Story of the Merchant and Parrot (2)*, Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran

- 2003 *The Story of the Merchant and Parrot (1)*, Elahe Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2002 *Lion and Lord*, Elahe Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2000 *Sama*, Barg Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran

Selected Group Shows

- 2012 *Wonder Land*, Shokooh Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2012 *Contemporary Artist*, Hamayesh Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2011 *Colour of Love*, Assar Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2010 *Across Borders – Iran meets Wiesbaden*, NERO Gallery, Wiesbaden, Germany
- 2010 *Silent Position*, Velada St. Lucia, Maracaibo, Venezuela
- 2010 *Haft Negah*, Mellat Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2010 *Jamm, Art & Beyond*, Kuwait
- 2009 *Guns and Roses*, Eleven Howland, London, UK
- 2009 *Iran Unbowed*, London, UK
- 2009 *Writing Art*, Janine Rubeiz Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2009 *Iran*, curated by Vahid Sharifian, Silk Road Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2009 *Iran on Paper*, Aaran Gallery, Tehran, Iran

2009 *Across Borders (2)*,
Radical Gallery, Zug, Switzerland

2008 *Writing Art*,
Dar-al-fonoon Art Gallery, Kuwait

2008 *Across Borders*,
Radical Gallery, Zug, Switzerland

2008 Etemad Gallery, Tehran, Iran

2008 *Iranian Famous Artists*,
Collection of Lili Golestan,
Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran

2008 *Abdollah House*,
Dar-al-Fonoon Art Gallery, Kuwait

2007 *Art Expo*, Society of Iranian Painters,
Saad abad Cultural Centre,
Tehran, Iran

2007 *Song of Bulbuls of Oil-rich Lands*,
curated by Vahid Sharifian, Esfahan
Museum of Contemporary Art,
Esfahan, Iran

2007 *Radical Drawing*,
curated by Vahid Sharifian,
Tehran Gallery, Tehran, Iran

2007 *Shams' Divan*,
Palestine Museum of Contemporary
Art, Tehran, Iran

2007 *Collected Memories*, Art Space,
London, UK

2007 *Broken Promises, Forbidden
Dreams*, Iranian Heritage
Foundation, Art London, London, UK

2007 *100 artworks 100 artists*,
Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran

2007 *50 Contemporary Artists*,
Mah Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran

2006 *International Art Expo of Beijing*,
Beijing, China

2006 *Wishes and Dreams*,
Meridian Cultural Centre,
Washington DC, USA

2006 Society of Iranian Painters,
Esfahan Museum of Contemporary
Art, Esfahan, Iran

2006 *Contemporary Iranian Artists*,
Tehran Museum of
Contemporary Art, Tehran, Iran

2006 *50 Contemporary Artists*,
Mah Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran

2005 *100 artworks 100 artists*,
Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran,
Iran

2001 *Conceptual Art*,
Tehran Museum of
Contemporary Art, Tehran, Iran

Art Fairs

2012 Abu Dhabi Art, Abu Dhabi, UAE

2012 Viennafair, Vienna, Austria

2012 Art.Fair Köln, Cologne, Germany

2012 Scope Basel, Basel, Switzerland

2012 Art Selection, Basel, Switzerland

2012 Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

2011 Munich Contempo, Munich,
Germany

2011 Art Abu Dhabi, UAE Pavilion,
UAE

2011 Art Dubai, Madinat Jumeirah,
Dubai, UAE

2010 Istanbul Art Fair, Istanbul,
Turkey

2008 Art Paris – Abu Dhabi,
Abu Dhabi, UAE

2008 Art Dubai, Madinat Jumeirah,
Dubai, UAE



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Imprint

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