



DOMUS
ART GALLERY

MARJAN FAHIMI

CROSSOVER

THE PRESENT IS UNFOLDING

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Curated by Giulia Coccia

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On the cover: **“Purple Dream”** – Detail
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MARJAN FAHIMI AN ENCOUNTER

It is a sunny day and Marjan Fahimi's paintings – squared, circular and rectangular – lie against the white walls of her studio. Their radiant energy, moving from different directions and across the space, creates a vortex of impressions. We seat in front of them, Marjan hands over a cup of Persian tea and suddenly the vision settles-down. In each painting figures and sketched shapes pop up

from the surface and stretch the composition, shifting from mere abstract to a higher and complex level

of reading. And the journey begins.

“This is *Pirouz*”, Marjan points out the profile of a feline-like creature, “which in Iranian means Winner. I was inspired by the story of a cheetah cub rescued in May 2022, the only survivor to a littler of a breed on the way to extinction.” *Pirouz* became the symbol of revolution during the months of protests that have marked the existence of Iranians seeking freedom and recognition of human

rights. Regretfully it passed-away at the beginning of the year, making its brief life journey even more meaningful and enlightening. Today *Pirouz* still embodies a message of hope for victory and so it is represented by Marjan within a delicate yet compelling contraposition against a fighting Dragon-shaped figure.

Purple Dream is again based on a two-sided composition where the glimpse of a female face is juxtaposed to an overseeing horse head suggesting an illusory space where there is seemingly no boundary between the dreamer and the viewer. Powerful animals such as cheetahs and horses may encourage the association to the revolution, yet this seems to apply also to a small bird that ignites and uplifts its strength in *Rage*. Recalling the myth of the immortal Phoenix that cyclically regenerates from its ashes, its companion *Rebirth* pays homage to the lightness of resurrection following the turmoil. Symbols along with spontaneous visions come into play in Marjan's works to the extent that it is almost impossible, if not irrelevant, to distinguish them. In other essays such as

Il Passaggio, *Sweet child of mine*, *The dog days are over* traditional elements of the landscape genre and references to old master iconography are subverted by a composition that challenges the common sense of perspective and time. An insight into the soul's spiritual path is evoked by the immersive quality of *Firefall*, *Dancing in the Dark* and *the Battle of Evermore*.

Paintings with a round surface may be referred to as 'tondo', a form that can be found in ancient art, though it was in the renaissance that it became a fashionable style. The use of the circular form is recurring throughout Marjan's production and perfectly encapsulates the essence of its implicit movement. *Lovers* enacts the confront between two sketched faces within chaos and equilibrium, emptiness and fullness, gravitas and suspension, channeling the contradictory nature of human desire.

Original fire as well as *On fire* adopt a transitional style where the same element elicits variable reactions in the viewer's perception.

Every painting is an open door that intices

a personal reading, a dialogue with the forms surfacing out of the abstraction.

In the book “*Open Work*”, a Marjan's favorite and fundamental source of inspiration to her creative process, the author Umberto Eco states: “*The kind of expectation aroused by a message with an open structure is less a prediction of the expected than an expectation of the unpredictable.*”

At all times we will be surprised by the messages that Marjan's works are ready to deliver as we detach from our busy life and simply pay attention to them.

A THREE-WAY CONVERSATION

Artist, Gallerist, Curator

Rome - Athens. October 2023

Giulia: Our conversation begins at the final stage of the exhibition project, as we are left with the question: how shall we title it?

Glenda: I thought about a word that could translate the style and content of Marjan's quest, and BOUNDLESS was the first that crossed my mind. I have always seen her works as being in constant motion: from her early pictures where lines designed the horizon of boundless landscapes with clouds, wind and rain, to the series on planets as well as abstract oval canvases that followed.

I have increasingly realized how harmoniously architecture, a fundamental element of Marjan's background, may

blend with a field that is all but structured: abstract art.

With the figure being included in her last works I understood how far Marjan has overcome her own boundaries by carrying influences from the past.

Marjan: It is indeed as you just said. At the beginning I was inspired by the urban views of my hometown, Tehran, where the predominant concrete gray color characterized my early works. Later on, after moving to the northern suburbs of Rome, I explored the natural landscapes of the countryside; in either case I tried to reduce the landscape to its purest essence to enhance its poetics. I would define my work as a CROSSOVER because over time it showed different styles as well as experimentations while remaining

true to itself. My work is in motion yet simultaneously grounded in the present. It is the observative nature of my process that enables me to be in the moment regardless of the endless flow of events outside and inside myself.

Giulia: Your works convey the idea of a present unfolding. They show details, shapes as well as colors that pop up on the surface to reveal new contents otherwise overshadowed. The visible unfolds through the invisible and the other way around, creating a continuous correspondence. Everything happens seemingly with no control from either the viewer or yourself, is that so?

Marjan: My work has always been defined as abstract while maintaining figurative as a starting point. From time to time, I happened to notice a brushstroke or a color stain on the canvas that suggested the idea of a figure in my mind, but I never paid great attention to it, since I was keeping my view focused on abstract. Only recently, I realized that the canvas was showing me more and more figures and faces at an embryonic stage, floating

in the atmosphere of the paintings and inviting me to give them shape.

What convinced me even more to explore these random events, was the engagement from people who would read into my work figures, faces, animals and landscapes.

Everyone who faces the work brings into it his own sensitivity, his personal and cultural experience, so that every single interaction becomes a new execution. Through the viewer's eye the work is reborn to an ever-changing original life and turns into a MOVING WORK or "OPEN WORK" to quote the late great philosopher Umberto Eco.

Giulia: Talking about movement and flow of events: how did you meet each other and begin your collaboration?

Glenda: I had the pleasure to get to know Marjan's work in 2016, upon the recommendation of my brother who had seen an exhibition entitled "Controluce" in Rome. My gallery project was at its earliest stage and committed to promote and bring artists based in Italy to Greece by presenting them in my showroom or rather domestic space.

I made a studio visit and acquired a small work by her. I was fascinated by the lightness of her landscapes as well as her paintings on board.

In March 2016 Domus Art Gallery opened “Dreamland”, a two-person exhibition showcasing Marjan’s work, and two months later I presented her paintings juxtaposed with fashion suits from a well-known Greek maison and called the concept “House Project Modart”.

Now, seven years later, I am once again honored to offer Marjan Fahimi a solo exhibition within the framework of a renewed, mature collaboration.

Domus Art Gallery has relocated 3 times and has developed the domestic art space into an institutional reality. Similarly, Marjan has kept exploring and transforming over the years, joining solo as well as group shows, artist residencies and fairs, going beyond any technical limit of her art.

I believe that relationships are fundamental and our goal is to promote experiences, vibes and visions rather than presenting just paintings and sculptures. If we don’t get to know the person behind the artwork, we can’t deeply understand his/her art.

And probably this informal concept of the home gallery enabled me to reach out to the true souls behind the various projects. Their permanence in my house is fundamental before the exhibition as well as afterwards. I am grateful to the artists I work with for we have a long-lasting relationship. Their trust is greatly inspiring to me.

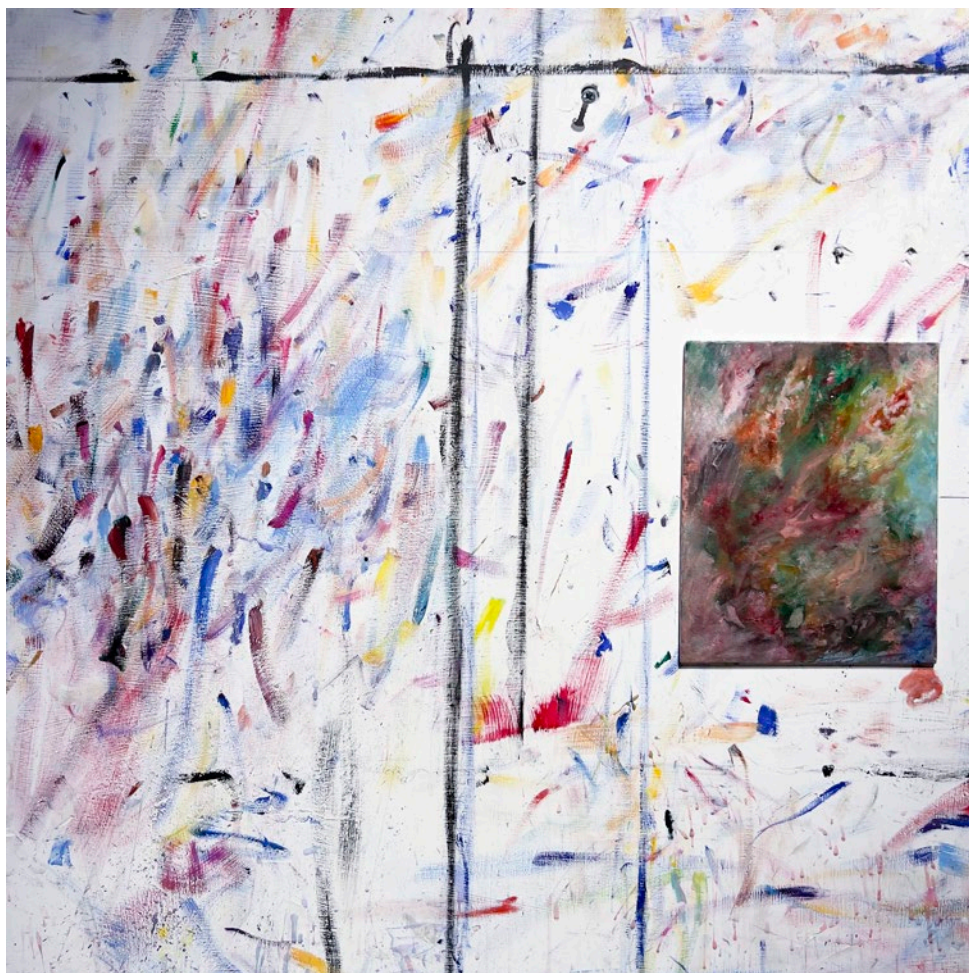
Marjan: I had immediately bonded with Glenda and her concept of gallery that overcomes the conventional space to embrace a more intimate dimension, where the approach to art turns into a cozy and familial experience. It’s a concept which forms the foundations for an unconventional relationship between art gallerist and artist where the simple collaboration gives way to friendship. On the occasion of the “Dreamland” exhibition I was hosted by Domus Art Gallery in the space that is also home to Glenda and Erik. This gave us the unique opportunity to get to know each other better and tune into each other. Domus Art Gallery has expanded ever since, while remaining true to its own concept, based on sharing and friendship.

Giulia: It is not by coincidence that this conversation as well as the whole exhibition project is carried out by three women and their common vision of reality. Glenda welcomes into her intimate art space, whilst Marjan brings into play the sensitivity and strength from her cultural roots. The combination of these elements delivers a message of hope and change. Marjan, your art is not openly political, however it speaks louder than words, through vibrant brushstrokes and references to the past and present of your motherland, Iran, and to the revolutions it has gone through until now. In which way has your original background blended with your current life experience in Italy and to which extent did it affect you?

Marjan: I was 22 years old when I came to Italy, bringing along experiences and traditions that radiated in me. I began putting down roots in this new land, however I was still tied to Iran by invisible threads. The creative quest of expat artists is made out of a cross contamination between past experiences and new cultural baggage. We can define it as a cultural crossover.

Over the past year Iranian people have gone through massive changes and had to face events that demanded acts of great courage. I think the body of works showcased in this exhibition talks about this shift on a conscious as well as intuitive level. Change is the intrinsic value enclosed in the word “Revolution” and what my country is experiencing since September 2022 has changed in an irreversible way the existence of all Iranians.

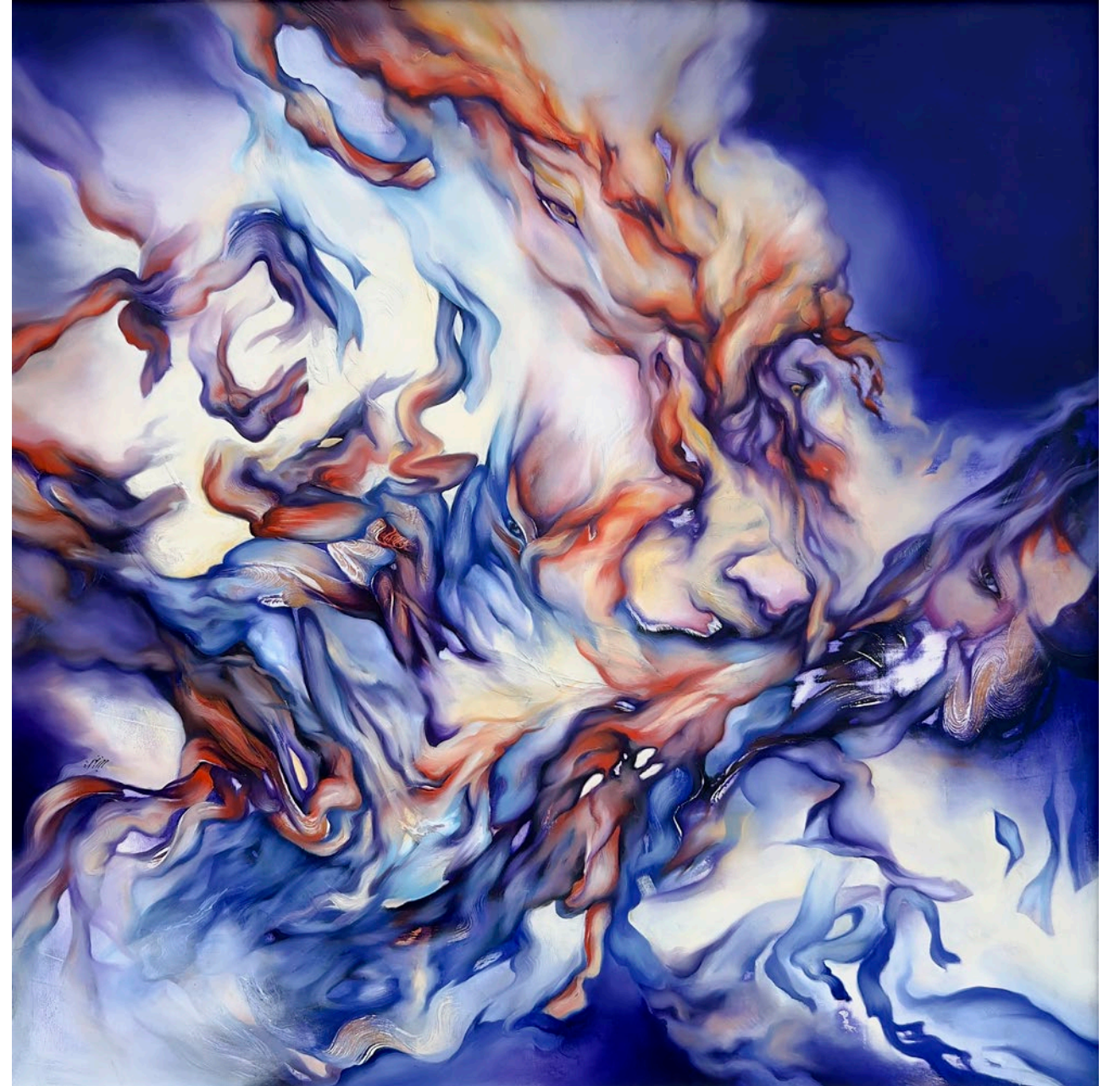
Contrary to popular belief the revolution is not defined by the speed of the change, does not consist in a great and immediate action but it’s a constant practice that develops in time. Sometimes it takes an act of disobedience to make a change and Art has done that through the centuries.



CROSSOVER
THE PRESENT IS UNFOLDING
WORKS



Purple Dream
Oil on wood panel - 110x110 cm - 2023





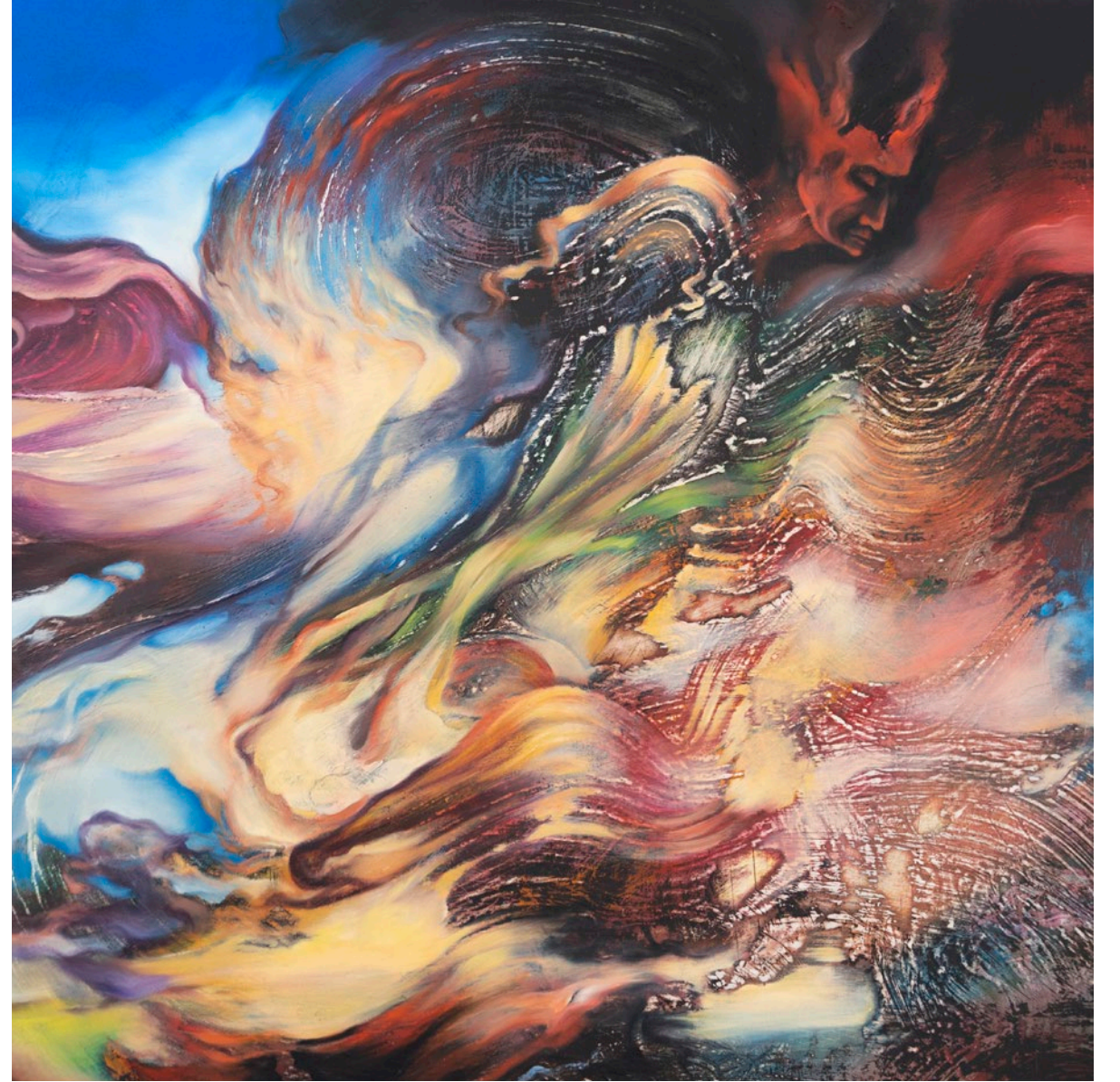
Pirouz
Oil on wood panel - 110x110 cm - 2023

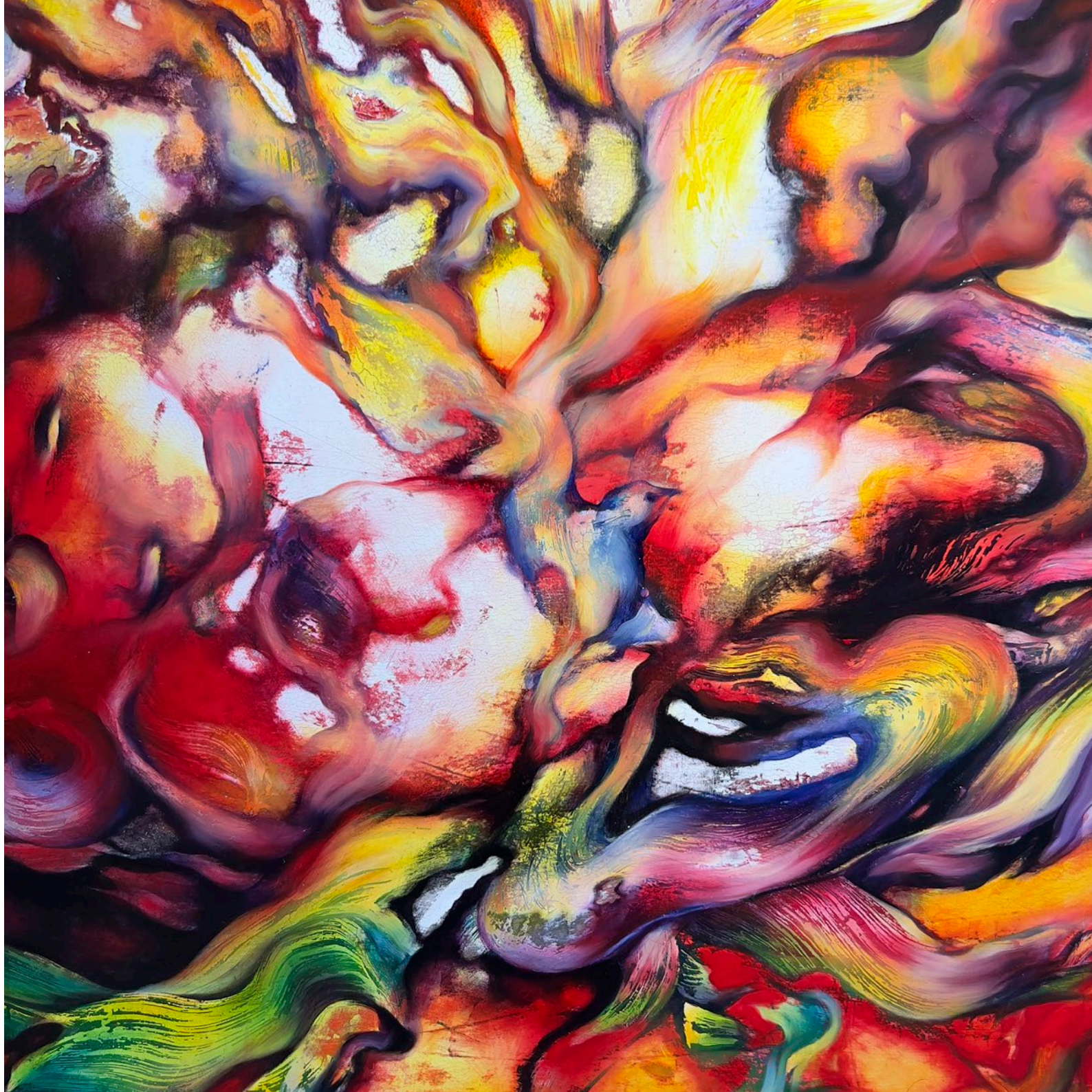


Il Passaggio
Oil on wood panel - 110x185 cm - 2020/2023









Rage
Oil on wood panel - 160x110 cm - 2022





Rebirth
Oil on wood panel - 160x110 cm - 2023





The dog days are over

Mixed media with resin on wood panel - d. 100 cm - 2023





Dancing in the Dark
Mixed media with resin on wood panel – d. 80 cm – 2019/2023



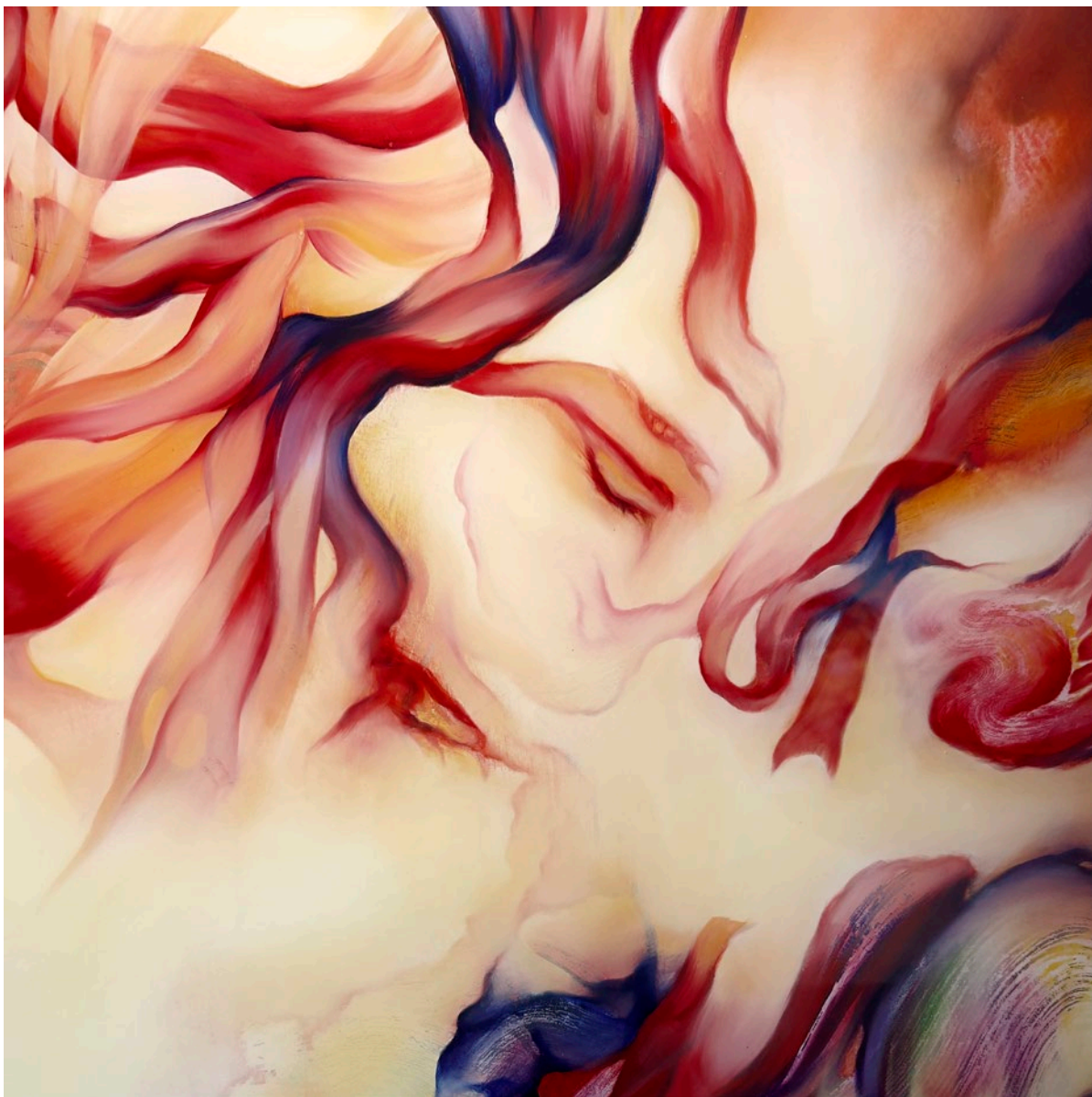


Firefall

Mixed media with resin on wood panel - d. 120 cm - 2023



Lovers
Mixed media with resin on wood panel - d. 120 cm - 2023





Sweet child of mine
Oil on wood panel - 50x50 cm - 2023



Original Fire
Oil on wood panel - 50x50 cm - 2023



On Fire
Oil on wood panel - 50x50 cm - 2023



The Battle of Evermore
Oil on wood panel - 110x160 cm - 2023







Marjan Fahimi is an Iranian artist born in Tehran in 1982. At the age of 15 she began attending painting courses at Hossein Maher's Studio and after graduation she started studies in Italian Language and Literature at the University of Tehran; in the meantime she participated in several group exhibitions in some of the most important galleries of the Tehran art scene such as Elahe Art Gallery, Bahman Cultural

Center, Robat Art Gallery.

MARJAN FAHIMI

Fahimi has also realized two solo exhibitions:

in 2003 with the "Urban Details" project at Atbin Art Gallery and in 2004 with the exhibition "Birds" at Seyhoon Art Gallery. The latter period of work is particularly influenced by the city and its landscapes, details and urban views seen so closely as to become abstract images, the only creatures to animate the scene are the birds, almost always sitting to contemplate the passageways of the concrete city.

In 2004 she came to Rome to study architecture. Being in contact with

Renaissance and Baroque art changed her artistic vision in a perceptible way; subsequently she moved to the Roman countryside, moving closer to nature and undertaking research on the naturalistic component of the landscape and its poetics, interpreting it in an abstract manner where the subjects are mainly characterized by views that highlight the main atmospheric phenomena: wind, clouds, rain and light.

Her search for an equilibrium between figurative and abstract continues, exploring a global vision of painting that proposes both the realism of the form and the lyric of sentiment. Stylistic research is combined with an experimental technique, mostly layered. The use of transparent resin in her artistic production is quite recent: she experimented for the first time with it in 2016. She uses transparent resin in order to encapsulate the pictorial moment and makes the space brighter, thus accentuating the depth of the work as well as the sensorial perception that comes from the stratification of the color.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2023 - “*Libertà/Azadi*”, curated by Vinicio Prizia, Sala Orsini del Palazzo Chigi, Formello

2022 - “*Ex-Stasis*”, curated by Rossella Savarese, Syart Gallery, Sorrento

2022 - “*ArtKeys Prize*”, NEXT - Capaccio, Paestum

2021 - “*Art is over*”, curated by Rossella Savarese, Syart Gallery, Sorrento

2019 - “*Astrazione Figurativa*”, curated by Juan Carlos García Alía, Galleria della Biblioteca Angelica, Rome

2018 - “*FORMA MENTIS. Estetica del tatto*”, Museo Tattile Statale Omero - Mole Vanvitelliana, Ancona

2018 - “*Matrice del paradiso*”, curated by Shura Oyarce Yuzzelli, Pinacoteca Civica, San severino, Marche

2018 - “*Sorrento Young Art - International meetings of Contemporary Art*”, curated by Rossella Savarese and Paolo Feroce, Villa Fiorentino, Sorrento

2017 - “*Nuvola Creativa - Seconda Edizione LIVING NATURE*”, curated by Antonietta Campilongo and Honos Art Gallery, MACRO (Museo D'Arte Contemporanea Roma), Spazio FACTORY, Rome

2017 - “*Trasmutazioni*”, curated by Gian Ruggero Manzoni, San Galgano Abbey, Siena

2016 - “*HONOS presenta HONOS*”, group show curated by Juan Carlos García Alía, Honos Art Gallery, Rome

2016 - “*Dodici Contemporaneamente. Perimetri, prospettive, vie di fuga*”, curated by Ornella Ricca e Pietro Spagnoli, Chiostro di Sant Agostino, Veroli

2016 - “*DREAMLAND*”, curated by Glenda Lorenzani, Domus Art Gallery, Athens

2015 - “*Controluce*”, solo show curated by Vinicio Prizia, Sala Orsini del Palazzo Chigi, Formello

2014 - “*Off Site Art*”, Public Art project, sponsored by ArtBridge (NYC), curated by Veronica Santi, L'Aquila

2007 - “*L.I.Art Prize - Martelive*”, Laboratorio Incontri d'Arte (L.I.Art), Rome

2004 - “*The Birds*”, solo exhibition, Seyhoon Art Gallery, Tehran

2003 - Group show, Robat Art Gallery, Tehran

2003 - “*Urban Details*”, solo exhibition, Atbin Art Gallery, Tehran

2002 - Group show, Bahman Cultural Center, Tehran

2002 - Group show, Haft Samar Art Gallery, Tehran

2001 - *VI Iranian contemporary drawing symposium*, Barg Art Gallery, Tehran

1999 - Group show, Elahe Art Gallery, Tehran

PUBLIC WORKS:

2022: “*The Window*” - a site-specific sculpture for Monte San Costanzo at Massa Lubrense, Naples.

AWARDS

2022: Winner of the residency contest “*Arte, Cultura del cibo e paesaggio*” at Massa Lubrense, a project financed by the Restaurateurs association, Architecture Department of the University of Naples Federico II and the Municipality of Massa Lubrense;

2022: finalist at the fourth edition of *ArtKeys Prize*;

2014: Second runner up artist in the SILVER Category in “*Adrenalina Contemporary Art Prize*”;

2014: artist selected for “*Off Site Art*” Project for Aquila - edited by Veronica Santi - in collaboration with ArtBridge, New York;

2008: winner of *Martelive* contest - painting section;

2007: finalist of *Martelive* contest and L-I-ART Jury prize;

Domus Art Gallery is run by Italian gallerist Glenda Lorenzani. Only a few weeks after having moved to Athens from Rome in November 2014, she initially decided to set up the Domus Art Project, opening her house to the public and transgressing the norms of art as only being shown in galleries. By combining the concept of the home with that of the gallery, Lorenzani created a

NINE YEARS OF DOMUS!

Domus Art Gallery.

Lorenzani's intriguing art space has gone from strength to strength, building a concept which not only goes beyond the normal gallery space, but which has also pushed the limits of art, presenting creativity that exceeds the traditional notions of art, by integrating other mediums into the mix, e.g. weaving, ceramics, fashion, tattoos, photography, resin, printing and even the mobile phone photograph. But these are not the only



crossovers that Lorenzani has presented at Domus, seeing as her artspace has also been the premises where Italian and Greek artists have often met, collaborated and presented their work, thus creating a bridge between these two neighboring cultures in particular.

Back in 2014, on the 6th of December, Italian artist Giusy Lauriola was the first to exhibit at Domus Art Project, with the solo exhibition "Butterfly Effect", presenting to the Greek public works which intertwined aspects of Roman and Greek culture, myth and history, whilst working on two layers (canvas and plexiglass). In May 2015, more Italian artists followed, when Lauriola's work was joined with that of Mauro Bellucci, Dino Ignani, Enrico Lorenzani and Mauro Molle, in an exhibition entitled 'A5'.

From March 18-June 30, 2016, the two-person exhibition with works by Marjan Fahimi and Giusy Lauriola, entitled 'Dreamland' was realized. This exhibition combined Fahimi's ethereal works which dealt with weather phenomena together with Lauriola's new project "Wings Plunged into Colors".

In May of 2019, Giusy Lauriola paired

up with British-Greek artist Natassa Kaloti to present the exhibition "Women Incolors" - a fabulously feminine universe of art. Kaloti's series "Illusion of Free Will" explored the motion of dancers, while Lauriola's new works presented transparent but hidden figures rendered via the use of resin and colors.

From December 18, 2019, to January 31, 2020, the solo exhibition of works by Ioanna Kardiakou entitled "On the Move" was hosted at Domus Art Project. Industrial romanticism prevailed in her representations of ships, adding her own interpretation of maritime art - this heavyweight of genres, especially in Greece.

In October of 2021, Domus Art Project changed venue, and became Domus Art Gallery, yet with the same concept in mind - integrating the home and the gallery. The new space boasts a high-tech, tastefully designed gallery, complete with exhibition panels and suitable lighting fixtures in what appears to be the home's garage from the outside. We have all heard of garage music, but never before of garage art! This inspiring space became

the hotspot for new artistic interactions: The first artists to inaugurate Domus Art Gallery on October 30, with their work, were Petr Shevchenko and Nikos Mikroulis. These two artists were later joined by Vittoria Panunzi and Luisa Valeriani in the exhibition 'Matter in Motion', which took place in December (2021).

"Matter in Motion" was an interesting mix of artists and mediums, demonstrating yet again Lorenzani's eye for creative ingenuity: From the reworking of the concept of the mosaic, via the use of the lenticular prism by Shevchenko, to the wood-carved constructions of Mikroulis which incorporated sections of clock mechanisms into their designs, and the mixed media works of Panunzi with their relief surfaces, plus Valeriani's transformation of cellphone photos into works of art.

What followed next was "Waves of Weaving" (March 10 -April 10, 2022), comprising the work of Yuriko Damiani, Tania Welz and Florence Vacher. This stunning event wove together the beautiful ceramic designs of Damiani, which reflect her own unique Japanese/Italian cultural mix, plus the African-inspired textile creations of

Vacher, and the textile art of Welz, which transforms the entire nature of her primary materials, such as jute, into precious and luxurious contemporary creations.

In May of 2022, Domus Art Gallery hosted the solo exhibition of the world-acclaimed contemporary artist and tattoo artist Marco Manzo. As a tattoo artist, Manzo is the pioneer of the ornamental style tattoo, 'Tattoo d'haute couture', but also expert of the tribal and 3D style. He managed to introduce the tattoo as an art form in the ever-expanding world of contemporary art. As a contemporary artist, he creates sculptures of the human form made from casts taken from real bodies (including that of actress Asia Argento), engraving upon them intricate designs.

In June, 2022, Domus Art Gallery realized its first artists residency. Following a long-distance discourse and preparation process between the gallerist, curator and the artists (that took place April/May), Domus Art Gallery was then transformed into a studio/workshop for ten days, where artists Merima Fetahovic, Giusy Lauriola and Stella Sevastopoulos joined forces with curator Manuela De Leonardis, and

worked non-stop on the concept "Greetings from Athens".

The activities of Domus Art Gallery then travelled to Rome in November of 2022, with the project "Shadows of Light" by acclaimed Italian artist Simone Lingua. Domus Gallery was in charge of the promotion and organization of this project. Lingua's site-specific installation was presented at La Lanterna di Fuksas in Rome, together with his works from 2015 to 2020, created with plexiglass and supermirror stainless steel, two materials that reinforce the dialogue with the elements of architecture. The result was an incredible immersive experience in which the projection of lights and sounds animated the connection between the installation, its architectural context and the other exhibited works.

A contemporary take on ceramics was the next exhibition organized by Domus in Italy. Entitled "Tetes et Betes" the exhibition took place in January 2023, in an intimate space in Rome. The works of artists Ilaria Gatti and Emanuele Scoppola comprised in the exhibition were examples of how imaginary childhood monsters can be turned into contemporary ceramic creations.

Domus Art Gallery then teamed up again with Simone Lingua for a summer project (June 25-July15), this time in Palermo, at the Palazzo Drago Airolidi. This project was of an experimental nature for Lingua, who envisioned it in the following way: "I imagined my works expanding and multiplying into a myriad of fragments. And so, like portions of a mirror, they invade the rooms of the Palace, according to an order dictated by the architectural geometries and the works."

Giulia Coccia is an art advisor and curator based in Rome, Italy.

In 2007 she graduates with honours in Humanistic Studies with major in Contemporary Art from the La Sapienza University, Rome. The same year she moves to NY where, after working experiences at the Italian Cultural Institute as well

GIULIA COCCIA

as the curatorial department of the Guggenheim Museum, in 2010 she becomes

curator and advisor to an important and broad private art collection. She remains in the role for seven years, at the end of which she edits the universal catalogue of the collection, published in seven volumes. In 2017 she founded her own art consulting company which advises a portfolio of local and international clients.

