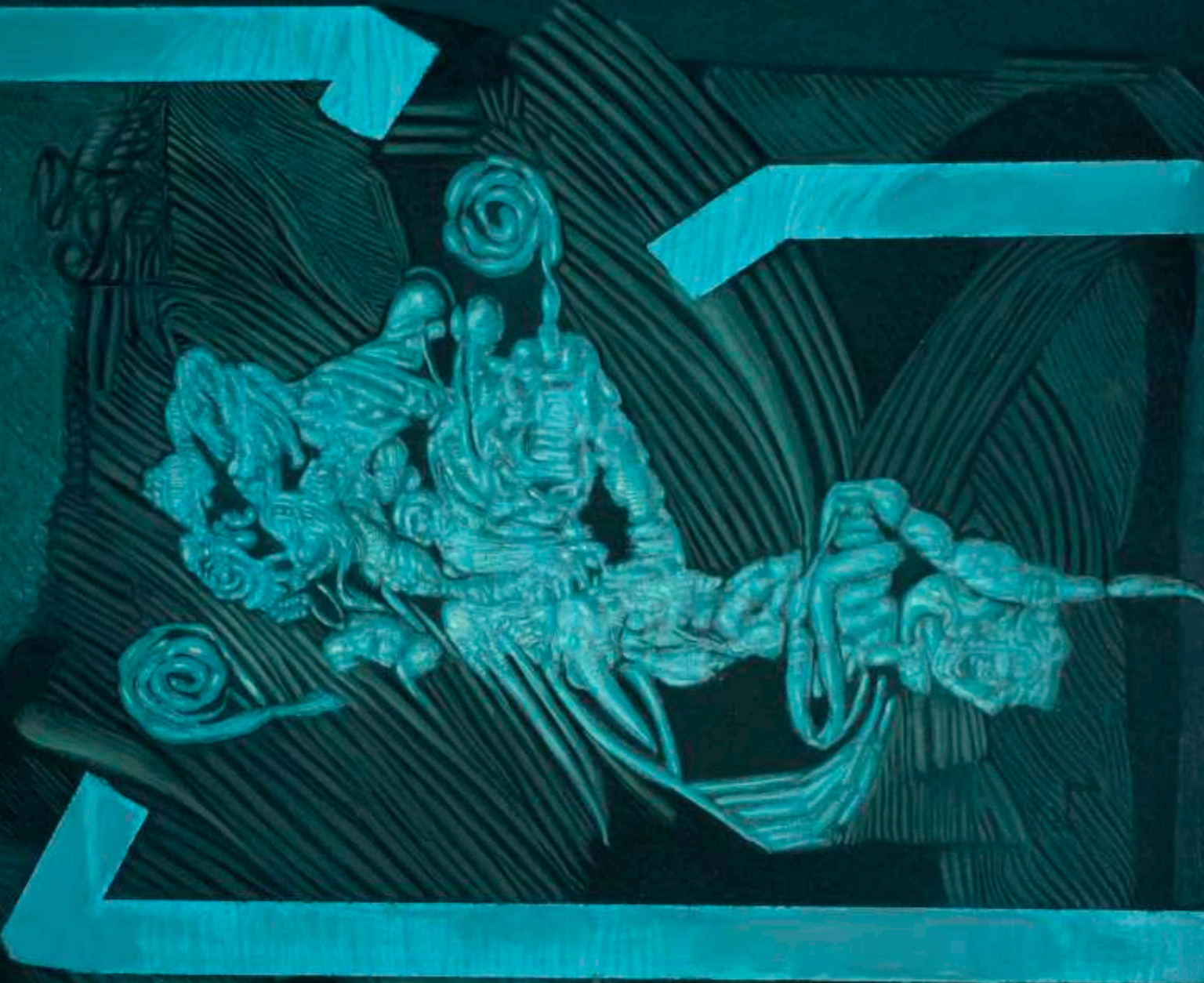


# MAHMOUD MERAJI



GALLERY

*Truth Seeking*

# MAHMOUD MERAJI

*Truth Seeking*

OCTOBER 17 - NOVEMBER 15, 2015



*Mirage* - 2008, Oil on panel, 40x43 inches

HEADBONES GALLERY

Artist Catalog: Mahmoud Meraji - *Truth Seeking*  
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October 17 - November 15, 2015

Meraji, Mahmoud, 1958-

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*Truth Seeking* commentary © 2015 Julie Oakes

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RICH FOG



Micro Publishing

# MAHMOUD MERAJI

*Truth Seeking*



*Feet and Hands* - 2006, Charcoal and pastel on paper, 40x30 inches

COMMENTARY BY JULIE OAKES





*Untitled (eye)* - 2006, Charcoal and pastel on paper, 40" x 30"



*Untitled* - 1999, Charcoal and pastel on paper, 17x12 inches



*Untitled* - 1999, Charcoal and pastel on paper, 10x8 inches

## MAHMOUD MERAJI

### *Truth Seeking*

The 1920 Manifesto of Surrealism defined their aim as being "to resolve the previously contradictory conditions of dream and reality." Mahmoud Meraji when asked what his painting consisted of stated that he was "truth seeking." This affirmation speaks of making a connection with an unrealised (not made real or actual) idea and then transferring it into a form that can be realised by another. It is a daunting yet obsessive task to turn the nebulous inner states of mind that escape definition into a piece of art. Impressions and philosophies, are sifted through the developed technique of the artist like a strainer that deposits upon the picture surface an image that connects with the unrealised.

Mahmoud Meraji was born in Iran and moved to Canada with his wife Amideh and his son Mehrad. Both Mehrad and then his father Mahmoud studied at OCAD (Ontario College of Art and Design). A seasoned artist, Mahmoud had already been a portrait painter as well as a modernist. Headbones Gallery showed his work in Toronto from 2006 to 2010. Mahmoud painted a life size portrait of Julie Oakes in 2007 that is to be displayed in conjunction with the work chosen for his exhibition *Truth Seeking*.

Meraji has an international perspective of art and had just returned from Paris when we visited his studio in Toronto. He teaches and mentors students through a school he has founded, believing in the



*Suicide* - 2009, Charcoal and pastel on paper, 51x76 inches

significance of cultural contribution. He recently showed portraits of his students in conjunction with their work in an exhibition in Toronto.

There is a noticeable modernist trend in Mahmoud Meraji's work- an insistence on creating a new reality despite his obvious adeptness at portraiture and realistic depiction. The super realism associated with the pop movement (Chuck Close), and then with the recent New German Painters has taken realistic depiction back into vogue. This could have been an expected progression in Mahmoud Meraji's work- to continue, with such a strong hand, his portraiture. Yet he insisted on making steps forward into the unknown, into modernism.

Unable to rest in depiction of the physical, Meraji visually grapples with the human condition. Within poetic, ropey spaces that bring to mind the connections between the body and the mind performed by the brain, he superimposes interlocking visual systems within the frame. Twisting and turning like cerebral folds, as convoluted and irregular as life's pathways, the figure exists in symbiotic relationship with an abstract context. A fully developed portrait might be intersected by lines and bars as if embedded in architectonic constraints.

Mahmoud Meraji uses a vocabulary of images that seem to possess romantic underpinnings, where the visual illustrates taste. The work is subtle and classy, intellectual and yet fresh. Mahmoud is graceful in his depiction. He is discrete with a gentleman's manners. And because of these layers of meanings, not quite revealed, but refined and cultured, the work touches the finer aspects of our own connoisseurship. It invites us into "the Meraji realm," one of good breeding where the origins of drawing are accomplished and can thus enter into higher conversations. Never too much, sparingly doled out to accentuate the detailed rendering, Meraji uses repetition in a symphonic sense, subverting rhythms in favour of a melody





*Figure Study # 7* - 2015, Chalk and pastel on paper, 16x12 inches



*Dreamer*- 2015, Chalk and pastel on paper, 16x12 inches

that forms agreeable successions and arrangements of shapes and movements. It is a classical melody with attention to form lending a general effect of balance while the emotions are distant and collected.

In some larger paintings the figure disappears, to be replaced by a purely abstract, lively environment. Meraji doesn't morph the figure into shapes, nor into other beings as did some of the historical surrealists like Dali or De Chirico. Better compared to Max Ernst where figures assimilated into organic mass or Joan Miro and Yves Tanguy where the characterization of the figure eventually became original abstract forms; Meraji continues to push the boundaries of safety (his ability to depict) to march with the avant-garde. Like the story-line of dreams where the connections are hard to make, the sense is embedded in the memorable impact of the visual where his figures and their situations veer away from logic to enter a more instinctual realm. If the iconography is not always clear, it is because there is a learning process in place and Meraji is teaching us how to see his world as he offers a respite from the clarion perspective of contemporary depersonalization.

The Surrealists practiced automatic writing hoping to better understand reality without stifling their thoughts through an Apollonian rigidity. Mahmoud Meraji has been composing visual letters, communicating with another dimension that is occupied by spirits, dreams, imaginings, and ideas. He has been sending missives religiously in an attempt to communicate the 'great incomprehensibles' in a form that can dissolve our separateness.

Julie Oakes, Vernon, BC- 2015

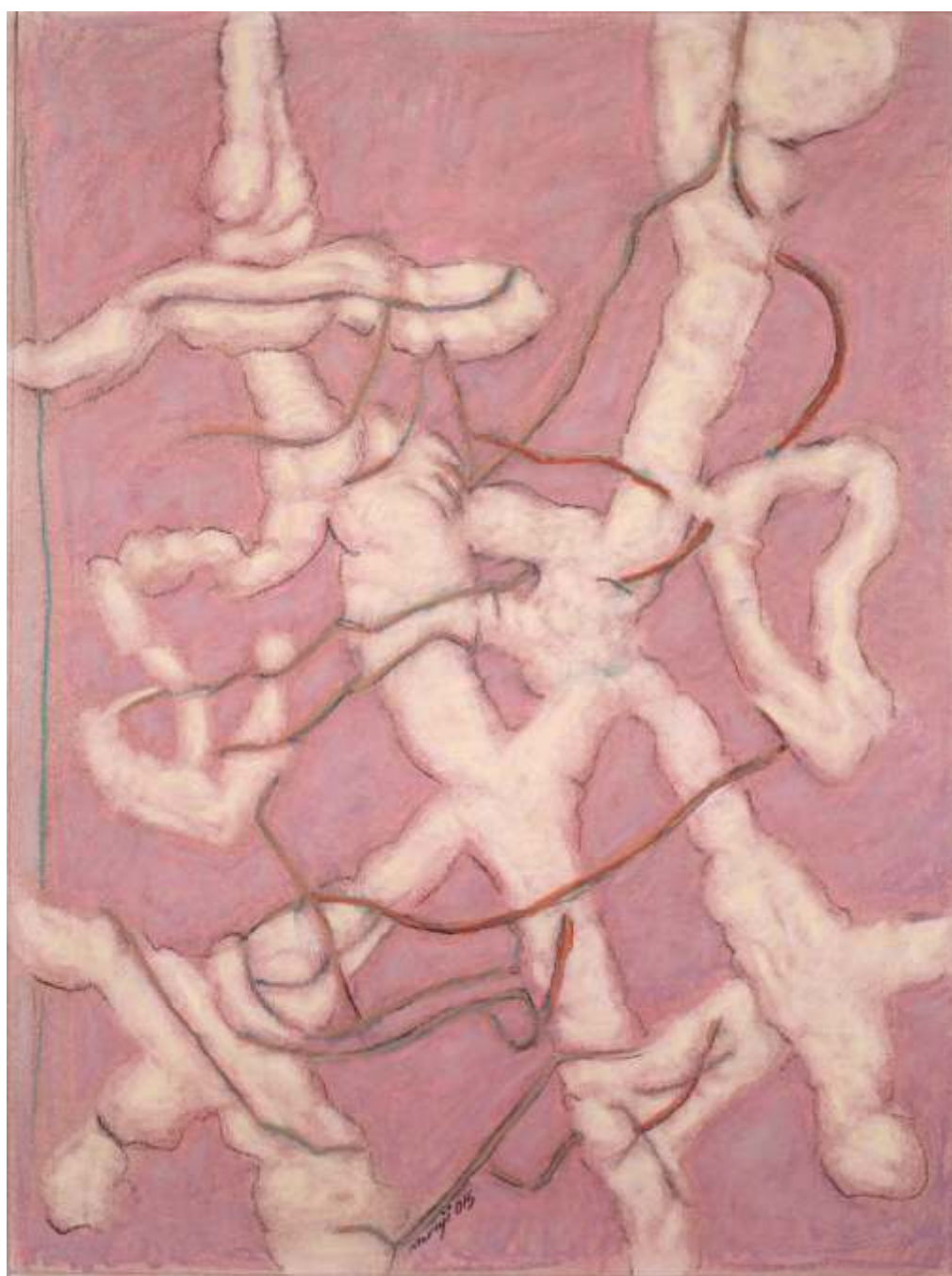


*Untitled (abstract)* - 2014  
Mixed media on canvas, 51" x 51"

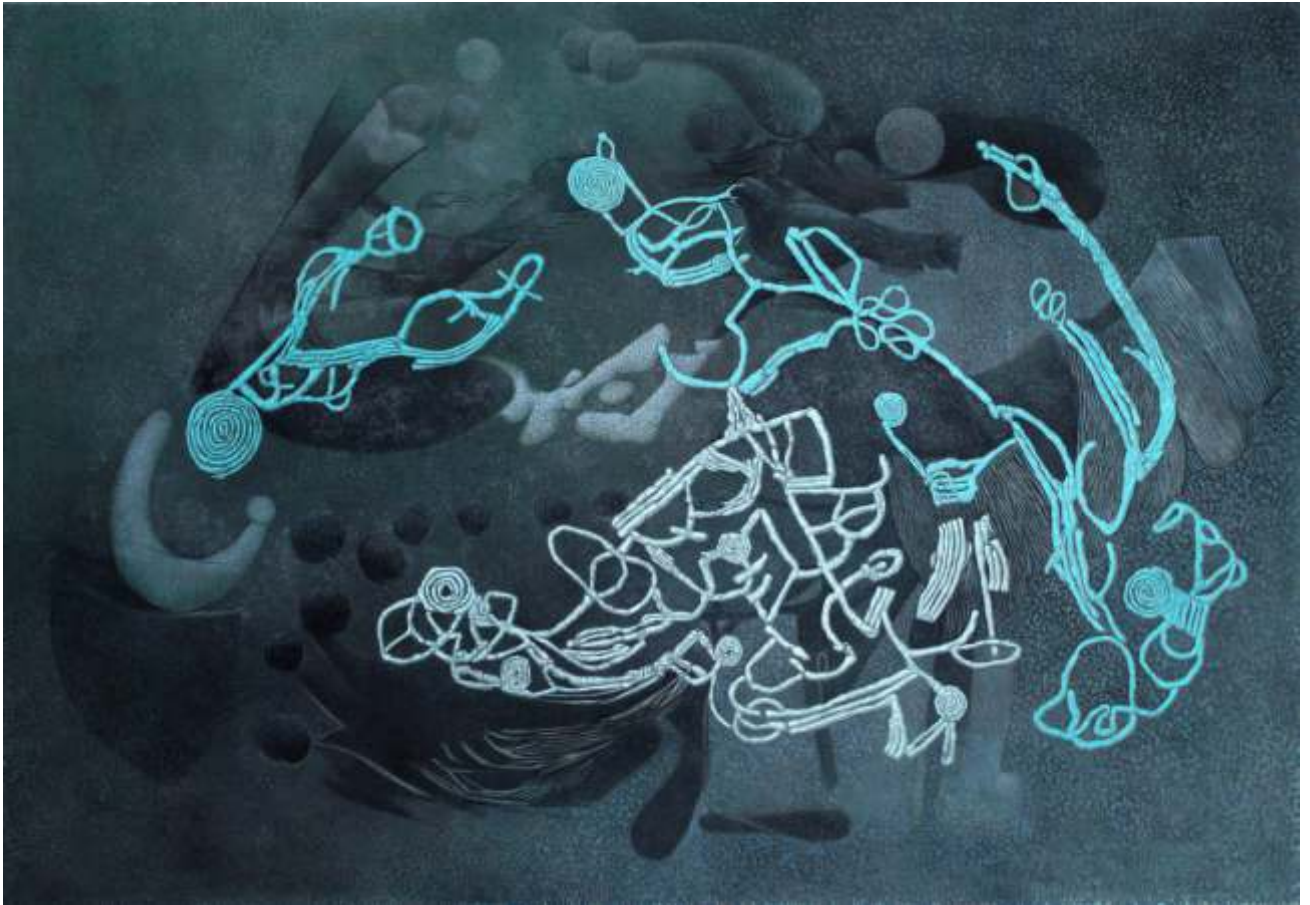


*Abstract #2* - 2015  
Chalk and pastel on paper, 16" x 12"





*Quarter Moon* - 2014  
Mixed media on canvas, 49.5" x 72"





*Abstract #4* - 2015  
Chalk and pastel on paper, 16" x 12"



*Last Judgement* - 2014  
Mixed media on canvas, 72" x 51"





*Abstract #1* - 2015  
Chalk and pastel on paper, 16" x 12"





*Symbols for Armani* - 2014  
Mixed media on canvas, 72" x 48"



*Figure Study #8* - 2015  
Chalk and pastel on paper, 16" x 12"



*Resurrection* - 2014  
Mixed media on canvas, 51" x 72"





*Abstract #5* - 2015  
Chalk and pastel on paper, 16" x 12"



*Abstract #3* - 2015  
Chalk and pastel on paper, 16" x 12"





*Figure Study #9* - 2015  
Chalk and pastel on paper, 16" x 12"



*Fragment* - 2014  
Mixed media on panel, 18" x 16"



*Don Quixote* - 2014  
Mixed media on panel, 16" x 18"





*Blue* - 2014  
Mixed media on panel, 16" x 16"

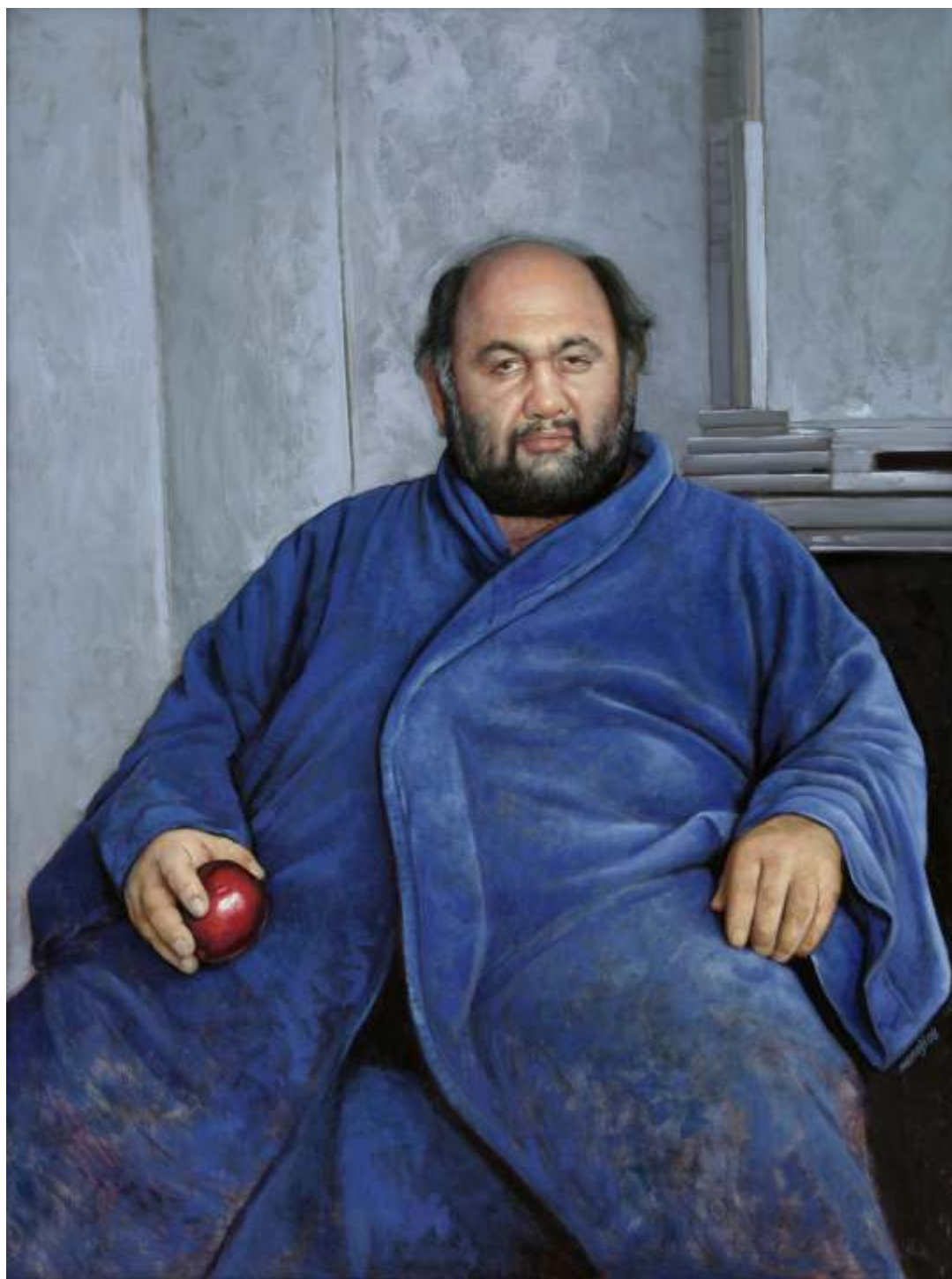


*Untitled (red robe)* - 2007  
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 39" x 30"





*Levon* - 2008  
Oil on board, 48" x 36"



*Untitled (embrace)* - 2008  
Acrylic on board, 52" x 42"





*Nostalgia* - 2006  
Oil on panel, 26" x 21"



*Untitled (hands)* - 2006  
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 50" x 38"



*Julie* - 2007  
Oil on board, 48" x 36"





*Untitled (offering yellow)* - 2008  
Acrylic on board, 52" x 42"



*Untitled (ring)* - 1999  
Charcoal and pastel on panel, 26" x 19"







*Untitled (horn)* - 1999  
Charcoal and pastel on panel, 26" x 19"



*Untitled (goat)* - 1999  
Charcoal and pastel on panel, 26" x 19"



*Untitled (figure)* - 2005  
Pastel, graphite, acrylic, 5" x 5"





*Untitled (animal)* - 2005  
Pastel, graphite, acrylic, 5" x 5"







Mahmoud Meraji

Born Tehran – 1958

Active

1974 – 1997      Tehran, Iran.

1997 – present      Toronto, Canada.

#### Achievements

- 2011      People Choice Award, 'Figurative Show, OCAD University, Toronto, ON.
- 2010      Headbones Artist Choice Prize, Toronto, ON.
- 2008      Grand prize, 'Miracle of the Portrait', Toronto, ON.
- 2008      Art/Humanities, National Ethnic Press & Media Council of Canada, Toronto, ON.
- 2002      Honorable mention, Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.
- 2001      Honourable mention, 'Art at the Heart', Toronto, ON.
- 1993      First Prize, 'Iranian Fair of Flowers and Nature', Tehran, Iran.

#### Solo Shows

- 2015'      Unseen Borders', Articsok Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2007'      Mystic Iranian Curves', Six weeks of Iranian Art, Toronto, ON.
- 1997      The Iranian Community Association of Ontario, Toronto, ON.
- 1997      Iranian Community Association of Ontario, Toronto, ON.
- 1997      Arya Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1996      Arya Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1993      Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1991      Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1985      Niyavaran Cultural Centre, Tehran, Iran.



## Group Exhibitions

- 2015 Mahmoud Meraji 'Truth Seeking' & Daniel Hanequand 'Ghostly Yours', Headbones Gallery, BC.
- 2015 'Mahmoud and Students: A Group Show', Articsok Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2015 'Ispirazione Divino', Articsok Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2014 'Summer Salon', Yumart, Toronto, ON.
- 2011 'Figurative Show', OCAD University, Toronto, ON.
- 2010 'The Kingston Prize', Kingston, ON.
- 2009 'The Kingston Prize', Kingston, ON.
- 2009 'Figutation', Headbones Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2009 'Ab strack'tid', Headbones Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2009 'Today and Tomorrow', The Canadian Portrait, Toronto, ON.
- 2008 'Miracle of the Portrait', International Arts Festival, Toronto, ON.
- 2008 'Buddha Composed', Varley Gallery, Markham, ON.
- 2008 'Tiregan: Iranian Festival', Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, ON.
- 2007 'Iranian artists cultural reunion', Six weeks of Iranian Art, Toronto, ON.
- 2007 'Canadian Artists without Boarder', Varley Gallery, Markham, ON.
- 2007 'Ethnic Convergence', Headbones Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2006 'Iran, Iran, I ran with Bogos', Headbones Galley, Toronto, ON.
- 2006 'Under the Azure Dome:Persian Festival', Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, ON.
- 2005 John B. Aird Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2004 'Metamorphosis', Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.
- 2004 Arta Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2003 'Drawing 2003', John B. Arid Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2002 luminary Art Gallery, Toronto, ON
- 2002 'Annual Juried Show', Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.
- 2001 'A Celebration of the Arts', Toronto, ON.
- 2001 'Art at the heart', Arts week, Toronto, ON.
- 2001 'Odyssey', Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.
- 2001 'Art at the heart', Toronto, ON.

#### Group Exhibitions (cont'd)

- 2000 39th Annual Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition, City Hall, Toronto, ON.
- 1999 38th Annual Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition, City Hall, Toronto, ON.
- 1998 Transition: Changing States, Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.
- 1995 The Third Iranian Painting Biannual, Tehran, Iran.
- 1995 Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1993 Fair of Flowers and Nature Tehran, Iran.
- 1993 The Second Iranian Painting Biannual, Tehran, Iran.
- 1991 The First Iranian Painting Biannual, Tehran, Iran.
- 1988 City Theater, Tehran, Iran.
- 1986 Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts, Tehran, Iran.

#### Publications

- 1997-Now 'Shahrvand Publication', Toronto, ON.
- 2000 'Multicultural Calendar', Skills for Change, Toronto, ON.
- 1997 'SUITCASE: A Journal of Transcultural Traffic Volume Two', UCLA Program in Comparative Literature, Los Angeles, CA.



Headbones Gallery, Vernon BC- 2015



Headbones Gallery, Vernon BC- 2015

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