

# BAZAAR ART BOOK

Exhibition 002

## ABU DHABI

*foreword by*  
His Excellency Mohamed Khalifa  
Al Mubarak

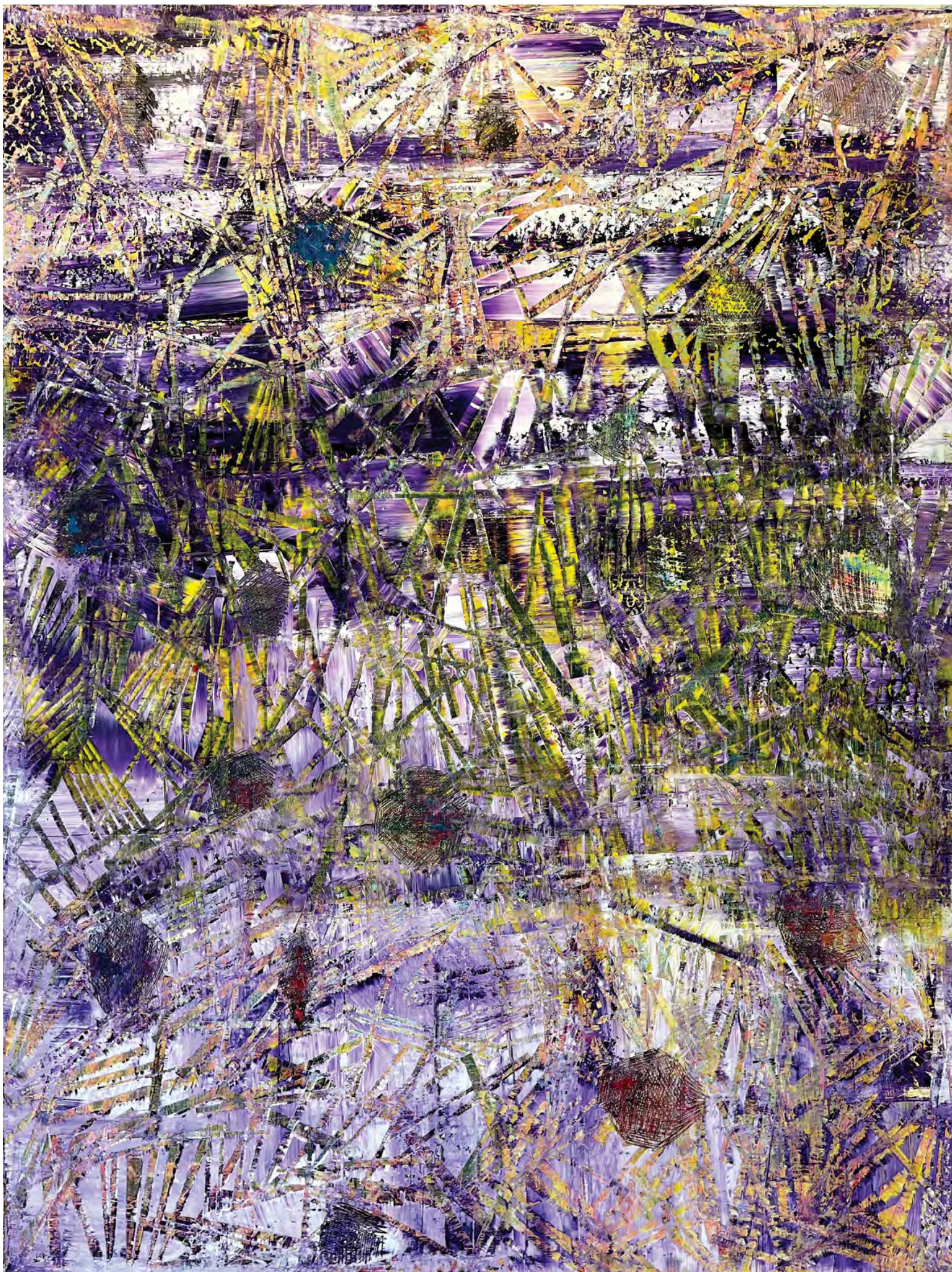
*featuring*  
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Cover  
SUMAYYAH AL SUWAIDI - A FISHING HOPE

AED 150  
USD 50  
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facing page, **SASSAN BEHNAM-BAKHTIAR**. *Kingdom of Heaven is Within You*. 2020/21. Mixed media on linen. 200x150cm

# SPARKS OF LIFE

*Contemporary artist  
Sassan Behnam-Bakhtiar  
is on a spiritual journey to  
enlightenment – one that  
comes alive through his new  
Manifest paintings, which  
speak the universal language  
of beauty, truth and chaos*

words **AYESHA S. SHEHMIR**

We, as human beings, live in a vibratory universe, and everything has its own energetic identity. For artist Sassan Behnam-Bakhtiar, it is vital to always think in terms of energy and these vibrations – that is the key to unlocking the ultimate secrets of life.

When it comes to manifesting an experience, Sassan says the subconscious mind is the host of all unresolved emotional traumas and beliefs, and it is the content of the subconscious mind that determines what kind of reality will be experienced in life. And, in essence, the power of manifestation is at the core of our spiritual path.

“I would like to talk about children,” expresses Sassan, who believes that children are the greatest teachers in life. “They are born with joie de vivre, have true passion for life, are creatives filled with love and care, and are great manifesters.”

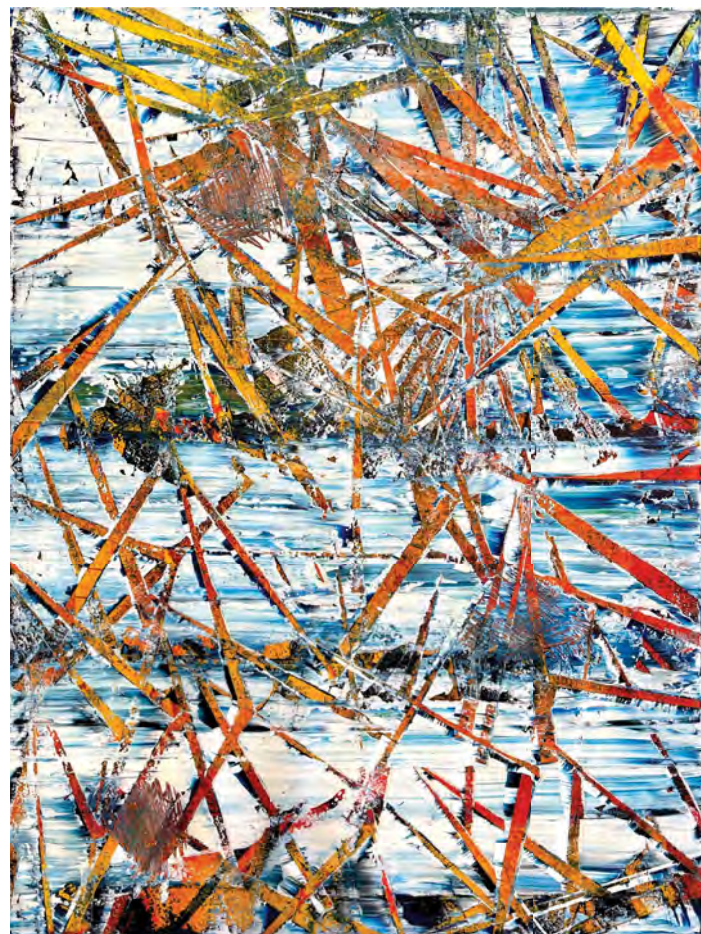
Focused on the emotionally dominant experience of manifestation, a brand-new series in the making since early 2020 will be presented by the Franco-Iranian artist during a major solo show at Setareh’s prestigious Berlin space during March and April 2022. This will inaugurate an exciting new venture at the gallery, with a special focus on NFTs.

Aptly titled *Manifest* and marking the artist’s second solo with Setareh, the exhibition builds a bridge between contemporary art and the digital world, presenting 12 new large-scale paintings and a collection of 100 unique, hand-painted works on paper, of which 50 will be offered as NFTs, and 50 as physical pieces. This will provide everyone a chance to own one of Sassan’s works at a price of €1,000, for either a physical work on paper or an NFT – that is, if collectors are lucky enough to be selected through the open-application process, going live later this year.

“Manifest is an ode to the energy and the subconscious,” explains Samandar Setareh, owner of Setareh. “Energy surrounds us, flows through us and yet, usually, it’s hard to explain how it feels – such as when we feel the vibration of a full moon, or the sound of the ocean waves.”



from top, **SASSAN BEHNAM-BAKHTIAR**. *Winter Manifest*. 2021. NFT  
*Soul Frequency*. 2021. NFT  
facing page, *Power*. 2021. Mixed media on handmade paper. 77x57cm



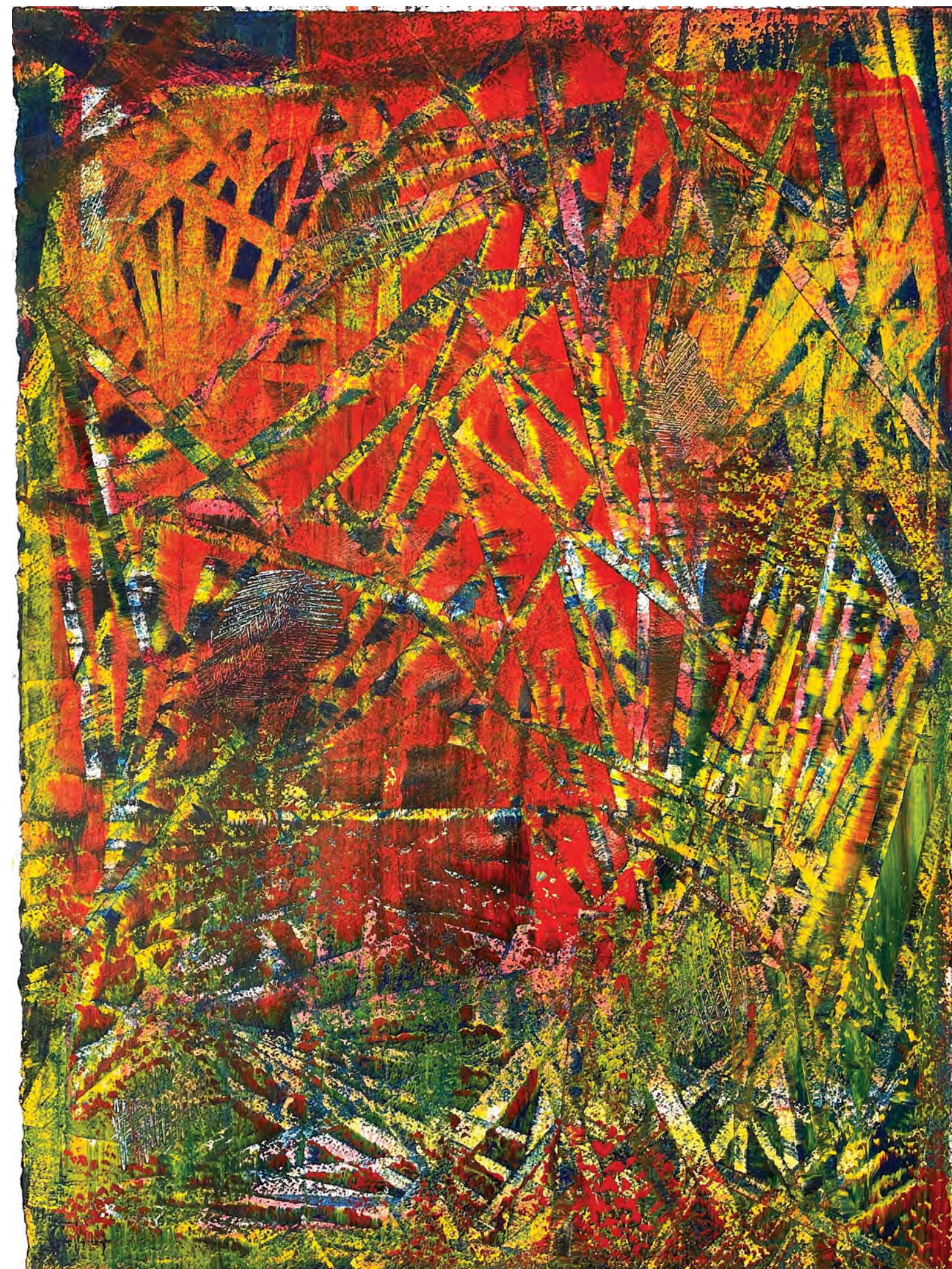
For Samandar, Sassan is an artist admired for being unafraid of change and embracing growth at every turn. “Artists from the avant-garde through time were carried by the same spirit and resolution.”

The upcoming show opening in March 2022, will display 12 new paintings which illustrate the evolution of Sassan’s signature scrape-style painting technique, which blossomed over a whole decade.

The *Manifest* artworks, such as *Nothing But Energy* (2021) and *Colours of Your Power* (2021) are a striking depiction of the inner human journey towards finding our own energy and freedom, while living through the beauty and chaos of life. The sharp interplay of colours and lines – visually aggressive yet soothing – viscerally portray this very relationship.

A survey of spirituality, each NFT and physical artwork share an intimate dialogue which explores the transformation of energy into matter and the gateway into the subconscious mind – delving into our internal struggles of growth and the inner route to fulfilment. Each of the 100 works on paper have been created on a special handmade paper made using a 400-year-old mill.

“Our daily range of vocabulary limits us when the moment of talking about energy presents itself,” adds Samandar. “The subconscious, on the other hand, is the inner realm that is latent within us. It helps us understand and feel. *Manifest* presents a quest. It is an aim to express different moments of the human journey, to awaken the viewer’s feelings, remind them of past experiences or inspire them towards something new.”





The new works feature vivid strokes and scratches, which the artist calls 'sparks of life', coupled with the alluring irregularities of his signature scraping. "Our souls are nurtured by the source of creation," says Sassan, touching on the inspiration behind the works. "An infinite source which does not finish. This source always carries its own energy in a way that it never runs out of it."

Samandar adds, "[The new works] appeal to change, to the evolution of oneself within the universe. The understanding of the energies that govern this universe entails an appreciation that comes from introspection and knowledge. Knowledge, nurtured with time, is visible in the medium that exposes it, through its colour, technique and its connection with the surroundings."

Sassan is a firm believer that once the soul is awakened, there is a genuine relationship of love, light and infinite energy. "This energy is continually arriving at increasingly higher conditions of empowerment, truth and divinity," says the artist.

When enough layers from our being are removed, only then are we able to tap into the essence of our distinctive soul frequency. As Sassan says, "Only then we can draw into our experience of what was meant to be ours all along."

The colourful, spellbinding paintings reference the progression of society, the self and transcendence, along with the concept of 'locked' knowledge, intuition and human sensitivities. Forever on a path of exploring the

realities of the world and digging for deeply hidden truths, the artist is constantly evolving his practice, and his being. "The soul is self-nurturing and is infused with the universal energy," says Sassan. "The soul also nurtures the human self, acting as a bridge between the inner and outer realms. The expansion of the soul into the inner realm is the best way to describe this. To embody the soul while immersed in the inner realm. A realm which exists holding a different set of emotions, feelings and rules. To be able to control the soul's actions in this inner world is truly a blessing – a continuation of one's spiritual evolution."

In celebration of the new series, the fabled British rapper Tinie Tempah has written evocative poems and verses based on the artworks, which will come alive as Sassan paints them on top of several works to spark a poetic dialogue. The artistic performance will take place on 19 March 2022, during a private viewing of the exhibition.

The 50 NFTs and 50 unique, physical hand-painted works on paper are numbered from one to 100, and an automated ranking system will scan each to assign a rank based on the number of colours and scrapes used. These ranks will be presented on the project's online platform in October, prior to the application period. The NFTs are minted on the Ethereum blockchain, which tracks the movement and authenticity of each. ■

*Art collectors from around the world can apply for the Manifest NFTs and works on paper (priced at €1,000 each) between 20 December 2021 to 18 January 2022 directly on [SASSANBEHNAMBAKHTIAR.COM/MANIFEST](https://sassanbehnambakhtiart.com/manifest)*

