

فراخواندن تمامی فرشتگان

Calling All Angels

زرتشت رحیمی
Zartosht Rahimi

www.
yafteh
.art

گالری
یافته
Number 8,
Taleghani Dead End,
Yarmohammadi St,
Daroos,
Tehran,
IRAN

دروس، خیابان یار محمدی، بن بست طالقانی، پلاک 8
(لطفا پیش از رسیدن به کوچه گالری، وسیله نقلیه خود را در
خیابان یار محمدی پارک بنمایید.)



An Introduction to Zartosht Rahimi's Show

Javid Ramezani

September 4, 2023

Beings are classified into two distinct categories: those who have acquired knowledge through learning, and those who possess an instinctive mind. Beyond this dichotomy, the most esteemed of all creations is referred to as "human." They are the chosen ones, the fruit of knowledge, and the most excellent form created under the moon.

Positioned between the realms of spirituality and corporeality, the perception of beauty in humans hinges on the function of the imaginative faculty.

This imaginative power creates a world from its imagination, portraying real life and nature. These manifestations occasionally comprehend the depiction, while at other times, they strive to represent.

This introduction serves as an entry point into Zartosht Rahimi's show.

The images depicted in this collection are the manifestation of the concept of beauty within our minds. By incorporating elements from the art of others and their subjects into genre art, it becomes an examination of their perspective on the higher world and the beings residing within, which are embodied in images and symbols. The central theme of the collection revolves around angels. As indicated in the statement, humanity, with subtle playfulness, has created angels in pursuit of the desire to fly. The images are depictions of angels as portrayed in Western art throughout various historical periods.

Rahimi strives to challenge the Western narrative on the East. By transcending the exotic realm, he explores Western art and endeavors to critically study the sanctity of their painterly elements. Given the decline of human values in the contemporary world, this desacralization itself becomes a novel conceptual medium for our art.

Angels are considered as God's messengers. The word "Fereshteh" (Angel) finds its roots in "Ferāishteh" from ancient Persian, and in the Avesta, it is referred to as "Ferāeshteh," signifying extreme beauty, purity, and benevolence.

In the Bible, angels were created before humans. They assume various ranks and levels, acting as protectors of humans and being objects of worship since the 4th century AD.

In the years following the Renaissance, Peter Paul Rubens created a work titled, "The Fall of the Rebel Angels" (1620), illustrating Michael and other angels casting people into the abyss.

This perspective bears witness to the movement of desantifying religious images in the 16th century. However, in Rahimi's work, different paintings have been appropriated such as those of artists like Masaccio, Raphael, and El Greco from various historical periods, spanning from early Renaissance to Mannerism and Baroque periods, all being represented with distinctive forms.

The figures of angels are often detached from their original context, placed against backgrounds adorned with graffiti and street art, using fluorescent colors. The narratives of these angels are hardly recognizable for the viewer, and the experience of aesthetics in their spiritual dimension remains enigmatic. In Rahimi's artwork, the angel from Sandro Botticelli's "Annunciation," (1490), is separated from the surrounding forms in the original painting and placed within a contemporary American artistic context. The lines encircling the angel figure in Rahimi's work emphasize the fusion of Iranian painting traditions with contemporary Western art. While the angel symbolizes the delivery of divine instructions and revelations it has no audience and remains isolated within a frame of high-contrast colors – a pattern observed in most of the artworks. These nonfunctional angels signify the deterioration of goodness in contemporary human existence.

Building on his past works, Rahimi aims to present a project with a more conceptually focused and coherent approach. In this regard, his focus on theoretical concepts and the cohesion of his ideas has reached a commendable position even though the medium of painting may have limited his expression. The main theme of the collection holds the potential to engage with newer media, and from this perspective, his boldness in transcending his visual materiality to a greater extent is not without its many risks and shortcomings.

Revisiting and presenting another culture is a tactic that, since the time of Naser al-Din Shah, has turned our art and culture into a commodity and ultimately subjecting it to the system of Orientalist commercialism. Rahimi's attempts to redirect this perspective towards Western art disregard the lack of a theoretical framework in this regard, as well as the economic and social context. Nonetheless, foreign audiences show a clear interest in these works. The question is, to what extent will pursuing gain through the same methods as others be beneficial in the quest for competition and identity revival? Should we resemble our adversaries?

Our lack awareness about the story of each angel in the original painting conceals the truth within the subtexts. The relationship between the two contexts necessitates narration and interpretation. From the viewer's perspective, this absence becomes a mystery that requires the original work to be referenced and introduced within the framework of art history.

For example, during the Baroque period when the Church attempted reformation through art, seeking to regain its lost credibility, how were the angels depicted? How are the angels by an artist like Rubens perceived in Rahimi's project? We know that during the Baroque period, the outlines around the artwork would often fade, and light held significant importance. Are Rahimi's visual compositions consistent across all subtexts in eras? This level of scrutiny provides him with extensive expressive capabilities. The concept that angels live with instinctual minds according to wisdom while humans live with empirical minds is how Rahimi's works can be viewed from an epistemological perspective. Regardless of political geography, Rahimi unconsciously promotes the expansion of experiential wisdom and a form of rationalism. This shift in the structures of Iranian collective wisdom is also a point of contemplation in this collection.

Rahimi's approach derives from a critical perspective on the mythical self-evidencies of his time. In a modern point of view, his art communicates through the way of painting rather than mere words and gestures.

Rahimi's painting, concerning technique, alludes to a Western style and context, which, in terms of semiotics and reliance on form and context, may contradict the primary goal of the project.

In any case, this collection by Rahimi signifies a substantial accomplishment in both theoretical and practical endeavors, marking a new milestone in his artistic evolution, urging us to follow him as a young and inquisitive artist.





160 x 120 cm

Acrylic On Canvas



160 x 120 cm

Acrylic On Canvas



100 x 80 cm

Acrylic On Canvas



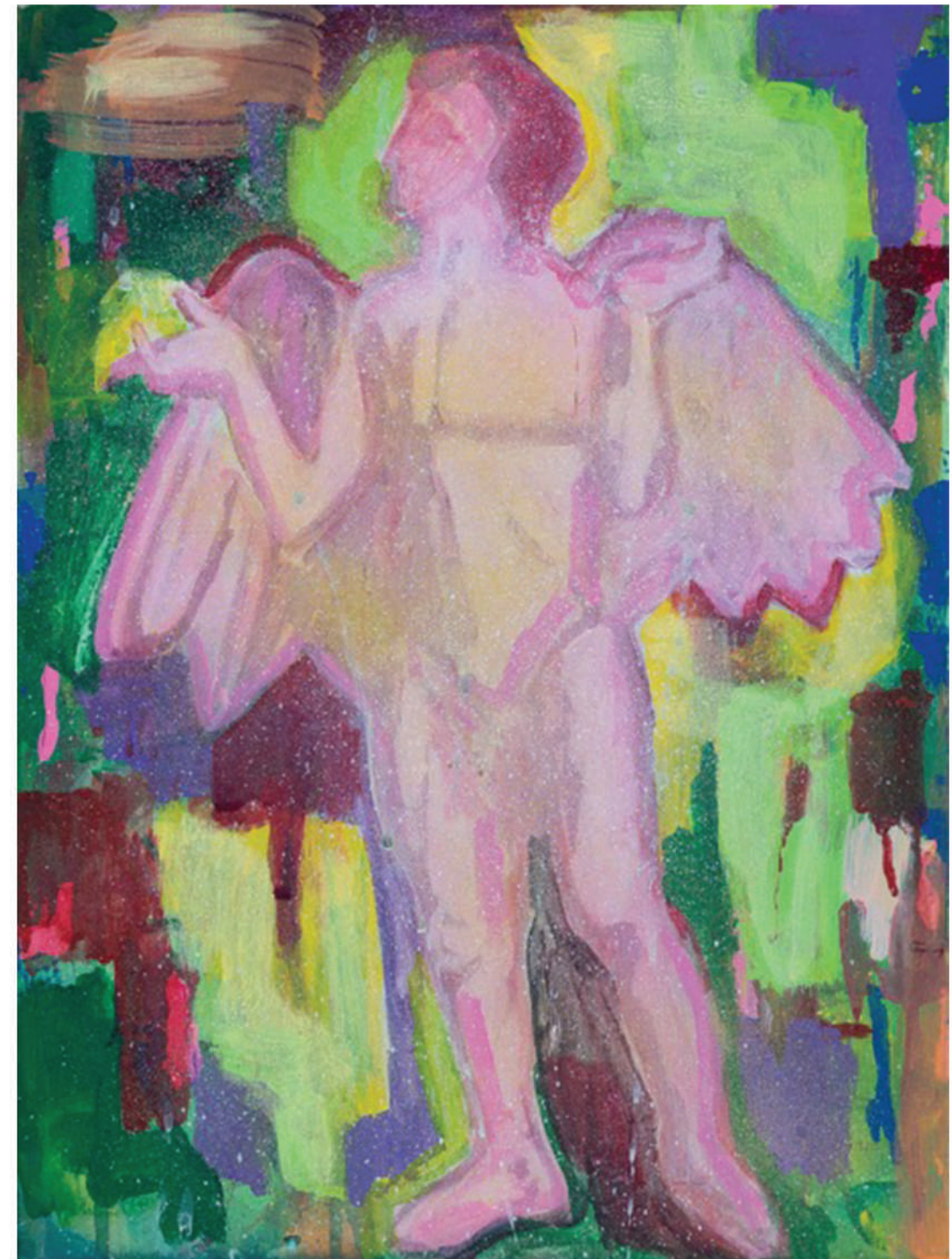
190 x 220 cm

Acrylic On Canvas



100 x 120 cm

Acrylic On Canvas



40 x 30 cm

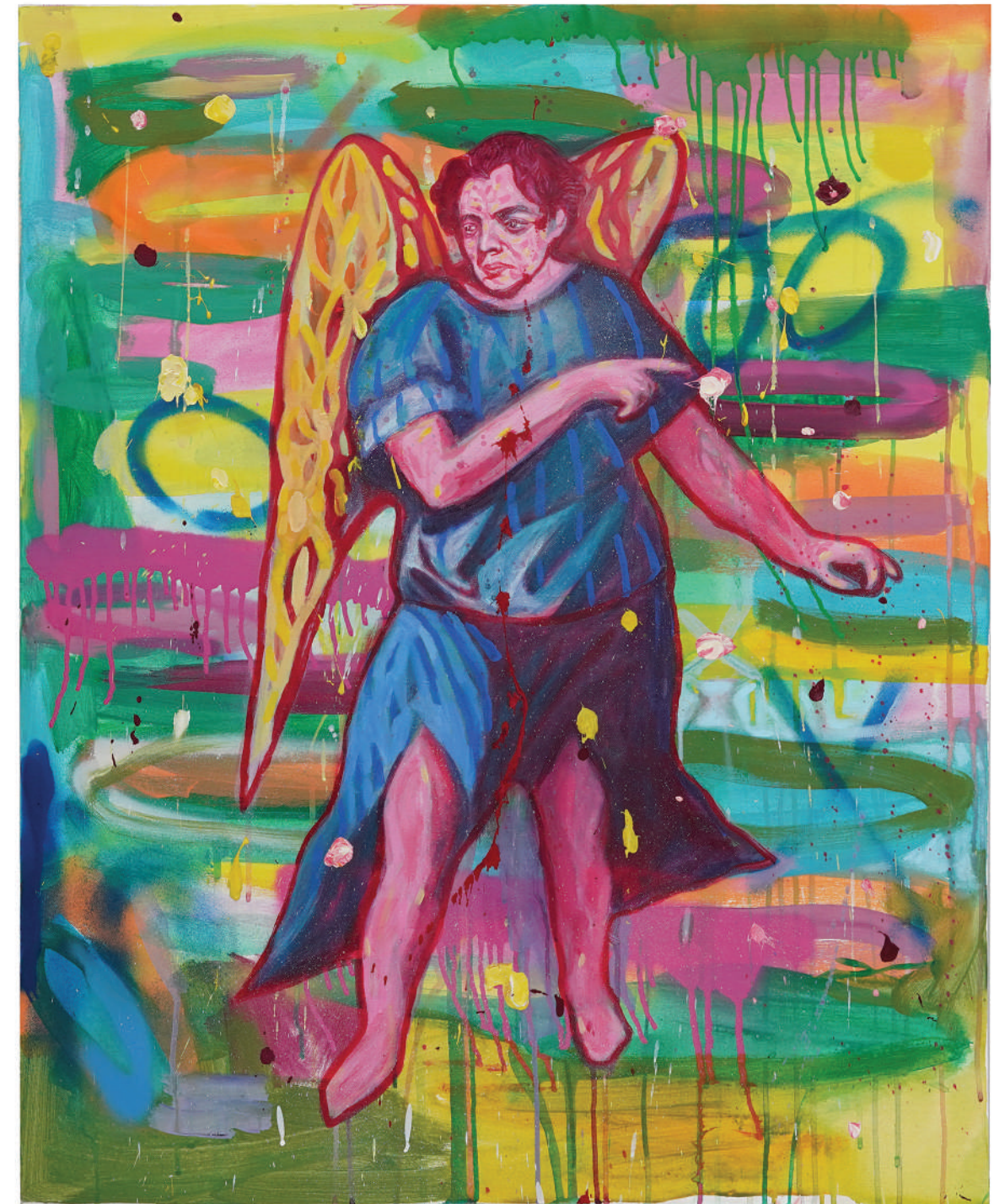
Acrylic On Canvas

Throughout history, it has been a common belief from ancient times to the present that angels are the links and intermediaries between the earthly realm and the throne of the Gods. An angel is a being within the human realm that possesses superior qualities, the most significant of which are wings, enabling the gods and angels to fly. From Hermes to Gabriel, in the History of Art, they have been depicted with large wings. This concept, rooted in the ancient human dream of flying, is present in almost all ancient religions and rituals, as well as in modern mythologies and narratives of superheroes.

Our common perception of angels with large wings is to some extent derived from the History of Art; from the prominent figures of ancient civilizations to the paintings in churches and illustrations, angels have been depicted with wings for flying, symbolizing their superiority over humans. Although celestial books consider humans to possess Free Will while angels lack it, signifying human superiority over angels. Perhaps this very notion has led us to create such an image of angels and Gods.

Zartosht Rahimi has also depicted angels detached from their historical and visual context, relying on references from Art History and mythology. Emphasizing the colorful lines of their figures and the chaotic, intertwined background, completely alters the symbolic positioning of angels. Rather than being connected to the heavens, these not-so-holy figures have become trapped in our imaginary world. Although these angels have wings to fly, it seems they are ensnared in a strange world, or perhaps lost. Like the modern human who, through science and technology, has conquered the world and achieved the dream of flying, but as he progressed, he found nothing but entanglement. Now, it seems he is in need of a superhero in the fantasized assembly of angels to depict the dream of tranquility.

Zarvan Rouhbakhshan

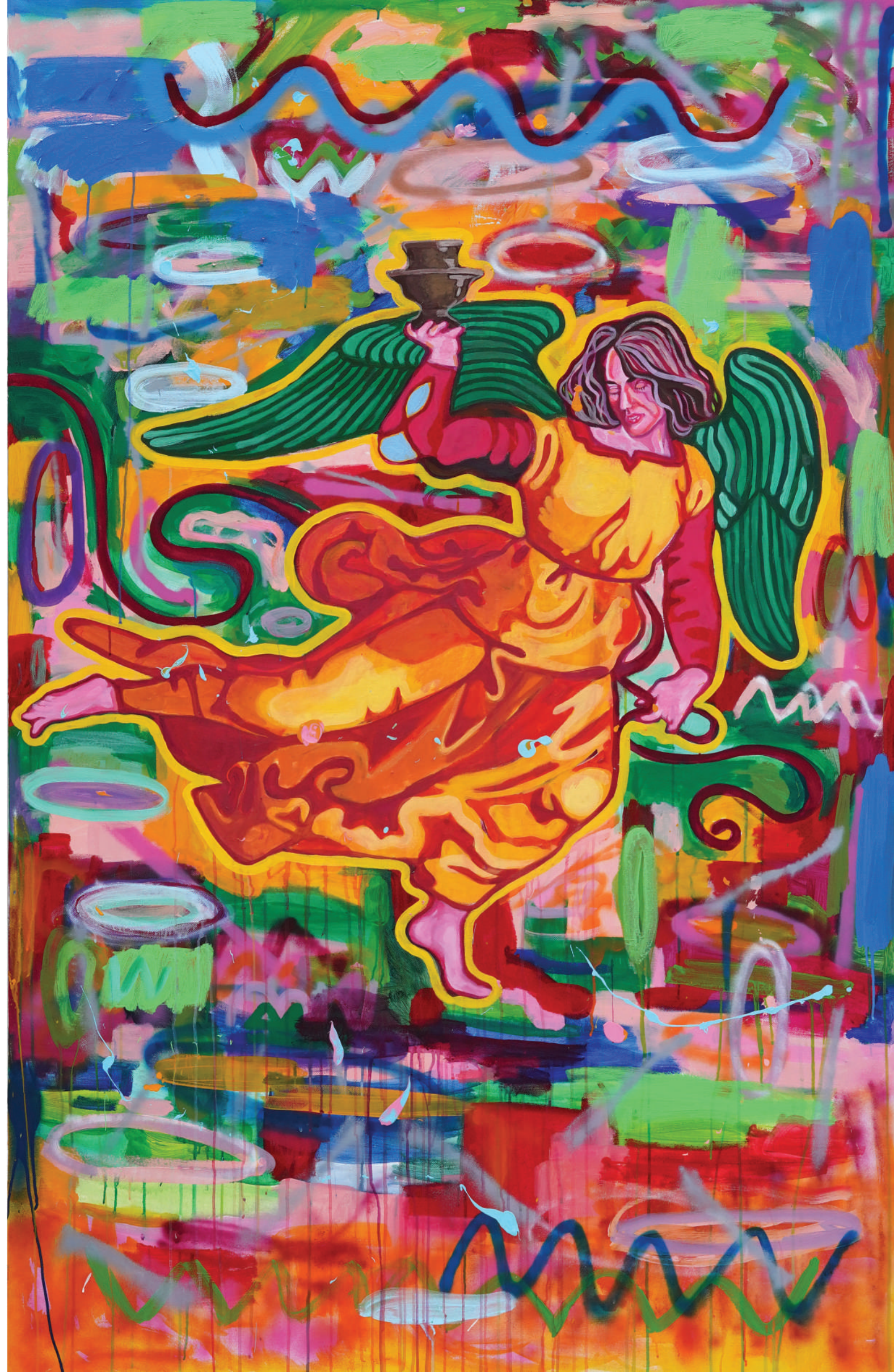


100 x 70 cm

Acrylic On Canvas

220 x 140 cm

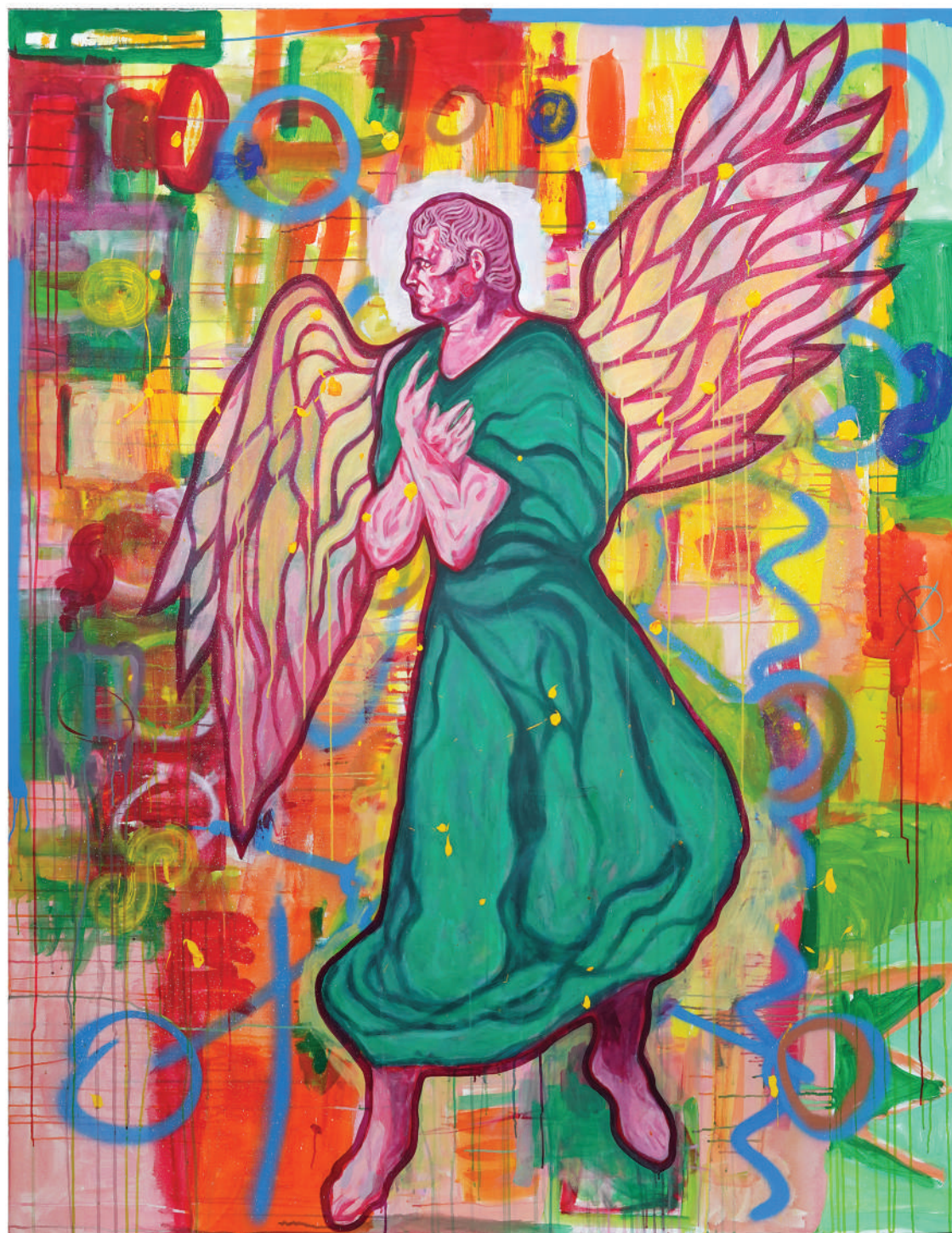
Acrylic On Canvas



220 x 140 cm

Acrylic On Canvas





160 x 200 cm

Acrylic On Canvas

Flying has long been a symbol of transcending human limitations and reaching a level of enlightenment or power. In works of civilization, "wings" symbolize this mystical aspect of how to overcome the constraints of time and space. With wings, humans could ascend beyond and reach a divine level. The ascension of the holy ones and the descent of angels, whether physical or spiritual, has been enlightening, depicting the kingdom of heaven for the seekers of knowledge. From the revelations of Bayazid and Ruzbihan to the logic of the mystical poems, we find this pattern in Iranian literature.

In his recent collection, Zartosht Rahimi has endeavored to re-envision and recall historical winged figures in an undefined, vibrant space. He immerses them in a background saturated with expressionism and graffiti-style colors. Rahimi has reconstructed the angels and depicted them in a carnivalesque of multifaceted color palette, which is both humorous and expressively unsettling. Through these "Grotesque" visuals, new forms of imagery are introduced, where the shapes and colors of brush strokes portray a transcendent existence for the characters, offering fresh perspectives and understandings for the audience.

Behnam Kamrani