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Tokyo Gallery BTAP, Jiro Takamatsu, *Oneness of Brick*, 1971



DUBAI

The power of the word

Iranian artist *Mohammad Bozorgi* creates Op art canvasses using his unique style of Arabic calligraphy

by Jules McDevitt

Erupting with ferocious energy, words seem to burst out of Mohammad Bozorgi's huge canvases like cosmic matter racing between heaven and earth. Kaleidoscopic compositions, redolent of the splitting of an atom seen through the lens of a microscope or the explosive display emanating from a dying star in space, introduce us to life forces that exist beyond the realms of direct human experience and remind us of our own inherent limitations.

Bozorgi's works are on display at Ayyam Gallery in Dubai Al Quoz, in a solo show entitled *Transcendental Strokes*. The artist, who was born in Tehran in 1978, gives the words an elastic quality, effectively stretching, flattening and bending the forms in order to fit them into the boundaries of their assigned borders.

"I think of words like molding clay in the hands of a playful child, who curiously touches, smells and shapes it," he explains. "I see the words as dominating the entire surface of the canvas. In essence, the canvas is their kingdom, and the viewer should imagine the work as part of an untold story which continues its movement far beyond the restrictions of the canvas."

Elegant modes of symmetry are employed, demonstrating the potentially endless permutations of Bozorgi's forms, an aspect of his work that induces a meditative state as viewers are invited to enter a world of infinite space.

Using the multidimensional perspective of Op art, he gives the illusion of depth and movement to the words, enlivening them with a dynamic, hypnotic quality. "To me," he says, "a word is just as beautiful as a miracle."

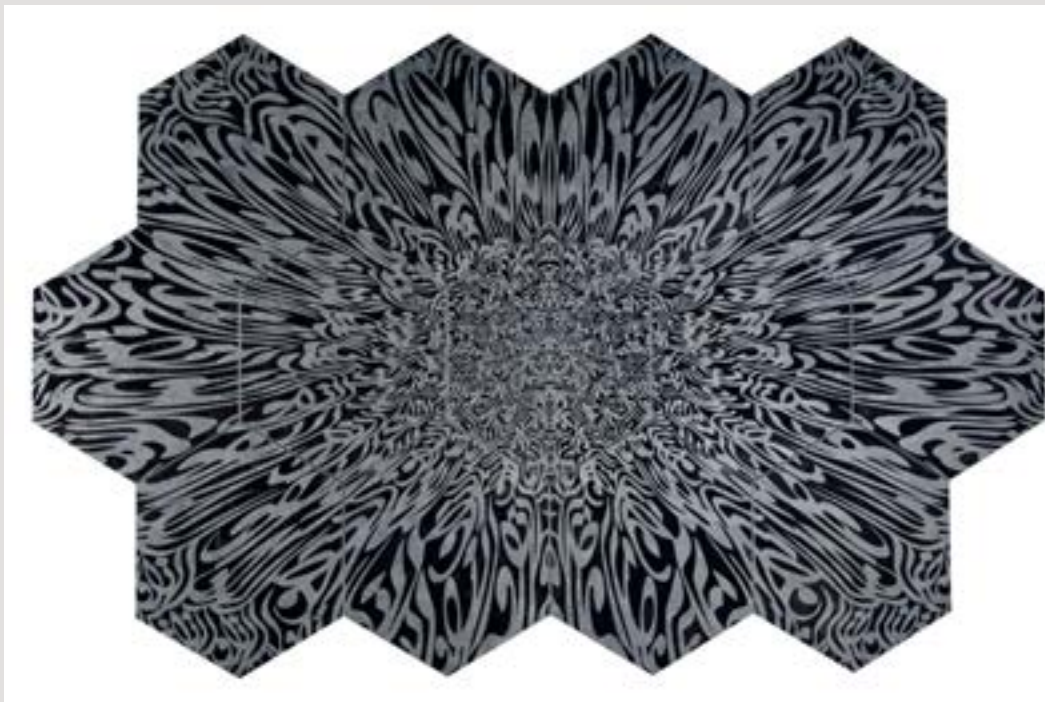
Reminiscent of his background in both engineering and the practice of classical calligraphy, the artist goes through a lengthy preparatory process for each painting. Creating multiple, technically detailed sketches using mathematical instruments, as well as traditional

implements like reed brushes, he experiments with the endless possibilities of geometry, symmetry, proportion and form before embarking on his final composition, executed by freehand on canvas.

He Will Provide is an enormous, multi-canvas work consisting of thirteen hexagons, a ubiquitous shape seen in Islamic geometrical decoration. The work is inspired by the *Surat An-Nahl* or *Surah of The Bees*, which recognises the complex mechanisms of beehives and the miraculous production of honey as an example of God's mastery and provision over mankind. The words emanate from the centre of the composition, becoming larger and more elongated as they get further away from their nucleus.

The Maker is comprised of two canvases mounted at an angle, giving the viewer an immersive, multi-dimensional experience. The mirroring sides that repeat the word "Allah" are identical. Both are distorted to the point of complete abstraction, creating an illusion like travelling through a black hole.

These works mark a new stage in Mohammad Bozorgi's development that focus on the examination of the aesthetic and spiritual power of the written word. Like a scribe, the artist's meditative artistic process sees him painstakingly practice his craft with both technical prowess and extraordinary artistic ingenuity. ♦



Mohammad Bozorgi, *He Will Provide*, 13 pieces, total 364 x 575 cm, acrylic on canvas, 2015

Mohammad Bozorgi's 'Transcendental Strokes' continues at Ayyam Gallery in Dubai Al Quoz until July 30.