



Mohammad Bozorgi, *Inner Enthusiasm*, 2017, acrylic on canvas (above) and *Theosophy*, 2017, mixed media on canvas

A sense of hope amid the darkness of war

In his new paintings, Tehran-based artist Mohammad Bozorgi has used the principles of geometry to create abstract illusions of depth and space

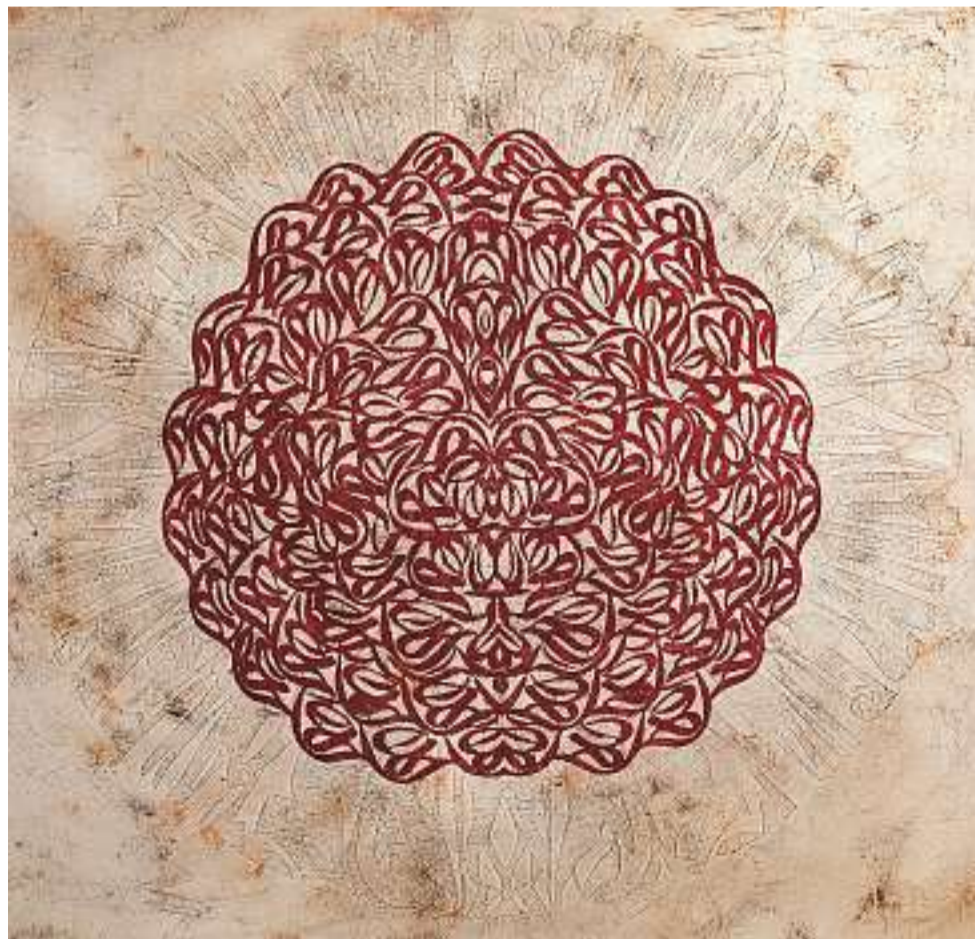
By JYOTI KALSI
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Well known contemporary calligrapher Mohammad Bozorgi wants to convey a sense of hope amidst the conflicts in the region through his beautiful paintings and silk screen prints in his latest exhibition, *Dance in the Dark*. The Iranian artist has used bright colours and delicate line work, done with traditional calligraphy tools, to transform text into fluid forms that celebrate the beauty of the universe and the tranquility and magnificence of nature as manifestations of divine creation.

Bozorgi has a degree in biomedical engineering but his love for art led him to study and master various forms of calligraphy. He is recognised as a leading figure among a new generation of calligraphers who seeks to contemporise this traditional art form through experimental formalism. In keeping with the aesthetic principles of Islamic art, his compositions are based on precise mathematical structures and symmetry, and despite his innovations in the script, he never deviates from the meaning of the words.

In his new paintings, the artist has used the principles of geometry to create abstract illusions of depth and space, and played with the letters to create texts that are infused with energy and positivism and seem to move across the canvas, radiating from and returning to the centre like the cyclical rhythms of nature.

By using many different colours, textures and words in his layered compositions, he has beautifully expressed philosophical and spiritual concepts about creation, collective consciousness, the eternal journey of the soul, and transcendence. "Today, we are surrounded by the darkness of war, destruction and great human suffering. I believe that an artist must create work that brings some hope, happiness and light into viewers lives.



So I have used colours such as violet, gold and green, that signify divinity, light, and nature, and even used special paints that glow in the dark. The texts in my paintings include various names of God, and uplifting words from the Quran, and from Persian poems that remind us of the beauty of the universe, and the benevolence of God, and urge us to maintain our faith and strive to find the light within us," Bozorgi says.

The artist has also experimented for the first time with silk screen printing to explore new ways of aligning traditional calligraphy

with contemporary visual culture. "I had to create my own silkscreen tools, and develop new printmaking techniques to print my complex compositions, but this new medium has given me the freedom to use more colours and new forms to express myself," he says.

■ *Dance in the Dark* will run at Ayyam Gallery, DIFC until August 30.

■ Jyoti Kalsi is an arts-enthusiast based in Dubai.

The written word

As part of their summer programming, Alserkal Avenue is celebrating the magic of the written word through the launch of Literaturhaus at Nadi, which is held every Saturday at 4pm in Nadi Al Quoz, the social club in the arts complex. The programme, which runs until September 30, aims to revive and reinvent the 19th century salon where intellectuals from various fields got together to discuss literature, art, culture and contemporary issues.

The programme brings together regional and international authors, poets, critics, curators, publishers, translators and musicians to share their ideas through readings, discussions and performances.

The programme for August includes a talk by writer and blogger Asma Al Jailani on 'How the skill of writing becomes the journey of writing' on August 5, followed on August 12 by a 'Spoken word and performance workshop' led by poet Farah Chammah and Jamil Adas, founder of Dubai Poetics. On August 19, publisher Andrew Hansen will talk about 'My Life on the Coffee Table', offering his perspective on how to achieve success in a rapidly changing and competitive book market, while having fun along the way. The salon on August 26, will feature a Poetry Slam, and a live musical performance by poet Chammah, accompanied by the band Parea, with percussionist Myriam Nemeah and oud and guitar player Maruan Betawi.

Next month, there will be additional sessions on September 13 and 28 at 6pm and 7pm respectively. The events lined up include a talk on 'love for written and spoken word and the importance of translation' by Zaki Anwar Nusseibeh, who has been an interpreter for the President of the UAE since 1968, and has worked in various government departments related to culture and heritage; and readings by writer Mai Khaled, from her book *The Magic of Turquoise*, and poet Zeina Hashem Beck, from her award winning book *Louder than Hearts*.

Philip Kennedy, professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Comparative Literature, Arts and Humanities at NYU Abu Dhabi will speak about the first Arabic novella from the 11th century — *The Doctors' Dinner Party* by Ibn Butlan. Yoga expert Aidan Walker will speak about his book, *The Ecology of the Soul*, explaining how the seven powers of our own inner ecosystem can help us to achieve peace, power and well-being. Diplomat Tom Fletcher, who writes a blog on international relations, will talk about his book *Naked Diplomacy: Power and Statecraft in the Digital Age*.

Other participants include long time UAE residents Dr Frauke Heard-Bey and David Heard. Dr Heard-Bey is a historian and political scientist specialising in socio-political developments in the Gulf region, and has worked at the Centre for Documentation and Research in Abu Dhabi for 39 years. She is one of the foremost authorities on the history of the UAE, from the time of the Trucial States, and will discuss its transformation over the last four decades. David Heard, a petrochemical engineer, who has a depth of experience in the country's oil industry, will talk about his book, *From Pearls to Oil*, which tells the story of how the oil companies first came to Abu Dhabi, and the role of oil in the country's development.

The events are free and open to the public, but prior registration is required. For more information go to alserkalvenue.ae and to book your place write to rsvp@alserkalvenue.ae

■ Literaturhaus at Nadi is held every Saturday at 4pm at Nadi Al Quoz, Alserkal Avenue, until September 30.