

AHMED FARID
CROSSROADS



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SAFARKHAN Art Gallery



Ahmed Farid, *Electric Storm*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 150 x 250 cm

Ahmed Farid

Born in 1950 in Cairo, where he currently lives and works, Farid is a self-taught abstract painter who trained privately through immersion apprenticeships in established artists' studios. With a degree in social sciences and an early career in marketing communication and business, Farid's initial encounter with art and his subsequent career within it, was borne out of his extensive travels in the early seventies.

Farid is himself a bi-product in his professional capacity of the dual perspective of post-1960s American pop cultural mythology, meshed with his experiences and traditional roots in the effervescent Egyptian socio-political collective experience.

Farid continues to draw upon his own opinionated positions on the dynamics that animate the bustling Cairene metropolis, and Egyptian life more broadly. From this unique perch, he delves into the addictively chaotic chasm of metropolitan life and all that it entails.

Farid's characteristic brand of abstraction are dynamic variegated meditations on phenomena including superorganisms such as urban settings, or meteorological like the changing seasons, as well as philosophical concepts of conflict, seclusion, accumulation and most recently, the idea of intersectionality in his collection for the exhibition "Crossroads."



Ahmed Farid, *Archways (segment)*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 150 x 250 cm



Ahmed Farid, *In the Clouds*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 100 x 200 cm

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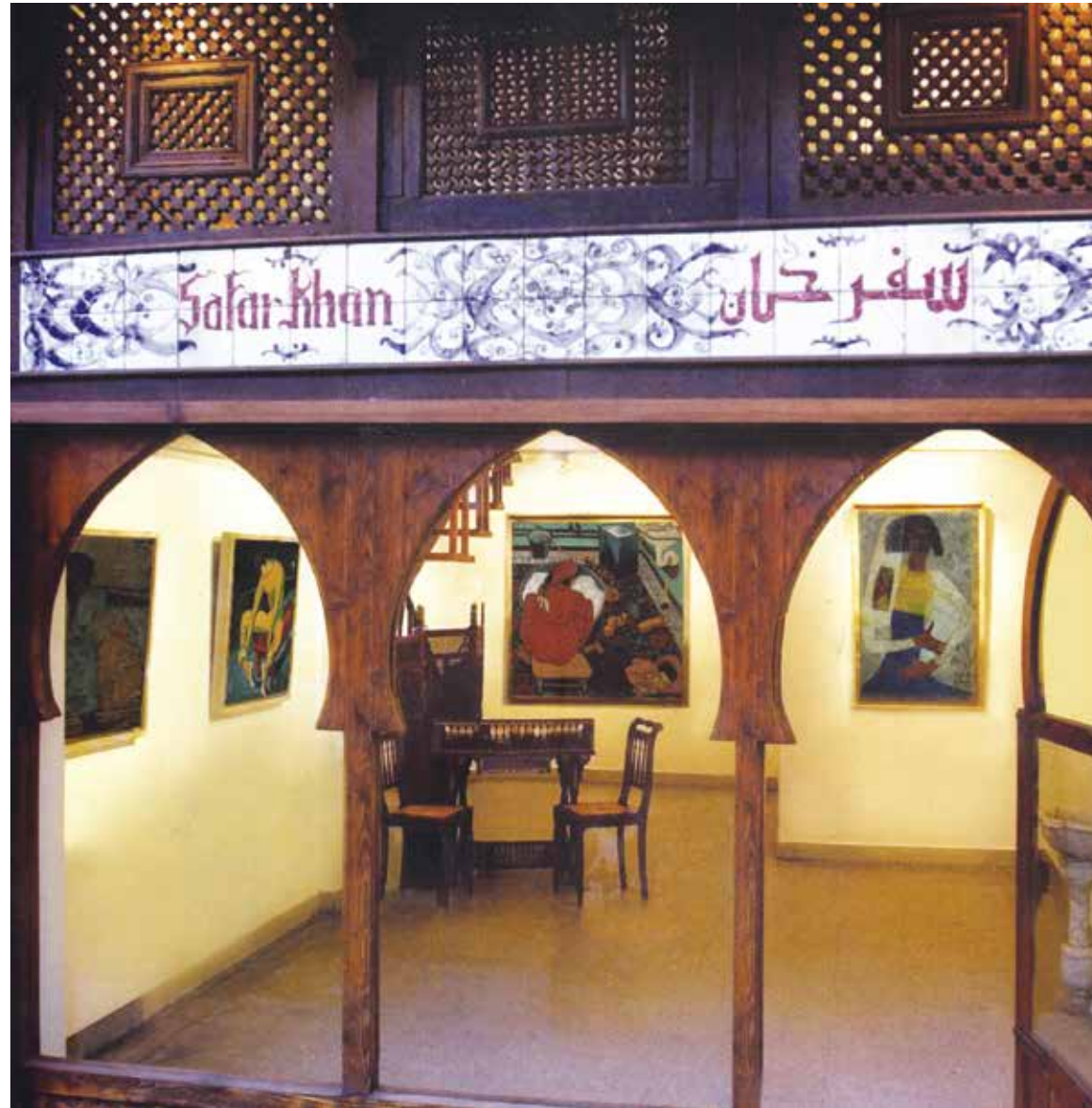
Ahmed Farid, *Urban Glyphs I*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 60 x 60 cm



Ahmed Farid, *Urban Glyphs II*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 60 x 60 cm



Ahmed Farid, *Horizon at Dusk*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 70 x 100 cm



SAFARKHAN Art Gallery

Since 1968, Safarkhan Art Gallery has been the foremost patron, purveyor, educator and custodian of Egyptian fine art. For over five decades our legacy of innovative curating and collecting has been defined by our peerless ethos, embodying the constant dialogue between the old and the new.

At Safarkhan we believe in art as the world's unifying language. Through our time-honoured role, we have dedicated ourselves to the journey of discovering and exhibiting a caliber of Egyptian art that has universal appeal for its inherent quality and message and is reflective of our individual and collective identity.

Whilst our historic connection to the pioneers of the Modernist period will always be at the heart of Safarkhan, it is our commitment to unearthing Egypt's most inspiring contemporary talents that allows us to uphold this privileged tradition.

Safarkhan's catalogue of services involves: organizing monthly exhibitions from the modern and contemporary classes with a curated focus; liaising with collectors and institutions; advising clients on the art of collecting; and maintaining close ties with the world's leading museums and auction houses.



Ahmed Farid,
Magenta, 2021,
mixed media on canvas,
120 x 220 cm



Ahmed Farid, *Invigorate I*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 180 x 200 cm



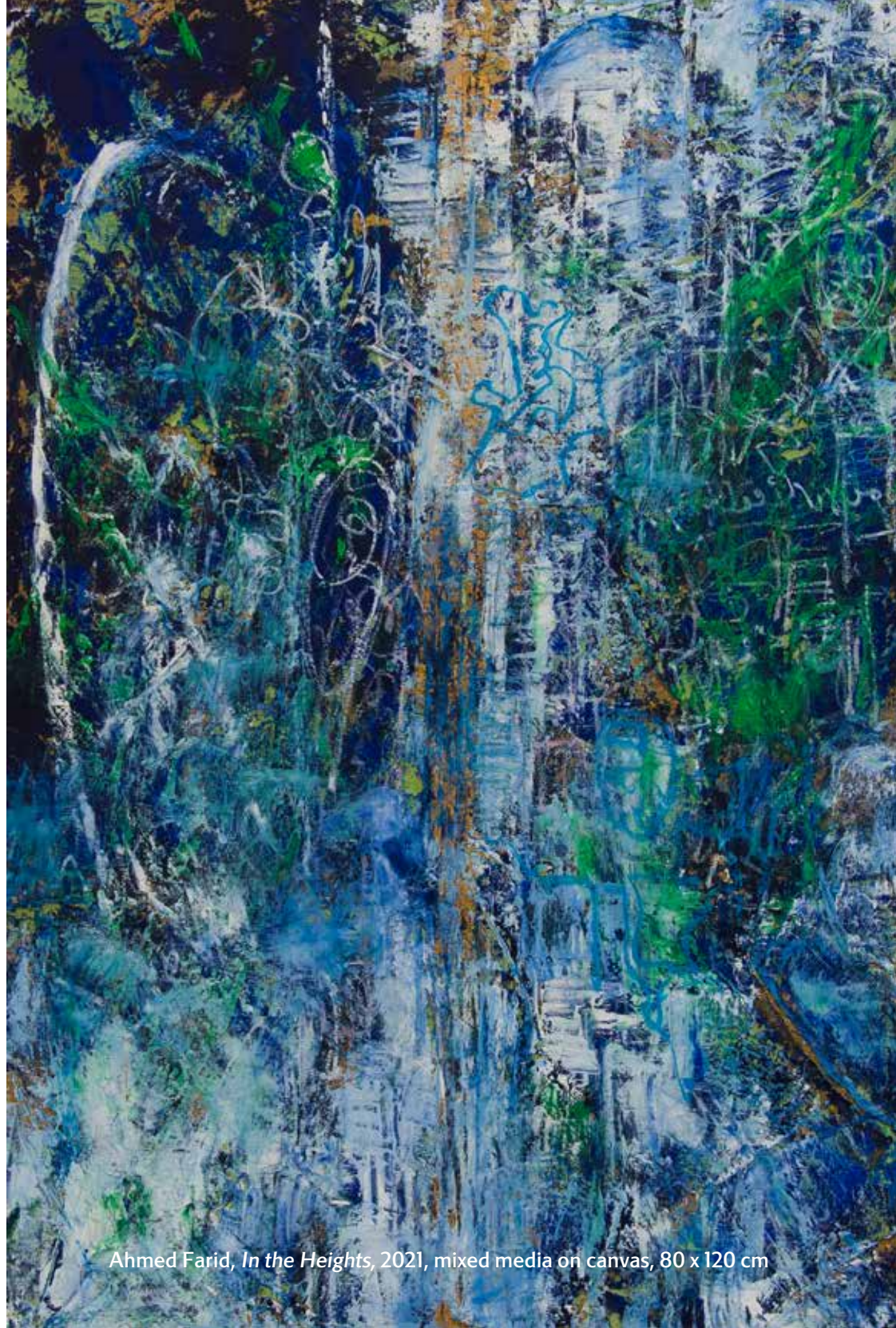
Ahmed Farid, *Invigorate II*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 180 x 200 cm



Ahmed Farid,
Crossroads (cover), 2021,
mixed media on canvas,
150 x 250 cm



Ahmed Farid,
Archways, 2021,
mixed media on canvas,
150 x 250 cm



Ahmed Farid, *In the Heights*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 80 x 120 cm

CROSSROADS

Celebrated international contemporary talent Ahmed Farid's fifth exhibition with Safarkhan is an artistic exploration and abstract meditation on the resonant notion of intersectionality. It refers to our world having in recent times become enveloped in a sort of stasis that to a great extent has suspended much of the norms that comfort us, resulting in a crossroads of psychological, physical and societal forces. This idea of the amalgamation of mental and physical "Crossroads" has been the stimulus behind Farid's latest collection, which he created laboriously throughout the midst of the pandemic.

For Farid, these altered individual and collective states were not merely something to wrestle with or resist. Rather, it was his own embrace of the certain welcome aspects that it also brought, which now animate the typically optimistic effervescent painting style he has risen to prominence on. Namely these took shape in the form of bringing us closer to a more profound understanding of the world around us, and our collective responsibility towards one another and the planet. Elsewhere, it is a contemplation of adopting a more measured and unhurried pace in our daily affairs, coalescing us into more grounded and thoughtful states of being. Ultimately, Farid brings to fruition the meaningful clarity and creative impetus that arrive from seclusion and isolation, leading to newer undiscovered horizons.

"Crossroads" refers to the artist's own personal path, and the eventual crossroads that he has met, and will continue to meet throughout his artistic journey. Crossroads that symbolize the significance and fatefulness of choice above all else, our yearning to choose, and the subsequent learning that comes with the choices we make in life. The expanse of Farid's canvases in this collection therefore represent the delicate equilibrium we as a species traverse between the temporal and intangible realms. That is the metaphysical domain of our spiritual selves, where the powers of intuition and subconscious reign supreme. It is where we find the source of inspiration for Farid's painting, the artist not only at a crossroads within his own personal and professional capacities, but his desire to express the collective crossroads we face and will surely continue to face as conscious beings in our individual and collective existence.



Ahmed Farid, *Cryptic City*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 120 x 220 cm



Ahmed Farid, *Forest Fire I*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 80 x 60 cm



Ahmed Farid, *Forest Fire II*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 80 x 60 cm



Ahmed Farid,
Red Island, 2021,
mixed media on canvas,
90 x 150 cm



Ahmed Farid, *Blue Sky Over Grassland*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 160 x 100 cm



Ahmed Farid, *Graffiti Dreams*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 70 x 50 cm

Ahmed Farid,
Shimmering Skyline II, 2021,
mixed media on canvas,
90 x 150 cm



Diego Faa on Ahmed Farid

Very often it is said that artists can be seen as thermometers of society, mirrors in which to reflect ourselves and seek answers to complex questions. Observing the choices they make in the artistic field, examining their new intellectual attitudes towards reality and knowing how to see the direction their study is going, allows us to not only appreciate the aesthetic language proposed, but at the same time to better understand the world we inhabit, and to ultimately deepen the knowledge even about ourselves.

However, in some historical moments this direction is not clearly visible, and the road before our eyes is hidden by a dense fog, from which it is impossible to untangle the yarn of opportunities, practicable routes and background voices, and it becomes hard to unravel the complexity of reality.

In some instances, the total loss of orientation leads to a suspension of the choice, to waiting in a sort of existential stasis not due to sloth or cowardice, but in a need for a more lucid observation of what surrounds us and is happening deep within us. Taking time to understand, getting away from the superficial noise and allowing to distance ourselves from absolute truths, are healthy and often unavoidable exercises.

Ahmed Farid's latest works presented in the exhibition clearly testify to the problematic nature and uneasiness of the historical moment we are living. Far from a definitive resolution, today his art appears to be at odds with itself and seems to open a window to a universe of suspended questions. The doubts surrounding Farid, the loss of some certainties, his inability to clearly imagine the future, and the disappearance of some loved ones have not determined a loss of awareness in his artistic ability, but instead an emotional turmoil capable of constantly putting everything in question. The artist once again chooses to reflect himself in his work, seeking escape from an indecipherable existence in the depths of the grooves traced in the matter.

What stands out in these works is an extremely direct and natural expressive need, arising from an outburst so deeply human that it cannot remain imprisoned in the brush. Every filter, every technical mannerism and every aesthetic frill is set aside to leave room for bold, broad and deep brushstrokes where the pictorial element, investigated as never before in recent years, obediently bends to the artist's will.

In the last few months, Farid and I have discussed very often what direction his

research should take in the near future, and in particular what theme the exhibition should focus on. From our long dialogues and from the observation of the works that he was creating, it was immediately clear to me that this apparent "non-direction" was taking shape as a clear awareness that there was no road, but only a need for an introspection that could not possibly have been read univocally. This is why, by closely examining these latest creations, we are led to experience contrasting feelings. The eye moves nervously and follows the uncertain and always on-the-edge trend of the brushstrokes, the overlapping colors, the figures that - as often happens in Farid's works - emerge from the background of the scene.

While remaining faithful to what has been his expressive language for many seasons, in these works his art seems to want to sink into an abyss of trepidation and anxiety that want to speak of nothing but themselves. The purpose that generated these works was to rely on the momentary impulse and get lost, to leave the hand free from any kind of predetermined construction. In a certain sense, this apparent lack of direction has always accompanied Farid's poetics, but in recent months it has taken over, leaving a

halo of uncertainty in the artist's intimacy and consequently in his works, along with a definite fear of the changes taking place inside and outside himself.

The bright and vivid colors, the continuous tonal changes and the oscillating balances within the works must not then be read as a display of a positivity reborn after a complex and problematic period, but rather as the means to represent this inner fragmentation. What clearly appears to me is that between the folds of these canvases there is a sincere testimony that there is no solution except in painting. All this internal tangle is founded and finds refuge in painting and the whole external world finds refuge in the artistic act. After all, the artist as such, unlike all of us, has the capacity to be able to pour his anxiety into the perimeter of the canvas, letting in everything that is impossible to say or scream beyond the boundaries of art.

Ahmed Farid has always painted with absolute sincerity, with the desire to speak of nothing more than what pulsates inside himself as an essential urgency; that's why when certainties fail, when everything seems to crumble and the world appears as unrecognizable, it is the right time to slow down, take time and indulge in painting.

— Diego Faa, Art Professor & Curator



Ahmed Farid, *Ocean Spray*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



Ahmed Farid, *Labyrinth*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 100 x 100 cm





Ahmed Farid,
Ancestral Beauty, 2021,
mixed media on canvas,
240 x 200 cm



Ahmed Farid, *Elements*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 90 x 150 cm

Exhibitions:

- 2008: • *Contemporary Views* (group exhibition), Al Masar Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
- 2011: • *Contemporary Views III* (group exhibition), Al Masar Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
• *Contemporary Views IV* (group exhibition), Al Masar Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
- 2012: • *Gallery Collection* (group exhibition), Al Masar Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
• *Artists at Home & Abroad* (group exhibition), Broadway Gallery, NYC, New York, USA
• *Little Treasures* (group exhibition), Trevisan International Art, Bologna, Italy
- 2013: • Faustini Art Gallery (group exhibition), Florence, Italy
• *Urban Diversity* (solo exhibition), Al Masar Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
- 2014: • *Migration* (solo exhibition), Al Masar Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
- 2015: • *Art Salon Al Ahram* (group exhibition), Cairo, Egypt
• Jerome Zodo Gallery (group exhibition), London, England
- 2016: • *Behind Closed Doors* (solo exhibition), Safarkhan Art Gallery, Egypt
• *Art For Life* (group exhibition), Safarkhan Art Gallery and Magdy Yacoub Foundation and Bulgari Egypt collaboration, Cairo, Egypt
- 2017: • *Melodies of Conflict* (solo exhibition), Safarkhan Art Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
• *Luxury Living* (solo exhibition), Art Basel Miami, Florida, USA
- 2018: • *Nothing Vanishes, Everything Transforms* (group exhibition), Manial Palace and Museum, Cairo, Egypt
• *Chaotic Beauty* (solo exhibition), Safarkhan Art Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
- 2019: • *Art Beirut* (group exhibition), Beirut Art Fair, Beirut, Lebanon
• *Reimagined Narratives* (group exhibition), Art d’Egypte, Cairo, Egypt
- 2020: • *Accumulation* (solo exhibition), Safarkhan Art Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
- 2021: • *Seasons* (solo exhibition), Safarkhan Art Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
• *Forever Is Now* (group exhibition), Art d’Egypte, Cairo, Egypt
• Resident artist at Chase Contemporary Gallery (NYC) exhibiting at Art Basel Miami, Florida, USA
- 2022: • *Crossroads* (solo exhibition), Safarkhan Art Gallery, Cairo, Egypt

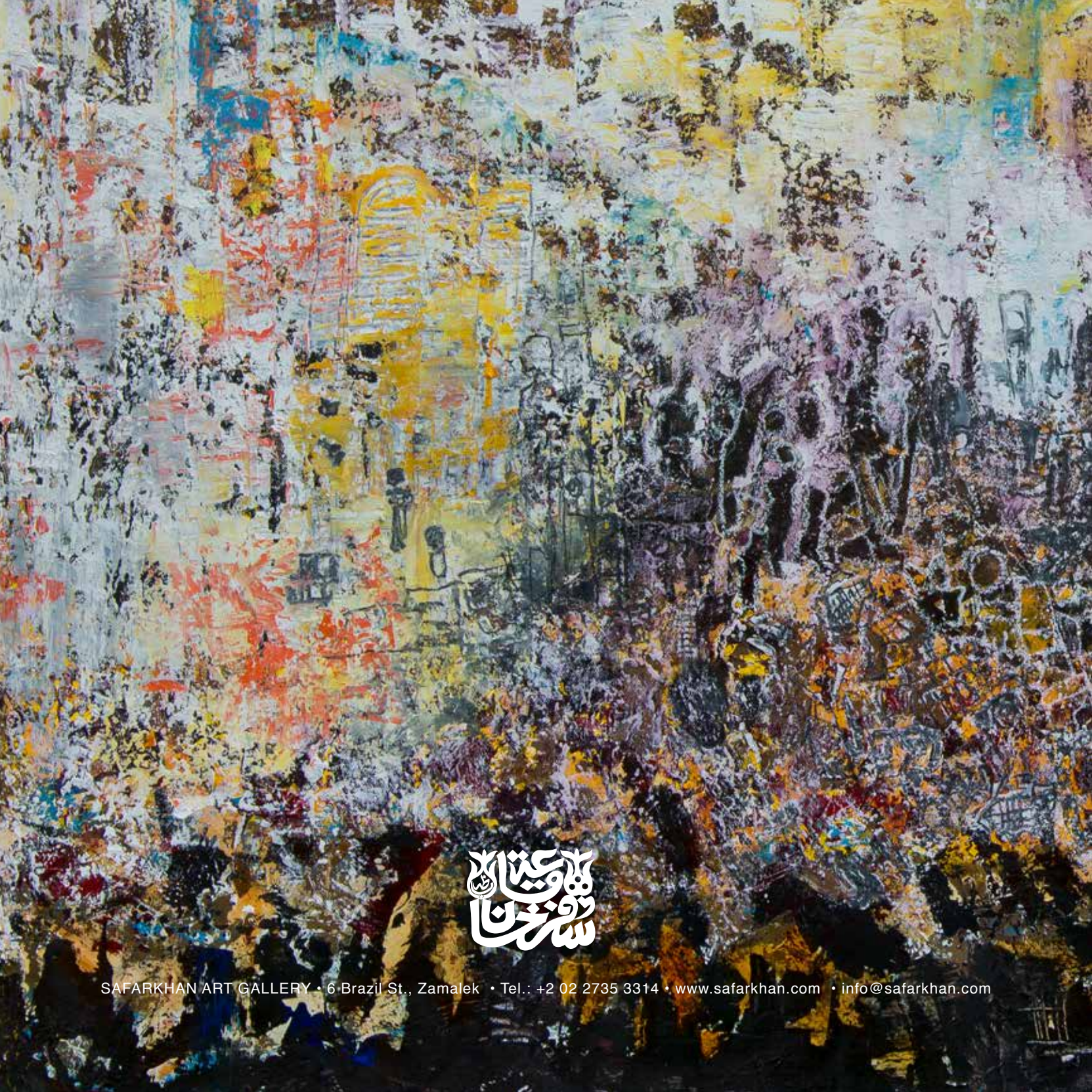
Ahmed Farid,
Smokescreen, 2021,
mixed media on canvas,
80 x 120 cm



Projects & Acquisitions:

- 2015:
- City Graffiti on Bulgari storefront windows, Christmas celebration, Cairo, Egypt
 - Commissioned painting for British Embassy, Cairo, Egypt
 - Commissioned painting for De Rigo Group, Rome, Italy
- 2016:
- Commissioned dining cladding for private residence in Zamalek, Cairo, Egypt
 - Commissioned painting for French Embassy, Cairo, Egypt
 - Commissioned painting for Italian Embassy, Cairo, Egypt
 - Commissioned painting for Fendi Casa Forli, Forli-Cesena, Italy
 - Commissioned painting for The Egyptian Modern and Contemporary Art Museum at Cairo Opera House, Cairo, Egypt
- 2017:
- Commissioned painting for The Egyptian Modern and Contemporary Art Museum at Cairo Opera House, Cairo, Egypt
 - Visiting Professor of Art, Accademia D'Arte Firenze, Florence, Italy
 - Metropolis Magic (2016), sold at Christie's Auctions, Modern and Contemporary Art, Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel, Dubai, UAE
- 2018:
- River of Stillness (2017), sold at Christie's Auctions, Dubai Post War and Contemporary
 - Art, Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel, Dubai, UAE
 - Urban Chaos (2018), sold at Christie's Auctions, Middle Eastern Modern and Contemporary Art, Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel, Dubai, UAE
- 2019:
- Seasons (2015), sold at Christie's Auctions, Middle Eastern Modern and Contemporary Art, London, England





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