

How does
a part of the world,
leave the world!

How does wetness,
leave water!

Don't try to put out fire
by throwing on more fire!

Don't wash a wound
with blood!

No matter how fast you run,
your shadow keeps up!
Sometimes it's in front!

Only full overhead sun
diminishes your shadow.

But that shadow
has been serving you!

What hurts you
blesses you!

Darkness
is your candle.

Your boundaries
are your quest.

I could explain this
but it will break
the glass cover
on your heart!
And there's no fixing that!

You must have
shadow and light source
both.

Listen!
And lay your head
under the tree of awe.

When from that tree
feathers and wings
sprout on you!

Be quieter than a dove, don't even open your mouth
for even a coo!

Jelal'uddin Rumi - 13th century Sufi mystic and poet

The influence of Rumi's poems on my artworks:

The Romanian-French sculptor Constantin Brancusi said about his creation process: "Things are not difficult to make. What is difficult is, putting yourself in the state of mind to make them". Before the creativity, there is intuition which comes from my infinite, non-physical energetic being. When I face something good which causes exultance on me, the cheerleaders in my spirit, come out and on the other hand when I meet something bad or cause some bad effects in my mind, my whole spirit experiences a huge lamentation. All of them lead me to a temporary white silence which guides my creativity to create!

But what exactly wakes these cheerleaders up? Isn't it some flakes from outside? Aren't you inspired by outside to have exultance? These are the questions which can be asked about the process of making an artwork. For me, painting is all about inspiring and there are a number of things we can do to ensure we avoid copying that which inspires us. It begins with where we draw inspiration.

Intuition occurs suddenly – either in the form of a "gut feeling" or a "brain wave". The cultivation of intuitive calmness requires unfolding of the inner life. When developed sufficiently, intuition brings immediate comprehension of truth. You can have this marvellous realization. When I draw inspiration from a poem, I pinpoint what inspires me at the core and I ignore the rest.

Is inspiration reliant on spontaneity or is it possible to engage this resource at any time, consciously? For me it's not consciously. It all starts like magic. A sudden gush of inspiration, a hymn, a whisper, an idea comes to mind, conscious of unconscious. Phantoms or spirits or whatever other names they are called. Premonitions and visions. Automatism and paranoiac visages... sometimes they come to me when I'm reading poems, or walking. Other times they go as empty vessels...then I begin to create. So when you get this inspiration unconsciously they wouldn't be thoughtful. Thinking is a conscious process otherwise it wouldn't be a thinking. But inspiration is a mixed process, the combination of the whisper from inner side and duplication of a reality which can tolerate the inner hymn. That's why any person can have his own inspiration of a constant reality.

But how important is the own physical constitution? In one hand, the result of the artwork is important. The feeling which shines on every single touch of it. But on the other hand we cannot eliminate the physical constitution because it can lead the addressee to get close to the artist. Sadness could prevent creating an artwork. But for me it's the pressure. The extreme amount of sadness, happiness, love, limitation, censorship and so on. As an Iranian artist who had lots of social, political, cultural concerns, pressure was a great jostle to find a way to throw out the

overwhelmed feelings. But I cannot ignore all the inspirations that I got through Rumi's poems. He has opened a new door to my life.



From ten years ago, having had cultural and social issues occupying my mind all my life, I found "painting" to be a means to display them, and getting into "pop art" was my way of interpreting them into "art". My first collection was about "individuality", "women", and "cultural problems in society". It was only later that I got to know Rumi and his works. He (Rumi), shows his mastery in using everyday events to present and show his spiritual beliefs. Some have gone as far as calling his "Masnavi" a "holly book", but I see this poetry book as the ultimate answer to solving social and cultural problems. Having always been interested in self-analysis, Rumi's poetry opened a window for me, through which, I could incorporate these thoughts into my paintings. Up until now, at the mention of the meanings behind Rumi's poetry with regards to painting, one was faced with the literal and yet vague concept, which only portrayed the emotions of the artist. While this approach and style is fully respected, it lacks the ability to fully engage and connect with the artist in order to enable him to envisage the true meaning of the poetry, and hence, the resulting art work fails to have any impact or leave any impression on society or culture. It is indeed a difficult task to portray the true meaning of these verses in the form of art and in a simple and comprehensive format for the audience, and can only be achieved through "pop art" or "surrealism" . As I mentioned before, Rumi's poetry dwells on "self-understanding" and "joyful living" and I, therefore, decided to incorporate them into my paintings.



The combination of the meaning in Rumi's verses and the images of the society take form in 12 oil color paintings on canvas. "Carpet" which is the symbol for "life" is the common motif in all the paintings. Carpet in Iranian culture presents the feelings and the emotions of the weaver, as well as his taste and artistry. Various motifs and symbols have been used in this collection, where each represent Rumi's insight and views on self-understanding. In most portraits, the presence of a famous Western woman who's the infiltration of the western culture into the eastern society. Surreal spaces seen in these works, in my opinion, provides more room to the artist, for bigger imagination, enabling him to exhibit Rumi's imaginative and yet spiritual dimensions used in his poetry. Rumi also goes beyond the material world and treads into an obscure and vague, yet a truthful world, where he takes the mind and the soul with him.

After two year of living and studying in Belgium, I have reached to another way of expression in my paintings. In my point of view, listening to the poems is best for making an artwork. This is the sweet spot for coming the ideas. Music is the optimal level for creating, whereas extreme quiet sharpens our focus, making it hard for us to think differently. Most of the inspiration form the poems have come when I was listening to a poem or was a result of reading poems have been read before. I'm not aware about what is coming to my hands to paint. I just let my hands through the feelings to make the whole shape. When I create an artwork, there is a deep satisfaction in manifesting that creation. In becoming the creator through a clear intention and surrender to an experience of my own creation I am fulfilling my inherent nature. I am being who I am. I am being true to myself. Exercising my power as a creator being. That truth provides the profound calmness of being. The calmness arises whenever my energy is free to dissipate in the experience I desire to have.

Every painting inevitably has something in common with the paintings that have existed before. We've all created arts with a header at the top and a footer at the bottom, but all those arts aren't the same. In each we put enough of ourselves into the work to make the art unique enough even if it's not visual that much. Sometimes this process happens unconsciously like I'm experiencing it. During the painting I was not aware of how the process is going but at the end I have seen some inspiration from Fernand Leger and Pablo Picasso (*Guernica*) somehow. Two of the artist who are admirable for me.



When pressed to explain the elements in *Guernica*, Picasso said,...this bull is a bull and this horse is a horse... If you give a meaning to certain things in my paintings it may be very true, but it is not my idea to give this meaning. What ideas and conclusions you have got I obtained too, but instinctively, unconsciously. I make the painting for the painting. I paint the objects for what they are.

As Rumi make all the poems of "Masnavi" in the moment of present and during the class sessions in front of the students. And here is the main inspiration that I got from his character and poems.

The only time and place we can truly live is in the present. While we can learn from past experiences and should wisely plan for the future, we must keep ourselves fully in the here and now. This is the way that Rumi lives and painting and living are the brothers who are growing up with each other.

Part of being aware of the present moment is to recognise that you cannot be anywhere else. There is no need to try to be in the now because you are already there. The only way to escape the present moment is via your thoughts which may drag you into the past or future. Being aware of your surroundings, your body and your thoughts at any given moment puts you in touch with the now. You might think of it as an invisible timeline on which we can add dates and times; or an empty bowl before adding any “content”. The best method for staying in the present moment is to have no method. To simply “be” wherever you are whenever you are.



When we understand the deepest, void nature of the mind, then we can work with the conventional nature of the mind to get rid of the disturbing side and build up the liberating side. And success in this practice is going to depend very much on the preparation. If we haven't built up enough positive force, if we haven't done enough purification, and so on, there will be just too many obscurations, too many mental blocks to be able to actually see the nature of the mind. Before starting to paint I usually meditate for 15 minutes to reach the emptiness of mind. The void which help me through the colors of life. As Rumi has mentioned this void set in his poems:

Frail and pale I go, my steps leave no trace!
Can you even recall, the outline of my face?

Asked me to take you- to my secret place
But I can't find my way, in this dusky space!

Beloved moves on, my heart takes up the race
I inhabit this heart, I have to chase and chase...

With a sea inside, I moored my soul to a brace
Now this sea is sinking, in an ocean of grace!

It was almost as if Rumi made objects, scenes and themes appear and disappear, run into one another, merge, vanish and resurface in the next line or the next poem. The result was what in his book "Mystical Languages of Unsayings". These poems displayed the inexpressible plurality, dynamism and play inherent in the experience of love. And that's why I have imaginary drawings in my paintings to reach this plurality.



Color is a vital necessity. It is a raw material indispensable to life, like water and fire. Man's existence is inconceivable without an ambience of color. We are passing another world war nowadays, the colorlessness of the war push me through having more bright and primary colors in my paintings. It is up to the painter to "organize this whole riot of colors." Convinced that modern space must be colored space, I strove to extend my painterly practice beyond the individual-

oriented and commodified easel painting to that of the communal wall, creating environments for the common man through a new orientation in mural painting.

My considered use of vibrant contrasts of bold line, simplified form, and abstract planes of pure color (red, blue, yellow, and green) infuses the composition with a joyous visual dynamism and energy. Ideologically I'm always more concerned with my country that I have left and its distanced position from the struggle against bureaucracy in Europe. What I am referring to is the bright color overlays that appeared in my paintings, layers of free-floating color planes that seem to arbitrarily interpenetrate the strong black outlines of my simplified figures and objects. While the separation between color and drawing was a fundamental Cubist device, one that had been of paramount importance for me.

Creating art is a way for me to learn about life and to understand the world I live in. My creative process reflects how I live my life, and the artworks mirrors the reposition of my cultures, history, thoughts, emotions, and everyday life experiences. It is a place where all aspects of my life come together and lose their boundaries. I work toward becoming an artist who, like a shifter, refines this complicated world into its essential elements. In doing so, I hope to benefit each person who encounters my work. Truthfulness is at the center of my art practice. From the place of honesty, vulnerability, and curiosity, I continue to explore the wonder of this Universe. And I'm thankful about having this opportunity to get involved and get guidance from my mentors to make this process more reliable and brilliant.

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May, 2018