

The background is a dark, textured red with vertical brushstrokes. A large, vibrant red splash of paint is on the left side. The bottom half of the image is a chaotic, energetic composition of thick brushstrokes and splatters in red, yellow, white, and black. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

VAHAN ROUMELIAN

Journey into the Self

Vahan Roumelian

Journey into the Self

Oil Paintings, Drawings and Sculptures



Aramé Art Gallery

www.aramegallery.com

Yerevan 2023



My art is part of my *modus vivendi* with which I oppose the intervening elements which penetrate everywhere, erupting the possibility with aggressive malice. I register on the canvas the projection of perishing and devastation. I originally deny the everyday existence of things which, even if it has sense or purpose and serves lofty ideals, nevertheless, will not interest me. I deal only with mystery. I try to change the breathing rhythm of Art.

Vahan Sevakian 2023,

Journey into the Self

By **Mané Sarkissian**

The only journey is the one within.
Rainer Maria Rilke

Observing the active, chaotic brushstrokes of Vahan protruding from his mostly monochromatic backgrounds, one can't help but intuitively sense the long journey of self-reflection that led into this apparent spontaneity of expression. Anything done masterfully always appears easy to the observers. Yet, in reality, a valuable work of art is the culmination of most intense and profound experiences that are only known to the silent artist himself.

Vahan was born in 1963 in Yerevan.

As his classmates recall, at school he was a difficult and rebellious pupil. The only class during which his behaviour was satisfying was that of painting. Once he was given paper and colouring pencils everything surrounding him ceased to matter. The shapes Vahan drew might seem weird and indefinite to others, whilst for him they were of great importance and held a deep significance.

He was not a docile character at Fine Arts Institute either. The only reason his instructors were patient towards his eccentric personality was his striking talent and the originality he showed in painting and colouring. Yet an adolescent Vahan began to experiment doubts about the truth and solidity of three-dimensional reality. In 1988, immediately after the earthquake that literally shuttered the solid world into pieces, he moved to Paris to study abstract art.

From then on, Vahan's path was that of liberation from illusionary limitations and beliefs: his only aspiration was absolute freedom to live and to create. And the artist realized that this could only be achieved through constant meditation and cultivation of self-awareness. He saw all the inner contradictions and insecurities that plague the human condition for what they actually are – a mental prison to escape. But he also realized that he needed a tool, a key that would unlock this prison and set his true self free to love and to live.

Inevitably, art becomes that treasured tool that Vahan uses in his path to introspection and self-discovery. He confidently carries it as a torch that shines light onto the most obscure corners and twists of his soul. The artist keeps patiently gathering the liberated pieces of his personality and generously pouring them onto the canvas.



Somewhere in the Space, oil on canvas, 105 x 200 cm

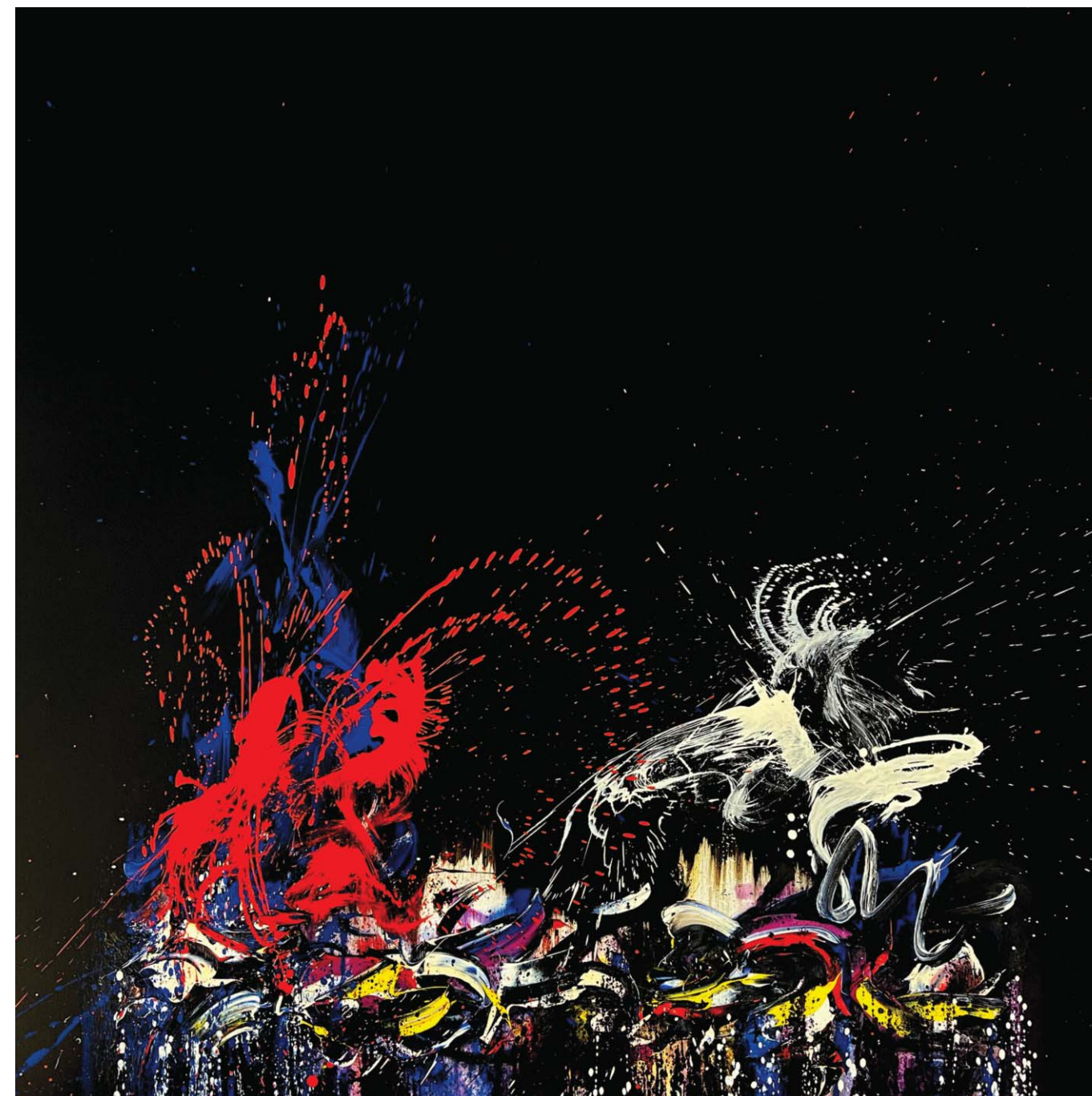
And the effect never ceases to amaze. The heavy, dazzling brushstrokes, moving in all possible, opposite and parallel directions on a flat backstage are so easy to identify with the chaotic and contradictory essence of our souls. They are undoubtedly destructive and often quite brutal. But there is no empty space in the universe. And we need to destroy one thing first to be able to build something better in its place. Vahan is very much aware of this truth and is totally at peace with it. Although forceful and aggressive at first glance, all the volcanic eruptions and explosions in his paintings are ultimately a force to create, rather than to destroy.

Perhaps, if we observe a little longer and look more attentively at this mess of smears, a new, secret dimension of them will be revealed to us – their intense musicality. No wonder Vahan is so fond of naming his pieces as “Opus 6”, “Opus 155” etc. He is trying to convey to us the musical harmony that arises within as we become capable of liberating our emotions. His creations are indeed gorgeous music translated into a rainbow, a fountain of fascinating colours.

The conductor of this unusual Opus is truly an extraordinary one; he holds a brush instead of a stick, and is dressed in a long white gown, covered with traces of all imaginable colours, instead of wearing an elegant black costume. There is also something heroic about his character, facing the blank whiteness of the canvas, full of determination and will to transform it into a reflection of his own present emotional and mental state.

It's such a rare thing in Art, that a painting can be the fruit of moment's sensation and deep premeditation, pure spontaneity and emotional maturity at the same time.

Rare as it be, this is the case with the artist Vahan Roumelian, the artist, who makes us hear music, while looking at a canvas, and perceive wholeness while observing the fragmented patterns of our souls.



Opus N5, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



Vey Vu Vey, oil on canvas, 170 x 250 cm



The Dramatic Black, oil on canvas, 170 x 200 cm



Deep Feelings, oil on canvas, 110 x 100 cm



Opus N11,
oil on canvas,
100 x 100 cm

Vahan has created his own space, the spiritual infinity of which has turned up for him a field of meditation. Painting is his mode of life, an opportunity to splash out everything that gnaws him from within. He is not interested in daily and rational existence of things, even if they have a certain sense and meaning, and serve for some kind of lofty ideals.

The creative process for Roumelyan is the territory of his freedom. He is free in building the compositions, in the choice of color correlations, in the gap of the associative connections between the real and unreal world.

Common, good-natured, frank in appearance, Vahan demonstrates in his canvases absolutely other qualities – preciseness, whole-heartedness, great diligence and irrepressible temperament.

What does the artist want to share with the onlookers by his abstractions, built on the highest culmination of feelings, on the lines and forms, swum out from his subconscious, on the contrast correlations of colors with sonorous scream announcing of themselves?

Abstract art isn't a simple thing. It requires a trained onlooker, subjective perception, which will allow if not to understand, then at least – to evaluate and accept it. The artist has confessed once: "I deal only with a mystery, to which I come nearer by momentary and all-disclaiming painting. I try to change the breathing rhythm of art". And, really his creations have their own rhythm of breathing, their own dynamics, their own "order".

Zara Airoumyan



Journey into the Self, oil on canvas, 170 x 300 cm



The Luxury of Being Yourself, oil on canvas, 120 x 230 cm



Queen of Colors, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm

I consider Roumelian one of the greatest artists of the Republic of Armenia. He was selected to be a participant of many exhibitions in various countries because of his extraordinary abilities and has since become an honored, talented and renowned artist with a great success all over the world.

Henrik Igityan

The Founder of Modern Art Museum of Armenia



Opus N1, oil on canvas, 110 x 100 cm

Vahan's paintings are a process of capturing a human being's soul. A process of seeing without necessity of any explanation. The artist of admirable pictures is able to see and whatever he sees is viewed in his artworks. The contradiction which is combined in a human being is expressed by him, turning into art poetry. He makes the colors breathe and his paintings like the sounds fly in the space and a music of color is created. The artist's aim is to achieve the highest quality, to be able to create elements of new shapes, to flow up with the colors on the canvas to achieve his goals. I'm looking for speed and action in art, speed not as means but as final goal and action as a life start.

Kh. Rudolf

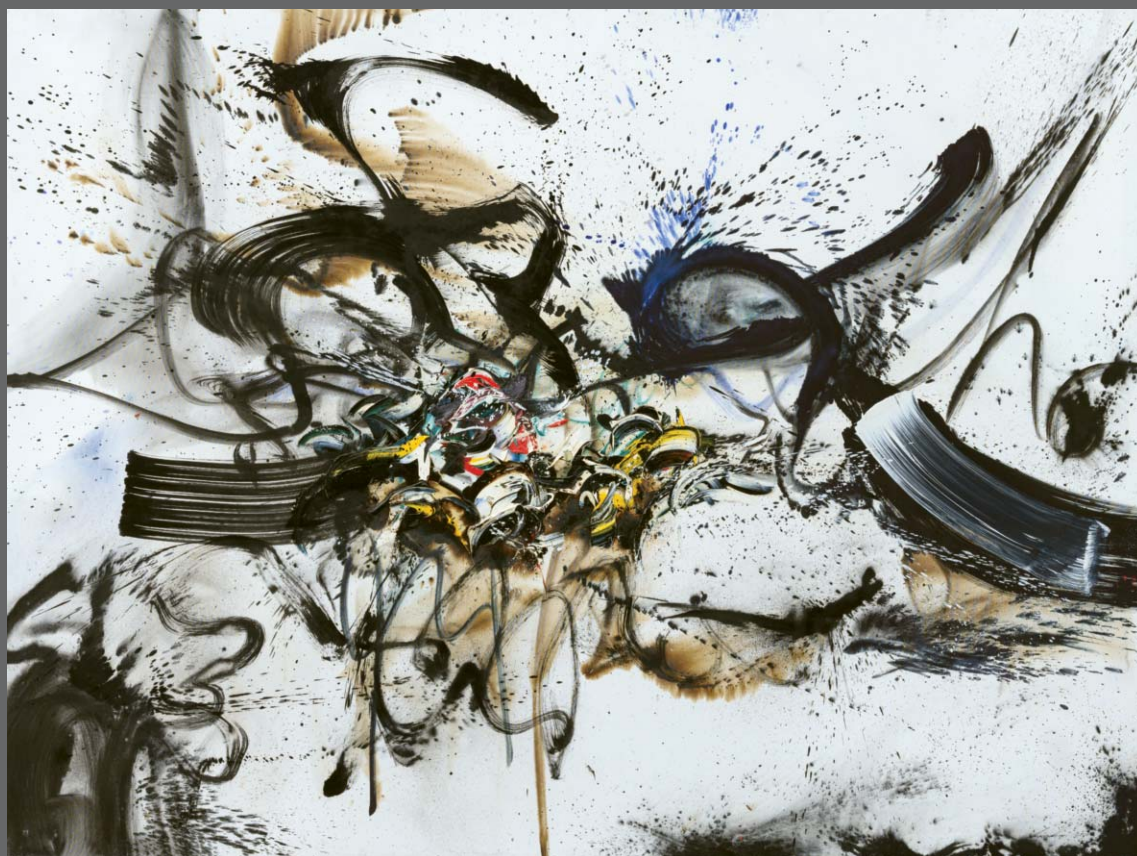
Academic of the Russian Academy of Arts



The Cheater and the Artist N2, oil on canvas, 170 x 200 cm



Gesture N16, oil on canvas, 170 x 200 cm



The Harmony of Chaos,
oil on canvas, 149 x 200 cm

No matter how paradoxical it might seem, but all Religions in hand with Science come to affirm that the primordial state of what seems so orderly and organized today on our Planet and the Universe was pure Chaos. This concept, so difficult to grasp with a rational mind, is nevertheless easy to be felt on a deeper intuitional level. And here is where true Art comes to help.

Observing the active, chaotic brushstrokes of Vahan, which mainly form the central part of his compositions with mostly monochromatic backgrounds, one can't help feeling a witness of the divine creation and admire the beauty and purposefulness of the apparent chaos, which underlies everything. Such works of Art have the capacity of unifying Science and Religion, Philosophy and Psychology.

A great connoisseur of Zen Buddhism philosophy, Vahan is, naturally, deeply aware, that "The only chaos is that which stirs within the mind". And Art, perhaps, is his path of liberation from the mental prison.

Mané Sarkissian



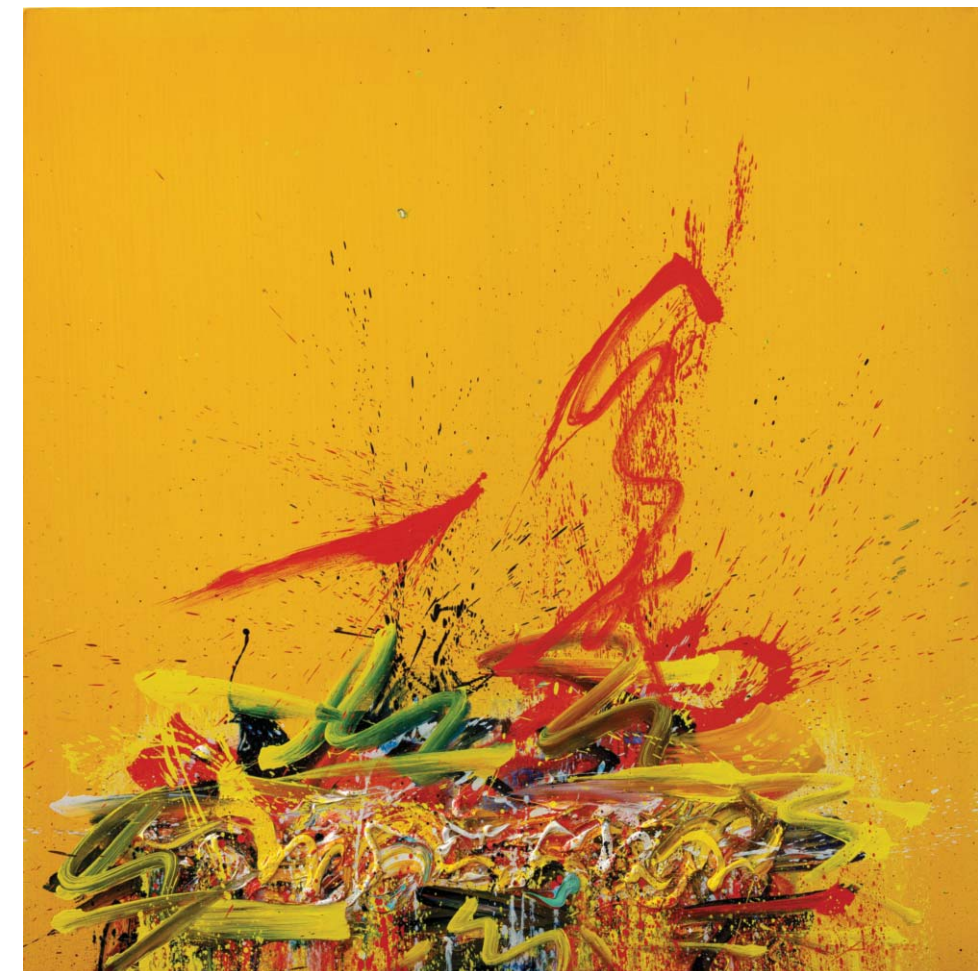
On July 25, at 19 o'clock, In memory of my Mother, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm



Passionate Red, oil on canvas, 140 x 200 cm



Pure Solar Energy, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm



Sunny Day, 2022, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



Expression of Power, oil on canvas, 120 x 180 cm



Opus N10,
oil on canvas, 118 x 84 cm

Through the act of “titling time” Vahan shows that , in case of painting, the problem of being is expressed in both rigorous and casual terms which grow out of the need to hit a spatial target while remaining conscious of the significance of time. To be an artist is to deal with this issue and its dual nature - to pursue and be pursued.

Nazaret Karoyan
Art Critic



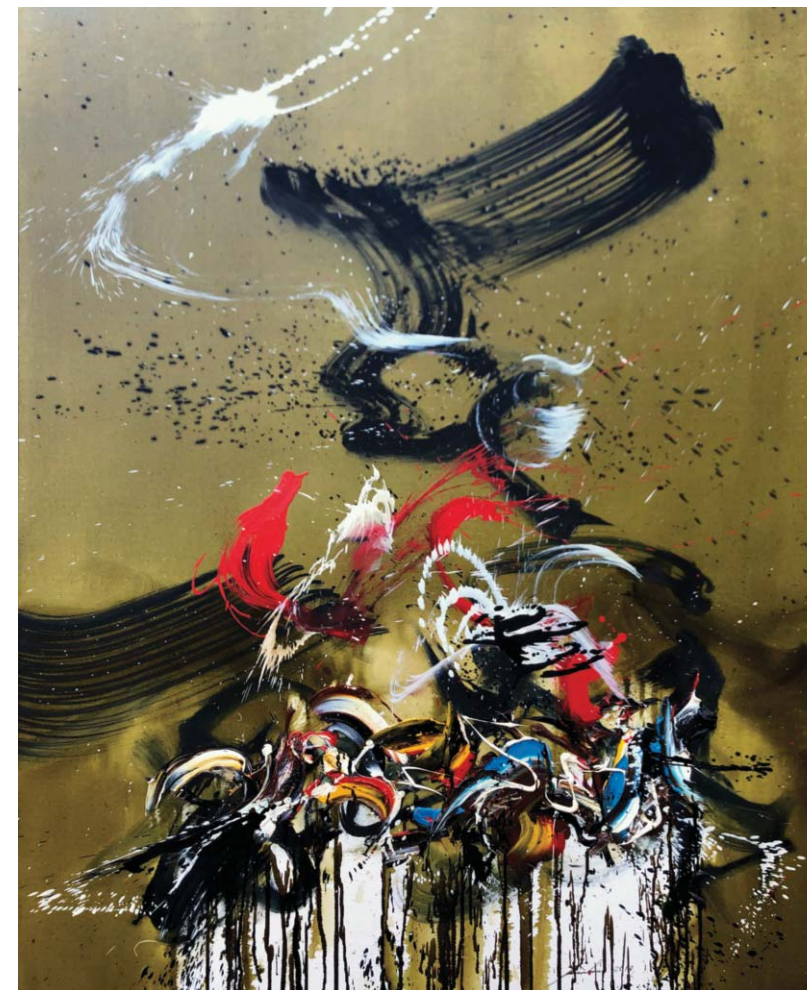
Two Souls and One Pulse,
oil on canvas, 110 x 90 cm



Mysterious Language of Colors, oil on canvas, 170 x 300 cm



Opus N11, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



Opus N3, oil on canvas, 110 x 90 cm



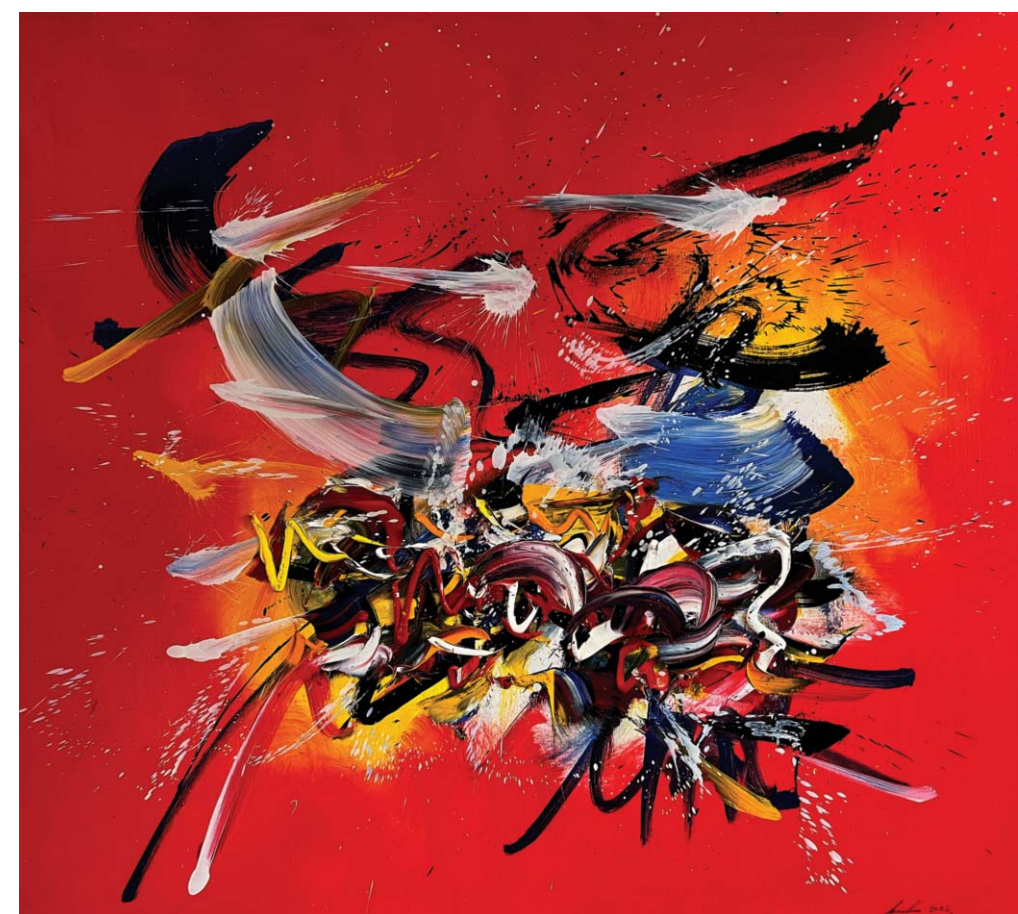
Opus N29, oil on canvas, 100 x 170 cm



Polar Lights, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm



Opus N13, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



Red Energy, oil on canvas, 100 x 110 cm



Tracks, oil on canvas, 180 x 275 cm



Mess, oil on canvas, 100 x 170 cm



Absence N2,
oil on canvas, 100 x 80 cm

Vahan's paintings confront the viewer with the purely physical act of painting. He expertly uses his medium to represent extreme states of emotion, pouring and flinging paint onto the canvas. Each painting is a record of an intense existential encounter between his body and his materials. Most of his canvases are titled with time "At 15 o'clock" or "At 12:30 o'clock"- indicating that they register a very specific experience. Like Jackson Pollock's drip paintings, Vahan's works are the residues of a performance. His attacks and jabs and slabs of color coalesce into a dynamic, yet balanced whole. The pictures are spontaneous, yet are the result of a very refined intuitive activity, tuned by meditation and refection. Vahan believes in the heroism of aesthetic activity, bringing to it a new heightened urgency.

Kathryn Hixon
Art Critic



Gesture N4, oil on canvas, 190 x 160 cm



Meditation, oil on canvas, 169 x 200 cm



Magic Garden N2, oil on canvas, 95 x 175 cm

His creative applications make it impossible for the author to introduce – after painting them – any changes, to erase anything, to re-paint, to redirect or to correct, because we do not see any traces of the aforementioned processes in his art. In this atmosphere, the artworks are rendered free torrents of ruptures and tensions that are beyond their immediate time and space.

Hrag Varjabedian
Art Critic



In Zero Gravity N2, oil on canvas, 100 x 280 cm



Gesture N11, oil on canvas, 90 x 130 cm



Dance of Brush Strokes, oil on canvas, 180 x 280 cm

The seemingly chaotic and ungovernable space of painting finds a common denominator through the artist's strong will and exquisite perseverance. Unreserved liveliness and bright impulses transmit an attraction to Vahan's creations, where "The Pulse of the Age" is delivered to the audience with greater transparency, thus, involving them in his tense field.

Poghos Haytayan

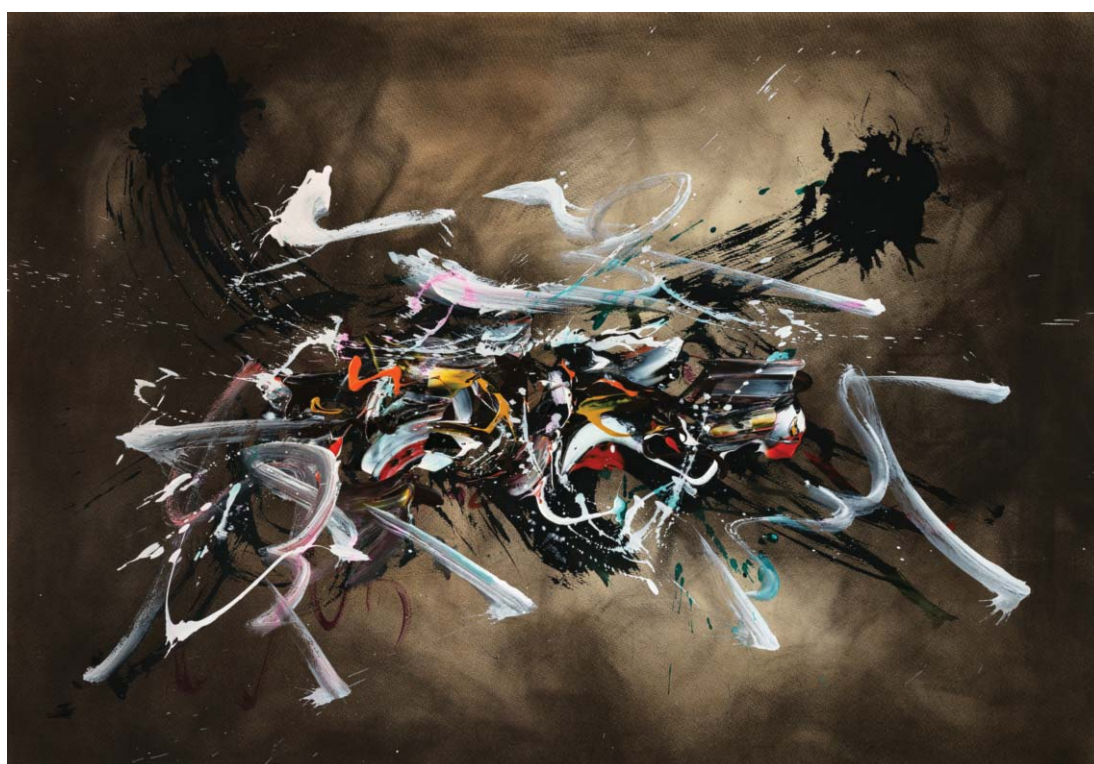
Art Critic



Absence N3,
oil on canvas, 110 x 100 cm



Gesture N21, mixed media on paper, 70 x 100 cm



At 14 o'clock, mixed media on paper, 73 x 103 cm



A Pilgrim N4, mixed media on paper, 50 x 72 cm



A Pilgrim N1, mixed media on paper, 50 x 70 cm



A Pilgrim N2, mixed media on paper, 50 x 70 cm



A Pilgrim N3, mixed media on paper, 50 x 70 cm



Liberty,
mixed media, 65 x 30 x 32 cm



Eruption,
mixed media, 57 x 40 x 45 cm



The Beauty of Chaos, mixed media, 64 x 43 x 41 cm



Vahan Roumelian

Biography

1963 Born in Yerevan

1986 Graduated from P. Terlemezian Fine Arts College, Yerevan

1988 Studied Abstract Art in Paris

1991 Graduated from Fine Arts Institute, Yerevan

1991 Studied Contemporary Art in Great Britain & France

His works were exhibited at Salon des Independants, Grand Palais, Paris, France (1989), Galerie les Cents, Paris, France (1991), Bochum Museum, Germany (1995), Galeria de Arte, Sao Paulo, Brazil (1998), Euro-Art, V Salon International, d'Artistes Contemporains, Barcelona, Spain (2001), WCAF Show, Hilton Convention Center, Las Vegas, USA (2004), Galleria d'Arte Rinascimento, Florence, Italy (2005), International Art Expo New York, USA (2006, 2007), Orangerie du Luxembourg Musée d'Art Moderne d'Arménie, Paris, France (2007) Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome, Italy (2008), International Art Expo, China (2009), Modern Art Museum of Armenia (2010), "Colors of Armenia", Milan, Paris, Vienna (2010), Art Monaco (2010, 2011), Grand Opening of a New Art Center of Arame Art Gallery, Yerevan, Armenia (2012), "Symphony of Colors", Beirut, Lebanon (2012), 10th Anniversary of Arame Art Gallery, Yerevan, Armenia (2013), "Sensual Revelations", Beirut, Lebanon (2013), Selected Art Works, Vienna, Austria (2014), "Beauty in the Palm", Beirut, Lebanon (2014), "Enchanted Reality", Beirut, Lebanon (2016), Solo Exhibition at Beirut Souks, Lebanon (2017).

2022, March 18, Solo exhibition at Aramé Art Gallery Zaitunay Bay Branch, Beirut, Lebanon.

2023, April 21, Solo exhibition at Aramé Art Gallery (Yerevan, Armenia), dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Vahan Roumelian.



"My union with my wife Moko is similar to the nucleus of an atom, in which positive and negative particles repulse and attract each other at the same time. As all scientific discoveries are fruit of collisions, in the same way from our debates on art new thoughts and ideas arise. It's like the collision of two stars in the Universe, from which a new – third star is born..."

Vahan Roumelian

Museums and Collections

- Danielle François Mitterand, Paris.
- Daimler Chrysler Cultural Center, Moscow.
- Modern Art Museum of Armenia.
- Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.
- History Museum of Armenia.
- Kathryn Hixson, (C.A.C.A.) Chicago.
- Bertzor Modern Art Museum, Artsakh.
- Private collections in France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Russia, Armenia, Lebanon, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Egypt.





Front cover: Deep Feelings, oil on canvas, 110 x 100 cm

Title page: View from the Porthole, oil on canvas, 150 x150 cm

Back cover: Frozen Fire, mixed media, 75 x 54 x 30cm

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