



**“To see
what the
eye does
not see”**

**Persian Artist in
Solo Exhibition at
Leighton House**

Esfandir Ahmadi, the well-known Persian abstract artist, will be holding a solo exhibition at London's Leighton House gallery, at 12 Holland Park Road in London, from 9 - 21 February. This follows his participation in the group exhibition at Lauderdale House in October and November.

Esfandir Ahmadi's painting is a quest for self-discovery and will have a strong appeal to anyone interested in abstract art. The images themselves derive from within, perhaps, as the artist strongly suggests, from the machinations of the unconscious itself, as the work takes form.

His work, both figurative, or “representational”, and abstract is meditative in nature and is influenced both by the Sufi tradition and by visionaries such as the English poet and artist William Blake. In Sufism the absolute reality is imageless and beyond human imagination, but Esfandir Ahmadi's art expresses the idea that, because space is empty it can embrace everything,

and the geometric patterns of Sufi tradition are used, almost paradoxically, to draw the viewer's attention away from the representational world to a deeper purity which provides insight into the inner self and the self's relation to the divine. Even the concept of the Void is seen, not as an expression of emptiness but, rather, resonant with energy.

It is sometimes difficult to describe abstract art in any meaningful way, particularly in a case in which abstract metaphors are often used to describe the idea or process which is represented in the

painting, and it is important to say that the artistic metaphors in Esfandir Ahmadi's work are often open-ended, that they may be viewed subjectively and that they may represent underlying universal truths which should find a resonance or response in the mind of the viewer. This applies even when the artist went through a very particular process in the construction of the painting, with regard to orientation and colour, and when a painting was revised and re-worked. In this sense art can be viewed in the same light as much classical music

which might be representational, or even “programmatically” in some way, which can also be viewed very subjectively, drawing different responses from different people. The artist may be reflecting, for example, the idea that “to lose sight of the North is to lose the ability to distinguish between heaven and hell, light and shadow, unconsciousness and transconsciousness”, where orientation is seen as an important meditative symbol, but, because of the artist's perception of the quest to find one's true self as a constant, across time and cultures, the viewer can still find meaning even if unaware of this particular abstract idea.

The work, with its roots in the unconscious, proffers the idea that everything that occurs in the macrocosm of the universe, and in the imagination, which is its expression, has its reflection and counterpart in the microcosm of each human being, the body being the “repository” of the soul.

Some of Esfandir

Ahmadi's works are, in fact, quite simple in nature and possess an immediate visual appeal and are thus very attractive to the eye even on a superficial level, although I am certain that the artist would argue that, because the correlation of colours, perhaps of a swirling blue/green spiralling shape were prompted, during their creation, by an idea of the spirit reaching toward the external, that the viewer is, in fact, responding subconsciously to the same initial creative idea!

Specific colours and colour combinations in Esfandir Ahmadi's work do represent specific concepts and perceptions, such as the spirit, the physical form, enlightenment, and, indeed, certain pictures may actually represent a specific philosophical idea, such as Man's being a reflection of God, but the pictures often contain such detail and elegance that it would not do justice to the work to attempt to restrict it by a limited description before the viewer has had a chance to see it. However, it would be fair to say that sometimes the works seem deceptively

simple, even in a case which the colours and geometric forms are arranged in such a way that they can be seen to reveal two aspects of the same form.

It is said that, for those with a spiritual interest in art, the work of Esfandir Ahmadi is very moving while those who approach the work from an artistic perspective will find a "revelation of skilled and controlled use of colour composition technique" (Asian Times).

The paintings are such a variety and nature that the immediate impact of seeing a number of them in the same room can be quite impressive a spectacle, but each painting (even if it is derived from a series) deserves individual contemplation, not least because, like the works of many an artist, Van Gogh, Picasso and Cezanne, take a few at random and there are psychological processes at work in the creation of the paintings that are not always immediately obvious to the eye: you look at a picture and think that you see everything, but you do not! even when