

## Announcing representation of Ali Banisadr



Portrait of Ali Banisadr, 2021  
Photography © James Choroto

**Victoria Miro is delighted to announce the representation of Ali Banisadr. The Brooklyn-based artist, acclaimed for his urgent, ravishing paintings that deftly combine elements of figuration and abstraction within a signature language, will present new work as part of the gallery's forthcoming online group exhibition themed around the colour blue (from 24 February). A solo exhibition will take place at the gallery in 2022. The first major monograph on the artist is published by Rizzoli in May 2021.**

A painter of epic vistas and dazzling intricacies, Ali Banisadr creates complex, turbulent worlds whose syncopated rhythms corral a multitude of references from art history as well as allusions to our own turbulent times. In any single, expansive canvas one might sense the crystalline detail of the Persian miniature tradition, the muscular brushwork of Abstract Expressionism, the narrative dexterity of the early Dutch masters, the bravura technique of the Venetian Renaissance, or the libidinous glyphs of Surrealism, among others.

These references reveal themselves not as static, sedimentary layers but as successive waves or currents, series of abstract and semi-abstract forms that flow together, intermingle or collide, submerging and resurfacing, recast and transformed through an often-lengthy process of subtraction and addition. While up-close, elements of the artist's compositions may recall Bosch-ian hybrid figures, from afar Banisadr's paintings, with their legions of strafing lines, arcs, blurs and smears of colour evoke, for example, grand world landscapes or the fractured and shimmering surfaces of our digital world.

Their narratives – earthly, celestial, pacific or war-like – unfold in ranging dramas that are informed, though far from defined, by the artist's own life story. Born in Tehran in 1976, Banisadr left Iran with his family in 1988 at the end of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, moving briefly to Turkey, then to the US. Living in California for twelve years, first in San Diego then San Francisco, the artist was exposed to graffiti culture at an early age. He participated in the Mission School of

graffiti in San Francisco, before attending SVA (School of Visual Arts) for his BFA, later earning an MFA from New York Academy of Art.

Like artists before him, most famously Wassily Kandinsky, Banisadr is a synaesthete who perceives visions in sound. He has spoken of how he first became aware of his synaesthesia, with one sense triggering another, during his childhood in Iran when he would draw ‘to create a visual understanding of the sounds I was hearing – the vibrations, explosions and air raids.’

Sound continues to guide his brushstrokes – their tempo and pressure – as well as the process of bringing together often contradictory elements, which he describes as reaching ‘a certain type of harmony that I find in organising chaotic fragments into a unified symphony.’ While a sense of flux underpins his works, their complex melodies sound notes of optimism. As the artist has said, ‘We are in a state of emergency and live in apocalyptic times – man-made and natural disasters, violence and conflict. I think we can heal, but we have to have the vision to see what lies beyond all the confusion and I think artists can play a part in this.’

Glenn Scott Wright, Director and Partner, said, ‘I have known and admired Ali for a number of years and have followed his work closely. His work is uniquely powerful, visually and intellectually, speaking to art history while being pertinent to our own times. Painting has always been central to the gallery programme and we are delighted to represent him.’

#### **About the artist**

Born in 1976 in Tehran, Iran, Ali Banisadr lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Current and recent solo institutional exhibitions include *Ali Banisadr/Matrix 185*, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT (22 October 2020–14 February 2021); *Ultramarinus – Beyond the Sea*, Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece (3 November 2020–21 February 2021); *Bosch & Banisadr, Ali Banisadr: We work in shadows*, Gemäldegalerie, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, AT (2019); *Foreign Lands: Ali Banisadr*, Het Noordbrabants Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands (2019). His work is in major institutional collections including: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna, Austria; British Museum, London, UK; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Het Noordbrabants Museum, Den Bosch, Netherlands; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; Francois Pinault Foundation, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, Italy; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT.

**During 2021, the artist will have solo exhibitions at Museo Stefano Bardini, and Palazzo Vecchio, both in Florence, Italy. He will also be included in the group exhibitions *Epic Iran* at the V&A, London, UK, *A Boundless Drop to a Boundless Ocean*, Orlando Museum of Art, Florida (now open and on view until 21 May 2021) and the forthcoming Victoria Miro exhibition *The Sky was Blue the Sea was Blue and the Boy was Blue*, available online and on Vortic Collect from 24 February. The first major monograph on the artist will be published by Rizzoli in May 2021.**

#### **For further press information please contact:**

**Victoria Miro** Kathy Stephenson | Director of Communications | [kathy@victoria-miro.com](mailto:kathy@victoria-miro.com)

**Rees & Co** Yasmin Hyder | [yasmin@reesandco.com](mailto:yasmin@reesandco.com) | +44 (0)7791 979 839