

# FREYDOON RASSOULI - THE ARRIVAL

By: Naomi F. Stone

He has been called a delight, a troublemaker, a rascal, a rogue, a legend, a messenger, a visionary, and an artist, but the description that endears Rassouli to those who know him is that of the true friend of the heart. Indeed Rassouli is a friend of the heart who creates through the heart. *"Heart is the house of love. It is where the union between the opposites takes place. Every time I'm creating through my rational mind, I experience the pain of relentless judging and comparing. Painting process becomes dull and mostly struggling. When my heart takes over the command, I feel free as if I'm flying in auto pilot".* Indicates Rassouli. Almost every canvas of his is the reflection of his heart. He calls his artistic technique 'Fusionart' where art becomes the medium to unite, rather than just an image. *"The intention of Fusionart is to unite the opposites yet beautifying their uniqueness and variation. Fusionart is a way to give meaning to the soothing magnetism of colors and forms that moves the viewer from dream to reality".* Rassouli explains. His first used the term 'Fusionart' when he was working as an architect in California during the Eighties. It was originally intended as a way of bringing together the essence of eastern and western cultures. The art ignited a spark that became a catalyst for uniting various ideologies and empowering in creative ways the way people expressed their cultures. He was at the time combining Iranian mysticism with art and architecture to expand the potentials for creativity. Since that time, 'Fusionart' has become known as an art movement in a variety of exciting ways to reflect on what fuses the outer world with the inner world and the negative with positive. Witnessing the political conflict between his birth place in Iran and his home in USA, Rassouli found an opportunity to bring out new and innovative ideas that could artistically fuse the two cultures together. Within the concept the he created, he created inspiring images to reflect the inner beauty of eastern mysticism through his western painting techniques. Bringing the Iranian mysticism and spiritual motives into the western art is probably the most outstanding feature of the art of Rassouli. This is entirely opposite of what many Iranian artists do, which is taking western artistic techniques into Iranian art. In a way, one can immediately observe in his art how the essence of Iranian classical paintings expands into a new form of abstract Surrealism. The poetry of the great mystics has been the continuing inspiration for him through his artistic life: *"In my art I attempt to explore the nexus*

*of internal and external universes, and expand on metaphysical and expressive ideas that I have drawn from Iranian mysticism"* he says. In fact, traditional Iranian art in his paintings is like the light that removes darkness from the viewer's vision. The works present sensual array of arabesque motives moving in a rhythm to fill vast spaces between sometimes abstract; other times figurative masses of full-strength colors. Each one of his canvases gives insight into the artist's eastern background, upbringing, ideology, feelings and personality. Each painting comes across as a personal journey. Unlike most artists, he begins by coloring the canvas directly, without drawing or painting outlines or having a clear idea of what the painting is going to be. It is solely his feelings that drive him to paint. His paintings depict various levels of journeying into multi-dimension. They have several levels of meaning rather than one dimension of vision. In the first glance we see one image, but as soon as we enter into the experience of viewing the painting, we are lead deeper into what is happening as the invisible energy working within the image. It is strange to say, but viewers can actually feel like his paintings can shift in response to their gaze. The meaning is open to whoever is looking at the canvas. It is the alchemy of intention, as if the eyes of the heart can draw out something deeper in the paintings that are hidden. His art works, like "Hafiz" poetry, respond to the one seeking the open heart behind the verse. They are created from an open heart that springs forward to meet the one who is arriving. What attracts people of various backgrounds to Rassouli's canvases is not only art as products, but also the visions and perceptions of the soul. His paintings are meant to bring the human soul and body together and make them into a unified whole. The result is a spiritual flow that continues beyond the moment. It may be consciously recognized, or it may continue on a subconscious level, but it continues to invite a response. In the painting titled *"The arrival"* the transparency is masterfully conceived. It creates an illusory effect where the viewer is unable to believe what the eyes are seeing. The depth is infinite and colors are holy. The effect is that there is no end to the spaces we are given to see. As we look at the painting, something opens up inside us and reveals itself in the sacredness of the soul. It seems as if the artist has been able to foresee and experience what is happening to the viewer of the painting. This is overwhelming for the viewer, wondering



Rassouli, Hear of the Universe



Rassouli. Ethereal Echoes



Rassouli. Sky of the Mind

how he has perceived the psychic depth in the painting.

As we look deeper into the painting, it seems like God has brought the depth of infinity to this holy place. The tapestry of creation is dissolving, liquefying and becoming transparent to reveal the limitless depth of infinity. It is almost like the images translate themselves as the artist is painting them. It seems as if God has offered the artist a mosque or a sanctuary where these revelations can be kept.

The overall image of the painting seems as we are in a large structure, with a dreamlike setting, which does not have Euclidean geometric dimensions. There is a soft rhythmic chiming, like a jingling bell. Though largely silent, there is no oppression. There are mercurial pillars everywhere, constantly shimmering. It slowly flows from the ceiling, onto the ground, but it does not spread. It is like a constant waterfall. Touching it, it feels solid. It is constantly in flux. Sound is not absorbed, it does not echo. As in most other works of Rassouli, there is no ominous, and light reflects all over the place. Walking across the imaginary space that he has created in the painting seems to have no resistance, and is very still. There are no ripples, nor does it stick to you. Looking at it, the area around wherever you are looks solid, like carpet, and then has a glossy shine of marble, and finally looks like water as it goes out. This is a calm, tranquil place. We walk there and just explore. There is no real urgency, and in a way, time is still. This is an eternal place.

"*Sky of the Mind*" is another painting in which the sky is a vision of freedom with no boundaries to restrict or reign in the imagination of the artist, nor of the viewer. The flowering influence of creativity draws on the empowering center that connects the two hemispheres of the brain allowing the two sides of our thought processes to communicate with each other. The viewer who gazes at the artist's creative visualization is touched by the intricate wisdom beneath the beauty opening new pathways in the light of their own awareness. The vast sky of the mind is exalted opening the potential through the generosity and grace of the cosmic womb of creativity. The painting has the feeling of energy and movement. Nothing is frozen like a painting of still life.

In his world, images fuse with transparent ones. Some are more solid than others, some feel spiritual, and some seem caught in a physical realm. Colors expand, rather than having limits, expressing a creative process of becoming something new. It feels like the spaces are created for contemplation, like being in a rain forest that leads to many different worlds. As we look deeper into the painting we feel as we have entered an area in the edge of eternity. The painting is the expressions of a collective soul where figures respond to their creative touch. They seem to have just entered the painting and are involved in some kind of change or transformation. Painting is not bound by the limitation of the canvas. It seems that the experience continues

beyond the framework of the picture. There is no beginning or ending and no final statement. They depict an aspect of a continuing journey of existence.

Originally from Isfahan, Iran, Rassouli was inspired and encouraged from early childhood to develop appreciation for art and mysticism by his Sufi uncle. Still a young boy, he discovered new ways to transform his subconscious images into forms he could share with others.

Recognized as the Best Student Artist in Iran at 15, Rassouli was awarded a government grant to study painting in Europe. He migrated to the United States of America in 1963, where he studied at the University of New Mexico and University of Southern California and received the Leadership Award from the Institute of International Education.

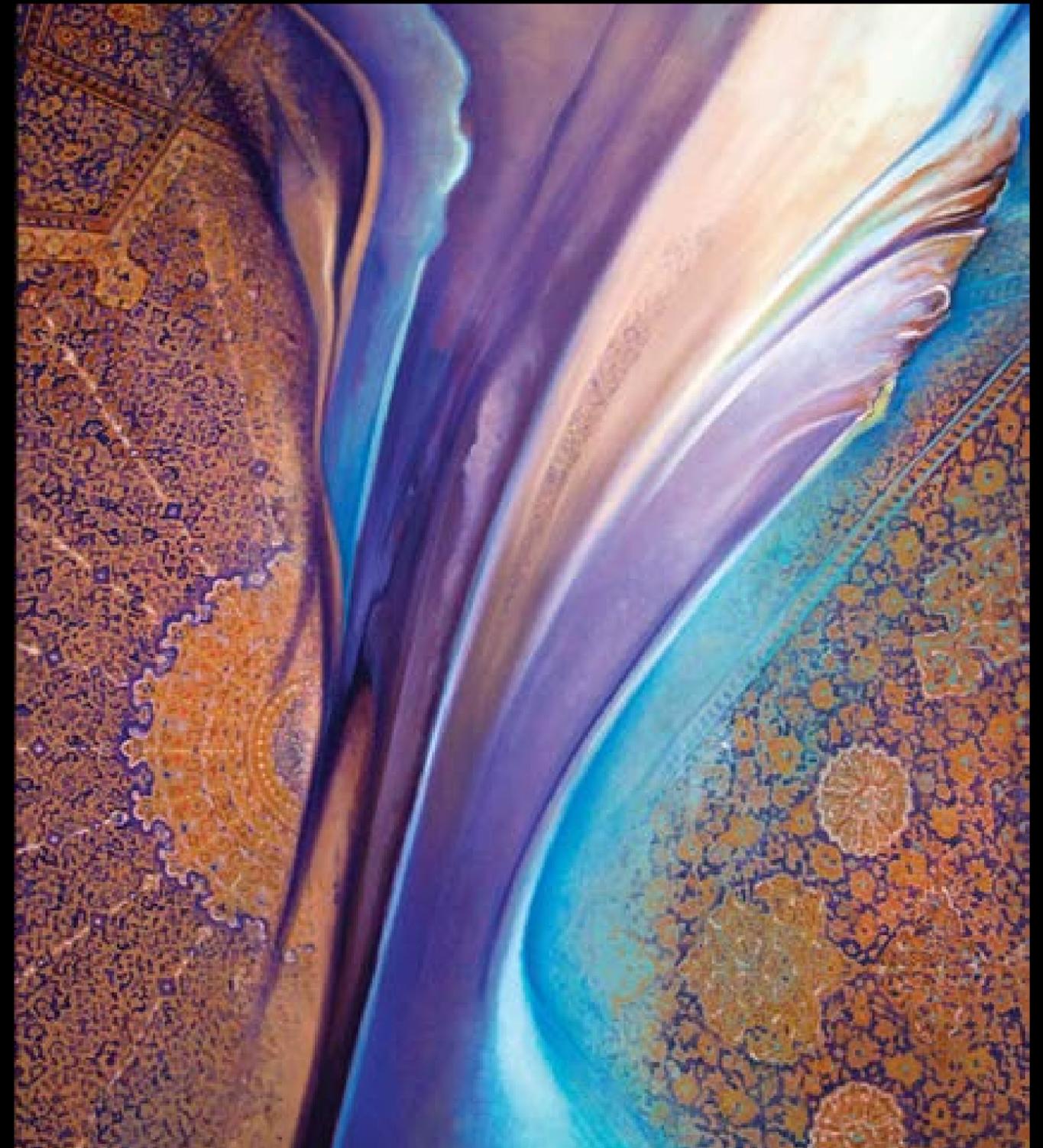
Rassouli was raised in the streaming vibrations of the playfulness of the mystics, listening to the voices of some of the great lovers of the world, and whiling with his beloved Sufi uncle. He was surrounded by the beauty of tapestries, innovative architecture, intricate paintings, and beauty of flowers, classic statues and sculpture, and the dancing of the mystics in sync with the turning world.

Rassouli is an artist who lives a life that is an art-form by itself and in a highly creative way. He was raised in an environment of stories, dances, and beauty from the time he was a small boy. It was perfectly natural for him to express his delight in unexpected and original ways. He was encouraged and nurtured and guided to believe this was his heritage and mission in life to bring beauty and the surprise of creating to whatever he did. He was touched by the changing face of love that surrounded him in countless ways. He was curious and inventive and used his imagination as naturally as breathing and felt the welcoming of the open meadow and the playing fields of nature as his playground. When he created, he was praised and encouraged for his attempt as a child. This was a welcoming entry into life.

In his words, Rassouli believes that *"we have had plenty of artists who have painted or sculpted images in an effort to depict their pain. Within the past half of the Century, we have seen so many images that are evocative and troubling. It is now perhaps the time to begin expressing sweetness of life and joy of union, rather than pain of separation. You might want to call my art sweet. I have no objection to it. Life is not always painful and not every artist is to find a way to depict pain. I prefer to offer joy and excitement to the observers of my art."*

#### ABOUT THE WRITER

Naomi F. Stone, a freelance writer and art critic who writes regularly for fine arts publications in the United States. Naomi holds a Master of Arts degree in Communication and has spent a lifetime in her own right as an educator, speaker, facilitator, and freelance writer helping to develop and encourage artistic achievements in others as a way to bring joy and meaning to every life.



Rassouli, Creative Flow