

# Fondation Behnam Bakhtiar Interview with Firouz Farmanfarmaian

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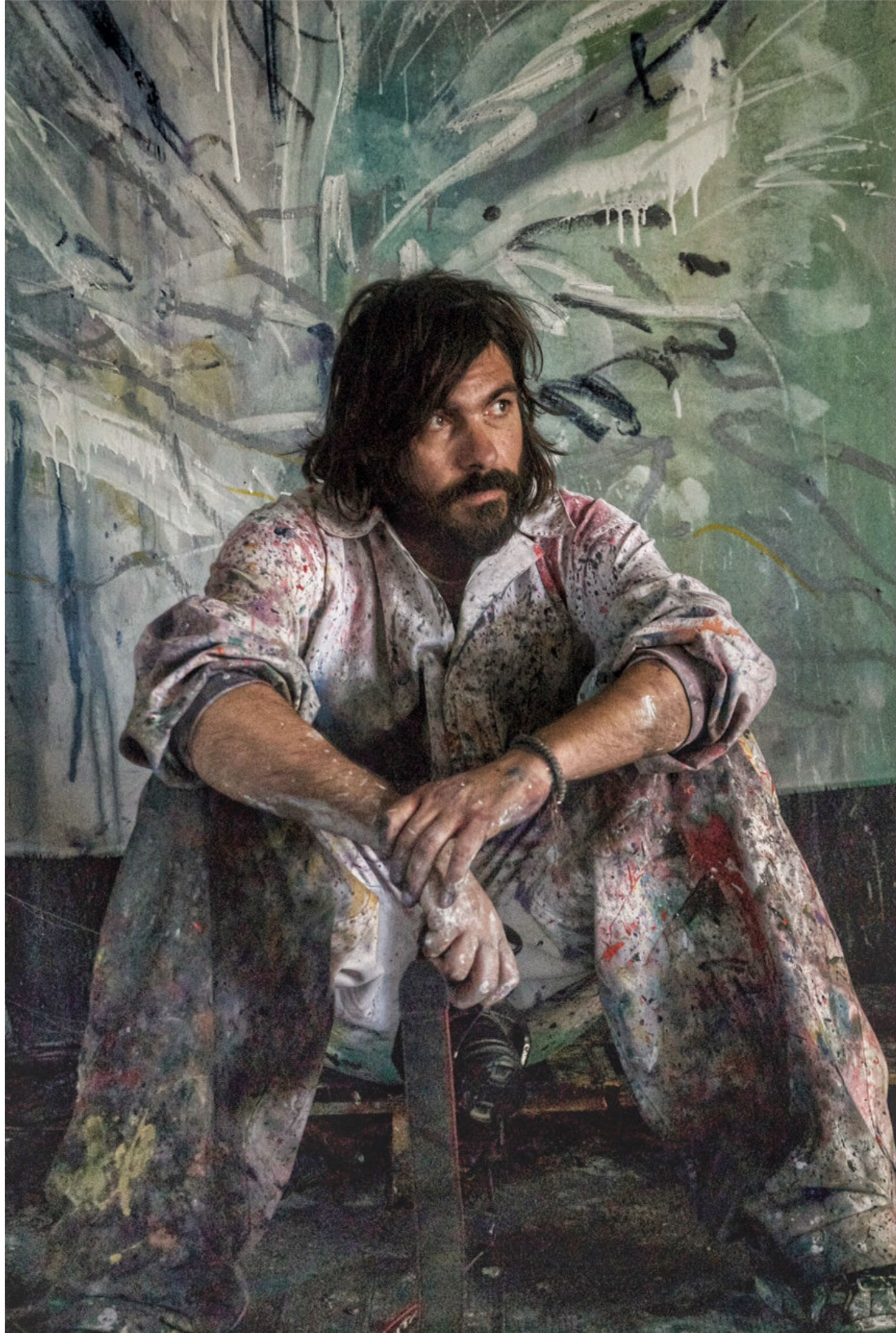


Photo by Ivana Dachy

History and memory inform the work of Persian-born artist Firouz Farman Farmaian, whose lifetime of living in exile in Paris, France profoundly influenced both his creative practice and individual character. "It is circumstance that ultimately shapes lives," says the artist, whose work seeks to actively engage in a dialogue with the past. As such,



his compositions possess a vivacious and spontaneous energy, as well as a deeply symbolic quality, which speaks to a multiplicity of currents in politics, art and philosophy.

Rooted in Persian lore, and focused on themes of nature, architectonics and the interplay between realism and abstraction, Farman Farmaian's diverse body of work is united by common motifs of movement and texture. The raw and visceral emotion of his pieces is tempered by their material properties, which are strongly rooted in a resolute emphasis on craftsmanship. Each work is the result of careful contemplation of the techniques and tools that will achieve a singular aesthetic and emotional intention. These in turn are deftly combined to create a unique visual rhythm across a wide range of media, including painting, sculpture, film and music.

**FBB. Tell us your story Firouz.**

Born in Tehran in 1973, our Family relocated following the Islamic Revolution. My Branch of the family settled in between Paris and Spain, where I grew up and went to study Architecture and Graphic Arts. Started my career as an Artist in France to slowly grow internationally. I am now happily represented in Iran, Europe and the US. Was very much awed by the careers of both my Grandfather, Architect Abdol-Aziz FarmanFarmaian and my Grand-Aunt, Contemporary Artist Monir Shahroudy FarmanFarmaian.

**FBB. Talk to us about your work and the message behind it.**

I set out from the very start to experiment on all mediums introduced by situations and people I collaborated with along the way, thus implementing creative phases. Painting has been my common denominator, and I have been active in that field since childhood. But have directed avant-garde films, videos and feature film pilots, collaborated on scripts, released 3 albums as a singer-composer with Playground - a signed indie-Rock band - and written a road-book before crystallising it all into contemporary art. I sincerely think, that amongst other things, today's contemporary action is in its essence plural, reflecting a globalised world where identities and certainties are at every moment challenged.

**FBB. What do you consider being your greatest goal and achievement as an Iranian artist today.**

Identity is a central segment to the growth of one's art. It is the sun all approaches depend on. In my case it is Iran, and more precisely my work on memory and exile that has led me to prepare various exhibitions. The RetroProjections exhibit presented off Fiac 2015 with the Golan Rouzkhosh Gallery in Paris went on to travel to the Marrakech Museum this Spring coinciding with the Biennale and was set to reveal my connection-fascination with my Iranian past.

**FBB. What are you doing to grow as an Iranian artist?**

My implication in the form of donations to Iranian cultural foundations such as Magic of Persia and Iranian Heritage Foundation have led me to enter collections such as yours and be able to defend a broader Idea of what Iranian Contemporary art can be today. Next is a joint exhibit in New-York set for this fall with the Shirin Gallery. Sincerely looking forward to collaboration with artist Sassan Behnam Bakhtiar and middle eastern art specialist and curator Janet Rady under the thematic Memory-Future / Future-Memory.

**FBB. How would you classify your artistic style?**

As Pluralistic.

**FBB. What are you working on at the moment, and what sorts of projects are you interested in pursuing?**

Apart from what is set to be shown early fall in New-York illustrating my ongoing work on memory using Print + Paint, late October will present a solo exhibit, STRATA. It will display my latest body of work on large-size raw canvases in Golan Rouzkhosh's new monumental Gallery in Hamburg, focusing on another of my main thematic segments, the natural world. Alongside these projects, I have been experimenting on on a first collection of Sculptures related to the ongoing Migrant tragedy. Also, The Dark Side Of the Masses, an Installation layering materials such as neon panels, metal, canvas, cardboard, Black Plastic Paint and a recycled Mannequin is currently presented in various Spanish cultural institutions. It explores the dark rapport materialism can have with extremes.

**FBB. Your work has been recently selected and acquired to join the Fondation Behnam Bakhtiar's Permanent Collection. What message do you have to other Iranian artists who would like to have their works in permanent collections and shown in museums?**

Firstly the support of Fondation Behnam Bakhtiar and its interest in my action has come as a real honour. I would say young Iranian Artists today, specially those living in Iran, will have to challenge their secular identities in order to make the difference.



**FBB. Any interesting upcoming shows and projects in the pipeline?**

The upcoming shows I recommended: Memory-Future / Future-Memory ,Shirin Gallery New-York. October 2016 / STRATA , Golan Rouzkhosh Gallery Hamburg. October 2016 / Dark Side of The Masses , La Lonja Vieja, Barbate, Spain. July 2016. The video of the installation is actually available on You tube. Still ongoing in June, Momentary Meditations solo exhibit at the Galeria Maior of Pollença, Mallorca, Spain. In the pipeline, the follow-up of the RetroProjection Marrakech Museum exhibit at the Galerie Delacroix of Tangiers to be confirmed for after Ramadan.

**FBB. Where can our audience purchase your work?**

In any of the mentioned galleries in this interview, Janet Rady Fine Arts of London and of course Fondation Behnam Bakhtiar.



Summer at the Caspian II Part III, Mixed media and super 8mm print on canvas, 70 x 100 cm, 2014