



FOR COLLECTORS OF THE FINE AND DECORATIVE ARTS

May/June Issue
By Ashley Busby

IN PERSPECTIVE

DISSONANT EXISTENCE

ALI BANISADR'S creative output navigates the challenges of humanity. From his upbringing in Iran during the Cultural Revolution to his life as an immigrant artist living and working in the United States, Banisadr draws from diverse touchpoints to reflect on the tempestuous nature of existence.

On view through June 29, 2025, the Katonah Museum of

Art presents the artist's first major survey, "Ali Banisadr: The Alchemist." With work stretching across almost 20 years of practice, the exhibition features paintings, drawings, and printmaking alongside new explorations in sculpture such as *Stick Figure #1* (2025).

One of the largest and most impressive works on view, *These fragments I have*



shored against my ruins (2023) is an excellent demonstration of Banisadr's wide-ranging sources and expressive mode. The title refers to the last line of T.S. Eliot's 1922 poem "The Waste Land," and like the famous poem, the composition lacks a consistent style. He celebrates dissonance, contrasting figure and abstraction, minute detail and all-over marks, the ancient and the new, the hermetic and the real. The canvas seems to pulse—with sound, with color, with

shape and line—a reflection of Banisadr's experiences with synesthesia.

The Center Cannot Hold (2007) bears an affinity with one of Banisadr's artistic heroes, Hieronymus Bosch. It is as though a bomb has gone off, shattering a plaintive landscape and rendering it apocalyptic. The title of the work references a line from William Butler Yeats's 1919 poem "The Second Coming," often thought to reference societal breakdown.



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