

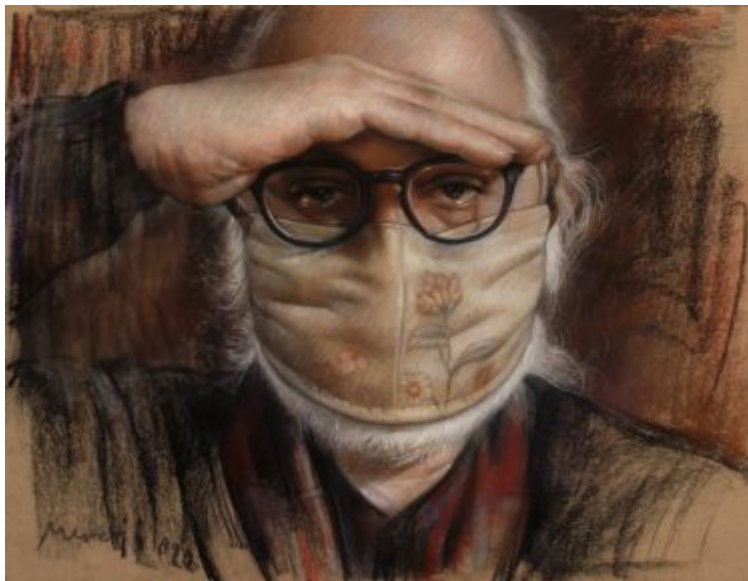
Pandemic Head To Hand

MAHMOUD MERAJI

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OCTOBER 8 - NOVEMBER 12, 2022



HEADBONES GALLERY

Artist Catalog: Mahmoud Meraji - *Pandemic Head To Hand*
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Vernon, BC, October 8 - November 12, 2022

Meraji, Mahmoud, 1958-

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Pandemic Head To Hand commentary © 2022 Julie Oakes

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Micro Publishing

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Mahmoud Meraji - 2022: Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC

COMMENTARY BY JULIE OAKES



Mahmoud Meraji- Headbones Gallery, 2022



Mahmoud and Amideh Meraji, Headbones Gallery, 2022

MAHMOUD MERAJI

Pandemic Head To Hand

Protective personal equipment - PPE – caused a change in personal appearance more pervasive than the onset of blue jeans; the world looked different during the pandemic- or people of the world looked different. There was an unavoidable awareness that hit anew each time we met, a barrier that cut off the first signal of the mindset of our fellow human – a smile because showing teeth for humans is a positive signal for the likelihood of a good experience. 'Face value', when sincere. It might have been accompanied by a handshake or even a hug.

A 'bubble' was the term adopted for the inmates (rightly used if referencing the pandemic) of a household though even within that bubble, should a member of the household contract the virus, within that space there was a second stage of isolation imposed. Within the bubbles, care and caution was advised but it was accepted that we would be removing our masks and plastic gloves like a jacket dropped by the front door. Mahmoud Meraji's bubble consisted of his wife, Amideh, their son Mehrad his partner, Melody, and her grandmother. The scenes are domestic. It would not be unreasonable to assume that this was inside the bubble, but the mask and the plastic gloves seem to be the custom, as socially critical as covering the naked body.



Mahmoud Meraji - Headbones Gallery, 2022

This ameliorated, sardonic attire was de rigueur for the bulk of the western world, transcending class, politics, financial status and, certainly, codes of aesthetics. There were pockets of selfish rebellious opposition to the communal acceptance of the masks and gloves or exclusion for the poorer countries who had to scurry to get a fair share of the PPE. Although PPE was dolefully predicted as a future necessity, it petered out just as patience was wearing thin. Still used within medical situations or out of respect for the old or immune compromised, that dress code, for now, has been rescinded.

To devote artistic headspace to making close to three hundred academic drawings where even the denizens within the bubble are masked, gloved and, by implication, precarious is a testament to the importance that the appearance of things had for Mahmoud Meraji. A proficient portraitist as well as having accomplished series of abstract works, he did what he had to do during the pandemic, even if it meant having to concentrate on the unavoidably perceived and resented indication of a viral menace. He drew and in that transmutative process, we realized the sublime is cousin to beauty.

Julie Oakes, Vernon, BC- 2022



Mahmoud Meraji with student Ehsan Khagrzadeh - 2022: Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC

Untitled (Amideh with ship) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self Portrait with hand over mask) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Amideh with white latex gloves) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self portrait seated with coffee) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Amideh in window) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self portrait with one eye covered) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Mehrad and Melody playing Cat's Cradle) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 18" x 24"



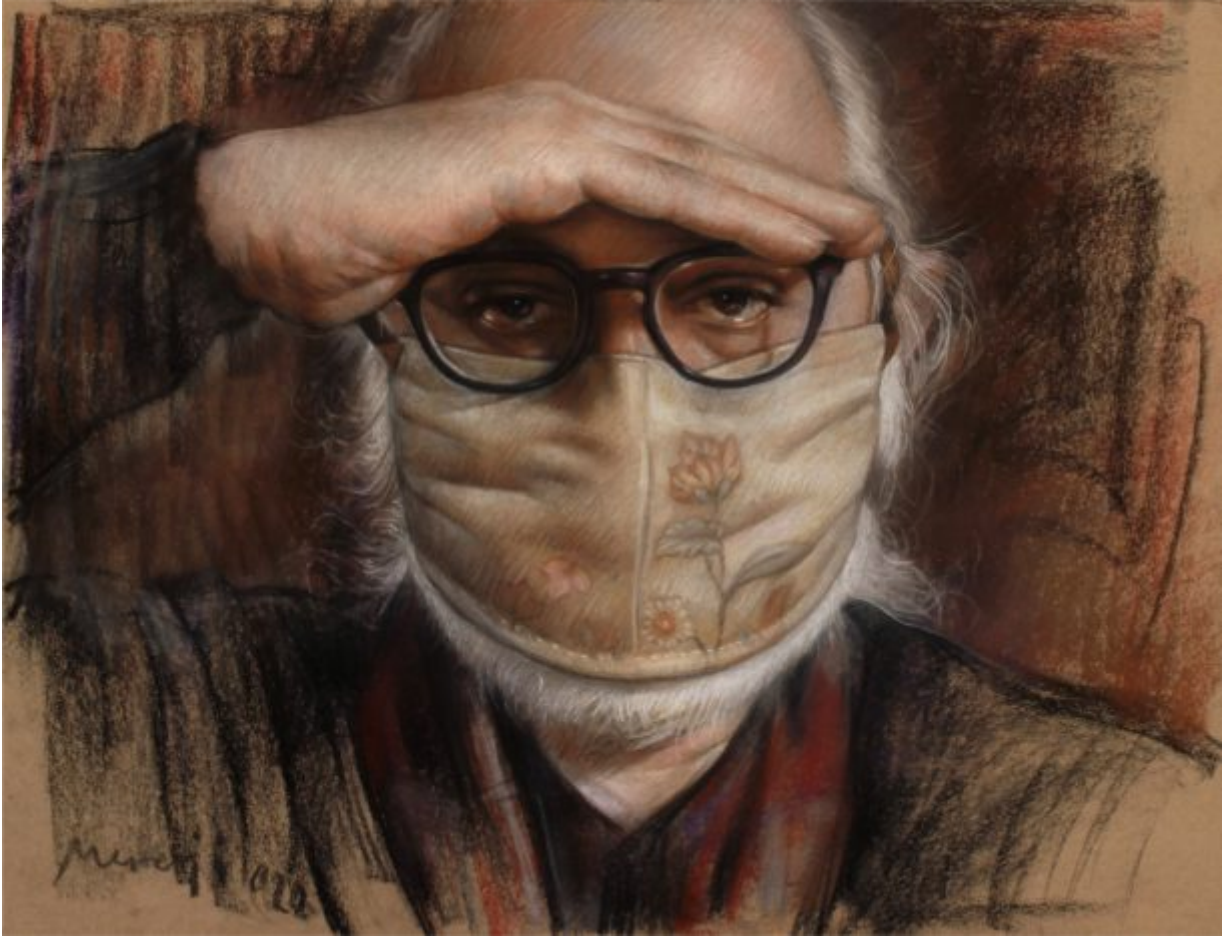
Untitled (Self portrait with flowers) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Melody seated) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self portrait looking forward) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 18" x 24"



Untitled (Amideh with fingers crossed) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self portrait wearing windbreaker) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Amideh arms crossed) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 18" x 24"



Untitled (Self portrait with hand on forehead) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 18" x 24"



Untitled (Amideh with two potatoes) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



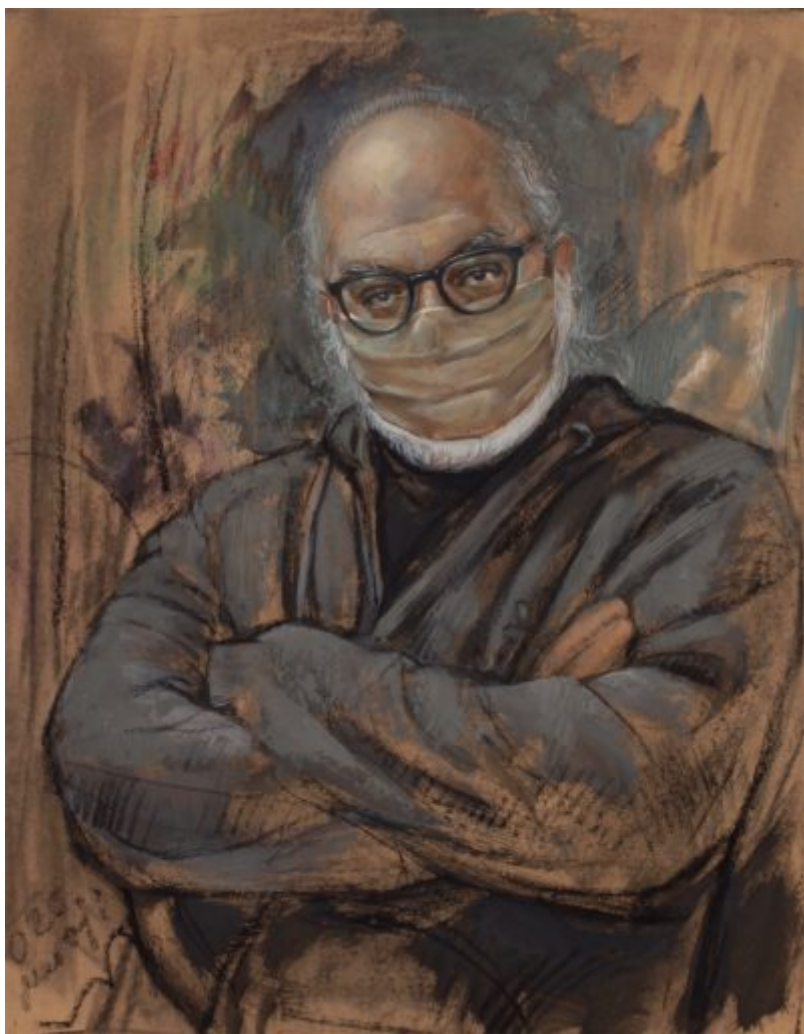
Untitled (Self portrait with potato) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Amideh head in hands) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 18" x 24"



Untitled (Self portrait with arms crossed) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Jean with red mask and striped sweater) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self portrait with cell phone) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Amideh with cell phone) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self portrait with shadow) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Amideh with mirror) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self portrait with cell phone) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 18" x 24"



Untitled (Amideh with flowers and vase) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self portrait with hands on lap) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Jean with red mask and orange) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Self portrait with carrot) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (Jean with red mask) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"



Untitled (four Mahmouds and chair) - 2020
Charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18"





Mahmoud Meraji
Born Tehran – 1958

Active

1974 – 1997 Tehran, Iran.
1997 – present Toronto, Canada.

Achievements

- 2011 People Choice Award, 'Figurative Show, OCAD University, Toronto, ON.
- 2010 Headbones Artist Choice Prize, Toronto, ON.
- 2008 Grand prize, 'Miracle of the Portrait', Toronto, ON.
- 2008 Art/Humanities, National Ethnic Press & Media Council of Canada, Toronto, ON.
- 2002 Honorable mention, Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.
- 2001 Honourable mention, 'Art at the Heart', Toronto, ON.
- 1993 First Prize, 'Iranian Fair of Flowers and Nature', Tehran, Iran.

Solo Shows

- 2022 Pandemic Head and Hands, Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC
- 2018 Bound & Redemption, Gallery 50, Toronto, ON
- 2015' Unseen Borders', Articsok Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2007' Mystic Iranian Curves', Six weeks of Iranian Art, Toronto, ON.
- 1997 The Iranian Community Association of Ontario, Toronto, ON.
- 1997 Iranian Community Association of Ontario, Toronto, ON.
- 1997 Arya Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1996 Arya Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1993 Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1991 Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1985 Niyavaran Cultural Centre, Tehran, Iran.

Group Exhibitions

- 2021 Sahar K. Boluki Fine Art, Toronto, ON
- 2021 Portraits of Resilience Online exhibition, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, ON
- 2015 Mahmoud Meraji 'Truth Seeking' & Daniel Hanequand 'Ghostly Yours', Headbones Gallery, BC.
- 2015 'Mahmoud and Students: A Group Show', Articsok Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2015 'Ispirazione Divino', Articsok Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2014 'Summer Salon', Yumart, Toronto, ON.
- 2011 'Figurative Show', OCAD University, Toronto, ON.
- 2010 'The Kingston Prize', Kingston, ON.
- 2009 'The Kingston Prize', Kingston, ON.
- 2009 'Figutation', Headbones Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2009 'Ab strack'tid', Headbones Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2009 'Today and Tomorrow', The Canadian Portrait, Toronto, ON.
- 2008 'Miracle of the Portrait', International Arts Festival, Toronto, ON.
- 2008 'Buddha Composed', Varley Gallery, Markham, ON.
- 2008 'Tiregan: Iranian Festival', Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, ON.
- 2007 'Iranian artists cultural reunion', Six weeks of Iranian Art, Toronto, ON.
- 2007 'Canadian Artists without Boarder', Varley Gallery, Markham, ON.
- 2007 'Ethnic Convergence', Headbones Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2006 'Iran, Iran, I ran with Bogos', Headbones Galley, Toronto, ON.
- 2006 'Under the Azure Dome:Persian Festival', Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, ON.
- 2005 John B. Aird Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2004 'Metamorphosis', Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.
- 2004 Arta Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2003 'Drawing 2003', John B. Arid Gallery, Toronto, ON.
- 2002 luminary Art Gallery, Toronto, ON
- 2002 'Annual Juried Show', Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.

Group Exhibitions (continued)

- 2001 'A Celebration of the Arts', Toronto, ON.
- 2001 'Art at the heart', Arts week, Toronto, ON.
- 2001 'Odyssey', Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.
- 2001 'Art at the heart', Toronto, ON.

Group Exhibitions (cont'd)

- 2000 39th Annual Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition, City Hall, Toronto, ON.
- 1999 38th Annual Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition, City Hall, Toronto, ON.
- 1998 Transition: Changing States, Scarborough Art Council, Toronto, ON.
- 1995 The Third Iranian painting Biannual, Tehran, Iran.
- 1995 Golestan Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran.
- 1993 Fair of Flowers and Nature Tehran, Iran.
- 1993 The Second Iranian Painting Biannual, Tehran, Iran.
- 1991 The First Iranian Painting Biannual, Tehran, Iran.
- 1988 City Theater, Tehran, Iran.
- 1986 Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts, Tehran, Iran.

Publications

- 2021 NowToronto, Portraits of Resilience, Kelsey Adams, May 25, 2021
- 1997-Now 'Shahrvand Publication', Toronto, ON.
- 2000 'Multicultural Calendar', Skills for Change, Toronto, ON.
- 1997 'SUITCASE: A Journal of Transcultural Traffic Volume Two', UCLA Program in Comparative Literature, Los Angeles, CA.



Opening reception Mahmoud Meraji- *Pandemic Head to Hand* - 2022: Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC

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