

MYSTICISM AND ART

REFLECTIONS ON CREATION

AN EXHIBITION BY
MALIKSHAH MURADALLY

CONTENTS

Artist Statement.....	3
ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY SERIES	
Letting Go(d) - I.....	5
Letting Go(d) - II.....	6
Letting Go(d) - III.....	7
Forgiveness.....	8
Unconditional Love.....	9
Grace.....	10
The Truth.....	11
Manifesting Light - II.....	12
Finding Muhammad in the Darkness - I.....	13
Thank You.....	14
Finding Ali in the Darkness - II.....	15
Finding Ali in the Darkness - III.....	16
Source Perspective - I.....	17
Wheel of Karma – I.....	18
4 Joogs.....	19
Charbagh - I.....	20
Divine Template.....	21
Seeking the Unknown.....	22
Manifesting Light - I.....	23
Merging with the Creator.....	24
Duality - I.....	25
Fearless.....	26
Messenger.....	27
In-between Spaces - I.....	28
Shimmering Light - II.....	29
Shimmering Light - III.....	30
The Path.....	31
FLUID ART SERIES	
Healing - I.....	33
Breathing Water.....	34
Embracing the Scar - I.....	35
Eclipse – I.....	36
Coloring in the Lines.....	37
All Rivers Run Home.....	38

ARTIST STATEMENT

Sell your cleverness, purchase bewilderment”

- Rumi

Since the age of 5, I have been reflecting on my mortality. I vividly remember telling my best friend that I hope my parents marry each other again in their next life. He must have thought what the hell was I talking about. What kind of thought is that for a five-year-old. I'm sure he just ignored the comment and we went back to playing with our Star Wars action figures.

I have always been curious about the Why of life, especially why a Creator that is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent and which has infinite love and infinite mercy would create this physical experience where there is so much pain and suffering. As Albert Einstein once said, *“I want to know god's thoughts-the rest are details.”*

My immersion into the world of art has been sudden and unexpected. In 2018 at the age 45, I woke up one morning with this unexplained feeling that I need to start painting. The last time I picked up a paintbrush was in elementary school. I have never studied art or taken an art class so why this sudden feeling to paint. So I decided to visit the local hobby shop in London, England (where I am based) watched a couple of YouTube videos, and my journey into the world of art began.

The early days were difficult as painting can be a very lonely process as it's only you, your feelings and thoughts, and a blank canvas. I was humbled as one of my first pieces titled Healing (which is inspired by Rumi's quote *“The wound is the place where the Light enters you”*) won the Diamond Jubilee art competition in the canvas category and was showcased at an international arts festival in Lisbon, Portugal.

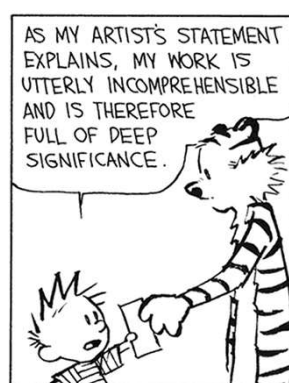
Over the past several years, my style has evolved focusing primarily on abstract and Islamic calligraphy utilising acrylic paint, mixed media (paste and gels) and fluid pouring techniques. I draw inspiration from the areas of music, fashion, literature, mysticism, and other calligraphy designers.

I would describe my works as Antevasin Art. Antevasin is a Sanskrit word meaning someone who lives on the border of two worlds (physical and transcendental). It is a visual representation of the spiritual side exploring the duality of existence and exploring areas such as free will, karma, after (before) life and Source (God) perspective.

His Highness the Aga Khan beautifully encapsulates the relationship between art and spirituality in this quote, *“Does not the Qur'an challenge the artist, as much as the mystic, to go beyond the physical - the outward - so as to seek to unveil that which lies at the centre but gives life to the periphery? Is not a great work of art, like the ecstasy of the mystic, a gesture of the spirit, a stirring of the soul that comes from the attempt to experience a glimpse of, and an intimacy with, that which is ineffable and beyond being?”*

In the end, what do I want to say with my art? Hopefully, my works ultimately will challenge the individual to explore their conditioning, explore *“unchartered territories”* and *“awaken the individual from the illusion of separateness”*.

To end on a lighter note, the writer Anita Moorjani once said *“Life is not meant to be serious. Laughter is even more uplifting and healing than any form of prayer, meditation or chanting.”* I completely agree. In this light, below is a Calvin & Hobbes cartoon on artist statements by Bill Watterson, July 15, 1995.



CALLIGRAPHY

SERIES



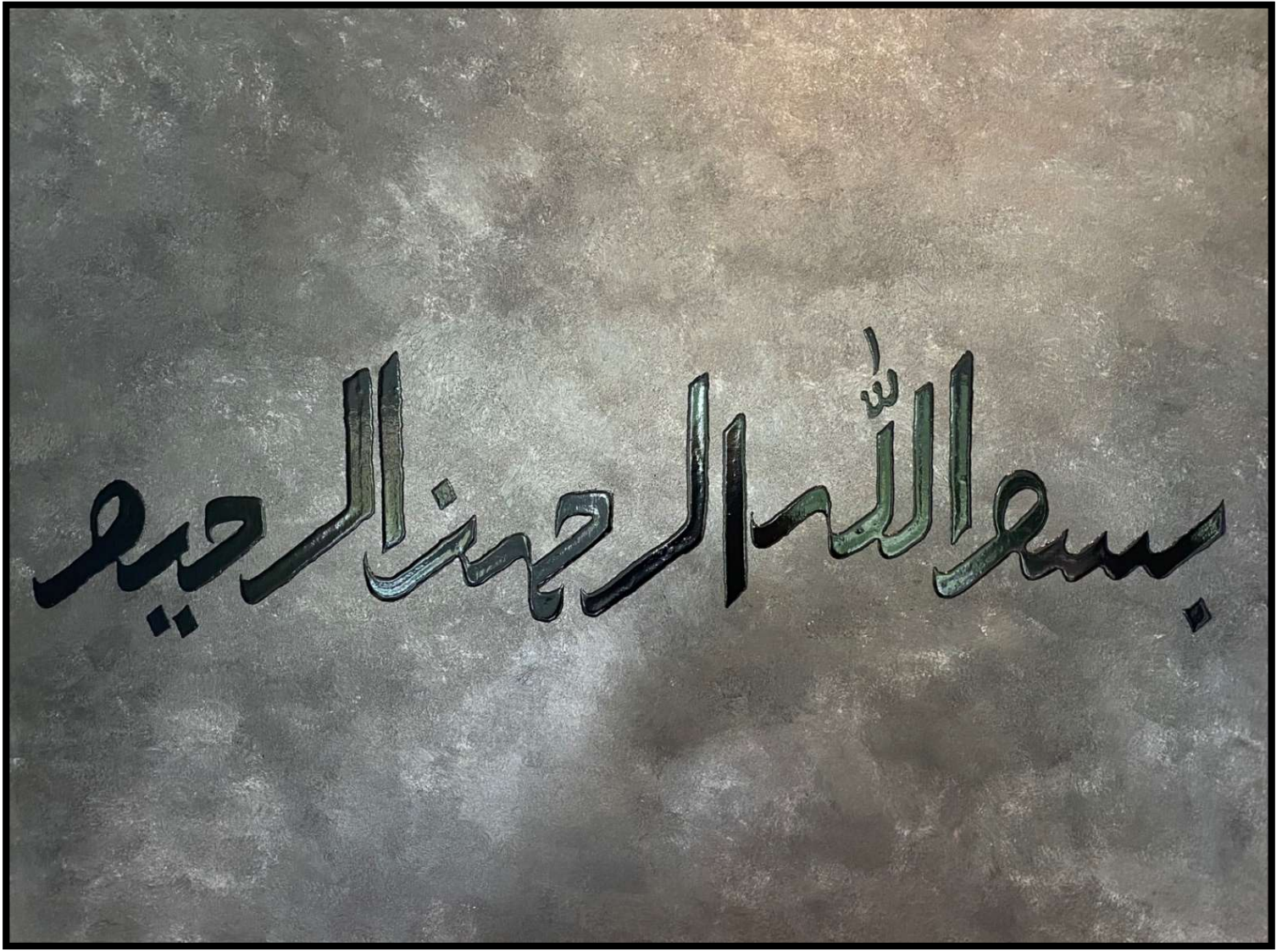
Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim in Arabic calligraphy

LETTING GO(D) - I

Acrylic on canvas (2022) – 40”x 30”

Reflections on Letting Go: “The best approach is to relax and let the outcome be what it will be...That is not being passive. In fact, it couldn’t be more active because you’re flowing with the tide of all the evolved energy of the universe rather than fighting against it – through anxiety, worrying, and so on.”

- P. McMahon dialogue with J. Krishnamurti



Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim in Arabic calligraphy

LETTING GO(D) - II

Acrylic on canvas (2022) – 40”x 30”

Reflections on Letting Go

“Life is balance of holding on and letting go.”

- Rumi

LETTING GO(D) - III

Acrylic on canvas (2023) – 40" x 40"

Reflections on Letting Go: "Even within the limitations of your linear time structure, each day, each hour, even each second, is entirely new. Yet, we don't approach them and experience them in that way. We carry into them all your baggage from the past. Not the baggage of our past experiences but all our thoughts about them. The experiences are all over and done with, but we won't let them go."

- P. McMahon dialogue with J. Krishnamurti



Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim in Kufic script

FORGIVENESS

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2022) – 40” x 30”

Reflections on Forgiveness: "When you forgive, you release the light within you. By holding on to [past wrongs], you block your creativity, abilities, and knowledge. When you forgive, you will open up the light for everyone else. Once you forgive, all barriers and blocks will be released....You become free to go forward. You are no longer attached to people and circumstances."

- M. Kelley



Ya Husayn (ibn Ali) in Arabic calligraphy



Fatima in Arabic calligraphy

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2022) – 40”x 30”

Reflections on Unconditional Love: "If there's one thing worth doing on Earth, it's discovering self-love. I say "discovering" instead of "learning" because learning implies you're starting from zero; but the truth is, you already love yourself. When you're born, when the amnesia happens, you forget your magnificence, and think you have to earn the right to be loved. How can you earn what already belongs to you?"

- A. Kagan dialogue with W. Cohen



GRACE

*Acrylic and gel on canvas
(2022) – 30”x 40”*

Ali in Arabic calligraphy

Reflections on Grace: “People usually don’t experience grace unless it hits them over the head with some big miracle. They aren’t in tune with the constant little miracles weaving in and out of their lives every day; miracles like breathing and seeing and hearing and walking and talking and thinking and being able to feel. That’s why so many spiritual paths promote the concept of gratitude. It helps you notice the grace in your life.”

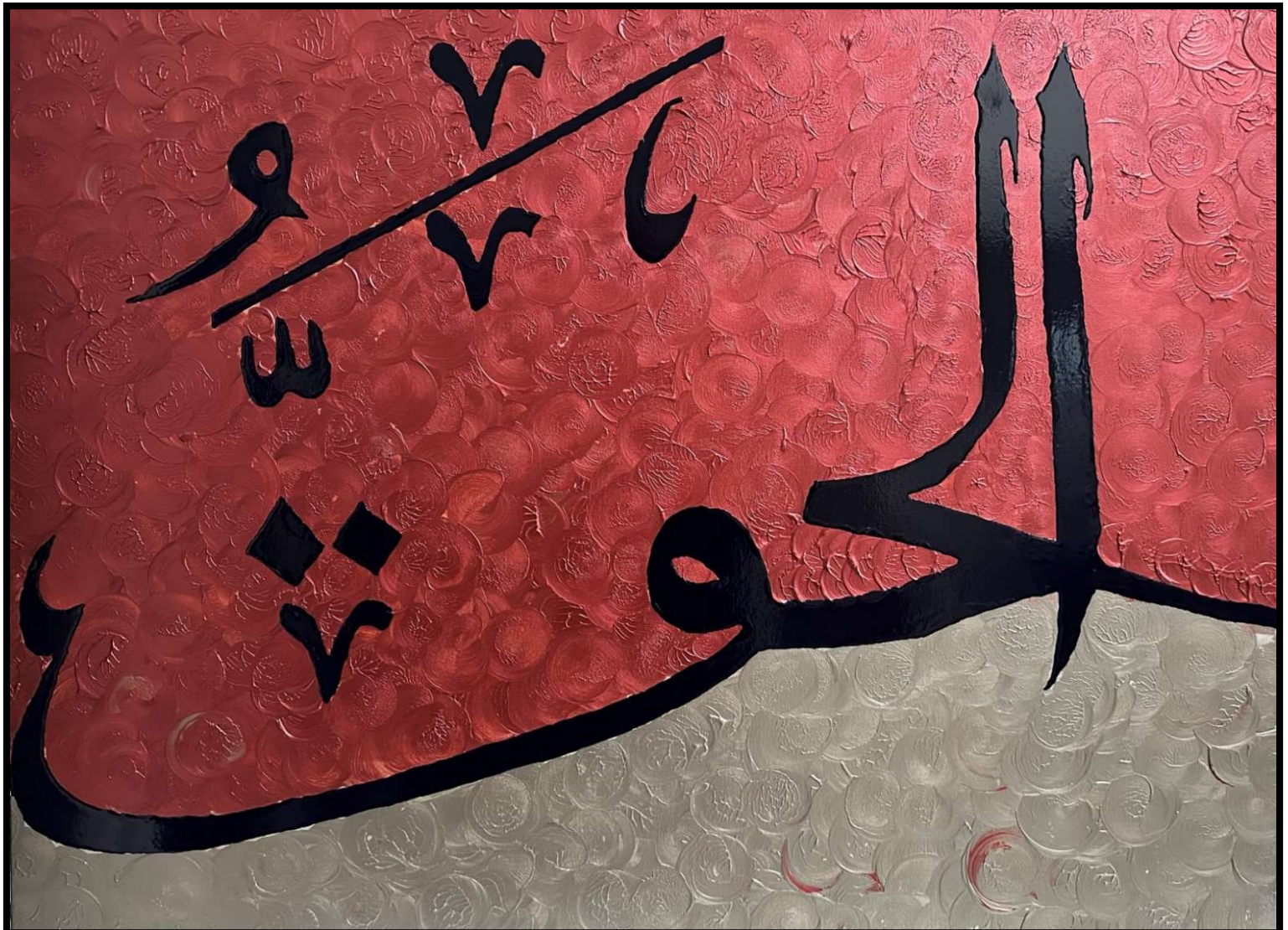
- A. Kagan dialogue with W. Cohen

THE TRUTH

Acrylic on canvas (2022) – 40” x 30”

Reflections on Creation: “All of God’s creations are equal because they are all thoughts within God’s mind. Thoughts are inherently equal. One thought cannot outrank another. Equality reigns in our universe—creating hierarchies is a human pursuit.”

- N. Danison



Al-Haqq (the Truth) in Arabic calligraphy



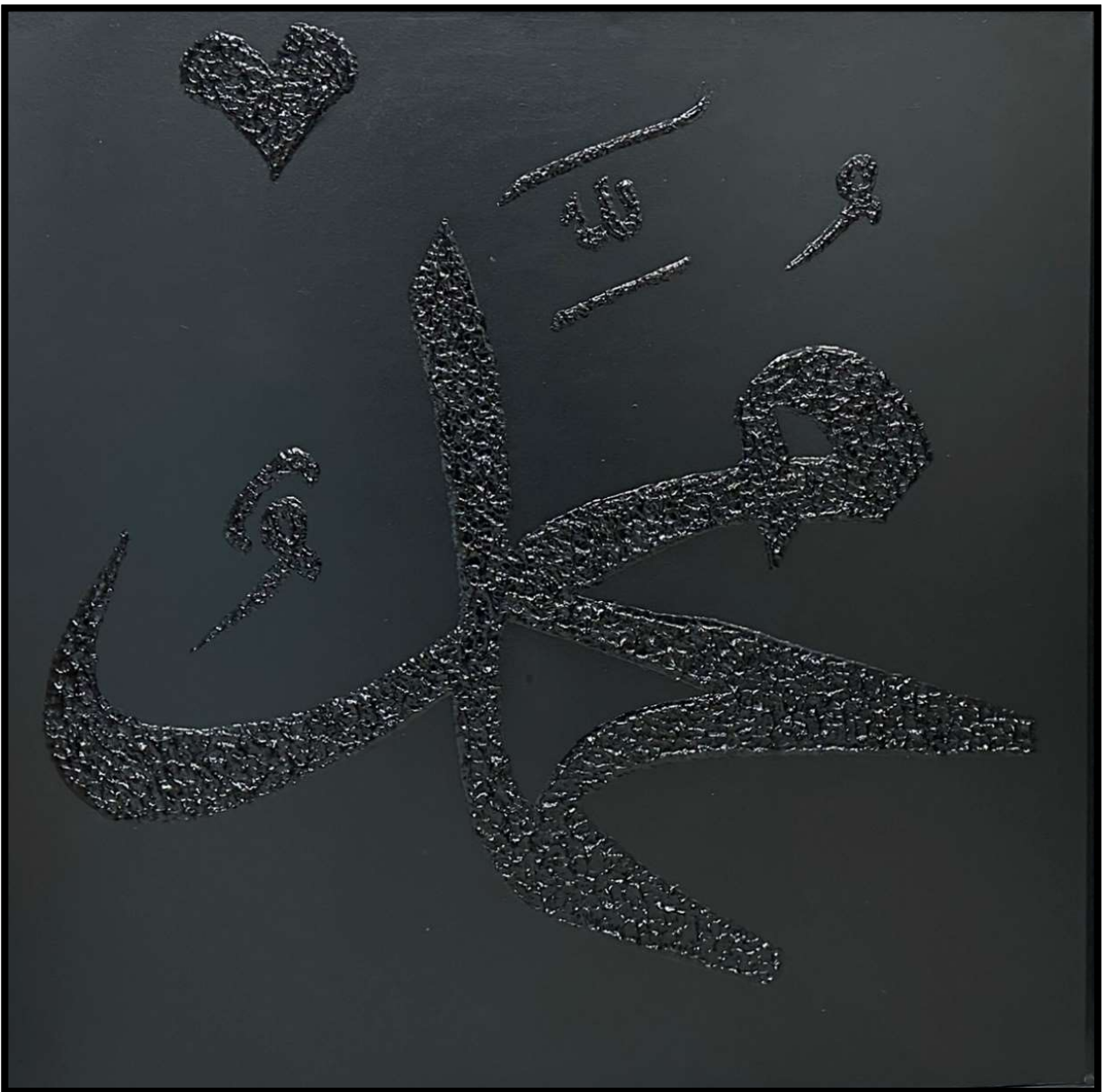
Ali in Arabic calligraphy

MANIFESTING LIGHT - II

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2021) – 60”x 40”

Reflections on Light: “What switches the light to an increasing level of brightness is the quality of the inner life of each person, security, self-esteem, ability to respond spontaneously to the flow of life, above all, freedom from conditioning, going within, allowing the light to spread throughout the whole being.”

- P. McMahon dialogue with J. Krishnamurti



Mohammad (PBUH) in Arabic calligraphy

FINDING MUHAMMAD IN THE DARKNESS - I

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2023) – 40” x 40”

The piece is inspired by mysticism and the search for hope. The color choice symbolizes that in difficult times, spirit (Muhammad, PBUH) is always there even though you may not be able to see spirit. The Arabic calligraphy is textured and layered symbolizing that in difficult times, spirit (the presence) is felt rather than seen. The canvas is best viewed at an angle (rather than straight ahead), symbolizing searching for spirit.

Reflections on Suffering: “It’s hard to be kind all the time..., because if you don’t toughen up, you go under. The nature of existence there is harsh. You fix one hole and another pops up. It’s supposed to be like that, though, so don’t be too concerned about it... although it’s not what we usually think of as payment. It wasn’t some price for so-called sins. It was more a learning thing.”

- A. Kagan dialogue with W. Cohen

THANK YOU

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2023) – 40”x 40”

Reflections on Gratitude: “My body’s pain was an eloquent expression of life—human life! It reminded me that I enjoyed the ultimate privilege of having a material body that could interact with matter and feel things a spirit cannot.”

- N. Danison



Alhamdulillah in Arabic calligraphy



Ali in Arabic calligraphy

FINDING ALI IN THE DARKNESS - II

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2021) – 20”x 40”

The piece is inspired by mysticism and the search for hope. The color choice symbolizes that in difficult times, spirit (Ali - 99 etchings) is always there even though you may not be able to see spirit. The Arabic calligraphy is textured and layered symbolizing that in difficult times, spirit (the presence) is felt rather than seen. The canvas is best viewed at an angle (rather than straight ahead), symbolizing searching for spirit.

Reflections on Suffering: “There’s a lot of pain in life, but not because you’ve done anything to deserve it...Pain is just part of the human experience, as natural as breath or eyesight or blood moving through your veins. Pain is part of the earth deal, so don’t be overly concerned about it.”

- A. Kagan dialogue with W. Cohen

FINDING ALI IN THE DARKNESS - III

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2021) – 20”x 40”

The piece is inspired by mysticism and the search for hope. The color choice symbolizes that in difficult times, spirit (Ali - 99 etchings) is always there even though you may not be able to see spirit. The Arabic calligraphy is textured and layered symbolizing that in difficult times, spirit (the presence) is felt rather than seen. The canvas is best viewed at an angle (rather than straight ahead), symbolizing searching for spirit.

Reflections on Suffering; “There’s a lot of pain in life, but not because you’ve done anything to deserve it...Pain is just part of the human experience, as natural as breath or eyesight or blood moving through your veins. Pain is part of the earth deal, so don’t be overly concerned about it.”

- A. Kagan dialogue with W. Cohen



Ali in Arabic calligraphy

SOURCE PERSPECTIVE - I

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2022) – 40" x 40"

The Four Doors is a concept in Sufism in which there are 4 paths back to Source (God). Shari'a (exoteric path), tariqa (esoteric path), haqiqa (mystical truth) and ma'rifa (divine knowledge).

Reflections on Source Perspective:

"There is no hierarchy in the universe from Source's perspective. We are all one with Source. We are all part of the same eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving Creative Energy. Every single molecule is equal to every other molecule."

- N. Danison



Allah in Arabic calligraphy



Allah in Arabic calligraphy

WHEEL OF KARMA - I

Acrylic on canvas (2023) – 40”x 40”

Reflections on Karma: "Karma is a representation of the soul's desire for balance in its experiences. It represents the soul's quest to learn from different perspectives. Every soul grows in understanding by experiencing existence from different points of view. There is no judgment in karma; it is not punitive. It is not imposed upon you from the outside—it's simply the soul's desire for balance in its learning...When the karma of a relationship is done, only love remains."

- M. Kelley

4 JOOGS

Acrylic on canvas (2022) – 40” x 40”

I wandered long through all the 4 'Joogs' (and realized that) there is none that equals Thee.

- *Saaheb Ji Tu(n) More Man Bhaave by Sayyed Mahamad Shaah*



Allah in Arabic calligraphy



Ali in Arabic calligraphy

CHARBAGH - I

Acrylic on canvas (2023) – 40” x 40”

A chahar-bagh (chahar meaning four and bagh meaning garden in Persian) is a quadrilateral garden inspired by the four gardens of Paradise described in Chapter 55 of the Qur’an, Surat al-Rahman, the chapter of the All-Merciful.

As the great 13th century mystical poet, Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī wrote, “The real gardens and flowers are within, they are in man’s heart and not outside.”



DIVINE TEMPLATE

*Acrylic and gel on canvas
(2021) – 40”x 60”*

Inspired by the saying

*Love does not have the capacity
for discernment.*

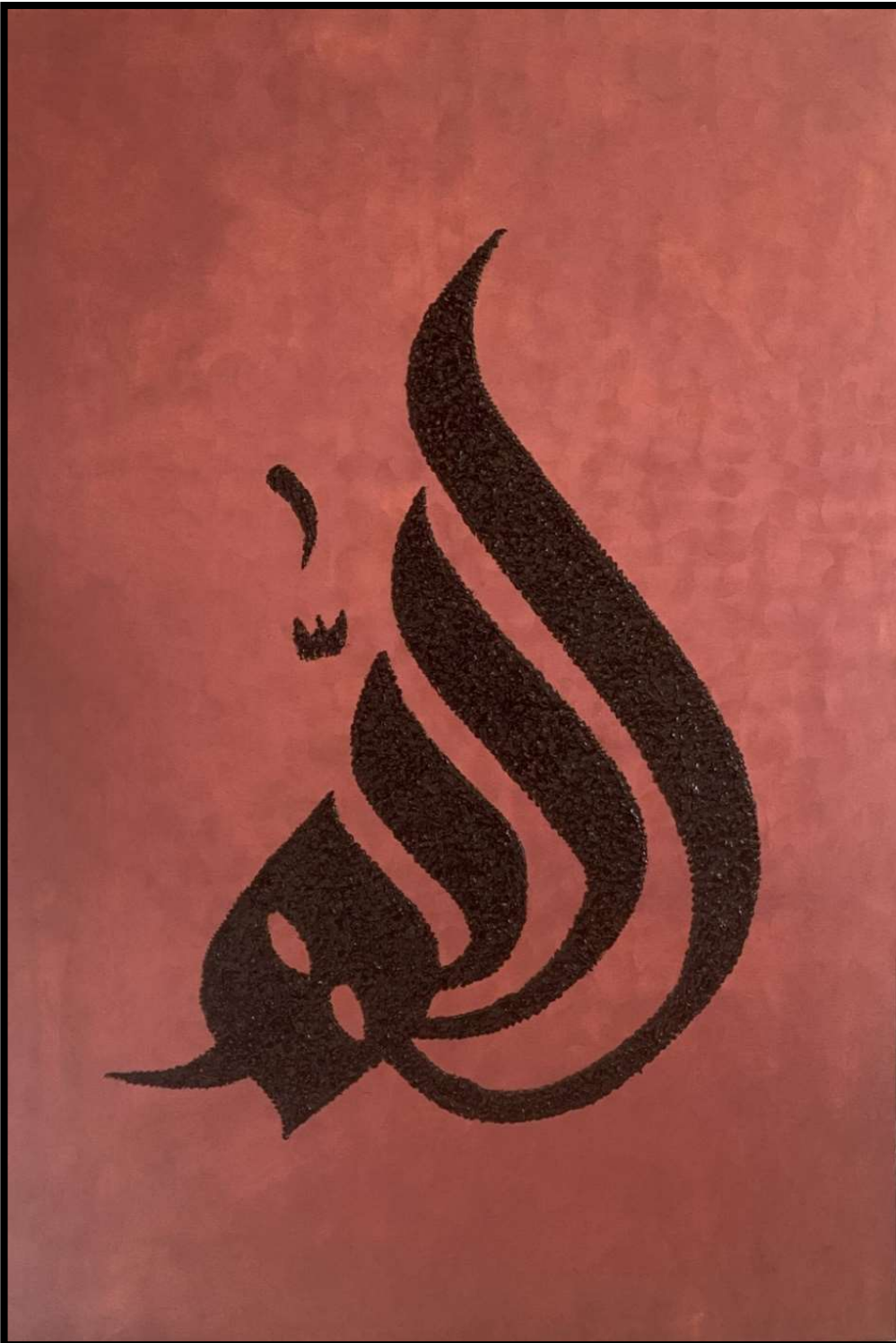
Allah in Arabic calligraphy

SEEKING THE UNKNOWN

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2021) – 40" x 60"

Reflections on the Unknown: "I AM is my only certainty, I have the whole universe of exploration open to me. I know no limits. If you say to me that God is the unknown, or the unknown is God... 'then' that concept presents to me a voyage of endless discovery. The unknown can never be known or it is no longer the unknown. So my universe is always evolving, always revealing new aspects of itself to me, as I am to myself. We are one in the unknowingness, which allows me to be eternally creative in my expression of I AM."

- P. McMahon dialogue with J. Krishnamurti



Allah in Arabic calligraphy



Ali in Arabic calligraphy

MANIFESTING LIGHT - I

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2021) – 60”x 40”

Reflections on Light: “Being in an earthly body and looking through physical eyes limits the way you perceive the light. Your eyes can’t see the light directly, only the things it shines upon, so the light remains invisible, just like the soul does. That causes a good deal of suffering on Earth because it’s hard to believe in what you can’t see. The light in Spirit makes visible what is invisible on Earth: the divine nature of all things.”

- A. Kagan dialogue with W. Cohen

MERGING WITH THE CREATOR

Acrylic and gel on canvas (2021) – 60" x 40"

Reflections on Creation: "You may return here once you have fully come to understand that you are always here."

- E. Gilbert



Al-Khaliq (the Creator) in Arabic calligraphy



DUALITY - I

*Acrylic and gel on canvas
(2021) – 24" x 24"*

Ali in Arabic calligraphy

Inspired by the following verse from the Rumi poem, "The Great Wagon"

**"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing,
there is a field. I'll meet you there.**

When the soul lies down in that grass,
the world is too full to talk about.

Ideas, language, even the phrase "each other"
doesn't make any sense.

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.

Don't go back to sleep.

You must ask for what you really want.

Don't go back to sleep.

People are going back and forth across the doorsill
where the two worlds touch.

The door is round and open.

Don't go back to sleep."

FEARLESS

Acrylic on canvas (2022) – 24” x 24”



Mohammad (PBUH) in Arabic calligraphy

Reflections on Fearlessness: “A useful thing to remember is that, if you are yourself in whatever situation you may find yourself, you cannot fail. You may well ask how can you be anything but yourself. Once you’re controlled by fear it’s impossible for you to express the true you.”

- P. McMahan dialogue with J. Krishnamurti

MESSENGER

Acrylic on canvas (2022) – 24” x 24”

Reflections on Messengers: “Whatever qualities come under the heading of benevolence, that virtue is right there in the light. It’s different with these Higher Beings. They’re more specific, more personal, like the Divine Presence is focused through a prism.”

- A. Kagan dialogue with W. Cohen



Mohammad (PBUH) in Arabic calligraphy

IN-BETWEEN SPACES - I

Acrylic on canvas (2021) – 16" x 16"

Reflections on Creation: "Most humans think there's nothing in between those pages, while actually 99 percent of that "emptiness" isn't really empty. All the dimensions are among those pages."

- E. Medhus



Ali in Arabic calligraphy



Ali in Arabic calligraphy

SHIMMERING LIGHT - II

Acrylic on canvas (2021) – 20”x 40”

Reflections on Light: “Turn to nature to pardon some of the difficulty you have to bear. Nature has more light than anything else on Earth.”

- A. Kagan dialogue with W. Cohen

“Nature helps you get grounded...go hug a tree. Walk barefoot in the grass. Look at the night sky. Nature on Earth is extraordinary. Appreciate it.”

- E. Medhus

SHIMMERING LIGHT - III

Acrylic on canvas (2021) – 20”x 40”

Reflections on Light: “Life in the ultimate analysis has taught me one enduring lesson. The subject should always disappear in the object. In our ordinary affections one for another, in our daily work with hand or brain, we most of us discover soon enough that any lasting satisfaction, any contentment that we can achieve, is the result of forgetting self, of merging subject with object in a harmony that is of body, mind, and spirit. And in the highest realms of consciousness all who believe in a Higher beginning are liberated from all the clogging and hampering bonds of the subjective self in prayer, in rapt meditation upon and in the face of the glorious radiance of eternity, in which all temporal and earthly consciousness is swallowed up and itself becomes eternal.

*- His Highness Sultan Muhammad Shah,
Aga Khan III*



Ali in Arabic calligraphy

THE PATH

Acrylic on canvas (2022) – 24” x 24”

Reflections on Creation: “All of ‘God’ Energy, no matter its form or evolutionary path, will ultimately increase to the ‘God’ vibrational level and merge back into ‘Him’.

- N. Danison



Ali in Arabic calligraphy

FLUID ART

SERIES

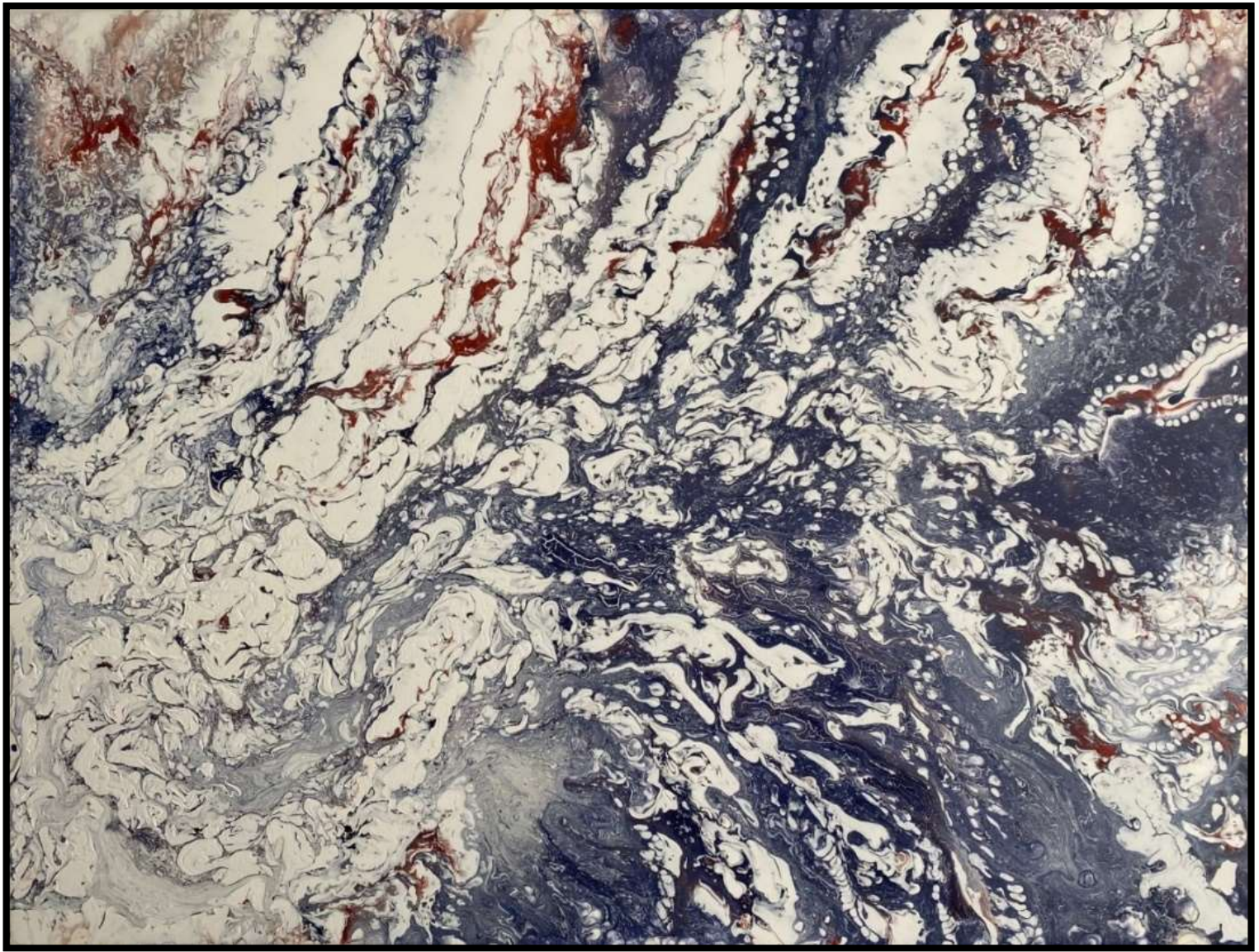


HEALING - I

Acrylic on canvas (2018) – 33" x 24"

"The wound is the place where the Light enters you."

- Rumi



BREATHING WATER

Acrylic on canvas (2022) – 40" x 30"

"We created in water a tangible reflection of the fluidity and infinity of love. Water came first and all other materialisations evolved out of it."

- P. McMahon

EMBRACING THE SCAR - I

Acrylic on canvas (2023) – 24" x 24"

The piece is inspired by Kintsugi, the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with gold.

The Kintsugi philosophy is based on the idea that beauty can be found in imperfection. Rather than try to disguise the flaws, the Kintsugi technique highlights and draws attention to them. It treats the breakage and repair as part of the history of an object (the self), rather than something to disguise. The new piece ultimately is stronger and more resilient.

As Justin Whitmel Earley said, "The scars are the design. Your attention is drawn to the cracks and how they are mended. That is what you're supposed to see. The beauty is in the brokenness."



ECLIPSE - I

Acrylic, gel, and paste on canvas (2021) – 24" x 24"

"Be patient when you sit in the dark. The dawn is coming."

- Rumi



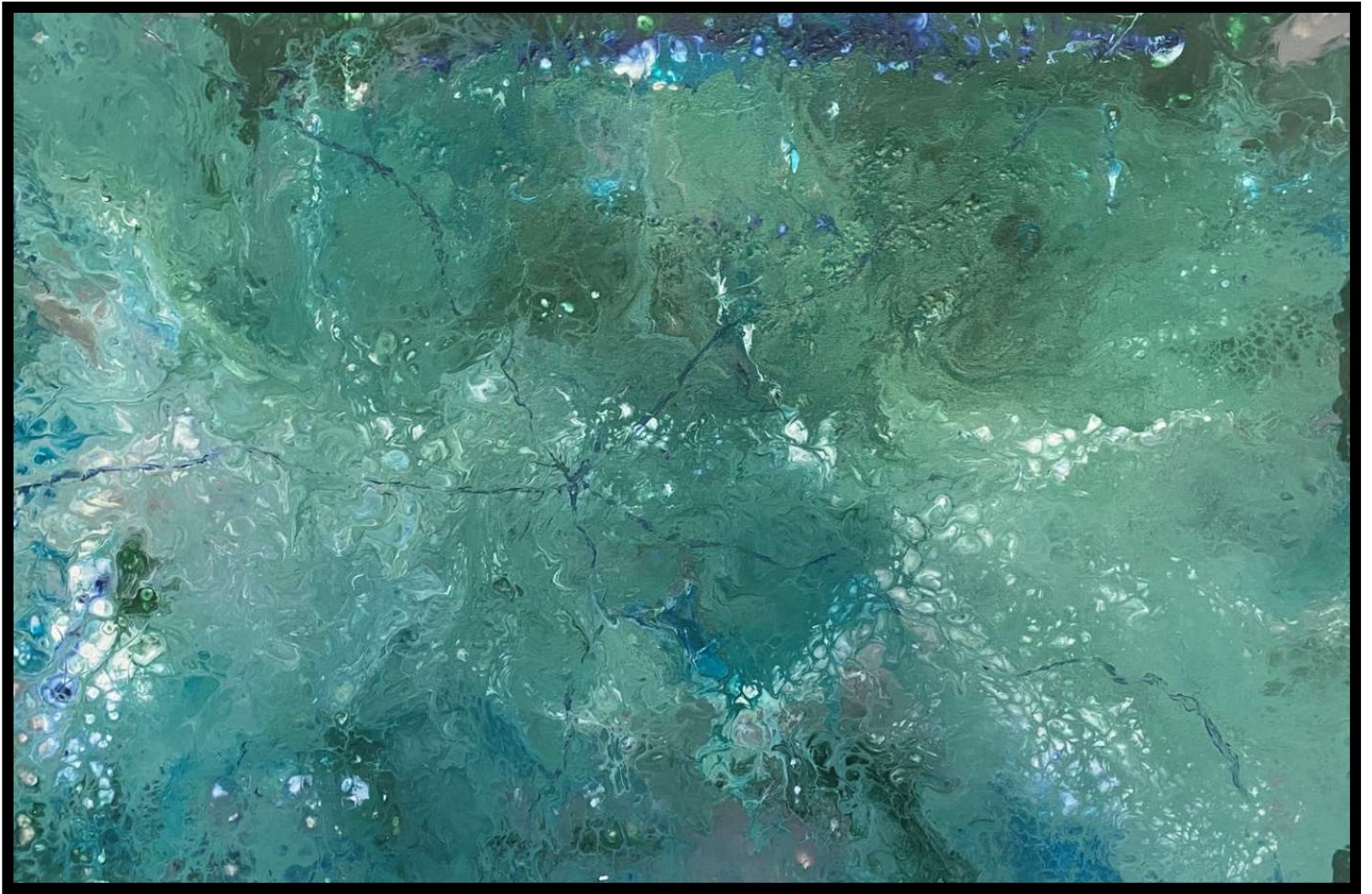


COLORING IN THE LINES

Acrylic on canvas (2023) – 40" x 40"

Reflections on Creation: "Isn't it funny that most people are scared of change, when changing is the double fudge frosting on top of the cake of life? And although much of your life is planned out, there's a lot of freedom inside that plan. The circumstances are like lines in a kid's coloring book, but instead of ink the lines are penciled in; they're erasable. As you color in the spaces, you influence the lines."

- A. Kagan dialogue with W. Cohen



ALL RIVERS RUN HOME

Acrylic on canvas (2018) – 36" x 24"

Reflections on Creation: "All of Source Energy, no matter its form or evolutionary path, will ultimately increase to the Source's vibrational level and merge back into Source."

- N. Dannison