

NABIL NAHAS

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17 November 2013 - 9 January 2014

shabibulqay



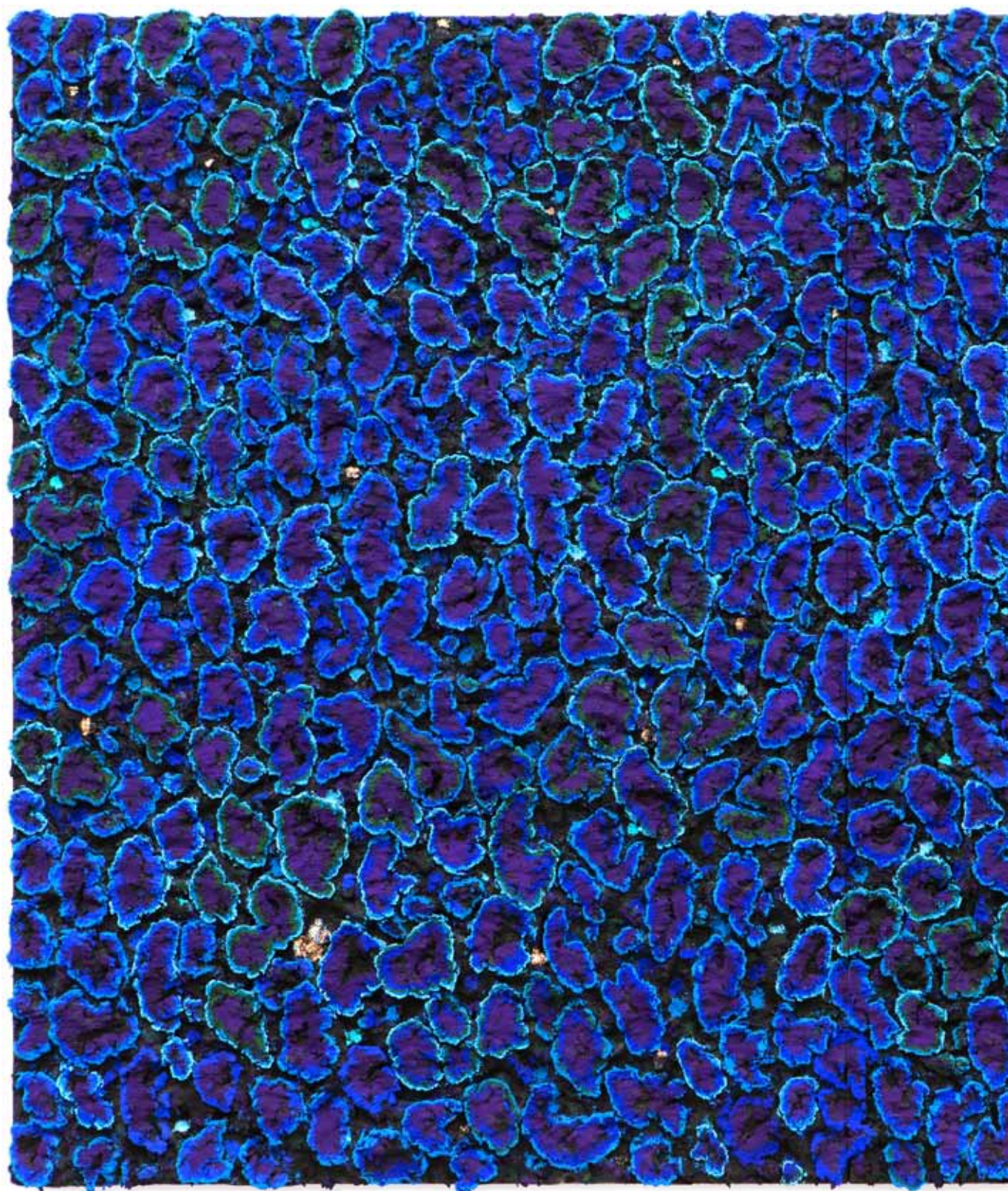
Serendipity, 2013
Acrylic on canvas
304.8 x 152.4 cm
120 x 60 in

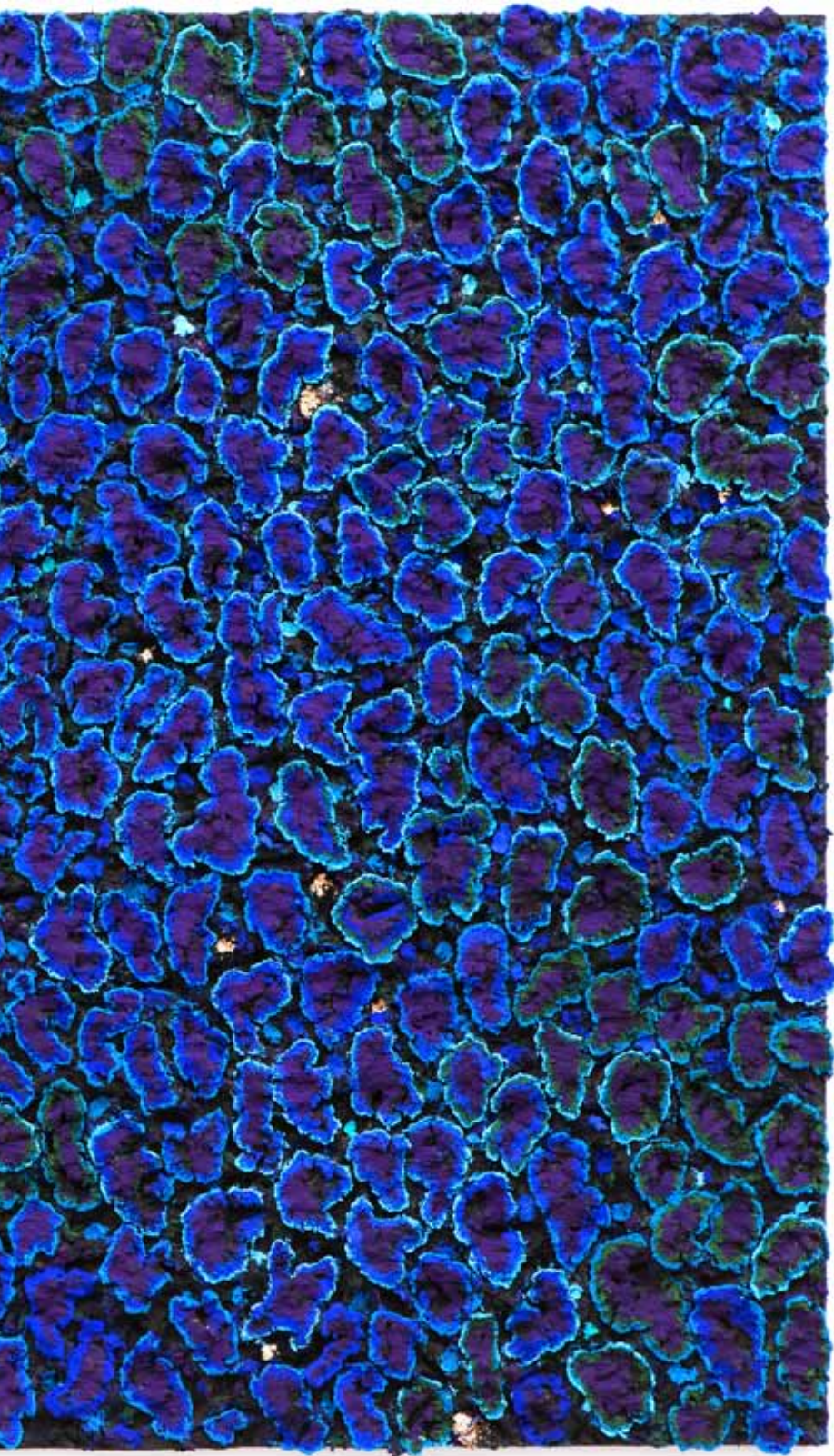




Midnight Sun, 2013
Acrylic on canvas
152.4 x 152.4 cm
60 x 60 in







Mashallah, 2013
Acrylic and pumice on canvas
213.4 x 304.8 cm
84 x 120 in





Twizzler, 2013
Acrylic on canvas
213.4 x 152.4 cm
84 x 60 in







Untitled, 2013
Acrylic and pumice on canvas
39.4 x 31.8 cm
15 1/2 x 12 1/2 in



Untitled, 2013
Acrylic and pumice on canvas
39.4 x 31.8 cm
15 1/2 x 12 1/2 in

Galaxies and Fractals

We are delighted to welcome back Nabil Nahas for his second exhibition at Lawrie Shabibi. For this exhibition, Nabil has focussed on his three-dimensional paintings, mostly *Fractals and Galaxies*. Taken together with the works in his previous show, *Palms and Stars*, they show the astonishing depth and breadth of Nabil's artistic production.

Nabil is perhaps best-known for his *Fractals*. He has been developing this series on and off since the mid 1990s, when he began to obliterate the familiar outline of starfish that he was fixing to his canvases at the time, heavily encrusting them with a ground pumice and acrylic mix and finishing them in psychedelic tones. Like much of Nabil's work, the technique and meaning came hand in hand. The term *fractal* refers to the theory of fractal geometry, formulated in the mid 1970s by Benoit Mandelbrot. Mandelbrot described random events in nature deviating from the ideal Euclidean geometry, the rough and fragmented geometric shapes which can be split into parts, each of which is at least approximately a reduced size copy of the whole. According to Mandelbrot, things typically considered to be "rough", a "mess" or "chaotic", like clouds or shorelines, actually had a degree of order. Nabil saw the parallels with his own work- his *Fractal* paintings also represent a kind of asymmetrical equilibrium. This relationship between order and disorder is a recurrent theme in his work, and not just for his *Fractals*.

At first sight Nabil might seem an abstract artist, but he can never be so easily labelled. Even in the most abstract of his works he defies any easy definition of abstract art. His paintings are literal- the images are always taken from something, they often infer movement and thus refer to a moment in time. The *Fractals* themselves vary considerably in size and colour, and evoke a variety of scales and moods. The smallest are like windows onto an underwater world of coral reefs and the larger ones simply overpower the viewer. On the one hand they look like encrusted surfaces of leviathans, and on the other they resemble irregularities that are visible only on an unimaginably minute scale- the false colour images of a scanning electron microscope. The subtle variations in tone and colour that ripple across the mottled surfaces of these fractals is both like the dappled light of tropical seas and like the mineral deposits in a slice of marble. Nabil has concentrated on the colour blue for his recent *Fractals*. The results are astonishingly beautiful.

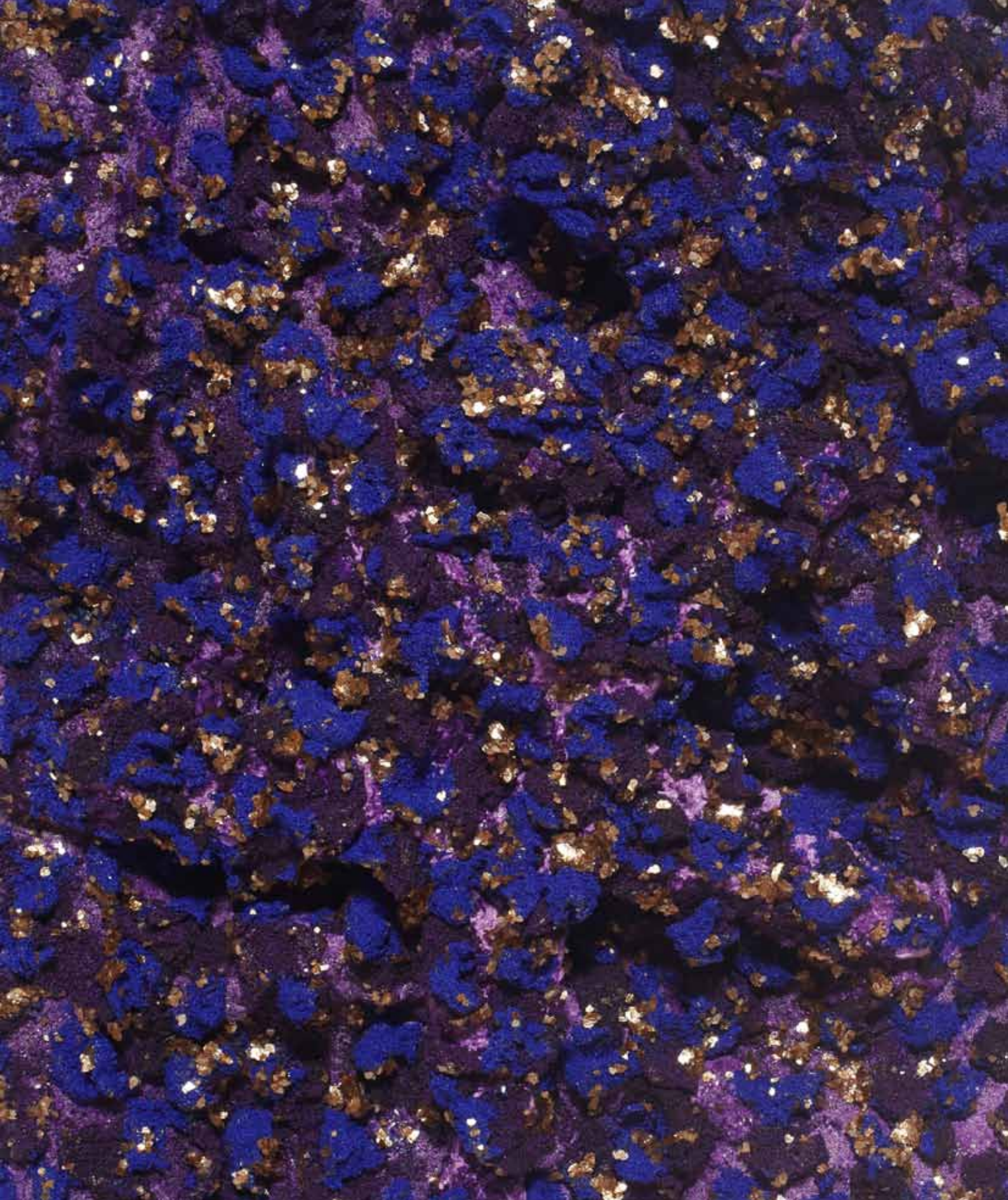
Nabil switches between his various styles – they evolve, diverge and sometimes converge again. This is partly what he means when he says he paints Nature. He may be painting a tree at the same time he is building up a *Fractal* or tracing the lines of a *Galaxy*. He sees no contradiction- in fact this diversity is at the core of his work. For a painter to move so deftly between such disparate styles might seem confused or confusing, but everything is interconnected. Both the *Fractals* and the *Galaxies* stem from his 1990s starfish paintings - the encrustations of his *Fractals* always hide an underlying network of moulded starfish shapes. Moulded shapes also underlie the *Galaxies*- the bubbling surfaces of these paintings are moulded clam shells. Lest the connection be less than obvious, Nabil playfully highlights it with the ghostly, cartoonish five-sided outlines that populate each of these *Galaxies*, partially hidden by twisted knots. Of course they are no longer really starfish- more like ripples, waves or force fields. These are not the only ghosts of earlier periods that Nabil has allowed to waft into the *galactic* paintings- the circular drops of his late 1980s colour field works also make an appearance, as does an innovation lifted from his *Fractal* series. Nabil incorporates paint chips, themselves a by-product of making his larger *Fractals*. He scrapes these vividly coloured concentric rings from his studio floor- recycled by-products of his *Fractal*-making that are effectively ready-made objects -albeit of the artist's own making, which reveal his process of accretion which builds up the under-surfaces of his acrylic-pumice mix.

One might think of Nabil's *Fractal* paintings as representations of the phenomenal world on a microcosmic scale- a vastly magnified one at that, but at first glance his *Galactic* paintings appear to speak of a scale that is more macrocosmic. Rather than the all-over effect of the *Fractals*, the *Galactic* paintings are both three-dimensional and graphic, with fluid forms and sinuous lines moving around their surfaces. The lines and shapes look like the interactions and repulsions between heavenly bodies, but just as easily they recall amoebic life forms. This paradox is emblematic of Nabil's work- the *galactic* paintings undoubtedly have grandeur, but so do they have a fair helping of humour. Their titles- *Twizzler*, *Serendipity* and *Inka Dinka Doo* clearly have nothing to do with either the cosmos or protozoa, much more to do with the visual puns of his paintings. Scale is important in Nabil's universe, but not that important. He would never let it get in the way of making a good painting.

William Lawrie
Dubai, October 2013



Untitled, 2013
Acrylic and mica
44.5 x 44.5 cm
17 1/2 x 17 1/2 in









Inka Dinka Doo, 2013
Acrylic on canvas
304.8 x 457.2 cm
120 x 180 in

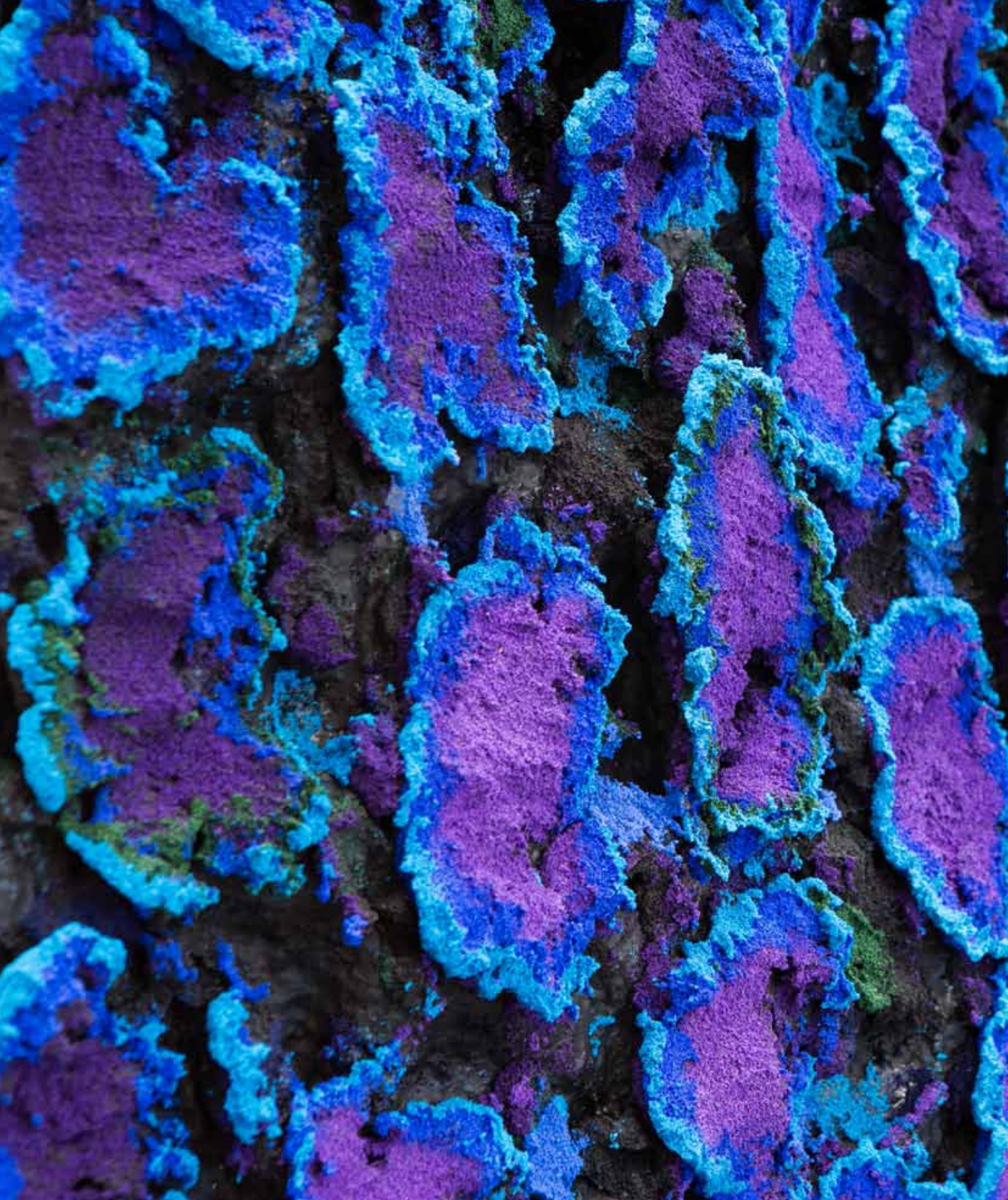


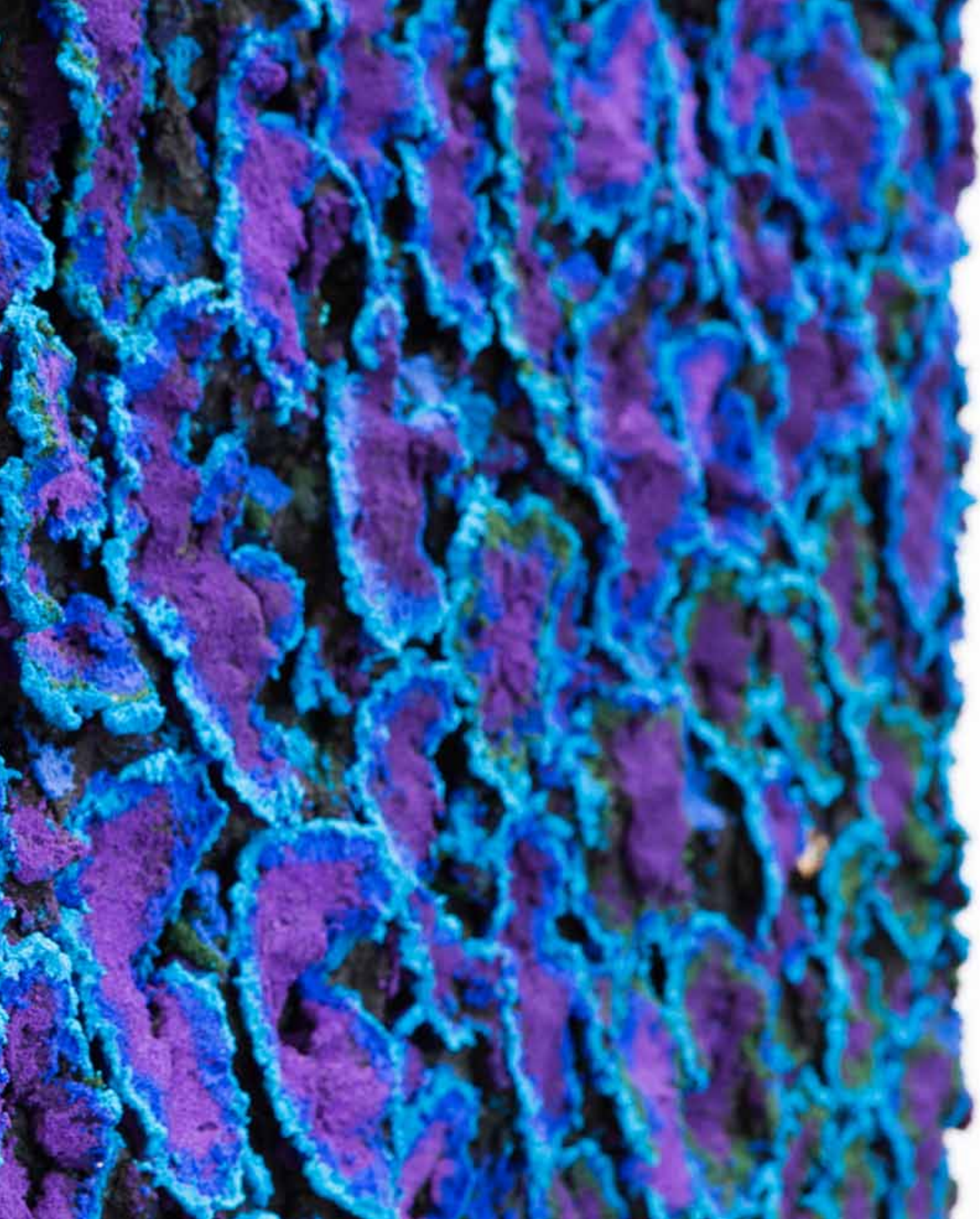


Untitled, 2013
Acrylic and pumice and mica on canvas
55.9 x 55.9 cm
22 x 22 in

Kind of Blue, 2013
Acrylic and Pumice on Canvas
213.4 x 152.4 cm
84 x 60 in

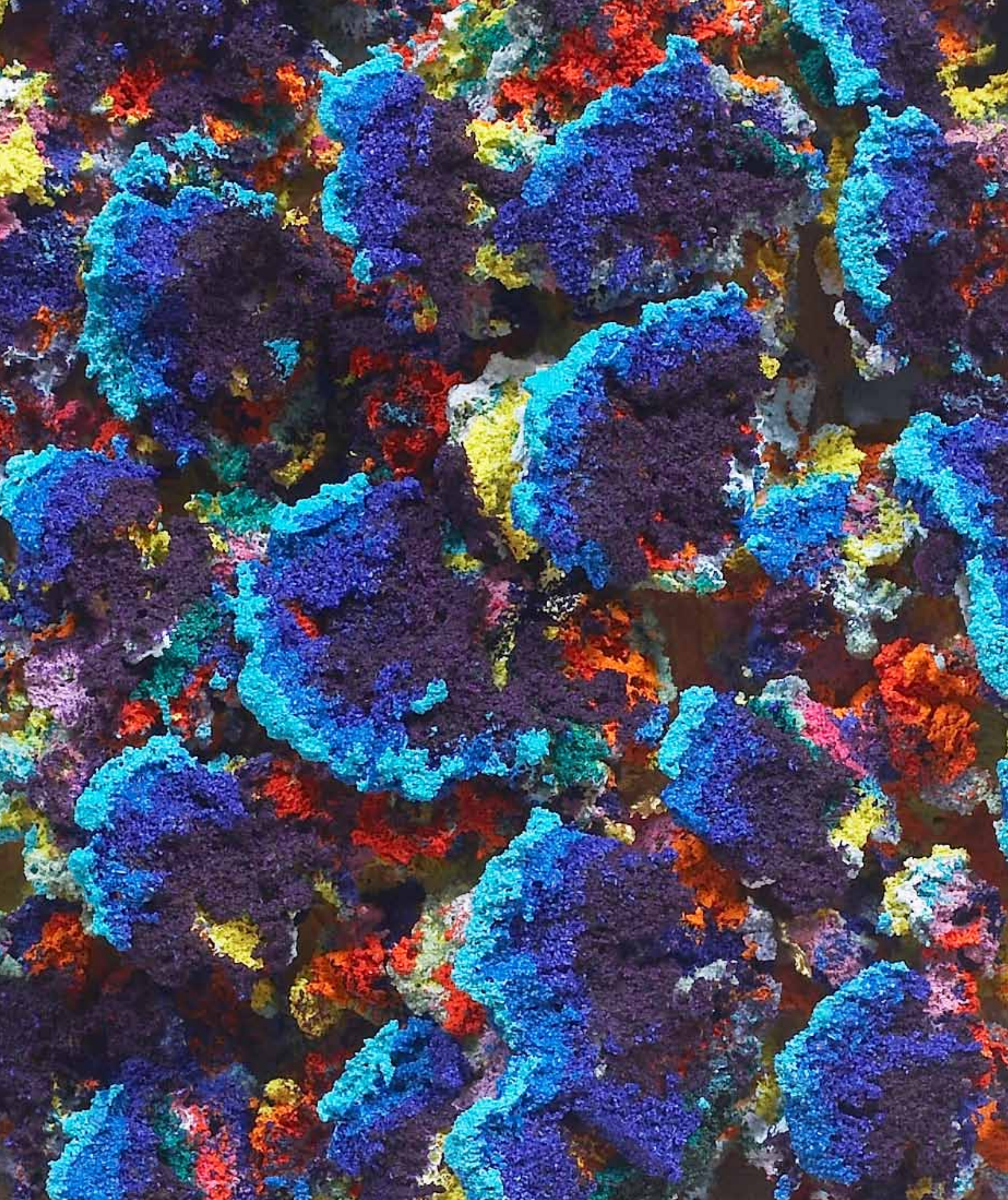






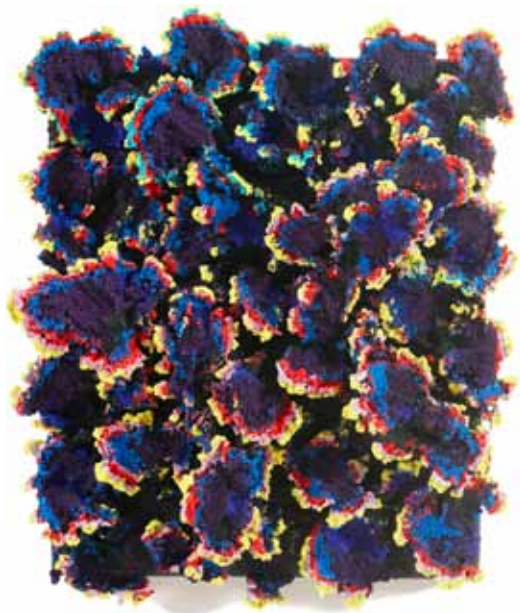
Untitled, 2013
Acrylic and pumice on canvas
81.3 x 71.1 cm
32 x 28 in



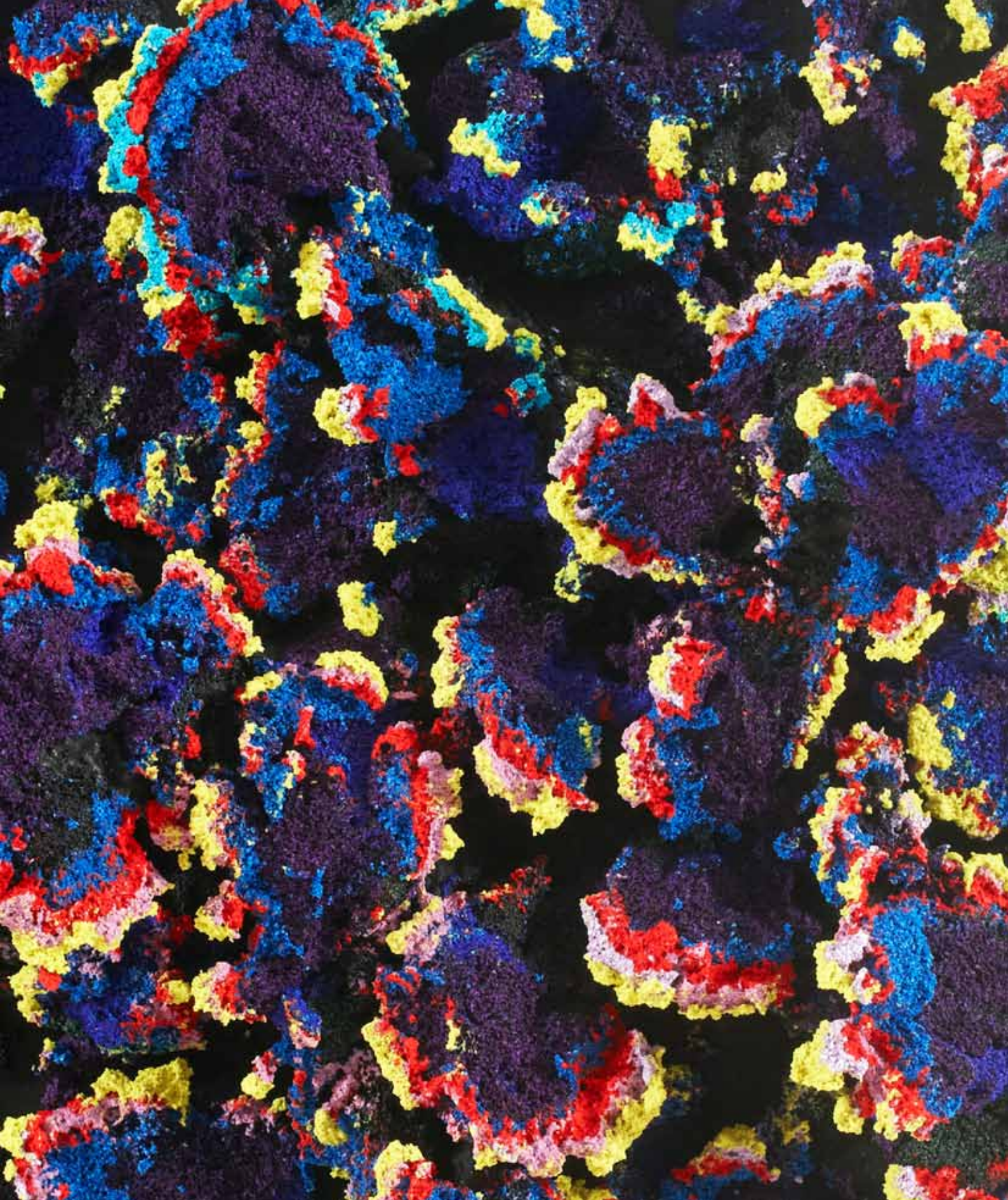




Untitled, 2013
Acrylic and pumice on canvas
39.4 x 31.8 cm
15 1/2 x 12 1/2 in

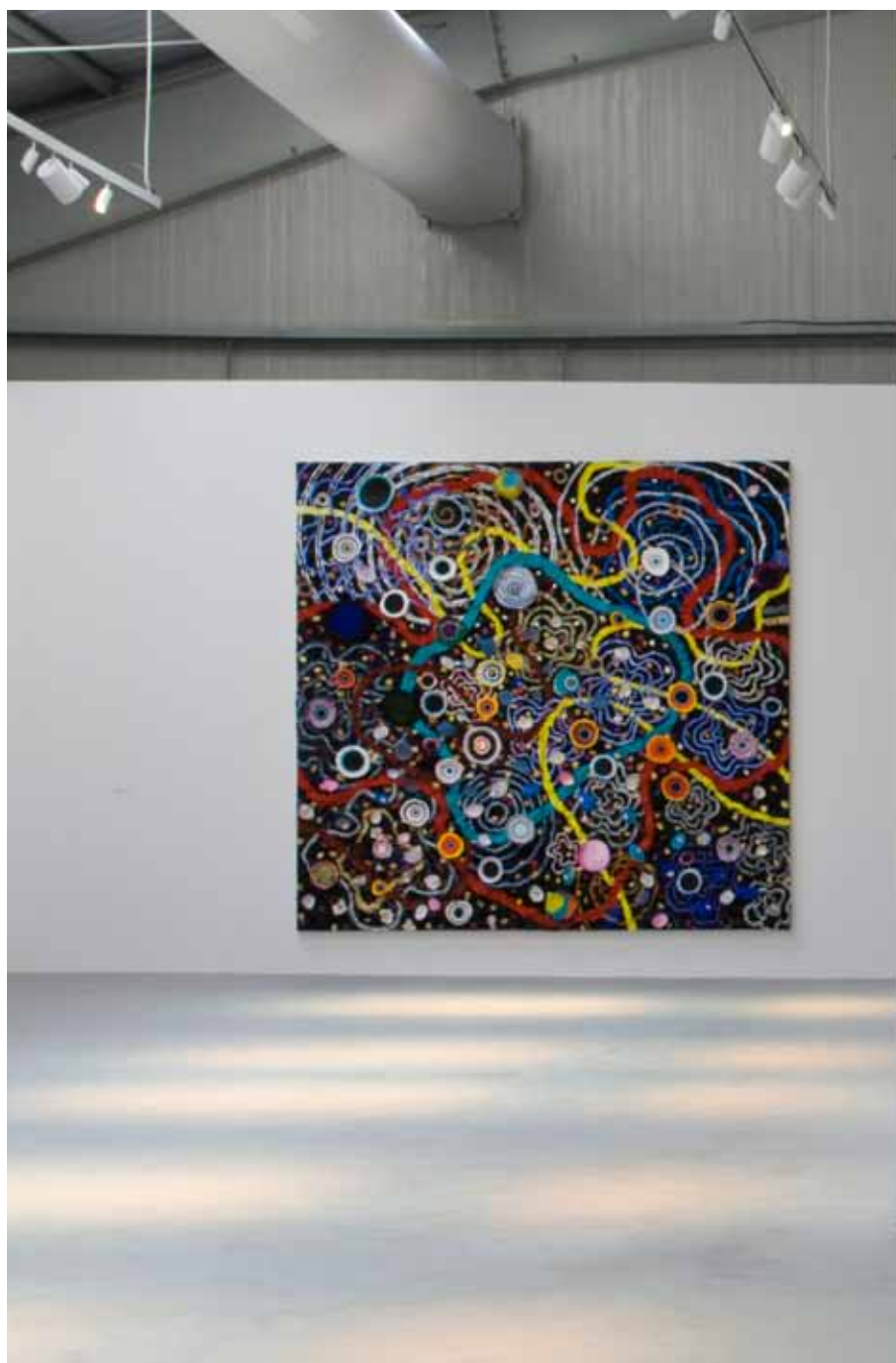


Untitled, 2013
Acrylic and pumice on canvas
39.4 x 31.8 cm
15 1/2 x 12 1/2 in



Untitled, 2012
Acrylic and pumice on canvas
39.4 x 31.8 cm
15 1/2 x 12 1/2 in





Nabil Nahas Retrospective, Beirut Exhibition Center, Beirut, 2010
Installation View



Biography

Born 1949 in Beirut, Lebanon
Lives and works in New York City

EDUCATION

1973 Yale University, CT, MFA
1971 Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, BFA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2013 Nabil Nahas, Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai
2013 Sperone Westwater, NY
2011 Nabil Nahas, Ben Brown Fine Arts, London
2011 *Palms and Stars*, Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai
2010 *Works 1970, 2012*, curated by Vincent Katz, Beirut Exhibition Center (BEC), Beirut,
2010 *Cedrus Libani: Roots and Memory*, FIAF Gallery, New York
2009 *Untitled (trees)*, Galerie Tanit, Munich
2005 Sperone Westwater, New York
2005 Galerie Xippas, Paris
2002 J.Johnson Gallery, Jacksonville Beach, Florida
2002 25th Bienal De Sao Paulo, Brazil
1999 Sperone Westwater, New York
1998 Millevinti, Milan
1998 Baumgartner Galleries, Washington, DC
1997 Sperone Westwater, New York
1994 Baldwin Gallery, Aspen
1988 Holly Solomon Gallery, New York
1988 Galerie Montenay, Paris
1987 Holly Solomon Gallery, New York
1980 Robert Miller Gallery, New York
1979 Robert Miller Gallery, New York
1978 Robert Miller Gallery, New York
1977 Ohio State University, Ohio
1973 Yale University, CT Yale University Chemistry Dept; mural

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2012 *New Acquisitions*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
2012 *Glasstress New York: New Art from the Venice Biennales*, Museum of Arts and Design (MAD), New York
2011 *Glasstress 2011: Collateral Event of the 54th International Art Exhibition*, La Biennale di Venezia, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti; Berengo Centre for Contemporary Art and Glass, Campiello della Pescheria, Murano; Wake Forest University, Casa Artom, Murano, Venice; organized by Adriano Berengo
2010 *BARAKAT: The Gift. Contemporary Art from the Middle East and Africa*, curated by Gaia Serena Simionati, Stux Gallery, New York
2002 *Blobs, Wiggles and Dots, Webs and Crustillations*, The Work Space, New York
2002 *Invitational Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York
2002 XXV Bienal de São Paulo 2002, São Paulo, Brazil

2002 *American Fractals*, Blanden Memorial Art Museum, Fort Dodge, Iowa
 2001 *Green on Greene*, Sperone Westwater, New York
 2001 *Painting Abstraction II*, New York Studio School, New York
 2000 *Le Temps Fractal*, Galerie Xippas, Paris
 2000 *Arte Americana; Ultimo Decennio*, Museo d'Arte della Citta di Ravenna, Ravenna
 1999 *Souvenirs: Collecting, Memory, and Material Culture*, The Museum Guild Hall, NY,
 1999 FIAC, Paris (Sperone Westwater, New York)
 1999 Group Exhibition, Sperone Westwater, New York
 1998 FIAC, Paris (Sperone Westwater, New York)
 1997 *What's Hot*, Baumgartner Galleries, Washington, DC
 1997 FIAC, Paris (Sperone Westwater, New York)
 1997 Galerie Tanit, Munich
 1996 Sperone Westwater, New York
 1994 Brian Gross Gallery, San Francisco, CA
 1993 Edward Thorp Gallery, New York
 1989 Chicago Art Fair (Galerie Montenay, Paris)
 1988 ARCO, Madrid (Galerie Montenay, Paris)
 1988 Chicago Art Fair (Holly Solomon Gallery, New York)
 1988 *American Baroque*, Holly Solomon Gallery, New York
 1987 *Art against Aids*, Benefit Auction organized by Livet-Reichard, New York
 1987 *Razzle Dazzle*, SSC&B Worldwide Advertising, New York
 1983 *Twentieth Century Art From the Metropolitan Museum*, Queens Museum, Queens,
 New York
 1981 Studio Museum of Harlem, New York
 1980 *Subject Space*, Pratt Institute Gallery, New York
 1979 Basel Art Fair, Basel, Switzerland
 1979 *New York Now*, Phoenix Museum, AZ
 1979 *Paintings on Loan from Private Collections*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 1977 *Art on Paper*, Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina at Greensboro,
 13th Weatherspoon Annual Exhibition

AWARDS

1980 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship Grant

THEATRE WORK

1988 Designed sets for *Occasional Encounter*, Jennifer Muller Dance Co.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

The High Museum of Art, Atlanta
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 Vorhees Zimmerli Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey
 Colby Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine
 Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
 Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Education City, Doha, Qatar
 The Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, Michigan

Bibliography

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- 2013 "Nabil Nahas", exhibition catalogue, NY, Sperone Westwater, 2013
- 2011 "Nabil Nahas", exhibition catalogue, London, Ben Brown Fine Arts, 2011
- 2011 "Nabil Nahas Unveils The Artist Within." www.arabwomennow.com, 25 Nov 2011
- 2011 Nazhand, Nazy. "Middle East Report," artnet.com (artnet magazine), 24 May 2011
- 2010 Nabil Nahas: Works 1970-2010. (Beirut: Beirut Exhibition Center / Solidere 2010)
- 2010 "Nabil Nahas' First Time," www.glasstressblog.wordpress.com (Glasstress), 30 December, 2010
- 2010 "The Abu Dhabi art fair: Faith in art." *The Economist*, 10 November 2010
- 2009 Nabil Nahas: untitled (trees), exhibition catalogue. Munich: Galerie Tanit, 2009
- 2008 De Dampierre, Florence. "Lots of Wonder." *The New York Observer Home Magazine* Fall 2008: 44-47
- 2005 McKee, Lauren, "Art before the hiatus," *amNewYork*, 23 June 2005, p. 19
- 2003 "Nabil Nahas," *American Art at the Flint Institute of Arts*, (Hudson Hills Press: New York and Manchester, 2003) p. 258-259
- 2002 "Nabil Nahas: Paintings 1990 " 2002, (Jacksonville, Fl: J. Johnson Gallery, 2002) essay by Vincent Katz
- 2002 Nada Anid, "Nabil Nahas," *Esquisse*, Juliet 2002, pp. 33-37
- 2002 "Países: 25ª Bienal de São Paulo," exhibition catalogue, 25ª Bienal de São Paulo
- Nuridsany, Michel, "Sao Paulo, biennale des megapoles," *le Figaro*, April 5
- 2002 "25ª Bienal De São Paulo," *Jornal da Tarde*, 10 April 2002, Brazil
- 2002 "Nabil Nahas é o único representante do Líbano na 25ª Bienal," 25ª Bienal De São Paulo, 6 April 2002, Brazil
- 2002 "25ª Bienal De São Paulo," *O Estado de Sao Paulo*, 15 April 2002, Brazil
- 2001 "Green on Greene," exhibition catalogue, Sperone Westwater, New York, 2001
- 2001 Condé, Susan, *La Fractalité dans l'art contemporain*, (Paris: La Différence, 2001), pp. 108-112
- 2001 Boodro, Michael, "Fleeting Pleasures," *Garden Design*, April 2001, pp. 46-55
- 2000 *Le Temps Fractal*, exhibition catalogue with essay by Christine Buci-Glucksmann, (Paris: Galerie Xippas, 2000)
- 2000 Gian Enzo Sperone; Torino Roma, New York; 35 Anni di Mostra tra Europa e America, 2000, *Hopeful Monster*. pp. 464-465
- 2000 Nuridsany, Michel, "Carte blanche pour le "fractal", *Le Figaro*, 11 July 2000
- 2000 Jones, Roberto Daolio, Fernanda Pivano, (Ravenna: Museo d'Arte della Citta di Ravenna/Edizioni Gabriele Mazzotta, 2000)
- 2000 *Arte Americana; Ultimo Decennio*, exhibition catalogue with essays by Claudio Spadoni, Alan Jones, Roberto Paolio, Fernanda Pivano
- 1999 Kuspit, Donald, "Nabil Nahas," *Artforum*, XXXVII, No. 10 (Summer 1999), p.154
- 1999 Phillips, Owen, "Going About Town," *The New Yorker*, (19 April 1999), p 14
- 1997 Scruby, Jennifer, "All Revved Up!" *Elle Decor*, vol. 9 no. 5 (August-September 1998), pp. 152-159
- 1997 Nabil Nahas, exhibition catalogue, with essay by Carter Ratcliff (New York: Sperone Westwater, 1997)
- 1997 Katz, Vincent, "Nabil Nahas at Sperone Westwater," *Art in America*, no. 5 (May 1997), pp. 125-126
- 1997 Colman, David, "Nabil Nahas: Contrast and Texture That Originate From the Sea," *Elle Decor*, no. 52 (April-May 1997), pp. 54-60

- 1997 Hogrefe, Jeffrey, "Nahas at Sperone Westwater," The New York Observer, 17 February 1997, p. 31
- 1997 Ebony, David, "Nabil Nahas at Sperone Westwater," ArtNet Worldwide, January 1997
- 1997 Smith, Roberta, "Art in Review: Nabil Nahas," The New York Times, 17 January 1997, p. C27
- 1995 Boodro, Michael, "Simplicité, compexité, humour et couleur comme vecteurs du courage de transgresser," Angeline's mag, no. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 12-14, 95
- 1995 Dabadie, Marie, Maison & Jardin, March 1995, pp. 124-129
- 1994 Adams, Brooks, Elle Decor, Feb. 1994
- 1993 Alhadeff, Gini, "The Well Composed Cottage," House and Garden, (July 1993), pp. 67-73
- 1992 Loring, John, "Realms of Gold," Worth, (October-November 1992), p. 147
- 1991 Michetti, Chantal, "Audace Suisse," Connaissance des Arts, no. 473-474 (July-August 1991), pp. 82-89
- 1990 Bethany, Marilyn, "Interiors," New York Magazine, 9 April 1990
- 1989 Boodro, Michael, "A Man of Many Faces," Vogue Decorations, no. 22 (October-November 1989)
- 1989 Coleman, Andrew, "Holly Solomon Art Designs Its Own Room," Metropolitan Home, (February 1989), pp. 160-164
- 1989 Groult, Catherine, "Nabil Nahas," Art Press, no. 133 (February 1989), p. 80
- 1989 Schwendenwien, Jude, Review in Artforum, (February 1989), p. 134
- 1988 Supree, Burt, "Wo Wo Wo Feelings," The Village Voice, 26 April 1988
- Dunning, Jennifer, "Premieres Offered by Muller," The New York Times, 14 April 1988
- 1987 Westfall, Stephen, "Nabil Nahas and Alain Kirili at the Holly Solomon Gallery," Art in America, (June 1987), pp. 152-153
- 1987 Russell, John, "Nabil Nahas and Alain Kirili," The New York Times, 30 January 1987, p. C22
- 1983 Wintour, Anna, "Painting the Town," New York Magazine, 29 August 1983
- 1981 Frank, Elizabeth, "Nabil Nahas at the Robert Miller Gallery," Art in America, (January 1981), pp. 126-127
- 1980 Raynor, Vivien, "Nabil Nahas," The New York Times, 10 October 1980
- Frank, Elizabeth, Subject Space (New York: Pratt Institute, 1981)
- 1979 Loring, John, "The Volatile Geometry of Nabil Nahas," Arts, (February 1979)



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