

## Press Review

Roxane Zand, 'The otherworldly Art of Mehdi Ghadyanloo', Sotheby's, February 2017

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### The Otherworldly Art of Mehdi Ghadyanloo

By Roxane Zand

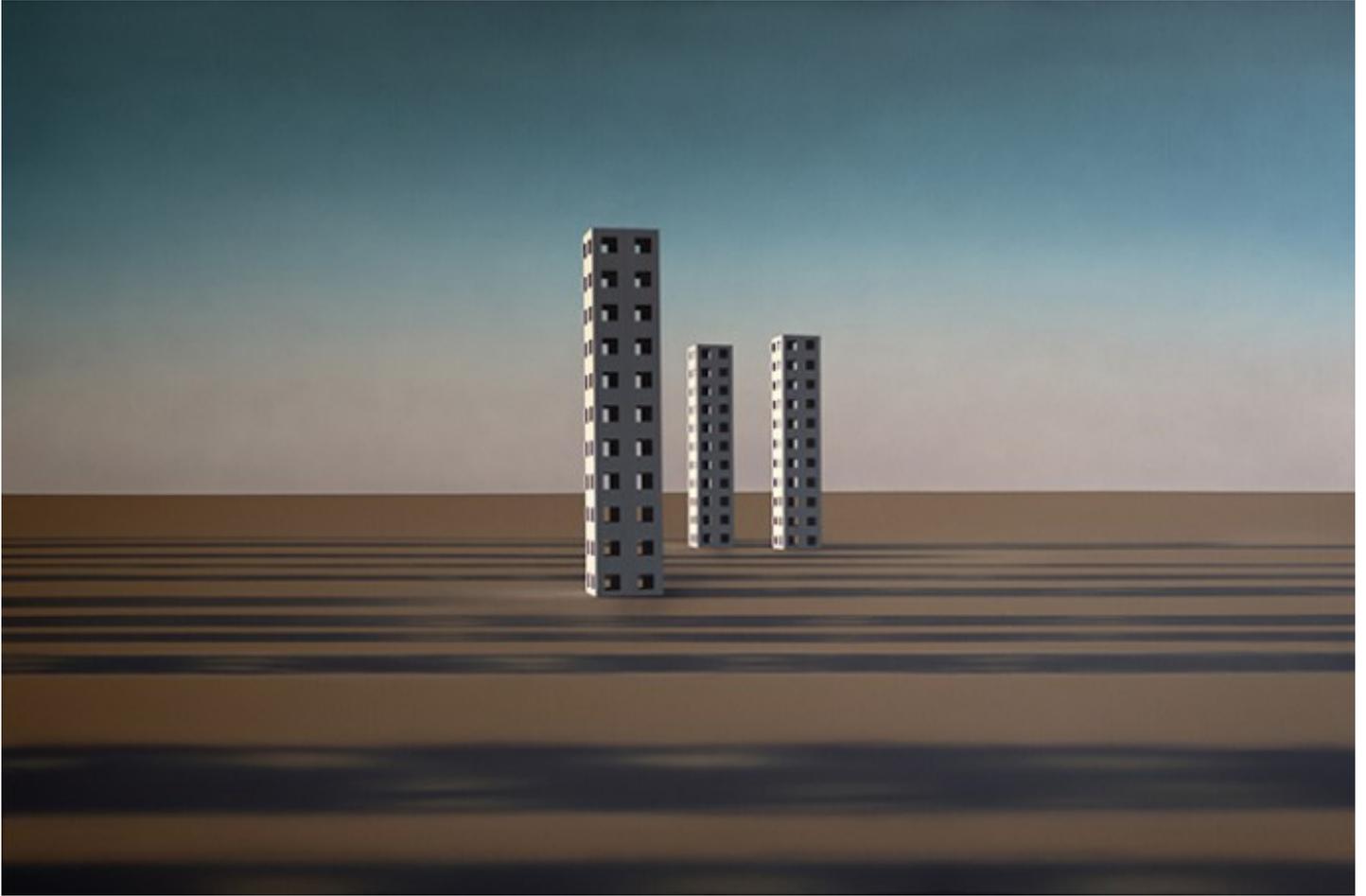
When I first came across Mehdi Ghadyanloo's otherworldly, surrealist landscapes, I found myself in an eerily silent and Zen-like engagement with compositions that spoke to me not about national identity or some ethnic specificity, but about the universal existential conditions that permeate our daily lives. Inspired by painters such as Giorgio de Chirico, Magritte, and the minimalism of Le Corbusier, Mehdi takes those very themes and visual cues and turns them into a voice all of his own. To know the artist and his quiet demeanour is to understand the wistfulness and silence of his compositions; nothing speaks loudly in his work, but every scene is charged with something vaguely threatening.



MEHDI GHADYANLOO, *EARLY REDEMPTION*.

A master manipulator of light, Mehdi uses angularities, shadows, and possibilities to convey vast spaces hinging on the fictional but anchored in a reality we can relate to. Growing up on a farm during conditions of war and economic sanction has inspired Mehdi to tinge his melancholy with hope, his sense of foreboding with beautifully-lit spaces of opportunity; these are profoundly expressive works and yet eminently easy to live with. The viewer is drawn to the compositions in a desire to know more, discover, and touch some untold story. The narrative

defies clichés and steps into a realm entirely its own. Geometric cubes, spiral staircases and architectural environments are beguiling yet also challenging. The artist's aim is to make us reconsider the obvious, and hence our mundane lives.



MEHDI GHADYANLOO, *THE CITY OF HOPE*.

Mehdi first came to public attention some years ago in Iran when the Ministry of Beautification issued a call for artists to create some murals around Tehran. Thinking that he would be asked to paint Islamic scenes, he was not hopeful of participating extensively. However he was given *carte blanche*, and he created a series of extraordinary scenes all around the capital. The international press soon picked up on him, and before long he found himself selling work through Richard Howard-Griffin, and also more recently being commissioned vast murals at Kings Cross and Boston's Dewey Square. Despite his international success, Mehdi remains a softly-spoken, modest personality and remains committed to his roots. A man of few words, his imagery speaks more than eloquently about his personal and highly appealing vision.