

## *Whispers of Nature*

solo exhibition by **Ghassan Zard**

Galerie Tanit Beirut

February 22, 2024 – April 3, 2024

Upon encountering Ghassan Zard's works, our senses find themselves cross-wiring and forming surprising dualities. Zard's creations hold a subtle familiarity, just enough to brush the surface of the universal, but then abruptly and boldly break from reality to give way to the purest forms of long-lost emotion. The artist's creations are portals into a sphere where his imagination is concretized. In this realm, any witness can connect with their own and the artist's memories, imagination, and understanding of life in an open channel of consciousness in which all senses are summoned.

Setting the medium free from our utilitarian needs, Zard sets off on an exploration of the organic ways in which metals can harden. The result is a blatant dichotomy that fuses softness and hardness, creating swirls, layers, and holes, in chaotic yet harmonious bundles. The reflectiveness of the material as well as the textures created in its solidification breathe life into the landscapes within each piece. Light and color convey varying temperatures, involving our sense of touch. Every work has the weightlessness of sea foam as it soars at the tip of a ripple, but also the heaviness of waves as they crash into the ground. These works float with the airiness of clouds all the while portraying a dense and heavy looming of a gray mass before a storm. The artist poetically and continuously defies absolute knowledge, choosing to keep his sense of wonder and surprise at the simplest aspects of life and nature.

The manifestation of one's image as a reflection weaves a strong relationship between the past and present. Memory then exists in one's own reflection. When looking in a mirror what other than a surge of memories arises? At the same time, a look in the mirror is but an anchor in the sands of the present. Zard's mirrors pay tribute to a specific moment he spent in a German forest, etched in his memory since 1989. Significant to Zard's consciousness, this moment unlocked a wondrous world of elves and gnomes that he had only heard of in children's books. Framing the mirrors are growths that resemble fungi, which the artist often sprouts from his works. Fungi emit sound waves constantly, which when measured, greatly resemble human speech. Seemingly silent to us, mushrooms are actually in constant communication. By hinting at the imagery of the forest and the connectedness of nature, Zard playfully invites the public to tap into our own unspoken language that links us all: the collective unconscious.

For all communications-related requests, please contact Tara Saroufim at  
[communications@galerietanit.com](mailto:communications@galerietanit.com)

For all acquisition requests, please contact Rita El Khazen at  
[beirut@galerietanit.com](mailto:beirut@galerietanit.com)

Majestic silver pavilions grow out of the holes of tree trunks that the artist polished smooth. Zard toys with the irony of introducing foreign elements to organic matter while loosely sticking to nature's script, hinting once again at mushrooms, flowers, or even ears. The sense of sound plays a major role in this supposedly dead forest, whether the trees are on the giving or the receiving end of the music. Beyond their death, these trees partake in an exchange more palpable to humans than the one they once made, in life, on a molecular level. A kind of complicity grows between the viewer and the piece. Imagination is brought to life in a forest that sings, speaks, whispers, or simply listens—however one needs or wills it. To the artist, the forest is a wormhole to childhood, to dreams, nostalgia, his grandmother's garden, and the secret life of art and ants.

Zard's paintings are not devoid of nature either: his technique is so organic that it mimics rain, light, steam, and even skin. The faded perpendicular streaks across the artist's canvases creep into the scene like an unsettling wave of energy. Zard's harmonious syncopation and continuous, vibrant rhythm plunge the viewer into a sound bath. The senses encounter a synesthesia-like phenomenon where visuals evoke an auditory response. Meditatively, the artist's meticulous attention is turned to the infinitesimal detail: every scratch, spot, and faded smear, elevating the senses further into consciousness. A oneness sweeps across these works and pushes the boundaries of the physical canvas to endlessness. Soon the loudness of the work catches up to the silence, and the movement within it catches up to the imposed stillness of its material support. Zard's masterful manipulation of this medium grips at every string of emotion within.

**Nathalie Bsar**

For all communications-related requests, please contact Tara Saroufim at

[communications@galerietanit.com](mailto:communications@galerietanit.com)

For all acquisition requests, please contact Rita El Khazen at

[beirut@galerietanit.com](mailto:beirut@galerietanit.com)