

HALA SCHOUKAIR

YOU PROMISED ME SPRING

The universe is boundless and expansive. To think its vastness is to detect the limits of knowledge. Or, such is the maxim with which Hala Schoukair paints her worlds: to venture into the infinite one should find the universe in the smallest of particles.

Her paintings locate entire ecosystems in the heart of an artichoke, a grain of salt, a pine seed. In between the smallness of her subject and the magnitude of its detail, a parallel universe is carved out. Somewhere neither worldly nor transcendent, fields of color draw the viewer into a frenetic space of encounter.

Schoukair is compelled by small things, and also knows herself to be small in the world. Like an ant, the marvel of her diminutiveness in relation to the world lies in the immensity of her labor.

She works only with a brush and a single color. She draws a line and bends it into a basic unit. She repeats ceaselessly until her brush dries, suturing unit to unit until their combination begets intricate forms. Like a craft, the lines undulate recurrently, but no two units are identical. Her process is repetitive and sweeping. It is also remedial: beginning with points of concentrated color, tension is relieved with the thinning of the paint.

In her work, Schoukair invites the viewer to participate in her process through the act of looking closely – through tracing with one’s eyes the tautness of lines and color and their gradual ease. Her older works on paper have inspired more intimate encounters. Clearing entry for one onlooker at a time, they give in to tremulous chance meetings like those of first-time lovers.

Schoukair’s most recent paintings are ambitious, detail-oriented works of much larger scale than those prior. They follow the same principles as her works on paper, but they impart worlds which can be spotted from a distance. Rather than open to a glimpse of the individual viewer, they are intended for an audience.

Natasha Gasparian

حين أُرسم:

الكون بالراس

والفكرة

تبرق كالألماس

لكن نحو الورق تتفحّم

فُتات

وأنا أُللم قوت اليوم.

تتعاقب الأزمنة

فأنا هنا وهناك

ثم

استقرت بهذا المكان

لا أدري كيف وصلت اليه

انه تحت جلدي

مباشرةً

الى الذي يعيش هذه الأهوال

أُعلمك أنني

أتحمل قراءة بعض الأسطر

إما المقال فلا محال

فأنا وحيدة مع الجريدة

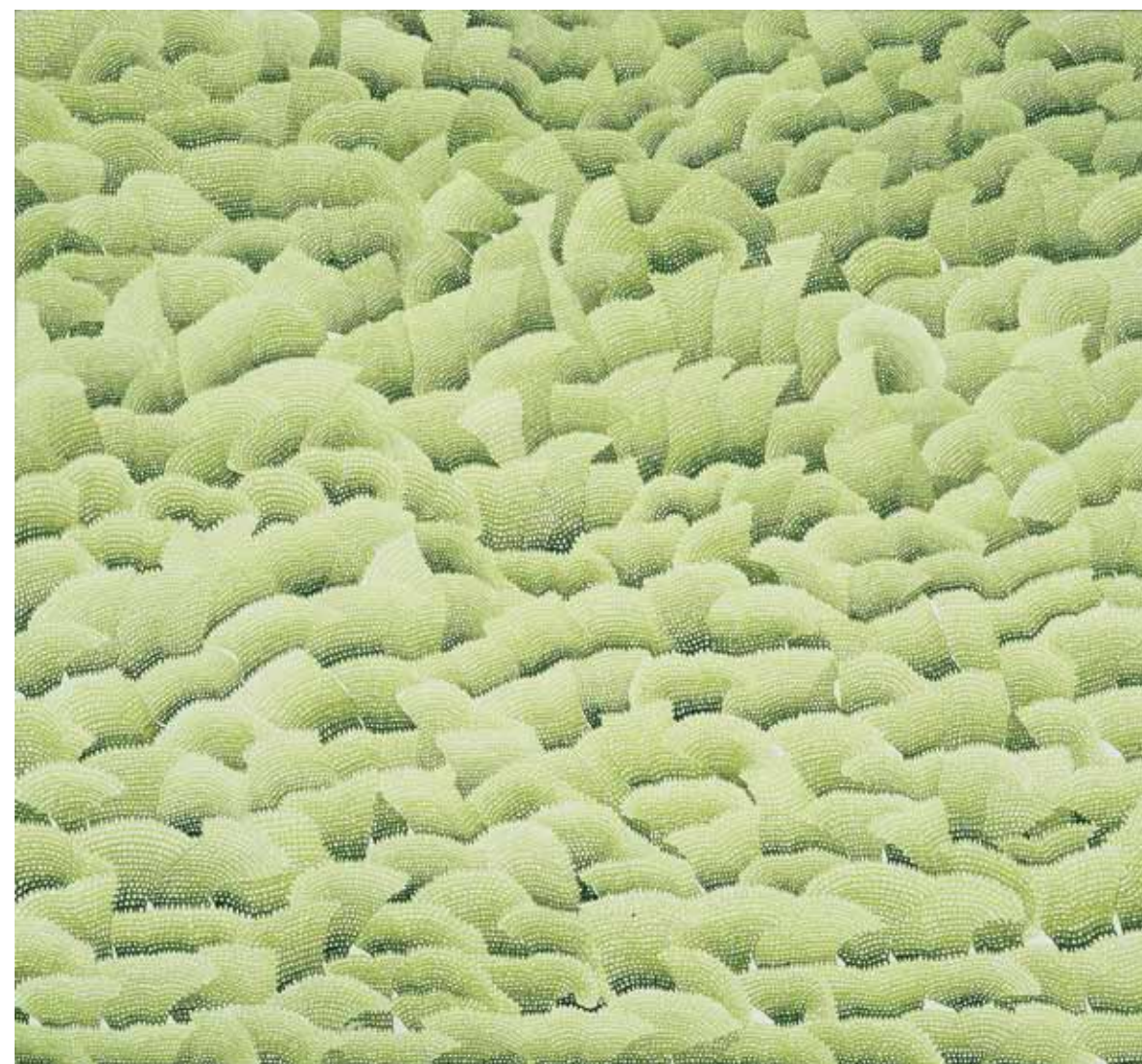
هلا شقير ٢٠١٦



Acrylic on canvas | 132x73cm | 2016



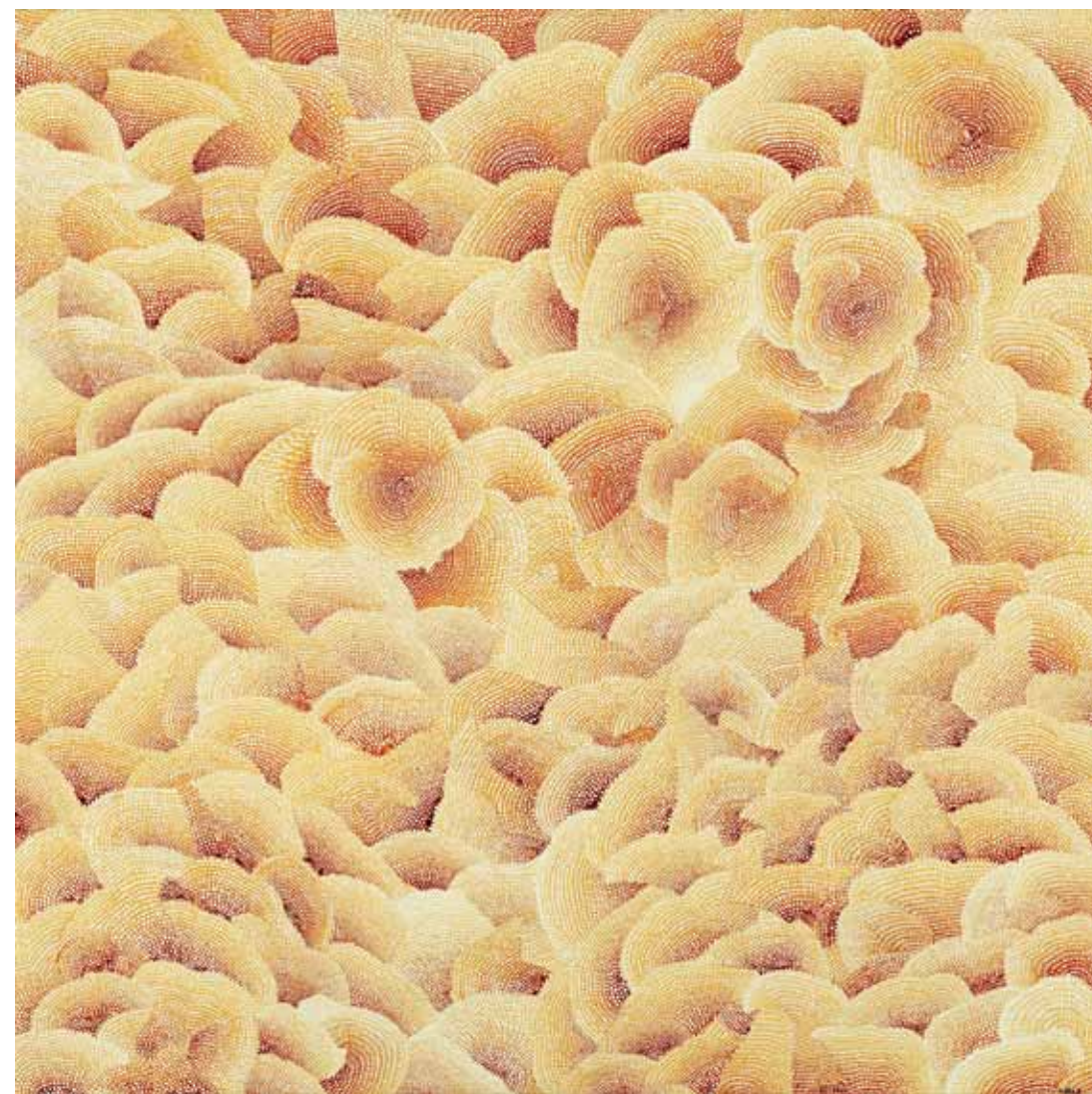
Acrylic on canvas | 60x64cm | 2015



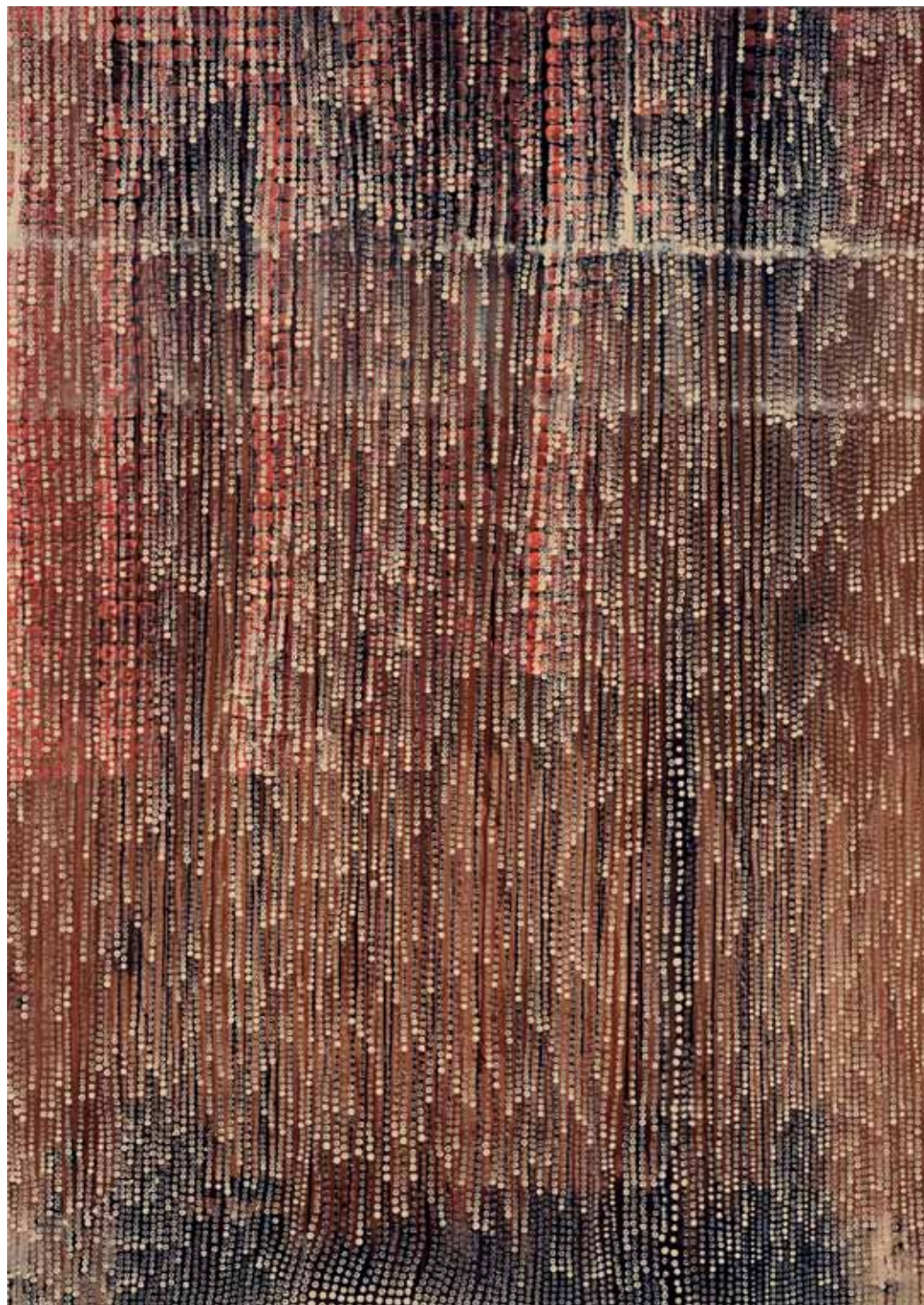
Acrylic on canvas | 60x64cm | 2015



Acrylic on canvas | 75x75cm | 2014



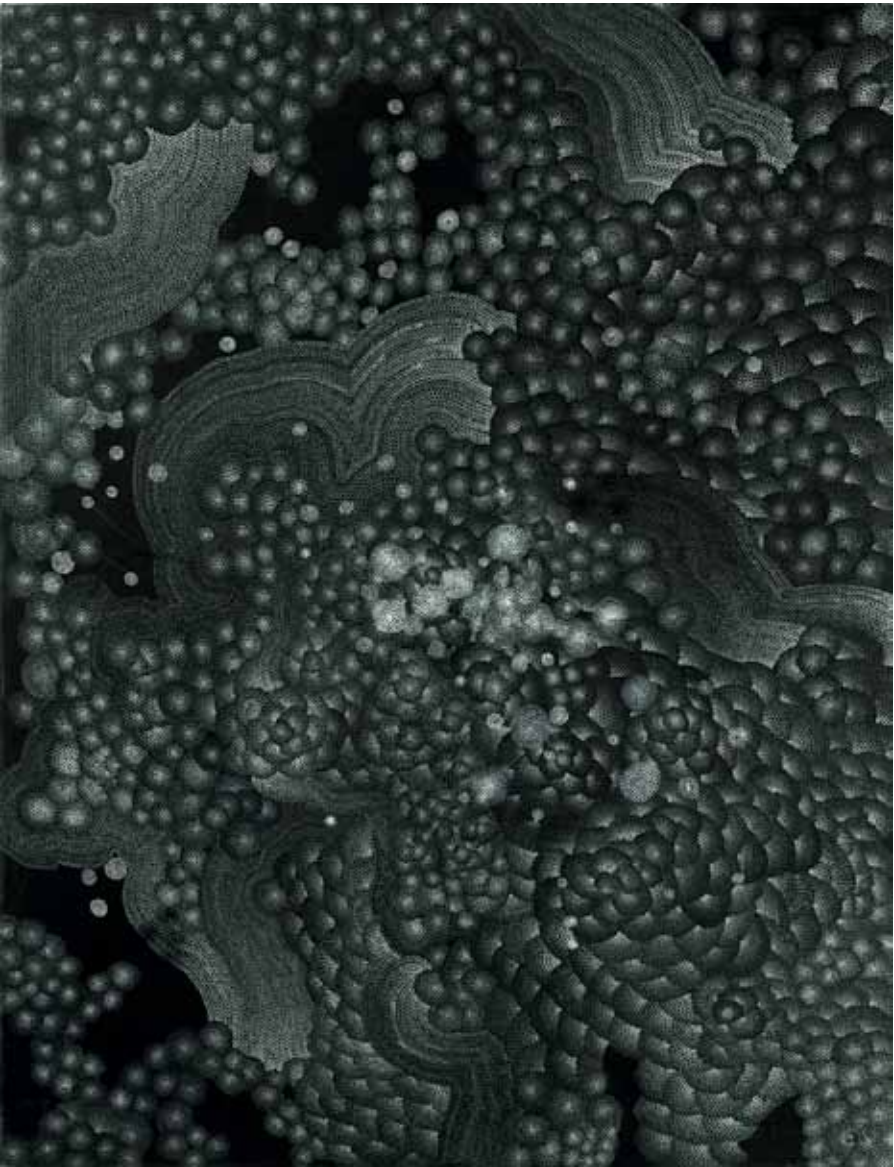
Acrylic on canvas | 75x75cm | 2014



Acrylic on canvas | 168x120cm | 2015



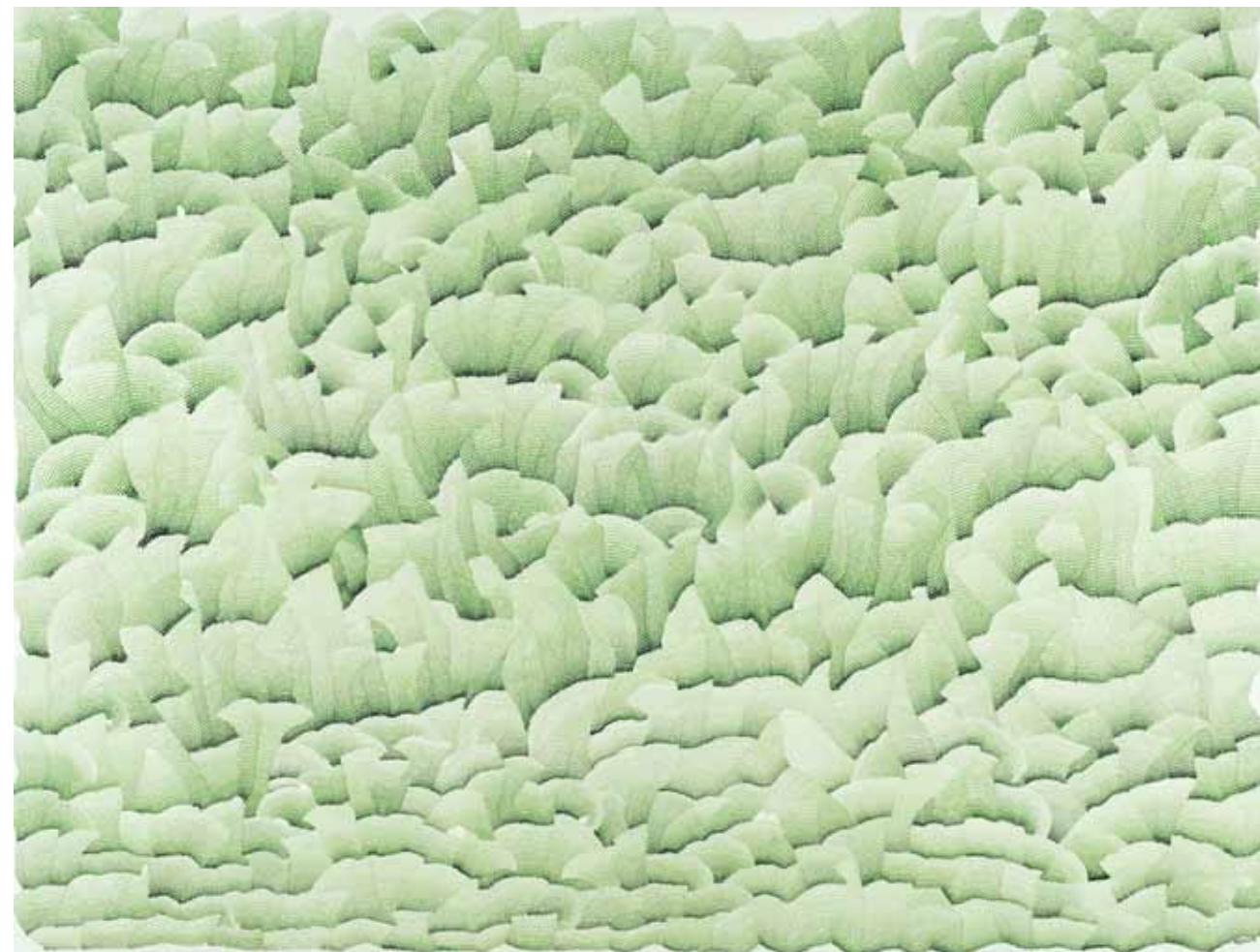
Acrylic on canvas | 98x90cm | 2015



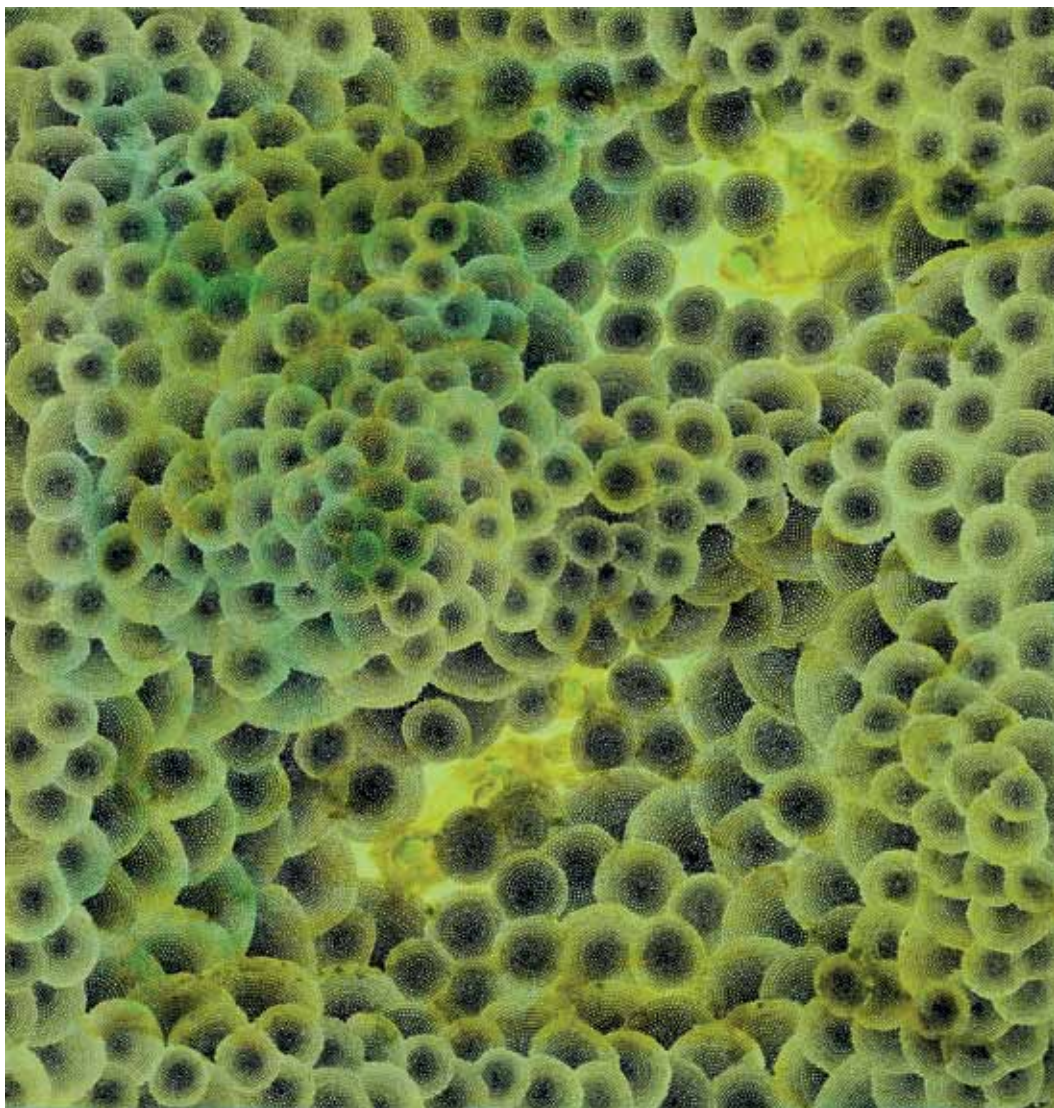
Acrylic on canvas | 143x110cm | 2016



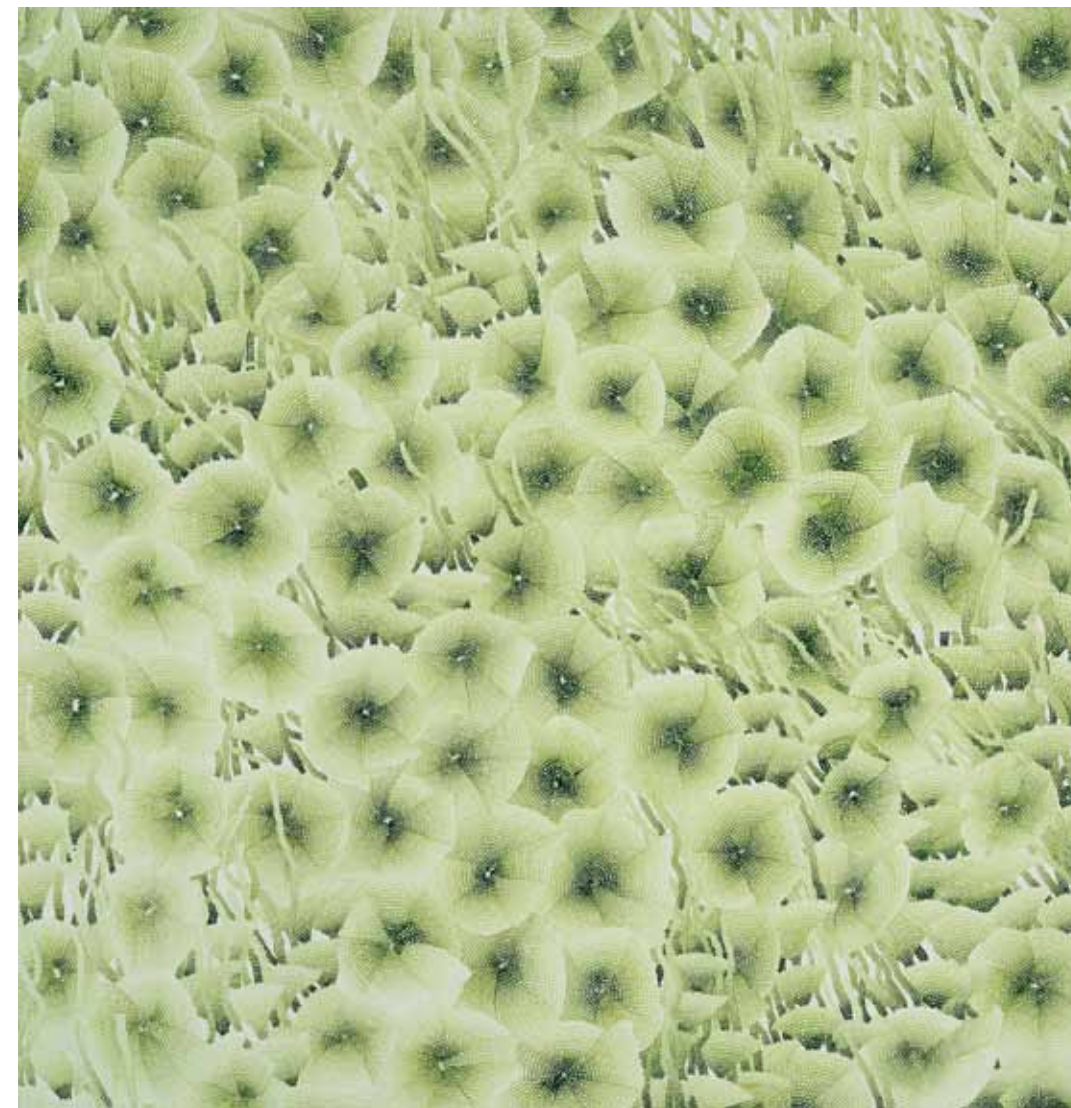
Acrylic on canvas | 173x135cm | 2016



Acrylic on canvas | 110x145cm | 2016



Acrylic on canvas | 60x64cm | 2016



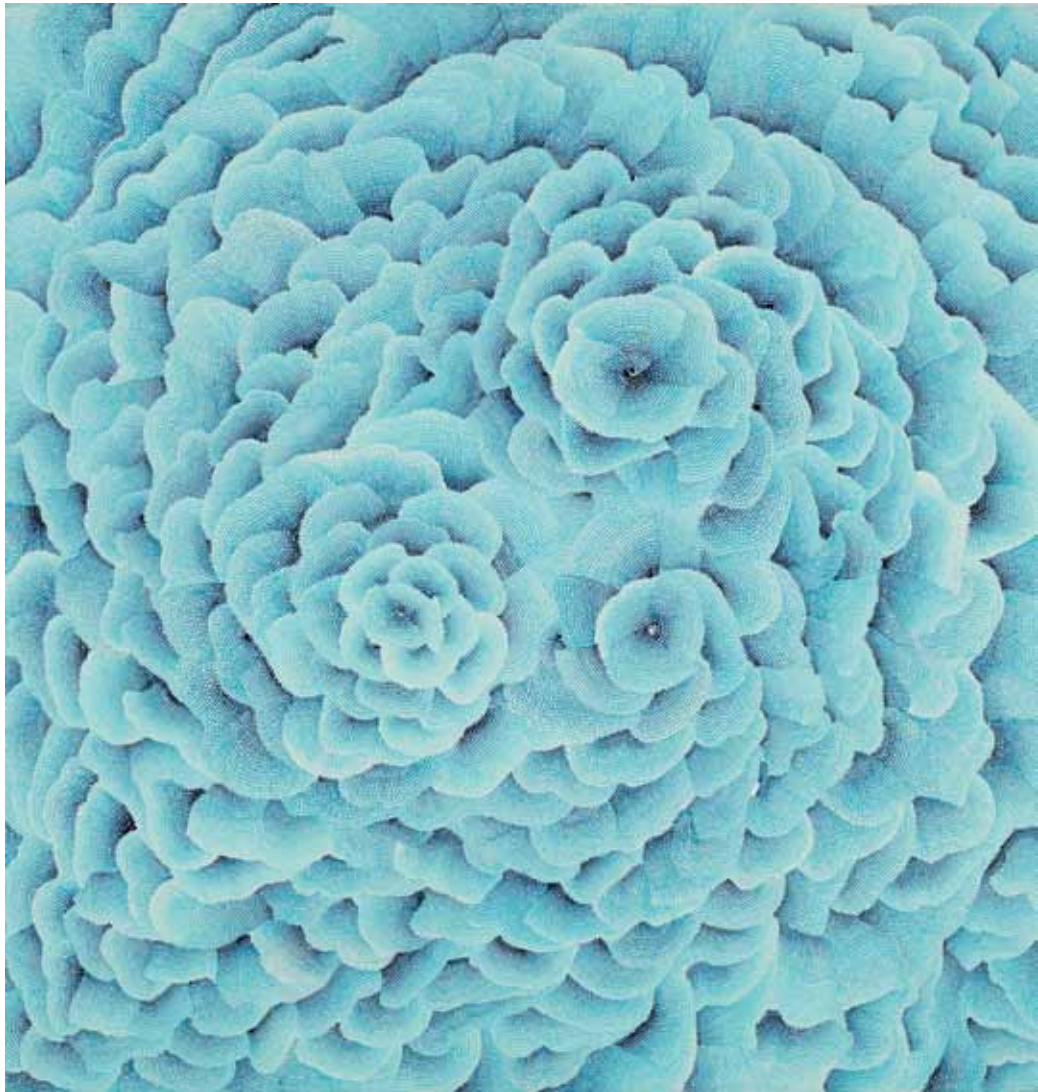
Acrylic on canvas | 95x92cm | 2015

Acrylic on canvas | 150x130cm | 2016





Acrylic on canvas | 110x145cm | 2016



Acrylic on canvas | 93x88cm | 2015



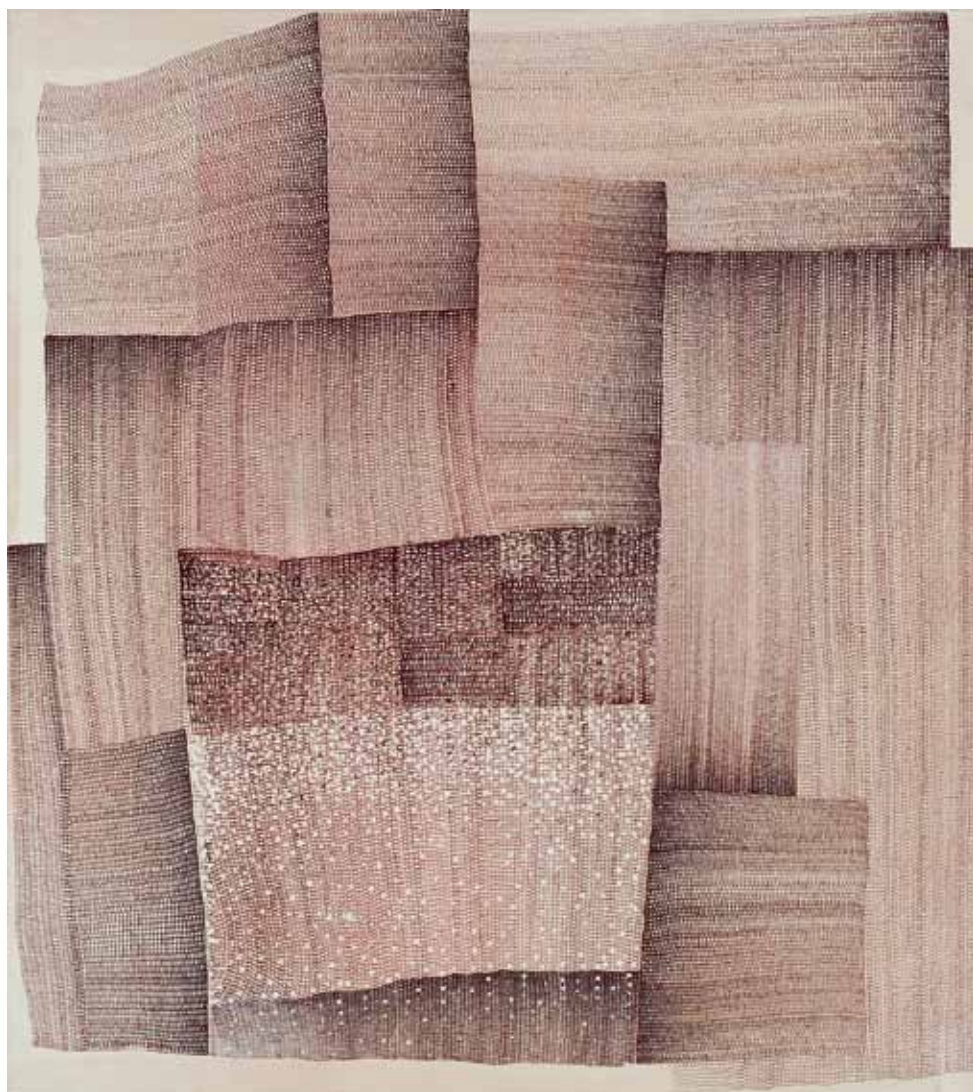
Acrylic on canvas | 90x92cm | 2015



Acrylic on canvas | 80x80cm | 2014



Acrylic on canvas | 80x80cm | 2015



Acrylic on canvas | 88x77cm | 2015 | 32nd Salon D'Automne (2016) at Sursock Museum

About Hala Schoukair



Hala Schoukair (b. 1957) lives in New York City. Having grown up in Beirut, she went on to receive a master's degree in Cinematographic Studies from the Sorbonne University, Paris in 1981. She lived in Beirut from 1983 -1987, where she worked in film production and window dressing. Later, she moved to the United States. Her most recent solo exhibition entitled *This is how it all starts*, (2013), took place at Agial Art Gallery in Beirut. Group exhibitions include *Continuity and Change: Islamic Tradition in Contemporary Art* at The Williamsburg Art and Historical Center in New York City (2007), *Morgenröte, aurora borealis* and *Levant: Into your solar plexus* at the Knusthalle Bern (2015), and the 32nd Salon D'Automne (2016) at the Sursock Museum in Beirut. She is the president of the Saloua Raouda Choukair Foundation.

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