

In the heart of Dubai's vibrant art scene, where tradition meets modernity and the local culture intertwines with global influences, Kaikhan Salakhov stands out as a visionary artist with a profound connection to both his heritage and the cosmos. Blending the spiritual with the abstract, Salakhov has captivated audiences worldwide with his unique approach to contemporary art. His new solo exhibition, 'The Cosmic Renaissance', is set to be one of the most anticipated art events of the season, offering an extraordinary exploration of the universe, humanity's place within it, and the eternal quest for meaning.

In the conversation with Egor Sharay, a prominent media figure, editor, and cultural analyst, Kaikhan Salakhov delves into the creative process behind 'The Cosmic Renaissance', exploring his inspirations and the importance of bringing this exhibition to Dubai – a city that, like his art, is continuously evolving and focused on the future. We explore the mind of this exceptional artist to uncover how he transforms his cosmic vision into tangible art that deeply connects with viewers on a personal level.



**Egor Sharay:** Your solo exhibition, which is set to open in Dubai in September, is called ‘The Cosmic Renaissance Exhibition’. The title intrigued me because I am currently working on a book where I use the word “renaissance” in conjunction with the Emirates and Dubai. What does the cosmic renaissance in Dubai mean to you?

**Kaikhon Salakhov:** Since childhood, I visited Dubai many times with my mother, who wanted this city to inspire me as much as it inspired her. She always dreamed that I would one day find my place here, and over time, Dubai has become a city I deeply love and connect with. To me, Dubai represents the future—a place where tradition meets cutting-edge innovation, and where the boundaries of possibility are constantly being pushed.

The term “cosmic renaissance” in the context of Dubai signifies a rebirth of ideas and an expansion of human potential on a universal scale. Dubai, with its forward-thinking spirit and vast potential, is the perfect backdrop for this concept. It embodies the fusion of art, technology, and futuristic vision, making it an ideal location to explore themes of artificial intelligence, interstellar exploration and evolution of humanity in space.

In this exhibition, I aim to reflect on the advancements that will shape our future—space exploration, becoming a multiplanetary species, robotics, AI, and sustainable environmental practices both on Earth and beyond. Dubai, with its rapid adoption of futuristic technologies, represents the perfect metaphor for the leaps humanity must take to explore the cosmos.





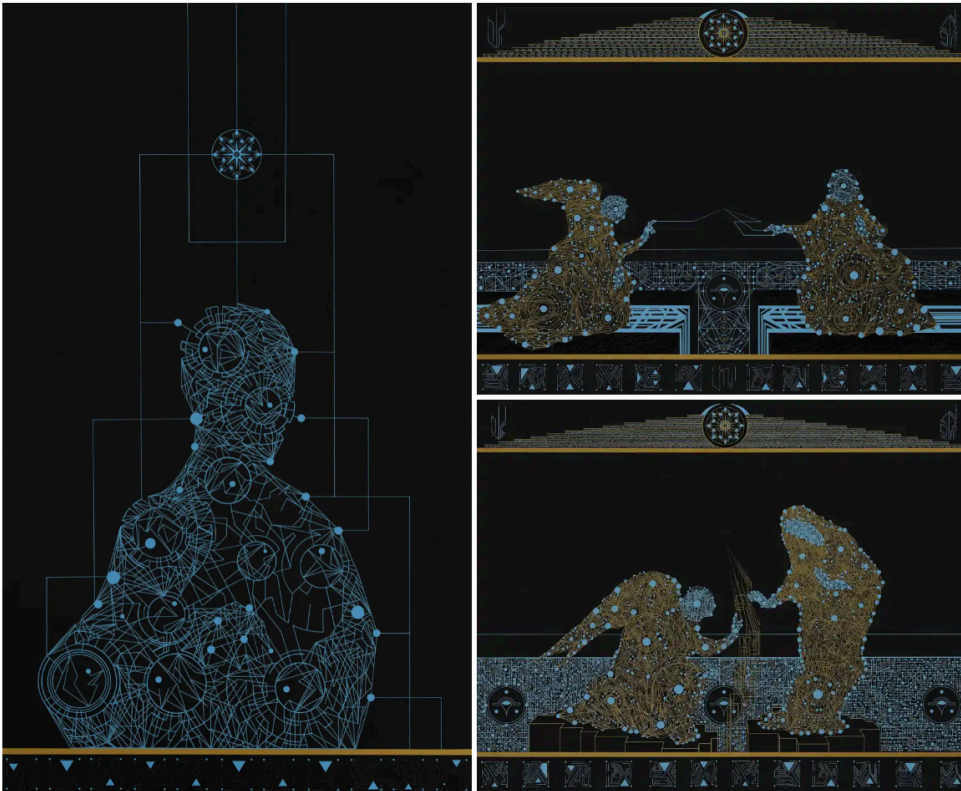
‘The Cosmic Renaissance Exhibition’ is a celebration of these advancements. Each artwork delves into the profound possibilities of space exploration, envisioning humanity’s expansion into the stars, establishing colonies on other planets, and developing advanced robotics and AI that will support these endeavors.

Furthermore, the exhibition emphasizes the critical need for the right strategies of cosmic development. The exhibition will include a book presentation that explains the meaning of all my 36 paintings in which I explore potential dysfunctions at every stage of cosmic development from robotics to space architecture all of which based on my model of 8 stages of consciousness, integrating both cosmic development and the spiritual progression of consciousness. I aimed to develop a comprehensive structure that could guide humanity in its journey to becoming a multiplanetary species while ensuring the evolution of our collective consciousness.

My work explores the integration of advanced technologies with the ethical and spiritual growth necessary to avoid carrying humanity’s darker aspects to other planets. It highlights the importance of preventing the multiplication of Earth’s existing problems across the galaxy and averting potential conflicts like those depicted in Star Wars. This balance, where technological advancements are harmonized with spiritual growth, is vital for a future where humanity can thrive peacefully both on Earth and throughout the cosmos.

Having been in Dubai since my childhood, witnessing its growth firsthand, I always dreamed of contributing to its legacy of pioneering the future. This exhibition is my way of merging those dreams with a vision of humanity’s cosmic journey. ‘The Cosmic Renaissance’ aims to inspire a sense of wonder and possibility, encouraging viewers to envision a future where humanity thrives both on Earth and among the stars.





**Egor Sharay:** First time we met two years ago at your first exhibition in Dubai at the Art in Space Gallery. How have the UAE influenced your subsequent works that will be showcased in the September exhibition?

**Kaikhon Salakhov:** I began working on this project seven years ago, and Dubai has always been a significant source of inspiration for me. The city's forward-thinking spirit and embrace of innovation make it the perfect place to present the ideas behind this project. Dubai's dynamic environment and its vision for the future have reinforced my belief that this is the right place to share my work. The energy and ambition of the UAE have deeply influenced the development of the concepts I'll be showcasing in the upcoming exhibition, allowing me to expand and refine my ideas in ways I hadn't imagined before.

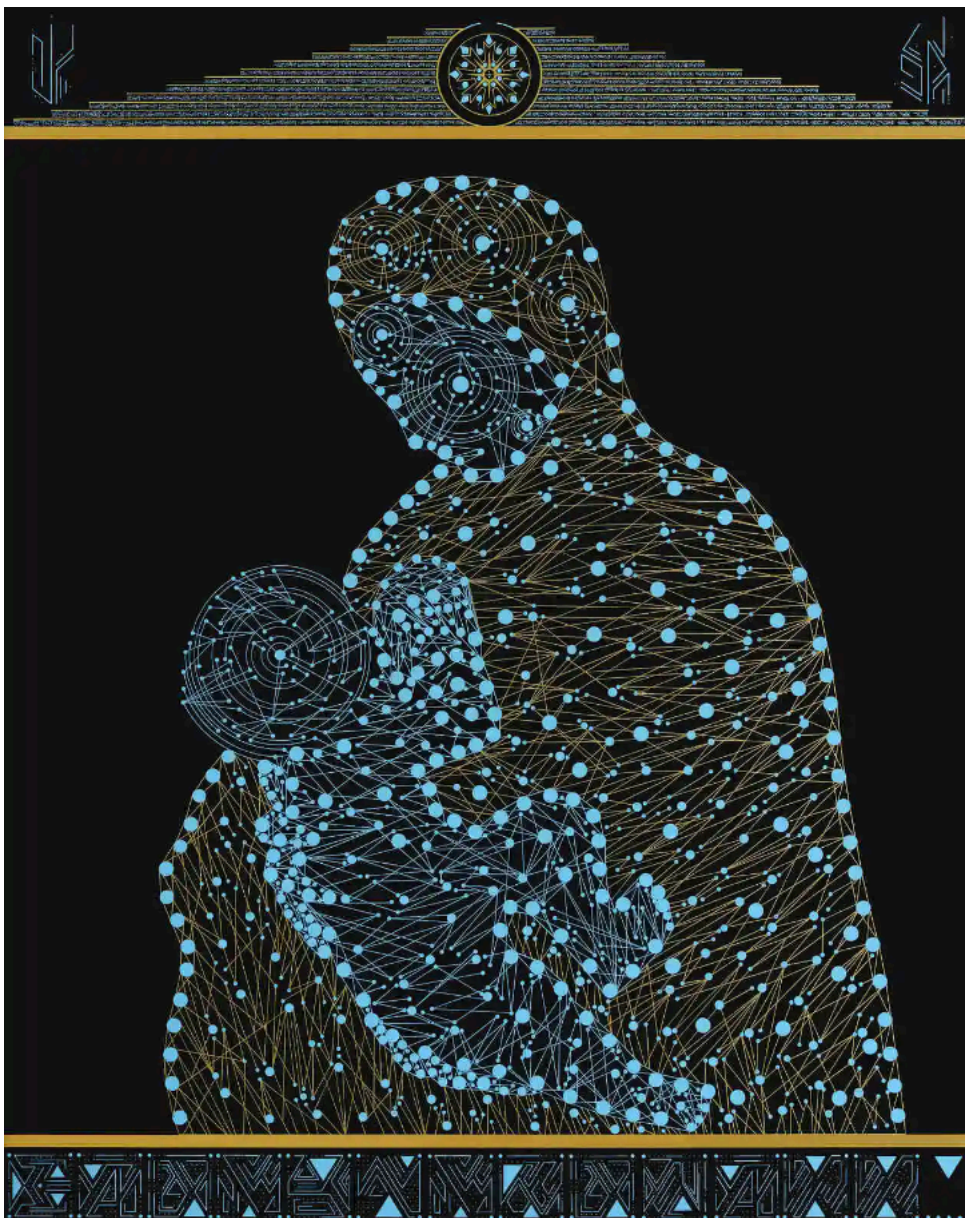
**Egor Sharay:** What elements of Emirati culture or environment have found their way into your art?

**Kaikhon Salakhov:** Emirati culture and the environment have influenced my work in profound ways. The rich tradition of sacred geometry, which is deeply rooted in Islamic art, resonates strongly with my own exploration of cosmic patterns and structures. The precise and disciplined use of geometry in Emirati art has inspired me to incorporate similar principles into my work, creating a visual language that speaks to the universal connection between all things.



Additionally, the discipline and vision embodied in the rapid development of the UAE have also found their way into my art. The Emirati commitment to innovation and progress, while respecting cultural heritage, mirrors the balance I strive for in my work – combining futuristic visions with deep spiritual and philosophical roots.

The vast desert landscapes and the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity in the UAE have also influenced the themes of exploration and development in my art. The way the Emirati people have transformed their environment, turning a harsh desert into a thriving metropolis, parallels the broader themes of cosmic development and humanity's potential to shape its future, both on Earth and beyond. This blend of sacred geometry, disciplined creativity, and visionary development in Emirati culture has been a continuous source of inspiration in my artistic journey.



**Egor Sharay:** Often, curators shape the narratives and messages behind exhibitions. Do you have a personal message or theme you want to convey through this exhibition?

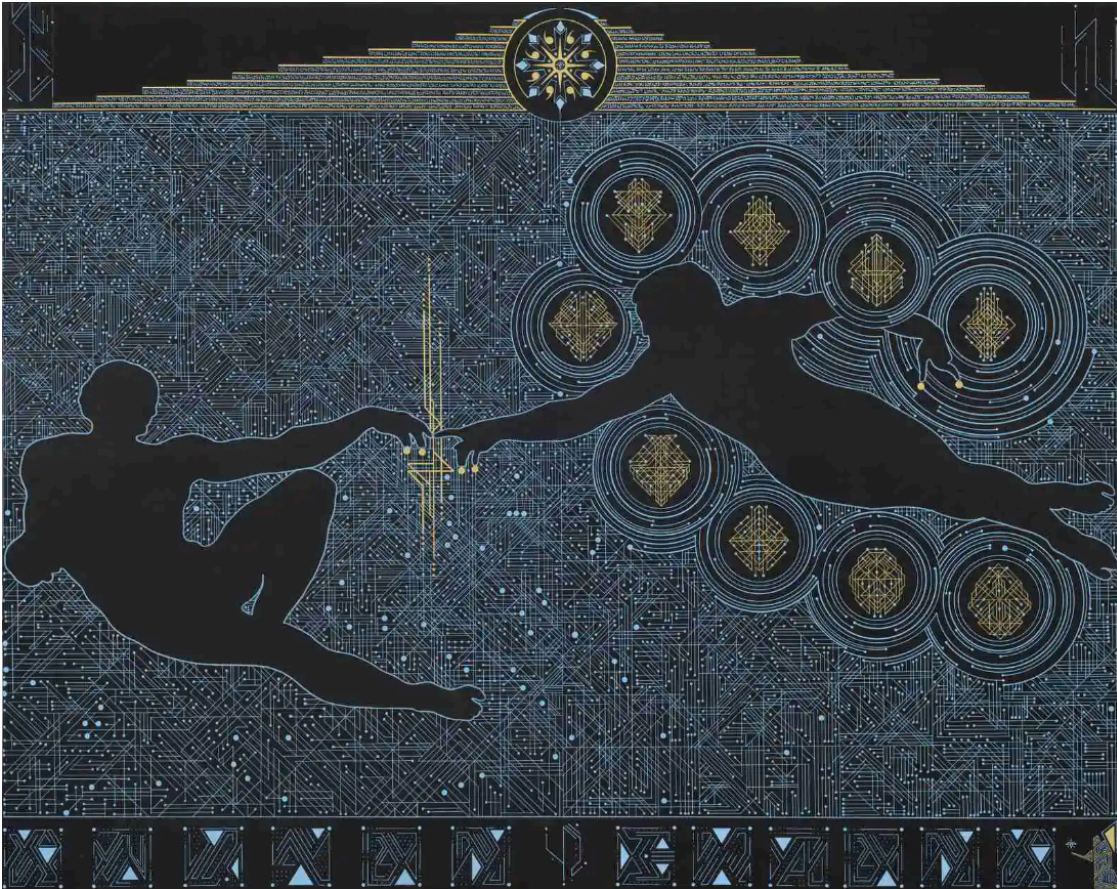
**Kaikhan Salakhov:** “Science-fiction writers foresee the inevitable, and although problems and catastrophes may be inevitable, solutions are not”, said Isaac Asimov. This quote perfectly encapsulates the essence of my exhibition. The objective of the exhibition is to broaden the horizons of the questions being asked about humanity’s development in space. I want to focus the viewer’s attention on the very serious problems that will await future generations as we venture into the cosmos.

The task of this exhibition is to pose the right questions – questions that require collective answers from all of humanity. The challenges I’ve tried to highlight are ones that will affect us all, and without global cooperation, we won’t be able to address them effectively. The time to start addressing these issues is now, before they become insurmountable. My goal is to spark a dialogue that will help us all begin to think about, and work towards, solutions for the complex future that lies ahead.

**Egor Sharay:** Kaikhan, you are an artist in the third generation; both your grandfather, Tahir Salakhov, and your mother, Aidan Salakhova, are recognized worldwide. Does such a family history help you, or does it impose obligations and constraints?

**Kaikhan Salakhov:** How many times have I seen, heard, and felt the disdain – sometimes whispered behind my back, other times openly expressed – toward my path or even my desire to pursue my dreams. While I have always believed in the success of others and wished them the best, I have often found that my own achievements were dismissed or devalued. If you’re born into a family like mine, people tend to assume you’re “lucky”, and no matter what you accomplish, it’s attributed to your family name rather than your own efforts.





If I fail, it's seen as proof that I don't deserve my legacy; if I succeed, it's credited solely to my family's influence. It's a difficult position to be in – you're judged not as an individual but as a product of your lineage. People often fail to see the real you, instead projecting their own assumptions and envies. This creates a challenging environment where making genuine connections and friendships becomes difficult because others may view you through a lens of envy or even resentment, secretly hoping to see you fail. That's the saddest part.

Interestingly, when my mother was young, people thought that my grandfather was the one painting for her. It's the same cycles, just on different levels. This shows how deeply ingrained these perceptions are and how hard it is to break free from them.

Even though I've carved out my own path, with art that is entirely different from anything my family has explored, with its own philosophy and direction, it's easy for most people to overlook that. They prefer to believe that any success I achieve on this path has nothing to do with the actual meaning or value of my work. People tend to ignore the reality of what it takes to forge my own way—how I've earned every achievement through struggle and relentless effort.



I work tirelessly, often spending entire days immersed in my work. I rarely go out, except for the gym and to practice martial arts. I don't drink, I don't smoke, and I am extremely strict about my spiritual progression. I hold myself to high standards, with priorities rooted in honor, family, and legacy. Yet, despite all this, I still see people, even those I wish well, look at me with eyes of hate and envy, seemingly out of nowhere. But there are bright sides, too. Being part of such a family has given me access to a rich cultural heritage and an environment that nurtured my creativity from an early age. The legacy I carry is not just a burden but also a source of inspiration, driving me to push boundaries and strive for excellence in my own right. It's a difficult reality to face, but I've learned to keep moving forward, staying true to my path and my values, regardless of how others perceive me. I've come to understand that the opinions and judgments of others, while sometimes hurtful, are ultimately fleeting and superficial. What truly matters is not how the world sees me, but how I see myself and, most importantly, how I stand before God. In the end, it is God's judgment that holds the ultimate truth. He alone knows the depths of my heart, my struggles, and my intentions. This awareness gives me the strength to remain steadfast, knowing that as long as I am honest with myself and maintain my connection with Him, I am walking the right path. My focus is on living in accordance with my principles, striving for honor, and leaving a legacy that reflects the values I hold dear. It's this inner conviction that propels me forward, allowing me to rise above the noise and stay true to who I am.

**Egor Sharay:** What are some key experiences or moments in your life that have shaped your artistic journey?

**Kaikhon Salakhov:** There have been several pivotal experiences that have deeply influenced my artistic journey. First and foremost, the people who believed in me, their love and support, have been a constant source of strength. Their unwavering faith in my path has given me the courage to pursue my vision.

When I was 16, I spent time in a Buddhist monastery, where the monks imparted wisdom that has stayed with me ever since. Their teachings, along with an audience I had with the Dalai Lama when I created Astral Space Exploration as a prime core and method of my artistic expression, profoundly shaped my understanding of life, suffering, and the importance of compassion. These experiences opened my eyes to the pain in this world and the immense work we must do to help each other, to heal both the planet and ourselves.

Moreover, there have been moments in my life when I faced death, but God saved me. These experiences have had a profound impact on me, reminding me of the fragility of life and the purpose I am here to fulfill. They mean a lot to me and reinforce the importance of following my path with dedication and sincerity.

All these insights have guided me to do what I do today, to stay true to my purpose, and to strive to be of the greatest benefit to humanity. My artistic journey is not just about creating; it's about contributing to a greater good, and these key moments in my life have been instrumental in shaping that mission.



**Egor Sharay:** Tell us about your artistic brand Astralspacex (Astral Space Exploration). When did you launch it, and what inspired its creation.

**Kaikhon Salakhov:** Throughout my life, I have been deeply passionate about science fiction and the future. Classics like Star Wars, Stanislaw Lem's *Summa Technologiae*, *Solaris*, and *The Futurological Congress*, as well as Isaac Asimov's *Foundation and Robot* series, and Arthur C. Clarke's visionary stories, have profoundly shaped my imagination. Films and series such as *Back to the Future*, *The 5th Element*, *Alien*, *THX 1138*, *Lost*, *The Fountain*, *Mr. Nobody*, *Sunshine*, *Star Trek*, and *Stargate* have fueled my creativity, exploring themes like time travel, dystopian futures, and interstellar exploration. The dark universe of *Warhammer 40K* and the philosophical depth of *Ghost in the Shell* have further influenced my understanding of the endless possibilities of advanced technologies and interstellar civilizations. Even computer games like *Stellaris* and *Mass Effect* have become great sources of inspiration.

During my academic journey in architecture, I envisioned creating biomechanical structures that seamlessly integrate with their environments, blending organic forms with advanced technology. However, I soon realized that the technological limitations of our time posed significant challenges to bringing these visionary ideas to life. This recognition led me to channel my sci-fi passion into independent artistry, where I could explore and express futuristic concepts without the constraints of current technological capabilities.

As a student, I immersed myself in the philosophical and theoretical works of Ken Wilber, Sri Aurobindo, Krishnamurti, Clare Graves, and the theories of Spiral Dynamics and the Integral Approach. I was particularly drawn to the AQAL Model and other frameworks that map the stages of human consciousness. This extensive exploration of consciousness theories enriched my understanding of human development and spiritual evolution.

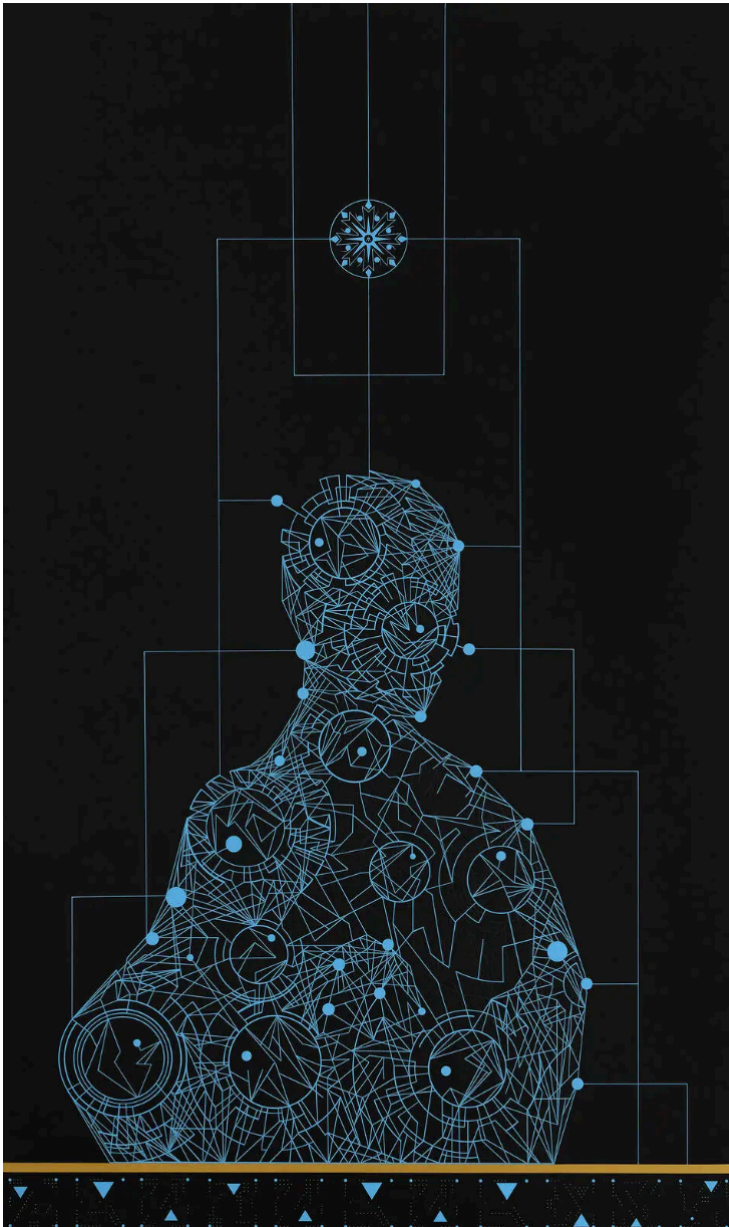


My fascination with the Kardashev Scale and its modified versions, along with the concept of humanity becoming a multiplanetary species, highlighted a significant gap in existing models. The Kardashev Scale, focused primarily on technological advancement, lacked a clear map of spiritual evolution. Conversely, the stages of consciousness models did not adequately address the cosmic scale of development. The idea that humanity could achieve Type I, II, or III civilization status without understanding the stages of consciousness is unrealistic. Achieving such levels requires unity and interconnectedness in actions and social structures. On Earth, humanity struggles to live in peace without territorial, resource, and ideological conflicts. The notion that we would suddenly achieve eternal peace in space, without repeating the history of Earth on a cosmic scale, is pure fantasy.



Existing models of consciousness focus solely on internal stages without considering cosmic development. This omission neglects the broader, interconnected progression necessary for a truly advanced civilization. Recognizing this gap, it became essential for me in 2015 to create a new model that integrated both aspects.

This realization inspired me to create my own model of 8 stages of consciousness, integrating both cosmic development and the spiritual progression of consciousness. I aimed to develop a comprehensive structure that could guide humanity in its journey to becoming a multiplanetary species while ensuring the evolution of our collective consciousness. This model acknowledges the necessity of balancing technological advancements with spiritual growth, recognizing that true progress requires harmony between these dimensions.

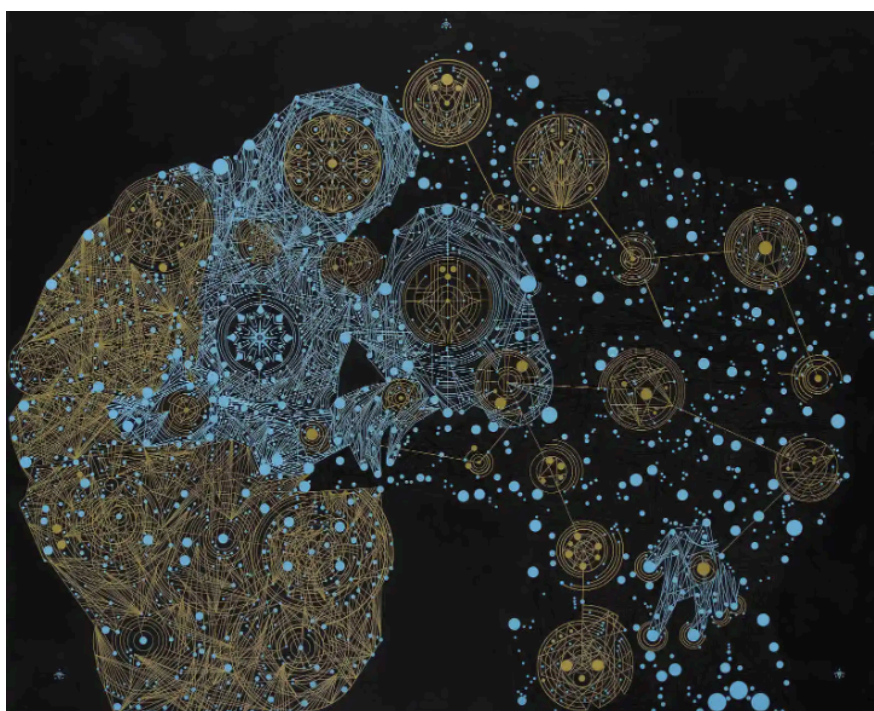


After finishing the construction of this model, which I named the “Astral Space Exploration Model of Consciousness” or ASX-Grid, I experienced a strong sense of purpose to devote my life to it through artistic expression. It was in 2018. My work is intended for future generations of humanity, providing a framework they can use, modify, and expand upon. Through my art, I seek to inspire others to envision a future where technological and spiritual advancements go hand in hand, guiding us toward a harmonious and enlightened interstellar civilization.

By blending scientific concepts with artistic expression, I hope to contribute to a broader understanding of our potential future. My art serves as a catalyst for contemplating the ethical, philosophical, and practical implications of our cosmic journey. It is my aspiration that this work will not only spark curiosity and innovation but also encourage a deeper reflection on the interconnectedness of all things and the integral role of consciousness in our evolutionary path.

**Egor Sharay:** What materials and techniques do you prefer to use, and why?

**Kaikhon Salakhov:** I primarily work with oils and acrylics, as I find that these materials offer a rich, tactile experience that I deeply enjoy. There’s something incredibly satisfying about working with my hands and feeling the texture of the paint as I bring my visions to life on canvas. Painting, for me, is not just a creative process; it’s a form of meditation and a way to connect with the universe. The act of painting allows me to channel my thoughts and emotions, creating a direct link between my inner world and the cosmos. Each brushstroke feels like a conversation with the universe, where colors blend and interact, reflecting the harmony and complexity of existence. This meditative connection helps me fully immerse myself in the creative process, making each piece of art a manifestation of both my personal journey and the broader, cosmic narrative I’m exploring.



**Egor Sharay:** How would you describe your artistic style and the themes you explore in your work?

**Kaikhon Salakhov:** My artistic style is a fusion of visionary sci-fi and cosmic exploration. I focus on merging advanced technologies with spiritual themes, exploring the evolution of consciousness, interstellar civilizations, and the intricate relationship between humanity's future in space and our spiritual growth.

**Egor Sharay:** How important is it for an artist to develop a unique voice or style, and what steps can they take to achieve that?

**Kaikhon Salakhov:** Honestly, I don't think there's a straightforward answer to that. Art is an inner alchemy, a deeply personal journey that no one else can guide you through. Developing a unique voice or style isn't about following steps; it's about discovering and expressing your true self. No one can do it for you – it's something you have to find within yourself.





**Egor Sharay:** How do you see the role of the creative economy and creative industries evolving in today's global landscape, and what impact do you believe artists like yourself can have on this sector?

**Kaikhon Salakhov:** To be honest, I've never really thought about that. I create art because I simply can't live without it – I'm obsessed with the ideas that speak to me. My focus has always been on following that inner drive rather than thinking about the broader impact on the creative economy. I can't speak for others, but for me, art is a necessity, not a calculated contribution to any economical industry. I've read too much of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* – Howard Roark taught me a lot. It's about staying true to your vision, regardless of what the world expects or demands. Art, for me, is an uncompromising pursuit of what I believe in, not something molded to fit external expectations.

**Egor Sharay:** Thank you, Kaikhon, for your time and insightful interview. We eagerly anticipate your upcoming exhibition on September 18 at Firetti Contemporary.

