

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

"Carpets of Eden, Gardens of Fantasy"

Curated By

Behrang Samadzadegan



Farid Rasulov, Cat #8, Print on Acrylic, 100 x 150 cm

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is delighted to announce the upcoming exhibition curated by Behrang Samadzadegan, titled 'Carpets of Eden, Gardens of Fantasy', opening 25th February, 2024.

In the ethereal domain of fibers and threads, where the ordinary converges with the enchanting, carpets emerge as tacit narrators, murmuring tales of a transcendent Eden. Within their woven realms unfolds a ballet of fantasy—a choreography of patterns and hues that captivates the senses and sparks the imagination.

The carpet, understood as a flat, patterned surface, served as a model for painters at the end of the nineteenth century and was a frequent point of comparison when discussing works. The Oriental carpet was of continuous importance even though it might be claimed that interest peaked during the nineteenth century; in the wake of Orientalism, carpets were a well-established motif as a code for the exotic. These carpets, much like dreamers, yearn for Eden. They embody more than mere threads and fibers; they carry the echoes of an enchanted garden, a sanctuary of dreams. In the quiet corners of our homes, these carpets become sanctuaries where fantasy blossoms.

Artists, whether by conscious choice or the unconscious pull of inspiration, find themselves drawn into the intricate embrace of these textile gardens. Some become lost in the meticulous order of patterns and the rhythmic geometry, finding solace in the structured beauty of carpets. Yet, within this order resides a realm of unexplored creativity—a territory where artists navigate unbridled fantasies. Like architects of dreams, they go beyond the surface, delving into the unseen, weaving layers of imagination that transcend the tangible. Here, carpets cease to be mere floor coverings; they metamorphose into canvases, hosting a symphony of dreams where fantasy begets more fantasy. The very notion of "fantasy within fantasy" becomes a portal through which artists journey into the depths of their imaginative worlds. As they thread the needle of creation, they infuse these woven tapestries with the essence of their dreams, intertwining reality and fantasy in a mesmerizing dance.

In "Carpets of Eden, Gardens of Fantasy," the viewer is invited to explore these realms—a pilgrimage through the fantastical gardens where carpets dream and artists awaken the dormant magic within. Each

step unveils a narrative, a brushstroke of creativity inspired by the rich tapestry beneath our feet. Let the exhibition stand as a testament to the extraordinary potential found in the overlooked corners of our daily lives—a celebration of the ordinary transformed into the extraordinary. This exhibition not only offers new perspectives on carpet research and artistic exploration but also presents the carpet as a model for understanding art and art histories in a broader sense.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Behrang Samadzadegan was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1979. He received a BFA from the Tehran University of Arts, and an MFA from TTU (Tehran Tarbiat Modares University). Behrang's work ranges from highly symbolic pieces to arrangements of stuffed-toy sculptures, to various sizes of drawings and paintings, to installations that restage ritual or historical narratives. The subject matters of his works are drawn from images and narratives of contemporary Iranian history, which he combines with fictional stories and the aesthetics of painting. His goal, however, is not to represent historical narratives. The image of history, he believes, is a personal matter created under the influence of visual and aesthetic stereotypes; a combination of confusion, chaos, and a futile quest for reaching unattainable truth. Similarly, throughout his work, he pursues hierarchies and systems that distort the representation of information and the consciousness; systems such as politics, aesthetics, and history that can empty and sterilize contexts and create arbitrary hierarchies that cause confusion and eliminate the possibility of recording and expressing the truth. As he sees it, this system also governs the creation of art, and it does not intend to reach a destination or find a way to redemption; the only thing that remains is a search for an alternative way and finding a new hope to get out of the turmoil and crisis. Thus, his creative process is influenced by the past, paralleled by the experience of living in the present.

ARTISTS: Etel Adnan, Faig Ahmed, Maryam Al-Homaid, Ayman Baalbaki, Melis Buyruk, Josefina Concha, Ali Cha'aban, Mohammad Ehsaei, Bijan Ghaseminejad, Shoeib Gorgani, Marcos Grigorian, Shahzad Hassan Ghazi, Areen Hassan, Mona Hatoum, Debbie Lawson, Aref Montazeri, Soheil Rad, Farid Rasulov, Marwan Sahmarani, Antonio Santin, Parviz Tanavoli, Shaheer Zazai.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over four decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western, Central Asian, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European, and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 16,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East. In addition to presenting a dynamic exhibition schedule, Leila Heller Gallery actively organizes shows with world renowned curators, hosts educational panels and film screenings, and produces catalogs and books with scholarly essays. Each year the gallery participates in major international art fairs and stages off-site projects as a platform for exploring new conversations within a wider context of galleries, artists and institutions.