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Enlightenment On Middle Eastern History And Culture Through Artwork



Michael Rakowitz (Detail of new work, on view for the first time, commissioned by the Ruth and Elmer

When Western audiences imagine artwork from this region, carpets often first come to mind. One of the most extraordinary examples of which can be seen now at the Aga Khan Museum, 15 minutes outside of downtown Toronto.

[The Wagner Garden Carpet](#) makes its first ever appearance in Canada through January 17, the last stop on a three-city tour that also included the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A rarely-travelling masterpiece of Islamic art, this monumental carpet—over 13x16 feet—made in 17th-century Kirman, Iran, is one of the oldest surviving Persian garden carpets.

Considering its size, age, craftsmanship—each square centimeter has about 100 individually hand tied wool knots—and near pristine condition, the object is a true wonder.

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From ancient Iranian artistry to contemporary, Amir H. Fallah (b. 1979, Tehran), takes on a major mural commission at the Institute of Contemporary Art in San Jose, California.

The institute debuts “The Facade Project”—an ongoing public art program dedicated to exploring the most critical social and political issues facing our time—with Fallah. The initiative will feature artists whose identities and work represent areas of the global community that have been largely overlooked by American arts institutions, thereby, offering a course correction to past patterns of inequity within the museum system.

“Amir H. Fallah: The Facade Project” includes a 50-foot mural enveloping the front of the building.

Fallah presents text and images from children’s books interspersed with visual quotations from Persian miniatures, illuminated manuscripts, American propaganda imagery and widely dispersed paraphernalia.