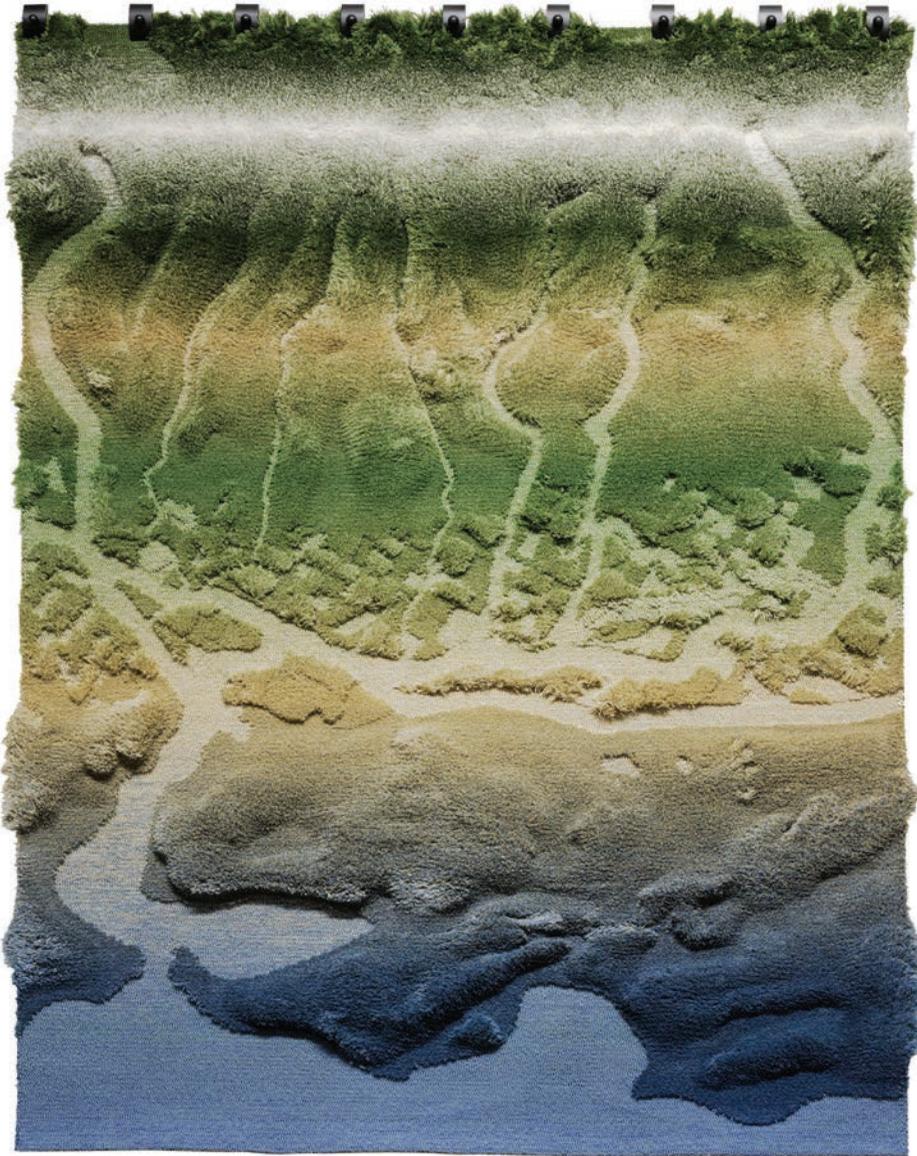


RugLife

Ginger Gregg
Duggan and
Judith Hoos
Fox,
Curators

2.6–5.23.2026

Pratt
Manhattan
Gallery



Pratt Exhibitions

Pratt
Manhattan
Gallery

Liselot Cobelens
California Drought (from the *Dryland* series), 2024
Wool
98 ½ x 78 ¾ inches
Courtesy of the artist

*Made possible by The Netherlands America Foundation,
Gemeente Den Bosch, Lighton International Artists
Exchange Program, donations through Voordekunst,
the Cultuurfonds Brabant, and CS rugs.*

RugLife Exhibition Itinerary:

Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco, CA
December 14, 2024–April 20, 2025

Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC
May 24–August 9, 2025

Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, MN
October 3, 2025–January 4, 2026

Pratt Manhattan Gallery, New York, NY
February 6–May 23, 2026



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*Generous support for RugLife is provided by
The Coby Foundation, Ltd*

RugLife is organized by the Museum of Craft and Design,
San Francisco, and guest curators Ginger Gregg Duggan
and Judith Hoos Fox of c²-curatorsquared

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Pratt Exhibitions

RugLife: Covering New Ground

Ginger Gregg Duggan and Judith Hoos Fox, Curators

The words “text” and “textile” share the same Latin root word: the verb *texere*, meaning to weave. Just as sentences are created by stringing words together to create meaning, cultures throughout time have carefully woven strands of wool or silk into designs rich with meaning. Sentences are stitched together to create anything from a sweeping fictional saga to a dry didactic text. Similarly, the rugs in the exhibition, *RugLife*, range from a formal approach to the subject matter to rich cultural critique and are representative of the unique cultures and/or identities the twelve artists represent.

Rugs and carpets have defined the character of space since animal skins began to warm and adorn cave dwellings; the earliest known Persian rugs are nearly 2,500 years old. Given this long history—entwined with religion, culture, and nature—it is not surprising that artists continue to find potential in the form of the rug. It offers artists and designers from around the globe a forum to take on the appropriation of cultural, racial, and gender roles and stereotypes within the framework of a decorative object turned art object.

Interweaving Past and Present

Because the rug is an object of daily use throughout cultures, and across societal stratifications, it is familiar and widely approachable by all, offering an entry point for artists’ manipulations, reinterpretations, and new creations. This provides the context to merge past with present, serious history with pop culture, and stereotypically Eastern and Western ideologies.

Azra Akšamija’s single-channel animation installation, *Palimpsest of ’89*, is an excellent example of this reframing of history. Commissioned by Museum for Modern Art, Ljubljana, for the exhibition *Heritage of 1989*, it offers a meta take on attempts to preserve Yugoslavia’s history. Each layer on the animated digital carpet corresponds to four major historic periods: the Pre-Ottoman, the Austro-Hungarian, Modernist/Socialist, and Post-Dayton. The digital carpet is

then projected in the center of the gallery to represent—in Akšamija’s: “a model for thinking about the creation of a common heritage through the weaving of integrative and disintegrative narratives and policies related to cultural institutions.” Over the course of the 21 minutes, more layers are added, removed or erased, highlighting the revisionist nature of history.

Lebanese artist **Ali Cha’aban** uses the rug in a multitude of ways to explore sociopolitical events and cultural representation in the hopes of sparking dialogue. By incorporating symbols of Western pop culture with the nostalgia of the well-worn Arabic rug—both immediately recognizable and relatable—Cha’aban is inviting all parties to the table. His *Broken Dream* series features Superman, Wonder Woman, and other American pop icons, silkscreened directly onto the surface of Persian carpets. Cha’aban views these as a way for him to confront, what he refers to as, inner-struggle, “...indulging in other traditions without letting go of your own culture.” As a result, neither element takes primacy over the other. Superman’s vivid primary colors do their best to overwhelm the more subtle palette of the rug but ultimately this push/pull creates a dynamic composition that mirrors the experience of younger generations within the Middle East.

Oksana Levchenya lives and works in Ukraine, where she produces traditional *kylym* rugs, a technique for carpet-weaving dating back to the 16th century. The tradition stops at the process, however, with unique designs that combine folk ornament and ethnic patterns with characters from gaming, television, movies, and other elements of pop culture. Levchenya’s hybrid-symbolism seamlessly merges the two in a way that is not immediately noticeable. It is only upon closer inspection that one notices the historic Cossacks are actually fighting Pac-Man, or Pokémon comprises the center of the radiant star motif. These elements of humor belie the serious concern the artist has for historic preservation and ecological cleanliness. The hemp thread that forms the base of the *kylyms* is made of dyed natural wool from

Carpathian sheep or vegetable yarn from nettles, which is then intricately handwoven.

Slavs and Tatars, founded by artists Payam Sharifi and Kasia Korczak, describe themselves as “a faction of polemics and intimacies devoted to an area east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China known as Eurasia.” Often focusing on language as the context for identity, they frequently utilize humor and pop culture to offer an entry point for a discussion about cultural traditions. Their rug, titled *Qatalogue*, is a great example of this approach. Cyrillic letters are tangled in amongst a swirling red tongue, referencing sounds that did not previously exist in Slavic languages. As with other work by Slavs and Tatars, the notion of a “mother tongue” is a recurring theme, and a reminder of the role that language plays in both uniting and separating various groups.

Patterning a Communal Experience

Perhaps because our world is incredibly interconnected with an open exchange of ideas on a global scale, many artists at this moment in time are choosing to turn to more personal and communal histories when addressing this traditionally functional object. The range and richness of voices embedded in a simple carpet illustrate that these objects are not inert, but are often complex expressions of ideas and points of view. Instead of mixing symbols from various cultural sources, these artists highlight particular elements of unique communities to show that referencing our personal experience can be incredibly powerful despite trade and cultural exchange.

As a Turkish artist who immigrated to Berlin as a child, **Nevin Aladağ** often questions what it means to be foreign in her work. Searching for sources of cultural identity rooted in heritage can seem antithetical to forming new social connections required when relocated. However, it is these fault lines that inform Aladağ’s work. Her series of rugs, titled *Social Fabric*, are vivid collages of carpet scraps from different origins and styles pieced together onto wood panels to create various geometric and abstract patterns. Despite pairing often-discordant colors and styles side by side, the overall design comes together to create a cohesive whole, referencing the melting pot sensibility of many communities. *Pattern Matching (purple-blue)*, included in *RugLife*, is created in the same way, but culminates in the form of a basketball court. The reference to the American sport of basketball—

often pick-up in nature and something that can bring people together—may seem at odds with the decorative florals and symbols of the rugs of origin, but each component speaks to merging while retaining authenticity.

Sonya Clark refers to hairdressers as heroes, saying “the poetry and politics of Black hair care specialists are central to my work as an artist and educator. Rooted in a rich legacy, their hands embody an ability to map a head with a comb and manipulate the fiber we grow into complex form.” Black vernacular hair designs serve as inspiration for a number of works by Clark, some made from black hair, some addressing the subject, and others looking at the tools of the trade. Her unconventional rug, titled *Comb Carpet*, is quite literally made of hundreds of standard black plastic combs, teeth facing up, forming a rug of sorts. This strong statement of cultural identity—Clark identifies as African American, Caribbean, and Scottish—is loaded with layers of meaning about racial stereotypes, the power of reappropriating cultural symbols, and understanding hair as a literal carrier of DNA as well as a metaphorical connection to one’s roots.

Nicholas Galanin is a Tlingit and Unangax⁴ multidisciplinary artist who addresses racism and xenophobia head on in his piece *White Noise: American Prayer Rug*. Hung on the wall like a television in any American family room—a version of a prayer rug for media—rendered in wool and cotton, is arresting. The title, *White Noise*, references the continuous drone of hatred voiced by many politicians, members of the media, and others designed to target oppressed or minority groups. Like the static on a television screen that cannot receive a signal, this constant background noise is maddening but can eventually be tuned out and ignored. Another notable rug project by Galanin, titled *The American Dream is Alive and Well*, covers a traditional bear skin rug with an American flag for the skin and ammunition for the claws. By reimagining traditional indigenous rug forms in a pointed critique against the flawed history of America, Galanin proudly lays claim to his heritage and identity.

Delineating a Sense of Place

From area rugs used to divide or decorate a room to prayer rugs marking a personal sacred place for devotion, rugs serve to delineate space. That notion of space also extends into the global realm, early on through trade, up to today via dis-

placement and emigration. Highly valued carpets signaled wealth and worldliness for their owners on the opposite side of the world from where they were created. On the other end of the spectrum, refugees fleeing their countries could roll up and take their prayer mats as one of their very few possessions as they settle in new lands. For some of the artists in the exhibition, this aspect of signaling “home” despite global mobility is at the heart of the work.

Ali Cha’aban manages to create a profound statement on Arab identity through the simple act of covering every surface of a standard white plastic chair with carpet. These inexpensive, stackable, Western-style lawn chairs are frequently seen in Arabic communities, particularly where there has been resettlement or in refugee circumstances, where temporary homes are made from very little. The semicircle of chairs provides a setting where members of the community can gather, socialize, exchange ideas, and enjoy a meal or tea together. In an attempt to reclaim some of the sensibility of home, Cha’aban reinserts elements of the culture that serves to dignify the design of displacement.

Dutch designer, **Wendy Plomp**, brings the notion of portability and place to the streets, addressing both homelessness and sustainability in her project, *Cardboard Carpets*. Utilizing the ubiquitous cardboard box, she unfolds them into their flat shapes, and prints them with decorative designs that transform them from trash to rug. The functional tabs, flaps, and perforated fold markings add to the unique shape and design of each carpet. In Plomp’s words, “I noticed how people gave cardboard new functions—like to beg or sleep on, to draw on or use for hitch-hiking signs, even to break dance on, which gave me the idea to print the inside of a used box with a carpet pattern so that wherever you are, this carpet can be your temporary clean space, your home.” Just as prayer rugs are meant to demarcate a boundary between sacred and profane space, for the unhoused, cardboard is often the only separation from a dirty street and the only way to stake any sort of personal space.

Stéphanie Saadé often mines her memories of and nostalgia for her life in Lebanon, where she lived with her family as a child. Her conceptual installation, *Stage of Life*, consists of a carpet from the family home that has been cut into strips and reassembled visually in space into a new configuration that incorporates the element

of distance as a shape in and of itself. The width of the strips was carefully measured and laid out to equal the distance from Saadé’s current bedroom and entryway of her building in Paris. In this new arrangement she has brought her faraway childhood into her current home, a nod to leaving home yet still holding it close. This seemingly simple manipulation effectively adds the weight of distance, memory, and longing to a functional object that typically symbolizes grounding, stability, and home.

Carpet Furniture: Drop Leaf Table by **Andrea Zittel** takes the role of carpet as spatial marker to a heightened level by visualizing an actual furniture layout onto the rug itself. As if seen from above in plan view, the outlines of a dining table, eight chairs, and accompanying place mats are delineated in architectural template style against the solid color of the surrounding area, the “rug.” While this may seem to be a straightforward playful take on designing space and place, it also suggests a minimalist approach to living and what exactly one needs to make a home in any circumstance. Being able to pack up and leave at a moment’s notice becomes more compelling as society becomes more mobile, more unstable, and resources become more scarce.

Looming Politics

Because the work of artists included in *RugLife* is both prescient and reflective of current cultural issues, it is not surprising that many of the works are more politicized, given our highly charged and divisive political climate. The rug offers to artists a medium and syntax for expression long after the ritual and functional roles of the rug have been supplanted. As a result, these works touch on issues that define our culture, expressed through the ubiquitous and accessible format of the rug.

Liselot Cobelens takes on environmental issues in her *Dryland Rug* series, addressing the drought in her native Netherlands, an area often associated with water. Referencing data from climate-change-induced droughts, Cobelens translates those numbers into different textures and manufacturing processes in the creation of the rugs. The artist’s interest in rug making came from wondering what kind of product would best showcase the issue, saying “...and then I came across tufting, which kind of gives a symbolic sense of how plants grow. From then on, everywhere I looked in the landscape, I saw rugs.”

Within each unique rug, waterways are realized as loop-pile tufting, grassy areas are cut pile tufting, with different pile heights also representing underground water levels. Some portions were even burned to indicate areas that were subject to wildfires. And areas with animal loss were literally sheared using sheep shearers. The resulting rugs are subtle but powerful reminders about the treatment of our surroundings and the impact that ultimately has on a global scale.

At first glance, **Johannah Herr's** brightly colored *War Rug III (El Paso Shooting)* does not immediately conjure its dark subject matter: the deadly shooting at a Texas Walmart in 2019. As with all of Herr's work, major societal issues, ranging from state-sanctioned violence and human trafficking to gun control and consumerism, take center stage, with each rug acting as a symbolic call to action. In *War Rug III (El Paso Shooting)*, the assault rifle used by the shooter is given the central prominent location in front of a turquoise outline of Texas, but is rendered in cartoonish colors. Icons from the crime scene and multiple Walmart logos fight for primacy, surrounded by a border of ammunition. As a whole, it is a jarring reminder of a day that started out joyful—families shopping for back-to-school—and ended with the deadliest attack on Latinos in modern American history. As Herr reminds us, it is about “how (and whose) bodies become ‘ungrievable’ in dominant power structures.”

In *War Rug IV (Las Vegas Shooting)* we see the entire scene of the tragedy: the border, a parade of bullets referencing the arsenal of ammunition used; images of two of the shooter's 24 weapons stretch the length of the rug; the distinctive striated facade of the Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino is flanked by red and blue poker chips. Police crime scene markers and the bump stocks that transform semiautomatic weapons into automatic ones, flank the icon of the hotel. Instead of a joyous gathering around music, the day turned ignominious.

Like Johannah Herr, **Noelle Mason** is interested in the imbalance of power and how that impacts people of color, in particular. Much of her work focuses on human trafficking and illegal immigration, but unlike Herr's animated designs, she employs the visual language of surveillance and satellite imagery in the design of her rugs. *Ground Control (Mexicali/Calexico)* features the border between Mexico and the United States at California, rendered in hand-woven wool. The

image was reproduced from the Terra satellite's Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (ASTER). Mason poetically sums up her perspective in the following lines:

This work is about the way we are manipulated by images.
This work is about police and policing.
This work is about bureaucracy.
This work is about borders.
This work is about boundaries.
This work is about transgression.
This work is about speed.
This work is about images that form us.
This work is about images that hurt us.
This work is a distortion.

Rugs delineate space both in local and domestic contexts, providing a global political context for trade, colonialism, and power struggles. Because space and politics are frequently interwoven, the rug serves as a central figure, knotting together major issues of modern life. No matter the material, thread, or substance used, each of the rugs in *RugLife* weave thoughtful discourse about many issues and concerns—globally as well as personally. Whether we consider home or our place in the world, ponder the aesthetics or the ethics, there is no denying the rug continues to be a powerful vehicle for contemporary artistic expression.

A version of this essay appeared in Selvedge Magazine, Issue 120 “Carpet Magic” [September 2024]. It is reprinted here with permission.



Ali Cha'aban
I Fought the Internet and the Internet Won II, 2019
Silkscreen on Persian carpet
Edition 2/3
86 ½ x 67 inches

I Fought the Internet and the Internet Won II, 2019
Silkscreen on Persian carpet
Edition 3/3
86 ½ x 67 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY, and Dubai, UAE

Curators Bio

Ginger Gregg Duggan and Judith Hoos Fox founded c²-curatorsquared in 2008, after collaborating successfully for five years, first at the Art to Arts in Bellevue Arts Museum and then at the Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois. Duggan's background in criticism, contemporary art and design, with undergraduate and graduate degrees from Florida State University and Savannah College of Art and Design, teaching and curatorial experience, published papers and panel participation melded with Fox's years of curatorial experience beginning at Walker Art Center and then at college and university museums, from Wellesley College's Davis Museum to Harvard University Art Museums. Bryn Mawr College and the University of Minnesota granted Fox degrees in sociology and museology. Together Duggan and Fox have initiated numerous exhibitions of contemporary art and design, largely partnering with academic museums. Most have traveled nationally and many are accompanied by publications. See their website for current and completed projects: www.curatorsquared.com. Duggan is based in Orlando, Florida, and Fox in Boston, Massachusetts.

Ai Weiwei

Born in Beijing, China, 1957

Lives in Montemore-o-Novo, Portugal

Ai Weiwei's first 16 years were spent in remote Northwest China until 1976, the end of the cultural revolution, when his family returned to Beijing from their banishment, a result of his father's poetry, which had been deemed dissident. Weiwei began his tortuous studies at the Beijing Film Academy in 1978. In the US, where he lived from 1981 to 1993, he studied at the University of Pennsylvania, the adult education program in Berkeley, California, Parsons School of Design, and the Arts Student League in New York. Living in the East Village, he supported himself painting street portraits with stints in the casinos in Atlantic City, where he was a professional at Blackjack, all the while immersing himself in the art of the day—Duchamp, Warhol, and Johns.

He returned to China in 1993 to assist his ailing father and then began a series of encounters with the repressive police that has continued to inform his prodigious art production. His Beijing studio-liv-

ing complex that he had designed in 2010, was razed on fabricated charges; the next year, he was incarcerated for 81 days for alleged tax evasion. These assaults catapulted him from living in China, as soon as his passport was returned. Subsequently he has lived in and maintains studios in Berlin, Germany, and Cambridge, United Kingdom.

His work consistently champions victims—of repression, incarceration, natural disasters—and gives form to incisive cultural commentary. His work has been exhibited and acquired by museums worldwide. The Royal Institute of British Architects awarded him an honorary fellowship; he was elected foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of the Arts; and the Chinese Contemporary Art Award conferred by the Guggenheim Foundation are a few of the numerous awards and degrees that he has received, including an honorary degree from Pratt Institute in 2012.

Ai Weiwei
Tyger, 2022
Hand-knotted, hand-spun, hand-dyed natural Ghazni wool
80 x 80 inches
Unique with two artist's proofs
Courtesy the artist and WWF-UK
Image © the artist and WWF-UK

Specially commissioned for the Tomorrow's Tigers project, an initiative that seeks to raise funds and awareness supporting vital conservation work to increase wild tiger numbers.

Tomorrow's Tigers is devised and curated for WWF by Artwise and produced by Christopher Farr. This edition has been hand-made by Turquoise Mountain in Afghanistan.



Azra Akšamija

Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1976
Lives in Boston, Massachusetts

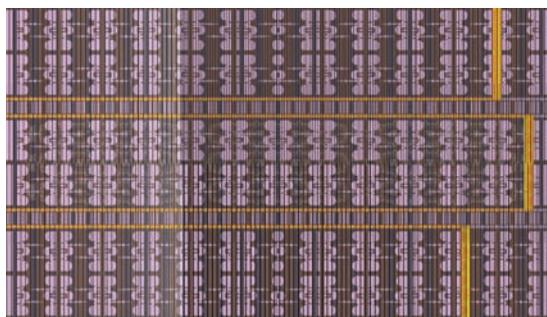
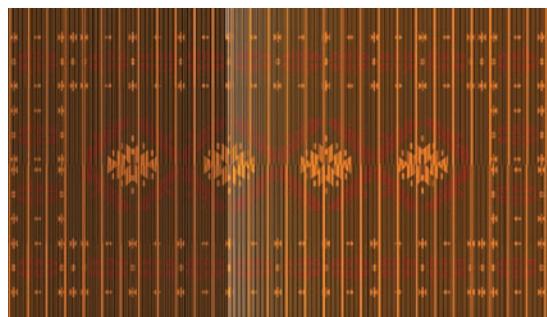
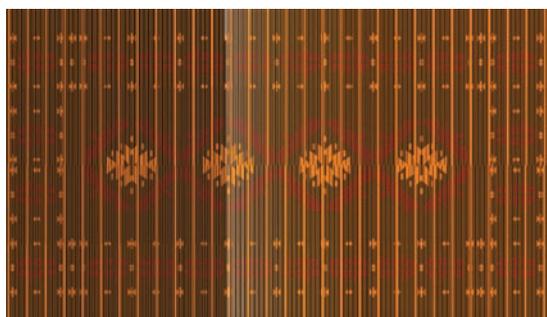
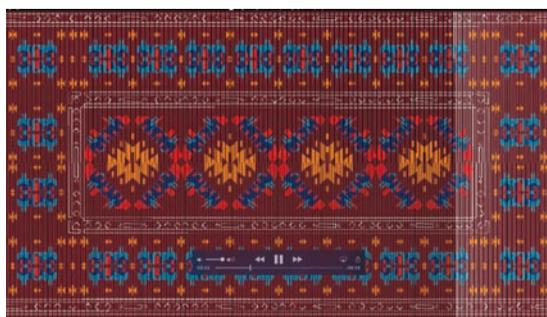
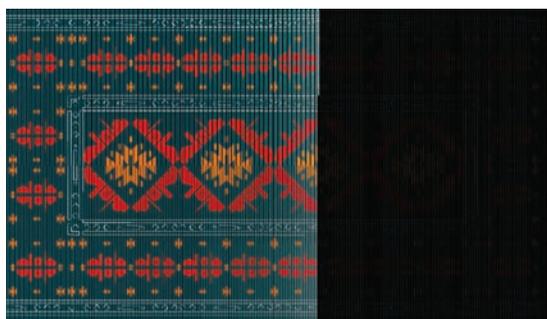
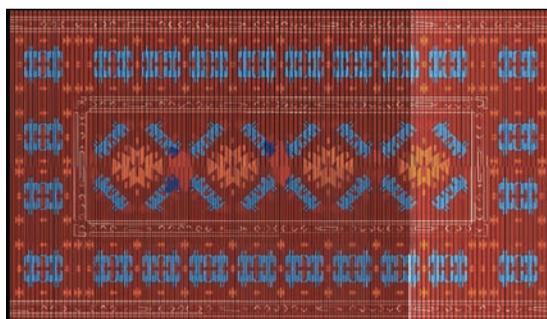
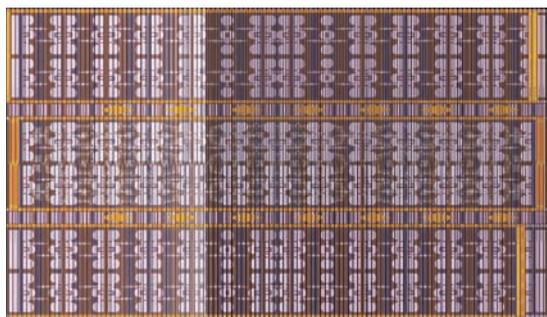
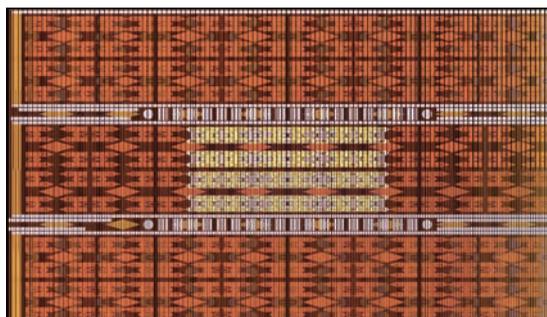
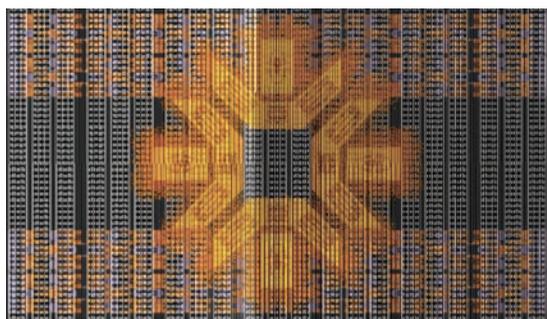
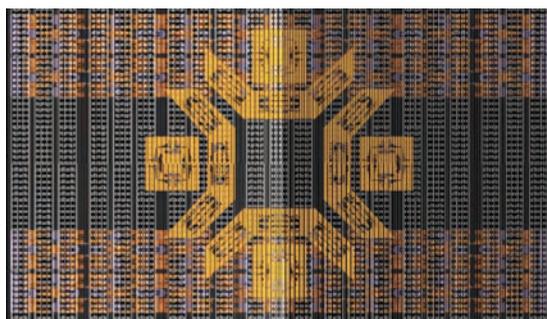
Azra Akšamija holds master's degrees in architecture from Graz Institute of Technology, 2001, and Princeton University, 2004. In 2011, she earned a PhD in History, Theory, and Criticism in the architecture department at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she is a professor in the Department of Architecture and directs the Art, Culture, and Technology program. She is also founder and director of the Future Heritage Lab.

A practicing artist, her work has been exhibited at leading international venues including Generali Foundation and Secession in Vienna; biennials in Venice, Liverpool (United Kingdom), Valencia (Spain), Manila (Philippines), and Mainfiesta 7; Museums of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Ljubljana; SculptureCenter and Queens Museum in New York; the Royal Academy of Arts in London; and design festivals in Milan, Istanbul, Eindhoven, and Amman. Most recently, her work has been shown at the Kunsthhaus Graz, Austria; the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada; the Venice Biennale of Architecture 2021, and the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Her list of publications—both as author and subject—is lengthy.

She received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2013 for her artwork in the Islamic Cemetery Altach, Austria; the Art Award of the City of Graz in 2018; and an honorary doctorate from the Montserrat College of Art, 2020. More recently, Akšamija received the Lafarge Holcim Award 2021 in the Middle East region and a Commendation in the Global Competition, and was recognized as the Emerging Voices winner by the Architectural League of New York in 2022.

Her efforts to ensure the remembrance of history, particularly those of disenfranchised immigrant populations, define her multimedia artistic practice.

Azra Akšamija
Palimpsest of '89, 2017
Single-channel animation
20 minutes
Courtesy of the artist



Nevin Aladağ

Born in Van, Turkey, 1972
Lives in Berlin, Germany

Born in Turkey, Nevin Aladağ grew up in Germany and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich. She holds the position of professor of interdisciplinary Artistic Work at the University of Fine Arts in Dresden. Her work has been featured in international exhibitions including *Documenta 14* in Kassel and Athens, the 57th Venice Biennale, the 11th Sharjah Biennial, the 11th Istanbul Biennial, and the 8th Taipei Biennial. Museums across Germany, Austria, France, United Kingdom, Italy, Taiwan, Japan, Mexico, and the United States have presented her work.

Aladağ's cross-media work often investigates the potential of sound to explore the complex issues of cultural identity, class, and stereotypes by mixing and merging instruments and creating new ones. Installation, video, performance, and sculpture are additional means for her explorations. Similarly, her work included in *RugLife* brings together disparate, unrelated pieces of carpet to form a new harmonious design.

Nevin Aladağ
Pattern Matching (purple-blue), 2016
Collage with carpets of different origin
31 ¼ x 52 x 2 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Wenstrup, Berlin
Photo courtesy of Trevor Good



Ali Cha'aban

Born in Kuwait, 1988

Lives in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

The unlikely route from medical studies to anthropology, in Lebanon and Kuwait at the American University of Kuwait, catapulted Cha'aban into the world of graphic design. Working at BBDO, an international advertising agency, served as the training ground where his childhood passion for drawing and an adolescent brush with graphic design matured into professional practice. He calls himself a third-culture child, referring to his Lebanese roots and Saudi upbringing. This rich and complex cultural experience finds form in his work in which he brings together elements of pop and traditional cultures. The evocative, provocative forms that he creates often incorporate the actual object of the traditional Persian carpet. As artistic director of the agency YKONE, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Cha'aban continues to create collaborations, including clothing with the Barcelona fashion house SVD, Les Benjamins, an Istanbul-based luxury street-wear brand, and with Nike.

Ali Cha'aban

Grandpa's Monobloc, 2023

Plastic chair, Persian rug

28 ½ 20 ¾ x 19 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY, and Dubai, UAE



Sonya Clark

Born in Washington, D.C., 1967

Lives in Amherst, Massachusetts

Sonya Clark is professor of art at Amherst College in Massachusetts, where she earned her bachelor's degree as well as an honorary doctorate. Subsequent degrees were granted by The Art Institute of Chicago and Cranbrook Academy of Art. She has been awarded a United States Artists Fellowship, a Pollock-Krasner award, an 1858 Prize, ArtPrize Juried Grand Prize, and an Anonymous Was A Woman award. She has participated in residencies across the globe, from China to Italy to Qatar. Her work has been collected and exhibited worldwide, including at the Arizona State University Art Museum; Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas at Austin; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan; Newfields, Indianapolis, Indiana; Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin; Mead Art Museum, Amherst College; Montreal Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Angers, France; Houston Center for Contemporary Craft; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Arts and Design, New York; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania; and High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia.

Clark comes by her connection to craft and fabric through her grandmother, who was a tailor. Fiber and related found materials are her consistent media to explore identity, social constructions, and history—both in the personal and collective realms.

Sonya Clark

Comb Carpet, 2008

Combs, cable wire

5 x 60 x 66 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Image courtesy of Taylor Dabney



Liselot Cobelens

Born in Deurne, Netherlands, 1994

Lives in North Brabant, Netherlands

A recent graduate of the Royal Academy of Arts, The Hague, with a bachelor's degree in interior architecture and furniture design, Liselot Cobelens's eponymous studio in 's-Hertogenbosch, North Brabant, Netherlands, is the locus of her explorations in landscape-inspired tactile narratives through carpets and design. She is a 2024 recipient of the Lighton International Artists Exchange Program Award, which with additional funding from The Netherlands-America Foundation, Gemeente Den Bosch, and donations through Voordekunst, the Cultuurfonds Brabant and CS rugs made possible the creation of the work for this exhibition, an iteration of her thesis project, a carpet that reflects the complex conditions of land and water in the Netherlands. She came to California to research the issue of water there, a defining challenge of the state, and her findings inform the carpet on view in the exhibition.

Liselot Cobelens

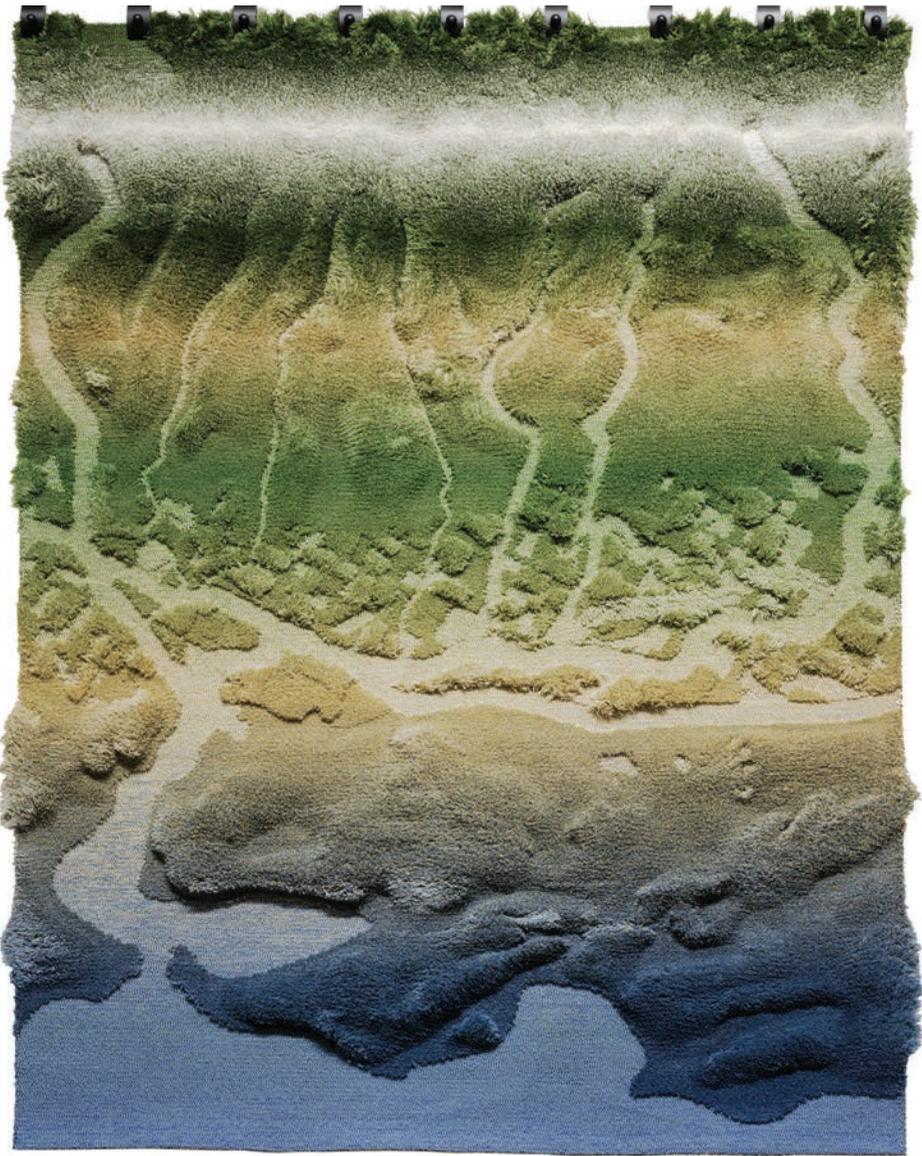
California Drought (from the *Dryland* series), 2024

Wool

98 ½ x 78 ¾ inches

Courtesy of the artist

Made possible by The Netherlands-America Foundation, Gemeente Den Bosch, Lighton International Artists Exchange Program, donations through Voordekunst, the Cultuurfonds Brabant, and CS rugs.



Nicholas Galanin

Born in Sheet'ka (Sitka), Alaska, 1979

Lives in Sheet'ka (Sitka), Alaska

Following degrees earned at London Guildhall University, BFA, 2003, and Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand, MFA, 2007, Nicholas Galanin, a multidisciplinary artist and musician of Tlingit and Unangan[^] descent, apprenticed with master carvers and jewelers. His multimedia work—encompassing video, ceramics, bronze casting, and conceptually-based projects—has been exhibited internationally, at museums such as Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland and SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico; and in biennials from New York to Sydney, Australia. The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Arts, Pennsylvania; Detroit Institute of Art, Michigan; Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, are among the institutions that have collected his work. He has been honored with distinguished awards and fellowships including the Don Tyson Prize, 2025; Guggenheim Fellowship, 2024; Pollock-Krasner Grant, 2023; Soros Art Fellowship, 2020; and American Academy of Arts and Letters, 2020. Teaching and lecturing are also major elements of his professional portfolio.

Nicholas Galanin

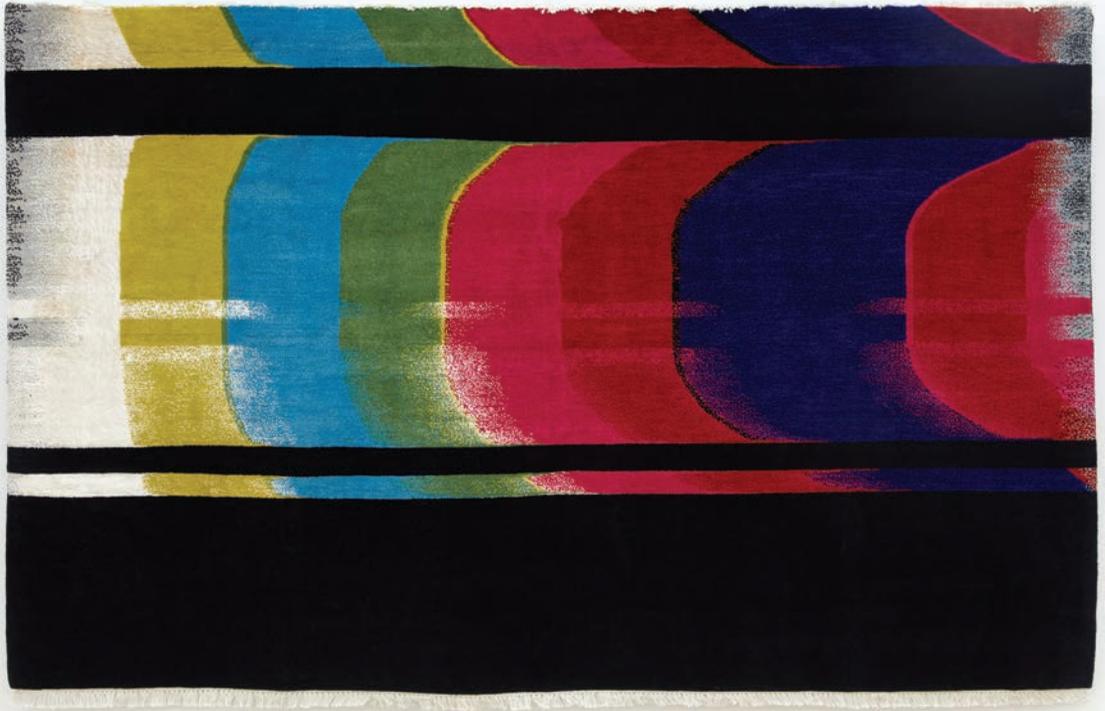
Signal Disruption, American Prayer Rug, 2020

Wool, cotton

60 x 96 inches

Courtesy the artist and Peter Blum Gallery, New York

Photo courtesy of Jason Wyche



Johannah Herr

Born in Reading, Pennsylvania, 1987
Lives in Brooklyn, New York, and
Mae Wang, Thailand

Johannah Herr earned an MFA in sculpture from Cranbrook Academy of Art, 2016, and a BFA in fine arts from Parsons School of Design, 2009. Her work has been exhibited across the United States and beyond, in Estonia and Mongolia. Residencies have taken her to New York, Norway, and Iceland, among other venues, and four public commissions can be found in New York. A 2012 Fulbright research scholarship to Mongolia has been followed by distinguished awards and fellowships. Institutions including Clark Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Bibliothèque Kandinsky at Centre Pompidou, Paris; and academic collections at Alfred University, Davidson College, and University of Miami have acquired her work. She currently holds the position of adjunct assistant professor at Pratt Institute.

Johannah Herr

War Rug III (El Paso Shooting), 2020

Tufted rug using acrylic and wool yarn

28 x 48 inches

War Rug IV (Las Vegas Shooting), 2020

Tufted rug using acrylic and wool yarn

28 x 48 inches

Courtesy of the artist



Oksana Levchenya

Born in Bershad, Ukraine, 1975

Lives in Kyiv, Ukraine

The precision and attention to structure required by Oksana Levchenya's training to become a surgeon at A. A. Bogomolets National Medical University in Kyiv found form in her rug making. She left the medical profession and earned a degree in the School of Architecture Design in 2005. From Alexandra Prakhova, member of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine, who represented the dynasty of Prakhov in the fourth generation, Levchenya learned the art of painting. Pivotal in her trajectory was her participation in the exhibition *Find your tribe and love them hard* at Shcherbenko Art Center, Kyiv, Ukraine, an investigation of social identity first proposed by British psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. The theory explores a person's sense of belonging to a particular social group. This experience led to Levchenya's founding in 2017 OLK MANUFACTORY, the locus of the production of traditional and modern handwoven rugs and tapestries, which through its manufacturing process, preserves an intricate manual weaving technique, ranging back to the 16th century. Contemporary designs and replicas of traditional patterns join the interweaving of past and present in her rugs that introduce contemporary pop cultural icons into traditional folkloric patterns. In March 2019, her reimagined Ukrainian klym Space Cossacks was shortlisted for the Arte Laguna Prize in the Design category.

Oksana Levchenya

Pac-Man and Cossacks, 2022

Hemp thread and natural dyed wool

80 x 140 inches

Courtesy of the artist



Noelle Mason

Born in San Diego, California, 1977
Lives in Tampa, Florida

Beginning her studies in theater, Noelle Mason turned to visual arts and earned a BA in studio art from the University of California, Irvine, followed by an MFA in sculpture from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Among her awards and residencies are the South Arts Southern Prize, 2017, and Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Artist Grant, 2013. Exhibitions in Florida that have featured her work include *Skyway*, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, 2021; *The World to Come*, Harn Museum, Gainesville, 2018; and Florida Prize, Orlando Museum of Art, 2015. Her work is part of the permanent collections of Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; and George Eastman House, Rochester, New York. Mason is an associate professor of art at the University of South Florida, Tampa.

Noelle Mason
Ground Control (Mexicali/Calexico), 2020
Handwoven wool
68 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Wendy Plomp

Born in Wilnis, Netherlands, 1977

Lives in Eindhoven, Netherlands

A 2005 graduate from the Design Academy Eindhoven, Wendy Plomp worked as a freelancer before establishing Dutch Invertuals in 2009, inspired by her curatorial passion for Dutch design. Plomp's keen curatorial sense is evidenced in the annual exhibitions she has organized that bring together commissioned work created around a theme that is prescient of issues in design across cultures. These exhibitions premiere in her studio in Eindhoven and typically are presented again during Design Week in Milan, Italy. Designer and researcher, she has expanded her arena to train and champion emerging designers from around the world through the online academy that she established in 2020. A consistent collaborator is Remco van de Craats, director and founder of Edhv, a branding and graphic design studio in Eindhoven, Netherlands, with whom Dutch Invertuals shares space.

Wendy Plomp

Cardboard Carpets, 2009

Cardboard, paint

10 various size pieces not to exceed overall dimension of 78 ¾ x 98 ½ inches

Courtesy of the artist



Stéphanie Saadé

Born in Lebanon, 1983

Lives in Beirut, Lebanon; Paris, France;
and Amsterdam, Netherlands

Truly global, Stéphanie Saadé studied at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France, and continued post graduate studies at the China Academy of Arts, Hangzhou, followed by a stint at the Jan Ben Eyck Academie, Maastricht, Netherlands. She has continued to develop her work while participating in residencies in Belgium, Switzerland, France, Netherlands, and Mexico. Her works are held in the collections of Centre Pompidou, Paris; Centre national des arts plastiques; Frac France Compté; Fond municipal d'art contemporain de la ville de Paris; Museo Maxxi, Rome, Italy; Centraal Museum, Utrecht, Netherlands; the Barjeel Foundation Sharjah, United Arab Emirates; and the Saradar Collection, Beirut. Her long roster of exhibitions and prizes cover sites across the globe. That her work examines identity, personal histories, migration, immigration, and memory comes as no surprise.

Stéphanie Saadé

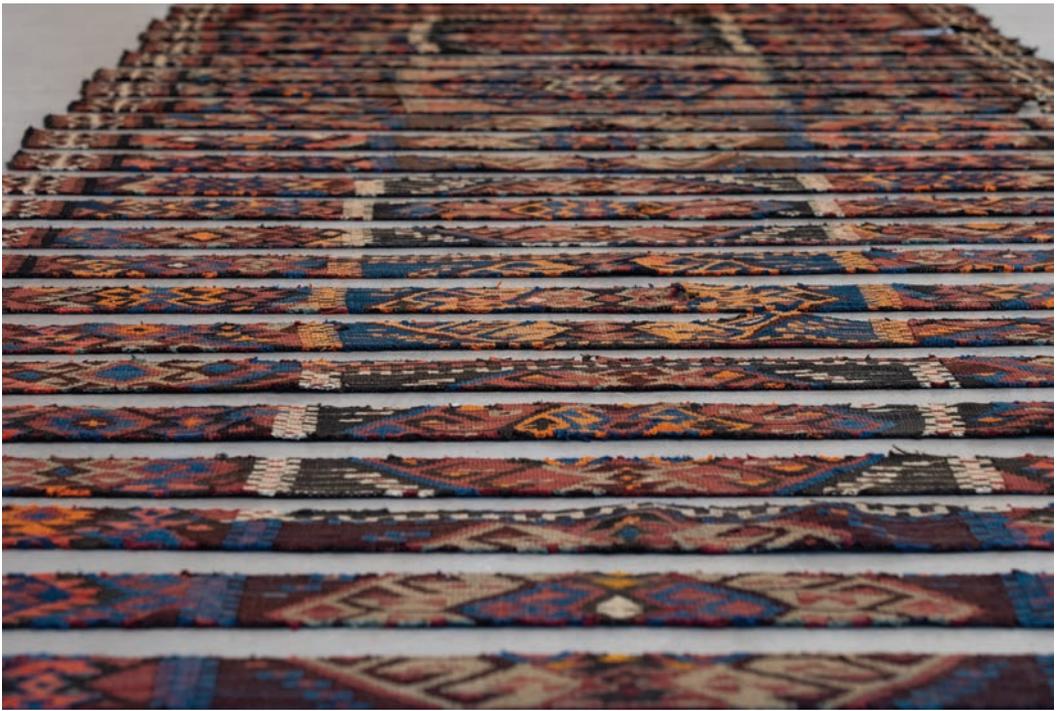
Stage of Life, 2022

Carpet cut in strips

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Marfa Projects, Beirut

Image courtesy of Youssef Itani



Slavs & Tatars

Collaboration founded in 2005

Kasia Korczak

Born in Łódź, Poland, 1976

Lives in Berlin, Germany

Payam Sharifi

Born in Austin, Texas, 1976

Lives in Houston, Texas

East of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China, Eurasia is the vast region of focus of this largely anonymous collaborative whose work finds form in exhibitions, books, lecture-performances, a residency and mentorship program, and a Slavic aperitif bar-cum-project space in Berlin-Moabite, Germany. Founded in 2006 by the Polish-Iranian duo, now international in membership, the collective's roots are in reading, rediscovering, and reaffirming the traditional and historical underpinnings of culture now being neutralized by globalization. History, tradition, folklore, and pop culture weave together to form the multimedia conceptual and object-based work of this collective. Language is the foundation of their investigation and conflicting ideologies are at the core of their chapter-based research, examples of which follow: alphabet politics (*Language Arts*); medieval advice

literature (*Mirrors for Princes*); and investigation of syncretism (*Not Moscow Not Mecca*).

Their work has been exhibited at institutions including Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Istanbul Modern, Turkey; Artists Space and Museum of Modern Art, both in New York; and the Biennials 8th Berlin, 9th Gwangju, 1st Yinchuan, and 10th Manifesta. They lecture frequently at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut; University of Warsaw; Princeton University, New Jersey; University of California, Los Angeles; and New York University; Abu Dhabi are among the universities that have hosted them.

Slavs & Tatars
Qatalogue, 2018

Woolen yarn
75 x 71 inches

Courtesy of Beata and Tom Majewski

Installation view of *Carpet Mapping* at Schloss Britz Berlin, 2023. Image courtesy of Jens Ferchland



Andrea Zittel

Born in Escondido, California, 1965

Lives in Joshua Tree, California

Andrea Zittel's work has broadened its scope from the BFA in painting and sculpture that she earned at San Diego State University, California, and her MFA from Rhode Island School of Design in sculpture. Meanings and modes of living are at the core of her architectural-spacial-object-based and community-based remote complex in the desert near Joshua Tree in California. Panels and planes are the fundamental forms that define her designs across media and function, from fashion to architecture.

Public commissions can be found off the coast of Denmark, at the Denver Federal Center in Colorado, and in the sculpture park at Newfields, Indianapolis, Indiana. Teaching is an important component of her practice, evidenced by the intensive seminars she conducts annually at A-Z West and her serving as critic in the graduate program at Columbia University, New York. The public collections that hold her work span the globe, with US collections including New York's Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Her work has been part of important international exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale, 1993; *Documenta X*, Kassel, Germany, and *Skulptur Projekte Münster*, 1997, Germany. Work was included in the 1995 and 2004 Whitney Biennials. Awards she has been honored with include a 1995 DAAD Fellowship; in 2005, the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucelia Artist Award; the Distinguished Body of Work Award from the College Art Association in 2006; in 2007, the AICA Award for Best Architecture or Design Show; and in 2012, she was awarded the Austrian Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts. In 2015, Zittel was granted a Guggenheim Fellowship for Fine Arts.

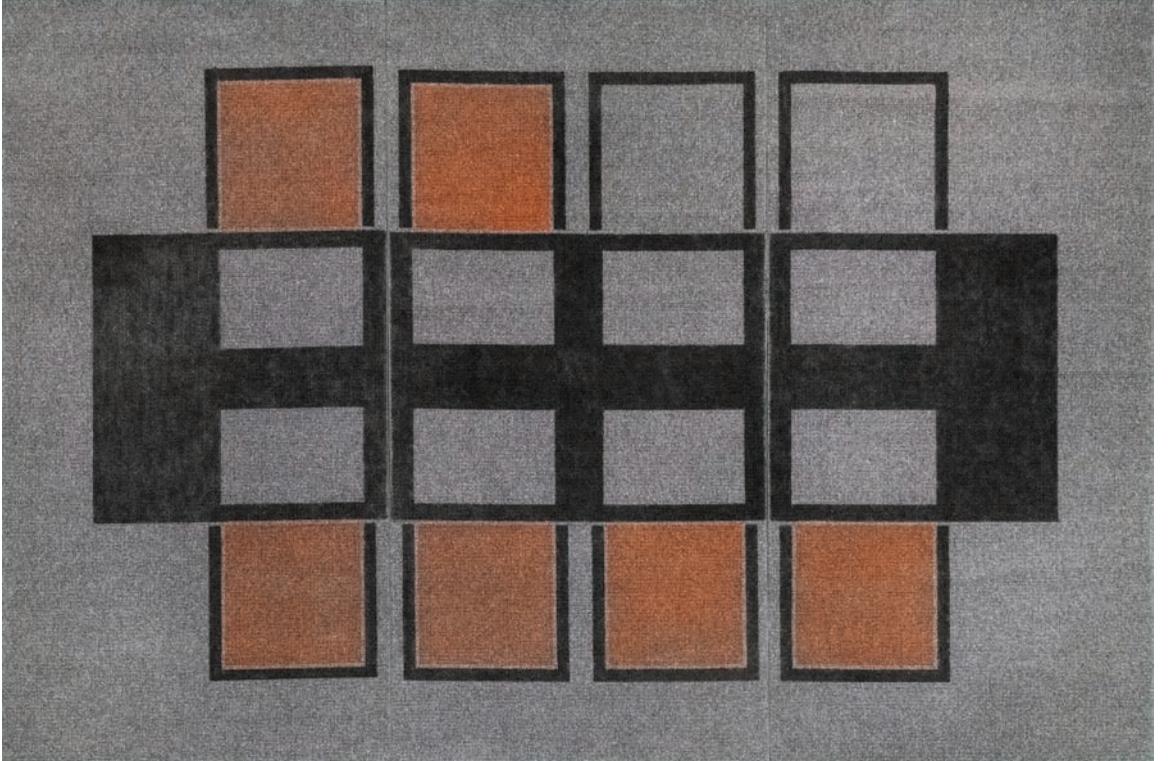
Andrea Zittel

Carpet Furniture: Drop Leaf Table, 1993

Silk and wool dye on wool carpet

96 x 144 inches

Collection of the McNay Art Museum, gift of John M. Parker Jr., 2017.235



Acknowledgments

Pratt Manhattan Gallery is thrilled to host *RugLife*, an incredible exhibition that underscores Pratt Institute's emphasis on interdisciplinary thought and creative expression. I love that this exhibition is truly global in scope, yet all of the artists' aims and the curatorial focuses are filtered through something as domestic and unassuming as a rug. I am grateful that this exhibition asks me to trade the rug's ubiquity for its deep cultural and political resonance.

It is always a pleasure to work with Ginger Gregg Duggan and Judith Hoos Fox of c²-curator-squared, and this exhibition has been no exception. Their insight, understanding, and flexibility have made presenting our iteration of *RugLife* an easy and rewarding experience. We are indebted to Ariel Zaccheo and the incredible team at the Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco, for their impeccable organizational and logistical planning to not only premiere *RugLife* but also to ensure that other institutions across the country can host this exhibition for their communities to enjoy.

Thank you to the artists and lenders of *RugLife*. Your trust and support make it possible for exhibitions like this to happen. I also want to thank the Coby Foundation for their generous support of this show.

At Pratt, I would like to thank the Exhibitions Department team for their diligence and dedication in presenting *RugLife: Grace Abbott*, gallery coordinator; Travis Molkenbur, head preparator;

Jun Ishida, Eliette Mitchell, Peter Schenck, and Scott Whipkey, installation technicians; and our wonderful staff of students whose involvement and energy cannot be overstated.

Finally, I would like to thank Nick Battis, our former director of exhibitions, whose retirement occurred while planning *RugLife*. Nick's commitment to Pratt, and this department specifically, is inspiring and unmatched. I know he is excited about this exhibition and would share in these acknowledgements.

Sincerely,

Ted Holland
Interim Director of Exhibitions

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