



Title - "Osho"

Contemporary Art

Artist - Faig Ahmed (1982 - present) of Baku, Azerbaijan

**Palm Springs Art Museum purchase for Permanent Collection with funds
provided by Donna Macmillan**

Medium - Textile (Carpet) and Sculpture

Work completed in Bulbule (a small village near Baku, Azerbaijan)

I first saw Faig Ahmed's "Osho" from far across the Chase Gallery and was immediately drawn to it as I have always had an interest and appreciation for fine Caucasian carpets. I had never seen anything like this work before and I was fascinated to learn just what the artist had done to transform the centuries old craft of hand carpet weaving into a sculptural piece of art that was so bold, so modern, and so contemporary.

Faig Ahmed lives and works in Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan. He graduated from the Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Art's Sculpture Department in 2004. He represented Azerbaijan at the 2004 Venice Biennale and his works have been exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions worldwide. Ahmed is also represented in private collections worldwide and his works are included in the Permanent Collections of LACMA and The Seattle Art Museum.

As a small child, Faig Ahmed had a fascination with textiles and once cut up and rearranged the design motifs of one of his grandmother's traditional Azerbaijani carpets, much to the dismay of his family. In his early career as an artist he worked in painting, installation art, and video, but his fascination with textiles and pattern drew him back to textiles and he now works with hand-woven carpets, creating sculpture. He views his art with these carpets as his "experiments." He creates the overall design of his works with the aid of computer software. The works are then executed by skilled craftsmen who hand weave his designs in a manner faithful to centuries of traditional Azerbaijani weaving methods. The result is that the final work of art flows from the traditional, to the contemporary, and further on into the future.

Faig Ahmed states that the concept for his contemporary carpet works originated during "a difficult period in my life in general and the carpet marked my transition from one condition to another." This transition he speaks of is clearly seen in his artful carpets. His inspirations come from carpets made by Azerbaijani weavers which are traditional visual symbols of the region. His art takes these traditional carpets and deconstructs their patterns thereby distorting them into psychedelic sculptural illusions of dripping paint, puddles of melting wax, and slow movement. His "Osho" carpet is a dramatic example of such illusions resulting in a three dimensional tapestry-like version of Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Faig Ahmed states, "I don't want to change anything, but at the same time I want to change everything" and that is beautifully demonstrated here with "Osho" and with all of his many carpet sculptural works.

- Bob Maietta

Sources:

smithsonian.com, November 19, 2015, "This Artist Makes Traditional Carpets That Look Like They Were Hit by a Software Bug" by Danny Lewis
Surface Design Journal, Spring 2015, "Rethinking Tradition" by Jessica Hemmings

Anti-Utopias: A Contemporary Art Platform, February 9, 2016, "Faig Ahmed: Points of Perception", Author unknown

faigahmed.com/about/info

Thesis, August 2016, "An Ecstatic Collapse: A Re-Thinking for Faig Ahmed's *Carpet Series*" by Kelsey Savannah Hoffman, B.A., University of Texas at Austin in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Palm Springs Art Museum Collections Committee Report, July 8, 2016

Palm Springs Art Museum Question Strategies Workshop, "Touring Challenging Contemporary Art", Bonnie Porter, MOCA Lead Gallery Educator