

IN CELEBRATION OF CANADA'S 150th THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM BECOMES A CANVAS FOR CANADIAN ARTISTS

Latest exhibition, *HERE*, offers visitors Museum-wide encounters with contemporary art installations



Photo credit: *The Fox, The Nut And the Banker's Hand, 2016-2116* (detail), Babak Golkar.
Image Courtesy: Studio Babak Golkar and Sabrina Amrani.
[Click here to download this image](#)

Toronto, April 25, 2017 — The Aga Khan Museum marks Canada's 150 years as a nation by transforming its renowned architectural spaces into canvases for expression and conversation about the complexities of Canadian identity in one of its most experimental exhibitions yet. Opening July 22, ***HERE: Locating Contemporary Canadian Artists***, features more than 20 artists working in a wide variety of media, among them painting, sculpture, video, and textile, in a few cases presented in unexpected and provocative ways.

Curated by **Swapnaa Tamhane**, artist and curator, the artworks explore the multi-layered histories of people and places and reveal surprising connections among the myriad cultures that make up Canada today. The exhibition is inspired by an ancient Roman artifact in the Museum's Permanent Collection, a marble carving adorned with acanthus leaves on one side and Kufic script on the other. The artifact was originally used as decoration for an ancient Roman structure but was later repurposed to mark the grave of a leather merchant, thus bearing the inscriptions of different cultures and different times.

“The contemporary artists featured in *HERE* suggest that Canadian identity, too, is made of many ‘inscriptions’ and many stories,” says Tamhane. “They each carry experiences from multiple geographies and generations; and furthermore, their art takes on new meaning and reflection within the interlace of the Museum’s environments.”

Highlights of the exhibition include:

- Jamelie Hassan’s *Souvenir of Lebanon, Made in Canada*, one of three works in the exhibition by the acclaimed artist, inscribes the flag of Lebanon into a log cut from a Canadian-grown cedar tree.
- *The Fox, The Nut and the Banker’s Hand* (pictured above), a sculpture by Babak Golkar, a Vancouver-based, American-born artist of Iranian descent. Acclaimed at the Turin Art Fair, the work is a time capsule concealed within a taxidermy animal.
- *Blanket*, a textile work by Brette Gabel, who learned the art of quilt-making from her Saskatchewan grandmother. The work displays the eight-sided star motif common to many cultures and will hang in the Museum’s Courtyard Café.
- *Ascent*, by Jaret Vadera, who lives and works between Toronto, New York, and several cities in India, is derived from video of sunlight on water and will be installed in the ramp between the Museum and the parking garage.
- A series of three abstract works painted directly onto the Museum gallery walls by Shaan Syed, who isolates patterns from both Islamic ceramic tiles and North African Berber carpets.

To mark the opening of the exhibition, Tamhane will lead a panel discussion with several of the artists featured in the exhibition, exploring what “here” means for Canadian artists today. Other special programming includes a free afternoon lecture by Tamhane entitled “What is Being *HERE*?” Beginning in September 2017 and continuing into 2018, the series *Conversation Nation* will bring to the Museum some of the exceptional performing artists from all over the world who make Canada their home, in on-stage combinations that celebrate the dialogue at the heart of Canadian pluralism.

The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, Canada, has been established and developed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), which is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). The Museum’s mission is to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the contribution that Muslim civilizations have made to world heritage while often reflecting, through both its permanent and temporary exhibitions, how cultures connect with one another. Designed by architect Fumihiko Maki, the Museum shares a 6.8-hectare site with Toronto’s Ismaili Centre, which was designed by architect Charles Correa. The surrounding landscaped park was designed by landscape architect Vladimir Djurovic.

– 30 –

FOR PRESS INQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

Jackie Koffman, Holmes PR
jkoffman@holmespr.com
416.628.5608

Arlene Madell, Aga Khan Museum
press@agakhanmuseum.org
416.858.8735