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Hammer Museum Exhibits Hand-Woven Carpets Made by Afghan Weavers and Designed by Six Contemporary L.A. Artists

New work shaped by trip to Afghanistan will benefit women weavers;

The Afghan Carpet Project opens June 13, 2015

(Los Angeles, CA) – The Hammer Museum announced today a new exhibition, *The Afghan Carpet Project*, that will feature six carpets designed by L.A.-based contemporary artists—**Lisa Anne Auerbach, Liz Craft, Meg Cranston, Francesca Gabbiani, Jennifer Guidi, and Toba Khedoori**—which were handmade by weavers in Afghanistan. The exhibition is the culmination of a project that began with a trip to Afghanistan in March 2014 to visit weavers in Kabul and Bamiyan as part of a federal initiative to stimulate the Afghan economy and bring in business to the region. The trip provided the artists with insight into the craft and the production process, as well as the living and working conditions for the weavers.

Following the 2014 trip to Afghanistan, each artist came up with an original design for her carpet—some reflecting upon the experience, and others derived out of the artists' respective practices. The project was originally initiated by the non-profit organization [AfghanMade](#), along with carpet producer Christopher Farr, Inc. The carpets will be on sale at [Christopher Farr, Inc.](#) starting September 2015. A portion of the proceeds from carpet sales will benefit [Arzu Studio Hope](#), a nonprofit organization that established weaving studios in Afghanistan to provide fair wages, education, and healthcare to Afghan women.

The show will also include photo documentation of the trip, captured by Lisa Anne Auerbach. This exhibition is organized by Hammer curator Ali Subotnick with Emily Gonzalez-Jarrett, curatorial associate, and will be on view at the Hammer from June 13 through September 27, 2015.

Hammer Director Ann Philbin said, "Although there was some trepidation on the part of the Museum and the artists to make a trip to Afghanistan at this moment in time, ultimately it was impossible to resist the opportunity. To visit these remarkable craftspeople and see firsthand their extraordinary weavings was a great experience for these artists. The fact that the project connects and empowers women across different cultures and countries only strengthened their purpose and desire to participate. The carpets they have made are extremely beautiful and represent a very special collaboration."

Christopher Farr said, "We have always been interested in finding new and better ways to make things while respecting the traditions of the craft – which is what prompted this collaboration with AfghanMade. They recognized our merit and creativity, and we brought the concept to the Hammer Museum."

The Afghan Carpet Project is made possible thanks to the generous support of Dori and Charles Mostov. Additional support is provided by Adam Lindemann.

Special thanks to Alisa and Kevin Ratner, Christopher Farr, Matthew Bourne, and Joseph Rainsford at Christopher Farr Inc., and Lisa Sanchez and Bulent Ozozan at AfghanMade.

For more information on the beneficiary of this project, please visit Arzu Studio Hope at arzustudiohope.org

RELATED PROGRAMS

What Tomorrow Brings: Work-in-Progress Screening

Wednesday, June 17, 7:30pm

What Tomorrow Brings is the story of the first all-girls' school in a remote Afghan village. The film traces the interconnected stories of students, teachers, village elders, parents and tenacious school founder Razia Jan who teaches a nation, a community and the students themselves that girls also count. While the girls learn to read and write, their education goes far beyond the classroom to become lessons about tradition and time. They discover their school is the one place they can turn to understand the differences between the lives they were born into and the lives they dream of leading. Followed by an audience feedback session with director **Beth Murphy**. (2015, Dir. B. Murphy, 90 min.)

Saving Afghanistan's Art and Cultural Heritage

Tuesday, June 30, 7:30PM

Archaeologists **Sayed Omar Sultan** and **Laura Tedesco** discuss efforts to save Afghanistan's art and culture. Sultan is Afghanistan's former deputy minister of culture. Tedesco serves as the cultural heritage Program Manager for the U.S. State Department where she works with the Afghan National Museum on its preservation efforts. Moderated by Ian Masters, journalist, author, screenwriter, documentary filmmaker, and host of the radio programs *Background Briefing*, Sundays at 11AM, and *The Daily Briefing*, Monday through Thursday at 5PM, on KPFK 90.7 FM.

Conflict Kitchen & Afghan Cuisine

Wednesday, August 19, 7:30PM

Explore Afghan culture and cuisine in this multisensory event crafted by **Dawn Weleski**, co-director of Conflict Kitchen, a Pittsburgh restaurant that serves food from countries with which the U.S. is in conflict. Conflict Kitchen offers a unique medium for presenting cultures and people beyond the polarizing rhetoric of politics and the narrow lens of media headlines.

ABOUT AFGHANMADE

AfghanMade was created to focus on the revitalization of traditional industries in Afghanistan – including carpet weaving, cashmere production, jewelry, and artisan products. In 2014, AfghanMade reinvested in hand-knotted carpets – Afghanistan's largest legal export with over one million Afghans working directly or indirectly in the supply chain of this industry. Historically, the patterns and quality of Afghan carpets were virtually unchanged from the previous century as Afghans had minimal exposure to outside influences, however today Afghan carpets have become modern and versatile as they embrace contemporary designs and colors.

Weaving is dominated by women in the country, in both urban and rural areas, and AfghanMade Carpets quickly invested in leading industry experts to provide Afghans training on proper wool selection, spinning techniques, new coloration and design. Staff are trained to produce premium quality washes according to international standards. Afghans can now sell their finished products directly to international markets, rather than having their work finished, packaged, and sold by neighboring countries.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Lisa Anne Auerbach (b. 1967 in Ann Arbor, Michigan; lives in Los Angeles) received a BFA from Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York and a MFA from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, California. She has shown work in numerous venues internationally, including solo exhibitions at Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden (2012); American Philosophical Society Museum and Philagrafika2010: Out of Print, Philadelphia (2010); Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, United Kingdom (2009); University of Michigan Art Museum, Ann Arbor, Michigan (2009); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado (2008); Printed Matter, New York (2009); and CPK Kunsthall, Copenhagen (2006). Her work was also included in *Whitney Biennial 2014* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and *Nine Lives: Visionary Artists from L.A.* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2009). Auerbach is Assistant Professor at Pomona College and she has also self-published numerous magazines including *American Megazine*, *Saddlesore*, and *American Homebody*, among others.

Liz Craft (b. 1970 in Los Angeles; lives in Los Angeles) received a BA from Otis Parsons, Los Angeles and a MFA from University of California, Los Angeles. Her work has been shown internationally, including solo exhibitions at Halle für Kunst, Lunéberg, Germany (2006); Public Art Fund, New York (2002); and Centrum für Gegenwartskunst Oberösterreich, Linz, Austria (2001). Her work was also included in *The Garden of Forking Paths* at the Migros Museum für

Gegenwartskunst; *Eden's Edge* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2007); and *Whitney Biennial 2004* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Craft is a senior lecturer at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles.

Meg Cranston (b. 1960 in Baldwin, New York; lives in Los Angeles) received a BA from Kenyon College, Ohio and a MFA from California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California. She has had solo exhibitions at Kunstverein Heilbronn, Heilbronn, Germany (2015); LA><ART, Los Angeles (2013); Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany (2009); Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin, New Zealand (2008); Mercer Union, Toronto (2008); Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand (2007); Printed Matter, New York (2000); and Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, California (1988). Her work was also included in *Made in L.A. 2014* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles and *Helter Skelter* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1992). Cranston is Chair of the Department of Fine Arts at Otis College of Art and Design.

Francesca Gabbiani (b. 1965, Montreal, Canada; lives in Los Angeles) received a BA from École Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Geneva, Switzerland; attended Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam; and received a MFA from University of California, Los Angeles. Her work has been shown internationally including solo exhibitions at the 2nd Mardin Biennial, Turkey (2012); CentrePasquArt, Kunsthaus Centre d'Art Biel Bienne, Switzerland (2005); Kunstverein Wolfsburg, Germany (2003); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2001); and Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Geneva, Switzerland (1998). In 2009, Gabbiani curated an exhibition for the Hammer Museum as part of the ongoing *Houseguest* series.

Jennifer Guidi (b. 1972 in Redondo Beach, California; lives in Los Angeles) received a BFA from Boston University and a MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She had solo exhibitions at LA><ART, Los Angeles (2014); Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York (2014); and ACME, Los Angeles (2006 and 2005). Her work has also been included in group shows at Pepin Moore, Los Angeles (2011); Anton Kern Gallery, New York (2008); Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago (2006); Santa Monica Museum of Art, California (2005).

Toba Khedoori (b. 1964 in Sydney; lives in Los Angeles) received a BFA from San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco and a MFA from University of California, Los Angeles. She has had solo exhibitions at St. Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis (2003); Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin (2002); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2001); Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland (2001); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC (1997); and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1997). Her work has also been included in *Making Worlds: the 53rd International Art Exhibition* at the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2009); the 2nd International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Seville, Italy (2006); the Liverpool Biennial at the Tate Liverpool, United Kingdom (2006); the 26th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2004); and *Whitney Biennial 1995* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. She will be the subject of a forthcoming solo exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2016.

ABOUT CHRISTOPHER FARR, INC.

Established in London in 1988 and Los Angeles in 2001, Christopher Farr together with his business partner Matthew Bourne have been at the forefront of contemporary rug design for over twenty five years. With backgrounds firmly rooted in antique Oriental carpets and textiles, both share a passionate knowledge of contemporary art and design that informs the work they produce. Farr trained at the Chelsea School of Art as well as Slade School of Art in London. Christopher Farr Inc is best known for their collaborations with a diverse community of designers and artists including luminaries such as Louise Bourgeois, Gary Hume, Sarah Morris, Andrée Putman, John Pawson, Jorge Pardo and Sam Falls to produce beautiful collectible carpets. With each collaboration a new challenge is presented pushing the boundaries of rug design. The company prides itself on using the very best yarn, dyes and weavers. Bourne's broad experience in production and attention to detail led to the innovation of new techniques.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum at UCLA offers collections, exhibitions, and programs that span the classic to the contemporary in art, architecture, and design. The Hammer's international exhibition program focuses on wide-ranging thematic and monographic exhibitions, highlighting contemporary art since the 1960s and the work of emerging artists through Hammer Projects and the Hammer's biennial, *Made in L.A.* As a cultural center, the Hammer Museum offers nearly 300 free public programs a year, including lectures, readings, symposia, film screenings, and music performances at the Billy Wilder Theater which also houses the UCLA Film & Television Archive. The Hammer is home of the Armand Hammer Collection of American and European paintings, as well as the Armand Hammer Daumier and Contemporaries Collection and the Hammer Contemporary Collection. The Hammer Contemporary Collection focuses on art of all media since 1960 with an emphasis on works of the last ten years, works on paper, and art made in Los Angeles. The museum also houses

the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts—comprising more than 45,000 prints, drawings, photographs, and artists' books from the Renaissance to the present—and oversees the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden at UCLA. Free admission to the Hammer Museum is made possible through the generosity of benefactors Erika J. Glazer and Brenda R. Potter.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Hammer Museum is free and open to the public.

Visit www.hammer.ucla.edu for current exhibition and program information and call 310-443-7041 for tours.

Hours: Tuesday–Friday 11am–8pm, Saturday & Sunday 11am–5pm. Closed Mondays and national holidays. The Hammer is located at 10899 Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood, Los Angeles. Parking is available onsite for \$3 (maximum 3 hours) or for a \$3 flat rate after 6pm.

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