



Contact:

Allison Gray, Communications Director
263 Pearl Street, Cambridge, MA, 02139
allison@gallery263.com
www.gallery263.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Carpet Grew Like a Garden

The first-ever solo show by Shabnam Jannesari

On View: January 14–February 13, 2021

Gallery Hours: Wednesday–Friday, 4–7 PM; Saturday, 1–4 PM

Cambridge, MA – Gallery 263 is pleased to announce *The Carpet Grew Like a Garden*, the first-ever solo exhibition by Shabnam Jannesari, an Iranian-born and Massachusetts-based artist. This show is part of Gallery 263’s Exhibition Proposal Series, a program in which exhibitions are selected by a competitive jurying process. In *The Carpet Grew Like a Garden*, Jannesari’s large-scale paintings illuminate the life the artist left behind in Iran. Through the lens of personal experiences, Jannesari explores the censorship of Iranian women by an overarching patriarchy and invites a dialog to reconsider assumptions about women whose lives have been circumscribed by Islamic culture.

The commanding life-size figures, rendered in oil paint or ink, are Shabnam Jannesari’s friends and family. Also included are portraits of the artist, often pictured with a camera in hand. Jannesari is inspired by women who push against the constraints society has placed on them. In *The Carpet Grew Like a Garden*, the figures occupy an ideal, secret, and supportive space that departs from reality and is imagined by the artist.

Persian carpets, serving as a symbol of this ideal world or paradise, are depicted in warm, saturated colors and elaborate patterns that conjure childhood memories for the artist. Jannesari’s use of these patterns acts as a bridge between different elements in her paintings. Persian carpets represent a world that transcends everyday life, which is the kind of space Jannesari builds for the figures in her paintings. The artist floods domestic rooms with pattern and color, freeing the women from societal rules. By reinventing and creating imaginary spaces with her intense palettes, Jannesari constructs an abstracted and highly emotive world.

Shabnam Jannesari’s paintings express her personal story, and reflect on the broad suppression of Iranian women’s lives. In *Hierarchy*, Jannesari emphasizes the female figure’s scale as she floats above a male figure in space. The woman’s size and compositional dominance are in contrast to the reality of Islamic culture; in Iran, the current legal system gives superior legal status to the male head of the family. In other works, the artist paints her figures without hijabs to represent women who remove their scarves in public to fight against the hijab law that has been imposed on them. Sharing these personal yet universal narratives in public provides Jannesari with the opportunity to connect with others and address the complex realities of Iranian female identity.

About the Artist

Shabnam Jannesari is an Iranian artist and an MFA candidate at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. She incorporates drawing and painting to explore a nostalgia of distant intimacies in her life. Her work illuminates the plight of the Iranian woman, censored by an overreaching patriarchy. Jannesari holds a BFA in Painting from the University of Guilan in Iran and is a recipient of The Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant. She has exhibited her work in Iran, England, and the United States.

Gallery 263 is a nonprofit that advances the artistic endeavors of makers and performers, while fostering public engagement, enrichment, and exchange. Functioning as a creative nexus, Gallery 263 provides a contemporary voice for the arts in Cambridge and our regional communities. Gallery 263 exhibits are free and open to the public.