
PRESS RELEASE

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farid rasulov

1001 CARPET ROOMS

Exhibition: 06.10.2026- 10.01.2027
by appointment only

Michela Negrini is pleased to present 1001 Carpet Rooms, the first solo show in Switzerland by Farid Rasulov (b. 1985, Shusha, Azerbaijan).

Farid Rasulov is a multidisciplinary artist based in Baku. Trained as a doctor, he turned to contemporary art after graduating from Azerbaijan State Medical University. His practice encompasses installation, sculpture, painting, photography, 3D and digital image-making, animation, and textile-based work.

Rather than developing a fixed visual language, Rasulov works across media and draws extensively from the world around him. Everyday objects, domestic environments, architectural forms, animals, food, ritual, ornament and traditional crafts become recurring subjects and materials. His works often begin with things that are immediately recognisable, which he then shifts through changes of scale, repetition, material, context or function.

The exhibition **1001 Carpet Rooms** features works from a series of 1001 unique 3D-rendered images in which European-style domestic interiors are transformed through Azerbaijani carpet patterns and inhabited by animals. Presented as photographic prints, the works construct surreal spaces in which furniture, architecture, ornament and living creatures coexist within an intensely patterned environment.

The series emerged from Rasulov's longstanding fascination with the encounter between Eastern and Western aesthetics. Its starting point is deceptively simple: a recognisable European interior is covered almost entirely by the visual language of the Azerbaijani carpet. Yet once the pattern extends across walls, floors, furniture and architectural surfaces, the room begins to lose its conventional function. Decoration becomes environment; surface becomes structure; the interior becomes an image.

The project developed in parallel with Rasulov's Carpet Interior, presented in the Azerbaijani pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. There, a European-style living room—complete with sofas, armchairs, tables, chairs and bookshelves—was enveloped in textiles bearing traditional geometric patterns associated with the Karabakh region. The installation transformed the carpet from an object within the room into a condition of the room itself. In 1001 Carpet Rooms, that physical transformation becomes virtual.

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Rasulov represented Azerbaijan at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 and at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. He has since exhibited internationally in museums, biennales, galleries and public art projects across Europe, the United States, the Middle East and the Caucasus.

The geographical and cultural specificity of his practice remains important. Azerbaijani domestic life, the rapidly transforming urban landscape of Baku, traditional carpet ornament, food, ritual and local craft traditions provide a rich source of material. At the same time, Rasulov deliberately places these references in dialogue with other visual and cultural systems, making his work difficult to contain within a single category of identity or tradition.

His medical training offers another perspective on his practice. Medicine is a discipline of observation, classification and dissection: of looking beneath appearances, isolating elements and examining relationships between seemingly separate systems. A similar impulse can be found in Rasulov's work. Rooms are broken down into surfaces, furniture and inhabitants; patterns become environments; rituals are separated into objects, bodies and gestures; everyday tools can acquire entirely different forms and functions.

This movement between the familiar and the unexpected is central to Rasulov's practice. A domestic object can become sculpture, an interior can become an image, an ornament can become architecture, and a traditional form can be reconfigured through contemporary technologies.

Rasulov has also repeatedly resisted the tendency to regard his works as carriers of fixed or hidden meanings. He has described his practice as grounded in commonplace things and has questioned the impulse to search for a deeper explanation behind them. This position leaves his works deliberately open: saturated with cultural references, yet resistant to a single interpretation.

His practice consequently occupies a productive space between recognition and estrangement. Familiar things remain visible, but their relationships have changed. It is within this shift from the ordinary to the unexpected that much of Rasulov's work takes place.

Rasulov has established an international exhibition record spanning Europe, the Middle East, the United States, and beyond, with numerous solo and group presentations at prominent museums, galleries, and cultural institutions. His solo exhibitions include the Museum of Modern Art in Baku, YARAT Contemporary Art Space, Rabouan Moussion Gallery in Paris, and Laumiere Sculptural Park in St. Louis.

His work has been presented at the 53rd and 55th Venice Biennales, as well as the OSTRALE Biennale in Dresden and the Moscow Young Biennale of Contemporary Art. He was also featured in Fly to Baku: Contemporary Art from Azerbaijan, presented across Vienna, Rome, Moscow, Berlin, Paris, and London. His international practice has been further showcased in Dubai, Sharjah, Istanbul, Bahrain, Portugal, Switzerland, and Germany, and recognized with the Arte Laguna Prize for Sculpture and Installation.

THE ORDINARY, RECONFIGURED

by Michela Negrini

Rasulov's art begins with things that already belong to the world. Carpets, furniture, animals, skewers, pallets, architectural materials, food, medical instruments, domestic interiors: his vocabulary is composed less of invented forms than of objects and images encountered in everyday life. Yet in Rasulov's work, familiarity is never quite allowed to remain familiar. A useful object becomes a sculpture; a room becomes an image; an ornament becomes an environment; a ritual becomes a surreal theatre. What appears ordinary is repeatedly subjected to a subtle process of displacement.

Rather than inventing an alternative vocabulary, Rasulov takes possession of the existing one. His materials are already loaded with use, memory and cultural association. What changes is their relationship to one another: their scale, repetition, context or function. The object itself may remain recognisable, but the circumstances in which we encounter it have shifted.

The artist has repeatedly resisted the expectation that his works should be decoded. He has described his practice as a response to commonplace things and has questioned the tendency of viewers to search for meanings that, according to him, are not there. This refusal is less straightforward than it initially appears. His works are saturated with cultural references and, precisely because they are so recognisable, seem to invite interpretation. The resulting tension—between an image that appears to mean something and an artist who resists assigning it a fixed meaning—is one of the defining pleasures of his work.

His strategy might therefore be understood as a form of literalism pushed towards absurdity. Instead of turning away from the everyday in search of the exceptional, Rasulov takes the everyday seriously enough to exaggerate it. A kebab skewer remains a kebab skewer, but a thousand of them become an architecture. A living room remains a living room, but when its surfaces are covered by the same carpet pattern, the domestic environment begins to dissolve into ornament. A functional object remains visible even after its function has been displaced.

Repetition is crucial to this process. Through multiplication, Rasulov allows familiar things to become strange without becoming unrecognisable. The repeated object acquires a new scale and a new rhythm; what was once functional becomes structural, spatial or pictorial. The ordinary does not disappear. It becomes excessive.

The carpet is perhaps the clearest example. A recurring element throughout Rasulov's practice, it is not treated simply as a symbol of Azerbaijani heritage. Instead, he tests what happens when its ornamental language escapes the boundaries of the textile itself.

In *Carpet Interior*, presented in the Azerbaijani pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013, a European-style living room was enveloped in patterns derived from Karabakh carpets. Sofas, chairs, tables, bookshelves and other domestic elements became part of a continuous ornamental field. The carpet was no longer an object placed within an interior; it became the interior itself. The effect is both comic and disorienting. The clean lines of the modern interior encounter the density and repetition of carpet ornament, producing a collision between two systems of visual organisation. Yet Rasulov does not simply oppose one to the other. He allows them to contaminate one another until the distinction between decoration and architecture, object and surface, East and West begins to dissolve.

This is characteristic of his broader approach to tradition. His references to Azerbaijani culture do not function as static signs of identity. They are materials that can be displaced, exaggerated, reconstructed and placed into new relationships. Tradition becomes something active rather than fixed: a language that can be continually reconfigured.

The same movement can be seen in his more recent engagement with carpet weaving, where inherited forms are brought into dialogue with contemporary imagery and techniques. Rather than treating heritage as a historical language that must simply be preserved, Rasulov approaches it as a living system capable of generating new images.

This movement between preservation and transformation is also present elsewhere in his practice. Alongside his investigations of domesticity and ornament, Rasulov has increasingly turned towards landscape, animals, flora and ecological questions. Recent works engage with the Caspian Sea and its fragile ecosystem, extending his interest in coexistence and transformation from the cultural sphere into the natural world. Across these different bodies of work, however, the underlying operation remains remarkably consistent: Rasulov takes something that seems settled and makes it unsettled. He does this without abandoning recognition. His objects remain legible; his images remain seductive; his materials remain familiar. What changes is the relationship between them.

Perhaps this is why his work occupies such an intriguing position between humour and seriousness. The artist may refuse the burden of a hidden meaning, but the works continue to generate questions. What happens when ornament becomes architecture when a utensil becomes sculpture when a domestic room becomes an image when a ritual becomes theatre when heritage becomes material rather than symbol Rasulov's answer is rarely given in words. Instead, he constructs situations in which the question remains suspended. The ordinary is still there.

It has simply become impossible to take for granted.

Michela Negrini and the [dip] project

Michela Negrini is a curator, art & design advisor, and founder of the [dip] project, a platform for investigating new trajectories in contemporary art across disciplines and media, while fostering critical reflection on the global issues that shape our time.

Based between Milan and Lugano she works internationally across contemporary art, cultural research and the development of collections and environments.

Her practice is grounded in more than two decades of experience and brings together curatorial research, artistic collaboration and cultural strategy, with projects spanning exhibitions, commissions, archives, collections, architecture and design.

Working with artists, the Geraldo de Barros Archive, institutions and private clients, she develops considered projects in which art enters into dialogue with context, space and lived experience. Her approach is grounded in rigorous research, close attention to materiality and detail, and a long-term perspective on cultural value.

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FARID RASULOV

from the series *1001 Carpet Rooms*

3D-rendered images

photographic prints on Photo Rag paper

cm 100 x 150, edition of 3

cm 50 x 70, edition of 5

Courtesy the Artist and Galleria Michela Negrini

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