



MEDIA ALERT
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July 23, 2013

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City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
Appoints Rijin Sahakian
as Guest Curator for
Exhibition of Contemporary Art from the Islamic World
as a Companion Exhibition to
Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art

Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Park
October 23 to December 28, 2014

Los Angeles - The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Rijin Sahakian as Guest Curator for the Los Angeles exhibition of contemporary art from the Islamic world as a companion exhibition to ***Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art.***

DCA will host both exhibitions at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG) in Barnsdall Park from October 23 to December 28, 2014.

For *Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art*, this will be the fifth and final mainland stop on a tour that will conclude at the Honolulu Museum of Art and will chronicle how Doris Duke came to amass an impressive collection of artworks from throughout the Islamic world, and how she went on to commission architect Marion Sims Wyeth to build her *Shangri La*, the five-acre estate in Honolulu, which housed it.

In Los Angeles, the Doris Duke exhibition will be complemented by a companion exhibition of contemporary art from the Islamic world, which will be produced by **Rijin Sahakian**, a curator with a deep knowledge of the contemporary arts scene of the diverse countries where there is a strong Muslim presence, including the diaspora.

Ms. Sahakian's ambitious curatorial project will reflect on the travels of Doris Duke, which inspired and ignited the Islamic Art collection, while looking at the contemporary issues of travel and migration. The Doris Duke exhibition will be hosted in LAMAG's South Gallery, while the guest curated exhibition will take place in the North Gallery of LAMAG.

DCA is partnering with the California Institute for the Arts (CalArts) to offer Ms. Sahakian not only a chance to develop the companion exhibition, but also to be a Visiting Faculty Member at CalArts in the 2014 Spring semester and leading up to the premiere of the exhibition.



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DCA is also partnering with several institutions including: the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, REDCAT, Self-Help Graphics and Art, the Fowler Museum at UCLA, and the Skirball Cultural Center to present citywide collateral programming, which looks at Islamic Art from both a historical and contemporary perspective, with pluralistic visions and representations.

Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art is organized by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, and was curated by Donald Albrecht and Thomas Mellins.

The exhibition is a glimpse at how Ms. Duke, whose honeymoon trip in 1935 led to a life-long fascination with Islamic art, worked with a diverse group of scholars, dealers, and artisans to establish a collection of objects that span from 13th century tiles, to 16th century manuscripts, to ceilings and other objects commissioned from artisans of the day.

At its first presentation in New York's Museum of Arts and Design, it garnered high praise from The New York Times' Karen Rosenberg who deemed it, "One of the best places to see Islamic art in New York right now, beyond the permanent collections of the Brooklyn and Metropolitan Museums."

Photographs, films, correspondence, and ephemera tell the tale of Duke's *Shangri La* and more than sixty objects - ceramics, textiles, jewelry, paintings, tile panels, and full-scale architectural elements - are woven together with historic photographs and artifacts, demonstrating the distinct balance between the house and its collections.

In addition to artworks that reflect diverse manifestations of Islamic art found in Spain, Morocco, Egypt, India, and other lands, and which date to the 10th Century, the exhibition also includes a small number of objects created by artists who have participated in *Shangri La's* current Artists-in-Residence Program, such as Shahzia Sikander, Walid Raad, Afruz Amighi, and Shezad Dawood.

The exhibition, *Doris Duke's Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art*, spans approximately 5,000 square feet, roughly half the size of Barnsdall Park's Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery.

About Rijin Sahakian

Rijin Sahakian (b. 1978, Baghdad, Iraq) has developed multidisciplinary arts programs in the United States and internationally. Sahakian has presented work on Iraqi art, arts education, and the politics of production at universities and cultural institutions including: Stanford University, the Sharjah Art Foundation, Darat al Funun, and the Royal College of Art. She has also consulted and acted as a producer on various film and exhibition projects including: *Iraq: Reframe* at the Montalvo Arts Center; the feature film *Detroit Unleaded*; and the *Desert Initiative* at the ASU Art Museum.

Sahakian was awarded a graduate Fulbright Fellowship for research in Amman, Jordan, where she was also a visiting scholar at the Columbia University Middle East Research Center. She has contributed essays and writing to various publications, artist catalogues, and projects. Sahakian received her M.A. in Contemporary Art and Cultural Policy from



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New York University. She founded *Sada (Echo)* for contemporary Iraqi art, a nonprofit project supporting new and emerging arts practices through education initiatives in Iraq and public programs internationally in 2011, which she currently directs.

About the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

The **Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)** generates and supports high quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles' 4 million residents and 40 million annual overnight and day visitors. DCA advances the social and economic impact of the arts and ensures access to diverse and enriching cultural activities through: grantmaking, marketing, public art, community arts programming, arts education, and building partnerships with artists and arts and cultural organizations in neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles.

DCA's projected operating budget and managed portfolio totals \$49.6 million in fiscal year 2013/14. It consists of: \$13.4 million in City related and indirect cost allocations; \$10.5 million in Transient Occupancy Tax funds; \$9 million in one-time City funding; \$9 million in funds from the Public Works Improvements Arts Program (PWIAP); \$7.5 million from the Private Arts Development Fee Program (ADF); and \$.2 million raised to date in private and public funds from foundation, corporate, government, and individual donors.

DCA significantly supports artists and cultural projects through its Public Art Division by administering a portfolio totaling \$16.5 million in PWIAP and ADF funds in FY13/14. Of this amount, typically 15% to 20%, or between \$2.5 and \$3.3 million, is attributable to artists' fees.

DCA's Executive Director and Marketing and Development Division have raised over \$21 million since FY07/08 to re-grant to LA-based artists and arts and cultural organizations for re-granting initiatives, and to support DCA's special programming and facilities. DCA also grants approximately \$2.3 million annually to 268 artists and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations through its long-established Grants Administration Division. Additional special project support of more than \$1.5 million is also awarded annually for a total of approximately \$3.8 million invested each year in LA's creative community.

DCA provides arts and cultural programming through its Community Arts Division, managing numerous neighborhood arts and cultural centers, theaters, historic sites, and educational initiatives. DCA's Marketing and Development Division also markets the City's arts and cultural events through development and collaboration with strategic partners, design and production of creative catalogs, publications, and promotional materials, and management of the culturela.org website visited by over 3 million people annually.

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