

RESOLUTION 46/230.  
A SOLO EXHIBITION OF THE WORKS BY FAIG AHMED  
CURATED BY FARAH PIRIYE

“How else can any past, which by definition compromises events, processes, structures, and so forth, considered to be no longer perceivable, be represented in either consciousness or discourse except in an ‘imaginary’ way?”  
Hayden White, *The Content of the Form*, 1928

“... I strive to guide the reader not into the world theatre with its political problems but into his innermost being, before the judgment seat of his very personal conscience”.  
Herman Hesse, *If The War Goes On*, 1949

Set against the backdrop of Azerbaijani history and the impact migration, memory and identity have had on the nation’s modern reality, the exhibition entitled *Resolution 46/230*, curated by Farah Piriye, builds its narrative around the work of prominent Azerbaijani contemporary artist Faig Ahmed, structuring an abstract discourse on shared consciousness and nationhood, religion and spirituality, traditional symbols and the digital world, language and borders.

The exhibition’s title is inspired by Resolution 46/230, which the UN General Assembly adopted on 2 March 1992, at the 82nd plenary meeting of its 46th session in New York, during which Azerbaijan and eight other former Soviet republics became new members of the UN. Marking the 31st year of Azerbaijan’s membership in the United Nations (UN), the exhibition displays nine works by Faig Ahmed, whose ‘carpet sculptures’ forge a triangular symbiosis between humanity, nature and technology.

The word *Resolution* also highlights the virtual spaces Ahmed engineers in his work by utilising pixilation, animation and digital distortion, transforming the perpetual visual language of traditional Eastern carpet making into nonconventional hyper-contemporary forms. *Resolution 46/230* is grounded in a global predicament humanity finds itself in, led by the dramatic divide between technological optimism guaranteeing endless progress and dread of a total takeover by machines, acutely accelerated by the Covid-10 pandemic, forcing human interaction into a world driven by electronic devices.

Ahmed’s work relies on digital design to disrupt and destabilise expectations of a repeat pattern, creating works that redefine boundaries between the past, present and future: “By using the modern pixel on the ancient carpet, we hear the voices of past times”, explains the artist. Fabric patterns have a universal quality, communicating messages across generations and cultures—they are symbols that can be deciphered into words and phrases. Ahmed gives an age-old craft a contemporary voice by taking us on a profound journey into the carpet’s ceaseless patterns and timeless symbolism, maintaining a delicate balance between anthropology, science and technological experimentation. “Notably, even with computer

technology, my carpets are produced the same way as a few thousand years ago. They are woven using similar wool threads and dyed in natural colours. These carpets are woven only by women who pass on this tradition from mother to daughter.”

The exhibition unfolds at the Palais des Nations, during the Human Rights Council session, serving as a serendipitous agent. The selection of works by Ahmed, featured in the Resolution 46/230, reflects the artist’s fascination with Azerbaijani history and identity, examining the dilemma of borders—whether cultural, territorial, linguistic or social. The year of 1992, when Azerbaijan joined the UN, saw a full-scale escalation of the conflict brought on by the early 1990s, and as a newly independent State, the country faced extreme difficulties. In that first year of partnership, UN assistance was focused on the immediate needs of refugees and internally displaced persons, providing food, health services, and shelter to over 600,000 IDPs and 200,000 refugees. The UN continued its support of Azerbaijan throughout the turbulent period of the perestroika, with post-conflict rehabilitation and longer-term development needs as the young country re-established its identity and nationhood.

“Languages are cultural carriers and thus affect the way people think. I am a self-taught student of the Sanskrit and Arabic, languages of Scandinavia and Central Asia. It was the study of pre-historic petroglyphs that led to my fascination with the language of carpet patterns”, reflects Faig. Last year also marked the 30th anniversary of the Roman alphabet becoming the official orthography of Azerbaijan (1992), after a century of repeated changes between Arabic and Latin (1920s) and Latin and Cyrillic (1930s). “This question of alphabets,” says Richard D. Kauzlarich, the U.S. ambassador to Azerbaijan, “is one aspect of the larger question of who we are”. In his personal search for the answer to this age-old question, Faig Ahmed dives deep into the historical dimension of a land that stands out as a region of migration and resettlement. “Known as a “harbour of refuge,” Baku has long beguiled travellers. Its visitors included intellectuals, vendors, and migrant workers. The city’s oil reserves, vaunted for ages, had kept Zoroastrian fire temples burning well after the retreat of its adherents”, says Professor Firoozeh Kashani- Sabet.

The Azerbaijani carpet is a repository of cultural identity, recognised in 2010 as intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO. Faig Ahmed explains: “I like carpets because every knot, every dot in the pattern, has human concentration, human energy.” Ceaselessly delving into national identity and genetics, collective memory and shared history, metaphysics and quantum physics, Faig’s sculptural installations take us on a journey from the times of Zoroastrianism—a religion that has left a deep mark on the history of Azerbaijan, to the ascetic world of Sufism, a mystic body of religious practice within Islam; from the dull realities of the authoritarian Soviet regime to the contemporary sensibility characterised by the ever-increasing invasive pressure of technology. Faig argues that over time, the visual culture of carpets alters under the influence of other cultures, religions and languages. He believes that: “Everything is connected. The craft of carpet making doesn’t belong to one nation, say Azerbaijan or Iran, it is a cross-border product of human civilisation as a whole. The traces of different cultures are detectable in carpets through the development of their patterns and weaving skills.” Faig treats this medium as a stable historical record and metaphor for the ephemeral nature of gradually disappearing borders.