



**MAK**

Press Release

## **MAK Permanent Collection Carpets Reopens**

World-famous carpet collection of the MAK to be presented anew in a spatial concept by Michael Embacher and with an artistic intervention by Füsün Onur

Press Conference	Tuesday, 8 April 2014, 10:30 a.m.
Opening	Tuesday, 8 April 2014, 7 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Permanent Collection Carpets MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	permanent
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m. – 10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Free admission on Tuesdays 6–10 p.m.

With an unusual and all-new spatial concept slated to be unveiled on 8 April 2014, the MAK Permanent Collection Carpets will sweep visitors away into the tranquil fascination of the carpet-maker's art. A selection of over 30 individual objects is to present an impressive survey of the MAK's holdings of distinctive, high-quality carpets with an emphasis on the unique examples of 16th and 17th-century Persian and Mamluk output that make this one of the world's best-known and most valuable such collections. The architectural concept by Viennese designer Michael Embacher, in which the exhibited objects seem to float in mid-air, is reminiscent of the interior of a silkworm's cocoon. And the new textile work by Turkish artist Füsün Onur, made specifically for the MAK Permanent Collection Carpets, enters into a subtle dialog with the deliberately sensuous atmosphere of the newly designed gallery.

In addition to a review of developments in carpet-making from the late 15th century to the 18th century, this presentation will also feature the art of carpets as an overarching theme of European interiors. Classic Safavid and Ottoman carpets of the 16th and 17th centuries, highlights of Oriental artisanry, represent the crown jewels of this new presentation. The most valuable holdings include the MAK's world-famous Safavid *Viennese Hunting Carpet* (central Iran, probably Kashan, 1st half of the 16th century), the *Silk Mamluk Carpet* (Cairo, Egypt, late 15th century) and a figurative Indian *Pictorial Carpet with Landscape and Pairs of Birds* from the era of Akbar the Great (Lahore, northern India, ca. 1600).

The classic Middle-Eastern output is complimented by a group of knotted-pile Savonnerie carpets made in France during the 18th century, including one that

belonged to Emperor Josef II of Austria (Paris, France, mid-18th century). The reign of Louis XIII in France saw the development of one of Europe's most famous carpet manufactories—the Manufacture royale des meubles de la couronne, des tapis façon de Perse et du Levant—which, in terms of style, was oriented toward the carpet output of the Eastern Mediterranean. The items exhibited in the MAK Permanent Collection Carpets document the pioneering design language to be found in such French works. “The inclusion of the Savonneries in this presentation of classic Middle-Eastern carpets makes for an aesthetically pleasing demonstration of the interaction between cultures and of various formal developments,” explains Barbara Karl, curator of the MAK Textiles and Carpets Collection.

The presentation will be rounded out by around 30 three-dimensional objects from the MAK Collection that serve to highlight diverse interactions with artisan output. Selected ornamental engravings from the Baroque period, for instance, illustrate formal similarities between architectural design concepts and the French Savonneries. Another example of such design-related parallels can be discerned between tiles and plates from İznik and the Ottoman *Niche or Prayer Carpets* from Istanbul and Bursa (2nd half of the 16th century).

### **Spatial Concept**

The individual carpets themselves, supported by thin steel wire ropes, appear to float above the floor as they lean toward visitors at various angles in Michael Embacher's architectural design. The outstanding surface textures of the carpets are brought out in particular by the carefully aimed lighting in this flexible presentation, which makes it possible to rotate the objects on exhibit on a regular basis. Embacher's spatial concept—which, being inspired by silk, an important material in the making of knotted carpets, alludes to the appearance of a silkworm's cocoon—opens up entirely new perspectives on these precious textiles, which are usually presented rolled out horizontally or hanging on walls.

With his studio EMBACHER/CO, Michael Embacher (\*1963, Vienna) occupies an interdisciplinary niche between architecture, design, technical construction, custom craftsmanship and artistic ambition. Following studies in architecture at the Vienna University of Technology and employment under avant-garde architects Günther Domenig and Sepp Müller, Embacher struck out on his own in 1993. His studio's work encompasses a multitude of architectural projects as well as exhibition concepts, private buildings and the development of patents. A passion for materiality, perfect craftsmanship and a striking spatial language are characteristic of Embacher's work. His best-known projects include the Gartensalettl in the Privy Garden at



**MAK**

Schönbrunn Palace (2002; awarded the Adolf Loos State Prize for Design in bronze), the Summer Stage on Vienna's Danube Canal (1996), the Laxenburg film storage facility of Filmarchiv Austria (2004), the design of Austria's self-presentation on the occasion of its EU presidency (2006), the retail premises of the Vienna Silver Manufactory (2009), and the re-design of the MAK Permanent Collection Vienna 1900 (2013). (embacher.co.at)

### **Artistic Intervention**

The conceptual and poetic textile work by Füsün Onur shows the motif of a miniature-like angel with oversized wings that floats above the museum objects like an emblem. The artist, one of the most important representatives of Istanbul's 1960s and 1970s feminist avant-garde and current contemporary scene, has woven in shimmering gold threads throughout this hand-embroidered work—threads that allude to Byzantium, the city between the Orient and the Occident. The angel's body appears to melt into an ornamental surface, while the face, hair, feathers, and accessories are depicted in detail. In this textile work, which developed over several months of planning and execution, Onur quite consciously takes up skills from traditional societies that place the collective before individual talent and expressivity.

Onur's intervention, which tells of the transformations of successive eras in both Western and Eastern patterns and images, bears witness to her high degree of sensitivity to the geographic and iconographic specifics of the historical examples shown in the new permanent collection display. The figure of the angel, for instance, appears to form something like a counterpoint to the winged beings depicted in the *Viennese Hunting Carpet* from Kashan (central Iran, 1st half of the 16th century), one of the MAK Carpet Collection's most valuable objects. These sprite-like beings between angel and human appear in Persian mythology and, just like their Northern counterparts, they are of a supernatural character.

Füsün Onur (\*1938, Istanbul), who creates sculptures, installations, spatial studies and sound works in addition to her drawings and textiles, studied sculpture at the Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts (Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi, today's Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University) under Ali Hadi Bara from 1956 to 1960. Following stays at American University in Washington, D.C. (Fulbright Scholarship, 1960) and at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland, Omar returned to Istanbul in 1967. Her works have been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including at the Art and Sculpture Museum, Istanbul (1990), at the fourth, sixth and twelfth International Istanbul Biennials (1995/1999/2011), at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2005), at the MAK in Vienna (2013), as well as the gallery ARTER in

Istanbul (2014). Füsün Onur has received international recognition for her life's work, particularly since her participation at dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel.

Following the reconception of the MAK Permanent Collections Vienna 1900 and Asia, this reinstallation of the MAK Permanent Collection Carpets is the third to take place under MAK Director Christoph Thun-Hohenstein.

The reinstallation of the MAK Permanent Collection Carpets is accompanied by the eponymous *MAK/GUIDE Carpets* edited by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein and Barbara Karl, with texts by Barbara Karl, Edith Oberhumer, Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Bärbel Vischer and Angela Völker, as well as an interview with Michael Embacher. German/English, 188 pages and ca. 100 illustrations, MAK Vienna / Prestel Verlag, Munich-London-New York 2014. Available for € 9.90 at the MAK Design Shop.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAM**

**Wed, 16 April 2014, 3 p.m.**

### **MAK Seniors**

Guided tour of the new MAK Permanent Collection Carpets, followed by further discussion at ÖSTERREICHER IM MAK Gasthaus. Bar. Total price € 12.

Registration requested: T +43 1 711 36-298, [education@MAK.at](mailto:education@MAK.at)

**Sat, 26 April 2014, 2–5 p.m.**

### **MAK4FAMILY The Flying Carpet**

**Sun, 18 May 2014, 11:00 a.m.**

### **MINI MAK Tales from a Thousand and One Nights**

**Tue, 16 September 2014**

**Lectures** as part of the International Conference on Oriental Carpets

Details to follow at [MAK.at](http://MAK.at)

### **Expert-guided tours**

With Barbara Karl, Curator, MAK Textiles and Carpets Collection:

Thu, 17 April 2014, 5 p.m.

Thu, 17 May 2014, 5 p.m.



**Guided tours** every Saturday at 5 p.m.

**Special guided tours can be booked in advance:**

T +43 1 711 36-298, [education@MAK.at](mailto:education@MAK.at)

Press materials and photos are available for download at [MAK.at/press](http://MAK.at/press).

Press Data Sheet

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Curator	Barbara Karl, Curator, MAK Textiles and Carpets Collection
Artistic Intervention	Füsün Onur Curated by Bärbel Vischer, Curator, MAK Contemporary Art Collection
Exhibition Design	Michael Embacher
MAK Admission	€ 7.90 / reduced: € 5.50 / family ticket: € 11 / free admission for children and teens up to 19
MAK Press and PR	Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head) Sandra Hell-Ghignone Veronika Träger Lara Steinhäuser T +43 1 711 36-233, 229, 212 F +43 1 711 36-227 presse@MAK.at www.MAK.at

Vienna, 8 April 2014