

Press Release

Frankfurt am Main, 7.2.2026

Wool. Silk. Resistance. 7 February – 14 June 2026

With the exhibition *Wool. Silk. Resistance.*, the Museum Angewandte Kunst is dedicating itself exclusively to rugs, carpets, and tapestries for the first time in 45 years. This comes at a time when interest in handmade textiles of all kinds is experiencing a resurgence, reflected in a striking number of international exhibitions.

Rugs, carpets, and tapestries can embody many different forms of resistance. This exhibition presents international works by contemporary artists who explore political dissent, individual and collective resilience, and practices of refusal.

Producing art within sociopolitical contexts entails positioning oneself in relation to specific social realities. This also requires a clear stance toward the concept of resistance – a relational term – that defines against whom or what resistance is directed. In this exhibition, resistance is initially understood as an experience of difference that, through subjectivity, gives rise to a wide range of aesthetic and artistic forms of expression as well as a broad range of themes. Within the artistic and emancipatory reconfiguration of rugs, carpets, and tapestries, the exhibition addresses political opposition, resilience, and material or structural endurance in individual ways. Acts of resistance may be directed against perceived illegitimate systems of power, traditionalism, discrimination, racism, trauma, or environmental destruction.

The artists' rugs, carpets, and tapestries therefore become bold vehicles for sociopolitical critique. With equal radicalism, many of the artists push beyond the conventions of the flat textile surface. They explore the possibilities of three-dimensionality, evolving into textile sculptures and immersive environments whose affective qualities engage directly with the conditions of contemporary life.

The application of techniques such as knotting, weaving, and tufting and the use of materials that may be traditional or modern unite centuries-old textile practices with the world of today. In this respect, the artworks reinterpret the utilitarian, decorative, and spiritual aspects of a rug or tapestry in their favouring of visual strategies that draw on iconography, pop culture, and politics. As vessels of critical meaning, what they convey has personal, social, geographical, and political implications. The ornamental aspects of the textile works are thus able to cross between worlds, connecting with contemporary narratives about good and evil, dominance and equality, war and peace, paradise and hell, reality and illusion, hope and pessimism, self and other, individual and collective.

Rather than approaching rugs, carpets, and tapestries from a stylistic or art-historical perspective, the exhibition presents them within a trajectory that exists outside established Western approaches to textile studies. The title introduces a series of questions: Can resistance be articulated through textile materials? And if so, in what ways do rugs, carpets,

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and tapestries express an “aesthetics of textile resistance”? And what is it about this medium that makes it so interesting for artists to reflect on resistance, whilst exploring intertwined themes through knots, the weave and the weft, or using a tufting gun?

Thus the exhibition centres on the perspectives of international artists working in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, who engage with different dimensions of resistance through rugs, carpets, and tapestries understood as open and evolving art forms. They are a reflection of the emancipatory efforts of a global movement that is fuelling new discourses centred on design concepts and production methods. The key issue here is how the carpets were created—whether entirely made by the artists themselves, produced as collaborations with manufacturers using artisanal or industrial, or even taking the form of found material that was then worked on artistically. Originally assigned to the realms of craft, applied arts, and design, the rug and tapestry works are not only authored by artists but also have the attributes of fine art. They thus call into question the customary hierarchies that exist between applied and fine art and redefine the relationship between them.

The exhibition features selected works by the following artists:

Faig Ahmed, Diedrick Brackens, Johannah Herr, Jan Kath, Alexandra Kehayoglou, William Kentridge, Baseera Khan, Noelle Mason, Otobong Nkanga, Tobias Rehberger, Erin M. Riley, Tsherin Sherpa, Rose Stach, Nasan Tur and Jeroen van den Bogaert.

Curator: Dr Katharina Weiler

The exhibition is supported by the Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain and the Dr.Marschner Foundation.

About the production of the rugs, carpets and tapestries in the exhibition

The 37 artist carpets on display in the exhibition *Wool. Silk. Resistance.* were created in different ways, namely:

1. as the artists' own productions (Diedrick Brackens, Johannah Herr, Alexandra Kehayoglou, Erin M. Riley),
2. as collaborations between the artists and manufacturers in artisanal production (Faig Ahmed, Jan Kath, William Kentridge, Baseera Khan, Noelle Mason, Tobias Rehberger, Tsherin Sherpa) or machine production (Otobong Nkanga, Jeroen van den Bogaert), and
3. as found material that was subsequently artistically processed (Rose Stach, Nasan Tur).

The various production methods and their meanings are therefore not only relevant to the respective art concepts, but also form their fundamental prerequisite and substance.

The (transcultural) negotiation processes involved in the creation of the artist-designed carpets in the exhibition, which were produced in collaboration between the artists and

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manufacturers using traditional craft techniques, reveal the sometimes profound relationships between the artists and communities of knitters or weavers. Thus, the works also embody an awareness of social standards in textile production. For example, the carpets were manufactured with consideration for transparent supply chains and appropriate remuneration (understood here as a relationship-dependent variable worldwide) for the artisans involved—even those works that do not have formal certification.

Exhibition catalogue

The exhibition will be accompanied by the publication of the catalogue *Wool. Silk. Resistance.* in March 2026.

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Opening Hours

Mon closed, Tue, Thu-Sun 10 am – 6 pm, Wed 10 am – 8 pm

Admission

14 Euro, reduced 7 Euro
Admission is free for Museumsufer (MUF) card holders, children and young people under the age of 18, students of Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts, Städelschule and Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach.

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