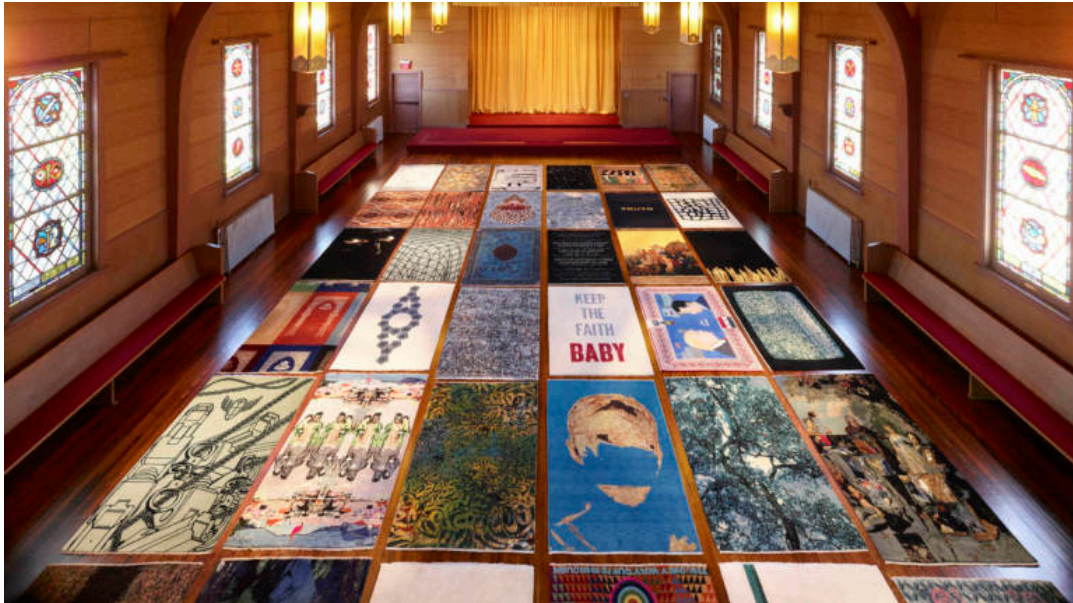


Tales of Seeking Sanctuary Woven into 36 Rugs at Fort Mason



By **Cy Musiker**
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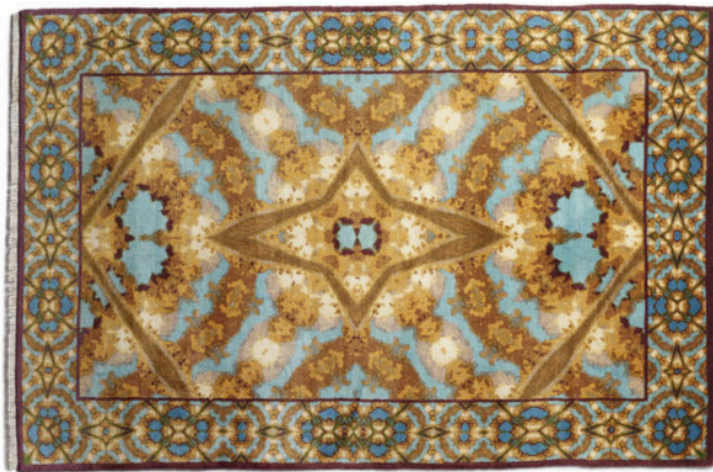
The For-Site Foundation, which oversaw the provocative *@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz* exhibition in 2014, is back with an equally thoughtful and troubling show about the idea of sanctuary as a basic human right. The concept dates back to biblical times, but the topic is certainly timely. Tens of millions of refugees currently struggle to find a temporary safe haven while countries (like the US) that once welcomed them now try to keep them out.

The exhibition is called *Sanctuary*, and it's a collection of 36 colorful rugs, hand made in Pakistan, and designed by artists from around the world. Many of the artists are from Arab countries listed in President Trump's travel ban.



The rug designed by Ammar al-Beik in For-Sites show 'Sanctuary' at the Fort Mason Chapel (Photo: Robert Divers Herrick/For-Site Foundation)

You can walk on the rugs with your shoes off, even though they're valuable works of art. I did so with curator and For-Site Founding Director Cheryl Haines. She pointed out one rug by Ammar al-Beik featuring chilling portraits of Donald Trump and Bashar Al Assad, facing each other under a chemical bomb, set like a frond of mistletoe between them.



The rug designed by Sanaz Mazinani in For-Site's show 'Sanctuary' at the Fort Mason Chapel (Photo: Robert Divers Herrick/For-Site Foundation)

Many of the rugs are lovely to look at but reveal a troubled narrative of war and displacement. Haines pointed to one by Sanaz Mazinani, an Iranian-born artist now living

in the Bay Area. “If you look across the field of these rugs, at first many appear to be abstraction only, but as you take a closer look, [at this one by] Sanaz Mazinani, [it features] beautiful kaleidoscopic imagery, but what it really is exploding bombs.”

Details for the exhibition *Sanctuary* through March 11 at the Fort Mason Chapel, including upcoming lectures and concerts, [are here](#).