

What We Know About Tafreshi-Duzi



TEHRAN -- In the heart of Iran's Markazi province, lies the vibrant city of Tafresh where a remarkable traditional embroidery has developed into a unique handicraft named Tafreshi-Duzi.

This exceptional artistry was initially used to embellish decorative designs on clothes hems but became more popular due to its exquisite application on the robes and cloaks, iFilm reports.

This style of art stands out from other embroidery techniques in Iran by utilizing alluring, yet uncomplicated geometric patterns and is distinct from Tafreshi needlework.

The fabric edges are adorned with meticulously sewn, mesmerizing motifs that add a unique and

visually stunning element to each design.

In Tafreshi handicrafts, fabric selection is crucial as it must perfectly coordinate with the wraps and wefts.

This detailed needlework involves a careful calculation of every warp and weft, as well as altering the fabric's texture, making the material choice extremely important.

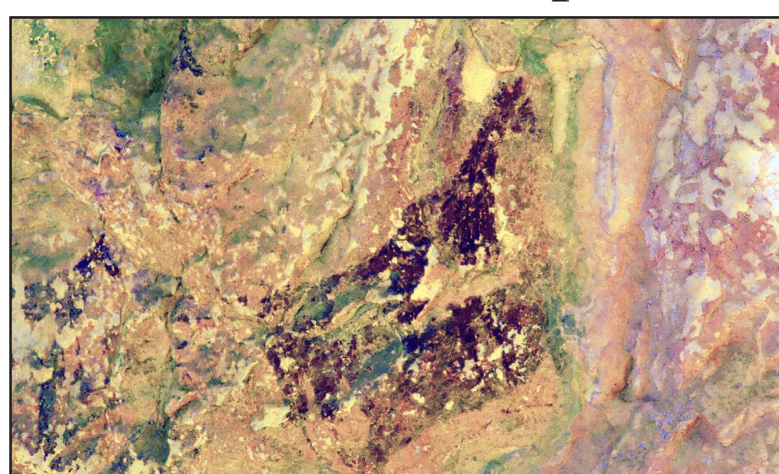
Sack fabrics are frequently favored by female artisans in Tafresh, owing to the easily identifiable weave and texture they offer, granting these skilled artisans the freedom to create without limitation.

The majority of patterns found in this craft are imaginative and purely geometric in nature, crafted entirely from the creator's artistic vision.

The art of Tafreshi-Duzi finds its place in various realms of creativity, adorning the borders of packages, cushions, Chadore Shab (night coverings), curtains, scarves, and skirts.

Step into the world of Tafreshi-Duzi, where the hands of skilled artisans bring forth intricate designs that weave tradition and creativity into every stitch.

Prehistoric Cave Paintings Discovered in Spain



A cave painting of deer found using drones.

ROME (CNN) -- Archaeologists in Spain have discovered prehistoric paintings in hard-to-reach caves in the east of the country using drone technology.

The use of drones allowed researchers to quickly gather evidence of previously unseen cave paintings dating from 5,000-7,500 years ago, according to a statement from the team at the University of Alicante, Spain. The archaeologists' findings were published in the Spanish scientific journal *Lucentum* last month.

The project allowed easier inspection of areas which could otherwise only be reached by "opening complex access routes climbing," reads the statement.

The team said they found their first results within just a few days of flying drones in a quarry in the Penàguila municipality in Alicante.

"This area is well known for housing numerous groups with prehistoric art," said lead author Francisco Javier Molina Hernández, an archaeologist at the University of Alicante, in the statement.

"The result was the discovery of a new site with prehistoric cave paintings of different styles, which we believe will be very relevant for the investigation."

Climbers then visited the site and verified the existence of a large number of painted figures in various styles, including stylized human figures and animals such as goats and deer, some of which have been injured by arrows, ac-

ording to the statement.

Hernández, who has been christened "Indiana Drones" by the Spanish press, worked with two other archaeologists - Virginia Barciela and Ximo Martorell Briz - on the research.

Researchers came up with the idea of using drones because "on many occasions we have risked our lives to access cavities located in rugged geographical areas," Molina told CNN.

"Many other caves have never been inspected because they are located in inaccessible areas," he added.

The researchers said the finding is one of the most significant Neolithic rock art sites discovered in the Valencia region in recent decades, due to the large number of figures observed.

Neanderthals were painting caves in Europe long before modern humans, study finds

"Secondly, the discovery of new cave paintings in this type of cave indicates that prehistoric man developed sophisticated means of climbing, perhaps by means of ropes or wooden scaffolding," said Molina.

They may have taken these risks to reach certain caves due to their relation to the sunrise or visual control of certain territory, he added.

Next up, the team plans to use more powerful drones to take higher quality images and expand their research to other areas of Spain, Portugal and other parts of Europe, said Molina.

World's Second Longest Wall is in Iran

TEHRAN -- The Great Wall of Gorgan in Golestan province of northeastern Iran stands as an ancient marvel of military construction, joining the ranks of renowned great walls built by humans centuries ago.

While the Great Wall of China and Hadrian's Wall in Northern England are widely recognized, there exists another extraordinary wall in West Asia—the Great Wall of Gorgan.

Situated between the Caspian Sea and the Alborz Mountains, this formidable barrier protected the borders of the Sassanian Empire, iFilm has reported. Its construction involved the use of clay, fired bricks, mortar, and other robust materials, rendering it a formidable fortress.

Although the exact timeframe of its creation remains debated, many sources attribute its construction to the fifth or sixth century CE, sug-



gesting it was initiated during the reign of the esteemed Persian king, Khosrow I.

While the precise motive behind its erection remains shrouded in mystery, it is widely believed that the wall was built to defend the empire's northern borders against the Hephthalites, also known as the White Huns, with whom the Sassanids had complex relations.

tural design and construction techniques set it apart.

Also referred to as the Red Wall or the Red Snake in ancient texts, the Great Wall of Gorgan showcases remarkable technical sophistication, as recognized by UNESCO.

The Gorgan Wall and its associated ancient military structures provide a distinct testimony to the engineering prowess and military organization of the Sassanian Empire.

They offer insights into the empire's vast territorial reach, extending from Mesopotamia to the western regions of the Indian Subcontinent, and highlight how effective border defense contributed to the empire's prosperity and longevity.

These monuments hold global significance, not only due to their monumental scale and historical importance but also because of their impressive sophistication.

Carpet Industry Bears Brunt of Sanctions

TEHRAN -- Iran enjoys a universal reputation in carpet weaving. Persian carpet or Iranian rug is one of the main features of Iranian culture and art as well as one of the country's leading exports.

Woven in various types by nomads and workshops, Persian handmade carpets are well-known for their longevity, lavish textures, strong colors and elaborate patterns.

They are characterized by nat-

ural dyes, traditional tribal patterns, as well as modern designs, but old techniques.

But Persian carpets are gathering dust as exports have declined over the years owing to U.S. sanctions and growing global competition.

Exports peaked at \$2 billion in 1994 but the country exported carpets worth \$50 million in the financial year ending in March 2022.



Economic Doldrums Hit Europe Art Market After U.S.

LONDON (FT) -- After a strong recent run, the art market might have expected to continue its bullish sprint. But a cooling became apparent last month at Frieze New York, where dealers say price tags for works that sold were generally below \$1mn, and at the city's flagship auctions, which offered mixed results. The question for the 284 galleries at this year's edition of Art Basel (June 15-18) is whether this chill wind, driven by economic uncertainty, blows all the way to Europe. The fair will be a major test for the Modern and contemporary art market, as will London's June auction series.

Big players in the market are acknowledging the slowdown. A Christie's spokesperson says: "In May we saw a real correction which was already palpable in November 2022, but not a crash or a collapse of the market. With the right estimates and sales formats, the market continues to be lively." The auction house pointed to strong prices for works by Henri Rousseau and Jean-Michel Basquiat and successful day sales.

"The market is readjusting and moving away from the frenzy of the past few years," says a spokesperson for French gallery Almine Rech, echoing a sentiment shared by many across the art trade. In Basel, the gallery is showing a painting by Elaine de Kooning from her Bacchus series along with new works by UK artist Hew Locke (prices on the booth range from \$80,000 to \$3mn).

During the past 12 months, Europe has been holding up. "European fairs such as Tefaf Maastricht and Art Paris were successful for us in terms of sales," says Yves Zlotowski, the director of Galerie Zlotowski, which is dedicating its booth to "avant-garde queen" Sonia Delaunay, offering pieces such as her "Rayures" gouache (1949, around €80,000).

U.S. and European collectors currently hold sway in the market but there are hopes that collectors from the rest of the world are picking up the slack. Those moving things forward are from Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, says Lorenzo Fiaschi, co-founder of Galleria Continua, which is showing works by Anish Kapoor and Adel Abdessemed at Art Basel.

"There might be some slowing down but we don't feel it as the overall market is constantly growing, including new collectors in Asia we didn't know two years

ago," adds gallerist Thaddaeus Ropac. Asia has become a key power in the art market in the past decade, but it is very China-dependent. The UK narrowly overtook China as the second biggest market in 2022, according to the latest Art Market report published by Art Basel and UBS.

Once the Basel fair is done, attention tuns to London. "We hope and we expect our June sales in London to confirm the market still responds well when works are at the right estimate," says the spokesperson from Christie's. The auction house is banking on a 1984 Basquiat work depicting Picasso (est £4.5mn-£6.5mn) to perform well.

"A cooling in the market can create great opportunities as collectors become more focused on finding quality with value," says Liza Essers, director of the Johannesburg and London-based Goodman Gallery. At Art Basel, the gallery will show "The African Library" by Yinka Shonibare (£1.5mn)

in the Unlimited section as well as works by "rising talents" including Nolan Oswald Dennis, Pamela Phatshimo Sunstrum and Misheck Masamvu (\$10,000-\$60,000).

According to New York based art adviser Candace Worth, it is worth seeing "the market" as a more complex organism: "It is comprised of thousands of micro-markets and while prices for many artists' work have softened, many others remain strong and robust and maybe even overinflated." And if some collectors are falling out of the market, the pool is widening with the new thirtysomething generation, she adds.

Worth adds that dealers bringing blue-chip secondary-market material to Art Basel are bracing nonetheless for a less competitive buying pool. "Buyers are definitely showing more caution at the higher price points, over \$1mn." But numerous younger and mid-career artists continue to have long waiting lists and deep buying

pools for their work, she says.

Florence-based collector Christian Levett thinks the more diverse areas of the market still stand to gain. "Galleries are getting behind large numbers of contemporary artists, particularly women and multicultural practitioners, building demand over supply for those artists, often at lightning speeds, with a similar effect on their auction prices," he says.

The art world, as lustrous and hermetic as it might seem, is nevertheless at the mercy of real-world issues, such as a potential escalation of the war in Ukraine or worsening economic data. "Inflation and the rise in interest rates have caused a generation in the financial markets over the last 12 months and have maybe led to a pause in some buyers' minds," says Levett. In this climate, all eyes will be on who walks through the doors in Basel next week, and whether sales are made across the board.

Picture of the Day



Oshtoran Castle, 18 km from Tuyserkan in Hamadan, dates back to the Qajar era and is a relic of the Iran-Russia wars. Photo by ISNA