

Galerie  
Nicolas Robert  
Montréal & Toronto

**THE ARMORY SHOW 2024  
ANAHITA NOROUZI**

**FOCUS SECTION | BOOTH F24  
SEPT. 5-8**

info@galerienicolasrobert.com  
galerienicolasrobert.com  
+1 514 373 2027



## The Armory Show - Booth F24

### Focus Section

We are pleased to be returning to The Armory Show with a solo presentation by Anahita Norouzi, in the Focus section. This recent body of work offers a poetic exploration of interdisciplinary forms and cultural exchange that furthers Norouzi's ongoing project of honoring her ancestral homeland by exposing the impacts of 200 years of resource extraction and exploitation by colonial forces in the Middle East.

Norouzi's materially rich, multi-part installation will consist of sculptural elements that analyze the political, social, and ecological complexities underlining the human relationship with the natural world and investigate the impact of historical colonialism and present-day globalism on resource-rich areas worldwide.

Looking both forward and backward in time, the work will shed light on the ways in which hegemonic powers have impacted humans and other species alike, creating mass movements that alter entire cultural traditions, demographics, and ecologies. The large scale, immersive works will forge a parallel between power asymmetry in the colonial era and the persisting disparities within the contemporary North-South divide, unveiling the enduring presence of similar regimes of power.

The booth will reflect Norouzi's characteristic attention to detail, her poetic use of historic and natural materials, and her bold and unwavering political commentary. Visitors will encounter great beauty and metaphorical layering, including the use of historical photographs and archive, glass, and limestone.

## Anahita Norouzi

### Artist Statement

Anahita Norouzi is a multidisciplinary artist, active in Montreal since 2018. She holds advanced degrees in Fine Arts and Graphic Design from Concordia University in Montreal. Her practice is research-driven, derived from marginalized histories, with a particular focus on the legacies of botanical explorations and archeological excavations, especially when scientific research became entangled in the colonial exploitation of non-Western geographies.

Articulated across a range of mediums and materials including sculpture, installation, photography, and video, her work interrogates different cultural and political perspectives on the human and non-human "other," underlining the complex space between conflicted state of displaced people, plants, and cultural artifacts, and the responsibilities of the host country.

Norouzi's work has been shown internationally, including BIENALESUR, the International Contemporary Art Biennial of South America (Buenos Aires), Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art, National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto), Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. She has received numerous grants, fellowships, and awards, most notably, the Grantham Foundation Creation Award, Liz Crockford Artist Fund Award, the Vermont Studio Center Merit. She is the winner of Contemporary art award of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (2023) and Impressions residency at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (2022), and the finalist for the Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize and the prestigious Sobey Art Award (2023).





*I ask myself where that rubber goes, 2023*  
Presented at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec  
MNBAQ 2023 Contemporary Art Award Exhibition

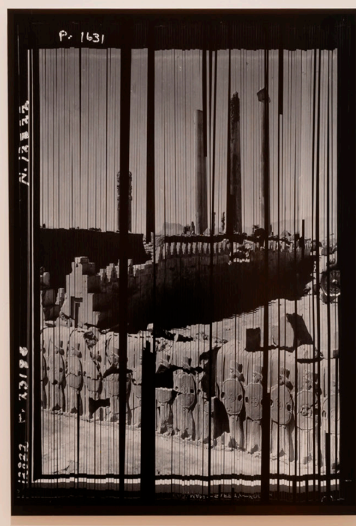


*I ask myself where that rubber goes, 2023*

### 144 glass fragments, magnets

Over the course of a lengthy and meticulously documented investigation, the artist has reconstructed the history of an archaeological fragment from the ruins of the Achaemenid palace of Persepolis in Iran. This fragment was looted from the site in 1936, acquired by a Canadian museum in the early 1950s, stolen, rediscovered, and finally returned to its country of origin—only to inexplicably disappear again.

This expansive wall installation, made of 144 glass fragments that visually evoke the appearance of crude oil, serves as reproductions of the 144 bas-reliefs looted from the Persepolis ruins, now located in more than 50 private and public collections around the world. Spanning two walls, this particular display prominently underscores the disintegrated state of the stones, which were intentionally broken into smaller pieces to facilitate their transportation and dissemination.



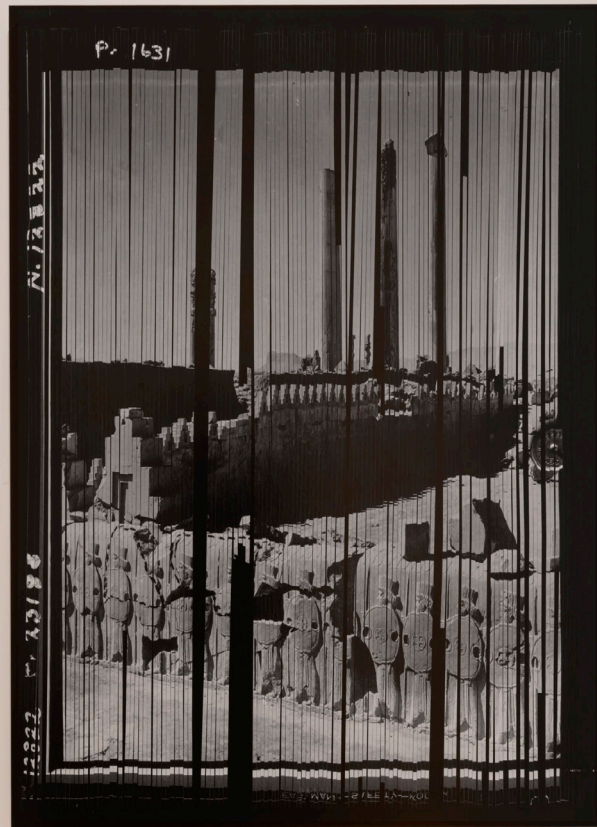
*Reading Through the Gaps, 2023*  
Inkjet print on archival paper, mounted on aluminum

Presented at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec  
MNBAQ 2023 Contemporary Art Award Exhibition



*Reading Through the Gaps, Ed. 1/2, 2023*

Inkjet print on archival paper, mounted on aluminum,



The large black-and-white photograph of a reassembled shredded document is in reference to the numerous intelligence reports and documents destroyed by U.S. embassy officers in Tehran, prior to being held as hostages by student militants. The Iranian revolutionaries, being aware of the US political interventions in Iran, meticulously recomposed these documents piece by pieces. Here, the artist draws a parallel: between human and object hostages, and their role in international politics; and between the U.S. embassy seizure by Iranian students and the ancient relief seizure.



*L'Orient est son jardin, 2023*  
Glass, metal, cement, resin





*L'Orient est son jardin, No. 3, 5-10, 2023*

Glass, metal, cement, resin

The installation consists of seven imperial fritillaries made of black glass, reproduced life-sized.

These flowers, characterized by their "upside-down" nectaries, are among the most ancient of Iran's ornamental plants and have graced Europe's most celebrated gardens since the 15th century. According to Iranian folklore, their nectar, dubbed "tears of Siyâvash," is produced as the plant weeps in mourning for the departed.



*The hunter hunted, the collector collected, 2024*  
Inkjet print on acrylic mirror



*The hunter hunted, the collector collected, No. 1-4, 2024*

Inkjet print on acrylic mirror

This series of photographs examines the role of technologies of perception—such as cameras, theodolites, and stereoscopes—used in imperial science to “observe and study” the other beings, regions, and cosmologies.

Derived from early twentieth-century photographs of sites in Iran, taken by British Petroleum to pinpoint the location of oil, these examples are of isolated, depopulated landscapes in which remnants of past civilizations are visible in the distance.

By “deconstructing” and then “reconstructing” these photographs, the resulting images are jarring photographic objects that draw attention to what is not there: the silences and absences within this archive.



*Zende-margi 1-3, 2024*  
Historical newspapers, limestone,  
mix media image-transfer on goat vellum



*Zende-margi, No. 1-3, 2024*

**Historical newspapers, limestone, mix media image-transfer on goat vellum**

Derived from the artifacts held in the collection of the Oriental Institute of Chicago, this series of works reveals how historical colonialism is inextricably linked with the world's current geopolitical reality.

These rare and historically priceless artifacts were excavated by the university's archaeologists in the 1930s from the ancient city of Persepolis, Iran, during a period marked by growing U.S. interest in the "Middle East," largely driven by the discovery of abundant oil resources.

Ensnared in the complex web of political turmoil between Iran and the U.S. since their displacement, these artifacts held hostage highlight how the Orientalist gaze is conflated with extractive industries, the race to exploit natural resources, and the impact of reckless Western politics on both the region's populations and its cultural heritage.

Each work in this series is composed of one print (framed mix-media image transfer on goat vellum) and one sculpture (historical newspapers and limestone, mounted on a wooden plinth).

## **RECENT EXHIBITIONS**



*May You Break Free and Outlast Your Enemy, 2023*  
Presented at the National Gallery of Canada  
2023 Sobey Art Award Exhibition  
Photo: NGC

## *May You Break Free and Outlast Your Enemy, 2023*

Clay-based 3D printing, air-drying clay, bitumen, glass

*May You Break Free and Outlast Your Enemy* confronts us with the case of Persia's ancient Elamite city of Susa, whose 5,000-year-old ruins were, from the 19th century on, stripped of part of their heritage by French archaeologists funded by the Louvre. This ancestral territory has also been the focus of considerable colonial interest because of its rich petroleum deposits. Many artifacts uncovered during the French excavations have ended up in the Louvre's collections, including several Elamite funerary heads. Stuck today in "a sort of museum limbo", these heads were originally intended to protect and guide the ancestors of the Iranian people as they descended into the netherworld.

For this work, the artist has made a large-scale clay copy of one of these heads. Despite its monumental enlargement, the delicacy of the material has enabled her to capture the fragile, even damaged look of the original. The head's cheek is laid against the floor, and from its wide, almond-shaped eyes – enhanced with bitumen, according to the Elamite craft tradition – flows what looks like a pool of petrol.

The head is surrounded by ten imperial fritillaries made of black glass, reproduced life-sized. These flowers, characterized by their "upside-down" nectaries, are among the most ancient of Iran's ornamental plants and have graced Europe's most celebrated gardens since the 15th century. According to Iranian folklore, their nectar, dubbed "tears of Siyâvash," is produced as the plant weeps in mourning for the departed. This installation-monument, which commemorates the vestiges of the city of Susa that vanished as the Iranian people looked on helplessly, represents for Norouzi a first step toward collective healing.







*Constellational Diasporas, 2024*  
Presented at the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art  
Curated by Marie-Ève Beaupré  
Photo: Mike Pattern



## *Constellational Diasporas, 2024*

### **550 Persian hogweed seeds, hand-blown glass, and resin**

In this body of work, Anahita Norouzi investigates how botany became crucial to the commercial and territorial expansion of Europe beginning in the 19th century. Norouzi traces the journey of the Persian Hogweed from Iran to Buckingham Palace, where it was prized as an ornamental plant, and eventually to Canada and the U.S. after the Second World War. As a pawn in international botanical diplomacy, the Persian Hogweed was desirable until it was no longer useful for political and economic trade.

With the sculptural installation *The Constellational Diasporas*, Norouzi offers a retelling of the plant's journey across the Atlantic Ocean from a perspective that restores its value as a cherished ingredient in the culinary traditions of West Asia. A large quantity of Persian Hogweed seeds was brought over by her mother when she visited her in Canada for the first time. While bringing seeds into Canada is normally prohibited, the seeds of this plant fell into an acceptable gray zone given their use as a spice. In this work, a single seed is suspended in resin, filling a small sphere of hand-blown glass. These spheres, in multiple hues of blue, evoke the aquatic, floating like clusters of cells. Scattered and constantly 'en route,' they float in a liminal space of kinship, simultaneously separate and together. This gift from mother to daughter is thus transformed into a poetic expression of longing and the safeguarding of cultural memory.



*Half of the Red Sun, 2023*

Presented at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec  
MNBAQ 2023 Contemporary Art Award Exhibition

Photo: Louis Hébert

## *Half of the Red Sun, 2023*

### MNBAQ 2023 Contemporary Art Award Exhibition

Over the course of a lengthy and meticulously documented investigation, the artist has reconstructed the history of an archaeological fragment from the ruins of the Achaemenid palace of Persepolis in Iran. This fragment was looted from the site in 1936, acquired by a Canadian museum in the early 1950s, stolen, rediscovered, and finally returned to its country of origin—only to inexplicably disappear again.

Half of the Red Sun examines the issue of the restitution of cultural treasures pillaged during the colonial era and the responsibility of museums regarding the vast numbers of artifacts that have been exported illegally from their countries of origin and distributed worldwide, depriving local populations of their cultural heritage.

This installation combines a large assemblage of interconnected objects and images—archival documents, a 19th-century lithograph, limestone rubble, sculptures, and a video—all providing clues to the vanished object and its turbulent history. Viewers never see the relief that inspired the work: its presence is felt only through its absence, its spectre, the space it once inhabited.



[www.galerienicolasrobert.com](http://www.galerienicolasrobert.com)

[info@galerienicolasrobert.com](mailto:info@galerienicolasrobert.com)