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Designing a handmade Iranian silk carpet to reflect the silent intellectuals and confront the quiet suppression of ideas

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ABSTRACT

As a conceptual Persian rug artist, writer, and publisher whose work explores the intersection of art, philosophy, history, culture, and contemporary social issues. My artistic practice seeks to transform the traditional Persian handmade rug into a medium for intellectual dialogue, using symbolism and craftsmanship to address subjects that affect humanity beyond national or political boundaries. The article "***Silenced Intelligentsia***" reflects this broader mission. Rather than commenting on a single country or political event, it examines the universal consequences of suppressing independent thought and creative expression. The accompanying handmade Persian silk rug serves as a visual extension of the essay, expressing the same ideas through symbolic imagery.

1. *Introduction:*

My perspective is shaped by years of studying history, philosophy, and social issues alongside my work as a designer and creator of conceptual Persian rugs. I believe art can encourage reflection and meaningful conversation about the challenges facing societies, while preserving the cultural heritage of one of the world's oldest artistic traditions.

The article argues that the suppression of intellectuals—including scholars, writers, journalists, artists, and academics—is one of the greatest threats to a society's long-term cultural, scientific, and democratic development. Throughout history, the silencing of independent thinkers has weakened public discourse, restricted innovation, and limited the free exchange of ideas. The article explores how censorship, political persecution, intimidation, and social pressure can marginalize critical voices, while emphasizing that intellectual freedom is essential for social progress, creativity, and accountability.

The article is accompanied by my conceptual Persian silk rug, "***Silenced Intelligentsia***" which serves as a visual interpretation of the same theme. In the artwork, each figure's brain contains a unique fingerprint symbolizing the individuality of human thought, while black bars represent censorship, repression, and the imprisonment of ideas.

Throughout history, societies have relied on their intelligentsia—scholars, writers, artists, and thinkers—to challenge norms, question authority, and inspire progress. These individuals act as society's conscience, bringing insight, innovation, and critical perspectives to the public discourse. Yet, in many parts of the world, this vital voice has been deliberately silenced.

The silencing of the intelligentsia often occurs under authoritarian regimes, where dissent threatens centralized power. Writers are censored, academics dismissed, journalists imprisoned, and artists exiled. Such suppression is not always overt; it can be subtle, taking the form of social ostracism, blacklisting, or funding cuts, all designed to discourage independent

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thought. The consequence is a society deprived of reflection, critical analysis, and cultural evolution.

The effects of silencing the intelligentsia extend beyond immediate repression. Without independent thinkers, governments face less scrutiny, misinformation spreads more easily, and societal creativity stagnates. Historical examples abound: from the purges of intellectuals under Stalinist Russia, to the censorship of writers and journalists under various military dictatorships, to contemporary crackdowns in authoritarian states where even online expression is monitored.

Yet, even in silence, the spirit of the intelligentsia often persists. Underground publications, samizdat writings, and digital platforms have enabled suppressed thinkers to reach audiences despite oppression. These acts of resilience remind us that ideas cannot be completely extinguished; they can only be delayed, hidden, or reshaped.

2. *Previous Work:*

In* 2014, *Cristina Cojanu examined the paradigm of the Damascus wall—characterized by blue tiles and carpet-like patterns, grids, and arabesque motifs [1]. Nazgul Asylbekova and et al presented research on the traditional art of carpet weaving among Kazakh and Turkic peoples, focusing on technical characteristics and its representation in museums [2]. Through the efforts of ***Somayeh Salehi and et al*** the design process of village carpets was analyzed ***in* 2026** based on Christopher Alexander's theory of the language of patterns [3].

Through the efforts of Mona Jami Pour and their colleagues ***in* 2021**, a new framework for implementing international digital marketing was designed (case study: the carpet industry) [4].

In* 2025, *Senad Orhani analyzed geometric patterns in Albanian carpets, applying an ethnomathematical approach to cultural heritage and mathematics education [5]. ***In* 2023, *Chandrashekhar Vishnu Chaudhari et al***, investigated the achievement of competitiveness through the Theory of Constraints, using a global carpet manufacturer as a case study [6].

In* 1400**, the methodology for the stylistic study of the design and motifs of Iranian carpets was examined ***by Abdollah Mirzaei [7].

In* 2012 *Fatemeh Safaii Rad presented a study on topics related to motifs and symbols in Persian carpets [8]. ***In* 2014**, the aesthetic role in the motifs of Persian carpets was analyzed ***by Rahim Salouti Sorkhe [9].***

Through the efforts of Mostafa Nabati Nejad and et al, the study on the understanding of research and development among hand-woven carpet entrepreneurs—focusing on the Isfahan carpet industry as a case study—was presented in **2013** [10].

In* 1978, *Gail L Robinson investigated the "magic carpet ride" syndrome—the experience of being transported to another culture—from an international perspective [11]. ***In* 1994 *Joanna O Masingila*** examined the application of mathematics in carpet weaving [12].

In 1840, Dorothy Armstrong analyzed the "***Oriental carpet***"—a concept involving the reimagining, reproduction, and reappropriation of the patterned pile carpets of South, Central, and West Asia [13].

In* 2025, *Narges Ahmadi and et al examined the role of folk literature in conveying identity-centered concepts within Nobaran carpets, utilizing Jahadi's explanatory approach [14]. ***In* 2024, *Azadeh Yaghoubzadeh and et al*** analyzed the structural design system of a Safavid rug (***of the compartment type***) housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York [15].

Through the efforts of ***Nasrin Hemayatkar and et al in 2019***, a fuzzy inference system for formulating appropriate business strategies was developed, based on a study within the carpet industry [16]. With the assistance of Akhtarsadat Mousavi and her colleagues analyzed the design of a technology development model for the use of natural dyes in the hand-woven carpet industry in 2013, employing a qualitative system dynamics approach [17].

In* 2022, *Ali Vandshoari and et al presented a typology and classification of the pictorial carpets featured in the ****Shahnameh**** of Shah Tahmasp [18].

In* 2026, *Mohammad Afrough, and et al explored the motifs and colors of Arabzadeh's carpets through the lens of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology [19]. ***In* 2019, *Muhterem Kadayifci and et al*** examined clustering within the framework of competitive advantage, through a study on carpet sellers in the Grand Bazaar [20]. ***In* 2022, *Rengin Gurel and et al*** investigated products that "age alongside us"—such as carpets—within Turkish households [21].

In* 1405, *Masih Aslani conducted research on the study of the art of music, sports and modern numerical systems in musical structures, as well as their relationship with musical temperaments and constellations [22-28]. Also ***in* 1405, *Fatemeh Etemadi Rad*** conducted research on art, carpet weaving and tourism [29-31]. ***In* 2026, *Daniel Bikas*** conducted research on the art of carpet weaving and the design of hand-woven carpets and tapestries, especially silk carpets [32-35].

3. Result and Discussion:

In a globalized world, protecting intellectual freedom is crucial. Societies that value their thinkers thrive on debate, innovation, and ethical governance. Silencing the intelligentsia is not just an attack on a few voices—it is an assault on the collective mind of a nation. Recognizing, supporting, and defending these voices remains a moral imperative for any society that seeks progress, justice, and cultural vitality.

Rug Description

A full-silk wall rug (***100x70 cm, KPSI: 550***) that portrays the tragic beauty of a silenced intellectual class. Each figure's head contains a distinct fingerprint, woven with microscopic precision—an unmistakable symbol of unique minds, identities, and creative signatures. These fingerprints form the interiors of their brains, representing the diversity of thought and the irreplaceable individuality of every member of the intelligentsia.

A schematic of the design and pattern of the tableau carpet"***Silenced Intelligentsia***" can be seen in ***Figure 1***, And the structure and hanging of the tableau carpet "***Silenced Intelligentsia***" can be seen in ***Figure 2***.



Figure 1, the schematic of the design and pattern of the tableau carpet of ***Silenced Intelligentsia***.



Figure 2, how the tableau carpet is structured and hung of ***Silenced Intelligentsia***.

Yet all these brilliant minds stand behind stark black bars. The bars cut vertically and horizontally across the composition, creating a powerful contrast with the soft shimmer of silk and the delicate fingerprint patterns. This imprisonment of thought reflects censorship, suppression, and the forced silence of voices meant to illuminate society.

The rug's overall aesthetic is minimalist, symbolic, and emotionally charged—an elegant but unsettling reminder of how societies lose their brightest lights when freedom of thought is confined.

Daniel Bikas

Conceptual Rug Artist

"***Silenced Intelligentsia***" is part of ***Daniel Bikas*** Rugs Collection 2024-2025.

A view of the carpet tableau of "***Silenced Intelligentsia***" is shown in Figure 3, and an overview of the carpet tableau of "Silenced Intelligentsia" during its complete design and construction is shown in Figure 4.



Figure 3, shows a view of the carpet tableau of" ***Silenced Intelligentsia***".



Figure 4, shows the overall view of the carpet tableau" ***Silenced Intelligentsia***" when fully designed and constructed.

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