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The design worthy of being a model in the art of heavy carpets

Bikas[a],

of Pharmacy, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz, Iran & Australia

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ABSTRACT

How societies decide who deserves to be remembered. Throughout human history, societies have created figures who are remembered not simply for what they accomplished, but for what their lives appear to represent. They become symbols of courage, intelligence, creativity, perseverance, compassion, leadership or discovery. Their names pass from one generation to another, their images become familiar, and their stories gradually acquire a meaning that extends beyond the individuals themselves. But what does it actually mean to call someone a role model? The question appears simple until we examine it closely. Every society has its heroes, intellectuals, artists, scientists, athletes, leaders and spiritual figures. Yet the people selected for admiration are rarely chosen by a universal formula. What one culture regards as exemplary, another may interpret differently. Historical periods also change the criteria. A person celebrated in one generation may be questioned by another, while previously overlooked individuals can later become central to a society's collective memory.

1. *Introduction:*

Daniel Bikas's Persian wall rug "***Best Role Models Ever***" approaches this complex question through an unusual artistic language. The work brings together 24 portraits of internationally recognized figures from different fields, transforming the traditional Persian rug into a visual gallery of human exemplars. Rather than presenting the rug merely as a collection of portraits, the work can be understood as an invitation to consider how humanity chooses whom to remember, admire and emulate.

The Making of a Role Model

A role model is not simply a successful person.

Success can be measured through wealth, fame, awards, discoveries, records or influence. But societies often ask something different of those whom they elevate as examples. They search for qualities that appear to transcend individual achievement.

A scientist may become admired because of an extraordinary discovery, but also because that discovery changes humanity's understanding of the universe. An athlete may become celebrated not only for winning competitions but for discipline, perseverance and the ability to overcome limitations. An artist may be remembered because a work changes the way people perceive beauty, identity or society. A writer may become influential because words written decades or centuries earlier continue to speak to new generations.

Consequently, the idea of the exemplary human being exists somewhere between ***achievement and meaning***.

Corresponding author:
Email: *bikasdaniel@gmail.com*
Tel: +98 914 400 5003

A person becomes a role model when society attaches a larger value to that person's life. Their biography becomes a kind of cultural narrative: *this is what human beings can achieve; this is what courage can look like; this is how imagination can transform reality; this is how perseverance can overcome obstacles.* In this sense, role models function as mirrors of collective aspirations.

Every Era Creates Its Own Heroes

The history of role models is also a history of changing social values.

Ancient societies often placed warriors, rulers and religious figures at the centre of collective memory. Later periods increasingly celebrated philosophers, scientists, writers and explorers. Modern societies have expanded the field further, creating cultural heroes from cinema, sport, technology, popular culture and other forms of public life.

This evolution reveals something important: ***societies do not merely discover role models; they construct them*.**

The qualities considered exemplary depend partly on what a society needs, fears, values or hopes for at a particular moment.

A period fascinated by scientific progress may elevate scientists and inventors. A society experiencing political transformation may look toward figures associated with freedom or social change. An era defined by technological transformation may celebrate innovators who appear to have reshaped the boundaries of possibility.

The selection of role models therefore tells us something about the society doing the selecting. When a society places a particular person on a pedestal, it is often expressing an aspiration about itself.

The Problem of Perfection

Yet the concept of the role model contains an inherent contradiction.

Human beings are complex. Even individuals who have achieved extraordinary things possess contradictions, limitations and imperfections. Historical figures are rarely identical to the simplified images that later generations inherit.

The transformation of a person into an icon can therefore involve a process of selection. Certain qualities are emphasized while others disappear from collective memory. A complicated human life can become a recognizable symbol.

This is particularly visible in portraiture. A portrait freezes a person into a single visual moment. The viewer sees a face, an expression and an identity, but not the entire complexity of the life behind it. The portrait consequently becomes an act of interpretation.

By placing 24 portraits together, *Best Role Models Ever* raises this issue visually. The viewer is confronted with a collection of faces that appear to represent different forms of human excellence. Yet the very act of grouping them together creates a question:

What do these people have in common?

The answer cannot simply be fame. Their professions, cultures, historical circumstances and achievements differ enormously.

What connects them is the idea of influence.

2. *Previous Work:*

In* 2025*, Iman Zakariaei Kermani and et al explored "***the metamorphosis of the carpet from an art object into a conceptual subject*** [1]." ***In* 2026*, Erdek Ibrahim*** presented "***Deconstructing the Traditional Art of Carpet-Weaving within the Context of Contemporary Art Approaches***" [2]. Reviewed ***by Popova, Yana Novikov in* 2008,** "***Patterns in Carpets: Discovery or Recognition***"[3]. A study was conducted ***by Mehrdad Sadri in* 2006** on the topic of "***Symbolic Concepts in the Patterns of the Sonqor Carpet***" [4]. Research was conducted ***by Telman Ibrahimov*** on the subject of "***Medallion Carpet. Origin, Symbolism and Definitions of Evolution***"[5]. A paper on carpet patterns was reviewed ***by Martin Sundberg and et al in* 2014[6].** Through the efforts of David Ness and his colleagues, a series of articles entitled "***Carpets and Cities from Cradle to Cradle***" was presented ***in* 2003[7]. *By Caroline A, Mason, In* 2002,** the geometric features of oriental rugs were examined in the Cultural Diffusion Study [8]. ***Yusuf A Adenle and et al in* 2024** Carpet and Textile Case Studies and Conceptual Model Analysis [9]. Through the efforts of ***Abolfazl Rafipour and et al in* 2022,** the mathematical ideas of carpets and rug weavers were used as a basis for designing mathematical assignments [10].
Carpet art was examined as a source of inspiration in urban landscape design ***by Reyhan Erdoğan and colleagues in* 2022**[11]. The Comprehensive Carpet Concept Project was reviewed ***by Hopkins, J. T. and colleagues in* 1989** [12]. ***Hassan Akbari and et al***

identified an underlying factor in the commercialization model of carpets in the Central Province ***in* 2026** [13]. The circular transition of the Dutch carpet industry ***in* 2024** was examined by Manon Diemeer with an approach to the sectoral innovation system [14].
***Marcia Bergmann and et al in* 2017** in Mature Industries Strategic Design on Performance and Competition in the Carpet Industry [15].
Through the efforts of ***Abdullah Mirzaei and et al in* 2026**, the formation of the contemporary Tabriz carpet design system was examined based on the role of university graduates [16].
In 2024, the use of Qom carpet motifs in the interior architecture of exhibition spaces was subjected to a visual-conceptual analysis ***by Mersedeh Madani and et al*** [17].
Dehkordi Razieh Mokhtari in 2023 for the carpet in Faeg Ahmad's arrangements (using phenomenological stages) was reflected in research [18]. E, Ahmadifard, et al analyzed the transformative institutions in the knowledge and innovation system of the handwoven carpet industry ***in* 2023**[19].
In 2025, Samirah Alotaibi conducted a qualitative study on contemporary fashion inspired by the motifs of Middle Eastern carpets [20].
In* 1405, *Masih Aslani reviewed research on the study of the art of music and modern numerical systems in musical structures, as well as their relationship with musical temperaments and constellations [21-27]. Also ***in* 1405**, research on art, carpet weaving, and tourism was analyzed ***by Fatemeh Etemadi Rad*** [28-30]. ***In* 2026**, the art of carpet weaving and the design of handmade carpets and tapestries, especially silk carpets, was reviewed ***by Daniel Bikas*** [31-34].

3. *Result and Discussion:*

From Individual Achievement to Collective Memory

A role model becomes culturally significant when individual achievement enters collective memory.

Memory is selective. Humanity cannot preserve every life with equal intensity. Museums, books, monuments, photographs, films and works of art all participate in determining which people remain visible.

The Persian rug has historically been particularly suited to this relationship between image and memory. Its intricate surface can contain patterns, symbols, narratives and cultural references that survive long after the original moment of creation.

In *Best Role Models Ever*, this traditional function is transformed.

Instead of flowers, geometric motifs or conventional pictorial scenes alone, the rug becomes a **woven archive of human figures**. The faces are preserved not in a history book or museum catalogue, but within the structure of a traditional craft.

The rug consequently becomes more than an object to be viewed. It becomes a form of cultural memory.

The design of various carpets based on the best patterns in human history is shown in ***Figure 1***. The design of carpets completed with the best patterns in human history ***by Daniel Bikas*** is shown in ***Figure 2***.



Figure* 1*: Design of various carpets based on the best patterns in human history

Why 24 Faces?

The presence of 24 individuals is significant because it prevents the concept of excellence from belonging to a single profession or discipline.

Science does not have a monopoly on human achievement. Nor do sport, literature, art, cinema, technology or spirituality. Human civilization is created through many different forms of intelligence.

One person may expand scientific knowledge. Another may push the physical boundaries of the human body. Another may transform artistic language. Another may explore the universe. Another may influence millions through ideas, writing or spiritual reflection.

Together, these figures suggest that there is no single definition of human excellence. There are many. This diversity is essential to the conceptual meaning of the work. The rug does not present one model of humanity. It presents a constellation of possibilities.



Figure 2: Design of completed carpets with the best patterns in human history by Daniel Bikas

Who Decides Who Is Exemplary?

The title *Best Role Models Ever* may initially appear definitive. But its deeper effect can be precisely the opposite. It encourages disagreement.

A viewer may recognize every individual. Another may question some selections. Someone else may immediately think of a person who is absent. That response is valuable. The artwork does not need every viewer to agree on the same definition of greatness. Instead, it can open a conversation about the criteria by which greatness is assigned.

Should a role model be someone who changed history? Someone who helped others? Someone who demonstrated extraordinary courage? Someone who expanded knowledge? Someone who inspired millions? Someone who overcame adversity? Or perhaps someone whose life demonstrated qualities that remain valuable regardless of fame? These questions have no universally fixed answer. And perhaps that is precisely why societies continue to create role models.

The Rug as a Question

In transforming these 24 figures into a Persian wall rug, Daniel Bikas brings together two forms of cultural inheritance: the ancient tradition of Persian carpet-making and the modern human desire to preserve influential individuals through images.

The result is a meeting between ***craft and memory, tradition and contemporary culture, individual achievement and collective identity.***

The black-and-white treatment reinforces the archival character of the composition. By reducing the visual world largely to tonal contrasts, the portraits emphasize faces, expressions and identities rather than spectacle. The rug becomes almost photographic in its intention while remaining unmistakably woven.

At the same time, the words *Best Role Models Ever* become part of the visual environment. They do not merely identify the artwork; they establish its central philosophical challenge. Who deserves such a title?And who decides?

Perhaps the most meaningful role models are not those whom society simply tells us to admire, but those who encourage us to reconsider the limits of what a human being can become.

Beyond the Portrait

Ultimately, *Best Role Models Ever* is not only about 24 famous people. It is about humanity's continuing need for examples.

Every generation searches for figures who embody possibilities larger than themselves. Children look for heroes. Young people search for paths to follow. Societies preserve certain names because they want future generations to remember particular forms of achievement, courage, imagination or perseverance.

But role models should not necessarily be understood as perfect human beings. Their greater value may lie in what their lives demonstrate: that knowledge can expand, that obstacles can be challenged, that creativity can cross boundaries, and that an individual life can influence the imagination of millions. The Persian rug therefore becomes a philosophical surface.

Its woven faces ask the viewer not simply to recognize famous people, but to think about ***why human beings choose to admire them***. In this sense, the real subject of *Best Role Models Ever* is not fame.

It is the human search for examples of what we might become. And perhaps every portrait, once woven into collective memory, ultimately asks the same question:

***What kind of human being do we want the next generation to remember*?**

24 of the best patterns in human history, on a completed carpet, are shown in ***Figure* 3**. A schematic of the best patterns in human history on a carpet is shown in ***Figure 4***.



***Figure* 3:** 24 of the best patterns in human history, completed on a carpet



***Figure* 4:** A schematic of the best patterns for carpets in human history.

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