

## Investigating the Cultural Interaction Approach in Designing the Carpet Museum

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### Abstract

Constructing cultural buildings and spaces has become common among different societies to respond to their needs for keeping and appreciating their art, history, culture and also showing it to other developed societies. Each society has its own culture and this culture can be sought in the art of every society. One of the closest places to culture is the museum. On the other hand, the architecture of every land is a part of its culture. Iran, having a rich and fruitful culture, increases our duty in keeping and valuing this national wealth. In fact, architecture and culture have a very close relationship with each other. The highness of the position of the Iranian carpet in the world and valuing it, like the finest spreading textures, is still standing. Global superiority and excellence can only be attributed to the art that is the original and natural reflection of the civilization and culture that has produced it. And this is what Iranian carpets enjoy to the highest extend, because they have perfected the aesthetic perspective that is prominently Iranian by creating spaces like exhibitions, stores, different and creative galleries, carpet weaving workshops, etc. Using an analytic-practical method, this research aims to introduce different global cultures through art, especially the art of carpet weaving by increasing the value of the carpet weaving art.

**Keywords:** Culture, Carpet Museum, ancient arts, designing

### Introduction

Each society has its own culture and this culture can be sought in the art of that society. The position and value of some of Iran's ancient traditions and values reflects a lot of significant concepts in the formation process of the Iranian art, especially that of architecture and carpet weaving. It gives the idea that there is a common image and bond between these two arts. There may be not a more documented source of nature in the effectiveness to the carpet weaving art and it has not used any other thing and the truth is nothing but this. But these very same designs and images also take place in architecture and drives us into looking closer into them. Professor Arbury has said that it might be said that the current patterns of the carpets date as back as the dawn of time.

The highness of the position of the Iranian carpet in the world and valuing it, like the finest spreading textures, is still standing. Global superiority and excellence can only be attributed to the art that is the original and natural reflection of the civilization and culture that has produced it. And this is what Iranian carpets enjoy to the highest extend, because they have perfected the aesthetic perspective that is prominently Iranian. The basis of these textures is based on ancient traditions and within their sinews, there lies ideals that have enjoyed value and sanctity and has been held dear in the language, literature and highest intangible heritages of this race since ancient times.

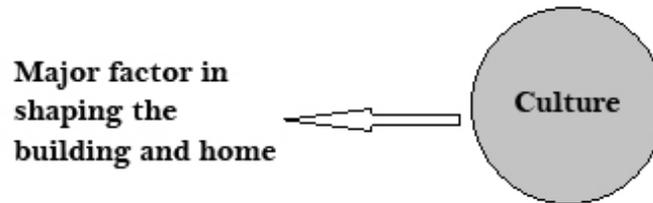
These works are results of the masterful craftsmanship which has long been a source of pride for the Iranian craftsman and provide a limitless domain for exhibiting the Iranian genius in creating designs and images of high rarity, glow and rhythm, full of opacity and filled with mystery. Saving and keeping artistic works, including carpets, which is the biggest global heritage indicates the

necessity for constructing a carpet museum for exhibiting it more than ever. It drives the architect to utilize his creativity in designing the right space by discovering the common artistic grounds between carpets and architecture to not only work toward the survival of this land in terms of culture and art through constructing museums like the carpet museum, but also provide the grounds for the expansion of knowledge about the cultures and traditions of other lands. The present study is of the quality-descriptive nature and is based on field and library studies. The data collection method for this research was through libraries, the internet and field research. Knowing a culture required library research.

**Culture**

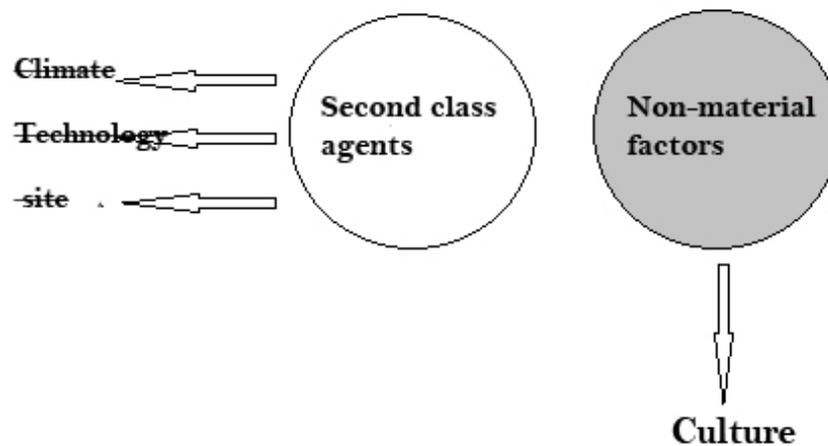
Expansive and different concepts and descriptions can be presented for defining culture. Since each society and ideology introduces a description for culture based on its world perspective and to avoid lengthy debates, some basic points are pointed out. Investigating the different definitions for culture indicate their approximately unified origin (Jafari, 1994).

Stress and focus on contracts and agreements on a unified definition of culture in this paper is because almost no human action or phenomenon can be found that does not affect or is not affected by culture. Culture is not an abstract subject which is parallel to the other subjects of the society, rather it is a spiritual space in which the individual or the society live on (Naqizade, 2000). For instance, the impact of culture in different fields of life, including art, architecture, urban development, advancement, life style and even industrial products is an undeniable matter (Nasr, 1980).



**Figure 1: Culture as the main factor in forming the building (Source: Memarian, 2011: 375)**

Therefore, this culture is the set of beliefs, knowledge, traditions and values that each society has evolved based on its ideals and lives according to it. In this process, the society's goal is to reach the eminence and development that its world view has defined and determined for it.



**Figure 2: Rappaport's Theory of Culture (Source: Memarian, 2011)**

To summarize this, culture is the space for the society's movement toward its eminent life goals and it is only natural that the sub-cultures formed from other subjects which have been discussed since the past and is now in the attention of the thinkers with more seriousness, focus and scrutiny is the impact of the environment on human including his culture and behaviors. Man-made elements or artificial environment is one of the main elements of the environment that affects human and his culture. This characteristic of art can be used to transport the cultural and ideological concepts of a generation to another and its fluent language can be utilized as the symbols for the saints in each period.

### **Relationship between culture and architecture**

Architecture, as a social phenomenon, is derived from culture and affects it and it reflects the human's thoughts regarding space, aesthetics and culture. The orientation of cultures is always based on human consciousness and his ideas and this path is also effective in the formation of the living environment and the appearance of architecture. Because this space is regarded as a human need and these types of needs are always responded to in the path of divine mind and consciousness. Therefore, before we look at architecture as a technical field of expertise, it must be regarded as an art form and its cultural aspect should be observed. The architectural space reaches eminence and growth based on cultural concepts in the domain of time and then is expressed in a local dimension.

Art, as a connective system is bonded to language and culture and to receive the message in it, the cultural ground in whose path art was formed, must be studied well; otherwise, its concepts are not apprehensible in a right way. One of the duties of the artist here is to help regular individuals in giving order to their cultural world and in fact, the artist must exhibit the natural signs with a stronger and more readable narration for regular people and eliminate the barriers for them. Cultural characteristics of each age can be known through its architecture, because when architecture is formed under the impact of the different conditions of an era, like political, social, economic and cultural conditions, can be regarded as an independent and live architecture as soon as it is created and it can attach its own features to itself. When the impacts of the creator of a work (of architecture) are eliminated, its architecture may survive. Now, if the creating factors matched with the cultural basis, that architecture finds a deep root and if its factors were to be unstable, that architecture will be devoid of life and new factors will eliminate it.

The changes of the present century have caused the change and evolutions among some of the articles of life and culture of the society. The movement and process of traditional architecture came to a halt; on the other hand, because of the quickness of the changes, it did not have the opportunity to adapt itself with the culture. But the changes in European countries took place step by step and they replaced the changed notions easily to a great extent. Now if the basic factors were to be known to revive our country's culture and architecture, they will survive. Architecture is not merely a set of styles and forms and it does not even determine itself with social and economic conditions, rather it is a combination of all of them (Diba, 2008).

### **Knowing the carpet**

The word Farsh (carpet) is an Arabic word and is attributed to whatever that can be spread and its Persian word is Qali, Qaliche, etc. In notes that are left from the Pahlavi language, for the luxurious carpet the word "Bep" or "Boub" and for carpet (and felt) the word "Namat" and for carpet, garment and kip the word "Vistarag" are used, which the latter word is derived from the word "Vistartan", meaning spreading. The word "Boub" in Dekhoda's Dictionary is defined as follows:

"The house's carpet and spreading, a carpet that is also called "Anboub""

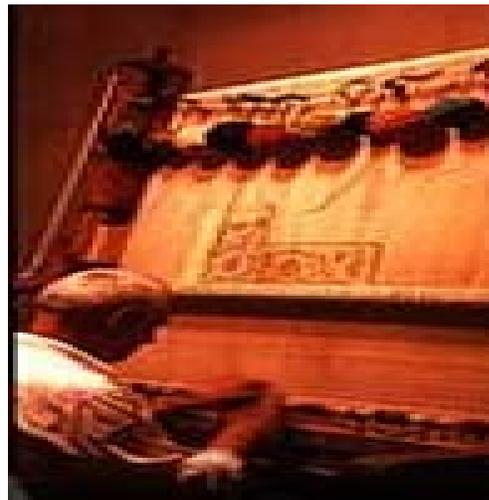
In the Tabari History, from Aboujafar Mohammed bin Jarir Tabari (approximately 840-922), translated and written by Mohammed Balami (964), the word "Basat" has been presented as a synonym for the carpet and when the Baharestan Carpet is spoken of, which is when the Arabs attacked Iran in Ctesiphon palace, it is stated that:

"They found a carpet made of silk, sixty cubits in sixty cubits."



**Figure 3: A carpet**

In *Mojam-ol-Boldan* by Yaqout Hamavi (early 1300s) and *Nozhat-ol-Qoloub* by Hamd-ollah Mostofi (1350) it is quoted from Abou-Oun, the author of the book *Aldhij* that: "In Qali Qala a carpet is woven which is called Qali and it is a summary of Qali Qala and Qali Qala is the name of a city in the great Armenia which was ruled by Iranians from the time of Anoushirvan until Islam came. Armeniaqes is one of the people of Armenia who ruled over the government. After him a woman came to power named Qali and constructed a city and named it Qali Qale which means Qali's beauty."



**Figure 4: A carpet**

### **Carpet history**

The Iranian carpet has a very long history. Weaving carpets has been very common in Iran for a very long time and it had an ancestral motivation. As the historians, tourists, warriors and discovered articles from the past indicate, carpet weaving, as a public, rural and nomadic hand craft has a very long history in Iran.



**Figure 5: A carpet**

Professor Rudenko, the excavator of the Pazyryk carpet believes that this carpet is the work of the people of Medes or Parthians (the Great Khorasan). Attention to similar and contemporary images to this carpet in the columns of Persepolis affirms this theory. Other works, such as painting from some of the medieval artists have carpets with designs that were said to be Iranian. Some historians have stated notions about the attack of the Romans to Iran and have mentioned the despoliation of the hand-made carpet as one of the spoils they took away. Greek sources have also mentioned Iran's brocade carpets. Although over complimented in some tales and descriptions, the Baharestan Carpet, with all of its artistry, as is affirmed in different anecdotes, is in itself an indication of the advancement of the carpet weaving industry and side crafts including designing and dyeing in ancient Iran. Carpet, as a symbol of human thought and idea, and as affected by his sense of innovativeness, has faced ups and downs during the course of history. Sometimes with the Artists' free thinking and the appropriate environment that has been created for the growth and flourishing of their art, it has reached its peak and sometimes, it has faced damages caused by natural and unnatural plights that struck the society and directed it to its periods of hiddenness and senility.



**Figure 6: A carpet**

The carpets of the Safavi era can be attributed to two time periods. One is the group of carpets woven during the reign of Shah Esmail and Shah Tahmasb which is known as Shah Tahmasbi and has its own style with the same name. Shah Tahmasb used to encourage artists, carpet weavers and designers constantly and he was also an artist. It has also been written down that he knew the art of dyeing and he himself designed carpets directly and guided the weavers. Therefore,

during his reign different fine arts, especially carpet weaving flourished and general changes occurred in its design. The bergamot carpets replaced carpets that were woven until the late 1500s in Iran and then were known as Mongol and Teymouri designs. Added to the bergamot carpets, weaving carpets with images of animals and hunting grounds became popular in this period. The other one is the group of carpets woven during the time of Shah Abbas which are known as the Shah Abbasi style. In this era, with the opportunity of the existence of the artists of the age, new designs, especially using the Islamic art and unique flowers were created. Some carpet designs in the Shah Abbasi style are: bergamot design or Lachak bergamot, hunting ground design, tree design, vase design.



**Figure 7: A carpet**

### **Carpet history in Iran**

The oldest hand-made Iranian carpet was excavated in the year 1949 in the second stage of the excavations by the Russian archeologist, Rudenko in the Pazyryk site and was called the Pazyryk carpet. In a book Rudenko published in 1953 in Russia after these discoveries, he wrote thorough explanations regarding the excavated carpet and stated clearly that it was a work of the Iranians and the oldest carpet in the world. He wrote that: "Without knowing for sure if the carpet belonged to the Medes, the Parthians (old Khorasan) or the Persians, this carpet and the fabrics found in Pzyryk date back to 5th century or early 4th century B.C." He adds later: "The date of this carpet is determined by the form and shape of the horse riders. The way the war horses are shown, in which instead of saddles, the horses have carpets on their backs, and the fabrics on the horses' chests are among the characteristics of the Assyrians but also on the Pazyryk carpet, there are different details and the way the horsetails are knotted is also seen in Persepolis's engravings.

In the time of the ruling of Mongols (13th and 14th century), carpet weaving reached a very high state in terms of beauty and technique. The flourishing of this industry was affirmed with the reign of Qazan Khan (1307-1524) and the Great Shah Abbas (1587-1629). About 3000 carpets are left from this period that are kept in great museums all over the world or in personal collections.

In this period, carpet weaving workshops were constructed next to the kings' palaces and different centers that used to be located in Tabriz, Isfahan, Kashan, Mashhad, Kurdaman, Jshaqan, Yazd, Estarabad, Harat and northern states like Shiravan, Qarebaq and Gilan developed and flourished.

At that time, high ranking painters and designers inserted bergamot's summarized and combinational designs in the middle of the carpets and Lachaks, which were the same designs that used be printed on the cover of valuable books during the 15th century. With the occupation of the country by the Afghans (1721-1722), this industry and art faced a downward slope.

In the 19th century, Iranian carpets, especially luxurious carpets of the Tabriz area found their way to Europe. Delegates were sent from European countries to all the countries of the orient and in a very close competition, collected all the old and antique carpets and sent them to Constantinople, which still was the most important carpet market in the orient. Nasrabad carpets are mediocre and carpets from other regions are of lower levels.

In Kashan, the European merino wool was used, but the economic crisis of those years in the 20th century, the merino wool was not used any longer because of its high costs which increases the total price of the carpet and the wool from Sabzevar, Kermanshah and Isfahan was taken to Kashan and there, it was cleaned and separated and then accurately worsted in the workshop.

But it has been a long time since the national made machine skeins which takes the color better than hand-made wool and is softer and shinier is used. Kashan carpet has two woofs and it was woven in a Farsi fashion and the regular kind has 40 chitterlings in every knot. Kashan's carpet weaving devises are generally working in houses. The workers are usually women and are very skilled at what they do (Iranian Carpet, M. Behazin).

### Museum definition

In the statute of the international committee of the carpet museum (ICONA), the museum is defined as the constant institution that works toward the safe guarding of the cultural and artistic heritage and cultural improvement of the society and it functions in different forms, especially through education and entertainment for the public in artistic, historical, scientific, technological, etc. complexes.

**Table 1: Classification of the carpet museum**

Artistic carpet museums are those whose collections are basically gathered and presented for their aesthetic value, although all their forming particles may not have been artistic elements in the mind of their creators.	Artistic carpet museum
All carpet museum whose collections are considered historical and their goal is to present a documentation of the periodical hierarchy of a series of events or a series indicating a moment of a scene of evolution are historical carpet museums.	Historical carpet museum
Another group of carpet museums that are similar to artistic carpet museum but are clearly different from them are galleries and centers of carpet art. They are artistic galleries managed by the private sector and governmental institutions of carpet art.	Galleries and centers of carpet art
Artistic carpet museum in the art groups is constantly designing and evolving the aesthetic environment of the carpet. Therefore, it is only natural that their activity which basically revolves around carpets, reflect the diversity of aesthetic movements and modern activities.	Modern artistic carpet museum
Natural sciences carpet museum, practical sciences carpet museum and technical carpet museum except for the historical carpet museum of sciences and techniques which is considered historical, are in the line of scientific carpet museums.	Scientific carpet museum
Carpet museums that are not constructed in a specific building, but in the area of a garden or a park and their objects are displayed in an open space are considered specialized.	Specialized carpet museum
Regional or local carpet museums are those that introduce all the natural, historical and artistic attractions of a province or a city.	Regional carpet museum

In article 2 of the order 1546 in June 13th, 1945, it is stated that each collection of works that have artistic, historical or archeological value and are exhibited to the public during the year is called a museum.

The word museum is derived from the root "Museum", meaning the inspiration or the name of the nine muses of art, poetics and music in the ancient Greece and was derived from this word by someone name Gillioum. The place of the above mentioned muses which is a place for debates among scientists and a place for keeping and exhibiting the jewelry and valuable items and is called after Greek women the "Museum", which is the name for the muses' congress.

### **Theoretical principles of museum architecture**

*Technical notion:* The architect always enjoys the conditions of his time and reflects the capabilities, facilities and cultural conditions. Especially when the economic and cultural conditions are inappropriate, this reflection is stronger. Attention to the modern techniques and being involved with the tools for constructing a building and applying it to the presented design is the most important factor in this impact. Therefore, we have tried to think about the issue of technique in a very realistic way and accept the executive planning as a limitation based on the available materials and facilities.

### **Role of carpet museum in cultural development**

Carpet museums as valuable and rich centers are of unique positions in developed countries. In these places, the reminiscent articles from different historical periods are collected and exhibited. Therefore, their historical-cultural identity has a more accurate possibility for identification and evaluation and it is affirmed and the nation can also find a more determining role in the advancement of the society with a realistic approach based on the rich civilization of the past and proud of the unique human thought, power and creativity that are observed in the artistic and practical works.

### **Position of carpet museum in tourism culture**

During the history, culture has played an important role in expanding tourism and is always among the determining factors in choosing the destination for tourists. Today, with the increase of development in the tourism field in different aspects like commerce, entertainment, etc. the role of culture in tourism is reduced. It can be deduced that now, most of the passengers seek commercial opportunities or entertainment in their travels and the global tourism market is perverted from solely cultural subjects. To reclaim the role and importance of culture in tourism, a great amount of effort needs to be used so that the tourists' tendency toward cultural subjects increase in different societies. Empowering and expanding the way the cultural potentials and historical heritage of the countries are displayed can attract the attention of a lot of tourists in this direction.

The tour planners believe that about 50 percent of tourist activities are done with the goal to visit the cultural heritage and study different cultures. Therefore, it can be seen that the cultural heritage is still considered as one of the main basics of the tourism industry. Here, the role of the carpet museum in developing and empowering the historical and cultural works is undeniable. By creating and expanding the museums with cultural and historical subjects, this demand of the tourists can be responded to and eventually, introduce the cultural sectors of the society and the historical heritage of the countries to the tourists by attracting greater numbers of tourists.

### **How to create connections with visitors**

In terms of quality, the expectations of the visitors do not match what is displayed and suggested in reality. In most cases, evaluating the amount of attraction of ancient sites or cultural carpet museums is not based on the credibility of what is displayed; rather it is dependent on other

factors, including the amount of the success of that museum or exhibition in stimulating the curiosity of the visitor, the amount of impact on the audiences' imagination and addressing them, the facility of the conditions for a short stay, availability of the facilities to choose items to purchase in cultural stores, etc.

This point should be always in mind that the world that introduces the carpet museum is different from the public world and what they receive. The authorities of the carpet museum often forget that what has been affirmed by them, is not necessarily tangible to the visitors. In fact, it is needed that the carpet museum put attention to the tastes and approaches of the visitors and try to bring their cultural approaches closer to the society's culture and provide a stronger connection between themselves and the audiences.

**Table 2: Scientific methods of education in carpet museum**

Making the museum environment dynamic and changing it from the stable and even nature of the spaces	1
Using educational videos, especially for schools and children age groups	2
Forming groups of the visitors and sending a guide with each group	3
Holding competitions and giving presents in order to let the visitors know of the items in the carpet museum and providing catalogues or postal cards with fine quality and reasonable prices to revive their memories of this visit	4
Providing wooden, plastic and plaster models of the important and valuable items of the museum and selling them to the visitors	5
Providing welfare facilities for the relaxation of the visitors which lead to spending more time in the museum, etc.	6

### Conclusion

Studying a cultural behavior needs historical investigation and reaching its root. Also, to respond to a lot of the questions in the field of culture, one must be within the heart of the society and experience all the issues with the society; otherwise, no correct answer can be given to cultural issues. Cultural issues cannot be solved like other problems of the society like industrial, scientific and other types of problems because these issues, unlike cultural problems, are solved and can be prevented in the short term.

The human being, as the creator of the culture has a unique and close relation with his creation, loves it dearly, sacrifices and devotes all he has got willingly to help it grow, become eminent and flourish and uses all his powers and thought to prevent its degradation and downfall.

Therefore, the skeleton of the artificial environment is formed by the internal relation, patterns of the social institutions and social organizations. Then, the changes in social institutions are adapted to the capabilities of the environment that is created and in this process, it in its turn changes. In the process of these changes, most social organizations, because of their lack of knowledge of themselves and lack of a correct understanding of the relations between the behavioral patterns of the organization and the artificial environment, face issues.

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