

# koffler gallery

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Artist Ghazaleh Avarzamani's game-based installations take centre stage in *Never Never Land* at the Koffler Gallery**

**Toronto, ON, January 10, 2019** – This winter, Toronto's **Koffler Gallery** presents the first solo exhibition in Canada of Iranian-born, Toronto-based artist **Ghazaleh Avarzamani**.

Running from **January 17 to March 17, 2019**, **Ghazaleh Avarzamani: *Never Never Land*** opens with a free public reception on **Thursday, January 17, 2019** from **7 to 9 PM**. The **Koffler Gallery** is located at **Artscape Youngplace**, 180 Shaw Street, Toronto.

Ghazaleh Avarzamani's artistic practice encompasses a variety of artistic forms, including textiles, embroidery, sculpture and installation. Driven by research on manifestations of global powers, their impact on and manipulation of history, geography and knowledge, her work explores the ways in which diverse contexts and systems transform ideas and forms, generating new meaning.

*Never Never Land*, Avarzamani's first solo exhibition in Canada, expands on a recent body of work that examines the relationship between experience-based knowledge, psychological factors, memory construction, modern rationality and traditional beliefs. Considering a range of spaces and devices for interactivity, self-development and play, her game-based installations, drawings, sculptures and fibre works question the rules and methodologies used to educate and shape the players' existential outlook.

Central to the exhibition, *Game of Goose* (2016) positions board games as master plans. Based on the oldest existing printed game sheet, the monumental mural piece comprises a 63-space track that maps medieval spiritualist values and superstitions, intending to instruct the player on matters of moral, social and religious import. Complicating the reading of the game, the entire map is embroidered onto a grid of 180 dark blue *kisseh* (Middle Eastern washcloth/loofah) and reproduced as a blueprint for the architecture of modern games. Used as support, the washcloths are quietly undermining the reality of the game itself. As objects meant to clean and remove, the blue loofahs remind the viewer that no structures of power are eternally stable.

The sculptural installation *Fortune Teller* (2016) references the Origami paper game meant to provide chance answers to the participant's questions, predicting their future. Devoid of any messages to read or even look at, the bare form is scaled up and replicated, investing the object with an antithetical role of having no fortune to predict. The absence of a specific message allows the viewer to see nothing and everything at the same time, enabling endless possibilities.

With new works that further explore these ideas alongside notions of learning and forgetting, growth and erasure, accomplishment and failure, Avarzamani aims to expose the paradoxical realities behind the surface of society and its traditions, educational methodologies, individual aspirations and cultural utopias.

**Ghazaleh Avarzamani** (b. 1980, Tehran) was trained in painting at Azad Art University in Tehran, followed by a Master of Fine Arts from Central Saint Martins, London, UK and has exhibited in venues internationally since graduating. Selected solo exhibitions include Ab-Anbar Gallery in 2016, Asia House London in 2014, Etemad Gallery, Tehran and Light Gallery, London in 2013. Avarzamani has been the recipient of the Red Mansion Art Prize in 2013 and Ontario Art Council award in 2017; she curated 'Jabberwocky' exhibition at Ab-Anbar in 2015. She currently lives and works in Toronto, and is represented by Ab-Anbar Gallery in Tehran.

For more information and a full list of the Koffler's Winter 2019 programs, please visit [kofflerarts.org](http://kofflerarts.org)

**Regular exhibition hours:** Wednesday to Friday, 12 PM to 6 PM; Saturday and Sunday, 11 AM to 5 PM. Closed Mondays, Tuesdays and statutory holidays. Admission is free.

### **ABOUT THE KOFFLER GALLERY**

The Koffler Gallery is a forum for the presentation and development of contemporary visual art that reflects diverse cultural, material and aesthetic perspectives, generating critical discussions around ideas of our time. Featuring a year-round program of exhibitions, publications, public programs and educational initiatives, the Koffler Gallery fosters new production while equally aiming to expand the visibility of existing work by Canadian and international artists. The program positions the contemporary Jewish experience in a context of comparative discussions of identity, memory and place.

The Koffler Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the Toronto Arts Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

### **ABOUT THE KOFFLER CENTRE OF THE ARTS**

The [Koffler Centre of the Arts](#) is a cultural platform that explores critical ideas and concerns of our time through exhibitions, publications, performances, conversations and digital initiatives. We examine complex issues in respectful, constructive discussions that position our Jewish identity in conversation with diverse perspectives and global voices. The Koffler Centre of the Arts acknowledges the support of the Koffler Family Foundation, Cultural Season Sponsor CIBC Wood Gundy, the Ontario Arts Council through the Community and Multidisciplinary Arts Organizations Program, our patrons and donors.

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**For further information and high resolution images, contact:**

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