

NEWS

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WALKER ART CENTER & THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART PRESENT *SIAH ARMAJANI: FOLLOW THIS LINE*



Siah Armajani, working model for *Fallujah*, 2004, wood, metal, fabric, paint, acrylic. Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Gift of the artist, 2006.

MINNEAPOLIS, AUGUST 6, 2018 — *Siah Armajani: Follow This Line* is the first comprehensive retrospective in the United States devoted to the work of Minneapolis-based artist Siah Armajani. Born in Tehran in 1939, Armajani moved to Minnesota in 1960 to attend Macalester College in St. Paul, where he immersed himself in the study of philosophy. He has lived and worked in the Twin Cities ever since, while exhibiting nationally and internationally.

Armajani is best known today for his works of public art—bridges, gazebos, reading rooms, and other gathering spaces—sited across the United States and Europe. Near the Walker, the artist's landmark 375-foot *Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge* (1988) connects Loring Park to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. The groundbreaking exhibition *Follow This Line* spans six decades of the artist's studio practice and resituates his work first within the context of prerevolutionary Tehran and, later, postwar and present-day America. Balancing a keen sense of abstraction with social and political content, Armajani has produced an ambitious and nuanced body of work that engages a wide range of references—from Persian calligraphy to the manifesto, letter, and talisman; from poetry to mathematical equations and computer programming; from the Abstract Expressionist canvas to the vernacular architecture of rural America, Bauhaus design, and Russian Constructivism.

Featuring more than 100 works made over the past 60 years, the exhibition brings together models from his *Dictionary for Building* series (1974-1975), nearly 150 small-scale maquettes representing the architectural elements of a house that have been combined into different permutations, as well as *Fallujah* (2004-05), a monumental antiwar sculpture created in response to the US invasion and



Siah Armajani, *Architectural Entity Even Event (2): At One Moment Shadow-ful Area Equals Shadow-less Area*, 1970, felt-tip pen on graph paper. Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Art Center Acquisition Fund, 1971.

occupation of Iraq. The exhibition also includes collages and other works on paper the artist made in the late 1950s while in Tehran, and more recent sculptures and models from his *Tombs* series (1972–2016) and *Seven Rooms of Hospitality* series (2016–ongoing). Many of the pieces included, from private and public collections in Europe and elsewhere, have never before been exhibited in the United States; others will be shown in a public institution for the first time.

The exhibition is accompanied by a major catalogue published by the Walker Art Center.

Siah Armajani: Follow This Line will be presented at the Walker Art Center September 9 through December 30, 2018, and at The Met Breuer February 20 through June 2, 2019.

Curated by Clare Davies, Assistant Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey (The Metropolitan Museum of Art); with Victoria Sung, Assistant Curator, Visual Arts (Walker Art Center); assisted by Jadine Collingwood, Curatorial Fellow, Visual Arts (Walker Art Center).

Siah Armajani: Follow This Line is organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York..

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Siah Armajani (US, b. Iran 1939) is best known for his large-scale, politically resonant works that merge sculpture with architecture. He has created bridges, gazebos, and reading rooms for outdoor public spaces. Some of his projects include the design of the Olympic Torch for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, *Lighthouse and Bridge* on Staten Island in New York, and *Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge* in Minneapolis at the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden.

RELATED EVENTS

Avant Garden

Saturday, September 8, 6pm
Walker Art Center

Join us for *Avant Garden 2018*, the Walker's annual benefit event and a celebration of the new fall exhibition *Siah Armajani: Follow This Line*. The evening promises a signature Walker party experience, with gourmet food, craft cocktails, an art auction, live music, dancing, and special guests. Get tickets now online or by calling the box office at 612-375-7600.

Proceeds from Avant Garden support the Walker Art Center's award-winning artistic and educational programs.

Drawing Workshop Series

Thursdays, September 6, October 4, November 1
Walker Art Center, Free

Join us on the Walker terraces or in the galleries for drawing workshops led by Amber Sausen, AIA Architect and the President of Urban Sketchers – an international drawing collective.



Siah Armajani, *Dictionary for Building: The Garden Gate*, 1982–1983, wood, paint, book. Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Purchased with the aid of funds from William D. and Stanley Gregory and Art Center Acquisition Fund, 1983.



Siah Armajani, *Prayer*, 1962, oil, ink on canvas mounted to board. Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Art Center Acquisition Fund, 1962.

The series begins Thursday, September 6, before the Siah Armajani exhibition opening, and the first workshop is centered around the artist's *Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge*.

Artist talk

Thursday, September 20, 6:30pm
Walker Cinema, Free

Join artist Siah Armajani and Victoria Sung, Assistant Curator, Visual Arts for an insightful and inspiring conversation about the artist's life and work.

Slavs and Tatars: Red Black Thread

Thursday, October 11, 7pm
Walker Cinema, Free

The internationally renowned art collective Slavs and Tatars creates exhibitions, books, and lecture-performances focusing on the art and politics of Eurasia. Their newest performance lecture Red-Black Thread addresses the "construction of race, namely blackness, from the perspective of Russia, the Soviet Union, and communism."

Visit Armajani's interactive installation Sacco and Vanzetti *Reading Room #3* (1988) in Gallery 7 to read a selection of publications from Slavs and Tatars' Red-Black Thread reading list.

Silent Reading Party

Thursday, November 29, 5–8pm
Gallery 7, Free

Lose yourself in a book inside Siah Armajani's interactive installation Sacco and Vanzetti *Reading Room #3* (1988). Bring your own, check one out from Coffee House Press, or choose from the publications selected by art collective Slavs and Tatars.

Gallery Tours

Thursdays, September 20, October 11, November 8
6pm

Dive deep into Siah Armajani: Follow This Line with specialized tours of the exhibition. Each tour expands up on the prolific career and life of this Minnesota-based artist. The tour on October 11 will be led by Siah Armajani exhibition curator Victoria Sung.

GALLERY HOURS AND ADMISSION

\$15 adults; \$13 seniors (62+); \$10 students (with ID)
Free to Walker members and ages 18 and under.
Free with a paid event ticket within six months of performance or screening.

Free to all every Thursday evening (5–9 pm) and on the first Saturday of each month (10 am–6 pm).

Enjoy free gallery admission on Thursday nights from 5 to 9 pm.

Target Free Thursday Nights sponsored by 

Tuesday, Wednesday, Sunday 11 am–5 pm

Thursday, 11 am–9 pm

Friday–Saturday 11 am–6 pm

Closed Mondays

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Premier Partners -----



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