

## Press Release

### ***Shirin Towfiq: Threaded Journeys opens at Mingei International Museum on March 30***

#### **Exhibition Dates**

March 30 - August 11, 2024

**March 5, 2024 – San Diego, CA** – In the exhibition, ***Shirin Towfiq: Threaded Journeys***, interdisciplinary artist Shirin Towfiq explores ways to express her experience as a second-generation Iranian refugee through folk art, lore, and craft. She draws parallels between the Persian magic carpet and its ability to transport people with incredible speed and the travels of many migrants, which often feel abrupt and disjointed. Towfiq creates her own interpretations of the magic carpet, embedding them with references to home and belonging; freedom and the feeling of being uprooted; and the intricacies of identities constructed around these journeys.

“My grandparents would always retell stories of their time in Iran to me. But when their memories about the 1979 Revolution became too difficult to tell, they would offer me sweets with tea to avoid the pain of a direct conversation, leaving my understanding of this history fragmented and incomplete,” Towfiq recalls.

“Creating these objects is an attempt to heal my family's traumas and to prevent them from impacting future generations, all while helping me feel a sense of belonging in my identity.”

Growing up, the understanding of her heritage was shaped by the stories, memories, and objects of her family. Through embroidery, patchwork, and digital prints on gauze, Towfiq rethinks how Persian folk art and daily traditions express the emotional complexity of belonging to multiple identities and places.

#### **Image Downloads**

<https://airtable.com/appp5dPWZwxBjilDs/shrt1AcQSbTERKTWe>

#### **Media Contacts**

Mingei International Museum

Camille Chang

[cchang@mingei.org](mailto:cchang@mingei.org)

## Press Release

***Cups to Connections: Global Gestures of Hospitality welcomes all to the Mingei International Museum on March 30*****Exhibition Dates**

March 30 - August 11, 2024

**March 5, 2024 – San Diego, CA** – The upcoming exhibit ***Cups to Connections: Global Gestures of Hospitality*** delves deep into the art of hospitality and shows how the act of sharing a drink contains the extraordinary power to bring people together. Featuring objects from a wide range of global traditions, ***Cups to Connections*** tells the stories of craft and heritage from across time and cultures. The show keeps close to heart the idea that hospitality, no matter the culture, custom, or beverage, can be the bridge that forges connections between people. The diverse display of items, such as colorful glass tea cups used for Moroccan mint tea and the hammered metal Cezve – a Turkish coffee pot – celebrate how a refreshing drink is a universal language of welcome. These objects draw attention to the elaborate beverage rituals that accompany the instruments, such as the Ethiopian traditional pot *jebena*. The host of an Ethiopian coffee session brews three batches of coffee in the *jebena*, each round – *abol*, *tona*, and *baraka* – symbolizing life's progression from bitterness to sweetness.

**Exhibition Curator Guusje Sanders** notes that the exhibit development process highlighted the excitement from the various lenders and partners that contributed to the show. “As we were receiving responses from the International Cottages to participate in *Cups to Connections*,” she says, “something we heard over and over again is the warmth, generosity, and pride each culture has for and in their hospitality. It truly feels like there is a global conversation in gestures of welcome. While it looks different around the world, the moments themselves – of individual connections made by sharing a drink (or food) – are so genuine.”

Featuring stories of hospitality from 26 cultures as well as items from Mingei’s permanent collection, drinking vessels and tools emerge as distinctive representatives of the cultures and geographic regions they hail from. Each work tells the unique story of how refreshments are made, poured, and ultimately consumed. The fine craftsmanship of each item shines in a compelling kaleidoscope of diverse forms and colors.

This exhibition is presented in collaboration with The House of Pacific Relations, a consortium of houses located in Balboa Park representing 31 cultures – bringing various cultural groups together to foster and cultivate a spirit of understanding, tolerance, and goodwill. This first-of-its-kind collaboration connects visitors with Balboa Park to each other and the myriad hospitality customs of the world. The houses are open on Saturdays and Sundays for visitors to experience a meaningful cultural connection, as well as sample authentic food and beverages from every corner of the globe.

# Mingei International Museum

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**HPR Publicity Co-Chair Sarah Twamley** commented on the collaboration: “The House of Pacific Relations International cottages are delighted and honored to be recognized by the prestigious Mingei International Museum. Our ability to share authentic experiences from various world cultures is the mission of our organization. This is a marvelous collaboration and thus a joy to share with their members and visitors.”

Shown simultaneously with ***Shirin Towfiq: Threaded Journeys*** and ***La Frontera***, this exhibition continues conversations around how communities share and build connections across cultures and borders. Celebrating the art of hospitality and how craftsmanship is closely tied to the identity of the communities, ***Cups to Connections*** highlights how objects of everyday use are heartfelt signifiers of home, comfort, and belonging.

### **ABOUT [MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM](#)**

Located in San Diego’s Balboa Park, Mingei International Museum collects, preserves and exhibits folk art, craft and design from all eras and cultures of the world. Within a newly reopened facility that includes an education center, theater, shop, restaurant and plenty of free, accessible public space, the Museum offers inspiring exhibitions and diverse community and educational programs to more than 100,000 visitors a year. As the presenter of [San Diego Design Week](#) and a partner to over 50 local artists and art and cultural organizations, Mingei puts celebrating creativity at the core of its mission through workshops, film festivals, lectures and more. Mingei is a nonprofit institution funded by admission, individuals, and institutional support.

### **Image Downloads**

<https://airtable.com/appp5dPWZwxBjIIDs/shrt1AcQSbTERKTWe>

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