

**MARJAN BANIASADI**

***Colors of Home***

Text by Nicola E. Petek

*“I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn’t say any other way  
– things I had no words for.” -Georgia O’Keefe*

Few things are as difficult as trying to describe a feeling. Every person feels differently, every emotion is individually shaped and afflicted. One of the sentiments that most people have felt at least once in their lives and whose severity everyone can agree on is the feeling of homesickness. In Germany, Baniasadi’s adopted home for the last few years, it was above all the literary figures and painters of the Romantic period (19th century) who did not close themselves off from this experience, but rather welcomed it and made use of it in their art. The poet Joseph von Eichendorff for example dedicated his poem *‘Heimweh’* (engl. *homesick*) to the longing for home, and the paintings of artist Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) repeatedly address the feeling of absence. Yet it is usually not the nostalgia for a certain place, but rather for a certain memory that makes our hearts heavy: Of the people who once surrounded us, of the lightness we felt at certain times. This melancholy can sometimes be triggered by a particular smell or taste or even by an object that one associates with a past happiness.

In Marjan Baniasadi's case, that object is the Iranian carpet. The painter was born in Brazil, grew up in Tehran and Delhi, studied in Lahore, Hungary, and Germany where she now lives and works. Just as she carries the memory of what it feels to be home with her wherever she goes, she also takes these specific rugs with her in one way or another. The confrontation with them has a healing effect: The woolen fabric embraces her both physically and emotionally, allowing her to travel back to another time and place and at the same time anchoring her in the here and now. She meticulously explores the components of the handmade, woven product, which is not only a formal convention but also, through its narrative quality, a way of looking at the world. The surfaces of Baniasadi's works are tactile, delicate, and sensitive. Their visual subtleties and complexities engage the viewer, in

discovering her work, we are welcomed into artist's reality. On the canvas, she creates a pattern of life all her own, made up of a multitude of cultural rituals, customs and idiosyncrasies. Baniyadi weaves her observations into unique knots, strands, colours, shapes and motifs, which she then carefully reassembles to enable new narratives that she generously shares with us.