

koffler gallery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Koffler Gallery announces the first major solo exhibition in Toronto by multidisciplinary artist Sameer Farooq

Toronto, ON, December 17, 2020 – The **Koffler Gallery** is proud to present *A Heap of Random Sweepings*, the first major solo exhibition in Toronto by multidisciplinary artist **Sameer Farooq**.

The exhibition is open from **January 21 to March 28, 2021**. The **Koffler Gallery** is located at **Artscape Youngplace**, 180 Shaw Street, Toronto. Exhibition dates are subject to possible change due to COVID-19.

A Heap of Random Sweepings is an immersive installation of new and recent sculptural, photo and print works choreographed as a deeply poetic reflection on the fraught and violent histories of encyclopaedic museum collections, their colonial origins, structures and impulses.

With a versatile approach that may combine or shift between visual art processes, documentary filmmaking and writing as well as anthropological methods, Farooq investigates strategies of representation to supplant the injustices and inadequacies museums have historically perpetuated through traditional forms of collection, interpretation and display. He foregrounds community-based models of participation and knowledge production, proposing counter-archives, new additions to a collection, or buried histories made visible, in order to offset how dominant institutions speak about our cultural histories and our lives.

In *A Heap of Random Sweepings*, Farooq creates a series of displays that elicit prolonged attention, asking us to look intently and to spend time in the presence of these artworks as well as the absences they evoke. Raising questions about provenance and repatriation, the objects and images assembled in this installation articulate new visions that repurpose the emptied spaces of museums devoid of their spoils.

The installation's physical arrangement changes periodically throughout the run of the show, emphasizing the fluidity of thought necessary for shifting entrenched practices. Submerged in an audio environment composed by Farooq's collaborator, Gabie Strong (Los Angeles, CA), the artworks offer themselves as tools for meditation and self-reflection. Lyric captions contributed by poet Jared Stanley (Reno, NV) unsettle the rigidly prescribed narratives of didactic labels. The assembly guides us to interrogate our relationship with art objects and to ponder on an intrinsic potential that transcends their aesthetic value.

Considering the possibilities offered by sustained contemplation and engagement, Farooq invites visitors to envision what a museum might become through the mechanics of restitution, what it may shift to collect and document, and what kind of experiences it could nurture.



Exhibition generously supported by TD The Ready Commitment.

Listing Information

Sameer Farooq: *A Heap of Random Sweepings*
January 21 – March 28, 2021
Koffler Gallery | Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw Street, Toronto
Curator: Mona Filip

Regular exhibition hours: Wednesday to Sunday, 12 to 5 PM. Closed Mondays, Tuesdays and statutory holidays. Admission is free. Gallery visits must be [booked online](#).

For more information and a full list of the Koffler's Winter 2021 programs, please visit kofflerarts.org

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Sameer Farooq is a Canadian artist of Pakistani and Ugandan Indian descent. He has held exhibitions at institutions around the world including the Lilley Museum, Nevada (2019); Vicki Myhren Gallery, Denver (2018); Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (2017); Institute of Islamic Culture, Paris (2017); Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2016); The British Library, London (2015); Maquis Projects, Turkey (2015); Sol Koffler Gallery, Rhode Island (2015); Trankat, Morocco (2014); Artellewa, Cairo (2014); Art Gallery of Ontario (2011); and Sanat Limani, Turkey (2010). Farooq holds an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design (Providence, RI), a BFA from Gerrit Rietveld Academie (Amsterdam, NL) and a BA from McGill University (Montreal, QC). He is a recipient of awards from the Canada Council for the Arts; Ontario Arts Council; Toronto Arts Council; the Europe Media Fund; as well the President's Scholarship at the Rhode Island School of Design. Reviews and essays dedicated to his work have been published by Canadian Art; The Washington Post; BBC Culture; Hyperallergic; Artnet; The Huffington Post; and C Magazine among others. Farooq was longlisted for the Sobey Art Award in 2018, Canada's preeminent art award.

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, promoting ideals of social justice, equality and inclusiveness.

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 a year-round program of exhibitions, publications, performances, literary events, digital initiatives and arts education programs. We examine complex issues through transformative art experiences that stimulate intercultural dialogue and promote social change. Through our in-gallery and off-site programs, the Koffler engages thousands of visitors each year. From school children and teens, to newcomers and seniors, we provide vital opportunities for self-expression and community connection, including to those in greatest need.

As a Jewish organization, we value – and aim to foster – social justice and equality while nurturing a passion for learning and understanding. We position Jewish identity in conversation with diverse perspectives and global voices to examine complex issues in a respectful, constructive way. These principles support the Koffler's engagement with the best contemporary creative minds in producing and presenting art that provides common ground for experiences shaping our shared cultural life and defining our social values.

Visit us online at kofflerarts.org

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For further information and high-resolution images, contact:

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