

off the wall gallery

paintings • sculpture • original prints

REZA TORABI **Persian (1980 -)**



Born in 1980, Persian artist Reza Torabi believes he was born to be an artist. As a child, seeing a beautiful painting made his heart race; he never doubted that this was his destined path. A young Torabi found charcoal and chalk around the house and started drawing on any surface he could find, much to his mother's dismay. Luckily, his parents encouraged him to develop his talent. His father, with his heavy brow and deep-set features, was perfect for charcoal portraits and would sit as Torabi perfected his technique. Soon, teenage Torabi received commissions for portraits of religious icons and began supporting himself through his art.

He studied fine art history, poetry, and Azari music at Güzel Sanatlar University. He launched his career in 2003 with his first solo exhibition, followed by many award-winning shows. Torabi wanted to share his knowledge and techniques, so he started teaching oil painting at his studio back home.

In 2010, Torabi moved to Turkey and embraced his newfound freedom as an artist. He experimented with new mediums and sold paintings and drawings to local clients. His first exhibition in Turkey focused on black India ink drawings. This show marked a new chapter for him, a rebirth. While he appreciated Turkey's acceptance, he always dreamed of painting in the United States and actively worked toward a cross-continental move.

In 2012, through the United Nations' Artistic Freedom Refugee Program, he moved to the U.S. He now lives in Atlanta, Georgia, pursuing his art career and performing with a group of musicians in his free time. His first series in his new home, "Life in Motion," depicts café and gathering scenes he had missed and felt homesick for. These paintings kept his memories alive, blending collage with a style he calls "blurred motion."

This style continued in his latest series, *Sevda*, which means “a bigger love” in Turkish. It combines the experimental aspects of *Life in Motion* with his talent for portraiture.

In 2019, eager to make the American dream permanent, Torabi took his U.S. citizenship test. While studying the country's history, he became fascinated by the potent image of the presidency. This inspired his “Presidents” Collection, featuring a mix of well-known American figures, pop culture icons, and iconic scenery. His work offers a humorous twist on what people often associate with the U.S.

The contrast between his loose, abstract brushstrokes and the detailed precision in Torabi’s portraits showcases the true strength and versatility of his talent. His desire to grow and evolve as an artist keeps his mind and heart deeply connected to his craft.