

The Charbagh on Heinestraße 40, Vienna is an 'urban gardening project', a new interpretation of the Persian 'Charbagh', a cross-sectionally quadrilateral garden, initiated by philomena+ and supported by Grätzloase, Garteln um Eck, and Eternit Austria.

The concept comes from landscape architect Hosna Pourhashemi and was realized by Aho Mahler and Emanuel Jesse. For planting their two-dimensional garden parterre, the artists were inspired by floral, plant and tendril ornaments of Persian rugs; the pink colour from rugs from North-western Iran.

The Charbagh is an arbitrary motif on Persian rugs through which the garden is brought into the interior in textile form.

Here now, the rug motif was brought, with stencils and colour, to the pavement in front of the philomena+ project room. This project includes universal and intercultural aspects. It can be seen as a temporary form of street art and is reminiscent of Indian mandalas, figurative or geometric graphs of cosmic significance made of flowers or leaves, or sand mandalas, wiped away after completion to demonstrate the transience of being. In our case, the artists abstracted a garden from the Islamic world on the sidewalk of the Viennese Praterstern.

The garden has a special position in all regions of the Islamic world and is considered as a symbol of paradise, described in the Koran as a garden intersected by rivers. The specific geometric design and architectural taming of a piece of nature into the garden form of the Charbagh is traced back to Persia, to the time of the Achaemenid

kings of 6th century B.C. Archaeologists believe they recognize the archetype of the cross-sectionally divided garden in the palace of King Cyrus II in Pasargadae.

The Charbagh 'four gardens' became the epitome of the Islamic garden par excellence and through the centuries has become widespread in Persian-influenced countries as far as India. Parallel forms of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque were also associated with this Persian 'primeval garden'. The garden as a universal, utopian place is here evoked in this form on the Praterstern as a symbol of the adaptability of Islamic concepts in our culture.

(Excerpt of Professor Ebba Koch's opening speech, June 17th, 2018)