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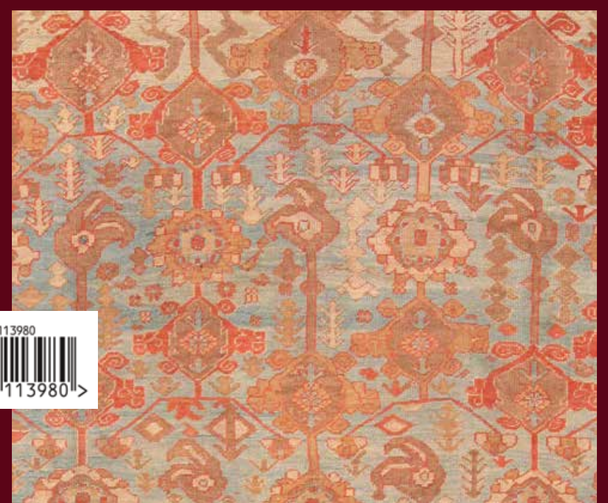

Art Underfoot: The Nazmiyal Collection

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All carpets, unless otherwise stated, are from the Nazmiyal Collection

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Preface

In the words of Jason Nazmiyal, the company that bears his name takes "an education-oriented approach to the world of antique rugs and carpets." This book is therefore a natural next step on his quest to share knowledge, appreciation, and love of antique, vintage, and mid-century carpets.

Having grown up in Tehran, Jason came to the United States in 1979 at the outset of the Iranian revolution. After university, he and his brother Josh opened a 700-square-foot storefront in Short Hills, New Jersey. By 1995 this had become a wholesale business in Manhattan's rug district. A story of commercial success and business acumen, then—and indeed Nazmiyal has consistently been among the first to anticipate new trends and to open up new ways of engaging with clients. But it is also testament to infectious enthusiasm. "All my rugs are my favorite," he recently told me. "I buy them with my heart. If it moves me and offers me something different, then that's the most phenomenal and fun part of this business. It's always a good feeling to buy a good rug."

In a world where some dealers have seemed only too willing to foster a mystique, he has remained a firm believer in giving his clients the insight to make their own informed decisions. To that end he has assembled a team of experts who can communicate such discernment, and who understand every era and genre of the carpet-weaver's art. "Consumers these days are smart," Jason insists. "If you educate people, and are fair and open, you build trust and confidence. If there isn't openness, it's a much harder road to follow."

It should therefore come as no surprise that the Nazmiyal website is unusually welcoming and transparent, with regard to prices as well as historical and technical information. Whether online visitors are looking for a purchase or just to find out more about these gleaming treasures, they are unlikely to feel intimidated, and sure to gain knowledge. As was the case with other initiatives, the company's competitors raised eyebrows when they saw the firm's commitment to building an extensive and versatile website at a time when most were merely dipping a toe in the water. There was similar puzzlement when Nazmiyal started running its own online auctions. But now these events are a fixture, with buyers frequently coming back for more.

The intention of this book is to explain and to inspire. It looks across continents and back over time, but also into today's homes and into the future. The Nazmiyal philosophy is that fine rugs remain relevant and will do so for future generations—all it takes is honesty and openness and a passion to share knowledge.

Ben Evans
Editor, Hali Publications Ltd.

"This book looks across continents and back over time, but also into today's homes and into the future"

Fig. 1 The Nazmiyal Collection, New York City.

Introduction

My life in carpets began entirely by accident, or perhaps as a matter of circumstance or even fate. Instantly, carpets captured my heart. I fell in love with the colors, the textures, the histories, the harmonies... I fell in love with the patterns, the dyes, the silks, the wools, the artistry—with how a rug can change an entire room, an environment, a mood.

This book was born of my wish to share that love with the world. For more than forty years, I have been buying and selling a wide range of exceptional antique, vintage, and modern rugs. These magnificent pieces are sourced from collectors, dealers, designers, and individuals from all four corners of the world. Every one of those carpets has, in one way or another, rewarded me with new ways of seeing color and design, stirring my imagination in fresh and fascinating ways.

On this incredible journey, I have had the fortune of meeting and sharing the experience with countless others. These fantastic people include trendsetters in interior design, Hollywood names, notables, and discerning clients who are gifted with curiosity and an eye for quality and beauty. I have also had the good fortune, and honor, of working with a deeply dedicated staff devoted to quality, service, and offering tremendous expertise. My team—Omri Schwartz, Alen Erfanian, Farhad Langaroodi—and I have a combined experience of more than 130 years selling rugs. I am incredibly proud of their commitment to our excellent customer service record, attending to our clients' individual and particular needs. This remarkable team, the extraordinary interior designers and private clients with whom I work, have all contributed to making Nazmiyal one of the foremost names in the world of fine carpets.

These same people inspire and motivate me in my search for carpets throughout the world. I am a hunter of rugs. Most days, I wake at 4:00 AM and hunt for the best examples. From my computer, I explore the entire world with the hopes of finding something remarkable, unique, and memorable. My search is as endless as my desire. It is an insatiable quest for a carpet that has harmonious colors, a particularly extravagant design, or for one that tells a story through its very simplicity.

Whether a 3rd-century textile or a modern piece, every piece that passes through my hands must have its own character, something that sets it apart from every other, a combination of color and pattern that coalesces into an exclusive design. That is why our inventory is so distinctive—we cater to those looking for the most unusual and best pieces. So, when you visit the Nazmiyal Collection New York City showroom, you can expect to find the unexpected.

All of this is abundantly true of the carpets featured in the pages of this book. Like all the rugs we sell, every one has been thoroughly researched and documented with information about its origin, significance, and narrative. Every carpet tells a story, and every story it tells is itself a work of art.

It is therefore with gratitude for my good fortune, and with the hope that you will come to share my passion for the magic of fine antique carpets, that we present this exclusively curated collection in *Art Underfoot*.

Jason Nazmiyal

"Every piece that passes through my hands must have its own character, something that sets it apart from every other"

Fig.2 Jason Nazmiyal.

Part 1:

A History of Carpets

Early Carpets

From the earliest days of humankind, people have liked to have something warm under their feet—be it in a tent, house, or cave. After the domestication of sheep, around 10,000 years ago, bearskin or reed mats gave way to woolen covers. A bearskin is good enough for a hunter-gatherer, but sheep-shearing opened up new possibilities. It became possible to create not just a single cover in which to wrap yourself at night, but also to make others with which to trade.

The oldest written sources about carpets are found on cuneiform tablets. In the library of the kingdom of Mari, near the Euphrates in present-day east Syria, 25,000 of these were discovered. They provide us with valuable insight into the kingdom's administration and trade, even though they document only a short period, from 1800–1750 BCE.

The earliest woolen covers were probably flatwoven, and therefore had no pile. Among the earliest surviving examples that show additional threads knotted into the ground fabric, we have cushions found in the tomb of an architect, Kha, from the XVIII Egyptian dynasty (1550–1295 BCE). Not only did these cushions have long pile, but in the center there are elegant lotus flowers woven in kilim technique. These show that 3,500 years ago, technically and aesthetically, a long and sophisticated tradition had already developed.

At the beginning of the 20th century the oldest-known surviving carpets were very small fragments from the first centuries CE, discovered in Central Asia by the archaeologist Sir Marc Aurel Stein. There were also slightly later finds from al-Fustat in Egypt. Larger fragments and nearly complete carpets were a millennium younger: 12th-century examples from Lower Saxony and 13th-century Seljuk carpets from Anatolia.

Textiles and carpets survive in archaeological finds only in very dry conditions. It was therefore a major stroke of luck that a nearly complete carpet was found in the late 1940s in an important Scythian burial kurgan (mound grave) in the Pazyryk valley in Siberia. Not too long after the burial the mound had been opened, and a large quantity of water had entered. The water then turned into permafrost, thereby preserving the rug and other textiles. The carpet has been dated to the 5th century BCE and is very sophisticated in design and technique, which again suggests that carpets already at that point had a long history. Its design shows clear Achaemenid and Assyrian influence. Who created it, and whether it was woven in Iran, in Turkestan, or elsewhere, is still the subject of discussion; but without doubt the carpet is one of the most important finds ever made.

Carpets appear in numerous literary sources. Writing in the 3rd century BCE, the Pharaoh Ptolemy Philadelphus describes his capital, Alexandria, as having "long-haired carpets made of fine, purple-dyed wool, laid out alternating with short-haired Persian rugs." Homer wrote in the Iliad that the coffin of Patroclus, closest companion to Achilles, was covered with a "splendid carpet." Like the Pazyryk the carpet had a spiritual aspect to it, to accompany its owner into the afterlife. We can also find rugs produced for births, marriages, and coronations over the centuries. In Constantinople the floors of the Hagia Sophia, the church commissioned by Byzantine Emperor Justinian, were originally covered with carpets, and ancient carpets from Lower Saxony were made for use in monasteries.

Fig.1 Qashqa'i nomads in southern Iran, photographed by Roland and Sabrina Michaud in 1970.

Fig.2 *The Pazyryk Carpet* (detail), 5th–4th century BCE. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. This remarkably well-preserved carpet is one of the oldest examples of knotted carpets in the world.

© British Library

Fig.3

The largest and most luxurious carpets were made for royalty, either to furnish palaces, as donations to religious institutions, or to provide princely gifts. One legendary, precious carpet lay in the palace of the Sasanian King of Kings, Khusrau I (531-579); it was so large that the borders could be walked like garden paths, and it was covered in precious stones that resembled flowers. It is reported as measuring 120 x 30 m or 393' x 98', and was referred to as the Spring Carpet because Khusrau had commissioned it so that he could forget about winter while admiring it. Unfortunately the carpet was cut up into pieces after the capital, Dastagird, near Baghdad, was destroyed in 641 CE by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius.

Court etiquette did not permit everyone to step onto a carpet. Some were allowed on the border section, but only members of the inner circle could set their feet down in the field or center. Today we roll out the red carpet for dignitaries and celebrities. And quite often, as during the Cannes film festival, there is a clear protocol as to who is allowed to walk the red carpet and who must keep to the uncarpeted sides.

Fig.3 Group at Ulugh-mazar in Xinjiang in 1908. Sir Marc Aurel Stein is in the center with his dog, Dash.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Fig.4

Sir Marc Aurel Stein

The Hungarian-born, British archaeologist Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943) was one of the key people in the rediscovery of the ancient network of trade routes across Central Asia known as the Silk Road. Over three expeditions, he excavated thousands of objects, including some of the oldest carpet fragments in the world. Most of these are held in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Fig.4 Carpet fragment brought back from Xinjiang by the explorer and archaeologist Sir Marc Aurel Stein, 3rd–4th century. British Museum, London, MAS.693.

Like Khusrau I's gigantic carpet, some Safavid carpets were woven with a silver and gold ground. They were highly valued as gifts for ambassadors and avidly sought after among the European aristocracy of the 17th century. Even in the 20th century, Iran's Shah Reza Pahlavi gifted rugs to Western governments. A Donegal carpet from Ireland traveled in the opposite direction when it was given in 1930 to the Pope, to boost the newly founded Irish republic's standing.

However, not all carpets were reserved for nobility and clerics; rugs were also present in the tents of nomads and in rural villages. An impression of what these rugs might have been like is possible thanks to finds in the deserts of Central Asia and caves in the Hindu Kush. Aurel Stein found scraps of carpets in 1908, but the last decades of the 20th century witnessed some very exciting finds of nearly complete smaller rugs. Dating from the first centuries CE, these carpets are kept in Chinese museums, some Western collections and (in the case of the cave rugs) in Kuwait. These carry depictions of lions and other animals; but fragments recently found in the Khotan oasis display elaborate designs of Hindu gods.

We might never know in which area of the world carpets first emerged and who made them; but they are certainly among the first items of furnishing humankind possessed. They were coveted symbols of prestige vehicles of artistic expression, whether adorning a king's palace or a nomad's tent.

With regard to these ancient eras we possess only isolated glimpses into carpet history. But the picture becomes clearer from the 13th and 14th centuries on. Therefore in the chapters that follow we can start to view the development of carpets according to their geographical origins.

Iran

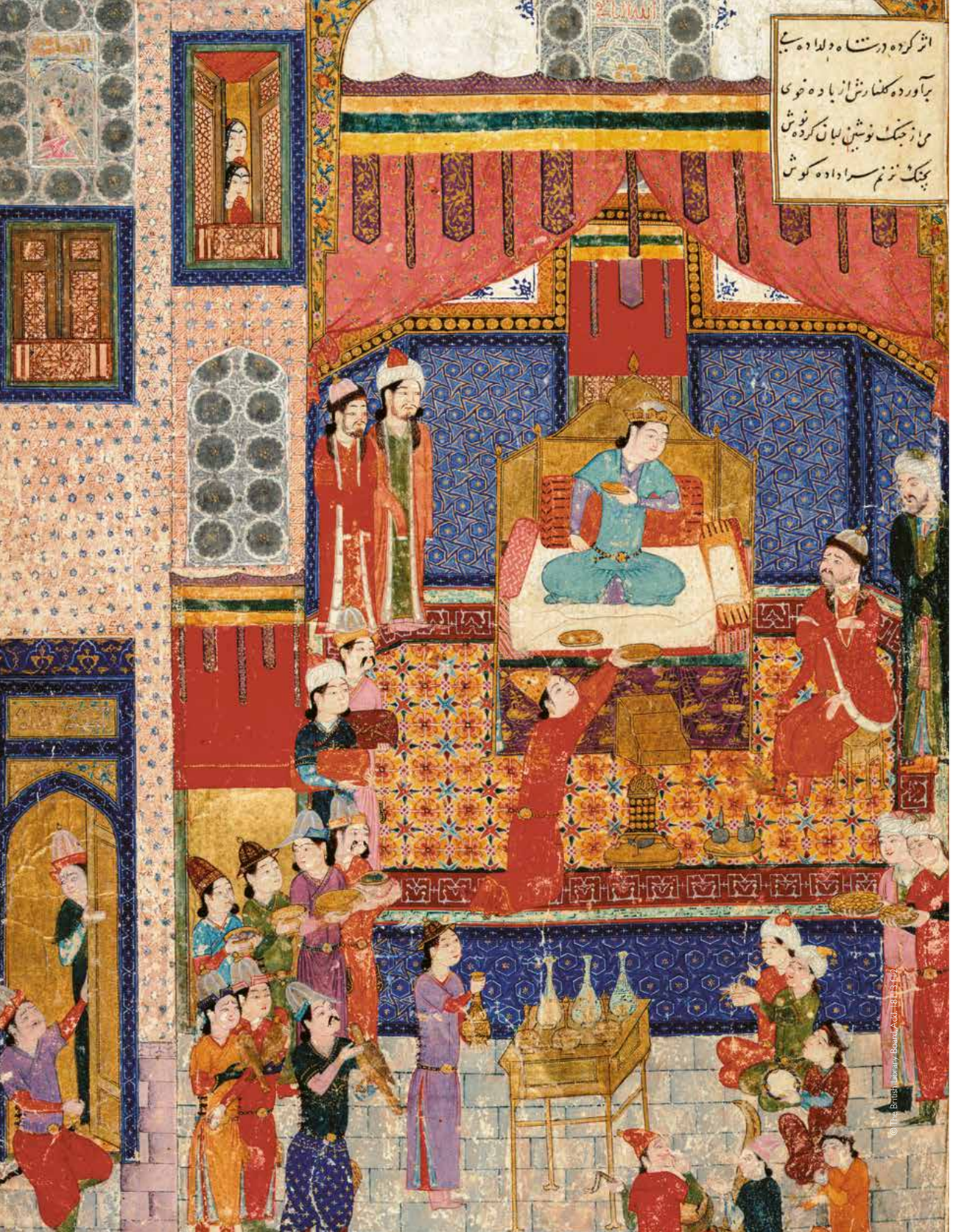


Fig.5 "Humay at the court of the Faghfur of Chin," by Junayd, from *Three Poems by Khvaju Kirmani*, Iran, 1396. British Library, Add. 18113, f.12 This manuscript painting features an early depiction of a Persian carpet.

Fig.6 *The Ardabil Carpet*, Persia, 1539–1540. *The Ardabil Carpet* is one of the most spectacular Persian carpets in existence. It was commissioned by Shah Tahmasp for the shrine of his ancestor in the town of Ardabil in northwest Persia.

Fig.6

"A remarkable work of art... the design is of singular perfection... its size and splendour as a piece of workmanship do full justice to the beauty and intellectual qualities of the design"

– William Morris on the Ardabil carpet

As we have seen in the previous chapter, rug weaving was mentioned on cuneiform tablets from 1800 BCE; and the oldest depiction of what are most likely carpets can be found on Assyrian carved stone slabs which functioned as thresholds for palaces from around 700 BCE. Both areas lie within the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BCE) which is also called the "First Persian Empire."

To draw a wider picture of the history of Persian carpets, we have to move forward roughly 2,000 years to gain sufficient material. By 1400 the military genius Timur Lenk ("The Lame") had conquered with great brutality most of the known world,

Fig.7

Fig.7 Safavid "Salting" rug, Persia, 16th century. 2 ft 3 in × 4 ft 4 in (0.69 m x 1.32 m). "Salting" carpets form a small group of rare carpets dating to the 16th century. This part-cotton and part-metal-thread fragmentary rug was published by Arthur Upham Pope in 1926.

but he always spared intellectuals and artisans, whom he brought home to his capital, Samarkand, thereby establishing the building blocks of the Timurid artistic renaissance, in which Iranian, Central Asian, and Chinese artistic styles were combined to dramatic new effect. We can see carpets in 14th-century Timurid paintings, and from the late 15th century onward a number of examples have survived.

Just as can be seen during the Italian Renaissance, carpets start to feature prominently in 14th-century paintings, and we have a good body of extant carpets from the late 15th century onward. During the Safavid dynasty (1501–1722) the arts in general and carpets in particular achieved new heights of material and artistic quality that secured the reputation of Persian carpets well into the 20th century.

What we can deduce from Timurid and Safavid paintings is that a significant change of style took place in carpet design at this time. Earlier depictions show rugs with more geometric forms, not unlike Seljuk carpets, which turned into a more curvilinear floral style. This transformation is referred to as the "Persian design revolution," an important

Fig.8

Fig.8 Khorasan carpet, Persia, 17th century. 9 ft 10 in x 15 ft 9 in (3 m x 4.8 m). From the famed collection of the American tycoon William Andrews Clark, this early Khorasan carpet belongs to a very small group of "star and cross" lattice design carpets.

Fig.9

Fig.9 "Vase" Kerman carpet, Persia, 17th century. 11 ft 5 in x 20 ft 2 in (3.48 m x 6.15 m). "Vase" carpets from Kerman, such as this rare example, are among the most valued of all carpets, owing to their complex weave, sophisticated design, and immediate aesthetic appeal.

Fig.10 Khorasan carpet, Persia, 17th century. 5 ft 4 in x 20 ft 4 in (1.63 m x 6.20 m). The imposing, monumental design of this classical Persian Khorasan rug consists of cruciform and scalloped cartouche floral medallions alternating down the center.

Fig.11 Animal carpet, northwest Persia, 17th century. 6 ft 10 in x 14 ft (2.08 m x 4.27 m). The composition of cloudbands and palmettes is based on a classic design and would have been woven according to a predetermined design, likely from a cartoon, yet the small animals appear improvised with greater freedom.

Fig.10

Fig.11

period that established the widely admired style that we still associate with Persian carpets today. The revolution during the Savafid dynasty created a design repertoire that became influential in India within the Mughal court, partially inspired Turkish Ottoman period rugs, and later can be traced in some Caucasian carpets. In essence the Persian carpet became synonymous with the term oriental carpet.

To produce the complex designs developed by court artists, it was necessary for the weaving to be based on sophisticated drawn cartoons, and for the carpets to made in highly organized workshops. The complexity of the motifs was enhanced by the use of silk both in the pile but also for the underlying structure; silk warps and wefts are stronger than wool and therefore allow for an even finer weave. To enhance

Fig.12

Fig.12 Isfahan carpet, Persia, 17th century. 2 ft 10 in x 3 ft 6 in (0.86 m x 1.07 m). This small Isfahan rug is highly unusual not only for its small size but also for its round medallion.

Fig.13 Isfahan carpet, Persia, 17th century. 12 ft 3 in x 16 ft (3.73 m x 4.88 m). Woven in the 17th century, this carpet belongs to a golden age of Isfahan, during which the Persian city's ateliers produced fine carpets often employing the motif found here; it is known as the "Shah Abbas" palmette.

the luxuriousness further, gold and silver threads were used as well.

To satisfy the demand for the numerous palaces, and for gifts and diplomacy, court workshops were established in many cities such as Tabriz, Isfahan, Kashan, Herat. The highest level of court art encompassed bookbinding, painting, metal work, woven silks, and carpets. Under Shah Abbas "The Great" (r. 1588–1629)—who had a great personal interest in textiles, precious silks, and rugs— carpet production became one of Persian art's greatest achievements.

The fruit of Persian looms became very fashionable in Europe as well—so desirable, in fact, that one particular weaving style that combined silk with silver and gold threads became mislabeled as "Polonaise" because the products were so loved by the Polish aristocracy of the time. These particular carpets were found in large numbers in royal and aristocratic houses throughout 16th–18th century Europe, and are often used as items of prestige in period paintings. Examples in good condition fetch several millions of dollars at auction today.

Another sought-after carpet group exported in great numbers were the "Vase" carpets. Many of these show a complex floral pattern that appears to emerge from a vase–sometimes present, sometimes implied. The group is connected by use of

Fig.13

Fig.14

Fig.15

Fig.14 Ziegler Sultanabad carpet, Persia, 19th century. 14 ft 5 in x 22 ft 3 in (4.39 m x 6.78 m). Woven in Sultanabad in the late 19th century for Ziegler & Co., this carpet features an allover arabesque design that embodies the particular style of the firm's creations.

Fig.15 Ziegler Sultanabad carpet, Persia, circa 1880. 13 ft 3 in x 16 ft 3 in (4.04 m x 4.95 m). Through the application of warmer tones on top of lighter, earthy ones, this Ziegler carpet achieves structure and subtle contrast.

Ziegler & Co.

Unusually, Ziegler carpets take their name from a company rather than a place or tribe. Toward the end of the 19th century, the European appetite for Persian carpets outstripped supply. Ziegler & Co., an Anglo-Swiss company based in Manchester, saw this opportunity and established an office in Sultanabad, from where it both designed and commissioned rugs specifically suited to Western tastes. Intended to complement any room, these carpets adopted a neutral palette relying on natural vegetable dyes and clear, elegant designs. "Ziegler" quickly became a generalized term for this type of carpet, and remains so today.

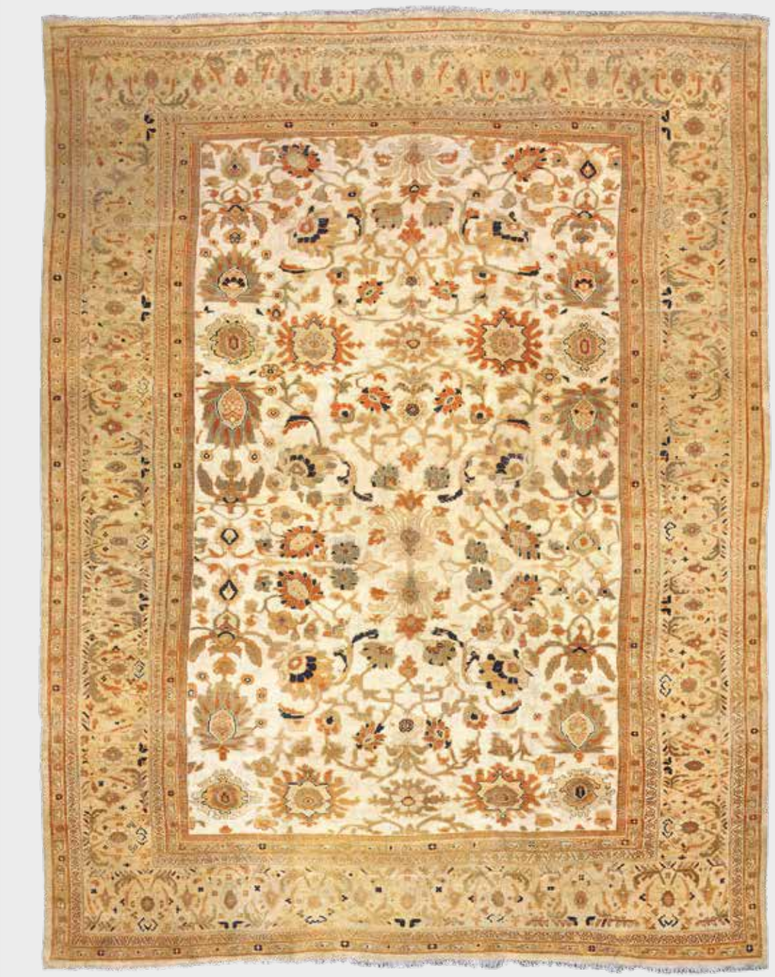


Fig.16

Fig.16 Ziegler Sultanabad carpet, Persia, 19th century. 12 ft 9 in x 16 ft 7 in (3.89 m x 5.05 m). This magnificent Ziegler Sultanabad carpet was housed in the dining room of Sigmund Freud's home at 20 Maresfield Gardens, in Hampstead, London.

Sigmund Freud

After fleeing Vienna in 1938, Sigmund Freud lived for the last year of his life in Hampstead, North London. He brought with him a small but fabulous part of his collection of rugs, some of which remain on view at his house, now a museum. Most famous among them is a lustrous, highly decorated Qashqa'i rug, still draped over his psychoanalyst's couch. Some of Freud's best-known theories examine the use of totems and symbols, so perhaps it is unsurprising that he chose to collect tribal rugs alongside more classical Persian examples.

Fig.17

Fig.17 Tabriz Haji Jalili rug, Persia, late 19th century. 15 ft x 20 ft (4.57 m x 6.01 m). This piece is the unmistakable work of the master weaver Hadji Jallili. His rugs are known for their high level of detail and precision.

Fig.18

Fig.19

Fig.18 Bakhshaish rug, northwest Persia, mid-19th century. 12 ft 2 in x 14 ft 8 in (3.71 m x 4.47 m). Bakhshaish carpets are noted for their simple color combinations and variety of designs. Each one is unique and represents the tribal heritage of a people living a traditional lifestyle.

Fig.19 Garden-design Bakhtiari rug, Persia, circa 1920. 12 ft 6 in x 18 ft 9 in (3.81 m x 5.71 m). In this design, one can see majestic cypress trees, willows, flowers grown on formal trellises, and branches bursting with blossoms. The cypress tree is a symbol for everlasting life.

Bakhtiari carpets

Among the finest of Persian tribal weavings, Bakhtiari carpets are famed for their tight-woven durability, rich color, and floral designs. The Bakhtiari are a Lurs tribe who inhabit the Zagros mountain region, to the southwest of Isfahan in modern-day Iran. They have a long history of nomadic pastoralism, and their weavings have been recognized as exceptionally fine and exported since the 19th century. Floral designs predominate, often arranged in highly imaginative ways evoking imagined gardens. Best-known among these is the *kheshti* design, which sets flowers within a lattice of boxes covering the field.

the same weaving technique: three passes of wefts after each row of knots. The first and the third of these are pulled strongly, which lifts every second warp higher than the next, giving the back a ribbed appearance.

The Persian love of nature and formal gardens translated into carpets which show waterways, sometimes filled with fish, flowing around flowerbeds with a variety of shrubs, blossoms, and geometric motives. Sometimes there are birds and numerous other animals in these idealized images of gardens. Studying paintings of the same period we can see the overlap between the depiction of gardens in both media.

Without doubt the most famous carpets of the period are the Ardabil carpets woven for the shrine of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili

Fig.20

Fig.21

in AH 946, which is equivalent to 1539/40 CE. The pair were still in situ 1843; but thirty years later, after an earthquake, they were sold to English carpet dealers. One fragmented carpet is now in the Los Angeles County Museum and the other in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The blue ground is covered by a complex system of swirling flowers and at the center is a medallion from which two mosque lamps descend toward either end of the carpet. The Ardabils are not only amazingly beautiful but also show the incredible craftsmanship of weavers and dyers.

The Ardabils are part of a wider group of carpets with a large medallion in the center. The medallions are often accompanied by pendants on either side, and in the four corners we find quarter medallions or other corner solutions. Several of these show dragons, angels, musicians, phoenixes, and fighting animals.

Some of these designs were woven up until the very early 18th century, but the decline of the Safavid Empire combined with political instability in Persia and reduced demand in Europe resulted in significant changes in

Fig.20 Kerman carpet, Persia, circa 1900. 10 ft 9 in x 20 ft (3.28 m x 6.1 m). A faded palette of soft blues and golds complements the balance achieved between border, field, detail work, and negative space.

Fig.21 Kerman carpet, Persia, circa 1920. 10 ft 6 in x 19 ft (3.2 m x 5.79 m). This Kerman carpet was woven in around 1920, at a time of transition when carpets were increasingly being produced with a European market in mind.

Fig.22 Kerman carpet, Persia, circa 1900. 14 ft 8 in x 21 ft (4.47 m x 6.4 m). The composition of this Kerman carpet is roughly symmetrical along the long axis, with elements repeating to achieve visual stability and appeal.

Fig.22

Fig.23

Fig.23 Haji Jalili carpet, Tabriz, Persia, late 19th century. 10 ft 7 in x 14 ft 5 in (3.23 m x 4.39 m). The silk in this carpet provides an unrivalled tactile dimension and transmits color to the fullest extent possible.

Fig.24 Haji Jalili carpet, Tabriz, Persia, late 19th century. 21 ft 2 in x 32 ft 3 in (6.45 m x 9.83 m). The large size of this Tabriz carpet, combined with its unusually fine weave and the high grade of wool used, suggests that it must have been specifically commissioned.

Fig.24

the weaving industry. During the turbulent 18th century and the earliest phase of the Qajar dynasty (1789–1925) carpets were still woven in large numbers, but not many were exported to the West. Motifs changed as well, but were still mostly based on their Safavid ancestors. The harshang and the mina khani designs emerged, and in the province of Azerbayjan the Dragon and Blossom carpets laid the groundwork for 19th-century Caucasian rugs. Evidence of these stylistic developments can be found in Persian paintings of the time.

In the 19th century an entirely new and important group of carpets comes to our attention: nomadic and village rugs. Not new in that this was when they first appeared, but new because we have barely any record of weavings before that date. We do have many surviving pre-1800 nomadic and village carpets and kilims from other carpet-weaving areas, Turkey being the prime example, but nothing from Persia.

This wealth of carpets and flatweaves open our eyes to a group of weavings with totally different designs and functions—

Fig.25

gabbeh rugs with minimalistic abstract designs, Baluch rugs with a limited range of deeply saturated colors, and kilims with striking geometric forms. There are not only carpets to stand or sit on but also sleeping carpets, bags, trappings for tents and camels, and bottle-shaped namakdan, used for storing salt. Furthermore we have sofreh—longish, mostly flatwoven "table cloths" for dinners and festivities, as well as squarish flour sofreh used for making and preserving the freshness of bread.

In multi-ethnic Iran the different tribes all had specific color schemes, weaving structures, and motifs. The Kurds in the west, the Azeri in the north, Kordi and Turkmens in the northeast, in the south Luri, Qashqa'i, Afshar and the Kamseh Federation, east of them the Baluch—all of them have their own strong tribal artistic expressions.

Fig.25 Silk Kashan carpet, Persia, circa 1910. 4 ft 4 in x 6 ft 9 in (1.32 m x 2.06 m). A rare example of Judaic weaving in Persia, this carpet from Kashan depicts Biblical scenes accompanied by Hebrew inscriptions.

Fig.26 Silk and metal thread souf Kashan carpet, Persia, late 19th century. 4 ft 3 in x 6 ft 6 in (1.3 m x 1.98 m). Woven from silk and metal thread, souf rugs were not necessarily intended to be floor coverings but were often designed to be hung on the walls of palaces or mosques.

Fig.27 Mohtashem Kashan runner, Persia, late 19th century. 3 ft 3 in x 17 ft 9 in (0.99 m x 5.41 m). This impressive antique Persian runner, attributed to the legendary Mohtashem atelier, is resplendent with a running series of central medallions.

"Themistocles replied that a man's discourse was like to a rich Persian carpet, the beautiful figures and patterns of which can only be shown by spreading and extending it out; when it is contracted and folded up, they are obscured and lost"

– Plutarch

Fig.26

Fig.27

Fig.28

Fig.30

Fig.29

Fig.28 Serapi carpet, Persia, late 19th century. 11 ft x 15 ft 6 in (3.35 m x 4.72 m). Combining a bold stepped-medallion field design with delicate floral motifs, this Serapi carpet creates a coherent and striking visual rhythm.

Fig.29 Geometric Serapi carpet, Persia, circa 1880. 8 ft 8 in x 10 ft 7 in (2.64 m x 3.23 m).Serapi rugs are known for their bold, open geometric style, fine wools, and intense colors, all of which may be found in this carpet distinguished by its abrashed green medallion.

Fig.30 Heriz Serapi carpet, Persia, circa 1880. 9 ft 10 in x 12 ft 9 in (3.00 m x 3.89 m). By adding more negative space between the different design elements, and using softer colors than what we normally see, the weavers were able to make this piece feel open, happy, and not at all busy.

“Any movement or sound is a profession of faith,
as the millstone grinding is explaining how it believes
in the river! No metaphor can say this,
but I can’t stop pointing to the beauty.
Every moment and place says,
‘Put this design in your carpet!’”
– Rumi

In the second half of the 19th century all things “oriental” become highly fashionable. Widely read travel journals and adventure novels contributed to the craze, as did the World’s Fairs in Paris, London, New York, Brussels, Philadelphia, and Chicago. The emerging “bourgeoisie” had surplus income to acquire artifacts from the Near and Far East, emulating the Grand Tour enjoyed by the aristocracy in the past. Among these acquisitions were rugs.

This led to an ever-increasing demand for handmade carpets. Carpet production in Persia flourished and certain towns and cities, like Heriz, Tehran, Tabriz, etc, became familiar names in the West owing to their specific carpet designs and weavings. Antique carpets were among the first to be exported, but they quickly became expensive and they did not meet all the needs of European and American houses. Traditionally carpets were twice as long

Fig.31

Fig.31 Heriz Serapi carpet, Persia, circa 1880. 15 ft 4 in x 26 ft 8 in (4.67 m x 8.12 m). Instantly recognizable and intricately designed, Serapi carpets pack a visual punch. Note the careful drawing of the central medallion.

Fig.32 Tabriz carpet, Persia, circa 1920. 14 ft 7 in x 24 ft (4.44 m x 7.32 m). True to the striking style of so many elegant Tabriz rugs, this masterpiece utilizes earthy and clay tones to create a naturally well-grounded atmosphere.

Fig.33 Tabriz carpet, Persia, circa 1900. 14 ft 8 in x 22 ft (4.47 m x 6.71 m). The Persian city of Tabriz has a long tradition of carpet weaving; in the 19th century it enjoyed repute for sophisticated carpet designs such as this.

Fig.33

(or more) as they were wide, but now carpets were needed for the rooms of Western houses, just one or one-and-a-half times as long as wide. Long, narrow runners were made for corridors and for stairs. Woven bags were used as cushions and as seat upholstery.

Market demand obviously changed not only the shapes but also the motifs found on carpets. The trade would react if a particular design sold well and withdraw it when it fell out of favor. Nevertheless, old Safavid designs were accurately rewoven, with good colors and wool. These rugs are now antique and offer today's buyers an excellent entry into the classical canon of high-court Persian style.

Fig.34

Fig.34 Malayer carpet, Persia, circa 1920. 11 ft 6 in x 20 ft 2 in (3.51 m x 6.15 m). Carpets of this kind come from the villages of northwestern Persia; they often employ stylized floral and tribal symbols repeated in an allover pattern, as the 'herati' motif is used here.

Fig.35 Sarouk Farahan carpet, Persia, mid-19th century. 19 ft 3 in x 23 ft 3 in (5.87 m x 7.09 m). This design is reminiscent of the order that exists in the natural world. Within all of the beautiful curves and seemingly wandering floral elements is a sense of greater order and organization.

After the Second World War, Iran still exported large numbers of carpets, but stylistically they became uninspired, endless repeats of the same motifs with harsh artificial dyes. Designs that were once exclusive to a certain town or tribe became interchangeable. While there was still a connection to the old traditions at the beginning of the 20th century, within fifty years the Persian carpet had become, artistically, a standardized, mass product. Within nomadic production the introduction of artificial dyestuffs had broken the link between the dyer and the weaver, and thus was lost a tradition that had probably lasted thousands of years.

During the 1990s, inspired by projects in Turkey, Iranian carpets enjoyed a revival in quality: natural dyes, high-quality wool (rugs from the mid-20th century used cheap Australian wool), hand spinning, and a new sense of dialog with the older artistic traditions have led to contemporary expression combined with the best-quality materials and weaving.

Fig.35

Turkey

There are two groups of 13th- to 14th-century carpets that represent the earliest extant rugs made in Anatolia, the Asian part of Turkey. Both were found in ecclesiastical buildings, albeit several thousand miles apart. A group of carpets with geometric field designs was found in mosques in central Anatolia, and rugs with animal motifs emerged from the monasteries in Tibet.

Eight carpets of the first group were discovered in the Ala'eddin Mosque in Konya in 1905, and twenty-five years later five more fragments came from the Eşrefoğlu Mosque in Beyşehir. Konya was the capital of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, and in nearby Beyşehir the carpets might well have been part of the first furnishings when the mosque was built between 1296 and 1299. These Seljuk carpets are woven with the symmetrical knot and have allover designs; they are kept in museums in Turkey.

Much later in the 1980s and '90s, a group of animal carpets emerged from Tibetan monasteries and found their way into museums and Western collections. They show fantastical animals, for example with human faces; they all have a red ground and share structural similarities with the Seljuk carpets. The animals in the "faces" carpet and in a second one with camels are depicted as overlapping forms, creating a three-dimensional effect. This enigmatic group gives us a glimpse into a weaving tradition that was unknown until very recently.

Even though the artistic expression of the two groups is quite different in the field drawing—one allover geometric, the other single-motif curvilinear—similarities in weave, color, and border designs lead us to assume that both came from Anatolia.

Photo: Pernille Klemp

Fig.37

Fig.36 The Virgin and Child Enthroned, Gentile Bellini, 1475–85. The National Gallery, London, NG3911, Mond Bequest, 1924. The Turkish rug under the Virgin's feet indicates her majesty and the reverence due to her.

Fig.37 Seljuk carpet fragment, Anatolia, circa 1400. The David Collection, Copenhagen, 3/1991. Anatolian carpets have been treasured for a long time; the traveler Marco Polo makes reference to them in his writings of circa 1300.

"Few prosperous Elizabethan homes were without 'Turkey carpets,' elaborately knotted floor and wall coverings with Islamic motifs made by Anatolian, Egyptian, Syrian or Persian weavers"

– Jerry Brotton, *This Orient Isle*

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst / Georg Niedermeiser

Fig.38

Fig.38 Dragon and Phoenix carpet, Turkey, mid-15th century. Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin. This carpet belongs to a famous group of early pieces from Anatolia with animal designs.

These two small groups represent the oldest surviving non-archeological "oriental" carpets. Both fall into the 13th or 14th century and one is even radiocarbon dated to the 12th century. We can find pictorial evidence for such carpets in Islamic and early Italian paintings.

Next in the timeline come the most famous Anatolian carpets with animal designs. Dating from the 15th century, they are the Dragon and Phoenix carpet in the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin and a rug discovered in a church in Marby, Sweden, now in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. Both rugs show two octagons filling the entire field. In the Berlin rug the old Chinese motif of dragon and phoenix is depicted, while in the Stockholm rug we find two confronting birds in each octagon, next to an abstract motif which has sometimes been interpreted as a tree.

Wilhelm Bode, the art collector and Berlin museum director, bought the Dragon and Phoenix rug in 1886 in Rome, and dated it to the 15th century. In nearby Siena, a fresco painted in 1441–42 by Domenico di Bartolo in the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala depicts a marriage scene in which a similar rug is clearly shown under the feet of bride and groom.

It is widely recorded that "Turkish" rugs arrived in Italy at least from the 13th century onwards and are regularly depicted in Renaissance paintings. Therefore, we know that rugs with certain designs were made by the date of the painting or even earlier. These observations were originally made by scholars like Bode and Julius Lessing; they were scientifically proven in the later part of the 20th century by radiocarbon dating.

In the second half of the 15th century, the artist Carlo Crivelli excelled in producing jewel-like paintings full of elaborate allegorical detail. Among the precise

Fig.39

Fig.39 The Black Church in Braşov, Transylvania, with some of its many 17th-century "Transylvanian" Turkish rugs decorating the pews and walls.

depiction of everyday objects we find a carpet with a specific star design of which the most famous surviving example is in the Museum of Applied Art in Budapest. As in the animal carpets, this rug and the few other known rugs with the "Crivelli Star" focus the field design into a pair of two main motifs.

A main single motif is found in period rugs with a so-called "re-entrant" or "keyhole" design. Under an arch the outline turns back into the field to form an octagon. This design and its variants were produced from the 15th to the 19th century and sometimes feature an octagon at both ends. Although the later examples have always been identified as prayer carpets, this has not been established with certainty for the early examples. This design also carries the name of an Italian Renaissance painter: the rugs are often referred to as Bellini.

Another well-known carpet design with an intricate allover design, usually depicted in red and yellow, is named after Lorenzo Lotto (1480–1556). German painter Hans Holbein was also working in the first half of the 16th century and his name is given to another geometric carpet pattern. There are also rugs called Ghirlandaio as well as Memling gül design carpets.

Many different types of carpet from this period survived in Europe. A particularly rich treasure trove of rugs was kept in the Lutheran churches of German-speaking Saxons in Transylvania, often carrying the date when they were donated to the parish. So numerous were the holdings of these institutions that it was once assumed that the rugs were actually a product of Transylvania; in fact they are still called "Transylvanians" today.

Probably the largest Turkish production during the 16th to 18th centuries comprises

Fig.40 Ushak carpet, Turkey, late 19th century. 10 ft 3 in x 17 ft 3 in (3.12 m x 5.26 m). This antique carpet was woven in a Turkish village using cotton and wool fibers.

Fig.40

Ushak carpets. These were a great export success to furnish royal and aristocratic palaces in Europe and they came in large sizes for huge rooms or in smaller format as table rugs. The two main groups have either a medallion with pendants and quartered medallions in the corners or star designs in a similar arrangement. These workshop carpets combine Persian and Chinese influences with particular Ottoman interpretations.

In the late 15th century the Ottomans had establised their power throughout Turkey, extending their rule in the following centuries to an empire that reached the city walls of Vienna. In 1517 the Ottomans conquered the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt—and therefore we should look at Mamluk carpets. These carpets, some of which are extremely large, have amazingly fine, intricate, complex, geometric designs that are very different from other weaving traditions. The motifs radiate from the central medallions and octagons in a kaleidoscopic fashion toward cartouche and rosette borders. Most 15th- and 16th- centuries rugs of this type have been found in, or are known to have passed through, Venice. However, after the Ottoman conquest, carpet patterns in Eygpt turned towards an Ottoman court style with "saz" leaves and tulips and other curvilinear floral motifs.

Thanks to Transylvanian churches and the huge holdings of European palaces, we have greater understanding of Turkish carpet traditions than those of virtually any other rug-weaving area. Another reason for this wealth of knowledge is the fact that carpets were donated to mosques. Here, unlike in Persia or the Caucasus, it was customary to make religious donations in the form of carpets and kilims. When a

Fig.41 Karapinar rug, Turkey, 18th century. 4 ft 9 in x 5 ft 10 in (1.45 m x 1.78 m). From the legendary collection formed by James Ballard, this superb carpet displays a highly unusual medallion and a fascinating border filled with "S" hook motifs.

Fig.41

James Ballard

James F. Ballard (1851–1931) was among the most prominent carpet collectors of his time. At a time when attention was predominantly directed towards Persian and Indian carpets, Ballard began to form what would become one of the most important collections of Anatolian rugs. He acquired beautiful and early examples of weaving from Kula, Ghiordes, Ladik, and many other Ottoman centers of weaving. Ballard traveled widely in Asia, and his purchases were not limited to Anatolian rugs. Fine examples of Egyptian, Persian, and Caucasian weaving are preserved in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to which he made a generous donation in 1922, and in his hometown, at the Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri. Looking at the Ballard rugs in these two museums, one has the sense that each example is a treasure, important in its own way and carefully selected by a "connoisseur" collector with an informed and passionate eye.

Fig.42 Hereke carpet, Turkey, late 19th century. 9 ft 9 in x 13 ft 1 in (2.97 m x 3.99 m). The paired serrated leaves in this carpet create a harmonious symmetry that perfectly complements the tonal palette.

Fig.42

mosque was newly erected its first set of rugs was made or donated; but more gifts would follow over decades and centuries, ending up piled on top of each other. In the 1970s and '80s certain rug types could be pinpointed to specific villages and towns, and by peeling the rugs off layer by layer, an age sequence would emerge.

It is not unreasonable to assume that nomadic and village rugs have been woven for thousands of years in areas between Morocco and China, but we have only sporadic archeological evidence. The vast majority of extant carpets from China, India, or Persia from previous centuries are court and workshop products. But owing to finds in Anatolian mosques we have a singular insight into nomadic and village weavings dating back centuries. Within these rugs we can see older traditions—potentially of Turkic Central-Asian origin as well as deriving from local customs—merging with influences from Mamluk, Safavid, and Ottoman carpets based on court art.

Anatolian nomadic and village rugs of the 16th and 17th century are often preserved only in fragments. We can compare some of these to existing complete rugs, but others represent a type for which we have no other evidence. From the 18th century onward we have many more examples that we attribute to specific towns and areas. It is fascinating to observe that certain motifs traveled through the centuries virtually unharmed.

Turkish carpets are roughly divided into West-, Central-, and East-Anatolian groups. Bergama, Ghiordes, Ushak are some of the well-known western weaving centers, while Konya, Ladik, Obruk, and Karapınar are famous hubs in the central region. The eastern part encompasses a much larger,

"I have never sold a single rug that I have ever purchased and I never intend to. I have given many to museums, and I expect to give more, but real rugs are like real paintings and must be loved and cared for"

– James Ballard

Fig.43 Ushak carpet, Turkey, late 19th century. 13 ft 7 in x 15 ft 3 in (4.14 m x 4.65 m). Establishing two primary colors gives viewers the freedom to alternate between the two with relative ease, allowing the contrast between the forms to speak for themselves.

Fig.43

diverse area, from Gaziantep to Erzurum and Kars close to the Armenian border.

Squarish rugs from Bergama often show echoes of earlier Ghirlandaio and Holbein carpets in mainly red and blue, dominantly geometric patterns; while the many intricately patterned prayer rugs from Ghiordes show naturalistically drawn columns, mosque lamps and flowers. As mentioned before, the 16th-century medallion Ushaks were produced well into the 18th century and in the later 19th century became an export hit again. These large carpets of Ushak made with soft wool and colors have help to extend the appeal of weavings from this area well into the 21st century.

Konya carpets have long been a favorite among collectors, not only because of their pleasing, highly saturated colors, including more yellow than in any other part of Anatolia, but also on account of their powerful geometric drawing. Quite often extensive in length, they have fields dominated by medallions, stars, and Memling güls in different forms, recalling the carpets woven in the region many centuries before. At the top and bottom of these rugs we regularly find a panel of lappets or small arches, a design which is quite peculiar to the area and can be found on yastik cushions as well.

Fine Ladik prayer rugs have been the focus of connoisseurs since the early 20th century. Their patterns established in the Ottoman court's carpets show a triple arch under a frieze of tulips and stylized columns on a red field. The oldest date back to the 18th century at least, and were made with a consistent high quality until the end of the 19th century.

Fig.44 Ushak carpet, Turkey, early 20th century. 14 ft 2 in x 20 ft (4.32 m x 6.10 m). The central emblem of this rug's design is a kind of "gul," or flower-like four-sided motif evoking the four corners of the earth.

Fig.45 Kirshehir runner, Turkey, late 19th century. 3 ft 4 in x 12 ft 2 in (1.02 m x 3.71 m). The colors of this Kirshehir runner are rich throughout, from the complex and ornate borders to the vibrant hues of the vertical stripes that run throughout the field, emphasizing the length of the rug.

Fig.46 Silk Hereke depicting a biblical scene, Turkey, late 19th century. 7 ft x 5 ft (2.13 m x 1.52 m). This striking silk rug depicts three scenes from the Old Testament story of the banishment from the Garden of Eden.

The immediate stand-out feature of eastern Anatolian rugs is the difference in color palette. The tones get darker: brown, aubergine, orange, green tend to be reduced in brightness, and we see a bluish dark pink unknown to other areas in Turkey. In the runners we find motifs similar to ones in central-Anatolian carpets, but there are examples clearly related to weavings from the neighboring Caucasus. They mainly have a longer pile in high-quality wool. Sometimes they are not exactly rectangular, and overall have a more nomadic feel about them.

Diametrical in artistic expression to these nomadic weavings are extremely fine silk- and metal-thread rugs made in the town of Hereke and in and the Kumkapı district of Istanbul during the second half of the 19th and first third of the 20th centuries. These rugs are mainly inspired by Safavid carpets with some influence from Ottoman court style and Mamluk prayer rugs. Their excellent craftsmanship has at times led to confusion between Safavid-period rugs and those made in these Armenian workshops.

The silk manufacture in Hereke was established in 1844, delivering silk

Fig.45

Fig.46

weaves to the Sultan and later furnishing his palaces. However, carpets were not produced there until the 1880s. While large carpets were produced for Turkish palaces, the German Kaiser also had a strong interest in their production. Hereke carpets feature traditional Persianate patterns but also European and period Rococo revival designs.

In Istanbul Armenian weavers established workshops whose first "employees" were young girls working for food and shelter. These workshops operated well into the 20th century, until the Second World War brought production to an end. Two of the most famous workshops were led by Zareh Penyamian and Hagob Kapoudjian. That the quality of these rugs is still held in high esteem today can be seen at auction. In 2012 a room-sized rug with a design inspired by Persian vase carpets fetched $350,000 at Christie's, London. Some of these Armenian silk rugs were made in other parts of the Ottoman Empire as well.

As in all rug-producing areas worldwide, toward the end of the 19th century decline set in for the great Turkish weaving tradition. This was due not only to the introduction of artificial dyestuffs but also to changes in the market and in society. Western dealers first bought everything that was old at the time, while encouraging and commissioning contemporary production of inferior standard. Carpets were produced in great numbers during the first two thirds of the 20th century, but the industry subsequently slowed down. In the 21st century rising wages and living standards have often made carpet production too expensive to be viable.

In 1981 Dr. Harald Böhmer from the University of Istanbul, a dyestuff expert, encouraged village cooperatives in Western Anatolia to reintroduce natural colors. The DOBAG project to promote natural dyes and recipes (its name deriving from the Turkish words for research and development), used high-quality wool for its carpets with traditional Anatolian designs, and no chemical finishes. A few other US initiatives sprung up in Turkey during the period, while the baton was taken up by the Miri brothers in Iran and Wilfried Stanzer in Morocco, establishing a renaissance in contemporary carpet design.

Today we find naturally dyed carpets throughout all carpet-weaving areas, and new approaches to design that all owe their origins to the work done in Anatolia over four decades ago.

The Caucasus

Carpet collectors of the 1960s and '70s often started to collect with Caucasian rugs. Geometric designs in clear unbroken colors fit well with modern furniture and interiors. As these pieces are mostly in smaller formats it was easy to add them to existing interiors. They are boldly graphic rugs conveying an old folk-art tradition.

Earlier collectors had concentrated on classical or pre-1800 carpets; Joseph V. McMullan was considered an outsider among his fellow collectors in New York's Hajji Baba Club since he was interested in tribal and village rugs as the more conventional types. His collection was arguably one of the most important of the mid-20th century, and his book *Islamic Carpets*, published in 1965, became a bible for carpet collectors.

Caucasian rugs were only part of McMullan's vast collection. But another very influential carpet book had already hit his and other's shelves in 1961, and focused entirely on weavings from the Caucasus. The German carpet dealer Ulrich Schürmann's *Caucasian Rugs* became the major reference book for anybody interested in the subject for decades to come.

In both books and collections are classical examples from the late 16th to 18th centuries, and rugs from the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Even though we have some written sources from medieval times that mention Armenian weavers, little is known about how carpets from that period might have looked. Large and longish carpets from the 16th to 18th centuries that have survived mostly in Anatolia are put into three groups: "Dragon," "Blossom," and "Shield" carpets, all of which appear to have been made in workshops.

Fig.47

Carpets of the early period are quite often large, suggesting that they were not made in traditional homes. They all have a similar structure in which at certain intervals a thick single weft shot is inserted rather than the usual two or four. These facts point to larger workshops producing for commercial interest, whereas village or nomadic rugs were woven for a family's own needs, any surplus items being bartered or sold locally.

Where the workshops were located is still open to debate. Shirvan and Kuba in the east have been suggested, as well as Tabriz, which would have been in the Persian province of Azerbayjan. However, current opinion has settled on Karabakh. Interestingly none of the extant examples can be found in any of the areas suggested above but in Anatolian mosques and Western collections. This is partly explained because in earlier centuries the weaving areas had been under Ottoman rule and had no tradition of donating them to local mosques.

Fig.47 and detail on previous page Rug with animal design, Caucasus, 18th century. 4 ft 6 in x 9 ft (1.37 m x 2.74 m). Bordered by a narrow pattern of geometric shapes, the juxtaposition of abstract shapes and animal life is truly remarkable.

Fig.48 Sumakh carpet, Caucasus, circa 1930. 14 ft 6 in x 17 ft (4.42 m x 5.18 m). Sumakh rugs were woven using flatweave technique that is similar to that used in kilim rugs, only much stronger.

Fig.48

Fig.49

Fig.49 Kazak Lori Pambak rug, Caucasus, circa 1880. 6 ft 0 in x 8 ft 1 in (1.82 m x 2.46 m). The central motif of the middle medallion of this rug instantly catches the eye, and manages to be simultaneously geometric and floral.

"Geometric designs in clear unbroken colors fit well with modern furniture and interiors"

Putting aside the question of where they originated from, it is widely accepted that these weavings were heavily influenced by Safavid carpets as well as other Safavid textiles. However, these carpets exhibit a distinct abstract, geometric interpretation of their curvilinear and naturalistic forebears. Prior knowledge of the Safavid originals might be necessary before one can identify the highly stylized dragons, phoenixes, animal combatant scenes, and the long, diagonal, serrated leaves so typical of the group. This style is most clearly expressed in the embroidered silk textiles produced in the Caucasus, whose relationship to 19th-century rugs is much easier to see.

These carpets and the textiles directly influenced the later group of Caucasian rugs that caused the new wave of collecting in the middle of the 20th century. These had been woven by villagers and nomads throughout the 19th century. What was most likely a modest level of production in the early 19th century turned into a vast cottage-industry output during the later part of the 19th century and early 20th.

For most of the 19th century the Caucasus was under Russian control. To help the peasants in Russia to supplement their agricultural income the government fashioned a system called kustar ("home industry"), which chimed well with the surge of Western demand for Caucasian weavings during the closing decades of the 19th century. This was high-quality production in terms of colors and wool, boasting an extensive range of individual designs.

Caucasian weavings can be roughly divided into two geographical areas. Those from the southwestern group tend to have a longer pile, are heavier, and display bold motifs; the eastern group offers rugs that are thinner, more finely knotted, and have a greater degree of detailed design. All are woven in the Turkish symmetrical knot; in the first group the construction is mostly all-wool, while in the second we find cotton as well. The rugs are classified to regions and

Sewan Kazak carpets

Sewan antique Caucasian Kazak rugs are named after Lake Sewan (Sevan), which is located to the east of Yerevan in Armenia, close to the border with Azerbaijan, and south of Tbilisi in Georgia. This group of carpets is distinguished by their use of color and geometric designs. The colors are clear and striking, and the geometric motifs are derived from traditional symbols sometimes believed to have ancient meaning. Instantly recognizable, Sewan Kazak carpet are a long-standing favorite with collectors.

Fig.50

Fig.50 Kazak Sewan rug, Caucasus, circa 1850. 5 ft 10 in x 7 ft 6 in (1.78 m x 2.29 m). At times, it appears as if less-skilled hands took over for a few rows before the work was handed back to a more experienced weaver. This unique feature ties this piece to the culture and people who created it.

Fig.51

Fig.51 Silk embroidery, Daghestan or Azerbaijan, 18th century. 4 ft x 5 ft 4 in (1.22 m x 1.63 m). The sophisticated medallion composition is filled with familiar duality symbols and angular ornaments rendered in distinctive Caspian blues, clear white, muted olive green, and vivid red.

Caucasian embroideries

The silk embroideries of the West Caspian region of the Caucasus are remarkable and have only recently gained the attention they deserve. Visually echoing the embroidery traditions of neighboring Turkey and Iran, as well as the designs of Caucasian pile carpets, they are deeply interesting. Often divided into two types, those made using a cross-stitch are usually light in palette and refined in style, while those using the long-stitch embroidery technique possess a richly-colored whirling energy.

within them we associate certain designs with specific villages and towns.

In the southwestern group we find Kazak, Fachralo, Borjalu, and the Karabakh area which includes the famous Chelaberd or "Eagle Kazak." This carpet design has survived in many examples and its evolution can easily be tracked back to the ancestors of the 17th- and 18th-century Dragon and Blossom carpets. On the other hand, Kazak rugs in particular show very interesting parallels to Anatolian village or nomadic rugs from the 17th/18th centuries.

The eastern group includes the areas of Daghestan, Kuba, and Shirvan, with their name-giving towns and villages. However, a rug with a Perepedil, Konaghend, or Chi Chi design from the Kuba district was not necessarily made in these towns. Structural analysis is needed to confirm precise origins since increased production in the late 19th century, and market forces, led to motifs wandering across traditional boundaries.

Certain motifs, like the Marasali single flower or boteh in a serrated leaf lattice, show the influence of earlier Persian woven textiles. Allover boteh designs, or botehs

Fig.52

Fig.53

Fig.52 Kuba 'star' embroidery, Caucasus, 17th century. 3 ft 1 in x 3 ft 1 in (0.94 m x 0.94 m). This rare and early silk embroidery was likely created to commemorate an event such as a marriage, death, or birth.

Fig.53 Kila rug, Baku, Caucasus, 19th century. 6 ft 7 in x 7 ft 10 in (2.01 m x 2.39 m). Baku rugs stand out as a group because of their beautiful colors, tribal character, and particular motifs such as the stepped octagon surrounded by rectangular features and the traditional boteh motif, a symbol of eternal life.

"Certain motifs, like the Marasali single flower or boteh in a serrated leaf lattice, show the influence of earlier Persian woven textiles"

arranged in vertical bands, were massively popular in Persia throughout the 19th century and found their way into east-Caucasian rugs. Another textile influence comes from small, 17th-/18th century indigenous silk embroideries, enlarged to suit the aesthetic of 19th-century carpets.

The colors in Caucasian rugs were traditionally achieved through natural dyestuffs, but this region was an early adopter of aniline and other artificial dyes. The earliest such dye, mauveine, turned out not to be light-fast, quickly fading to gray; it

Fig.54

Fig.55

is easily identified as there are often traces left on the back of the rug or within the knot. Around the year 1900, running reds and glaring oranges are other candidates for the worst early artificial dyes. This has led to very dogmatic dating claims. In truth, from 1880 to the late 1920s both natural and synthetic dyes have been used in parallel, and there are carpets from the 1920s which are still all-natural dyed. Only experience can truly tell the difference.

On Caucasian rugs we often find dates, which one needs to be careful in interpreting. They might be right, but not necessarily; they might state the date of manufacture or mark some other notable event. Other dates are clearly pure fantasy, as one can find two almost identical rugs, one dated end of 19th century and another from the early 19th century. The dates are therefore taken as guides that should be used alongside other material and design indicators.

In the 1920s folk-art weaving in the home and small workshops was still encouraged by the Soviet government. However, after 1945 factory production took over, losing all the soul of the earlier carpets. Everything stopped after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and tentative attempts at a revival have so far not rivaled the modern, quality production of Iran, Afghanistan, and Tibet.

Fig.54 Kazak Sewan rug, Caucasus, circa 1880. 5 ft 5 in x 6 ft 10 in (1.65 m x 2.08 m). These Kazak rugs, with their instantly recognizable shield motifs, are perennially popular with collectors.

Fig.55 Kuba rug, Caucasus, circa 1900. 4 ft 1 in x 8 ft 6 in (1.24 m x 2.59 m). A wealth of smaller pattern elements lead the eye around the field of this Caucasian weaving.

Fig.56 Carpet merchant's shop in Tiflis displaying rugs, kilims, and bags from the Caucasus, photographed by Dimitri Ermakov, circa 1880. National Museum of Georgia, Tbilisi, 1603.

Fig.57

“I created most of the drawings in situ, and closely followed the original colours, contours and outlines of the depicted objects. Using these materials, technical sketches were created in color on squared paper in the art studio. Later these point papers were sent to the committee’s educational workshops, where carpets were woven according to them”

– Julius Straume

Fig.58

Fig.57 Kazak rug, Caucasus, 19th century. 5 ft x 6 ft (1.52 m x 1.83 m). This delightful antique Caucasian carpet is a colorful, symbolic, and expressive example of tribal designs from the Kazak region's famed weavers.

Fig.58 Photograph showing the Russian Empire's Caucasian Kustar Committee carpet design workshop, overseen by Milokhov, late 19th to early 20th century. State Museum of Folk and Applied Arts, Tbilisi

Fig.59

Caucasian carpets were among the most sought-after carpets during the second half of the 20th century, when many collections were formed and a wealth of specialist publications added to knowledge and appreciation. What made them popular in the sixties and seventies still holds true.

Good colors on fine wool with geometric, sharply defined designs still sit nicely within modern interiors. The range of types, weaves and styles means that Caucasian weavings have greater comparative popularity than the size of the weaving region might suggest.

Seychour rugs

Seychour rugs were made in the northeast Caucasus and are prized for their precise drawing and saturated colors. This group is often considered to be a subset of the Kuba school of rugs. A number of motifs, however, are particular to Seychour carpets, such as the cabbage rose and Seychour cross. Many Seychour rugs also share a border design known as "running dog," due to its resemblance to a series of canines on the run. Later examples display a more expressionist approach to color and pattern.

Fig.59 Rug in "primitive" style, Karabagh region, Caucasus, circa 1900. 4 ft 6 in x 6 ft 2 in (1.37 m x 1.88 m). The masterly interplay of color creates brilliant contrasts in every part of this magnificent antique.

Fig.60 Seychour rug, Caucasus, circa 1900. 3 ft 10 in x 5 ft (1.17 m x 1.52 m). Bold colors, sophisticated simplicity, and precise detail underlie the artistry of this striking statement rug.

Fig.60

India

Indian carpets of the 17th century are the most beautiful and technically advanced carpets in the world, a statement not many carpet scholars and connoisseurs would challenge. This is especially true for the incredibly beautiful, extremely fine pashmina carpets on silk foundation: the acme of carpet weaving.

For a time it was thought that the art of carpet weaving came to India with the Mongols out of Central Asia. This was either during the time of the first Mughal emperor, Babur, who was a descendant of the Timurids, or through his son Humayun, who lost control over India for a while and spent fifteen years during the 16th century in exile in Safavid Persia. On his return he brought with him Persian artists and a taste for Persian art and culture.

Until recently, one could not have declared with certainty that any carpets from India had been woven before the end of the 16th century. However, a silk carpet from the first half of the 15th century has now been attributed to the Deccan in southern India. Furthermore, written sources describing the use of carpets at earlier dates have been known for some time; therefore it seems that they must have existed in large numbers.

Most extant classical Indian carpets were woven during the reign of Akbar the Great at the end of the 16th century. Akbar enlarged the empire to encompass the entire Indian subcontinent, established a centralized system of administration, showed religious tolerance, and furthered the arts. India tripled in size and wealth during his fifty-year reign. In Lahore, Fatehpur, and Agra he established court workshops for carpets, in which most likely weavers from Persia and Central Asia worked next to Indian craftsmen. From his official chronicler we know that he had "caused carpets to be made of wonderful varieties and charming textures; he has appointed experienced workmen, who have produced many masterpieces. The carpets of Iran and Turan are not more highly thought of."

This first phase of Mughal carpets, roughly between 1580 and 1630, was strongly influenced by Persian rugs, but with a special Indian flavor. Under Akbar the essential criteria of Mughal art were established: love and respect for the natural world, leading to a more realistic depiction of flowers and animals than in Persian rugs; an insistence in the highest possible standard in workmanship; and a synthesis of Persian, Indian, and European influences.

Carpets woven under his reign show pictorial qualities which were clearly related to miniature paintings and the arts of the book. Court artists would design the cartoons from which the rugs would be woven. Among them are rugs that figure fantastic beasts and grotesques drawn in a realistic style, combined with garden and hunting scenes.

Under Akbar's son Jahangir, (r. 1605–27), the East India Company started to get a foothold in India, shipping "Lahore" carpets in 1615 from Surat to London, where the carpets sold well. The Dutch East India Company was already well established, and Indian carpets appear in many paintings from the Dutch Golden Age.

Jahangir was personally interested in the arts, architecture, and especially painting. He prided himself that he could look at any painting, old or modern, and could, from the brush stroke of an eyebrow, tell the painter. The Jesuit priests at his court showed him European books, engravings, and paintings which influenced Jahangir's court art. He

"Indian carpets of the 17th century are the most beautiful and technically advanced carpets in the world, a statement not many carpet scholars and aficionados would challenge"

Fig.61 Mughal painting depicting two ladies lounging on a bed under a white canopy, India, early 18th century. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS.48:41/B-1956, Gift of Mr. John Goelet.

Fig.62

had one portrait copied by his court artists and then challenged the British ambassador, Thomas Roe, to find the European original among the copies; he failed to do so.

Carpets of the period show a superb refinement in the drawing of scrolling vines, in which we find fighting animals or birds. There is a tendency to ever-more naturalistic depictions—the opposite to what we find in Persian weaves of the time. Introduced is "ton sur ton" coloration like pink blossoms on a red ground, a feature one rarely finds in carpets further west. The use of shading and "pepper and salt" piling (where knots of

Mughal textiles

The luxury textiles produced in India during the period of the great Mughal rulers, 1556–1707, remain synonymous with delicacy and technical finesse. Using the finest wools (pashmina) and often silk, Mughal textiles are characterized by their imaginative and beautiful floral motifs, deriving from the pervasive influence of the Persian garden.

Fig.62 Mughal velvet textile, India, 17th–18th century. 6 ft 4 in x 7 ft 10 in (1.93 m x 2.39 m). Soft gold, pale green, and a rich shade of red come together to great effect, heightened by the lustrous delicacy of the shimmering velvet surface.

Fig.63 Mughal gallery carpet, India, 17th century. 9 ft x 24 ft 8 in (2.74 m x 7.52 m).This magnificent Mughal carpet belongs to a small group of early 17th-century Lahore carpets heavily influenced by the 16th-century medallion carpets of southwest Persia.

Fig.63

Fig.64

Fig.64 Agra carpet, India, last quarter 19th century. 13 ft x 16 ft (3.96 m x 4.88 m). This elegant Agra carpet features a superb allover arabesque executed in a daring palette of burgundy, azure and ivory set over an icy blue ground.

different colors are set next to each other) are other innovations of the period.

Up until this time Mughal Indian carpets had used a cotton structure, sometimes with silk and a wool pile; but a higher knot density became necessary in order to achieve even more refinement. In all other carpet-producing areas this was achieved through the use of silk; but the Mughal emperors used fine pashmina, the wool of the Himalayan mountain goat, on an entirely silk foundation. Not only can this wool be very finely spun, but is easily dyed. Due to the fineness of these carpets, graceful and subtly graduated curvilinear forms could be produced with great precision.

The painterly aspect of these pashmina carpets is remarkable. The undulating, scrolling vines running over and under each other draw the viewer into a three-dimensional space. Curling leaves seem to turn in on themselves, and what is just a hint of three-dimensionality in contemporary Safavid Persian rugs takes on a genuine presence. In small rugs with an arch design, flower bushes or single flowers seem to swing in a breeze, emerging from hillocks that recede into the distance.

Some of these rugs are the finest of all antique carpets, so much so that they have often been mistaken for velvets. They are statements, not only of luxurious quality but of superb craftsmanship—an declaration that "we do it this way because we can," comparable to "Kunstkammer" objects in contemporary Europe. The great esteem in which they are held among scholars and collectors alike is proved by a Christie's, London sale in 2017, where a 6 x 19 in fragment would have set you back $112,000.

Jahangir had long wished to visit Kashmir in springtime. When he did, in 1620, he was

Fig.65

Fig.65 Agra carpet, India, last quarter of the 19th century. 15 ft 10 in x 23 ft (4.83 m x 7.01 m). Four heart-shaped pairs of graceful vine-scrolls structure the entire composition of this delightful antique Agra carpet.

Fig.66

overwhelmed by the beauty of the valley which he called “beyond all description.” He described the meadows as “flower carpets” and admired single flowers as “garden nymphs.” From now on the “single flower style” became a defining feature of Mughal art, appearing on paper, in marble, textiles, glass, metalwork, wood, ivory, and jade.

The way the single flower on a plain background is drawn in various media is influenced by European “herbaria,” in which a single flower or plant is shown in all its aspects. This botanical precision is also evident in some carpets, but these are combined with imaginary blossoms. Paintings and marble as well as some rugs show the amalgamation of European and Chinese influences in Indian court art, with depictions of insects (e.g. butterflies) and Chinese clouds.

Jahangir’s son, Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58), is remembered for architectural achievements, famously the monument to his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. In many of these buildings we find the single-flower design in stone, or fine pietra dura, stone inlay. In carpets as in the architecture we also find single flowers in rows, which appear like meadows. A further development is to put the single

Art Deco

“Art Deco” refers to those carpets aligned with the aesthetic movement of the same name which radically reshaped taste in Europe and beyond. In tandem with the eruption of the “style moderne” in painting and sculpture, the decorative arts and world of interior design saw a shift towards the unornamented and angular. Artists including Picasso, Klee, and even Francis Bacon began to design carpets. These are broadly characterized by a muted, saturated palette which sets dark and light in opposition in order to create a dynamic field, rather than relying on ornamentation. Such is the appeal and versatility of these carpets that they came to be commissioned and designed in India, as both kilims and pile rugs.

Fig.67

Fig.66 Ivory Agra carpet, India, circa 1880. 11 ft 7 in x 15 ft 6 in (3.53 m x 4.72 m). Bright orange, stormy gray and delicate beige contrast with the ivory ground of this Agra carpet, set off by the vibrant red border which inverts the color scheme of the field.

Fig.67 Art Deco carpet, India, early 20th century. 12 ft 7 in x 18 ft 7 in (3.84 m x 5.66 m). Layered patterns, geometric motifs, abstract compartments, and saturated jewel tones are combined in this lively example of Indian Art Deco weaving.

flower into a trellis, a further indication of European influence.

Most of the outstandingly gorgeous pashmina rugs were made when Shah Jahan was on the throne and India reached the peak of its cultural glory. His successor, Aurangzeb, was a devout Muslim and lived a more austere life. During his time there was significantly less patronage for the arts, but carpets with many of the patterns favored under Shah Jahan were still produced.

Under Aurangzeb India became the most successful economy on the planet and the textile industries were a large part of that. Muslin, chintz, ikats, and silks were exported throughout the known world, from Japan and Indonesia in the east to France and England in the west. Carpets were exported to Portugal and the Netherlands, where we find them in many paintings.

Artistic decoration changed under Aurangzeb; the simple clarity which was popular under Jahangir and Shah Jahan made way to dense ornamentation, and the overall impression is less naturalistic. A new design, best described as "millefleur," was introduced; so was silk for the pile, even though pashmina rugs were still woven. Millefleur designs were woven well into the 18th century, either allover or in a lattice.

Prayer arch rugs had a special design showing an exuberant bouquet of flowers emerging from a plinth or a vase. These designs were later copied throughout Persia.

In the Deccan, multi-arch prayer carpets, safs, were laid out in the mosques. These have softer if not paler colors than in the north, including pink, orange, beige, and pale green. The drawing is more angular and the rugs are more coarsely woven.

The death of Aurangzeb marked the beginning of the end for the Mughal Empire. His reign was followed by a string of ineffective rulers and a period of political uncertainty, culminating in invasion by the Persian Nadir Shah during the 18th century. But cultural changes usually take a century or two to play out. High quality carpets were still made, but there was a lack of innovation and the royal patronage that had begun under Aurangzeb. This led to growth in private workshops and increased provincial production during the 18th century.

One type of weaving, particular to India, was established during this period: cotton flatweaves called dhurries. Originally made with simple stripes or geometric designs and primary colors, these were used to cover floors, doors, as partitions and even to cover other carpets inside and out. In the 19th century, more pictorial and aesthetic statements were entering their design vocabulary, and pieces were also made to sell abroad.

By the 19th century, the British colonial administration took over the East India Company's lead in carpet making, and efforts were made to make carpets for use in Western interiors. The growth in trade encouraged the private workshops but carpet workshops were also established in jails throughout India. The jail carpets made by prisoners led to larger and larger carpets being made with little financial risk, and stately homes, palaces and government buildings in Britain and the British Empire were furnished with Indian carpets.

The main centres for the jail carpets were Amritsar, Delhi and Lahore. These carpets tend to have strong claret reds, yellows, ice blues and dark navy blue. Outlines are often in black. The designs tend to use traditional motifs from the Safavid and Mughal traditions, such

Fig.68

Fig.68 Agra runner, India, last quarter 19th century. 3 ft x 10 ft (0.91 m x 3.05 m). Woven in the northern city of Agra, the design of this carpet relies on the interplay of large palmettes and fluid arabesques, arranged in a long and narrow runner format.

Fig.69 Agra carpet, India, circa 1900. 16 ft 10 in x 25 ft 6 in (5.13 m x 7.77 m).This huge antique Indian Agra rug features an all-over design that draws inspiration from floral patterns and elements that we normally see in Persian carpets.

Fig.69

as scrolling vines with large palmettes and arabesques. These carpets are still considered to be extremely elegant, highly sophisticated, and useful for contemporary decorators since they were made in sizes well suited to contemporary interiors, with more square carpets made than in any other production centers. A record exists of the commission by Lord Lansdowne in 1893 of the largest Indian carpet known, 39' 4" x 78' 9" (12 x 24 m), from the jail in Agra. It was made for for Queen Victoria for Windsor Castle's Waterloo Chamber, where it remains today. It was so big that it took forty men to carry.

After the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, companies in India and Pakistan showed themselves willing to weave every carpet design available worldwide, whatever there was demand for. During the 1970s India's reputation as a center of distinction was badly damaged. However, during the closing decades of the 20th century, quality improved greatly, and as well as traditional designs one can now order any modern pattern in various qualities. By the second decade of the 21st century India had become the largest producer of carpets in the world.

Courtesy of ROM (Royal Ontario Museum), Toronto, Canada. ©ROM

Fig.70 Ancestor portrait, China, Ming dynasty, second half of the 16th century. Royal Ontario Museum, 923X56.7

Fig.71 Ningxia rug, China, 17th century. 4 ft 7 in x 9 ft (1.4 m x 2.74 m). Antique Ningxia carpets, like this outstanding example, produced under the auspices of the Chinese imperial palace, are the epitome of understated elegance and aristocratic restraint.

China

It was mentioned before that carpet fragments were discovered in the Taklamakan Desert, a region which at various times over the past 2,000 years has been under Chinese control. Regarding the Tang Dynasty, when the Kingdom of Khotan was under either Tibetan or Chinese control, our knowledge of carpets comes from poetry.

The poet Wang Ya wrote about the lap dog of a concubine which was always allowed to sleep on a precious silk rug but was left to "bark at the fireflies" on the terrace after the lady had lost the favor of the Emperor. In the poem "The silk threaded carpet" by Bai Juyi (772–846) we even find some social critique, as he describes a lavish silk rug which needs "A hundred men at once burdened with carrying it into the palace, threads so thick and silk abundant it could not even be rolled. Does or does not the prefect of Xuancheng know? That one-zhang of carpet is one thousand threads of silk! Alas, the floor does not know cold, yet people need warmth; steal less of people's clothes to make garments for the ground!"

Paintings of the period show carpets as well as the decorated walls of the caves in Dunhuang. During the 13th and 14th centuries depictions show carpets not only in interiors but also in tents and on horsebacks as saddle rugs.

It is assumed that, when the Forbidden City was constructed between 1406 and 1420, all the rooms and halls were covered with carpets made specifically for them. Made to measure, they were placed between columns, around thrones, and in pavilions, all of which sometimes results in unusual shapes. A few of these rugs have survived and some might indeed be as early as the late 15th century. These palace carpets have usually strong silk warps, cotton wefts, and wool pile. They show majestic dragons, flowering lotuses, clouds, and complex geometric designs.

Some of these Ming carpets were enormous—an example still in the Palace

Fig.71

Fig.72

Ming carpets

The Ming emperors of China commissioned carpets for the Forbidden City palaces. These were woven in Beijing (Peking) and were often extremely large or of irregular shape. With their white silk warps, thick pile and dragon motifs, these imperial commissions have always been rare and never of a commercial nature.

Fig.72 Ming dynasty dragon carpet fragment, China, 16th century, 3 ft x 3 ft (0.91 m x 0.91 m). Dating to the illustrious Ming dynasty, this 16th-century fragment depicts the imperial dragon motif, with its undulating body and celestial vapors.

Fig.73 Ningxia runner with cloudband design, China, 17th century. 2 ft 6 in x 15 ft (0.76 m x 4.57 m). The early rug features a stylized cloud-band pattern, a motif that dates to the late Han dynasty and was intended to establish a connection between the ruler and the heavenly realms.

Fig.74 Ningxia rug, China, late 17th century. 4 ft 5 in x 6 ft 4 in (1.35 m x 1.93 m). Using only three colors, this rug features complex geometric forms which lend it a sense of earthiness and unity.

Museum, Beijing, measures 24 x 16 m (78' x 54'). The only large carpet ever to have left the palace represents the transition from Ming to Kangxi style. This extraordinarily elegant, beautiful carpet was originally 10 x 9.7 m (32' x 31'); although it has been reduced in width it is otherwise in good condition. It is said to come from the private temple of the Empress Dowager Cixi. Louis Comfort Tiffany bought it in 1916 and it stayed in his "Gesamtkunstwerk," Laurelton Hall on Long Island, for thirty years. Having later joined the collection of A. Jerrold Perenchio in Los Angeles, it was sold at Christie's, New York, in October 2020 for $1,710,000.

In Chinese ancestor portraits we often find carpets under the chair of the sitter, and many show a red field. Yet the Dowager carpet and other surviving rugs of that age have a golden, mellow, yellow to beige-brown field. Where did the red-ground carpets go, one might wonder? The explanation is that the red dyestuff wasn't stable. As it is unlikely that a sophisticated and highly advanced society wasn't aware of this, it is assumed that it was an inbuilt "defect." The Chinese dyers ingeniously created colors that "matured" with age but would still be harmonious. In this context it might be good to recall that Chinese high society collected antiques for centuries. This refined aesthetic is very different from that pertaining to all other rug-producing areas, where color fading is definitely regarded as a fault.

From the long reign of the Kangxi Emperor (1661–1722) we have more extant carpets which are considered among the finest of classical Chinese rugs. The Emperor himself had interest in the weaving industry as we know from a Jesuit priest who was with the entourage of the ruler when he

Fig.73

Fig.74

visited weaving centers in Ningxia. The Emperor's son and successor Yongzheng wrote in a memorandum in 1726 that the palace carpets, even though in use for thirty to forty years, were still in excellent and clean condition and that his father looked after them well.

We find a great variety of complex geometric overall designs on Kangxi carpets, as well as dragons chasing flaming pearls, "hundred antiques," and all-over flowering lotus scrolls. These elegant rugs are remarkable for their well-balanced use of space, with pattern and tone carefully used to create multiple layers in the design.

In the 18th century during the Qianlong dynasty (1735–1796), the style changed to a more flowery, playful feel, not unlike the changes in the decor of porcelain at the time. Some see in this a decline compared with the earlier, more formally elegant Kangxi period; but there were new design inventions like the three-dimensional swastika border and the first appearances of the blue pearl border. Both become ubiquitous during the succeeding century.

During the 19th century the bases of Chinese carpet design repertoire didn't change much, and many of the old motifs were used interchangeably. More colors

Fig.75

Fig.76

Fig.75 The "Tiffany" carpet installed at Chartwell, the home of A. Jerrold Perenchio (1930–2017), in Bel Air, California

Fig.76 Ming dynasty silk textile, China, 17th century. 2 ft x 2 ft 1 in (0.61 m x 0.63 m). This early silk textile is decorated with exquisitely drawn lotus palmettes, vines and cloudbands of classical Chinese design.

were used and, overall, carpets contain more blue, especially the rugs from Pao-Tao and carpets from Beijing. Many saddle covers and small carpets were made for the Tibetan market. So closely do they echo designs used in Tibetan rugs that they still sometimes get confused, despite the very different weaving structure.

Carpets for the Tibetan market show more Taoist, Buddhist and other symbols, and this seems to spill over to local production as well. It's not that symbolism wasn't important in the classical carpets, but it is now more visible, sometimes seeming to have been thrown in just for good measure.

The Chinese court endorsed the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, and many monasteries were founded. Typical carpet furnishings are long bench runners for monks to sit on, single seating mats, and the famous pillar rugs, which depict a dragon chasing the flaming pearl in a manner that, when the rug is wrapped around a pillar, makes the dragon seem to encircle it.

As well as the different coloration of (especially early) Chinese carpets, another factor sets them apart from the work of all other carpet-producing areas. One will find no improvisations in the drawing, faults in design or individual rendering of traditional motifs. Chinese carpets were precisely planned and executed.

It seems astonishing that, even though in the late 17th and early 18th century there was a craze for everything Chinese in Europe, carpets seem not to have been exported to Europe or America. Probably this is partly because the export of Ottoman and Persian rugs to Europe had also declined at the same time. However there was never an export tradition to speak of. China had over centuries exported silk and porcelain in huge quantities, but never rugs. Carpets were reserved for palaces, monasteries, and the houses of wealthy citizens and civil servants.

World Fairs had kindled interest in not only the Middle East but very much the Far East as well. By the end of the 19th century, export expanded dramatically. Among other artifacts satisfying Western demand were carpets. At the St. Louis exhibition 1903–04,

Fig.77 Ningxia carpet, China, late 18th century. 6 ft x 9 ft 9 in (1.83 m x 2.97 m). Woven in the mountainous Ningxia region of northwestern China, this design uses subtle shading to give depth and create areas of shadow and light within the individual motifs.

Fig.77

Fig.78

Fig.78 Dragon carpet, China, circa 1900. 12 ft 4 in x 14 ft 6 in (3.76 m x 4.42 m). Dragons are well known as the Chinese symbol for power, strength and luck; here eight blue-headed dragons encircle a dramatic black field.

"A hundred men at once burdened with carrying it into the palace, threads so thick and silk abundant it could not even be rolled"

"The Silk Threaded Carpet," Bai Juyi (772–846)

modern Chinese carpets were shown. Especially in America, Chinese rugs became very fashionable, promoted in magazines like *Country Life*, and huge quantities were exported during the first two decades of the 20th century.

Tiffany Studios in New York and Gump's department store in San Francisco offered Chinese carpets, some of which were already antiques. A group of connoisseurs started collecting antique Chinese carpets in earnest. Among them were Thomas B. Clarke, and George Hewitt Myers, who started the Textile Museum, Washington D.C, and who bought classical Chinese rugs in New York auctions between 1909 and 1916.

Chinese production quickly oriented itself toward Western wishes and changed sizes and patterns according to what sold best. The First World War had stopped imports from Turkey and hindered imports from Iran; another advantage was that Chinese rugs were cheaper. In the twenties and thirties Art Deco carpets were made in various workshops in Beijing and Tianjin. The American W. A. B. Nichols founded his famous rug-making company in Beijing and later in Tianjin, and was enormously successful with his exports to the US. Other companies sprang up producing carpets with aspects of the classical Chinese design repertoire, albeit in an "orientalist" way and

Fig.79

Fig.79 Blue-ground carpet, China, circa 1920. 8 ft 2 in x 9 ft 8 in (2.49 m x 2.95 m). The dark-blue ground of this carpet recalls the night sky, in which the lotus flowers seem to glow.

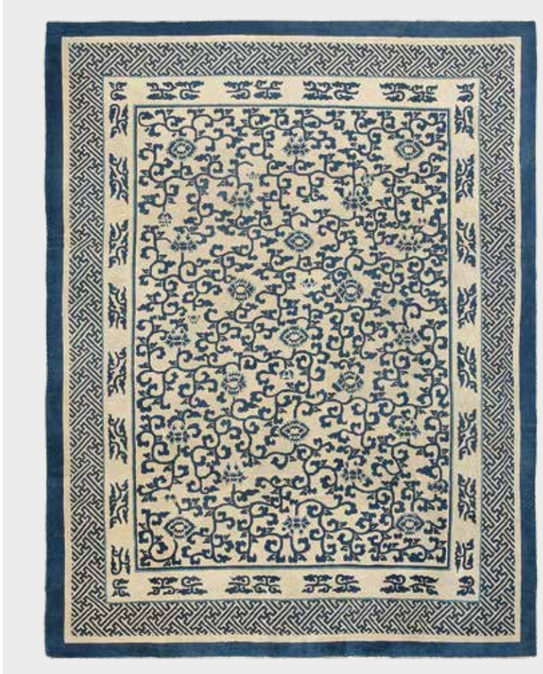


Fig.80

Fig.80 Carpet with allover design, China, early 20th century. 8 ft 10 in x 11 ft 6 in (2.69 m x 3.51 m). The geometric border and floral field harmonize in this carpet, which uses a limited palette of ivory and blue to great effect.

with distinctly Western motifs. The largest firms like Karagheusian imported 600,000 to 900,000 square feet per year into the United States. The Great Depression ended this trend.

Many of the rugs produced in this period are of good wool and color quality and have survived incredibly well to this day. Up until the 20th century most Chinese carpets had been dyed with natural dyestuff and therefore the industry "missed" the period of bad early artificial colors and headed straight to stable chrome dyes. These colors could provide any shade a customer would wish for, including less conventional hues such as mauve, orange, turquoise, and burgundy.

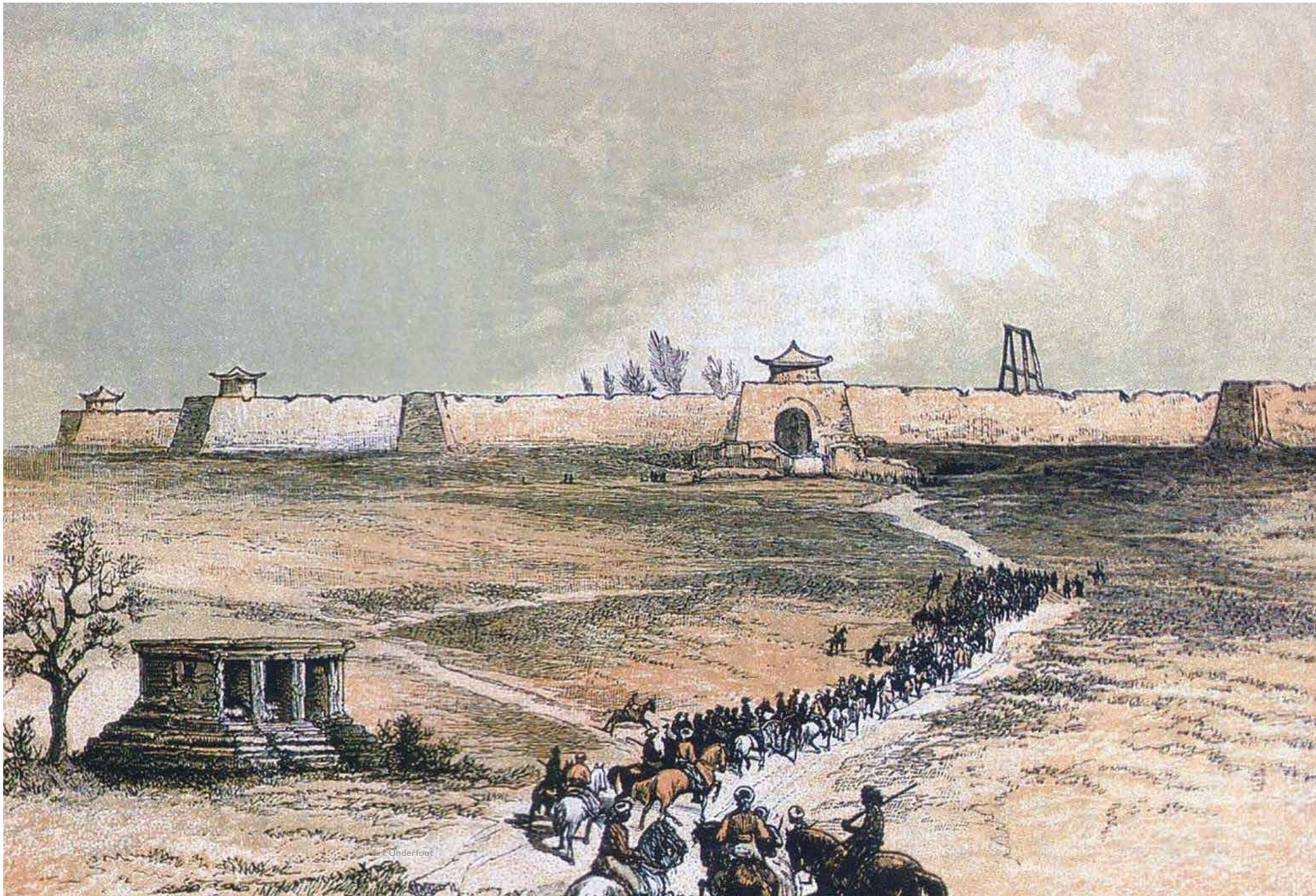
During the Second World War production came to a standstill. But post-war the economic importance of the weaving industry was understood, and carpet production was encouraged and then centralized by the Chinese government. At times carpet export was the fourth most important export article. To begin with, Chinese motifs were used, but later on the manufacturers were able to produce any rug design known worldwide in any quality or material. After China opened up its economy in the early nineties, carpet weaving declined dramatically. Those weavers still working are now ageing, and young people don't want to learn the trade. Chinese designer rugs are mostly woven in Nepal nowadays.

East Turkestan

The Taklamakan Desert revealed some of its buried treasures to Sir Aurel Stein, including a number of carpet fragments dating from the first centuries CE. In the last decades of the 20th century several more important finds occurred, not only of fragments but of near-complete rugs. Their discovery made previous speculation—that the carpets had been imported from other areas—appear unlikely. Tools for carpet making were found next to the fragments. It seems evident by now that carpet production in East Turkestan has been a tradition for at least 2,500 years. A Chinese traveler mentioned rugs in the 7th century CE.

The oasis towns at the eastern edge of the Taklamakan forming the Kingdom of Khotan were Buddhist for the first 1,000 years CE, and had been at times under Chinese and Tibetan rule. But from 990 Muslim Turkish rulers started the Islamization of Khotan; it was several hundred years before it was completed, by the 15th century. The carpet-producing towns Khotan, Yarkand, and Kashgar were important trading places along the silk route. Especially important for China was the export of jade from Khotan. In 1763 the entire area fell under Chinese rule.

Around 1860/70 there were 200 workshops in Khotan weaving long carpets to fit the style of houses of the oasis. Also produced were seating rugs and "safs"—multi-niche carpets for prayer. Carpets were exported to India, Tibet, China, and West Turkestan.



CPA Media Pte Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

Fig.81 "Approach to Yarkand", from a sketch by R. B. Shaw from *Visits to High Tartary, Yarkand and Kashgar,* 1871

Fig.82

Fig.82 Khotan rug with pomegranate design, East Turkestan, circa 18th century, 5 ft 6 in x 8 ft 9 in (1.68 m x 2.67 m). This vibrant rug boasts an unusual, asymmetric field of semi-geometric flowers, the varied palette of rusty reds, blues, and golds combining to spectacular effect.

Fig.83 Kansu gallery carpet, China, 18th century. 6 ft 7 in x 15 ft 6 in (2.01 m x 4.72 m). Blending Tibetan and Chinese Ningxia design elements, this vivid gallery rug is attributed to Kansu, for long a key Silk Road trading post.

The Silk Road: Gansu

The Silk Road was a network of trade routes that linked Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. It began in north-central China, from which it stretched west across the Pamirs, through Afghanistan, and via Turkey and the Levant to the shores of the Mediterranean. Gansu was the link between China and Central Asia, and home to a 1,600-kilometer section of the Silk Road. Unsurprisingly, given its name, silk, textiles, and carpets traveled along this network.

"In the Turkic city of Kashgar, numerous courtesans live in great luxury, practiced in song and dance. But there are also very decent people who are excellent at making gold and silver brocaded silk carpets"

– Fu Ching

Khotan carpets have a soft wool and a floppy handle, and show design influences from China and India. One type displays three large, mostly blue medallions on a red ground, the middle one quite often being slightly different from the others. This design, used only here and in Tibet, is said to go back to Buddhist times when a Buddha statue would stand on the middle medallion flanked by two bodhisattvas. Wall paintings on the northern edge of the Taklamakan in the Turfan oasis make this theory seem feasible. Smaller three-medallion rugs were exported to Tibet.

Carpets from the Yarkand oasis are stiffer in handle and have blue cotton wefts; Khotan uses mostly brown wool in the wefts. Both have cotton warps. Yarkand rugs share designs with Khotan, often very precisely drawn. The red

Fig.83

Fig.84

Fig.85

Fig.84 Khotan *saf*, East Turkestan, circa 1900. 4 ft x 17 ft 2 in (1.22 m x 5.23 m). This magnificent *saf* prayer rug features 9 different mihrab fields surrounded by a border that contains both geometric and floral elements.

Fig.85 Pomegranate Khotan rug, East Turkestan, mid-20th century. 5 ft 10 in x 11 ft 4 in (1.78 m x 3.45 m). This vintage rug takes typical East Turkestan motifs and gives them a twist with a contemporary palette of bright color.

dyes used for the pile tend to be a bit more blueish compared with Khotan products. The oasis is known for very elegant large and luxurious carpets with a silk pile.

Further to the west lies Kashgar. The independent Chinese traveler Fu Ching stated: “In the Turkic city of Kashgar, numerous courtesans live in great luxury, practiced in song and dance. But there are also very decent people who are excellent at making gold and silver brocaded silk carpets.” Kashgar carpets show influences from Persian rugs, especially in the Herat style, and the silver and gold brocading technique seems to derive from so-called “Polonaise” carpets from early 17th-century Kashan. The cotton structure can show red, yellow, or white wefts.

Between 1865 and 1877 China lost control of East Turkestan to the

Fig.86 Khotan carpet with radial floral designs, East Turkestan, circa 1910. 14 ft x 20 ft (4.27 m x 6.1 m). Delicate vegetation radiates from each of the nine flowerheads in the field, adding a sense of movement to the design.

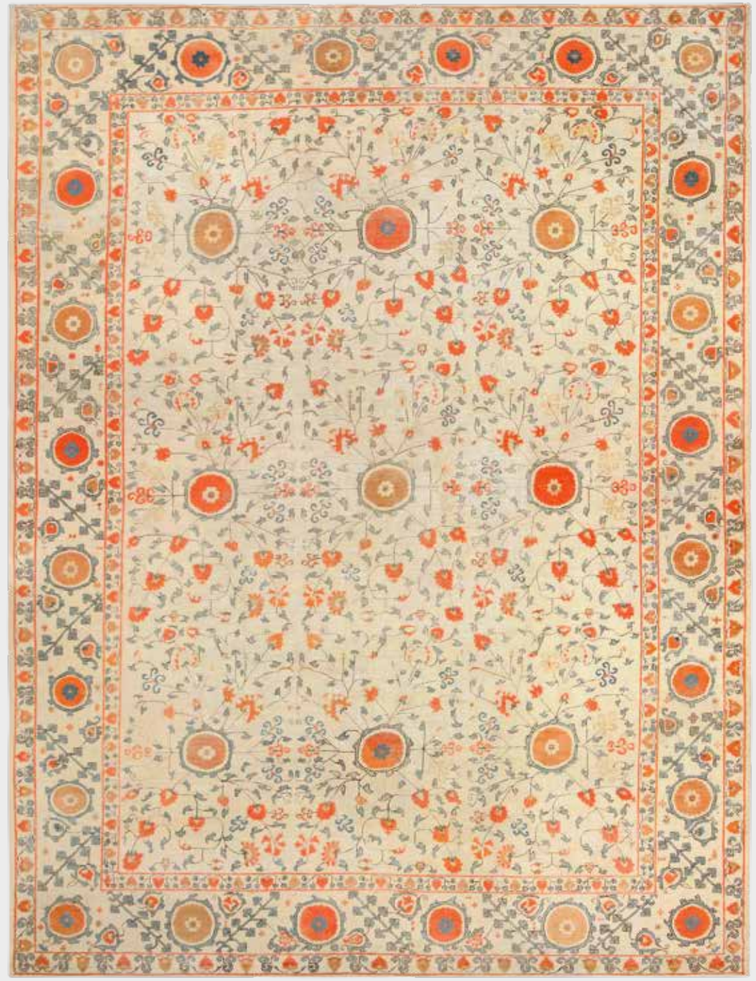


Fig.86

fundamentalist Islamic ruler Yakub Beg, who ruled from Kashgar. It is likely that most of the safs from the area were produced during his reign. The British adventurer and agent Robert Shaw, who was in Kashgar at the time to further British interests, describes a westward-heading caravan of 871 horses of which 120 carried felts and twenty-five carpets. The latter were twice as valuable as the 120 horse loads.

After China retook control over the region from the last quarter of the 19th century onward, the character of the carpets changed. A wider palette of colors was introduced and more distinctive Chinese motifs entered the design language. Flowers are now drawn in a more naturalistic fashion, birds appear, a few tiger rugs are made, vases, brush pots and other pieces of Chinese interiors are shown.

Europe

Spain

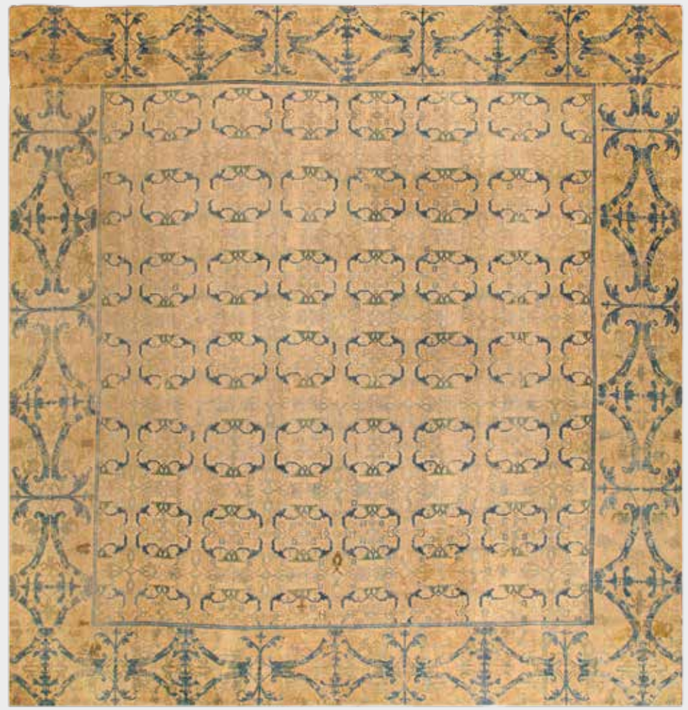


Fig.88

Fig.87 The Cabinet Doré at Versailles formed part of Queen Marie Antoinette's private quarters. On the floor is a French Savonnerie carpet.

Fig.88 Alcaraz rug, Spain, 16th century. 16 ft x 17 ft (4.88 m x 5.18 m). Woven in the late 16th century when Spain was ruled by the Habsburgs, this rug displays the contemporary preference for European and Italianate aesthetics.

At the beginning of the 8th century the Iberian peninsula was conquered by the Muslim Umayyad dynasty, which stretched from India to southern France. It brought with it not only the seeds for the European Enlightenment and major advances in all sciences, but also the skills of carpet weaving.

The oldest surviving Spanish carpet is said to be the "Synagogue" carpet in Berlin, which is dated to the 14th century. Two border fragments in the same museum from the 15th century show a stunning resemblance to 12th-century German carpet fragments in Halberstadt in parts of the design. This therefore suggests that it is not only the use of the peculiar "Spanish" single knot that connects the two earliest areas of production in Europe.

The style of knot was probably brought in from Egypt, where fragments made in the same technique have been found. We have written evidence of carpet making in the 10th century, and two 12th-century Arab authors state that rugs from Chinchilla were exported to and appreciated in the Near East. Eleanor of Castile (1241–1290), well-educated and cultured, brought carpets with her to England, along with fine tableware, for her wedding to Edward I. It is said that the rugs were laid out and tapestries hung

Fig.89

Portuguese Arraiolos rugs

Arraiolos, a town in the central Alentejo region of Portugal, gives its name to a type of vernacular embroidered rug with a long history. Moorish rule between the 8th and the end of the 15th century brought the region within the orbit of Islamic craftsmanship, encouraging the development of a rich embroidery tradition. The embroidery techniques used vary, and the designs of Arraiolos are often fascinating, mixing Persian arrangements with folk motifs.

Fig.89 Arraiolos carpet, Portugal, 18th century. 10 ft x 18 ft 3 in (3.05 m x 5.56 m). Needlepoints such as this were made in Portugal by communities expelled from Spain in 1492; the combination of Spanish and Moorish influences is characteristic.

Fig.90

Fig.91

for her wedding procession, receiving both admiration and mockery from the English.

Extant carpets date from the era following the Christian Reconquista, i.e., after 1491. Despite the change in religion and politics, carpets continued to be woven by the Mudejar, Muslims who stayed in Spain, and they still exhibited many Islamic features, like the Kufic borders. Examples from the 15th century have this border usually on a blue ground, and quite a few show coats of arms on an allover field of small-stars-and-octagon arrangement.

These octagons are sometimes filled with little human figures and animals, which we can find scattered around in the Kufic border as well. Sometimes at either end are white-ground panels, which show European hunting scenes or heraldic motives. Some early rugs are interpretations of Anatolian large Holbein carpets, while others take their cue from silk and velvet designs of either European or Eastern manufacture.

In the 16th century, many more emulations of Ottoman carpets, like small-patterned Holbein, Lotto, and Ushak, were made, both in knotted pile and in silk embroidery in Spain and Portugal—the later focusing on Safavid designs. But over time generally carpets became more European in

Fig.90 Cuenca rug, Spain, 17th century. 7 ft 4 in x 14 ft (2.24 m x 4.27 m). Cuenca rugs became popular among collectors in the 1920s due to a demand for suitable carpets for Spanish-style houses in California and Florida.

Fig.91 Alcaraz carpet, Spain, second half 16th century. 5 ft x 10 ft 2 in (1.52 m x 3.1 m). After 1500 the carpet workshops of Spain, including Alcaraz, turned away from Islamic influence and developed a new European ornamental vocabulary of medieval and classical derivation, which this rug exemplifies.

Fig.92

Fig.92 Art Deco carpet, Spain, early 20th century. 20 ft 4 in × 28 ft 2 in (6.2 m × 8.59 m). In this Spanish carpet from the early 20th century, typically Art Deco shells and ribbon designs give a three-dimensional quality.

Fig.93 Alpujarra rug, Spain, mid-19th century. 5 ft 8 in × 7 ft (1.73 m × 2.13 m). The limited palette of primary colors and simple, folk design is characteristic of rugs from the Alpujarras district to the south of Granada.

"Eleanor of Castile, well-educated and cultured, brought carpets with her from Spain to England for her wedding to Edward I"

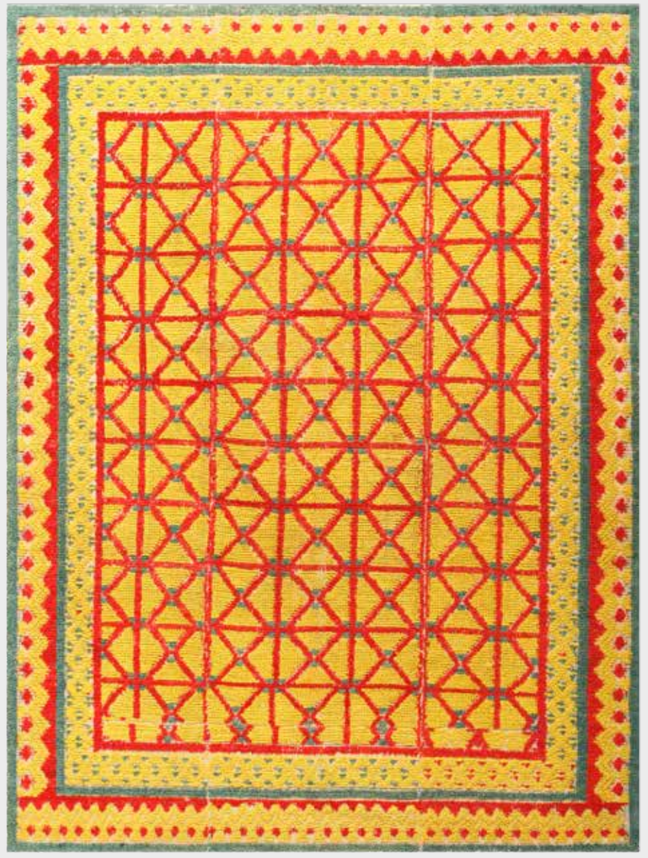


Fig.93

style, and rugs with large wreaths became very fashionable, and workshops developed a general tendency to use fewer colors, seen predominately in the Cuenca rugs of the 17th and 18th centuries.

In the 18th century, under the Spanish Bourbons, the carpets drew their inspiration mainly from France and England. Philip V (r. 1700–1746), who had grown up in the French court of Louis XIV, established carpet workshops in Madrid. One of those workshops was Real Fábrica de Tapices, which still makes carpets and tapestries. The initiative marked a renewed interest in rug making throughout the Iberian peninsula.

In the Alpujarra region, probably from the 16th century onwards, there emerged a folk-art weaving that produced rugs in a loop technique. Initially influenced by Moorish designs, the motifs became more local and adopted a limited color range. Sometimes inscribed and dated, these carpets show human figures and birds, reminiscent of Spanish embroideries.

England

Fig.95

Fig.94 Armorial carpet with "Star Ushak" design, England or Flanders, last quarter 16th century. The Duke of Buccleuch, Boughton House, Northamptonshire, 37-49.

Fig.95 Axminster rug. England, 19th century, 15 ft x 18 ft 10 in (4.57 m x 5.74 m). Made in the grand neoclassical European tradition, Axminster carpets such as this were England's response to the French Savonnerie carpets produced for the French elite.

Carpets were not always used in English houses. Instead rushes and other materials were strewn across the floors and often left to molder. When Cardinal Wolsey ordered that the rushes in Hampton Court should be changed every day it was considered extravagant. But in 1518 the cardinal demanded that he should be sent twelve to fifteen handmade "Turkeye" carpets via Venetian wine traders, basically to facilitate lobbying work. However, in the 16th century, these would have been placed on tables rather than the floor. After some intense negotiating, in 1520 Wolsey received sixty carpets, which he inspected closely, one by one, and with which he was very satisfied.

Wolsey's carpets became Henry VIII's property after the cardinal's death in 1529, and in a household inventory from 1547 over 400 rugs of "turquey makinge" are noted. When exactly English reproduction of Turkish designs began is not known, but the oldest known rug is the Earl of Verulam armorial carpet. In early carpet literature it was said that it was entirely of English design, but the field is actually covered in tulips and carnations in rather an Ottoman style. It is most likely that it is taken from either an Ottoman textile or a court kilim.

Early English rugs have a woolen pile in the Turkish knot on a hemp foundation. Even though in the 16th century rugs the basic Ottoman models are adequately copied, there is something distinctively European about the results. It has repeatedly been suggested that they come from an atypical production line in

Fig.96

“History has remembered the kings and warriors, because they destroyed; art has remembered the people, because they created”

– William Morris

Fig.96 William Morris carpet, England, late 19th century. 19 ft x 30 ft (5.79 m x 9.14 m). William Morris played a major role in the revival of British textile arts. There is an obvious Persian influence in the design of this carpet, demonstrating an appreciation for the carpet designers of previous eras.

Fig.97 Arts and Crafts Donegal carpet, Ireland, early 20th century. 11 ft x 17 ft 9 in (3.35 m x 5.41 m). Donegal carpets were inspired by the patterns and motifs found in traditional Persian rugs, but the palette was adjusted to appeal to the prevailing European taste.

Fig.97

Turkey, but the hemp foundation should put this argument to rest. Additional confirmation can be taken from an inventory of the Countess of Bedford dated 1602 which noted an “Item one Turkey Carpett of Englishe makinge.”

Next in time are the Buccleuch carpets today kept in Boughton House. Three are of Star Ushak design, and two of these are dated 1584 and 1585. The fourth is a blue-ground Lotto. Small initials hidden in the design represent the weavers’ initials. It is remarkable that these four rugs have been kept by the same family since their creation.

In the 17th century we find the first carpets with clearly English motifs, mostly taken from embroideries; however “Turkish” designs were still being produced. Carpets started to arrive from India through the East India Company, and a rare copy of a Lahore rug that survived in the collection of the Earl of Strathmore at Glamis Castle is now in the Royal Museum of Scotland.

Mastery of pile knotting meant this technique could be used for covers on chairs, benches, and cushions. Already by 1540 an inventory of Canterbury Cathedral noted “Cosshions of Carpetworke.” Throughout the 17th century we find many examples of this work, mostly with floral or armorial motives; some chairs in the Victoria and Albert Museum still have original “Turkey”-work upholstery.

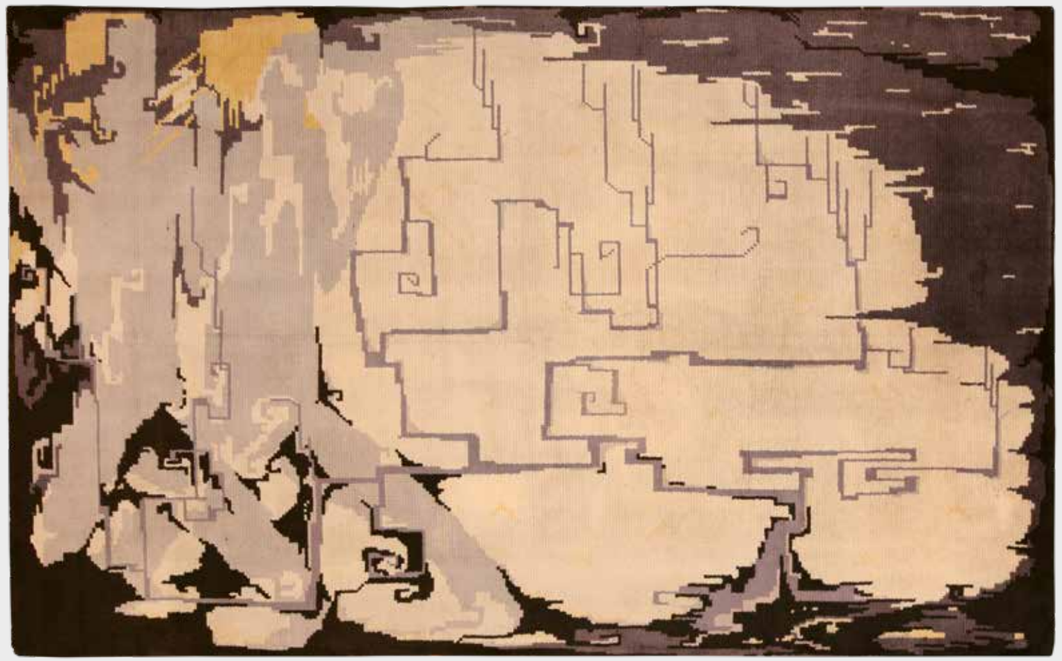


Fig.98

The 18th century not only saw the introduction of silk upholstery in petit point embroidery for chairs and benches, but also a renewed interest in carpet weaving. Huguenots coming from France around 1750 had expertise in weaving, and Thomas Moore of Axminster, Thomas Whitty of Moorfields, and Passavant in Exeter set up carpet manufactures. In 1756 the Royal Society of Arts offered premiums to makers of hand-knotted carpets, allowing for lower prices and a growth in production.

The famous neoclassical architect Robert Adam designed rugs, some of which mirrored the designs of the ceiling decoration. The "Grand Tour"-educated upper class were very receptive to the clean, classical lines of these carpets with Greek key meander borders and acanthus decoration. They show a restrained elegance and observe strict symmetry, sometimes incorporating motifs from Pompeian wall decoration. At the same time the alternative decorative trend coming from France and Italy—the flowery, exuberant Rococo with its asymmetric accents—was also available from companies like Axminster.

For the Brighton Pavilion, the summer retreat of King George IV, a massive carpet measuring 62 x 42 ft was produced in Axminster at the beginning of the 19th century. It was full of Chinese symbols—dragons, birds, insects—and weighed a massive 1,700 lb.

With the dawn of the industrial age came diminishing appreciation of hand-crafting. The Axminster company went bankrupt and was closed down. On the death of its founder, Thomas Whitty, the recipes for natural dyestuffs were lost as well. The looms were transferred to Wilton, where machine-made carpets were produced. The company could afford to keep handmade rugs as a sideline, but further into the century the cheaper and more quickly produced, mechanically woven carpets gained supremacy throughout England.

The ingenuity of engineers and weavers in the 19th century is remarkable, and it is impossible to do justice to the variety of innovation. Therefore the term "machine-made" will here include everything from cut-loop and tufted carpets to fully mechanical weaving, and such ill-advised ideas as gluing pile onto a canvas.

Fig.98 Deco rug, Hildo Krop, England, early 20th century. 6 ft 5 in x 10 ft 1 in (1.96 m x 3.07 m). Hildo Krop was a famous Dutch sculptor, potter; and designer of furniture, including abstract carpets such as this, and a forerunner of the "Amsterdam School" of the 1920s–1930s.

Fig.99 Art Nouveau Donegal carpet, Ireland, circa 1920. 10 ft 2 in x 17 ft (3.1 m x 5.18 m). The irises and foliage so emblematic of the Art Nouveau style intertwine around and above a shimmering green field, showing the far-reaching influence of the movement in Europe by the 1920s.

Irish Donegal carpets

At the end of the 19th century, hand-knotted carpets were designed commercially and produced in a region with a long textile tradition: the northwestern Irish country of Donegal. Characterized by broad, graceful designs, they typically fuse a "Celtic style" with orientally inspired designs. Companies such as Alexander Morton & Co. led this weaving revival, closely aligned with the Arts and Crafts movement in their repudiation of the industrial in favor of the traditional.

Quite simply, these industrial products lacked the qualities of earlier manufacture. A government select committee judging the state of design in British industry found, "According to the evidence of M. Guillotte, a maker of Jacquard looms ... a French capitalist employs three or four artists, where, in England, one artist would supply eight to ten manufacturers." Further evidence of artistic decline is found in reactions to the 1851 Great Exhibition, where designs are castigated as "indolent and servile" and calls are made for a new style of "an intelligent and imaginative eclecticism."

To educate taste, carpet samples from all over the world were brought together in the newly founded Victoria and Albert Museum in London. One of the examiners was William Morris, and he described the Persian patterns as "coming from the holy-land" of design, where "the art was perfected" and "spread to cover for a while the world, east and west." In 1877 he wrote to George Wardle, "I saw yesterday a piece of ANCIENT Persian, of Shah Abbas (our Elizabeth's time) that fairly threw me on my back. I had no idea such wonders could be done in carpets." Soon after he moved to Kelmscott House and installed a tapestry loom.

Morris had at first had his carpet designs woven mechanically, but had found his creativity hampered as a result. So looms were installed in his Hammersmith premises and the carpets produced were trademarked with the blacksmith hammer, a large M, and a wavy line. In 1881 the looms were moved to the Merton Abbey works, where production continued. Certainly this was niche, boutique production, but the Arts and Crafts movement exerted a huge influence on machine-made rugs, as well as other industries.

Fig.99

Flanders

Fig.100

Tapestries have been made in the region called Flanders—which is today north France, Belgium, and the southern Netherlands — since at least the 13th century. These large pictorial hangings were important furnishings in palaces, castles, and cathedrals. The oldest complete set of tapestries, the Apocalypse cycle, is held in Angers Cathedral, France, and was made between 1375 and 1380. This fabulous set of Gothic tapestries helps to show the function of these elaborate wall hangings, which were used to decorate the large, empty walls of Gothic and medieval buildings with historical allegories and religious messages.

While the looms of places like Aubusson and Flanders may be most readily associated with the weaving of tapestries, the expense and importance of creating sets of tapestries for royal households can be shown by the fact that royal tapestry ateliers were established in other European seats of power such as London, Stockholm, St Petersburg, Rome, and Madrid in the 16th to 18th centuries.

Fig.100 Flemish tapestry, Belgium, 17th century. 11 ft 8 in × 13 ft 7 in (3.56 m × 4.14 m). Depicting a mythological scene, this tapestry is signed or initialled by Jasper van der Borght (d. 1742), a member of one of the most significant tapestry-weaving dynasties in Brussels.

A princely provenance

Tapestries have been favored by kings, queens, and aristocrats since the Middle Ages. Tracing the provenance of these illustrious weavings can be a Who's Who of European royal houses and noble families. When this tapestry was sold in Paris in 1875, it came from the collection of Prince Paul Galitzin. Galitzin belonged to one of the largest noble houses in Russia and was a noted art collector.

Fig.101

Tapestries would provide warmth and color for large chambers, and certain artistic or historic themes could be conveyed across up to a dozen tapestries united by matching borders. Commissioning a set of tapestries was a powerful display of wealth. The textiles could be made to fit the spaces in which they would be hung, and the patrons' artists of choice could be used to create the original artwork. The Old Master painter Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) was one such artist. He famously made tapestry designs to be used as cartoons by the weavers to create the tapestry.

An advantage of sets of tapestries was that they could move with the court or with the patron; they could easily be rolled up and then rehung. The capture of these movable items of wealth in battle was a real feather in the cap. Tapestries thus became important items of booty during war; tapestries with a royal connection were especially prestigious prizes of victorious campaigns.

While the richest patrons could afford to commission their own sets of tapestries, there were also workshops that made tapestries for sale at different price levels. Minor princes and aristocrats would settle for cheaper materials and a less fine weave. Workshops could either copy and adapt other artists' cartoons used for royal commissions, or scenes and border types could be chosen from templates and woven. Some tapestries could simply be bought as ready made. All workshops would sign their works with monograms woven into the borders of the tapestries, which identify when and where they were made.

The art of tapestry is still alive and well. The 20th century was a high point, with artists such as Pablo Picasso, Alexander Calder, Fernand Léger and Jean Lurçat making tapestries, and establishing new price levels akin to those of other works of modern art.

Fig.101 Flemish heraldic tapestry, Belgium, 17th century. 11 ft 10 in × 13 ft 3 in (3.61 m × 4.04 m). This important Flemish tapestry, woven in the 17th century, is rich in enigmatic heraldic imagery.

Fig.102

"A great Footcloath in the manner of Turky-work, . . . in a place built on purpose at the end of the Cours de la Reine, commonly called the Savonnerie, which is to be the full length of the great Gallery of the Louvre, but is not yet finisht"

– Germain Brice, writing in 1687 on a set of ninety-three carpets that was being created at the Savonnerie for the Grande Galerie of the Palais du Louvre in Paris

Fig.102 Carpet with Fame and Fortitude, Savonnerie Manufactory, France, 1668–1685. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 58.75.129 Gift of Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1958. This was one of a set of 93 carpets made for the Louvre. Its iconography celebrates the French monarchy.

France

It was a very modern problem that France was faced with in the early 17th century. A crippling trade deficit had partly been caused by vast importation of luxury goods from Turkey and India: carpets. The French monarch Henry IV (1553–1610), with his finance minister Maximilien de Béthune, decided therefore to establish workshops for weaving carpets "de Turquie et façon de levant," meaning rugs with the symmetric knot, in France.

Workshops opened in 1608, directly under the Grand Gallery in the Louvre, under the auspices of Monsieur Pierre DuPont. Carpets were woven mainly for the royal households or as precious gifts. Henry's widow, Marie de Médicis, established another workshop just outside Paris in a former soap (French: savon) factory, which housed orphans at the time and provided cheap labor for weaving rugs. The Savonnerie manufacture was run by a different family of weavers from the Duponts, the Lourdets, causing a bitter rivalry.

Marie's son, Louis XIII (r. 1610–43), gave his name to the first period of Savonnerie carpets characterized by an exuberance of flowers in baskets, vases, cornucopias, and bouquets. All are drawn in a very naturalistic way related to contemporary Dutch embroidered and tapestry-woven table covers and other smaller domestic textiles, which were much in demand throughout Europe.

By the 1660s the Savonnerie had developed a distinctive weaving structure, setting apart its products from other, later French and European carpets. It used the symmetrical knot, two wefts–one sinuous one taut–keeping the two warps apart, of which is one fully depressed. The back of a real Savonnerie is therefore strongly ribbed by comparison with a later Beauvais rug, which shows a flat surface on the reverse. Another distinct feature is the use of colored warps in the otherwise natural-colored

Fig.103

Fig.103 Art Deco carpet, Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, France, circa 1920s. 14 ft x 15 ft 7 in (4.27 m x 4.75 m). This almost-square carpet was woven to a design by Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann during the 1920s, at the height of the Art Deco movement.

Fig.104

Fig.105

Fig.104 Art Deco carpet, France, 1920s. 19 ft 4 in x 29 ft (5.89 m x 8.84 m), The artist has created a rippling, three-dimensional effect, which is characteristic of the Art Deco style.

Fig.105 Charles X Savonnerie carpet, France, circa 1820. 10 ft 5 in x 14 ft 1 in (3.17 m x 4.29 m). Restoration style features include Gothic elements and highly detailed florals, as can be seen in this carpet.

foundation. Every tenth warp is dyed (brown, blue, or green) to help the weaver to follow the cartoon more exactly. Hemp is used for the foundation; some later examples have wool wefts, and the pile is nearly always wool.

Under Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715) the style shows a significant change towards the Baroque. Louis XIV and his minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert renovated the Louvre, and this modernization included carpeting all state rooms, which was previously unheard of. These carpets immediately bring to mind Baroque ceiling decorations in the general layout, the borders, scrolls, acanthus leaves, and even "pictures" within the carpets.

All French carpets from the second half of the 16th century onward were designed by painters. Prominent among these was Charles Le Brun, first painter to the king. But producing such a significant number of huge carpets in a short period of time proved difficult. To speed up production, several of the Louvre carpets were woven on short warps, meaning the rug was woven horizontally, allowing more weavers to work simultaneously on one piece. Production started in 1665, and during the next twenty years nearly 100 carpets of sizes up to 30 x 18 ft / 9 x 5 m were woven.

In the 18th century under Louis XV, carpet designs took a more playful turn: less stately, more domestic, late Baroque toward Rococo. They are still relatable to stucco ceilings of the same period. The most prominent designer of the time was Pierre-Joseph Perrot.

Neoclassical designs start to appear in the second half of the 18th century in designs by François-Joseph Bélanger. The trend

Fig.106

“Bessarabian rugs”

So-called “Bessarabian” rugs belong to a genre of flatwoven and knotted carpets produced in Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. Floral motifs dominate in these weavings, which often draw inspiration from 18th-century French carpets. These were popular in Russian aristocratic circles and became stylistically influential throughout the eastern parts of Europe.

continued through Michel-Bruno Bellengé, Louis XVI’s principle designer and “Paintre du Roi.” Living at first in the Louvre, but later in the Savonnerie workshop, he designed many carpets, including one for Marie Antoinette’s palace in Fontainebleau. His carpets were copied in Beauvais.

In 1743 a carpet factory was established in Aubusson, where tapestries were already being woven. Designs were less refined than those of the Savonnerie, woven with colors, and therefore affordable for the lower aristocracy and the emerging bourgeoisie. A new era of French carpets had begun.

The French Revolution brought a brief interruption at the Savonnerie workshops; but under Napoleon, Neoclassical design turned into a fully developed imperial, “Empire” style with depictions of helmets, swords, shields, spoils of war, laurels, and eagles. Although many European carpets are often erroneously called Savonnerie, only the ones with the structural characteristics mentioned above can correctly carry the appellation.

Fig.106 Floral Bessarabian kilim, Romania, mid-19th century. 9 ft x 12 ft (2.74 m x 3.66 m). In this example of Bessarabian weaving, softly colored flowers are projected against a variegated green ground redolent of life and lushness.

Fig.107 *Midsummer Dance*, tapestry by Lars Gynning, France, mid-20th century. 10 ft 8 in x 7 ft 9 in (3.25 m x 2.36 m). Created in Aubusson by the legendary Pinton Frères atelier, this Art Deco tapestry titled *Midsummer Dance* is a Cubist masterpiece that captures the distinctive style of the artist.

Fig.108 Aubusson carpet, France, circa 1860. 15 ft 3 in x 17 ft (4.65 m x 5.18 m). The central medallion consists of floral vine scrolls and leaves with various tones used for shading. This adds an exquisite level of artistic detail.

Lars Gynning tapestries

Lars Olof Gynning (1920–2003) was a Swedish painter and textile designer who rose to fame in France in the mid-20th century. His dynamic, modernist tapestries exemplify the exciting mid-century reinvention of the art form. In France he encountered Jean Lurçat, a figure at the vanguard of the tapestry revival, who would profoundly influence him. Both Lurçat and Gynning were artists, who came to tapestry from the world of painting, and in Gynning’s designs there are clear echoes of Cubism. In the 1940s, he started to work with the renowned French tapestry atelier Pinton, known for producing Aubusson tapestries and also for working with artists. The partnership was fruitful, and Gynning produced over 200 highly distinctive figurative weavings, full of movement and graphic clarity.

The labor intensive nature of pile weaving made these carpets expensive and exclusive, therefore in the late 18th century a number of entrepreneurs started making flatwoven carpets in the workshops traditionally used for tapestry weaving in Aubusson. Made in the same technique, these carpet started to be used for government buildings and were much quicker in adapting to new decorative trends. They became popular with the aristocracy, who could order upholstery, wall hangings, and carpets all from the same workshops and reflecting the same styles.

The rise of new artistic movements in the 19th and 20th centuries was centered on Paris, and the influential Société des Artistes-Décorateurs meant that Art Noveau Modernism and Cubism found full expression in the weaving workshops of France. The ensuing renaissance in French carpet weaving attracted the attention of leading names of 20th-century design including Sonia Delaunay, Ivan da Silva Bruhns, Fernand Léger, Joan Miro, Jean Lurçat and Émile Ruhlmann to name just a few.

These carpets were often made in limited editions, commissioned for specific projects and signed by the artists. Now they are collected by both museums and private individuals and often found at art fairs.

Fig.107

Fig.108

Scandinavia and Finland

Fig.109

Fig.109 Carpet designed by Barbro Nilsson and woven by MMF, Sweden, mid-20th century. 7 ft 5 in x 10 ft 1 in (2.26 m x 3.07 m). In 1942, Barbro Nilsson took over the MMF atelier and remained in charge until 1970. A renowned artist, she was handpicked by Märta Måås-Fjetterström for the job.

Fig.110 The weaving room at the MMF workshop in Båstad, Sweden, 1929. Märta Måås-Fjetterström wears a hat. The weavers are producing one of two *Hästhagen* pile rugs for Crown Princess Märtha of Norway.

Fig.111 *Fasad* carpet designed by Marianne Richter and woven by MMF, Sweden, mid-20th century. 5 ft 10 in x 7 ft 6 in (1.78 m x 2.29 m). This striking fiery red kilim with a geometric design represents the simplicity and perfection of mid-century modern Scandinavian rugs.

"Look at the rugs—find me"

– Märta Måås-Fjetterström, when asked to describe her artistic practice

The oldest rug in Sweden, dated to the 14th century, was found in a small church in Marby in the north of the country. It is not a Swedish rug but among the oldest Anatolian carpets known. We do not know how the carpet ended up there but similar weavings are shown in Italian paintings of the time.

The earliest mention of carpets in Sweden in documents is from 1420, when nuns were allowed to use the traditional rya rugs for bedding in addition to pelts. We can assume that these were Swedish weavings: compared with Anatolian rugs, the long pile with many additional wefts results in superior insulation and flexibility and is thus better for sleeping.

In Scandinavia rugs were mainly used as sleeping carpets as they are long lasting, "breathable," and can be washed. They were used by all classes and even Duke Johan, the future King Johan III of Sweden, took five rya to London when he proposed to Elizabeth I.

Special larger and heavier rya were made for boats and for fishermen. The report of a stolen fishing boat listed its contents as "old rags, one new rya and 250 fresh turbot." Some early sleeping rugs show sparse decoration including some on the non-pile side—something they have in common with Moroccan Berber sleeping carpets.

In Finland a house-buying contract from 1495 mentions rya, and throughout the 16th and 17th century they are regularly documented. Finnish rya use the Turkish knot, while in Sweden we find looped pile as well.

Only very few extant 17th-century rugs are known from Finland, and none from Sweden. But from the 18th and 19th centuries we have many examples, mostly dated. The decoration of these, often dowry pieces, shows bride and groom, the tree of life, flowers (often single tulips), birds and other animals, hearts, and Baroque and Rococo influences as well.

As well as the piled covers, colorful flatweaves were made for beds, alongside cushions for domestic use and for the benches of carriages. These, partly because of the nature of the weave, are more geometric in design and remind us of Eastern weavings without directly drawing from them. Both of these traditions became important again in the mid-20th century.

The Arts and Crafts movement had influence in Scandinavia, with several weaving schools being founded. The use of rya had died out by the end of the 19th century, but a renewed interest in their design led to new rugs being patterned in the traditional style.

After the Second World War, hand weaving in Scandinavia continued to be

Fig.110

Fig.111

Fig.112

Fig.112 Kilim, Ann Marie Hoke, Södra Kalmar Läns Hemslöjd, Sweden, circa 1950s. 6 ft 5 in × 10 ft 2 in (1.96 m × 3.1 m). Echoing the modernism of the early 20th century, the design of this Swedish kilim divides the field into smaller and smaller sections to create a multi-dimensional, compartmentalized design.

Fig.113 *Spegelnatt* carpet by Brita Molin, Sweden, circa 1971. 9 ft × 13 ft 7 in (2.74 m × 4.14 m). Titled "Night Mirror," this carpet by Brita Molin has needlework that is visible throughout the striking piece, drawing attention to the fabric itself in a way that is consistent with Swedish designs.

artistically and commmerically successful. It was mostly female artists, like Elsa Gullberg, Agda Österberg, and Thyra Grafström, who were famed for their contribution to modern Swedish design.

Modern designs were made as well, and a carpet from one of the most famous weavers, Märta Måås-Fjetterström (1873–1941), shows influences from the Vienna Secession movement. The workshop received regular commissions from the royal family and government, and won numerous prestigious international design prizes. The carpets and flatweaves, many woven with the designers' initials, are still highly valued today.

On Märta Måås-Fjetterström's death in 1941, Barbro Nilsson took over directorship of her workshop, which continues to produce. Fjetterström, and Nilsson, were pioneers: as early as 1923 Fjetterström created a sculptured rug that, without any colors, used blank areas to create a pattern. Extreme long-piled rugs were made, and from Finland came rya by Impi Sotavalta and Eva Brummer in which the colors of the outlines softly melted into each other.

Beside the artists' studios there was a flourishing cottage industry producing carpets and flatweaves. In the 1960s the success of Scandinavian-designed rugs led to them being taken up by large industry to weave mechanical rugs; but carpet-weaving kits were also offered to individuals. From a catalogue one would choose a design and the kit would include detailed instructions, the ground weave, and all the dyed wool necessary to weave it.

Fig.113

Bezalel

Fig.114

Fig.115

In 1908, in a romantic stone castle outside Jerusalem, the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts was established. It was endorsed by the Zionist Theodor Herzl and financed by German Jewish philanthropists; its aim was to provide training for Jewish craftspeople. It was hoped that it would stimulate greater economic activity and help forge a new Jewish identity. In the same way that William Morris wanted to fill the emptiness of industrial products with beauty and meaning, the Bezalel objects aimed to create a unique Hebrew style and a common cultural experience.

The school was named after Bezalel Ben Uri, the biblical builder of the tabernacle. Its most important products were carpets depicting scenes from the Holy Land, the Temple Mount, Herzl's cypress tree, the menorah and other Jewish motifs. Woven by young Mizrahi Jewish girls in the symmetrical knot, following Art Nouveau designs by artists educated in Germany and Austria, they were dyed with natural colors.

Common examples of the style include carpets with menorahs, the silhouette of Jerusalem, and cartouches with Hebrew writing. Many times the influence of the Vienna Secession can be felt. The colors are different from those found on Turkish and Persian carpets, albeit natural. The border designs have more in common with their Eastern counterparts, but can easily be told apart on account of the aforementioned occurrences of Hebrew writing.

Until 1916 many thousands of these carpets were woven. But in that year the school needed to close owing to famine, typhoid, and cholera. Individual designers and workers founded an independent commercial workshop in 1920 called Marbadiah. Initially rugs in Arts and Craft style were produced there, but more and more adaptations of classical carpets emerged over time, in which the Jewish motifs were more subtle. Other carpets took inspiration from Roman mosaics and other motifs of antiquity. After experiencing financial ups and downs the workshop finally had to close in 1931. A consequence of the school's relatively short period of output makes original weavings rare and therefore particularly valuable and desirable.

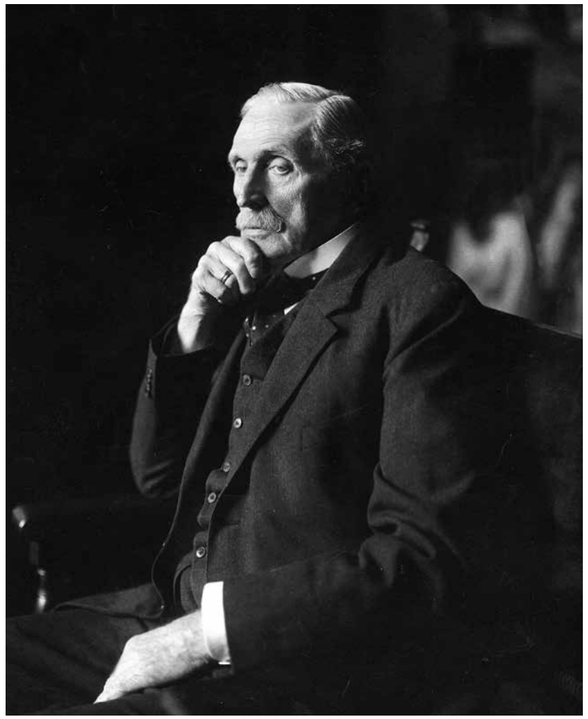
Fig.114 Bezalel carpet with garden design, Jerusalem, circa 1920. 15 ft 9 in x 17 ft 10 in (4.8 m x 5.44 m). Featuring a cleverly executed pattern of overlapping shapes, this Bezalel rug is rich in Judaic symbols, including the Torah and the Second Temple of Jerusalem.

Fig.115 Bezalel carpet, Jerusalem, mid-20th century. 3 ft x 4 ft 8 in (0.91 m x 1.42 m). Hebrew writing which translates to "Bezalel Jerusalem" appears on one end the design, making it clear as to the origin of the design of this rug.

Fig.116 Bezalel carpet, Jerusalem, circa 1910. 4 ft 9 in x 7 ft 9 in (1.45 m x 2.36 m). The graceful, sinuous vines snaking their way across the field of this carpet seem to owe a stylistic debt to European Art Nouveau.

Fig.116

The Eastern Carpet in the Western World



Sueddeutsche Zeitung Photo / Alamy Stock Photo

Fig.117

Fig.117 Portrait of Wilhelm von Bode, 1927. From a background in Renaissance painting, Bode went on to become the world's leading carpet scholar.

When a young Wilhelm Bode arrived in Vienna in 1871 he had just finished his PhD in art history, and was mainly interested in Renaissance paintings. But when he came to know the fashionable artists Hans Makart and Heinrich von Angeli, he was made aware of the carpets in the paintings he had been studying. These artists theorized that the tonality in Venetian and Dutch paintings might derive from Eastern carpets. Bode, meanwhile, would go on to become the world's leading expert on Eastern rugs.

Eastern carpets must have been known in Italy from at least the 13th century. Venice had stretched its influence over the Mediterranean, and after the sacking of Byzantium in 1204 copious treasures were brought back to the city. Unfortunately no detailed written source or artistic depiction of them survives from that period. Carpets appear sparingly in 14th-century paintings, but it is not until the 15th and 16th centuries that we find numerous rugs of mainly Turkish/Ottoman origin represented in art.

Rugs are shown in religious paintings (quite often under a Madonna), in altar scenes, over the table of rich merchants, under the feet of kings, or even hanging out of windows and over balconies. As in antiquity they were connected to divinity and power. Their owners could display them as evidence of international relationships, business acumen, and taste.

The most important Italian families of the time—the Sforzas of Milan, Montefeltros of Urbino, Dorias of Genoa, the Medicis of Florence, and of course the elite of Venice—all had paintings of family members that included depictions of carpets. In some cases these carpets still exist and can be traced back to those families. Precious textiles,

Fig.118 *Virgin and Child*, follower of Hans Memling, early 16th century. Metropolitan Museum of Art,1975.1.111, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975. In this devotional Renaissance painting, the parapet is decorated with a Turkish carpet, a real prestige item.

Fig.119

Fig.119 *Cardinal Bandinello Sauli, His Secretary, and Two Geographers*, Sebastiano del Piombo, 1516. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1961.9.37, Samuel H. Kress Collection. In this early Italian group portrait, a Turkish "Lotto" carpet covers the table.

"The large majority of carpets in Renaissance paintings are easily identifiable and we have surviving examples"

Fig.120

Fig.120 *A Maid Asleep*, Johannes Vermeer, circa 1656–1657. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 14.40.611, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913. In this domestic scene by the famous Dutch painter Vermeer, an exquisite carpet occupies the foreground.

tapestries, and carpets would bring color and warmth to the thick-walled rooms in the "palazzi" of the Italian upper class.

These items were expensive, luxurious tokens of status and wealth. By incorporating them into the paintings the families showed that they were fashion-conscious and had good taste. On the other hand the artists could demonstrate their artistic skills in recording the rugs truthfully, and proclaim their connections to the most important aristocratic families.

Some of the greatest artists of the time incorporated carpets in their pictures. Piero della Francesca, Caravaggio, Lorenzo Lotto, Hans Holbein, Giovanni Bellini, Domenico Ghirlandaio, and Jan van Eyck were among them. Bellini was himself in Constantinople, and we know of Lotto owning a "tapedo turchesco" (Turkish carpet). The large majority of the carpets in paintings are easily identifiable and we have surviving examples. As for those instances where we don't, we must never forget that we are left with only the tip of the iceberg, a remnant from what was once a vast export operation.

It was studying carpets in paintings that helped Wilhelm von Bode establish a basis for his first monograph on carpets, published in Julius Lessing's *Alt orientalische Teppichmuster*. It followed that the names of the artists were attached to certain types of

rug. That has been called “unhelpful” and “wrong”; but, as we do not know what these different types were originally called in either Italy or Turkey, it provides us with a handy, easily remembered nomenclature for the different rug types.

One important thing that Bode, Lessing, and later scholars discovered was the way that certain carpets appear in paintings from one era and disappear from later art. Small-patterned Holbein carpets, for example, appear first in a 1451 painting by Piero della Francesca, but are not found in any Italian paintings after the first half of the 16th century. They might have fallen out of fashion or were not being produced any more. But regional differences are important as well. During the Dutch Golden Age, the vast majority of carpets depicted in paintings are of 17th-century Persian origin, partly owing to a change in trade routes.

Up to this time most carpets had traveled west via Venice, which controlled trade with Turkey. But now luxurious weavings reached the royal households of Sweden and Denmark via the Russian river systems. Portugal controlled the sea routes to Persia and India, as would the East India Companies of England and the Low Countries in later years.

Sometimes the Western names for Eastern carpets can cause confusion. “Polonaise” is the appellation given to luxurious silk rugs, with silver and gold metal-thread brocading, from early 17th-century Persia. The reason is that the Polish aristocracy of the time had such an appetite for these extravagant rugs that the carpet itself became “Polish.” In the churches of the German-speaking Saxons in Transylvania we find numerous Anatolian carpets from the 16th to 17th centuries, of which one type is now called “Transylvanian.” At one time it was even assumed that these were made in Romania.

It has happened that a carpet or an entire group of rugs is called after the first Western owners. Therefore we know a certain Ming-dynasty carpet under the name “Tiffany carpet”; and a group of Safavid rugs with a similar structure is named after the collector George Salting, who bequeathed a carpet from the group to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London upon his death in 1909. An early 16th-century Ushak prayer rug with a singular design is called the Bode-Angeli rug, as Bode sold this rug to the painter in the 1870s.

Paintings are not the only means by which we know about carpet fashion in Renaissance Europe. Dowry lists and inventories of monasteries and palaces give insight regarding the prevalence of the Eastern carpet in the West. One of the largest collections in the 16th century was actually in England. As previously noted, in a 1547 household inventory of Henry VIII we find 444 rugs of “turquey makinge.”

From the late 17th century to the mid-19th century there seems to have been a lull in Western interest in Eastern carpets. This might have something to do with the dominance of French Baroque and Rococo taste during that period. France’s royal Savonnerie carpet manufacture in particular set the standards of fashion in the second half of the 17th century.

During the 19th century the declining fortunes of the European aristocracy brought many antique carpets from past centuries onto the market. Meanwhile, the rising wealth of the bourgeoisie rekindled interest in carpets and all things Eastern. The World’s Fairs in London, Paris, Vienna, and Philadelphia opened the eyes of ever-larger sections of the population to far-away countries and their products.

“By the 1910s, New York City and London had become the largest rug markets in the world”

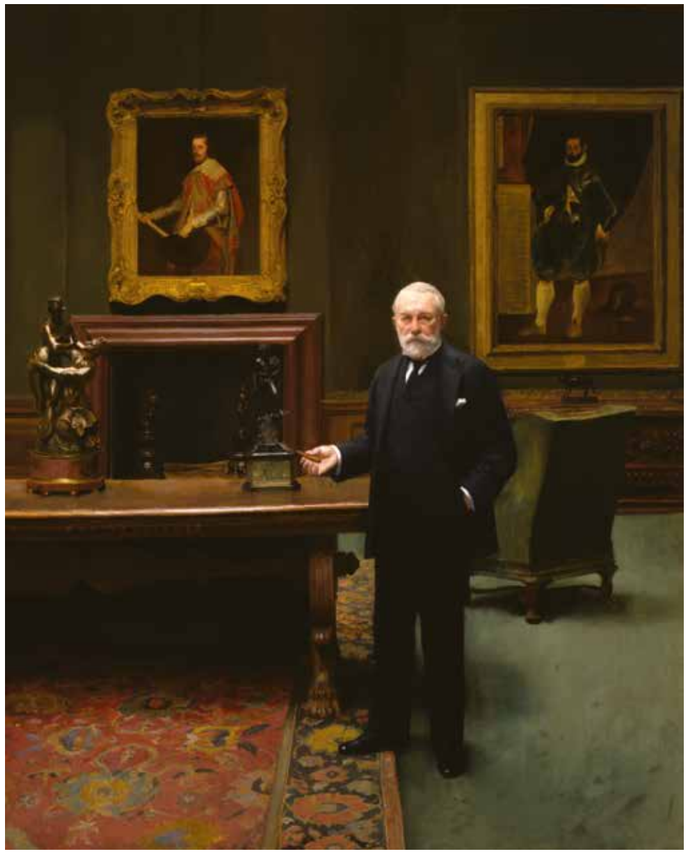


Fig.121 *Portrait of Mr. Frick in the West Gallery*, Sir Gerald Kelly, 1925. Frick Art & Historical Center, Pittsburgh, 1984.55. An elaborate carpet covers part of the floor.

Henry Clay Frick

Henry Frick was an industrialist, philanthropist, and art collector, who left his New York mansion and collection to the public. The Frick Collection is now a much beloved New York museum and home to two spectacular Mughal carpets among other works.

Early museum collections, like Lessing’s Deutsches Gewerbe-Museum in Berlin and the V&A in London, collected carpets mainly as models for inspiration for Western artisans and to enhance the quality of industrial production. This led to the ground-breaking 1891 exhibition in Vienna’s K. K. Österreichische Handels-Museum, presenting 429 carpets of which roughly a third were antique at the time. Alois Riegl, who led the textile department of the museum, contributed an essay to the monumental publication *Orientalische Teppiche 1892–1896*. In it, he not only appreciated the value of antique carpets as an inspiration for modern production, but also emphasized their art-historic importance. He tried to break down the separation between the “high arts” and “applied art” in general, and was especially enthusiastic about Safavid Persian court carpets and their refined aesthetics. This preference would prevail for half a century.

What used to be the privilege of aristocrats became a subject of interest to the middle classes. In a review of A. U. Dilley’s 1909 book *Oriental Rugs*, the writer claimed that, “Almost everybody nowadays owns rugs, has to buy rugs, and is more or less interested in knowing something about them.” At the time there was an emergence of carpet literature quite unlike the scholarly work of the last third of the 19th century. Titles like *The Practical Book Of Oriental Rugs* and *The Mystery Of The Oriental Rug* by Dr. G. Griffin Lewis from 1911 and 1914, Rosa Belle Holt’s handbook *Rugs, Oriental And Occidental* from 1901, and C. J. Delabere May’s 1920 *How To Identify Persian Rugs*, are aimed at a general audience. Their purpose is to educate about rugs, explaining how to buy and how to use them.

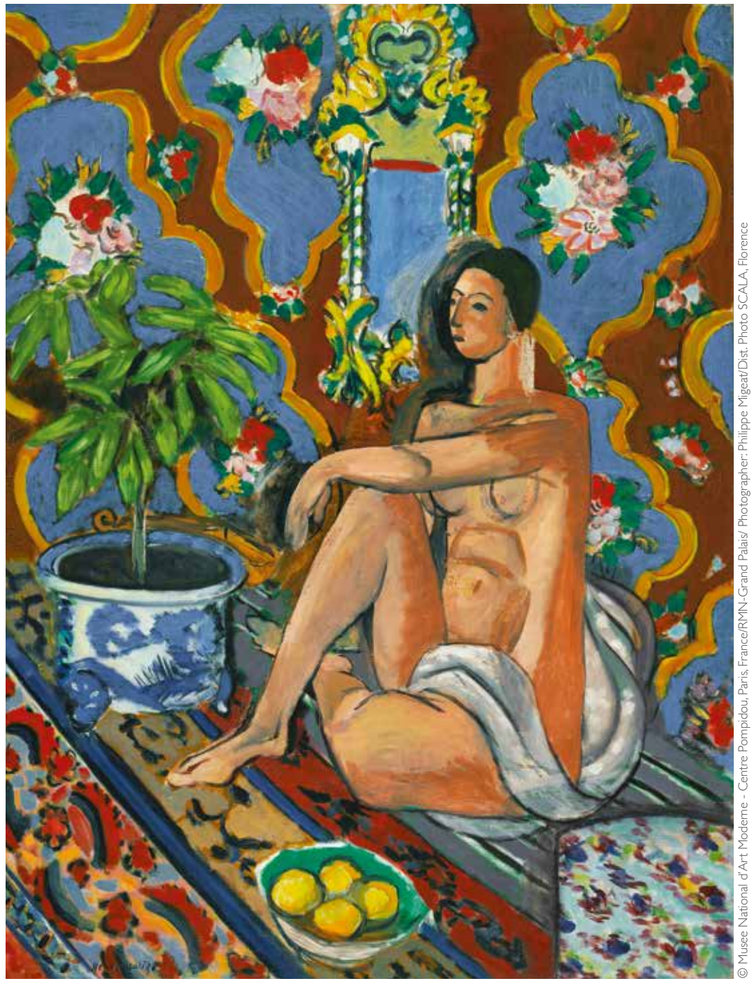


Fig.122

Henri Matisse

Henri Matisse, the French modern artist, was fascinated with carpets and textiles and looked to portray them in his works from the moment he picked up a paintbrush. His second ever picture was a reworking of the print on his box of paints: a still life arranged around a table covered with a carpet. Later in life, he became a devoted collector of textiles and carpets. In a letter from 1918, he specifically asks his wife to "take care of the rugs that are in the studio."

Consequently there was a rapid increase in production, especially in Persia. Griffin Lewis noted in 1911 that carpets worth over $5 million passed the customs house. The import duty of 50% plus dealers' profits provides further evidence of the high demand in the US. Furthermore he mentioned that New York City (with the possible exception of London) had become the largest rug market in the world. Prices then and now could vary greatly, from a couple of hundred dollars to tens of thousands.

Griffin Lewis notes that, "At the Marquand sale in New York City in 1902, a fifteenth century Persian rug was sold for $36,000."

Fig.122 *Decorative Figure on an Ornamental Background*, Henri Matisse, 1925. Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, Paris. Matisse often featured carpets and textiles in his paintings.

Senator William A. Clarke's collection had cost $3,000,000, and in 1909 H. C. Frick had paid $160,000 for eight small Persians. The second most famous carpet in the world after the Pazyryk, the Ardabil carpet from the shrine of Sheikh Safi al-Din, was valued at $30,000 at the time—and its sibling when sold in auction was as valuable as a Rembrandt painting in the same sale. These were enormous sums at the time.

A new aristocracy had emerged, formed by the big industrialists and tycoons that wanted to emulate the lifestyle of the old European families. Guided by dealers and museum people alike they followed the maxim of the German art historian Max Friedländer: "Owning art is about the only decent way of demonstrating wealth that good taste permits." Among the paintings, furniture, tapestries, and other antiques which they bought from impoverished castles and palaces were centuries-old precious carpets. The Rothschild, Rockefeller and Vanderbilt families, J. P. Morgan, Henry Clay Frick, Benjamin Altman and William A. Clarke collected during the gilded age the very best carpets in the world. Sometimes they bought at auctions, watched by a fascinated public; at other times they went to the most knowledgeable dealers of the era like the Duveen Brothers in New York and Paris, the Bernheimer family who provided for the German steel and coal magnates, and in London Vincent Robinson & Co., one-time owners of the pair of Ardabil carpets.

In Europe, middle-class and high-end collecting slowed dramatically after the First World War as it did in the US during the Great Depression. Nevertheless, in 1931 Arthur Urban Dilley published the highly acclaimed *Oriental Rugs and Carpets*, hoping to "extract fifteen dollars from the empty pockets of rug collectors." This led to the foundation of the very first rug society, the Hajji Baba Club of New York. The five founding members were soon joined by other enthusiasts. Among them was Joseph V. McMullan, who would go on to form one of the most influential carpet collections of the mid-20th century.

During the 1950s greater prosperity in the West led to increasing demand for contemporary production. Mostly this meant Persian carpets, which were still seen as superior to ones from other rug-producing areas, especially in Central Europe. Even though the Hajji Babas had an early interest in Turkmen weavings, in the wider world of antique collecting the focus was still on classical rugs from the 16th to 18th centuries. However, in the next decades two major changes would happen; they led to new heights in appreciation and scholarship.

First, ethnographic art lost the adjective "primitive." It became clear how much African and Pacific tribal art had influenced the masters of classic modern art. It was not just Makart and Angeli in Vienna who had been inspired by carpets and textiles; there was an entire culture of artists' studios decorated with Eastern textiles and rugs. Picasso never fully acknowledged the influence that African art had on him, but it became obvious to the world. Henri Matisse was born into a family of weavers in an area in northern France where many looms operated; the second picture the young artist painted included a rug. The relationship between textiles and Matisse's works was the subject of a major exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art in London 2005.

But the carpets in the artists' studios or draped on the famous couch of Sigmund Freud were not centuries-old courtly Safavid carpets or luxurious export items from the Ottoman Empire. They were tribal and village rugs, mainly from the 19th century. Previously they had been regarded as simple, primitive if not degenerate pieces of folk art. In the context of abstract art, tribal art, and a renewed fascination with the East—an environment in which jazz music played its own part in changing attitudes—the nomadic carpet became collectable as well.

The second change was that people born after the Second World War traveled on the

"The second most famous carpet in the world, the Ardabil carpet from the shrine of Sheikh Safi al-Din, was valued at $30,000 at the time—and its sibling when sold in auction was as valuable as a Rembrandt painting in the same sale"

Fig.123 The Clark Kerman sickle-leaf Vase-technique carpet, southeast Persia, late 16th–early 17th century. Museum of Islamic Art, Doha. The carpet sold for $33,765,000 at Sotheby's, New York, in 2013

"The Clark Kerman sickle-leaf carpet sold for a world record $33,765,000 at Sotheby's in New York in 2013. This is the highest price ever paid for any Islamic work of art"

hippie trail from Turkey through Iran and Afghanistan and became familiar with the design language of these countries. Non-travelers found all things Eastern just as fashionable. The Baby Boomer generation had disposable income. Among the many acquiring rugs were a smaller group who wanted to know more about the items they had purchased.

This interest ignited a flurry of activities: exhibitions, books and magazines solely dedicated to carpets; conferences, the foundation of many clubs and societies; and wider, more focused scholarship. At its peak during the eighties and nineties one could attend a major event in Europe or the US almost fortnightly, throughout the year. Dedication and enthusiasm for antique carpets and the wider textile arts were encouraged by a unique constellation of factors. The Baby Boomer's affluence and their openness combined with their acquiring extra time for study and traveling.

The many specialized books appearing included ones focusing on the tribes who wove carpets, the motifs and styles of rugs, and their particular functions. Among the magazines came HALI, founded in 1978, the longest-lasting and most important publishing venture in the field of carpets and textiles. As had occurred at the beginning of the century, the top of the market was controlled by high-quality dealers such as Eberhart Herrmann from Munich and London's Michael Franses. Like Arthur Dilley in 1909, they combined great knowledge about rugs with impeccable taste. In these years the most important antique fair in the world, the TEFAF in Maastricht, hosted a specialist textile group: the Textura, which showcased the major dealers of the time.

Prices for antique carpets and kilims rocketed. Highly important collections were formed and new discoveries were made. Some of these are now in museums like the de Young in San Francisco and the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which have received significant donations of rugs. But other collections have been dispersed to give new collectors a chance to join the field. This creates a buyers' market. The scarcest and most precious carpets are still making millions as they always have, but some other areas, like Anatolian kilims, now have entry prices that are more affordable.

In fact, Safavid Persian rugs are still topping the prices fetched at auction. Two well-preserved "Polonaise" carpets with immaculate provenance sold for £3,890,500 and £3,724,750 respectively at Christie's in London on 2 May 2019. A 17th-century Kerman "Vase" carpet fetched $6.9 million dollars there in 2010. The highest price paid for a carpet from the Ottoman Empire is £1,854,200 for a Mamluk rug at Sotheby's, London, 27 October 2020.

A resurgence of interest in Chinese art has also translated into exceptional prices being recored at auction. The Ming-dynasty "Tiffany" rug was sold for $1,710,00 at Christie's in New York on 14 October 2020. And a Ming-period dynasty wool-pile imperial throne carpet from the Wanli period (circa 1580), was sold Christie's, Paris, on 23 November 2021 for €6,881,000 ($7,741,975).

But the crown for the most expensive carpet ever goes to a carpet owned by Senator William A. Clark and deaccessioned from the Corcoran Gallery. The Clark Kerman sickle-leaf carpet sold for a world record $33,765,000 at Sotheby's in New York in 2013. This is also the highest price ever paid for any Islamic work of art.

Part 2:

Decorating with Rugs

Photo: Eric Piasecki

Introduction

Fig.1 Seating area in Julianne Moore's New York City Townhouse. Featuring a vintage Moroccan Beni Ourain rug.

Carpets have featured in human dwellings for thousands of years, providing warmth, comfort, and decoration. It is mind-blowing to think that they are no less popular today than they were in ancient times. In fact, there are several reasons particular to our current society that make handmade rugs more popular than ever.

Decorating with antique or vintage carpets is a sure-fire way of adding something truly unique to one's home. Antique carpets are one-offs—no rug is identical to another. In a world of mass production, that is a quality which cannot be overstated. With most of the objects that today surround us being made by machines, there is also something to be said for the allure of the handmade.

Antique and vintage rugs are not only woven by hand, they are created using natural fibers such as wool, silk, and cotton. With more and more people wishing to detox their home environments, this is an important consideration. Green materials constitute just one of the eco credentials of antique rugs; they are seriously sustainable objects. Buying an antique rug is a form of luxurious re-use. A well-made rug lasts a very long time—it's no coincidence that museums across the world display rugs that are centuries, and sometimes millennia, old.

Buying a handmade rug is not like buying furniture: it is comparable to buying a work of art, but one that has a practical use and can be lived with and experienced in a more holistic way than, say, a painting. Carpets are tactile objects and add texture to a space. As one can glean from these pages, the range of designs is almost unlimited. A rich weaving heritage across continents and centuries has led to a plethora of patterns, sizes, and colorways—enough to fit any style of decorating. From traditional to Art Deco to mid-century modern, eclectic and contemporary, there is a carpet to fit every space. This section provides interior inspiration with practical tips about how to decorate with carpets of any size and look. In the words of Edgar Allan Poe, "The soul of the apartment is in the carpet."

Making Antiques Look Fresh

Photo: Björn Wallander

Fig.2 Federal-style mansion for a pair of art collectors in Houston. Designed by Cullman & Kravis and featuring a 19th-century light-brown Tabriz carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

"We love finding ways to incorporate these pieces [family antiques] into our clients' homes in ways that feel modern and appropriate for today's style of living. In fact, the juxtaposition of traditional and modern creates an alchemy of old and new that makes a home more personal and interesting"
Ellie Cullman

It is a delicate balance to live with antiques without making a space feel like a period room at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Being judicious when picking antique furniture, lighting, and carpets can prevent a room from feeling precious and inhospitable. Mixing 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-century pieces with modern upholstered seating, curtains and light-colored walls brings a lightness and gracefulness to a setting filled with serious antiques.

For a Federal-style mansion for art collector clients in Houston, Cullman & Kravis designed a traditional environment that is graceful and elegant. A 19th-century light-brown Tabriz carpet sets the mood. The

Fig.3

intricate design is quieted by the soft palette that is echoed in the choice of the color of the walls and fabrics. Above the Grecian mantle hang Louis XVI-style gilt-bronze sconces and an abstract expressionist Hans Hofmann painting. Symmetrical sofas in a neutral silk, circa-1780 French fauteuils, gilt candlesticks, and a French chandelier lend a seriousness for an overall European patrician look.

For an Upper East Side Georgian-inspired apartment, Cullman & Kravis skillfully fused antiques and objects from different historical periods and culture for a modern apartment that evokes a sense of history while embracing modern works of art for a fresh look.

In the library, a late 19th-century sky-blue Tabriz carpet with a strong and distinctive design of strapwork vinery and palmettes blends well with the walls in a similar color.

Fig.3 Bidjar carpet, Persia, circa 1880. 11 ft x 17 ft 8 in (3.35 m x 5.38 m). The antique rugs from Bidjar are probably the most densely woven of the antique rugs we see today. They were made to last which is why they are often called the "iron rugs of Persia" or "three-generation rugs."

Fig.4 The library in a Georgian-inspired Upper East Side residence. Designed by Cullman & Kravis and featuring a late 19th-century Tabriz carpet with strapwork vinery and palmettes from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Photo: Eric Piasecki

Fig.5 The library in a Georgian-inspired Upper East Side residence. Designed by Cullman & Kravis and featuring a late 19th-century Tabriz carpet with an all-over design of scrolling and overlapping strapwork vines from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Photo: Eric Piasecki

“I never think that sticking slavishly to one period is successful, a touch of nostalgia adds charm. One needs light and shade because if every piece is perfect the room becomes a museum and lifeless”

Nancy Lancaster

Photo: Eric Piasecki

Fig.6 The living room in a Georgian-inspired Upper East Side residence. Designed by Cullman & Kravis and featuring a large Indian carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.6

Photo: Eric Piasecki

Fig.7 The living room in a Georgian-inspired Upper East Side residence. Designed by Cullman & Kravis and featuring a large Indian carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.8 Agra carpet, India, late 19th century. 13 ft 6 in x 17 ft 5 in (4.11 m x 5.31 m). Detailed palmettes and cloudbands interspersed with vines and birds cover the field of this exuberant Agra, surrounded by an elaborate cartouche border.

Fig.8

Caring for your carpet

An antique carpet is an investment and certain care should be taken to protect and maintain the condition. Most dealers will provide an appropriate rug pad for your carpet which will extend its life and provide extra protection. The general rule of thumb is that the pad should be about the same thickness as the carpet. Regular vacuuming, using a brushless attachment, is important in preventing dirt and crumbs from getting embedded into the bottom of the pile, which can speed up the wear of a carpet. For smaller rugs, vacuum both the front and backs to release as much dirt as possible. Rotate your carpet every year or two so that fading and wear is more even, and have carpets professionally cleaned every three to seven years. Address spills immediately, blotting with a damp cloth; but, for most spills, the lanolin in the wools acts as a natural repellent. Red wine, coffee, and animal stains require immediate attention as they are the most difficult to remove. And once you see a tear developing, have it repaired before it gets too large and too late. Keep a special eye on the ends and sides, as they are usually the areas that first show wear. They can be easily stabilized by a professional restorer.

Other colors from the carpet are mirrored in the drapes, pillows, the upholstered side chair in a red silk, and the large abstract expressionist painting by Kenneth Noland. An assortment of antiques, including a 19th-century Polish chandelier, a circa-1820 English Regency desk, and X-form stools add a fresh formality.

A large Indian carpet for the living room provides the backdrop and an element of cohesiveness for the layering of English, Continental, Asian, and American furniture and objects.

Photo: Steve Freihofer

Color Codes

Fig.10

Fig.9 Theodore Alexander showroom at High Point Market. Designed by Alexa Hampton and featuring a 19th-century Indian carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.10 Agra rug, India, 1880s. 10 ft 10 in x 14 ft 6 in (3.30 m x 4.42 m). The pops of color and large-scale patterns that are drawn against a happy blue background are sure to brighten any interior.

Choosing a color scheme for a room is the hardest yet most important decision to make when beginning an interior plan. Many professionals feel strongly about the 60–30–10 rule: 60% of the space uses a single, dominant color; 30% of a secondary hue; and 10% of an accent color. Many designers these days choose a neutral as their main color, but that is certainly a trend that can be deviated from. Thinking about warm and cool tones can also make a difference. For a dynamic and lively space use warm tones, like red, orange, and yellow. Conversely, blue, green, and purple, which are cool tones, create a soothing and quiet atmosphere. It is also important to note that certain woods and materials have innate warm and cool tones, and they should not be ignored.

For a showroom at High Point Market for Theodore Alexander, Alexa Hampton chose shades of red to be the dominant color. From the ikat-inspired, two-tone fabric on the armchair, the delightfully patterned wallpaper to the impressive architectural photograph by Celia Rogge, shades of red and pink predominate the vignette. By choosing an antique Indian carpet with an overall design of serrated red rosettes on a sky-blue field with an interesting abrash, Hampton continues the color theme of red but also introduces a secondary color of blue as an effective contrast.

Not only is exploring color theory helpful for picking colors for a space but it is immensely useful when looking at carpets. Unlike artists, rug weavers were never taught color theory; but they have an innate ability to pick colors that complement and contrast. Although the color wheel seems rudimentary, it is so instructive when exploring a color scheme both for a space and a carpet. The three basic schemes are analogous, complementary, and triadic.

Hues

Primary:

Red

Yellow

Blue

Secondary (adding two primary colors together):

Orange | Green | Purple

Tertiary (adding a primary and a secondary color):

Yellow-orange | Blue-purple | Red-purple

Yellow-green | Blue-green | Red-orange

Tint: adding white to a hue

Shade: adding black to a hue

Tone: adding gray to a hue

“He who wishes to become a master of color must see, feel, and experience each individual color in its endless combinations with all other colors”

Johannes Itten

Fig.11 Private residence in Hyde Park Gate, London. Designed by Kit Kemp @ Kit Kemp Design Studio. An intricately patterned carpet shines next to a chair upholstered in a traditional textile and a figurative wallpaper.

Getting busy

Although it sounds counterintuitive, a carpet with a busy pattern paired with a busy fabric becomes a neutral.

Fig.12

Abrash

Abrash in Arabic means mottled, and is the term used to describe a natural change in color or dye batch. This appears as horizontal striations across a carpet, or sometimes in sections, as a weaver uses a bundle of wool that was either dyed at a different time as the surrounding wool or has faded at a different rate.

Chicken or the egg?

Do you start with a carpet for a design and color scheme or is the carpet the final touch? Design professionals are divided on the topic and it really comes down to personal style, as both approaches can lead to a memorable and successful interior. By starting with a carpet, the mood is established and colors, both ones that are prominent and ones that are neutral, can be pulled for fabrics and wall colors. By starting with fabrics and furniture, introducing a carpet at the end of the project avoids an interior that is too matchy-matchy and coordinated, and can create a magical moment at the end of the project. But all agree: Either choosing at the beginning or the end, you really want an "aha moment" where the carpet seamlessly brings everything together and unifies the space.

An analogous model uses colors that are next to each other on the color wheel and are effective for a monochromatic look. Colors directly across from one another on the wheel are complementary and have a vital role as accent colors. For example, a room filled with shades of blue will be energized by a pop of orange in a pillow or artwork. The most dynamic and high-contrast pattern of color is triadic. By combining three colors that form a triangle on the wheel (i.e. green, orange, and purple) a harmonious scheme emerges without being monotonous.

Fig.12 Malayer carpet, Persia, circa 1920. 12 ft 4 in x 18 ft 8 in (3.76 m x 5.69 m). The light-blue background of this rug features a beautiful array of traditional Middle Eastern botanicals and florals, which would blend harmoniously with neutral or pastel walls.

Fig.13

Fig.13 Serapi rug, Persia, late 19th century. 12 ft 3 in x 17 ft 9 in (3.73 m x 5.41 m). Many of the striking colors chosen for this piece are designed to contrast with each other, drawing attention to the shape and composition of the motifs such as the geometric medallion.

"If one says 'red'—the name of the color—and there are fifty people listening, it can be expected that there will be fifty reds in their minds. And one can be sure that all these reds will be very different"

Josef Albers

Fig.14

Photo: Sean Myers

Fig.15

One cannot discuss color theory without talking about Johannes Itten (1888–1967) and his book *The Art of Color* and the more digestible companion book *The Elements of Color*. While teaching at the Bauhaus from 1919 to 1922, Itten stressed his Seven Color Contrasts theory. In his words, "Our sense organs can function only by means of comparisons. The eye accepts a line as long when a shorter line is presented for comparison. The same line is taken as short when the line compared with it is longer. Color effects are similarly intensified or weakened by contrast." His seven kinds of color contrast are:

1. Contrast of hue
2. Light-dark contrast
3. Cold-warm contrast
4. Complementary contrast
5. Simultaneous contrast
6. Contrast of saturation
7. Contrast of extension

Contrasts are what provide visual interest for an interior, a rug, or anything for that matter. Without it, our eyes have a hard time making sense and we get bored.

Fig.14 Scandinavian kilim by Agda Österberg, Sweden, mid-20th century. 5 ft 5 in x 8 ft 5 in (1.65 m x 2.57 m). Bold colors and geometric shapes work in unison to create a complex, multi-dimensional abstract design showing Agda Österberg's signature flair.

Fig.15 East London warehouse conversion. Designed by Rachel Chudley and featuring a salmon-colored Moroccan rug on a dark floor for a moody and sophisticated atmosphere.

Pairing a carpet with your floor

Dark floors look best with a carpet with saturated colors, while light-colored floors benefit from light-colored rugs. Likewise, light colors will brighten a small room with limited natural light, while a darker color will make a large room more intimate.

Pastel Pretty

Fig.16

Fig.16 Ushak carpet, Turkey, early 20th century. 12 ft x 15 ft (3.65 m x 4.57 m). The secondary colors of shell pink, burgundy, and ochre add visual interest and definition to the design of this rug.

Fig.17 Sitting room in a private residence in the US. Designed by Marissa Stokes of Jayne Design Studio, and featuring an antique Ushak rug with a pale-blue ground and salmon-pink border, from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Photo: Don Freeman

Fig.17

When one thinks of an 'oriental' carpet, what generally first comes to mind is a traditional red-and-blue Persian carpet. However, Turkish Ushaks are the complete opposite and can be found in a wide range of pastel colors, some unusual, supplying age and patina without the somberness associated with darker colors. Trends in the home often follow those in fashion; and just as pastels have been popular on the runway, so too have they been in interiors. Pastel-colored carpets and

Try it on

Whenever possible, try a carpet in a room before making a final commitment. Lighting can be very different in a showroom from how it is in your own home. Most dealers will let you keep a potential carpet overnight so that it can be seen in various lighting situations—morning, day, and evening. Think about what time of day you will mainly be using the room and make sure that the lighting accentuates the positive features. But the most important factor is to have an emotional connection to your new carpet and to have a wow moment when you place it on the floor for the first time.

Fig.18 Tabriz carpet, Persia, circa 1920. 14 ft x 19 ft 6 in (4.27 m x 5.94 m). The soft palette of this rug, with its colors largely having faded into pastel-like neutrals, gives a modern touch to the traditional craft of weaving.

Fig.18

"Creating a room is a bit like mixing a salad, you need contrasting but complementary flavours, textures, and colors to get a delicious mixture that flows"

Nancy Lancaster

The right direction

Be mindful of the light and dark sides of a carpet, if there is a difference. Generally speaking, the lighter side facing the entrance makes a stronger statement. If the carpet has a directional design, orient the design toward the view so it is as if you are walking into the design. Not unlike hanging a horseshoe open side up, it almost feels like bad luck if a directional carpet is upside down on a wall, or if your first glance at a carpet on the floor gives that effect.

Fig.19

Fig.19 Tapestry by Margareta Hallek, Sweden, circa 1963–1964. 4 ft x 5 ft (1.22 m x 1.52 m). Margareta Hallek was a Swedish artist who was born in 1932. Her abstract designs often feature bold patterns and brilliant colors. She was a student of Barbro Nilsson, whose textile sensibilities can be seen in Hallek's work.

upholstered furniture soften the hard edges of architectural elements and metal-based light fixtures.

In a sitting room for a client, designer Marissa Stokes for Jayne Design Studio highlights an antique Ushak carpet with a pale-blue ground and a salmon border. Secondary colors of shell pink, burgundy, and ochre add visual interest and definition to the design. The only pattern in the room is found on the carpet and decorative fireplace; by having the patterns not match but be dissonant, they counterintuitively neutralize each other and add visual interest without shouting. The solid pastel velvets and cotton used on the furniture focus your eye on the pattern of the carpet. This room, thanks to the carpet and the pale, soft colors, exudes a sense of calm and a peaceful ambiance.

The Power of Red

Photo: Steve Freihon

Fig.20 Interior in red created for Theodore Alexander. Designed by Alexa Hampton and featuring an Ushak rug with a striking red ground from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.21 Ushak carpet, Turkey, late 19th century. 16 ft 4 in x 20 ft (4.98 m x 6.1 m). The magnificent antique rugs from Ushak were favorites among the aristocrats in the early days of America. These rugs were often found in churches and other prominent public buildings.

Fig.21

The boteh motif

The boteh is a motif found frequently on Persian, Indian, and Turkish rugs, carpets, and textiles. Probably of Persian origin, this almond- or pine cone-shaped ornament spread to Europe via Kashmir shawls, taking on the "paisley" name. Often depicted in rows, sometimes offset, they come in a variety of colors and with different filler motifs. One rendition in particular is desired, woven primarily in southwest Persia—"mother and child," where a larger boteh shape encloses and embraces a smaller version.

Styling a room in one color can be an effective way of making a statement, and there is no color more powerful than red. The color of both Cupid and the Devil, red is passionate, active, and full of energy. Like wearing a bold red lipstick, an interior primarily in shades of red is sexy and romantic.

A crimson-ground Ushak carpet from circa 1920, with an allover design of paisley forms, effectively works with a scarlet-red velvet couch, a chair covered in a two-tone ikat-inspired fabric, and vermillion walls, for a stimulating and enveloping space. The black-and-gold faux bamboo cocktail table and octagonal, coffered, antiqued wall mirror with a gold finish add contrast and complete the sensual look created by Alexa Hampton for Theodore Alexander.

Not ready for an all-red interior but want to add some excitement? Add an energizing and attention-grabbing accent with a lamp, single chair or artwork that's predominantly in red. A pop of red is never a mistake.

Art Deco

Fig.22

Fig.22 Rug with five dragon-filled medallions, China, early 20th century. 10 ft 10 in x 17 ft 10 in (3.30 m x 5.44 m). The Art Deco period saw a fascination in America and Europe with decorative objects from other cultures, such as this carpet.

Fig.23 Living room in a private residence overlooking Central Park, New York. Designed by Coco Arnesen Design LLC and Kate Draper Design LLC and featuring a Chinese carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Photo: Mark Jenkinson

Fig.23

Taking its name from the Exposition international des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes held in Paris in 1925, the Art Deco style influenced architecture, the visual arts, furniture, and the decorative arts in the late 1920s through the 1930s. Noted for its sleek geometric and symmetrical shapes, the movement embraced innovation, the power of machines and the "modern." Streamlined forms take precedence based on geometric formats like triangles, circles, and octagons, decorated with chevrons, zigzags and parallel lines. Furniture and objects typically use highly polished wood, lacquer, marble, and metal, with stylized decorative motifs in exotic materials like ivory, vellum, sharkskin, and straw marquetry. Colored terra cotta, polychrome mosaics, aluminum leaf, and bronzed glass provide interest and texture. Ideal for city living, the style still resonates today.

The simplified forms and decoration of the style are exemplified by an elegant Art Deco-

Fig.24

Fig.25

Fig.24 Study in a private residence overlooking Central Park, New York. Designed by Coco Arnesen Design LLC and Kate Draper Design LLC and featuring a Tibetan carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.25 Antique carpet, Tibet, circa 1920. 7 ft 8 in x 11 ft 7 in (2.34 m x 3.53 m). A singular, fierce scrolling dragon centers an ivory field while the border provides pops of unadulterated, cheerful color.

inspired apartment overlooking Central Park in Manhattan. Kate & Coco, a collaboration between Coco Arnesen Design LLC and Kate Draper Design LLC, chose an early 20th-century Chinese carpet with a solid, soft-beige ground with five decorative foliated dragon-filled medallions in ink blue. Setting the tone for the living room, the gentle curve of the metal railing of the foyer banister leads your eye to the fluted architectural elements, metal-based furniture, and clean lines of the furniture. The two club chairs exhibit a typical form of the period and lack decoration, allowing the fabric to provide the visual interest—especially since the floral forms echo the shape of the central medallion on the Chinese carpet. It seems fitting that Kate & Coco chose a Chinese carpet as a backdrop to the Art Deco elements in the room, as there was a fascination with the “exotic” and non-Western cultures during the 1920s and ’30s, particularly African, Aztec, Pre-Columbian, and Chinese.

In the same apartment, the designers chose for the study a Tibetan carpet from the 1920s with a similar aesthetic to the living-room carpet. A singular, fierce scrolling dragon centers an ivory field that harmonizes well with the simple lines of the furniture. A mix of mid-century Scandinavian and Art Deco-style furniture works because of the fluid lines and lack of carved decoration or applied embellishments, allowing the carpet to provide the visual interest.

During the first half of the 20th century, several important European interior and furniture designers created handmade carpets both to coordinate specific projects and to sell in department stores, like Printemps in Paris. Emile-Jacques

Ruhlmann, Süe et Mare, Pierre Chareau, and Paule Leleu were among the most prolific designers. Some designers, such as Ivan da Silva Bruhns, were so successful in their carpet-making ventures that they founded their own carpet workshops.

For a home in Quogue, Alexandra Loew used a circular Paule Leleu carpet from circa 1940 for an Art Deco-inspired round office. Built on the carpet, the furnishing scheme incorporates a Max Ingrand (1908–1969) reverse-painted mirror, a 1930s writing desk, vintage rosewood armchairs, and leather club chairs. The innovative pattern of the carpet provides a rhythm to the circular room, but also playfulness and whimsy, characteristics of the Art Deco period.

Paule Leleu (1906–1987) was the daughter of Jules Leleu, a sculptor, designer, and owner with his brother, Maurice, of an interior design firm in Paris. After joining the family company as a young girl, from 1936 onwards Paule oversaw the textile department and created more than 500 designs for carpets, fabrics, and wallpapers. She was fond of a round format for her carpets and excelled at the play between floral and geometric motifs. She is known for a diamond diaper trellis motif, and in this example it takes on a Spirograph-like form.

While we are on the topic of Art Deco, we can't ignore Chinese Art Deco carpets. Bright and cheerful, colorful and bold, Chinese Art Deco carpets can suit a variety of interiors from LA contemporary to grandma chic. The names Nichols and Fette are synonymous with Chinese rugs from the 1920s and 30s. In 1924 Walter Nichols introduced the "Super Chinese Rug" woven at his looms in Tianjin and distributed through the Pande Cameron Company. They are known for their density, sturdiness, and distinctive colors made from German dyes. A typical Nichols carpet has a solid colorful (think emerald green, aubergine, and raspberry) ground with sparse flowers in diagonal corners. They were extremely popular at the time and it is said that at one point 3,000 a month were sent to the United States. Helen Fette, an American missionary in China, set up the Fette-Li Company with a Chinese partner in Beijing, export of their carpets beginning in the early 1920s. In contrast to Nichols products, Fette carpets are noted for a floppy, more pliable handle, with colors and designs more in line with earlier Chinese prototypes. Small twists of design, such as oval fields and the use of solid grounds, lent a more modern feel to Fette carpets, suiting interiors of the time.

Fig.26 Office in a private residence in Quogue, New York. Designed by Alexandra Loew and featuring a circular Paule Leleu carpet from circa 1940 from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.26

Fig.27

“To create something that lasts, the first thing is to want to create something that lasts forever”

Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann

Fig.27 *Cosmos* rug by Maison Leleu in a 1930s interior. Archive of the Musée des Années 30, Boulogne-Billancourt.

Fig.28 Art Deco rug by Maison Leleu, France, circa 1920. 9 ft 10 in x 9 ft 10 in (3 m x 3 m). The Art Deco movement was an answer to the overstated designs of the Victorian era. This piece by Jules Leleu uses the kind of refined color combination that was often seen at the beginning of the era.

Fig.29 Art Deco rug by Maison Leleu, France, circa 1920. 8 ft x 11 ft 5 in (2.44 m x 3.48 m). For this rug, Leleu chose three different motifs to be used throughout the field. The rectangular and square shapes are used as a point of contrast to the flowing floral shapes.

Art Underfoot

Fig.28

Fig.29

Mid-Century Modern

Louisiana native Lee Ledbetter, a New Orleans-based architect and interior designer known for seamlessly mixing a modern aesthetic with traditional elements, creates environments that are livable and visually interesting. To Ledbetter, the original form takes precedence and informs his design decisions.

For his former residence, a 1953 home in the Riverbend district of New Orleans, Ledbetter respected the original architecture of California architect John Ekin Dinwiddie (1902–1959). Although Dinwiddie trained and worked in Northern California for the majority of his career, he designed several homes in New Orleans while he was the dean of the School of Architecture at Tulane University from 1953 until his death. Ledbetter retained and enhanced the mid-century modern vernacular of the structure, but made the interiors unique, lively, and personal, with a mix of mid-century furniture, contemporary photography, and ceramics, with the occasional antique statement piece.

Anchoring the living space is a subtle, 100-year-old Ushak in light aubergine and camel that marries a mixture of furniture: a pair of circa-1955 lounge chairs by Terence Harold Robsjohn-Gibbings for Widdicomb; an Edward Wormley for Dunbar sofa (circa 1950); a custom-made coffee table; and a pair of Louis XVI-style armchairs. The gestural painting by New Orleans artist George Dunbar and pair of Peter Lane ceramic sculptures provide texture and offset the neutral and predominantly solid fabrics. Not only does the Ushak carpet provide some pattern but it also softens and breaks up the expansive cork flooring while delineating the seating area.

Photo: Mark Roskams

Fig.30 Private residence designed by architect John Ekin Dinwiddie in New Orleans. Interior designed by Lee Ledbetter and featuring an Ushak rug in light aubergine and camel from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.30

Fig.31

For a corner of the same space, Ledbetter uses a Khotan rug from East Turkestan to define a smaller conversation area against a wall with multiple drawings and photographs arrayed salon-style. Two vintage Billy Haines swivel chairs are perched on the rug, while another Robsjohn-Gibbings sofa sits just off of it. The patina of the Khotan and its wear contrast effectively with the smoothness and evenness of the floors and walls. The rose-red field color supplies a needed contrast to the neutral ceramics, chairs, curtains, and artwork. The bright-yellow inner border plays with the lemon in the artwork, spine of the book on the shelf, and citron pillows in the adjacent main seating area.

For his more recent home, Ledbetter renovated an International-Style house nestled among Victorians in the Tulane University district of New Orleans. Designed in 1961 and completed in 1963 by noted architect Nathaniel "Buster" Curtis, Jr. for his own family, the home is composed of three brick-and-glass pavilion-like structures connected by stylish outdoor spaces and long glass hallways, all ensconced in steel columns and oversized arches. Curtis's firm, Curtis and Davis (architects of the

Fig.31 Ushak carpet, Turkey, circa 1900. 12 ft 9 in x 15 ft 10 in (3.89 m x 4.83 m). The gracefully stylized willow trees in this rug give it a stately and formal feel.

Fig.32 Private residence designed by architect John Ekin Dinwiddie in New Orleans. Interior designed by Lee Ledbetter and featuring an Ushak rug that pairs beautifully with the artwork, walls, and upholstery fabrics.

Fig.32

Photo: Mark Roskams

Photo: Mark Roskams

Fig.34

iconic Louisiana Superdome), embraced the International Style but with a sense of place, frequently using the Southern vernacular of courtyards and arcades for cross-ventilation, providing relief from the hot and steamy Louisiana climate.

The same Ushak carpet makes an appearance in the main pavilion but feels entirely different against the white-brick wall and terrazzo floors. Here again, Ledbetter artfully mixes French antiques, mid-century classics, contemporary ceramics, and a mixed-media work by Robert Helmer. The floral field of large palmettes and floral vinery adds pattern to the solid powder-blue fabrics on the brass armchairs, neutral Ultrasuede on the vintage Florence Knoll sofa, and leather on the Louis XVI-style armchairs.

Ledbetter's use of the same Ushak in two of his homes in New Orleans proves how versatile carpets can be. A carpet can renew and refresh its look depending on the surrounding architecture and design elements. Although the size of a carpet can bring limitations, reusing a carpet in a new room or home can be an exciting challenge and can renew your appreciation of its ability to beautify a space.

Mid-century modern, a period roughly lasting from 1933 until 1965, describes an architectural and design movement in the United States that evolved out of the International Style and Bauhaus movements promoted by Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius in Europe. Coinciding with the post-Second World War boom, the mid-century modern style in architecture, interiors, and products uses clean, simple lines, little embellishments, and truth to materials, such as exposed concrete, wood showing its natural, unpolished grain, and exposed steelwork. The overarching leitmotif is a

Fig.35

Figs.33 & 34 Private residence designed by architect John Ekin Dinwiddie in New Orleans. Interior designed by Lee Ledbetter and featuring an early 20th-century Khotan rug from East Turkestan from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.35 Khotan carpet, East Turkestan, early 19th century. 4 ft 5 in x 9 ft 10 in (1.35 m x 3 m). While most East Turkestan rugs were woven in wool, this piece has a silk pile, which lends an unrivaled texture.

Photo: Pieter Estersohn

Fig.36

Art Underfoot

“A lot of younger people are buying their furniture at big-box stores and not buying antiques. They’re missing out on bringing a sense of authenticity and warmth to their homes. When you decorate with antiques, you’re continuing something that came out of your culture. Plus, antiques are more sustainable, and they’re well built”

Lee Ledbetter

sense of bringing the outdoors in, with large windows and open-floor plans allowed by the use of post-and-beam construction. Function and form are equally important. Geared toward the average American family, the overall impression is less formal than the International Style. Joseph Eichler (1900–1974) and his company, Eichler Homes, epitomize the mid-century modern aesthetic via housing developments in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, with their open floor plans, glass walls, skylights and atriums. “Eichlers” have stood the test of time and continue to be some of the most coveted houses on the market today, as are homes built by architects and developers such as Keck and Keck, Mies van der Rohe, and Richard Neutra. If this is your style, a pilgrimage to Palm Springs to see one of the largest arrays of mid-century homes is a must.

Fig.36 Private residence designed by architect Nathaniel “Buster” Curtis, Jr. in the Tulane University district in New Orleans. Interior designed by Lee Ledbetter and featuring an Ushak rug in light aubergine and camel from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Stephen Kent Johnson/OTTO (designed by Mike Rupp)

Fig.38

Fig.37 Seating area in a Gramercy Townhouse. Designed by Mike Rupp and featuring a mid-century modern carpet by Märta Måås-Fjetterström.

Fig.38 Carpet by Märta Måås-Fjetterström AB, Sweden, mid-20th century. 6 ft 9 in x 9 ft 6 in (2.06 m x 2.9 m). This kilim has the pared-back geometric patterning for which Märta Måås-Fjetterström and her workshop became known.

Fig.39 Carpet designed by Barbro Nilsson and woven by MMF, Sweden, mid-20th century. 6 ft -6 in x 8 ft 3 in (1.98 m x 2.51 m). This carpet bears Barbro Nilsson's initials in one of the corners. The palette is earthy, giving an organic feel to the weaving.

"The connection between technique and form must never be broken"

Märta Måås-Fjetterström

Märta Måås-Fjetterström

An influential figure in the history of both Swedish weaving and modern carpet design, Märta Måås-Fjetterström (1873–1941) played a key role in reinventing the tradition. In 1905 she joined Malmöhus läns Hemslöjdsförening in Malmö, a newly established institution intended to preserve the Swedish weaving tradition and encourage women to design and weave rugs. Ten years later, Måås-Fjetterström would open her own atelier in Båstad, which continues to produce carpets and remains famous today. Some of her flatweave tapestry designs draw on Scandinavian mythology, folk tales, and mystical imagery. Others recast traditional motifs within a scheme of modernist geometry. MMF carpets, as they are often known, are highly sought after by those favoring a mid-century modern aesthetic.

Fig.39

21st-Century Grand Tour

Fig.40

The Grand Tour

It was customary in the 17th and 18th centuries for young upper-class men, particularly from the British nobility, to embark on the Grand Tour, an educational rite of passage. It could be as short as a few months to as long as several years, with visits to France, Switzerland, and Italy with mandatory stops in Paris, Geneva, Florence, Venice, Rome, and later Pompeii. With a guide or tutor (cicerone), the focus would be on improving a Classical education with an emphasis on specific works of art and music. Prestige would be further enhanced with the souvenirs brought home: coins and medals, books, works of art, and scientific instruments, all to be displayed and shown off in the traveler's library or drawing room when back home.

Inspired by Venetian architect Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) and Palladian architecture, the Georgian period of architecture flowered first during the 17th century before the English Civil War, and then again in the early 18th century. The English aristocrat Lord Burlington (1694–1753) was its biggest proponent and embraced this neoclassical style in his projects, primarily for his own London home, Burlington House (now the Royal Academy of Arts) on Piccadilly, Chiswick House Villa in Middlesex, and Tottenham House in Wiltshire. Based on classical design features from the ancient Roman and Greek Empires, the Georgian style relies on strict symmetry, especially for window and door placement, decorative window headers, entrance embellishments such as pediments, hip roofs and facades covered in brick, stone, or stucco. Neoclassical motifs such as Vitruvian waves, egg and dart, Greek key, swags and

Fig.40 Amritsar carpet, India, late 19th century. 15 ft 10 in x 23 ft 3 in (4.83 m x 7.09 m). A large carpet can serve almost as an architectural feature, creating zones within a home.

Fig.41 Private residence in New Jersey. Designed by Ellie Cullman of Cullman & Kravis and featuring a 19th-century Indian carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Photo: Eric Piasecki

Fig.41

The National Trust Photolibrary / Alamy Stock Photo

Fig.42

“Even if it’s not a style of architecture or period you like, a decorator has to have a feel for a house’s personality and try not to fight against it. I like to get the juice out of a house and not spoil it”

Nancy Lancaster

Fig.42 The drawing room at Peckover House, Wisbech, England. Peckover House is a glorious example of a Georgian home. The Peckover family resided in this townhouse for over 150 years.

festoons, and beaded borders proliferate in architectural elements and the decorative arts.

Throughout the 18th century the Georgian style was extremely popular in America, signifying strength, formality, and prosperity. Drayton Hall in South Carolina, the Redwood Library in Newport, Rhode Island, and of course Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello in Virginia, are all exceptional examples of 18th-century Georgian architecture in America.

For a client in New Jersey, Ellie Cullman and her partners at Cullman & Kravis elegantly outfitted a recently built Georgian-style home sensitively designed by architect James Paragano. Faithfully following Palladian and Georgian cues, the home is grand without being splashy. Georgian details for the formal living room include large-arched glass doors symmetrically flanking a Louis XVI marble mantel, while a pair of Neoclassical Italian chandeliers center each of the two distinct and balanced seating arrangements.

Cullman chose a large (23 ft 3 in x 15 ft 10 in) 19th-century Indian Amritsar carpet that ties the two seating groups together. Having an allover design of alternating rosettes and palmettes separated by serrated leaves, the honey-colored field and dusty rose accents of the carpet serve as a jumping-off point for the tonal upholstery with delicate patterns in similar colors. The twelve-and-half-foot-tall walls have an unusual gold foil fused into the plaster that further plays with the gold undertones

Fig.43

Fig.43 Agra carpet, India, late 19th century. 6 ft 8 in x 9 ft 10 in (2.03 m x 3 m). The seafoam field and the red motifs contrast to create a rug that is both soothing and noteworthy.

Fig.44 Library in a private residence in New Jersey. Designed by Ellie Cullman of Cullman & Kravis and featuring a 19th-century Indian carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

of the carpet. By using a monochromatic approach to color in this room, the carpet contributes to but doesn't overpower the formal yet warm ambiance of the room that glows and sparkles at night.

Interesting objects and furniture culled from a variety of countries and periods give a Grand Tour feeling for the library in the same home. Cullman chose a light-colored Indian carpet with a whisper of design to contrast with the paneling of anigre wood. A French chair is paired with a circa-1780 Italian desk, while over the Louis XVI marble mantelpiece is an atmospheric 19th-century painting by American landscape painter George Inness. Sprinkled in between are a Picasso bird-form vase and Japanese Meiji-period vase that echo each other. Although the carpet has an intricate design, because of its low-key palette it acts as a neutral backdrop and ties together the disparate objects.

Furnishing a library

In contrast to the living room, which is the outward projection of oneself, the library is an inward one. A library is private, and maybe even a bit mysterious, and calls for leather-bound books, precious objects, comfortable seating, and personal mementos. The right carpet for the library is one that adds warmth, seriousness, and invites the viewer in to have a seat with a good book.

Fig.44

East Meets West

Fig.45

Fig.46

Fig.45 Khotan carpet, East Turkestan, circa 1900. 7 ft x 13 ft 5 in (2.13 m x 4.09 m). In classic antique Khotan rug style, this carpet features rounded medallion designs.

Fig.46 Khotan carpet, East Turkestan, late 19th century. 4 ft x 7 ft 2 in (1.22 m x 2.18 m). Based on a traditional animal pelt design, this rug features fields of flowers and formally arranged geometric patterns.

Fig.47 Reading alcove outfitted with a range of silk pillows, some using antique textiles, San Francisco Showcase, 2010. Designed by Tucker & Marks and featuring an East Turkestan rug with a wan-fret border from the Nazmiyal Collection.

It was quite fashionable during the late 19th century to have a room in your home dedicated to Middle Eastern taste, to signal that not only were you economically successful but also that you possessed sophistication and worldliness. After trips to Turkey, Egypt, and Syria, English painter Sir Frederic Leighton brought back textiles, pottery, and architectural elements to fill his home in Holland Park, culminating in his dramatic "Arab Hall" highlighted by 15th- and 16th-century Damascus tiles.

In America, Cornelius Vanderbilt II (1843–1899), grandson of Commodore Vanderbilt, enlarged his mansion at 1 West 57th Street in 1892 to include a two-story

Photo: Matthew Millman

Fig.48 Dining room with a reading alcove for a fictional collector, adventurer and explorer, San Francisco Showcase, 2010. Designed by Tucker & Marks and featuring rugs from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Photo: Matthew Millman

"Layering is key. Exquisite patterns add sophistication and intricate details create depth and interest"

Suzanne Tucker

Two is company

Using two carpets to define an architectural space can be very striking, especially when the space is not an exact rectangle or square. Here, Tucker & Marks made great use of a larger Khotan carpet, paired with a smaller rug in a similar palette. By matching the length of the smaller rug with the width of the larger carpet, the pairing is harmonious and accentuates unique architectural details.

Photo: Andy Wainwright

Fig.49

Olana State Historic Site

Painter Frederic Church designed his estate overlooking the Hudson River Valley with friend and architect Calvert Vaux. A combination of Victorian, Persian and Moorish styles, it is furnished with objects from the artist's extensive travels. For many years, the Churches called their property "the Farm." Isabel Church, Frederic's wife, is sometimes credited with coming up with the name Olana, which stems from a city referred to as "Olane" in Strabo's *Geographica*, one of the "treasure-storehouses" on the Araxes River with a view of Mount Ararat. It seems probable that the Churches felt an affinity between this historic site and their own Orientalist masterpiece.

Moorish Smoking Room. Perhaps Vanderbilt was inspired by Leighton or by the artist Frederic Church, who employed Persian and Moorish elements in his 1872 mansion Olana on the Hudson River; but it is also likely that inspiration came from the Moroccan exhibit at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial. Desiring a replica of a room in the Alhambra, Vanderbilt and his architect sent their agent to Spain to make on-the-spot drawings that resulted in an extravagant and over-the-top homage to the Moorish masterpiece.

Fast forward to today, and the Moorish and Ottoman trend is still a popular one. For the 2010 San Francisco Showcase, Tucker

Fig.49 Painter Frederic Church's estate Olana, which overlooks the Hudson River Valley, is a prime example of Orientalist architecture in the US. A combination of Victorian, Persian, and Moorish styles, it is furnished with objects from the artist's extensive travels.

Fig.50 Silk Haji Jalili carpet, Tabriz, Persia, late 19th century. 15 ft 8 in x 24 ft 6 in (4.78 m x 7.47 m). Flowerhead motifs within a lattice of leaves cover the field of this silk carpet.

Fig.50

Fig.51

& Marks conceived a dining room with a cozy reading alcove for a fictional collector, adventurer, and explorer—in other words, a modern-day polymath. A shapely sofa in the bay window, outfitted with a range of silk pillows (some in antique textiles), sits perfectly on an East Turkestan rug with a wan-fret border and a pale yellow field with a diaper trellis of stylized leopard spots.

A pair of Syrian octagonal tea tables add an extra layer of a Middle Eastern aesthetic. The curtains, in Tucker & Marks "Maharani" fabric in champagne and pewter, are a reinterpretation of 18th-century Indian wood block prints for the French market.

Whether East or West, one object or many, any room that celebrates a multicultural mix of objects is a success.

Image Professionals GmbH / Alamy Stock Photo

Fig.52

Fig.51 Kurdish carpet with shrub design, Persia, 18th century. 12 ft 8 in x 18 ft (3.86 m x 5.49 m). A lattice filled with shrubs within diamonds covers the field of this Kurdish rug; even the lattice itself appears to be a part of the overall vegetal design.

Fig.52 Artist Frederic Leighton's travels inspired both his art and his home, Leighton House, in London. This is most obvious in the so-called Arab Hall, a room containing Islamic art from all periods.

New American

Fig.53

Fig.53 Bakhshaish carpet, Persia, late 19th century. 11 ft 3 in x 13 ft 5 in (3.43 m x 4.09 m). Highly stylized and geometricized palmettes and rosettes float on a pale-blue field in this Persian tribal carpet.

Fig.54 Bedroom in a private residence overlooking Oyster Bay, Long Island. Designed by William Cullum of Jayne Design Studio and featuring a 19th-century Bakhshaish carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

The Colonial Revival movement in America reached its zenith in the 1930s, and versions of it have persisted ever since. A puritanical ethos is a common thread: simplified use of one, usually pale, paint color, delicate wallpaper and fabrics, wainscoting, and uncomplicated woodwork and architectural detail. Well-placed antiques of functional form add character and rigor: Windsor chairs, candle stands, tea tables, and sewing cabinets.

Like Ralph Lauren for American fashion, Jayne Design Studio has mastered a specific American look for interiors. The principal, Thomas Jayne, received a master's degree in American material culture and decorative arts from Winterthur Museum's program,

Photo: Don Freeman

Fig.54

Photo: Tria Giovan

Fig.55

Fig.55 Hallway in a private residence in New Canaan, Connecticut. Designed by Paul Stuart Rankin, who carefully restored this Colonial Revival home to its former glory.

"I like old things, but I want them to look fresh—and that often comes from looking again at the old sources and rethinking it in color, shape and juxtaposition"

Thomas Jayne

Fig.56

Fig.56 Beshir rug, Afghanistan, circa 1880. 10 ft 6 in x 14 ft 6 in (3.2 m x 4.42 m). This carpet has a charming design in its field that can almost be likened to contemporary illustration work.

followed by stints in the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Historic Deerfield, and the J. Paul Getty Museum. Senior designer William Cullum's credentials are from the College of Charleston in both Art History and Historic Preservation, with further study from the Victorian Society in America. Because of their strong academic backgrounds in American history and design, a sense of place is a strong arc to both men's narratives.

Influenced by the blue waters of Oyster Bay, Long Island, William Cullum conceived a soothing bedroom with hints of history for his clients. Richard Cameron, the architect of the project, rebuilt the original polygonal room, which surprisingly is the base for a minaret-style lighthouse. It is inspired by the nearby surviving architectural remains of Laurelton Hall, the 19th-century home of Louis Comfort Tiffany that tragically burned down in 1957.

The late 19th-century Bakhshaish carpet establishes the palette and adds a dash of the unexpected. Highly stylized and geometricized palmettes and rosettes float on a pale-blue field that complements the light-blue quilted bedspread and reading chair. The shape of the Fortuny ceiling light fixture mimics the shape of the palmettes in the field of the carpet, while the upholstery on the 1830 Scandinavian side chairs and the curtains in Lee Jofa's Althea add contrast and visual interest. Although the overall perception of the room is thoroughly modern, nods to a Colonial past are found in the glass dolphin-form candlesticks, the antique Federal mantel and paneled wall and arched moldings. Recalling the great Long Island estates of 19th-century robber barons, the northern Italian walnut and parcel-gilt assembled cassone under the windows add not only history but a perfect spot for books and decorative objects. By including a "buck"-legged side table and a pieced vintage batik quilt, Cullum reminds us not to take things too literally while still staying true to place.

Urban Chic

Fig.57 Gramercy Park apartment, New York. Designed by Alexandra Loew and featuring an unusual Khorasan carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection .

Photo: William Waldron

An urban chic interior is one that fuses elements of contemporary, modern, and industrial designs to create a space with a cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and hip feel. Perfect for city living and smaller spaces, it is softer and more comfy than an industrial space; more unconventional and edgier than a contemporary one. It is still welcoming and interesting, often using artwork to unify the space and make it more personal. Neutral colors, often dark, and solid fabrics are preferred, but, far from boring, they can bring a richness by texture alone. Plain walls with accents of exposed beams and pipes also reinforce the reminder of an urban setting. If there were one word for urban chic it would be "handsome." Handsome in a James Dean sort of way.

For this Gramercy Park apartment, Alexandra Loew found inspiration in the home of British Architect Sir John Soane (1753–1837). Like Soane, her client, “The Collector,” is an erudite and insatiable collector with an interest in books, pottery, dinanderie (objects in brass, copper or bronze), and works on paper, all in great quantities. The urban chic look excels in this space with the unexpected. The carpet, a very unusual and atypical Khorasan carpet from northeast Iran, belies its origin with its two-toned minimalist design. The subtle and refined paisley forms are precisely placed on a neutral field with an undulating cocoa-brown border. The movement of the wave-

Fig.58

Fig.58 Khorasan carpet, Persia, early 20th century. 8 ft x 11 ft 3 in (2.44 m x 3.43 m). The subtle and refined paisley forms are delicately placed on a neutral field with an undulating cocoa-brown border.

Fig.59

Fig.59 Carpet depicting a pond, China, circa 1910. 9 ft 2 in × 9 ft 4 in (2.79 m × 2.84 m). This elegant weaving carries abstract depictions of clouds, rippling water, flowers, and fish.

Fig.60 Study created for San Francisco Decorator Showcase. Designed by Kristen Pena of K Interiors, San Francisco. Moody yet inviting, this space, in which the carpet plays an integral part, embodies the idea of urban chic.

"I strive to create an element of the unexpected in polished environments. Like a beautiful mess that surfs the line between good taste and decadence"

Alexandra Loew

like border is echoed in the curve of the standing lamp, the ovoid ceiling light fixture, and bulbous vase on the fireplace. The theme of neutral colors and the lack of decoration in the carpet are continued in the choice of fabrics, bibelots, and artworks in the room. Texture reigns: exposed metal pipes, upholstered leather settee, brass objets and smooth, unadorned porcelain vases. The pairing of atonal main elements in the room, including the carpet, with compelling works of art both fine and decorative, creates a space that is elegant and sophisticated.

Photo: Brad Knipstein

City Sanctuary

Fig.61

Fig.61 Ziegler Sultanabad carpet, Persia, circa 1900. 13 ft × 17 ft 7 in (3.96 m × 5.36 m). Sultanabad was an important carpet-weaving centre during the 16th century, when weavers created carpets for the Safavid courts. Many of these designs formed the foundation of Persian carpet design and inspired other pieces.

Fig.62 Penthouse on the Upper East Side, New York. Designed by Elissa Cullman and Lee Kavanaugh of Cullman & Kravis and featuring a Sultanabad carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Apartment living calls for certain qualities in an interior—comfortable furniture that is easy to reconfigure and an economy of space that allows for a creative approach to at-home living and entertaining. By comparison with living in the country or suburbs, the focus is less on the outside (unless you are lucky enough to have a view of a park) and more on architectural details, interesting treatment of walls, showing off artwork, and defining spaces by carpets.

For a 1927 duplex penthouse apartment on the Upper East Side, decorators Elissa Cullman and Lee Kavanaugh of Cullman & Kravis created a city sanctuary. Spaces are dedicated to quiet living, but with the

Fig.62

Photo: Joshua McHugh

Fig.63

Fig.63 Dining room in a penthouse on the Upper East Side, New York. Designed by Elissa Cullman and Lee Kavanaugh of Cullman & Kravis and featuring a Sultanabad carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Choosing carpets for adjacent spaces

When choosing multiple carpets that are in nearby rooms, it is important to consider the flow of carpets within the home from room to room. Using the same type of carpet—for example, all Heriz carpets—establishes a look that is united and connected. Likewise, a dominant color could be the thread that holds it all together. For rooms that open up to each other, a striking concept is to flip the border and field color of the two carpets next to each for a dynamic juxtaposition. If you are the type that wants more diversity, stick with a similar character, motif, or tonality.

Fig.64

Fig.64 Sultanabad carpet, Persia, circa 1900. 15 ft 2 in x 24 ft 8 in (4.62 m x 7.52 m). This rug evokes feelings of summer abundance and a time when all of the flowers are in bloom.

flexibility and ability to entertain both intimately and for a large crowd. Each piece of furniture is picked with a specific function—nothing is superfluous here. By covering upholstered pieces in classic neutrals in sumptuous fabrics, there is an understated but elegant vibe throughout the apartment. Antique furniture and objects are incorporated, each with interesting details and accents allowing for some unexpected notes.

The stunning scarlet-ground, late 19th-century Sultanabad carpet has an allover design of scrolling leafy tendrils and

Fig.65 Mohtashem Kashan carpet, Persia, late 19th century. 9 ft 2 in x 12 ft 2 in (2.79 m x 3.71 m). Woven by the atelier of the master weaver Mohtashem in Kashan, this carpet combines grand scale, fine detail and exceptional material quality.

Fig.66 Library in a penthouse on the Upper East Side, New York. Designed by Elissa Cullman and Lee Kavanaugh of Cullman & Kravis and featuring a Tabriz carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.65

rosettes. It provides the perfect base for a living room with multiple seating areas and uses. The Franz Kline painting over the fireplace with a surround by Jamb is the focal point of the room and the center of the symmetrical back wall that allows the rest of the room to break free. The two main seating groups live together harmoniously and allow a certain amount of flexibility depending on the number of guests in attendance. This is a perfect example of a colorful carpet in an overall design working ideally with neutral seating furniture that can be easily moved for a variety of entertaining situations without interrupting the design of the carpet.

In the adjacent dining room, the designers create a harmonious look by choosing a compatible red-ground Sultanabad carpet with a complementary design and colorway. The overall design of the carpet is the optimal backdrop for a classic pedestal dining table and Regency-style chairs. The Venetian-plaster walls in a terracotta color blend with the carpet for an intimate and enveloping ambiance. Both the Robert Motherwell painting over the mantel and the expressive Lee Krasner echo the movement of the scrolling vinery and stylized floral forms in the carpet for a dynamic dialogue between the walls and floor.

The library in the apartment calls for an afternoon of reading or an intimate cocktail party. Based on a 17th-century "Polonaise" Isfahan design, the circa-1900 Tabriz carpet boasts an interesting range of colors that offsets the wood paneling and leather sofa. The crimson in the carpet is picked up by the velvet accent pillow on the sofa and the stripes in the armchair, while the blues in the carpet are echoed in the gestural painting by Louise Fishman. Although the Tabriz is from a different region in Iran from that of the Sultanabads in the living room and dining room, many of the same colors are repeated, building on a cohesive look for the apartment.

"The soul of the apartment is the carpet"
Edgar Allan Poe

Photo: Joshua McHugh

Contemporary Cool

Fig.67

Fig.67 Interior highlighting Alexa Hampton's 2019 collection with luxury furniture brand Theodore Alexander. Designed by Alexa Hampton and featuring an Ushak carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Some may think that an antique carpet in a contemporary setting would be incongruous, but, on the contrary, an antique carpet can provide a sense of stability and warmth to the whims of modern objects, colors, and textures. The most successful antique carpets in a contemporary setting are those that subtly blend with the wall color, furniture, and fabric. An antique carpet provides relief and a juxtaposition to the sharp edges, shiny materials, and high gloss used in contemporary interiors. Sometimes you need to be reminded of the wisdom of the old to make the new feel youthful. The carpet may not be the first thing that your eye is drawn to but, upon closer inspection, you realize that it ties the whole room together.

New York City-based Alexa Hampton learned the trade from one of the best in the business: Mark Hampton, her father. When he passed away in 1998, she took over the business, Mark Hampton LLC, and continues to delight with her interiors and collaborations with various partners including luxury furniture brand Theodore Alexander.

In a stylish space highlighting her 2019 collection with Theodore Alexander, the salmon and celadon velvet fabric on the lush sectional sofa and side chairs sits coherently and restfully on a salmon-field Ushak carpet with a subtle geometric overall design of stylized palmettes. Dating to 1900, this Ushak assuredly inhabits an environment that is decidedly contemporary; it is surrounded by, on the wall, the colorful, atmospheric, and

Fig.68

painterly photographs of Lucia Engstrom, a matte gold lamp, and lacquered étagère topped by a bevel-edged faceted octagonal mirror. The tone-on-tone geometric wallpaper of concentric circles echoes the repetitive design of the carpet. The long convivial sofa hugs the wall, allowing the carpet to show itself off under the dramatic lighting. By complementing the palette of the sofa and its celadon accents, the carpet becomes the supporting actor giving the stars of the show the limelight.

A living room is the social and outwardly facing part of a home and shows the personality of the owner. It should be comfortable but at the same time hold the most cherished and dear works of art and furniture. In essence, it is the soul of the house and sets the stage for the rest of the rooms. A carpet is integral to a living room—it provides personality, but also a little formality.

Ushak carpets have lively colors and highly stylized designs that can make a

Fig.68 Ushak rug, Turkey, circa 1900. 14 ft 7 in x 17 ft 6 in (4.45 m x 5.33 m). This Ushak carpet in timeless pastel tones has a subtle geometric overall design of stylized palmettes.

Fig.69 Interior highlighting Alexa Hampton's 2019 collection with luxury furniture brand Theodore Alexander. Designed by Alexa Hampton and featuring an Ushak carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.69

Fig.70

Ushak carpets

Antique Ushak carpets, despite their age, have a contemporary feel and are often used successfully in ultramodern interiors. Ushaks tend to feature a softer palette; because of their loose weave with large knots, the design motifs are magnified and highly graphic.

Fig.71

Fig.72

Fig.70 Ushak carpet, Turkey, circa 1900. 20 ft x 26 ft 6 in (6.1 m x 8.08 m). This antique oversized area rug features an array of pleasing persimmon tints, from the solid burnt-orange outer border to a variety of lighter ground dyes.

Fig.71 Ghiordes carpet, Turkey, circa 1880. 15 ft 5 in x 17 ft 4 in (4.7 m x 5.28 m). This rug features an allover design with a repeating abstract flower and an organically amorphic approach to the famed paisley design pattern.

Fig.72 Geometric Ushak carpet, Turkey, circa 1900. 12 ft x 14 ft 3 in (3.66 m x 4.34 m). The most common interpretation of this rug's central motif, an eight-pointed star, is a connection to the four compass directions, or between man, eternity, and the cosmos.

space uniquely your own. For two Theodore Alexander showrooms set up as living rooms, Alexa Hampton picked late 19th-century Ushak carpets each with light-blue grounds and overall designs primarily in reds and oranges. The carpets are the jumping-off points, and colors from the carpets are subtly repeated in the sofas, walls, pillows, and accessories for an integrated look.

Embracing the unexpected can result in a dynamic and dramatic space. For a vignette,

Unify with a carpet

With the two couches placed completely and symmetrically on the carpet, they act as a pair even though they are of different shapes and upholstered in completely different styles of fabric.

Fig.73

Fig.73 Ushak carpet, Turkey, circa 1880. 11 ft 8 in x 14 ft (3.56 m x 4.27 m). Colors from a carpet can be pulled out for furnishings such as couches, walls, pillows, and accessories for an integrated look.

Fig.74 Living room from a Theodore Alexander showroom interior. Designed by Alexa Hampton and featuring an Ushak carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Photo: Steve Freihon

Fig.74

Photo: Steve Freeth

Fig.75

Asymmetric arrangement

Here, the furniture is placed asymmetrically, with the larger pieces of furniture placed around the perimeter of the carpet. Using a carpet without a center medallion allows for more freedom and creativity when deciding where a piece of furniture should sit.

Fig.75 Living room from a Theodore Alexander showroom interior. Designed by Alexa Hampton and featuring an Ushak carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.76 Ushak carpet, Turkey, circa 1920. 12 ft 10 in x 18 ft 2 in (3.91 m x 5.53 m). This intricately patterned Ushak carpet can be used as a centerpiece or unifying element depending on the choice of other furnishings.

"Interiors should be unique and personal, and bring joy. They should be keyed to the person inhabiting the space"

Alexa Hampton

Fig.76

Photo: Steve Freihon

Figs.77 & 78 Interior highlighting Alexa Hampton's 2019 collection with luxury furniture brand Theodore Alexander. Designed by Alexa Hampton and featuring an Agra carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.79 Agra carpet, India, late 19th century. 9 ft x 12 ft (2.74 m x 3.66 m). Daring to go for an unusual color combination in your carpet will result in a truly unique interior.

Turn it around

Rotating a carpet every two to three years will extend its life and prevent uneven wear. Although it isn't an easy task to move large pieces of furniture, removing furniture every once in a while is also a good opportunity to make sure that there isn't moth activity happening under them, since moths thrive in dark places.

showcasing furniture she designed for Theodore Alexander, Alexa Hampton chose an antique Indian Agra carpet with an unusual color combination of eggplant, chartreuse and a light pink. Taking a break from the conventional by using a carpet with colors not often seen together, Hampton not only meets the challenge, but excels.

Color cues are taken from the carpet with the chartreuse-leather-covered bench combined with the dark-salmon textured walls for an updated preppy pink and green color combination. Further pops of color are channeled from the carpet in the bright yellow pillow and visually arresting contemporary photographs. Instead of using traditional dark-wood furniture, an element of surprise is introduced by the unorthodox use of white for the bedside table and chest of drawers.

Whether it's an out-of-the-ordinary color combination or an anachronistic piece of furniture, lamp, or artwork, the unpredictable stimulates the senses and increases the drama and personality of the

Photo: Steve Freihon

Fig.78

Fig.79

Photo: Steve Frehon

Fig.81

room.

In yet another space for Theodore Alexander, New York designer Alexa Hampton created a classic and dramatic interior. Enhancing the striking showroom is a late 19th-century Lavar Kerman carpet that brings the setting together seamlessly. The dominant colors in the room are shades of a claret red employed on both sofas, the velvet curtains, and the fabric-covered walls, picking up the same hue in the scrolling vinery of the minor borders and the outlining of the floral motifs in the field of the carpet. The carpet strengthens the color statement with just the right amount of claret and creates a dialogue between all the elements in the room, tying it all together.

Although the carpet has an intricate and some might say busy design—because of the ivory field and density of design—in a strange way it actually becomes a neutral anchor for the high drama of the rest of the room. It has a quiet elegance, especially as it is the lightest element in the room. The shape of the scalloped cutout in the Greco-Roman-inspired cocktail table perfectly echoes the main claret motif in the field of the carpet. Although the carpet displays an allover design, the main four-pointed star elements are off-center on the carpet; this is hardly noticeable because of the placement of the two seating areas.

The unusual architectural photographs by Celia Rogge heighten the high-gloss effect of metallic accents on the neoclassical inspired mirrors and polished brass trim on the furniture, all juxtaposing with the muted carpet. The key to using an antique carpet in a high-drama space is to think of it as a neutral backdrop for the theatrical performance of the rest of

Eco credentials

An antique or vintage carpet is the ultimate eco-friendly element of a room. Not only does an old carpet provide patina and character, but it also benefits the environment and reduces landfill when compared with other types of carpeting. It's recycling at its very best.

Fig.81 Lavar Kerman carpet, Persia, early 20th century. 11 ft x 12 ft (3.35 m x 3.66 m). A seemingly "busy" design can become a neutral if it is paired with other objects with intricate patterns or strong colors.

Figs.80 & 82 Interior highlighting Alexa Hampton's 2019 collection with luxury furniture brand Theodore Alexander. Designed by Alexa Hampton and featuring a Lavar Kerman carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Timeless Elegance

Photo: Pieter Estersohn

Fig.83

Suzanne Tucker of the San Francisco interior design firm Tucker & Marks has reconfigured and elegantly designed a full-floor apartment in the heart of San Francisco's Pacific Heights. The building, a 1924 Beaux Arts structure designed by the prolific and prominent early 20th-century architect Conrad Alfred Meussdorffer, overlooks Lafayette Park and has enviable city views.

For the dining room, Tucker chose a late 19th-century Angora Ushak carpet that has an overall silky and lustrous sheen due to the wool from the native Turkish Angora goat. The pale-blue ground of the Ushak echoes San Francisco Bay in the distance while the shades of coral and light browns in the oversized palmettes blend with the color of the walls and upholstered Queen Anne-style armchairs by Gregorius Pineo. Tucker effortlessly combines the classic with the contemporary using a warm and glowing palette as the unifier. Classical pieces such as the Biedermeier chandelier and the oval Directoire dining table sit comfortably with

Fig.83 Dining room in a private residence in a Beaux Arts building, Pacific Heights, San Francisco. Designed by Suzanne Tucker of Tucker & Marks and featuring an Ushak carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.84

Fig.84 Sultanabad carpet, Persia, circa 1900. 12 ft x 16 ft 10 in (3.66 m x 5.13 m). In this rug, the artist used line to draw the eye to the various elements of the design and create graceful sweeping curves.

Fig.85 Dining room in a private residence in a Beaux Arts building, Pacific Heights, San Francisco, Designed by Suzanne Tucker of Tucker & Marks and featuring an Ushak carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

"Incorporating something beautiful and old in a room transforms it in a subtle way and gives a welcomed tension between the old and new"

Suzanne Tucker

the modern Richard Serra drawing and gilded-bronze Fletcher Benton sculpture. The Venetian etched-mirror panels flanking the windows were designed by Valerian Rybar and Jean-François Daigre for the previous owner, and add an old-world charm without being dowdy.

Tucker's attention to detail combines with her exhaustive knowledge and appreciation of antiques and the decorative arts. This allows for elegant and refined spaces while also revealing the personality of the owner, without sacrificing the comfort of modern living.

The Timeless Elegance Style is that moment of transition from old to new. It's the play of feminine and masculine; soft and hard; shiny and matte; and refined and relaxed. It never overpowers, nor is it ornate or extravagant. For the classic, the salient qualities are symmetry, perfect scale, importance of function, and overall balance. The cues from the "new" are richness of materials, use of similar hues, and restraint from the use of pattern and over-decoration. The whole makes for a sophisticated yet understated interior that is still luxurious and visually compelling.

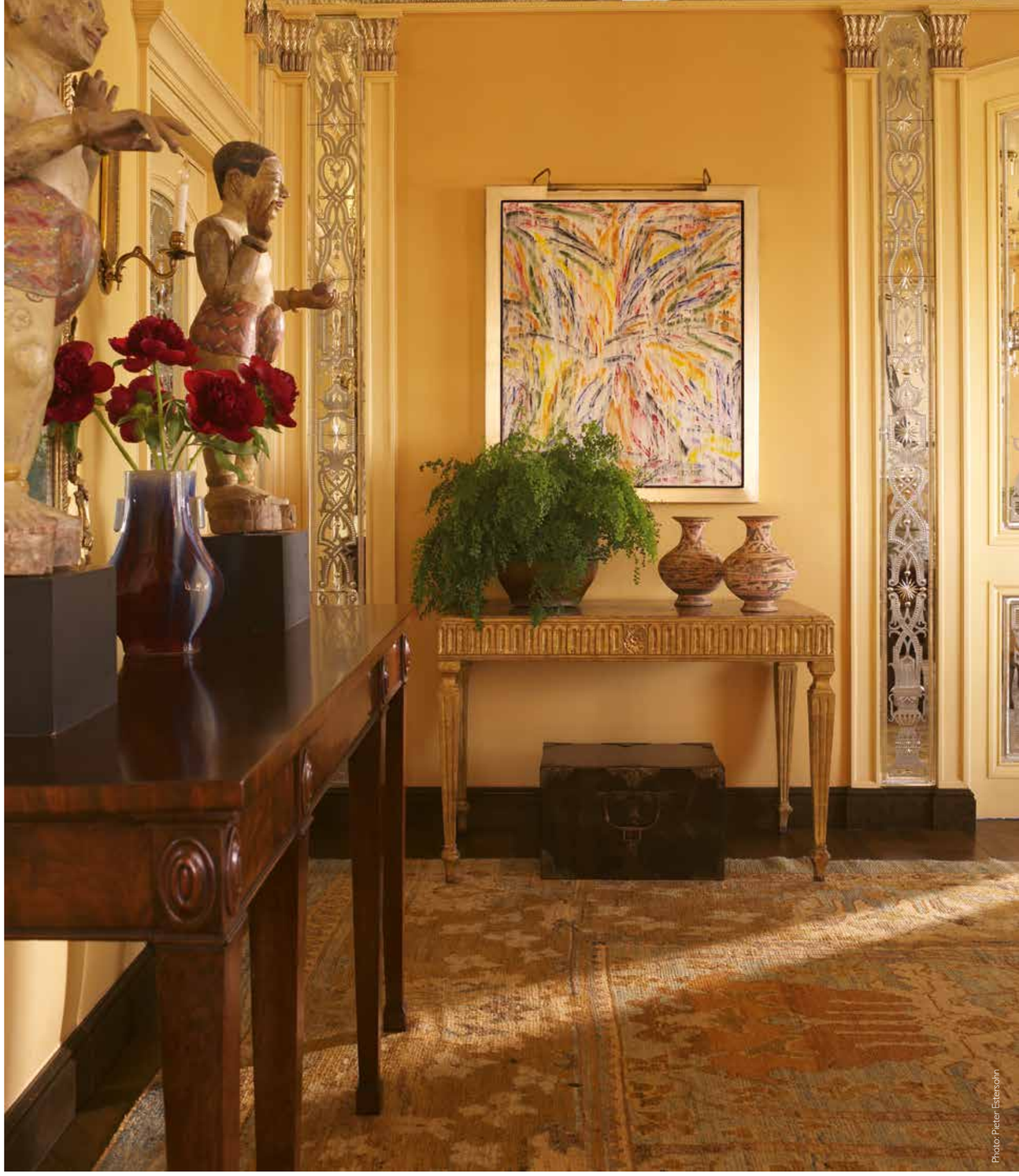


Photo: Peter Estersohn

Fig.85

Embracing the Eclectic

Fig.86

"It's about making a collage, taking elements and putting them together in an artistic way"
Thomas Jayne

Fig.86 Sumakh carpet, Caucasus, first quarter of the 20th century. 13 ft x 15 ft 6 in (3.96 m x 4.72 m). A geometric pattern can bring order or a sense of fun, as seen in this cheerful pattern.

Fig.87 Living space in a private residence, Long Island. Designed by Egan Seward of Jayne Design Studio and featuring a sumakh carpet with a geometric pattern from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Although an eclectic interior may look haphazard, several important ingredients are necessary for it not to look jumbled and disjointed. Defined by a mixture of style, period, and origin, this look shows off furniture and objects that relate and contrast by way of textures, colors, and pattern, while still inexplicably creating a coherent look. To avoid a messy and chaotic appearance, choose a neutral as the base with a consistent accent color to help to unify the individual parts. Simple walls in either white or a single color that relates to the accent color will give a place for your eye to rest. Experiment with different types of texture—smooth, rough, soft, glossy, and hard.

Fig.87

Fig.88

Fig.89

Fig.90

“Be daring, be different, be impractical, be anything that will assert integrity of purpose and imaginative vision against the play-it-safers, the creatures of the commonplace, the slaves of the ordinary. What is elegance? Perhaps the world’s second-worst crime is boredom; the first is being a bore”

Cecil Beaton, *Self Portrait with Friends*

Fig.88 Artist Bonnie Saland’s Poppy Peak studio and home in Pasadena, California, is a striking example of an eclectic interior, combining a vintage rug with upholstery fabrics inspired by antique textiles.

Fig.89 Kashan carpet, Persia, circa 1900. 9 ft x 13 ft (2.74 m x 3.96 m). The warm tonal variations of purples and crimson are subtly offset by a soft shade of blue against the white ivory color of the background in this silk carpet.

Fig.90 Ottoman embroidered textile, Turkey, 17th century. 4 ft 8 in x 7 ft 1 in (1.42 m x 2.16 m). Embroidered textiles such as this striking example were highly regarded throughout the history of the Ottoman Empire.

Going global

For a global twist on the eclectic style, instead of a plain wall, use a busy wallpaper and add objects from recent travels—baskets, sculptures, and pillows in unusual fabrics.

By its very nature, the eclectic style is playful and experimental, so don’t be afraid to be bold and show some personality and quirkiness.

For his matriarch client in her Centre Island family compound on the north shore of Long Island, Egan Seward of Jayne Design Studio mixed disparate objects and furniture for a playful and eye-catching great room. A late 19th-century sumakh carpet, with a geometric repeat, anchors and defines the main seating arrangement, giving intimacy to the expansive space. A sense of whimsy is introduced by the contemporary Bocci light fixtures of multi-color glass spheres that pop against the stark white-paneled wall. Contemporary abstract paintings are uniquely mixed with mid-century chairs, an Indian style filigree mirror, and a cloisonné side table. Your eye jumps from one interesting object to the other, but the plain grid-like walls and floor-to-ceiling windows allow for a pause to take it all in.

A Matter of Size

Fig.91

Fig.92

Fig.91 Dining room in a private residence. Designed by Marissa Stokes of Jayne Design Studio and featuring a late 19th-century Sultanabad carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection.

Fig.92 Sultanabad carpet, Persia, late 19th century. 11 ft 7 in x 16 ft 6 in (3.53 m x 5.03 m). This Sultanabad carpet has a very wide coral border with large elements and interesting corners, with lots of restful ivory in the field.

Picking a carpet in the right size will make all the difference to how a carpet will look in your home. A carpet that is too big for a room will not only look like awkward wall-to-wall carpeting but it won't lay flat and will develop creases over time. Using a too-small carpet will create an off-balance space and make the room feel smaller than it is. The ideal is to leave at least a foot of exposed floor on all four sides.

Dining rooms require special attention. The biggest no-no is to have a carpet where the chairs sit half on and half off the carpet when they are pulled out for seating. Chairs should sit firmly on the carpet with about two feet from the backs of the chairs, when

Fig.93

pushed in, to the edge of the carpet. And if your table extends, make sure that the carpet is long enough to accommodate it at its full length. Often, the carpet is the only pattern in the room, while the border and corners of the carpet will be most prominent, so be certain that they catch your eye.

For this dining room in a private residence, Jayne Design Studio adhered to these unspoken rules for carpets. The late 19th-century Sultanabad has a very wide coral border with large elements and interesting corners, with lots of restful ivory in the field. The dining chairs have ample space when pulled out and there is extra room at the ends for when the table is fully extended. But, more importantly, the carpet sets the tone, literally, for the room. Colors are expertly pulled from the carpet for the

Medallion vs. overall pattern

There is no rule as to where and when to use a center medallion carpet or an overall-pattern one, so it really comes down to preference. Some feel that everything needs to be centered on and around a medallion, but there are plenty of success stories where the medallion is basically ignored. Once parts of a medallion are covered, it really becomes all about color and pattern and less about the design. On the other hand, exposing the medallion or having it under a glass table makes for a powerful look. For many, an overall pattern affords welcome flexibility and freedom.

Fig.93 Heriz carpet, Persia, circa 1900. 12 ft 6 in x 17 ft 6 in (3.81 m x 5.33 m). The warm reds, brilliant pinks, soft blues, earthy browns, and ivory give this exciting rug a vibrant character.

Fig.94 Kerman carpet with hunting scene, Persia, circa 1880. 14 ft 8 in x 22 ft 8 in (4.47 m x 6.91 m). Depicting a Safavid-period hunting scene, this Kerman carpet was woven in about 1880, during a period in which both Persian weaving traditions and Safavid imagery enjoyed a revival.

Fig.94

Fig.95

wall color, the coral curtains, the glossy sideboard, and the suede-covered chairs. The backs of the chairs are covered in an exuberant fabric and it almost looks as if they are pieces of the actual carpet!

For a living room, the front legs of sofas and chairs should rest firmly on the carpet with at least six inches of rug on either side of the furniture. For a cohesive look in a large room, make sure that the carpet accommodates all the legs of sofas, chairs, and tables of a central seating area. For pieces of furniture sitting against walls, the carpet can either stop short of the front legs or lay half-way underneath, but not all the way to the wall.

There is a lot of flexibility when choosing a carpet for a bedroom. One large carpet can do the trick as long as at least two feet of it extend on either side of the bed, as well as at the foot of the bed. There is nothing better than starting your day with bare feet on a lush wool carpet. If hiding most of a large carpet underneath the bed

Fig.96

Fig.95 Antique rug, China, early 20th century. 3 ft x 5 ft 8 in (0.91 m x 1.72 m). The trellis pattern of this rug brings a pleasing sense of symmetry to a room.

Fig.96 Bedroom in a private residence. Designed by Lee Ledbetter and featuring a Khotan carpet and a Chinese carpet from the Nazmiyal Collection. This interior is an excellent example of how two different carpets can be brought together to great effect.

Fig.97

Fig.97 Khotan rug, East Turkestan, circa 1920. 4 ft x 8 ft (1.22 m x 2.44 m). The tan and blue tones in this rug have a calming quality that is perfect for a bedroom.

makes you uneasy, choose smaller rugs to surround the bed. Pairs of rugs can be found easily for a symmetrical look; or, for a hint of whimsy and asymmetry, finding rugs in a similar pattern or colorway can also be a successful solution.

For a serene bedroom with lots of shades of gray and light blue in solid fabrics, Lee Ledbetter Associates used two small rugs to define the intimate space and add a punch of subtle color. A leather recliner rests atop an early 20th-century Khotan rug in tan and light blue, while a Chinese rug in muted colors with an alluring trellis pattern lies at the foot of the bed.

There is much debate about whether one should use one carpet to cover the entire floor of a room or spread several carpets throughout. The truth is, both scenarios can work if done thoughtfully.

It can be difficult to find an oversize carpet at the right price point with a design and colorway to suit your needs. Although a large carpet makes a room feel more

Francesco Lagnese/OTTO (designed by Miles Redd)

Fig.98

"Tattered rugs add texture, patina and history to any space. In his novels, Charles Dickens mentions a well-worn Turkish carpet or hearth rug as code whenever he wants to indicate a room that's full of soul"

Lisa Borgnes Giramonti, *Novel Interiors: Living in Enchanted Rooms Inspired by Literature*

Fig.98 Living room in Boxwood House, Atlanta. Designed by Miles Redd, who lets a huge carpet become the foundation for several seating groups.

Fig.99

Fig.99 Esfahan carpet, Persia, 17th century. 11 ft 4 in x 30 ft (3.45 m x 9.14 m). This antique rug from Esfahan features a grand arabesque with ornate cloudbands and Shah Abbasi palmettes that are enclosed by turtle and vine scroll borders.

Fig.100 Hollywood couple's historic home in upstate New York. A selection of diverse antique carpets covers most of the floor area. Yet the result is harmonious and cohesive thanks to the unified palette of the chosen woven pieces.

Layer upon layer

A popular look is layering antique and vintage rugs on a neutral base, like a textured sisal or jute carpet. It's a great solution for when you have a rug that is too small for the space but otherwise suits the room.

commodious and tied together, two large carpets can equally be successful. Two, or more, carpets can delineate conversation areas and can even overlap, as long as the main pathway isn't at the seam. American designer Ralph Lauren took a risk for his Bedford, New York home by overlapping three Persian carpets from the 17th and 18th centuries with similar patterns and palettes, creating a visually exciting backdrop for his antique English furniture and Flemish tapestry.

For those who adhere to a Maximalist aesthetic, layered small rugs and fragments from different cultures achieve a well-traveled Middle Eastern bazaar look. A series of small related rugs down a long corridor or hallway is enchanting and in addition solves the problem of finding the elusive long and narrow runner. A trick to having a cohesive look while using multiple carpets is to find rugs with similar borders either in color or pattern or, conversely, using rugs with a similar field color. The bedroom is the perfect place for scatter rugs, since a bed will often cover most of a large carpet.

Smaller colorful rugs in a kitchen or a bathroom can add some softness and interest to utilitarian rooms that are primarily shiny, monochrome, and functional. Even a laundry room or pantry could use a lift. And don't forget about the mud room—what better way than a having a dark-patterned rug to capture and hide dirt.

Björn Wallander/OTTO

Part 3:

Owning an Antique Rug

Fig.1

Rug Appraisal

Only people who deal with antique rugs on a daily basis can determine their true current value, especially in an ever-changing market, where particular colors, designs, and technical features fuel the demand for certain types of rugs rather than others. Rug appraisers must in fact consider many different factors. Besides, the weight that each of these factors has differs according to the type of carpet, where it was produced, its age and other considerations such as current style trends. Carpet appraisal is not a simple process, and there is no simple formula that can determine the valuation of any particular carpet. To become an expert appraiser takes training and years of knowledge that is only gained through experience. In addition, a good appraiser must stay on top of the international market and any changes or trends that currently affect the value of carpets in the marketplace.

The Nazmiyal Collection offers appraisal services and can help you determine the value of a rug you already have or one that you would like to purchase. If you would like more general information about evaluating and appraising rugs and the different criteria that we use to determine the price, then please contact us.

Fig.1 Sultanabad carpet, Persia, circa 1880. 10 ft 10 in x 17 ft 6 in (3.3 m x 5.33 m). This breathtaking antique rug features the angular, less curvilinear, patterns that are so recognizable as being from the Ziegler production of rugs in Persia.

Fig.2 Detail of an Ushak carpet, Turkey, early 20th century. 12 ft x 15 ft (3.65 m x 4.57 m). It is only by looking closely that we can truly appreciate the intricacy of pattern in most antique rugs.

"The value of art is in the observer"

Agnes Martin

Fig.2

Selling your rug

Nazmiyal has been in the business of buying and selling old and antique rugs for the past thirty years. We are always looking for old or antique rugs and carpets to buy and we pay the top market value to acquire good old carpets. We are happy to evaluate the rug you are interested in selling, to determine whether or not we would be willing to buy it for our inventory. If your rug meets our standards we will buy it and we guarantee immediate payment. As an alternative to selling your rug, you also have the option of applying a predetermined value of your rug toward the purchase of a different rug or carpet from our available inventory.

Photo: Michael S. Smith Inc.

Fig.3 Master bedroom in a private residence in Malibu. Designed by Michael S. Smith Inc. and featuring an antique Khotan carpet. The blue of the sea and the crisp white of the bedding are picked up in the carpet's palette.

Nazmiyal Auctions

Since 2002, Nazmiyal Auctions has been offering fine and rare vintage and antique rugs and new decorative carpets to discerning customers and collectors from all over the world.

Buying at Nazmiyal Auctions

By utilizing our auction platform, you can easily bid live from anywhere in the world. If you are a new client, you will need to register and create a new account. Once your details are on file and verified, you will be approved to bid in our auctions.

Buyers have the option of leaving absentee bids for items they are interested in purchasing. You will need to fill out the auction absentee bidder form and enter the maximum amount you are willing to pay for every lot. Please note and remember that the maximum amount on the absentee/telephone form excludes the buyer's commission. Our system will bid on your behalf up to the maximum amount you indicated and will try to secure the item at the lowest possible price. Our Auction Glossary on the Nazmiyal Collection website provides more information about common auction terms and what they mean in practice.

Selling at Nazmiyal Auctions

The decision to sell your rug begins with a free valuation from Nazmiyal. If you have an antique or vintage rug that you would like to sell, our team of experts will be happy to provide an estimate, orchestrate the auction details and work with you through each part

of this three-step process. We will help you with the following:

- Completing a valuation and deciding whether to sell
- Signing a contract and setting a reserve price
- Receiving payment

Completing a free estimate is the first step in the selling process. For your convenience, all valuations are complimentary, and the process may be completed in several different ways. Choose the option that is best suited to your needs.

In-Person: Visit us in person with your item to receive a preliminary estimate. This service is available Monday through Friday during our normal business hours. Call +1 (212) 213-5776 for an appointment and receive directions to our gallery.

Online: Valuations may also be completed by email if you are unable to visit our showroom. To achieve an email valuation, fill out an online valuation form on our website and submit photographs as directed.

At Home: In-home evaluations are available to clients who have private collections that are more extensive and have a higher value. Please contact our main office to request an in-home estimate.

After your item has been appraised, specialists will work with you to determine the appropriate time for our auction, and we will address any other considerations or concerns that you may have. This post-valuation discussion will cover preliminary auction estimates, recommendations on the auction venue, and details about the possible timing of the sale.

If you decide that an auction is the right option for your item, you will be able to sign a contract immediately, and we will accept the item to be photographed and thoroughly prepared for auction. Your sales contract will include the item's estimate, a reserve price if one has been determined, and other essential details. Each lot published by Nazmiyal is subject to a seller's commission.

For more information, please contact the Nazmiyal Collection team. We will be happy to hear from you.

Photo: Kerry Joyce

Fig.4 Seating area in a private residence. Designed by Kerry Joyce and featuring a 17th-century Isfahan carpet. This interior is a great example of how a seriously old rug can sing in a modern interior.

Virtual Interior Design

Virtual interior design is the perfect alternative to having an interior designer come to your home and work with you there. As the name suggests, you work together virtually, and you as the client often receive regular updates and proposals in the form of concept boards and a list of what you will need to execute the project from home.

People choose to use virtual design for many reasons. Some like to maintain control over their project, and this gives them a way to do that. The client can decide how much or how little support, inspiration, and suggestion they would like, and then can incorporate it into their home at their own pace and in their own way. Another reason might be that you want to renovate just a small area of your home, and it is a quicker and less expensive fix than working with an interior designer in person. There are no set appointments unless you want them, and no set timeline. It is also a great solution for those who want to hire a designer they admire who might not be based in their area.

A new tool on the Nazmiyal Collection website allows you or your chosen interior designer to imagine any of our rugs in your space. This means you can try out different styles, color schemes, and sizes from the comfort of your home. Finding the perfect rug has never been easier!

Fig.5 Bedroom in a private residence. Designed by Michael S. Smith Inc. and featuring a Kerman "vase" carpet. Sometimes more is more when it comes to pattern, as can be seen in this interior where the carpet, wallpaper, throw, and upholstery fabric work come together beautifully.

Photo: Michael S. Smith Inc.

Cleaning and Repairs

Cleaning

Antique and vintage rugs are rare, unique, and beautiful collectible items. Therefore, these rugs should be cherished and maintained with care to ensure their longevity, beauty, and value. Whether it is a runner, a room-size, Moroccan, tribal, or Persian carpet, your antique rug deserves to be cleaned, washed, and pampered. The general rule is that your rug should be cleaned every three to five years depending on how much foot traffic it receives.

An essential part of preserving the value, beauty, and integrity of your antique rugs and vintage rugs is having them cleaned by professionals. At Nazmiyal, our antique rug experts and professional carpet cleaners have been washing, cleaning, repairing, and restoring antique rugs for more than thirty years. In addition to our antique rug-cleaning service, we also clean semi-antique and vintage rugs from China, Persia, Turkey, and the Caucusus.

We perform wet and dry carpet cleaning procedures that are compatible with silk rugs, wool carpets, and the most delicate handwoven textiles. For the past three decades, our antique rug-cleaning team in New York City has reinvigorated valuable textiles and carpets made with sensitive colors and delicate natural fibers. Our rug-cleaning services are carried out in a specially designed workshop and restoration studio that can accommodate the smallest decorative rugs and largest room-sized carpets.

Our knowledgeable conservators and rug-cleaning experts carefully examine each carpet to determine the best process and foresee issues with color bleeding, delicate fibers, and structural weak points. Before cleaning antique rugs, the age, size, condition, materials, construction techniques, and level of soiling are carefully considered.

“When someone beats a rug, the blows are not against the rug, but against the dust in it”

Rumi

Fig.6

Figs.6 and 7 Antique and vintage rugs are treasured possessions as well as investment pieces. As such, having them professionally cleaned and restored is an obvious choice.

Fig.7

Repairs

Whether heirlooms or recent purchases, antique and vintage rugs are an investment. Hours upon hours were devoted to crafting these beautiful works of textile art. As such, they deserve proper care and attention from their owners to prolong the rug’s health for decades to come.

The Nazmiyal Collection offers expert rug restoration and carpet repair services. We can easily tackle any-size restoration project. While most of our rug restoration services are provided for people that live in the greater New York City area, if it is a bigger repair project, you always have the option of shipping the rug to us for inspection and an estimate.

Outside of accidental and catastrophic damages, such as fires and floods, the most common repairs are related to everyday wear and tear. It is usually the sides and ends that weaken first from everyday use. Do keep in mind that, as these weaken, it leaves the rug at risk of unraveling. This may result in damage to the pile itself if not promptly and expertly repaired.

Here are some common repairs for antique rugs:

- Restoring and repairing the binding on the sides of a rug
- Restoring and repairing the ends of a carpet and fringe
- Repairing and restoring the pile of a rug or carpet
- Repairing, restoring, and reweaving a hole in a rug.

Preserving the value of unique rugs, kilims, and handwoven textiles is our chief concern. Whether for monetary, artistic, or simply sentimental reasons, an antique rug should be cleaned professionally to ensure longevity and to preserve its beauty. Our considerate approach to antique rug repair and restoration procedures allows us to create repairs that are nearly undetectable. Common restoration services include general cleaning, repairing fringes, recovering selvages, and re-knotting damaged or missing patterns. When appropriate, we also undertake intensive repair and restoration efforts, including re-piling worn areas and rebuilding the warp and weft. Whether your rug was damaged recently or is simply showing the effects of age, we invite you to contact us about restoring your beloved antique rugs.