



View from the Fringe

Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



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<https://www.ne-rugsociety.org>

April 9 Webinar Preview Michael Rothberg on Saddlebags from Persia and the Caucasus



Michael Rothberg

On Saturday, April 9, collector and author Michael Rothberg will present “Saddlebags from Persia and the Caucasus: An Examination of Selected Design Motifs.” Focusing on aspects of design in nineteenth-century knotted-pile transport bags woven by tribal women, Michael will show examples—Shahsevan, Kurdish, Afshar, Khamseh Confederation, Qashqa’i, Luri, and Baluch—from his recent book, *Nomadic Visions: Tribal Weavings from Persia and the Caucasus* (published in 2021 by *HALI* and the Near Eastern Art Research Center), as well as bags from the Transcaucasus, Persian Azerbaijan, and Varamin.

For the past forty-three years, Michael has been collecting a wide range of oriental rugs and textiles. He has spoken at many venues, including the Copenhagen Rug Society, the Turkmen Collectors’ Conference in Hamburg, and the American Conference on Oriental Rugs. In 2004, at ACOR 7 in Seattle, he mounted a memorable exhibition of his Turkmen rugs. In addition to *Nomadic Visions*, he has published articles and reviews in *HALI* and *Oriental Rug Review*. In 2019 he received the Joseph V. McMullan Award for Stewardship and Scholarship in Oriental Rugs and Textiles.

Webinar Details

Date and Time: Saturday, April 9

1 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time

Venue: Your desktop, laptop, or tablet

Directions: If you are an NERS member or have registered for a previous NERS webinar, you will receive an email invitation to this one. To view it, you must register beforehand via the link in the email. Non-members who have never before attended an NERS webinar should email jean.hoffman@jeanhoffman.com to get an invitation.



Shahsevan *khordin* (saddlebag), Moghan-Savalan region

May 1 Meeting Preview: Jeff Spurr, “Off the Beaten Path”



Jeff Spurr amid some of his collection

On Sunday, May 1, NERS member and frequent speaker Jeff Spurr's "Off the Beaten Path: A Yen for the Obscure in Textiles, Basketry, and Beadwork" will mark our welcome return to in-person presentations. His talk, originally given to the Hajji Baba Club, New York, in 2013, addresses the whys, wherefores, and history of his collecting, with stories from "the field." Photographs of the walls of his apartment reveal some of that collecting range and its changes through time, as well as the textiles, beadwork, and basketry representing the traditions that have primarily captured his attention. He could have selected other traditions but here will focus on some that have specially appealed to him—Kashmir shawls, Central Asian textiles, Kuba textiles, Pygmy barkcloths, Kirdi beadwork (from Cameroon), textiles of Sumatra, and textiles, beadwork, and basketry of Borneo.

Jeff is an independent scholar of Islamic textiles and a dedicated collector of non-Western textiles, basketry, and beadwork. He developed and managed collections of historical photographs of the Middle East at Harvard for twenty-six years, and co-curated several exhibitions, among them *Silver and Shawls: India, Europe, and the Colonial Art Market*, at the Sackler Museum in 2005. For ACOR 8, in 2006, he curated the ambitious *Unusual and Overlooked: Antique Textiles from Central Asia*. He is a co-author of *Kashmir Shawls: The Tapi Collection*, published in 2012, and has written numerous articles for *HALI*. For many years he served on the Collections Committee of the Department of Islamic and Later Indian Art at the Harvard Art Museums and advised the former Department of Textile and Fashion Arts at the MFA, Boston.

Meeting Details

We ask that all who attend be fully vaccinated.

Date and Time: Sunday, May 1, 3:00 p.m.

Place: Durant-Kenrick House, 286 Waverley Ave.
Newton, MA 02458

Directions: From Boston and east, take Mass Pike to exit 127 (17) and follow signs for Boston/Newton Centre, making a U-turn over the Pike. At Newton Centre sign, go RIGHT on Centre St. for 0.1 miles. Go LEFT on Franklin St. for 0.3 miles. Turn RIGHT on Waverley and go 0.2 miles. House is on the LEFT.

From Rt. 128 and west, take Mass Pike to exit 127 (17), turn RIGHT onto Centre Street, and follow directions above.

From Watertown Square: Take Galen Street (Rt. 16) toward Newton Centre for 0.4 miles. Continue to Washington St. toward West Newton/Newton Centre, making a U-turn over the Pike. At Newton Centre sign, go RIGHT on Centre Street and follow directions above.

Parking: On Kenrick Street. Parking places at the end of the Durant-Kenrick House driveway may be used for dropping off people or supplies, but **NOT for parking during the meeting.**

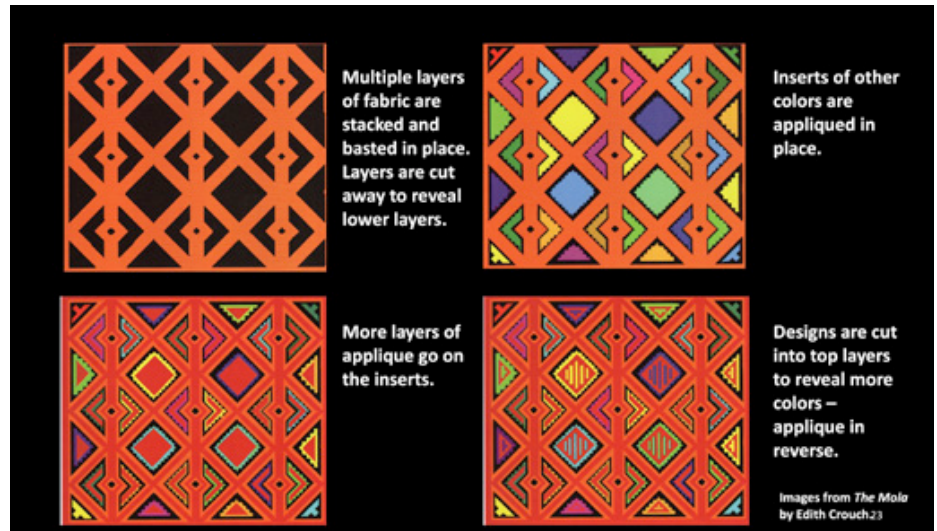
Food: Since Durant-Kenrick House is open to the public at this hour, refreshments will not be served prior to the meeting.



Kirdi beaded apron, Cameroon

February Webinar Review: Tom Hannaher on Molas

by Jim Adelson



1. Tom Hannaher and some of his molas 2. Steps in mola construction, after Edith Crouch, *The Mola* (2011), p. 246

On February 12, in a webinar organized by NERS and cosponsored by Textile Museum Associates of Southern California, leading Guna art collector Tom Hannaher (1) presented “Painting with Scissors: Mola Art of the Guna (Kuna) Indians of Panama and Colombia.” His enthusiastic audience numbered 674 participants, from thirty-nine countries.

Tom began the presentation by recounting his textile-collecting history. His first acquisitions, in the early 1980s, were oriental rugs, but “I made the mistake of subscribing to *HALI* magazine, where I instantly learned I couldn’t afford the good ones.” He then focused his attention on Shahsevan saddle bags. However, after an encounter with rug dealer Ronnie Newman redirected his interest to pre-Colombian textiles, Tom sold the Shahsevans and acquired a sizable group of pre-Colombian weavings. Along the way, he first encountered molas, buying one for \$45 in an Ipswich antique store. In the early 2000s, to finance a new business he’d started, he sold his pre-Colombian pieces and thenceforth concentrated on molas.

At the time, eBay was a relatively new resource. In addition to providing Tom with many molas, the online auction site also led him to his mentor, Kit Kapp. In 1960, Kit had started an adventure-travel business in Panama, and during his eleven years in the area had immersed himself in the culture and art of the Guna Indians there. He acquired more than five thousand molas, leading him to write the book *Mola Art of the San Blas Islands*—still one of the best sources on the subject, according to Tom.

The Guna people inhabit the San Blas islands and the Bayano and Darién regions of mainland Panama, as well as a small portion of coastal Colombia. Their name was formerly spelled “Kuna,” but the tribe recently voted to

change the official spelling to “Guna.” The Gunas combine their own mythology with Christianity, and their arts include jewelry, carved wooden *nuchu* (figures that store healing spirits) and staffs of office, and ledger drawings. Guna also put considerable artistic effort into women’s clothing: head scarves, wraparound skirts, and mola blouses.

One theory on the origin of molas assumes that the Gunas once practiced body painting—as the neighboring Embera Indians still do, using abstract geometric patterns—and that the Gunas, shamed into wearing clothes by arriving Christians, transferred these designs from skin to molas. But Tom said he’d seen no evidence to support this theory; on the contrary, a set of paintings from 1842, collected by Kit Kapp, depicts Guna women as fully clothed, although not yet in molas. Tom said the earliest known mola image is a photograph dating from 1887, which shows a group of women several of whom wear these blouse panels.

Tom next explained how molas are made, using an illustration from Edith Crouch’s *The Mola* (2).

Early molas, he noted, can no longer be found in Panama, having been bought up by collectors from outside the country. The Gunas kept many molas, but they didn’t last; local humidity and bugs all hastened their deterioration. In fact, for a 2019 mola exhibition at the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá, Tom lent eighty of his own molas so that the Gunas would have early examples. He added that a primary way he has been able to assemble his collection is by contacting some of the initial collectors and buying pieces from them.

Concluding his introduction, Tom stressed that molas are fun and surprisingly affordable, and that “the very best [ones] rise above being just folk art, and become fine art.”



3. Early mola with abstract-looking motifs



4. Middle-period pictorial mola



5. Late-period mola with dense design and pop-culture theme

He then turned to the chronological development of molas, dividing them into three periods—early (pre-1950), middle (1950–1970), and late (post-1970). Early molas are large, with an average width of 24". Their imagery appears relatively abstract, as seen in a mola whose seed pods could be interpreted as non-representational forms (3). These molas are more crudely executed than later ones, with a rougher approximation of curves, fewer stitches, and larger gaps between motifs. The cloth used tends to be lighter.

In comparison, middle-period molas are smaller, averaging 19" in width. Far more often, though not always, they feature pictorial images, in many cases drawn from foreign sources such as magazines. They are typically made from heavier cloth. "Ottomano," a sturdy, plain-weave cotton with slight ribbing, is favored; this fabric essentially disappears from molas around 1970. Stitching and cutting have by now become much more sophisticated, yet middle-period molas still retain their gutsiness and humor (4).

Late-period molas are the smallest, with an average width of 15". By the time of their creation, they are primarily being made for sale to Westerners and feature such popular motifs as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (5). Patterning densely covers each piece, leaving no open space; the use of a burgundy-red cotton top layer is very common. Tom said he finds these later molas more formulaic in design and color, and lacking the appealing looseness and variation of their predecessors.

He then illustrated some sixty of his favorite molas, of which this writeup includes only a chosen few. One early example, still part of a blouse (6), was a *sianala* (incense-brazier) mola, showing a man holding two of the clay braziers used in healing and other Guna ceremonies. This mola was originally collected by Herbert Heard Evans, Assistant Manager of the Panama Canal project from 1917 to 1924. Many of the molas that Evans acquired went to the Smithsonian, but this one remained in his family until Tom acquired it from a great-granddaughter.

Another early example (7) was a *purba* (spirit) mola, depicting what at first appears to be a rider on an animal. Tom explained that it's not a human rider, but rather the animal's spirit emerging from its back. At 30" the piece is very wide, and Tom doubts it was ever actually used on a blouse. He noted that its crude execution, with varying gaps between its motifs, give it a "loose and energetic" feeling that appeals to him.



6. Blouse with incense brazier mola, collected 1917–1924



7. Animal spirit mola, 1920–1935

A third mola (8) may appear to show two naked men. Tom nevertheless felt that these figures actually represent lizards, since Guna women are reluctant to depict naked human bodies on molas, while lizards are very common and, Tom added jokingly, there is no such hesitation to show naked lizards.

A striking *sullup* (eagle) mola (9) clearly depicts the bird of its title. It was acquired by Commander Wayne Stuckey, a U.S. Navy ship captain in the San Blas islands in the 1920s. It too lacks evidence of ever having been on a blouse.

Another distinctive mola in Tom's collection shows the Panama Canal locks with a boat going through them (10), plus a building and a large central biplane. It was collected in 1924 by a man named Alfred Loomis, whose twenty-foot sailboat set a record as the smallest craft to pass through the locks. Loomis later became the editor of *Yachting* magazine. Tom pointed out that the mola was stained and

noted that such stains are common in the best molas, which, unlike lesser ones, were kept—"the beauty overcoming the damage."

Tom called a final example from the early period his "Superman mola" (11)—not a fanciful interpretation, since it reproduces the cover of the August 1940 issue of *Action Comics*. On both cover and mola, Superman is shown overpowering a raging lion that has escaped from a derailed circus train, and thereby saving a cowering Lois Lane (who makes her first appearance in this issue of the comic book). The mola faithfully replicates many details of the cover, even down to the little 10¢ price mark.

Tom revealed that this mola is the most expensive one he ever bought; its previous owner had originally aspired to sell it to "ultimate Superman collector" Jerry Seinfeld, but eventually let Tom have it for a hefty price. Expensive though the mola may have been, Tom noted the irony that the comic book itself sells for at least a hundred times what he paid.



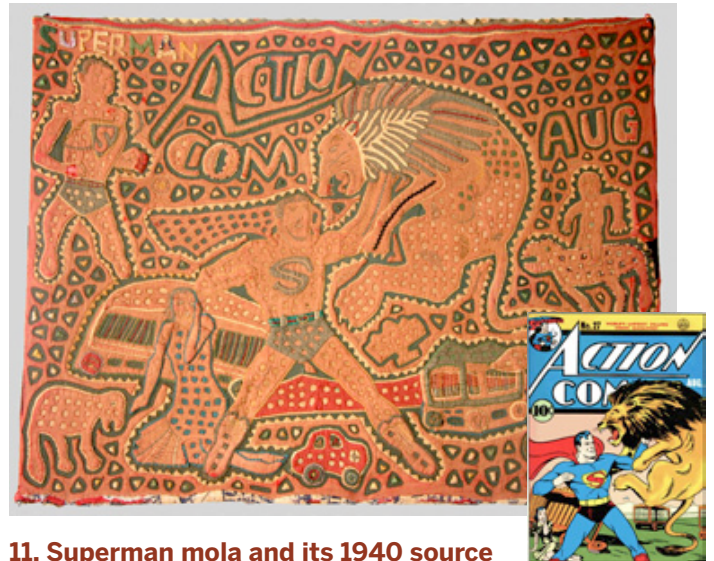
8. Mola with naked men or, more likely, lizards, 1920–1935



10. Panama Canal locks and plane mola, collected in 1924



9. Eagle mola, collected 1920–1928



11. Superman mola and its 1940 source



12. Funeral party mola, 1950s–1960s



14. Kool cigarettes mola, mid-1960s, and Willie the Penguin



13. Butt-attacking mosquito mola, 1960s



15. Playful monkeys mola, Bayano mountains, early 1960s

Among Tom's middle-period molas was one that he described as a "wild funeral party with a sharkman and two phonographs" (12). He based this interpretation on a corpse-like figure with visible ribs at the mola's bottom center; a larger figure dressed up in what might be a shark costume; and, on the sides, two huge gramophones cranked by small-scale people. This puzzling imagery prompted Tom to relate something Kit Kapp had once told him: that when Kit revisited Gunas he'd seen three years before, they admitted that what they'd said about particular molas was made up on the spot; they had just wanted to pull his leg. Tom thus concluded that "a lot of what we believe is true about molas is actually the result of Guna women having some fun with us and making up a story."

Tom's related observation, that "Guna women have a good sense of humor; they love to laugh," was further

illustrated by a brightly colored, cartoon-like mola showing a kneeling person attacked in the buttocks by an enormous mosquito (13).

Another of Tom's molas borrowed from contemporary advertising, to humorous effect (14). One of its two penguins is pictured eating a fish, but his companion—modeled on Kool mascot Willie the Penguin—instead puffs on a cigarette, beneath a caption that echoes the brand's slogan, "Smoke Kool—it's refreshing!"

Bayano Gunas, who live in an isolated area of mainland Panama rather than on the San Blas Islands, were less exposed to tourists and maintained their "old school" designs longer than did their island relatives. Tom showed a Bayano mola (15) picturing a group of playful monkeys; although made in the 1960s, it has the archaic look of molas from the 1930s.



16. Coleman lanterns mola blouse, 1960s



18. Robles for President political mola, 1960s



17. Waves mola, early 1960s



19. Stars and moon mola, designed by Diego, 2010

Print-media images like Superman and the Willie the Penguin were not the only foreign influences on mola designs; Tom showed a Guna blouse whose front panel features three Coleman lamps (*kwallu waka*) (16). Because these gas lanterns started far fewer fires than candles, Tom explained, the Guna took to them as soon as they became available.

Contrasting with representational molas of the middle period are those with strictly abstract motifs, exemplified by an early 1960s *temal* (waves) mola (17). At the very moment Op Art was taking off, Tom observed, Guna women were creating works that would have been well received in New York galleries.

Gunas got the right to vote in the early 1960s; Panamanian politicians quickly sought their support with colorful political posters that favored graphics and symbols over words, since

most Gunas could not then read. Tom showed a poster-inspired mola depicting presidential candidate Robles, of the National Party, as a “big strong guy breaking the chains of oppression” (18). Tom noted that the Gunas were quick to incorporate novel imagery like this, adding, “They’re very competitive. They’re always trying to outdo each other, so they really wanted to grab any new idea and make it into a mola.”

Despite favoring early- and middle-period molas, Tom had a few favorites to show from among the late molas in his collection. The “stars and moon” pattern of one of them (19) was created by a gay man named Diego, a San Blas mola maker so successful that his designs were often stolen. Tom’s copy was no exception; he had bought it in a market in Panama City.



20. Cow mola, 2010

With his *moli* (cow) mola (20), Tom proved that, in his words, “Even modern molas can be quirky, wild, and over-the-top fun.” In contrast to many late molas, this one was spare in design, using a minimum of cloth and few colors. More typical was his final selection, a second Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle mola (21), with its pop-culture theme, dense patterning, and burgundy-red ground.

In his last slide, Tom provided his contact information and other mola resources: his email address, huariman@yahoo.com; “nascaman,” his seller’s name on eBay; molamuseum.org, for posts on molas; and his Facebook group, “Kuna Art Society,” for those interested in molas and other Guna artistic media. Following Tom’s conclusion, Cheri Hunter, Program Chairman of Textile Museum Associates of Southern California, gave a short introduction to TMA/SC’s organization and programming.

Jean Hoffman then fielded the audience’s many questions. Several questioners wanted further details about who made molas. Mostly Guna women, Tom reiterated; they begin making them as young as seven or eight years old and continue throughout their lives, until they can’t see well enough to cut and sew. Some gay men also make molas.

To a related question about the tradition being carried forward today, Tom answered that mola making continues, particularly in the eastern San Blas islands, where some seventeen- and eighteen-year-old women are amazingly skillful artisans. Only a very few mola makers are known by name; it’s generally an anonymous art form. As to whether molas are still worn by Guna women, Tom said that it varies by area, but in many places, yes.

Multiple questions concerned the Gunas selling their molas; why, for instance did they sell so many to Kitt Kapp? Tom’s general answer was that, dating back to the 1920s, mola sales have been a valued source of income, providing cash



21. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle mola, 2010

in a barter economy. Asked what Gunas think of collectors’ interest in their art, Tom reiterated that they really need the money and like the fact that people are willing to buy molas.

Other questions concerned mola production and materials. To a query about the source of the cloth for the earlier molas, Tom answered that almost all of it was acquired from Colombian traders, who offered not only fabric but also scissors, needles, cooking oil, and other items, in return for coconuts. Asked whether molas were made on frames like embroidery, Tom responded that, no, they were hand-held while being worked. To a question about the embroidery itself, Tom replied that the stitching was both functional—holding the layers together to preventing pouching, or puffiness—and decorative, but that he tends not to pay attention to the technicalities of the decorative stitching. As to whether mola makers sketch their designs, Tom indicated that, from what he’d seen, any preliminary marking was made by roughing the cloth with a needle; perhaps even this was not done in earlier molas.

Another questioner wondered whether the front and back mola panels of a blouse were identical. They were typically related, Tom answered, but never the same; for one thing, mola makers avoided wasting the fabric bits cut out from one panel by applying them to the other panel, yielding different coloration.

Asked how collectors should display their molas, Tom recommended that glass not be put atop them (or other textiles). He mounts his molas on acid-free cloth, which he then stretches on frames. He also suggests that, to reduce their exposure to light, molas be rotated rather than kept on permanent view.

NERS, TMA/SC, and the many worldwide participants in Tom’s “Painting with Scissors” webinar heartily thank him for sharing his knowledge, collection highlights, and enthusiastic appreciation of mola art.

Editor's Pick: A Quintet of Rugs in Recent Area Auctions

From Grogan & Company, Boston, *The Fine Rugs and Carpets Auction*, January 20, 2022



Lot 25, a Kazak prayer rug formerly in the collection of Walter and Marilyn Denny was still lush-piled, but the yellow in its half-medallions had faded since its 1971 publication in Raoul Tschebull's *Kazak* (pl. 11). It sold for \$13,000 plus premium.



Lot 135, a Dazkırı yastik, had excellent colors and wool. It was bought by a member of NERS for \$3750 plus premium. For a comparable example, see Brian Morehouse, *Yastiks* (no. 7).

From Skinner, Marlborough, *Fine Oriental Rugs & Carpets*, March 10, 2022: a sale organized by newly appointed Senior Rug Specialist (and NERS member) Richard Belkin



This "Garrus" Bijar, offered by Skinner in its October 2019 rug sale (lot 155), had great design appeal but significant surface wear not visible in the photo. Estimated at \$1500–\$1800, it sold for \$4250. It was back, with the same estimate, at this sale (lot 1023), where it brought even more—\$4750 plus premium.



In August 2021, when it sold for \$450 at an antiques auction in South Deerfield, Mass., this quirky little Bakhshaish had a corroded center and borders and lacked its ends (inset). Much restored and now measuring 2'9" x 4'5", it resurfaced as lot 1094 at Skinner, where it brought \$2200 plus premium.

And a conundrum from coastal Maine: Thomaston Place Auction Galleries, *Winter Enchantment, Day Two*, February 26, 2022



As lot 106 in their November 2014 auction, Rippon Boswell offered this twentieth-century copy of a Turkish "small-pattern Holbein," which had been published most recently by Stefano Ionescu in his 2010 *Handbook of Fakes by Tuduc* (p. 31). Although Rippon Boswell catalogued the rug as "Tuduc" and estimated it at €2000, it sold for a jaw-dropping €41,480—two bidders apparently disbelieving that it was a modern reproduction. On February 26, the same rug reappeared in Maine, as lot 2095 in a Thomaston Place Auction Galleries general antiques sale. Now misdescribed as an "early Turkish 'Holbein' carpet," but again modestly estimated at \$2000–\$3000, it brought \$35,000 plus premium.

In Memoriam Lawrence Kearney, 1948–2022

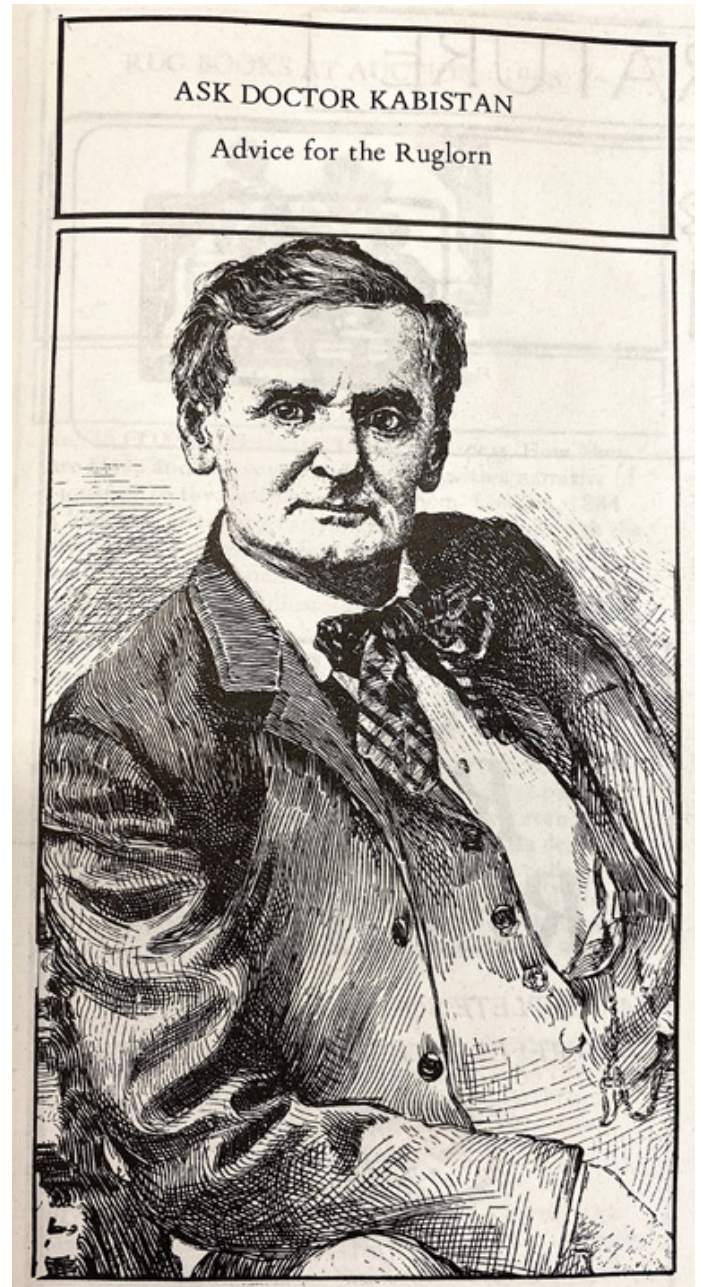


1. Lawrence Kearney in 2014

On March 9, 2022, less than a year after retiring from his position as Director of Fine Oriental Rugs and Carpets at Skinner, Lawrence Kearney (1) died from complications following an aortic tear. He was 74. The shocking news rocketed around internet rug sites; rugrabbit.com, for example, immediately posted: “The rug and textile world has sadly lost one of our most passionate advocates. Lawrence Kearney will always be fondly remembered for his wit, kindness, impeccable taste, and poetic sensibility.”

Born in Oxford, England, Lawrence grew up in Oshawa, Ont., and Buffalo, N.Y. After graduating from the State University of New York at Buffalo, he earned an MFA in poetry from the University of Arizona, Tucson. There he first started buying rugs, some of which, given his meager grad-student salary, he was soon obliged to sell: “One morning, I realized I was a rug dealer!”

He was also a poet. A volume of his work, *Kingdom Come*, was published in 1980, and he earned numerous poetry awards, including fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.



2. Lawrence's interview of Walter Denny, and 3. his provocative "Whither Turkomania?" in *Oriental Rug Review*, March and January 1982

But ruggies, myself included, knew Lawrence for a different sort of writing—his output from 1982 to 1987 as Features Editor of *Oriental Rug Review*. In his own name he published long, revealing interviews with rug grandees Walter Denny (2), Ulrich Schürmann, and John Edelman. In a contrarian opinion piece on Turkmen weaving (3), it was Lawrence who coined the term "Turkomania." (For the Schürmann interview and "Whither Turkomania?" see <https://www.ne-rugsociety.org/literature.htm>.)

Additionally, posing as the pompous (and patently

4. Lawrence's alter ego, Doctor Kabistan, self-proclaimed psychiatrist and advice columnist for *Oriental Rug Review*

bogus) psychiatrist Doctor Kabistan (4), he dispensed "Advice for the Ruglorn," replying to made-up queries from, for instance, a wife whose husband's affection had been stolen by rugs, or a dealer who specialized in collectible rugs but was increasingly allergic to collectors. (That disillusioned dealer was no fiction, it turned out; at the 1993 Santa Monica ACOR, in an iconoclastic lecture titled "Collectors, Dealers, and the Future of Rug Collecting," Lawrence declared himself henceforth a seller of decorative carpets, whose buyers weren't so disputatious and tight-fisted.)



5. Kazak prayer rug, formerly Rudnick Collection

Lawrence built his clientele, for collectible and then decorative rugs, while living in Detroit, western Massachusetts, and eventually the suburbs of Boston. To convince potential buyers that something was worth the price he was asking, he simply “sold them on its beauty.”

That aesthetic passion permeated his *HALI* review of the Rudnick Collection (“A Kind of Meta-Art,” *HALI* 152, Summer 2007: 62–71). Of the Rudnick rug he most admired, for instance (5), he wrote:

... [its] surface is extraordinary, “polished by human use,” as Robert Haas says in one of his poems. Beyond the sheer deliciousness of the colors, there is the design, whose powerful Turkic vocabulary is softened and made intimate by the weaver’s sense of play. Every element seems detached, floating in zero gravity ... the gorgeous red ground is the connective tissue.

“Selling them on beauty” was also Lawrence’s mission in his many presentations to museums and rug societies. Over the years, he was an NERS speaker at least six times, his subjects ranging from yastiks (“More bang for the buck!”) to American hooked rugs, dozens of which he lugged



6. Lawrence, cataloguing his first Skinner sale

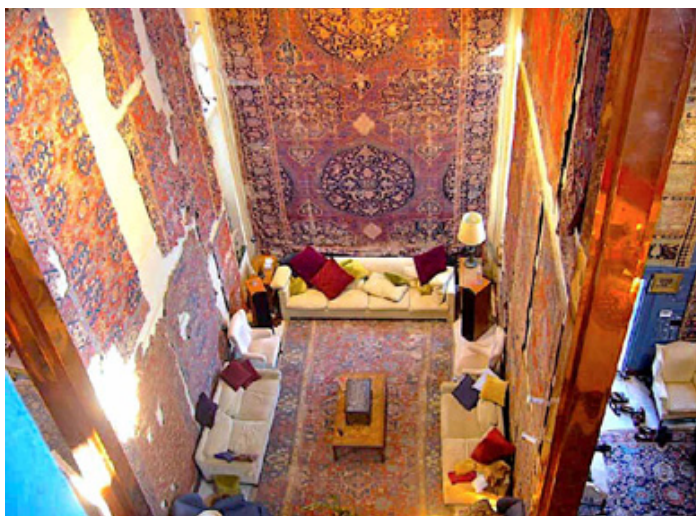
to an October 2013 meeting. (Whatever he thought of collectors as customers, he remained an eager collector himself, expanding his scope both eastwards—to Kashmir shawls—and westwards—to American quilts, coverlets, and rugs.)

Skinner hired Lawrence in 2014, making him responsible for recruiting, cataloguing (6), and promoting rugs for the firm’s twice-annual carpet auctions, as well as allocating additional pieces to American, European, and Asian sales. Two years into his auction-house role, he addressed a gallery full of NERS members and carpet-sale previewers. The title of his talk was “The Story of Rugs Is the Story of Civilization.” In both its bouncy poetic cadence and its affirmation that carpets are enduringly central to human society, that title was Pure Lawrence.

Indeed witty, kind, discerning, and poetic, Lawrence is mourned by many. He is survived by his beloved wife, Karen Kearney; by his children (and their spouses or partners), Jesse Kearney (Stefanie), Christopher Kearney (Diana), Jamie Kearney, and Emily Piper (Winthrop); and by his grandsons, Niklas Kearney and Vincent Kearney. To all the Kearneys, we in NERS extend our sincere condolences.

Julia Bailey

Skinner Acquires the Jim Dixon Collection; Bonhams Acquires Skinner



Interior of Jim Dixon's house in 2009

The late Jim Dixon (d. 2020) collected hundreds of early carpets, rugs, and fragments, displaying them in his lofty, purpose-built northern California house (**left**). His collection has now been consigned to Skinner and, according to a recent announcement, is slated to be offered in a series of auctions starting in May. Skinner hosted a special preview of some of Dixon's Chinese rugs, including a rare Ming dragon carpet, at Asia Week in New York.

Following the Dixon Collection announcement, however, came another: that Skinner has been acquired by Bonhams, an expanding British auction house, and will henceforth be Bonhams Skinner. No department specializing in carpets is listed on the Bonhams website. Whether new ownership will alter Bonhams Skinner's departmental organization and personnel—and its future rug auctions—has yet to be seen.

Upcoming Rug and Textile Events

Auctions

- Mar. 29, London, Bonhams, *Islamic and Indian Art*
- Mar. 30, London, Sotheby's, *Arts of the Islamic World & India including Fine Rugs and Carpets*
- Mar. 31, London, Christie's, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds including Oriental Rugs and Carpets*
- Apr. 12, Vienna, Dorotheum, *Oriental Carpets, Textiles, and Tapestries*
- May 12, Philadelphia, Material Culture, *Oriental Rugs from American Estates 51*
- May 28, Wiesbaden, Rippon Boswell, *Major Spring Auction*
- June 26, Philadelphia, Material Culture, *Fine Antique and Collectible Oriental Rugs, Kilims, Trappings, and Textiles, featuring the Jack Cassin Collection*

Exhibitions

- Until May 8, Cambridge, Harvard Art Museums
Social Fabrics: Inscribed Textiles from Medieval Egyptian Tombs
<https://harvardartmuseums.org/exhibitions/5836/social-fabrics-inscribed-textiles-from-medieval-egyptian-tombs>
- Until May 15, Washington, D.C., National Museum of Asian Art
Fashioning an Empire: Safavid Textiles from the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (includes carpets)
<https://asia.si.edu/exhibition-status/current/>
- Until June 6, Washington, D.C., GWU/Textile Museum
Indian Textiles: 1,000 Years of Art and Design
<https://museum.gwu.edu/exhibitions>

Future NERS Event

Sunday, August 14: Annual Picnic, Moth-Mart, and Show-and-Tell
Gore Place, Waltham

Note: Due to the deadline for this *View*, Jim Adelson's review of Alan Rothblatt's March 26 webinar, "Rare Turkmen Asmalyks," will appear in the next issue. Meanwhile, all members of NERS will have access to the recording of Alan's presentation.

Photo Credits: **p. 1:** Michael Rothberg **p. 2:** Jeff Spurr **pp. 3–8:** Tom Hannaher **p. 9:** Grogan & Company (top); Skinner (center); Douglas Auctioneers (center inset); Thomaston Place Auction Galleries (bottom) **pp. 10–12:** *HALI* (figs. 1, 5); *Oriental Rug Review* (figs. 2–4); Skinner (fig. 6) **p. 13:** *Jozan* (photo by Rob van Wieringen)

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ACOR Representative:

Ann Nicholas

NERS has moved to a calendar-year schedule. If you haven't already paid your 2022 membership dues, please do so now; your membership will extend through December 2022. You can pay online: go to <https://www.ne-rugsociety.org/NERS-paypal.htm> and follow directions. Alternatively, you can mail a check, payable to NERS, to our Holliston address.

The New England Rug Society is an informal, non-profit organization of people interested in enriching their knowledge and appreciation of antique oriental rugs and textiles. Our webinars and meetings are held seven or more times a year. Membership levels and annual dues are: Patron \$170, Supporting \$110, Couple \$80, Single \$60, Student \$30. Information and renewal forms are available on our website, <https://www.ne-rugsociety.org>; by writing to the New England Rug Society, P.O. Box 6125, Holliston, MA 01746; or by contacting Jim Sampson at jahome22@gmail.com.

**The New England Rug Society**

P.O. Box 6125
Holliston, MA 01746

In this issue:

April 9 Webinar: Michael Rothberg on Saddlebags	1
May 1 In-Person Meeting: Jeff Spurr on His Collecting	2
Webinar Review: Tom Hannaher on Molas	3
Editor's Pick: A Quintet of Carpets in Recent Auctions	9
In Memoriam Lawrence Kearney, 1948–2022	10
Skinner News, Upcoming Events, Photo Credits	13