



View from the Fringe

Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



Vol. XI, No. 3 February 1, 2004

www.ne-rugsociety.org

February Meeting:

Seref Özen on What is New from Central Asia in the Istanbul Market

As we all know, the demise of the Soviet Union more than a decade ago unleashed a flood of rugs and other textiles from the former SSRs to the West. Much of this flood has passed through Istanbul, which forms a natural gateway to the Caucasus and Central Asia, the main sources for the most desirable material. This has served to reinforce Istanbul's position as the hub of the world's rug trade.

Seref Özen is uniquely qualified for bringing us up to date about what's happening in this area. He is one of Istanbul's premier dealers of antique oriental rugs and textiles, with two stores in the historic Sultanahmet district. He is internationally respected for his artistic eye, his academic knowledge, and his wide field experience traveling in search of "finds." In addition, he has been one of the successful pioneers in marketing collectible textiles to collectors around the globe via the internet. His on-

Next Two Meetings Details

Dates: Friday, February 20 (Özen)

Friday, March 19 (Böhmer)

Time: 7:30PM

Place: First Parish, Bedford Road, Lincoln

Note: \$5 guest fee for non-members

Directions: See page 12

line "shops" can be visited at www.cocoontr.com and www.tribalchase.com.

Seref has been interested in antique textiles and rugs since 1985. His interest has become very serious after the disintegration of Soviet republics. He quit teaching eight years ago and became a full time dealer. As a former linguistics teacher at Istanbul's Marmara University, his English is impeccable.

March Meeting:

Harald Böhmer on Natural vs. Synthetic Colors and Dyes

Dr. Harald Böhmer is one of the founding fathers of the modern natural dyes movement. Harald and his wife Renate arrived in Turkey in 1960 on a teaching contract and fell in love with its history and culture, especially its rugs. At the same time they were perturbed by the garish and discordant colors of the modern synthetically dyed products. During this period, Turkish rug making was in serious decline. Dr. Böhmer decided to do something about it. With his background in chemistry and physics, he devoted himself to natural dye research at Istanbul's Marmara University. He initiated the DOBAG project that has engendered the revival of naturally-dyed rug weaving in Turkey, and by setting an example, elsewhere as well.

Kökboya is a Turkish word that is used in Turkey for all kinds of natural dyes, whether they are

actually made from roots (*kök*) or rather from flowers, leaves, tubers, or seeds. Even insect dyes are included in this expression. It is also the title of Harald's book published in 2000, in which almost 100 dye plants from Turkey and around the world are introduced on a scientific basis: their botany, their qualities for dyeing, their cultural and historical importance, and aspects concerning their reintroduction for professional use or as a hobby.

We are thus very pleased to have the definitive authority on this subject address our meeting.

Members of the Rug Society can bring samples of carpets and kilims to be examined for the nature of their dyes—one piece per customer, please!

This evening should prove to be entertaining and instructive to one and all.

Page 9: NERS On-Line Bag Exhibit plus ACOR 7 details



October Meeting: Betsy Sterling Benjamin on “The World of Rozome: Wax Resist Textiles of Japan”

By Jeff Spurr

On 24 October, NERS members intrepid enough to face the unknown were treated to a lecture by Betsy Sterling Benjamin: “The World of *Rozome*: Wax Resist Textiles of Japan” (pronounced ro-zo-may).

Terminology:

Ro: wax

Ketsu: resist

Zome: dyeing

hence

Roketsuzome: wax resist dyeing and, for short,

Rozome: wax dyeing

Wax dyeing is a form of resist that can create a very clean and exceptionally flexible line unlike the typical effects of tie-dyeing (Indonesian: *plangi*, Japanese: *shibori*), ikat (Japanese: *kasuri*, a compound ikat), and *tsutsugaki* (Japanese rice paste resist). According to Ms. Benjamin, *shibori* is expressly associated with the design of clothing, while *tsutsugaki* is a technique associated with folk craft and is traditionally applied to handspun cotton woven in narrow widths to form various domestic articles such as futon covers, *noren* (curtains), boys’ day banners and also clothing.

Although modern artists have engaged in a great deal of experimentation with base materials and types of wax, application techniques, and dyes, *rozome* in its essence is applied to silk. It is distinguished from batik, which is dip-dyed, by the application of dye with a brush that can be manipulated to achieve a wide variety of effects and often results in a painterly quality impossible with batik. The wax is typically used to create a complete block-out of the dye, but half-resist techniques are employed as is a range of special effects, particularly dye shading (reminding this author of the effects used in the fine landscape woodblock prints of such 19th c. artists as Hiroshige).

Ms. Benjamin commenced her talk by tracing the history of this technique from the earliest known archaeological finds of the 4th century BCE to the earliest Japanese examples, found among thousands of other textiles in the remarkable ceremonial store-

houses of the Nara Period (710-794 CE), and then—after a great leap in time—to the revival of this technique in response to foreign imports in the 17th century.

Benjamin briefly described the Silk Road and the historical links between the Eastern Mediterranean and China running through Central Asia, and the various finds made typically in dry regions such as Egypt and Xinjiang. The earliest known textile that displays the characteristics of wax resist is a highly fragmentary but huge (10’ x 11’) woolen cloth found in the Seven Brothers kurgan, a Scythian burial site at Kertch in the Crimea. Much like the Pazyryk carpet, which emerged from the same sort of Scythian burial context but was in all likelihood a product of the highly sophisticated Achaemenid culture, this textile was created by artisans at one of the Greek colonies along the Black Sea coast. With the free

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Betsy Benjamin showing one of her creations



October Meeting: Betsy Sterling Benjamin on “The World of Rozome: Wax Resist Textiles of Japan”

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and vivacious line that this technique permits, this ancient Greek textile displays registers of decorative motifs reminiscent of Greek metalwork or even architecture, alternating with scenes from mythology—the figures being named as they frequently are on Greek vases. Thus the tradition as we know it begins with exceptionally sophisticated work indicative of an extended antecedent tradition.

Benjamin showed us one of the many early textiles that have emerged from the great crossroads of Xinjiang, a stylistically hybrid piece from Niya with features suggestive of the classical Greek West (nude female figure holding a cornucopia) and the Chinese East (undulating dragon)—a fragment from a large and elaborate cotton hanging. She also showed a simple dot-and-lattice silk collected by Aurel Stein. It represents the sort of fabric that was probably used as an inexpensive substitute for the more time-consuming and costly pattern-weave silk fabrics in that and later periods.

Benjamin’s attention shifted to early Japan with remarks concerning the vast holdings of the Shosoin Storehouse at Todaiji Temple in Nara, whose contents, presently numbering approximately 180,000 textiles and fragments from the 7th and 8th centuries CE, some imported and some local. As she explained, these had been among the objects dedicated to the Buddha by the dowager empress upon the death of the emperor in 756 and many of them had been employed in the elaborate dedication ceremony for a gilt-bronze Buddha at the temple in 752. Included among the textiles were a relatively modest number of *rokechi*, the ancient Japanese term for *rozome*.

Although Japanese arts of that era were highly influenced by those of the Chinese Tang dynasty, Benjamin asserts the Japanese identity of some of the textiles whose origins have been contested, and emphasized the already long-standing tradition of high quality textile production in Japan. Most of these pieces underwent one or two dye baths at most. They were more often dipped than brush dyed, and rarely had as many as three colors. The most excep-

tional of these pieces are four screens used by the Emperor Shomu, a form that she would be showing many modern examples of later in her talk. They feature animals under a tree in the manner of Sassanid Persia, specifically a ram, a parrot, an elephant, and a wild boar together with an eagle. Based on a recently-discovered ink inscription on one of the cloths, it is now known that the original bolt of silk, from which this and one of the other screens were made, was given as a tax payment in 751.

Thus the imagery was certainly borrowed from a distant place but the textiles were made locally, speaking to the vitality and cultural significance of the Silk Road in this early period.

After the 8th century CE, with the Heian Dynasty—whose robust culture is known to many through the *Tale of Genji* by Lady Murasaki Shikibu and the *Pillow Book* of Sei Shonagon—Japan was closed to imports. Among those forbidden imports was the wax used in the *rozome* technique. Although one might think they could have come up with a substitute (and, indeed, the tsutsugaki rice paste resist of Japanese folk textiles may have a long tradition), this absence brought *rozome* to an end. It was only in the late 16th century that the arrival of Dutch traders brought an influx of *sarasa*, primarily cotton resist-dyed textiles from India, rekindling interest in this technique. The imported *sarasa* textiles were highly regarded, being called “celebrated cloths” by the Japanese (but also “Siam cloth” since they mistook its place of origin), and even small pieces were used in such privileged contexts as the tea ceremony for tea caddies and covers, or employed by the wealthy as fabric for kimonos or obis. It is worth noting that large numbers of these *sarasa* textiles were being exported to Indonesia at the same time and had a profound impact on the development of the Javanese and Sumatran batik and other textile traditions. Benjamin mentioned that the Tokyo National Museum has a large collection of *sarasa* pieces representing no less than 450 designs.

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October Meeting: Betsy Sterling Benjamin on “The World of Rozome: Wax Resist Textiles of Japan”

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Efforts to emulate *sarasa* locally began as early as the 17th c., but a revival of true *rozome* had to wait until the beginning of the 20th c. The Paris Exposition of 1900 displayed Coptic wax-resist textiles and attracted textile designers from all over the world, including Japan and Java. The batiks of the latter created the greatest sensation and may have had an influence in Japan. Shortly before, appeals were made to open the Shosoin and let the textiles be examined and conserved. This task proceeded for several years around the turn of the century and brought the early wax-resist textiles to light.

The remainder of Benjamin's talk was devoted to the modern masters whose work brought *rozome* to its exceptionally high status in present-day Japan, where it is an unsurpassed vehicle for artistic expression in the textile arts, as well as a means of beautifully decorating kimono and other utilitarian pieces. What was most striking here was the continuation of tradition: striking examples of modern art made in the form of screens, echoing the screens of Emperor Shomu which had been deposited in the Shosoin way back in 756 CE. Through seeing numerous examples of their work, the audience got a sense of the variety, refinement, and painterly characteristics of this technique when employed in the creation of textile art, and the special effects that could be created by specific technical means. Several of these examples were extremely beautiful by any definition.

Betsy Benjamin herself graduated from the Massachusetts College of Art. Two years in Finland brought her into contact with talented batik artists who inspired her to get a master's in textile design from Arizona State University. Thence she traveled to Indonesia in search of inspiration and knowledge of the wax resist technique of batik (a Javanese term) practiced there; however, it was not until she arrived in Japan that she discovered this technique in its most fully realized condition, that of *rozome*. A stay that was to last a year became 18, during which time she studied under a sensei (master), familiarizing her-

self with the range of possibilities of the technique, the applied work of kimono design and dyeing, and the styles of the various master artists. Her own master actually ran a manufactory of *rozome*-decorated kimono and other articles for the consumer market, as well as creating his own works of textile art. Perhaps for this reason his works preserve a folk quality largely absent from the work of the other master artists Benjamin profiled.

Benjamin concluded her lecture with a description of her great project to observe the arrival of the new millennium by creating a series of hangings reminiscent of pieced quilts (without the quilting), featuring rectangular units of *rozome*-technique imagery appropriate to each of the seven continents, for each of which she staged an appropriate ceremonial event in that part of the world. These hangings were meant to recall the *kesa*, or patched cloak, of Japanese Buddhist monks, specifically the seven-column variety. They were meant to promote healing and peace.

There were several questions. One asked how the wax was removed. Her answer: for cotton, boiling in water; for silk, the use of solvents. Traditionally, the wax was rubbed or scrubbed off. She also said that learning with a master was through apprenticeship, usually starting in April, the end of the Japanese school year. The typical apprentice was the graduate of an arts high school. Work is typically carried out on mats on the floor. Benjamin was also asked how much the artworks of the masters we had seen would cost on the market. Her answer: \$10,000 to \$250,000.

Benjamin concluded her interesting talk with the announcement that there will be a World Batik Conference at Massachusetts College of Art to be held in June 2005 and that the accompanying exhibition will feature the work of 18 master *rozome* artists.

Benjamin has written the first comprehensive book to appear in English on Japanese wax-resist, *The World of Rozome: Wax Resist Textiles of Japan*, which was published to much acclaim in 1996 by Kodansha International.



November Meeting: Peter Stone on the Development of Tribal and Workshop Design Motifs By Jim Adelson

On November 14th, amid Skinner's display of rugs for the next day's auction, Peter Stone spoke on motif variations in tribal and village rugs of the 19th and 20th century. He described how he'd begun research on this theme hoping that there were anthropological studies of design evolution, written by those with formal training in the subject. But he found none, and had to approach it himself.

Peter started with an explanation of what he meant by the term "motif." To him, a motif consists of design elements. A motif can also be identified by its use—for medallion, filler, major border, field repeat, spandrel, etc. Motifs change over time, and also when they move among geographic locations or weaving populations. But the heart of his insight and talk was a set of generalizations about changes in motifs that he observed repeatedly, across a number of weaving groups. Peter cautioned that these are generalizations that don't hold in every single case, but their frequent occurrence makes them useful in understanding what happens to motifs.

Peter had distilled his observations into five major generalizations. The first was "motifs devolve from the complex to the simple." He explained that he chose the word "devolve" rather than the terms "degenerate" or "degrade" which are pejorative.

Supporting this first major generalization, Peter presented four points. The first of these points was "motifs devolve from naturalistic to impressionistic to abstract forms." He illustrated this subpoint with examples from Chahar Mahal compartment garden carpets. He picked different rugs of different ages, contrasting their handling of several motifs—flowering plants, mihrabs, palmettes, floral sprays, vases, and particularly weeping willows—and showing the change in depiction over the time period.

The second point for this first generalization was "motifs devolve from curvilinear to rectilinear forms." Again, Peter cited many examples, including an Anatolian Makri border, a Lotus palmette, a Harshang Kuba/Karadja medallion, and Afshar op-

posed-vase motifs.

The third point was "motifs devolve from asymmetrical to symmetrical forms." Peter chose a Qashqa'i medallion motif that went from lateral but not vertical symmetry in an early 19th century piece to complete symmetry by the beginning of the 20th

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Peter Stone in front of Skinner Kazak



November Meeting:

Peter Stone on the Development of Tribal and Workshop Design Motifs

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century.

The final point was that “motifs devolve from animal to botanical forms and both devolve to geometric forms.” He selected a number of bird motifs to illustrate this, in one case progressing to a blossom. He also presented a progression of a split-leaf arabesque to Varamin and Caucasian borders, and eventually to a fully geometricized form.

Peter’s second major generalization was “motifs that are originally rectilinear are less subject to devolution and variation than motifs that are originally curvilinear.” He characterized this generalization by saying “in evolutionary terms, this is ‘survival of the rectilinear.’” His initial examples for this generalization included an octagon with an embedded 8-point star and a Kochak cross, among others. He also cited the border design known as “running dog” or “Greek key,” mentioning a comment by Marla Mallett that these designs may be inherited from flatweave structures, preserving their form almost unchanged.

The third major generalization that Peter presented was “elements of complex motifs are extracted for use in other combinations of elements and other motifs.” He illustrated this with a 16th-17th century Persian Herati design, from which different elements were chosen and emphasized in different later treatments. Peter’s examples included the Mina Khani design, the progression to the so-called Harshang and Karagashli designs, and a sample Afshan rendition.

Peter’s fourth generalization was “borrowed pile weave motifs are modified according to the traditional styles of the weavers adopting the motif and the motifs are combined with the weavers’ pre-existing motif repertoire.” Again, he had a number of illustrations; the first was the archetypal Salor gul and its rendition by the Hashtrud Kurds, with the gul taking on a striped edge and rosette, then acquiring additional elements, such as hooked motifs, within the gul form. Another example, with European ori-

gins in this case, was the treatment of cabbage roses in a Kuba rug. According to Peter, some of these rugs were commissioned by Russian officers in the Caucasus, and the weavers drew from the much esteemed French Aubusson and Savonnerie rugs and used the rose design in the weaving’s field while retaining traditional border systems. A more recent and almost comical example has been the evolution of Afghan “war rugs,” which started originally with just a couple of weaponry motifs in a rug of otherwise-traditional designs, and evolved to a much more extensive use of weaponry symbols, pushing out other motifs in the field and borders.

Peter’s final generalization was “motifs proliferate from urban centers to tribe and village.” There have been assertions that designs flow in the opposite direction, but Peter maintained that migration from urban to village/tribe was much more common. He mentioned ikat designs, which are known in an urban context as early as the 7th century AD, but which had progressed to village and tribal contexts by the 19th century. He also cited the very popular Herati design, which eventually showed up in Qashqa’i, Luri, Ersari, village Kurd, and Sanjabi Kurd, as well as other weavings.

Peter ended his talk by cautioning the audience that these generalizations are useful, but not absolute. He quoted Oscar Wilde, who, when asked what was the greatest work of fiction, replied “Burke’s Peerage”—be very skeptical of claimed genealogy. Peter even showed his own humorous “tappetomorphs,” which were spurious examples of design evolution, with the Memling gul representing the last stage of evolution from a starting classic tic-tac-toe grid, and sunfish in a fish tank morphing into the Saryk Timurdjin gul.

Our thanks to Peter Stone for sharing his thoughts on motif evolution, and to Skinner for co-hosting the meeting and supplying many examples of Peter’s themes on the surrounding walls. For those interested in this topic, Peter’s book on the subject should be published in late 2004—look for it!



NERS Member Mini-Profiles

By Ann Nicholas

Janet Smith

I am a retired librarian and live in Sudbury. My husband and I have done a fair amount of traveling through the years. I like non-fiction books, opera, and oriental rugs. I used to do a lot of skiing and tennis until recently when age crept up on me. I joined the Rug Society in 1992 at the first ACOR meeting in Boston. (*Editor's note: Janet is the person who takes care of our name badges and meticulously alphabetizes them before each meeting.*)

How do you characterize your involvement in rugs? What kinds interest you most?

I grew up surrounded by oriental rugs, but took them for granted until we inherited those of my husband's parents about 35 years ago. I wanted to know more about them, so I took my first "course" at Gregorian's. Bud and I went on George O'Bannon's rug trip to Central Asia in 1993, where we met Yon and Dora Bard. I have signed up to go again this year with Natalia Nekrassova – last year's trip was cancelled (*alas, we just learned that so has this year's!*). Consequently I am tending toward Turkmen rugs, although I have more Caucasians.

What kinds of rugs are you buying now?

Most of my rug buying is for my four sons – hoping that I can influence them. It's probably impossible!

Carl Strock

I am a columnist for the Daily Gazette newspaper in Schenectady, NY, and live in Saratoga Springs, NY.

How would you characterize your involvement in rugs? If you don't collect rugs, what do you collect and why?

As for oriental rugs I am more enthusiast than anything else. I started out to collect, but my taste quickly outdistanced my pocketbook so I now content myself with admiring.

I have turned my acquisitive desires to more affordable and more arcane objects, principally Southeast Asian baskets, which I regard as three-dimensional weavings. I love the sensuous forms and

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Janet Smith and Carl Strock



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NERS Member Mini-Profiles

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the darkened patina, obtained through generations of smoky, greasy use, that these baskets show. I'm especially drawn to those of the northern Philippines, Vietnam and Laos — places with which I have a personal connection. My wife is from the Philippines and I worked in both Vietnam and Laos during the war, where I had special sympathy for the minority "Montagnard" people, the makers of the baskets I now collect. So there's a nice old connection there. I also have acquired a small sampling of textiles from those places, though old ones are hard to find, since the climate does not favor preservation, and newer ones tend to be garishly colored. I also have put together a small but I think good collection of wood sculptures and other used objects from those cultures. The best of these things, to my eye, are as powerful as good African sculpture, but at a small fraction of the cost — if you can find them, and if you don't get misled by copies made for the tourist and decorator market.

Mostly for visual appeal, I have also begun to collect examples of different forms of writing, preferably old and beautiful, sometimes on paper, sometimes on vellum (dried sheep or goat skin), sometimes on wood, sometimes on silk. I have samples of Mongolian, Tibetan, Syriac, Ethiopian, Burmese,

Armenian, and others—and of course Arabic, several different styles. I also acquire, as opportunity presents, Latin American textiles—19th century ponchos and wraps from Peru and Bolivia, and coca bags. I do have one choice pre-Columbian piece that I wrote up for *Hali*.

You collect so many different things, what first interested you in rugs and the New England Rug Society?

I long had a latent interest in textiles and bought a few odds and ends without thinking about it, but one day, I aimlessly dropped in on a small rug shop that then existed in Saratoga Springs, and my eye was caught by some beautiful small cushions. I had no idea what they were, and the salesperson on duty was not much help, but on a whim I bought one for what I thought was the extravagant price of \$100 or \$120, and promptly set about trying to find out where it came from—which led to the buying of rug books and so forth. (It turned out to be a nice little Shahsavan soumak bag face). The next thing I knew I was going to Skinner and Sotheby auctions and joining the New Boston Rug Society (as NERS was called at the time), which has been a wonderful experience for me—getting to listen to and meet so many knowledgeable speakers and share pleasures with fellow members.

Thanks to Ed Berkhoff for providing the pictures for this article, as well as for the meeting reviews.

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. Its meetings are held six to eight times a year. Annual membership dues are: Single \$45, Couple \$65, Supporting \$90, Patron \$120. Membership information or renewal forms can be obtained on our website www.new-rugsociety.org, or by writing to **New England Rug Society, P.O. Box 582, Lincoln, MA 01773**, calling Mark Hopkins at 781-259-9444, or emailing him at mopkins@comcast.net.

NERS 2003/4 Steering Committee:

Mark Hopkins (President)

Jim Adelson

Robert Alimi

Julia Bailey

Yonathan Bard

John Clift

Tom Hannaher

Gillian Richardson

Janet Smith

Jeff Spurr



NERS New On-Line Exhibition is Open!

We're pleased to invite you to visit our new online exhibition *To Have and To Hold, Art and Function in Transport and Storage Bags*.

This latest NERS undertaking features 49 antique ethnographic bags and bagfaces from Morocco through Central Asia, all borrowed from the collections of NERS members. Each piece is accompanied by a detailed plate description and technical analysis, and an introductory essay puts the undertaking into perspective.

The exhibition officially opened on February 1 and will remain up for the foreseeable future. To access it, go to our Web site (www.ne-rugsociety.org) and click on "Gallery".

The exhibition's final selections were chosen from photographs of 176 pieces submitted by NERS members. The selection panel, consisting of NERS members Jim Adelson, Bob Alimi, Yon Bard, Jeff Spurr, Mike Tschbull and myself, spent many hours compiling a balanced selection, focusing on com-

plete pieces as much as possible. The 16 lenders, all of whom have chosen to remain anonymous, were generous in accommodating the committee's frequent requests. Yon did the digital photography. Mike researched and authored the text with assists from Jeff Spurr and others. Holly Smith generously donated many hours doing the complex technical analyses. Beau Ryan provided us facilities for photography and analysis of the pieces and tolerated our presence with much patience. And NERS's webmaster Bob Alimi put it all together and made it happen, perhaps the most challenging task of all.

Warmest thanks to all the NERS members who collaborated to make this undertaking possible. We hope all our members will enjoy many visits to the website as they savor these examples of an intriguing and historically important textile art form. All comments or questions are welcome; just use the Guestbook on our website.

Mark Hopkins

ACOR 7: Register Now!

The 7th American Conference on Oriental Rugs (ACOR 7) is coming up in Seattle in less than two months, and already 27 NERS members have registered to attend. It's going to be fabulous. If you're still thinking about it, now's the time to act.

While there's plenty of room at the conference, the two hotels adjacent to it—the Edgewater and the Marriott—are filling up. So if you wait till the last minute, you may find yourself with distant lodgings.

This will be a very exciting conference. It all takes place in a spiffy new convention center on Seattle's waterfront that will house the sessions, exhibitions, and dealers' fair. Fifty-three dealers from all around the globe will present a dazzling inventory of antique textile art in the conference's Dealers' Row.

A diverse series of exhibitions will accompany the conference, including Turkmen rugs from the Rothberg and Pinner collections, Afshar weavings and Persian prayer rugs from the Burns collection, an Austrian collection of Manastir prayer kilims, a collection of ikats and resist-dyed textiles, a small

showing of Chilkat weavings, and the requisite large exhibition of pieces from local collections. In addition, an exhibition of Bijar carpets is being sponsored by a local dealer.

Other events will include two large receptions for registrants, and a repeat of the costume contest that proved so popular at ACOR 6.

ACOR 7 takes place March 25-28. So if you haven't already registered, now's the time. You can do it on-line at www.acor-rugs.org. To receive registration materials by mail, fax Annie Linville at 317-635-4757 or phone her at 317-635-4755. For answers to questions, contact Mark Hopkins at 781-259-9444 or mopkins@comcast.net.

Following is a list of the focus sessions planned for ACOR 7:

- Nomadic Peoples of Iran – *Jon Thompson*
- Nomads in Anatolia – *Harald Böhmer*
- Kurdish Weavings – *Jim Burns*
- Putting Together A Collection – *Cathryn Cootner*

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ACOR 7: Register Now!

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- Baluch Weavings – *Frank Diehr*
- Suzanis – *Christian Erber*
- Lakai and Kungrat Weavings – *Bruce Froemming*
- Women and the Persian Carpet Industry – *Leonard Helfgott*
- Tibetan Rugs – *Bill Liske*
- Structural Analysis and Design – *Marla Mallett*
- Saryk Rugs and Other Weavings – *Natalia Nekrassova*
- Ikats of the World, Show and Talk – *David Paly*
- Non-Ersari Tribes of the Amu Darya – *Peter Poullada*
- Design “Markers” – *Shiv Sikri*
- Mystery Rugs – *Wendel Swan and guests*

There will also be 14 of the highly popular *Out of the Cedar Chest* sessions, small gatherings fea-

turing hands-on showings of individual collections. Each of the following will be presented twice.

- Bethany Mendenhall/Charles Lave – *Turkish weavings*
- Lawrence Kearney – *A Variety of Textiles*
- James Douglas – *Baluch*
- Erik Risman – *Ersari and other Middle Amu Darya weavings*
- Bruce Baganz – *Shah savan and others*
- Michael Wendorf – *Kurdish bags*
- Ralph & Linda Kaffel – *Favorites from their collection*

In addition, Val Arbab will present two limited-attendance, hands-on sessions on how to identify rugs.

Even beyond that, there will be a natural dye workshop, professional restorers working on-site and answering questions, a demonstration of contemporary Chilkat weaving, and guided tours of the exhibitions. It's going to be great; don't miss it.

NERS News

New members. We welcome the following additions to our roster: Barbara and Kenneth Matheson (*our apologies for inadvertently omitting their names from the previous Newsletter*), Camille Myers Breeze, Rindy Northrop.

NERS presence in HALI. A profile of NERS president *Mark Hopkins*, written by NERS member *Carl Strock*, appears on page 166 of *HALI* 131 (11-12/03). NERS members and dealers *Jeff Dworsky* and *Tom Caruso* are pictured at the Tucson Rug Bazaar on page 152 of *HALI* 132 (1-2/04).

MFA ikat panel. For the past few years NERS has been making annual contributions to the Textile Department of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. Last year's contribution went towards the purchase of a beautiful Bokhara wall hanging (*pardha*), pictured on the right. It is a silk and cotton ikat in warp-faced plain weave.

Changes at Skinner. After many years as head of Skinner's rug department and as our principal link to that auction house, *Jo Kris* has resigned from that organization. She will continue her association with

the rug world as a consultant. We wish her good luck in her endeavors.



MFA's ikat panel, ca. 1850. 7'3"x5'6.5"
Photograph @ 2003 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Upcoming Rug Events

NERS 2003/4 Meetings:

April 16: Jim Adelson and Yon Bard on Turkmen weavings

May 22: Picnic and show & tell.

Auctions:

Bonhams & Butterfields, Los Angeles, 3/2

Rippon Boswell, Wiesbaden, 3/27

Sotheby's, New York, 4/2

Bonham's, London, 4/27,28

Sotheby's, London, 4/28

Christie's, London, 4/29

Skinner, Boston, 5/8

Bonhams & Butterfields, San Francisco, 5/11

Nagel, Stuttgart, 5/18

Christie's, New York, 6/30.

Conferences:

ACOR 7, Seattle, WA, 3/25-28/04. See page 9.

Seminar on Central Asian Rugs & Textiles with

Elena Tsareva and Tom Cole, 2/17-18/04 in San Francisco. Contact Lesley Gamble at lgamble@ufl.edu for more information.

Exhibitions and Fairs:

San Francisco Tribal and Textile Arts Show, 2/13-15. For information visit www.caskeyles.com.

Antique Rugs of the Turkmen Tribes, until 4/4. University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia.

The LA Ardabil Carpet, until 5/11. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Rugs from the Caucasus, until 6/20. Textile Museum of Canada, Toronto.

Armenga's Story, the Life and Death of Arthur T. Gregorian, until 3/29. American Library and Museum, Watertown, MA. 617-926-2562 ext. 3 or sabine@armenianlibraryandmuseum.org.

Note: the ALMA Library has acquired a number of classical rug reference books, which are available for perusal by scholars and collectors.



Bakhtiari Khorjin, no. 32a in the NERS on-line bag exhibit.

Because of its large size (7'6" x 3'0"), I had to shoot it in two overlapping sections from a ladder. I corrected the perspective distortion in each section on the computer, and then joined the two sections into a single "panoramic" image. The raw section pictures are shown on page 12.

Yon Bard

Opportunity knocks!

We have received the following note from NERS members Laney and Mendy Balkin:

"Decor International Inc. is for sale after 43 years on Newbury St., Boston, selling rugs, textiles, folk art etc. Interested? Call us at 772-589-7601.....

We would like it to go to someone who really cares!"

Newsletter contributors and helpers: Yon Bard (editor), Jim Adelson, Dora Bard, Ed Berkhoff, Mark Hopkins, Ann Nicholas, Janet Smith, Jeff Spurr

Comments/contributions/for sale ads to: Yonathan Bard, e-mail doryon@rcn.com



Sections of exhibit 32a (see page 11)



February and March Meeting Directions

Directions:

From Rte. 95 (128) take the Trapelo Road West exit (#28B) in Waltham. Proceed west about 2.5 miles to a stop sign at the five-way intersection in Lincoln (there is a white planter in the middle of the intersection.) Go right on Bedford Road for 0.1 miles to Bemis Hall, a large brick building on your right. **The parish house is on your left.**

From Rte. 2 take Bedford Road, Lincoln Center exit (eastbound, turn right at light; westbound, go through light, turn right, and circle 270 degrees to cross Rte. 2 at the light.) Proceed 0.9 miles and you will see Bemis Hall, a large brick building on your left. **The parish house is on your right.**

Parking:

In back of the parish house plus along the street. It's OK to park in front of Bemis Hall **provided the building is dark and not in use.**



New England Rug Society
Post Office Box 582, Lincoln, MA 01773



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