

# ALBERTO LEVI GALLERY

MILANO

TAPPETI ANTICHI E CONTEMPORANEI DAL 1878

## Antique Textile Art IV

### A Collection of Oriental and European Carpets and Textiles

By Alberto Levi

The yearly exhibition and publication of 'Antique Textile Art' is one of the Alberto Levi Gallery's most rewarding achievements. The purpose of this monograph is to present a selection of our most significant acquisitions, which reflect the ever more eclectic character of the Alberto Levi Gallery. This year has seen us working very closely with the world of architecture and design. This growing interest was expressed in two recent exhibitions that were held in the Gallery.

Last year's autumn event was entitled 'Abstract – Carpets & Design' – an installation of tribal rugs and textiles with a pronounced abstract aesthetic shown alongside furniture and objects designed by leading architects Guido and Tito Canella. This unique alliance allowed both artistic expressions to act in a context of reciprocal appreciation.

For the springtime Salone Internazionale del Mobile, one of the main design events held every April in Milan, we decided to venture in the world of contemporary artists' rugs. In 'Contemporary Rug Art' we presented the Tibetan carpet collection of the young German designer Jan Kath. His production is characterised by an abstract and minimalist sensibility, which perfectly complemented the now established style of the Alberto Levi Gallery.

Just as the previous generation of antique carpet dealers helped us define the criteria which differentiate the best weavings from the good and the mediocre, one of the objectives of today's dealers is to highlight the features that distinguish a contemporary art rug from a mere reproduction of an antique carpet. These days we are able to produce rugs of high artistic standards that merit being included in the realm of modern art. At the same time the market's awareness of the importance of carpets in relation to interior design enables us to encourage young talents who, like Jan Kath, contribute in making 21<sup>st</sup> century carpets as innovative and creative as those made by the artists of the Art Déco and modernist period.

This year's selections include an even wider range of pieces, both in terms of date and origin. The Anatolian collection includes an extraordinary 18<sup>th</sup> century Bergama piece, a Kula rug with a particularly delicate and refined palette, an unusual Karapinar medallion carpet, a Kurdish rug of great graphic and chromatic impact and a very peculiar felt on an ivory background of strong primitive expressiveness.

The Caucasus is also well represented in many of its main typologies, including two fabulous Kazaks, a Shirvan dated 1820, a very fine Konaghend prayer rug with silk and gold threads, an unusual Shirvan with a light blue field and a Zili and a Sumakh with extremely lively palettes.

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Persian carpets and flatweaves range from minimalist kilims from the northern regions and a rare Bakhshaish of small dimensions to more classical typologies, such as two Ziegler carpets and a very fine white ground Saruk Ferahan. Tribal weavings are represented by a garden design Bakhtiari and a Qashqa'i with vertical stripes, both distinguished by a brilliant palette typical of the best examples. One of the most important acquisitions is an 18<sup>th</sup> century carpet with an Afshan pattern, previously published by Schurmann and attributed here to the province of Khorasan.

Two fabulous Agras on ivory backgrounds and a majestic Dhurrie with a tile pattern honour the Indian tradition, while a selection of Chinese carpets from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century reflect a singular sensibility and style which also characterise our choice of pieces for this special annual exhibition.

We couldn't resist including Berber and Tuareg weavings, shown this year in our 'Abstract' exhibition, as they truly exemplify tribal art of distinct modernity. Some European carpets of great interest have also been included, from with more traditional examples, such as a rare pair of Bessarabian kilims and an elegant room sized Axminster, to a series of 20<sup>th</sup> century French carpets created by the masters of that period. These include an Aubusson carpet attributed to René Joubert, a very rare Myrbor carpet designed by Jean Lurçat and two Art Déco carpets, one signed by Derche and the other attributed to Eric Bagge. Our increasing interest towards the artistic avant-garde of the twentieth century made us include three examples from the modernist period, such as a very striking Rya by Marta Maas Fjetterstroem and two carpets with kaleidoscopic designs by Verner Pantón, all of which illustrate the contiguity of textile art with the

various forms of design in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The objective of this publication is to assemble an eclectic ensemble of carpets, which as they belong to the special domain of textile art, will communicate with each other through an intimate yet universal language. The articulation of this language is the driving force of our work.