

# ALBERTO LEVI GALLERY

MILANO

TAPPETI ANTICHI E CONTEMPORANEI DAL 1878

## Antique Textile Art

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

By Alberto Levi

Antique Textile Art results from the desire to testify all the experiences acquired in almost fifteen years of activity in this field. The first love for carpets, Kurdish rugs, have led me to study the entire spectrum of tribal weavings, discovering stylistic and iconographic similarities between examples of an apparently different nature. The discovery of this continuum has characterized the style of my research, aimed at thinking of carpets without those absolute distinctions such as tribal and urban, collectible and decorative, since each of these manifestations should aspire at belonging to a single domain, that of textile art.

The enormous privilege of having began my career within a well established wholesale business, S.L. Ghassemoff, founded in 1949 by my late father Soleiman Levi, allowed me the chance to come in close contact with many and various pieces of high quality, thus learning to "feel" the carpet both from a visual and tactile point of view. The sensible teachings of my father, and of all the people involved in the textile arts that I was fortunate enough to meet over the course of time, have enabled me to develop a system of differences between an art and a craft carpet, creating within the former group a second, more detailed system of subdivision.

The opening of the gallery in 1997 has allowed me to confront myself with a larger audience, thus organising shows like China and neighbouring regions dedicated to Chinese carpets and those from nearby areas which are under China's sphere of influence, Minimal, that is a group of tribal weavings of various origins which have in common a minimalist imprint in their colours and stark graphics, Aubusson and Savonnerie, directed at illustrating two different aspects of antique French textile art. The experience gained as Chairman of the I.C.O.C. Organising Committee (the International Conference on Oriental Carpets, the ninth edition of which has successfully taken place in Italy during September 1999) permitted me, among other things, to examine a large number of carpets from various private collections, selecting the stars of an exhibition representing the best of what is in Italy, thus putting into practice those teachings that help me distinguish a masterpiece from an ordinary work of art.

In this catalogue I present a selection of pieces in various styles and origins, with the goal of illustrating the eclectic taste of my gallery. From Anatolian village rugs to French Art Decò carpets via the classics of Persia and the Caucasus, my proposition is that of going beyond the typical barriers between antique and decorative, concentrating instead on the artistic expression that brings together all of these marvellous carpets.