

HALI

The International Magazine of Antique Carpet and Textile Art



9th ICOC: Milan, Florence & Venice
Islamic Textiles in the Bargello Museum
January/February 2000 Issue 108



OUT & ABOUT IN ITALY

Away from the ICOC Dealers' Fair and lecture programme the organisers scheduled a special Saturday night event, with eleven Milanese carpet and textile galleries extending their business hours long into the night. Similar dealers' special exhibitions were to follow in both Florence and Venice.

Saturday in Milan was the most hectic day in the ICOC schedule. Downtown, near the Duomo, the narrow streets of the Cinque Vie district were buzzing with rug activity. At his via San Maurizio gallery Alberto Levi paid tribute to his late father's five decades in the wholesale business, trading as S.L. Ghassemoff. A beautiful blue-abrashed Bakhshaish, a fine small Sehna rug, a bold Chinese pillar carpet and a smart pinwheel Kazak, all demonstrated the huge range that Levi's father handled.

Around the corner, the irrepressible David Sorgato held court in his new space on via Sant'Orsola. 'Carpets from Far Eastern Routes' comprised a stylish collection of Chinese and Tibetan rugs with furniture and sculpture (including an irresistible opium bed) from Massimo Mondini of Blu Cina. Sorgato managed to keep his via Caminadella gallery busy, too, with



a show of newly acquired gabbehs.

In the fashion quarter, Davide Halevim and Emil Mirzakhanian hosted memorable exhibitions of their own. Mirzakhanian's distinguished group of classical rugs

included the mid 17th century Getty Mughal floral carpet, a 16th century East Mediterranean 'Chessboard' rug with lovely colours and a fine Mamluk. Nearby, Mirco Cattai of Mohtashem showed Kazaks, while at her Nilufar Gallery on via Spiga, Nina Yachar celebrated twenty years in the business with 'Crossings', a weird but wonderful mix of architect-designed furniture, carpets, textiles and African sculpture.

In the Sempione-Fiera area, the peripatetic Tom Murray joined Asian textile specialist Carlo Cristi to present 'Cotton for Spices: Indian Textiles for the Indonesian Market'. Their thoughtfully chosen material was beautifully arranged and Cristi's via Moscati premises assumed an air of other-worldliness. Among the pieces was a great expanse of 15th century *hamsa*-design cloth; an exquisite 15th-early 16th century Indian trade cloth (*sarasa*) made for the Toraja market and a mysterious double-ikat from Borneo.

Not to be outdone by their Milanese brethren, in Florence the evening opening of Alberto Boralevi's 'Animals in Carpets' at The Carpet Studio was so crowded that it was scarcely possible to see the rugs and textiles. Nearby, in their via dei Fossi gallery, Paolo Lazzarini and Salvatore Archimede (A&L) offered a small group of good 19th century sumakh carpets. And those who went to Dinolevi's were amply rewarded with Umberto Sorgato's Italian luxury silks and velvets.

In Venice, in his gallery close to St Mark's Square, Rascid Rahaim showed later Caucasian pieces. And as a fitting finale for those who were up to the challenge of navigating the city's labyrinthine alleys, Walter Marchi showed 'Antique Nomadic Art', a range of Central Asian rugs and textiles, a welcome venture in a country not best known for interest in Baluch and Turkmen weavings.



Top left: Emil Mirzakhanian's via Montenapoleone gallery.

Centre: Central Asian rug, ca. 1800, Marchi Collection, Venice.

Above: Indian trade cloth for the Toraja market, 15th-16th century. Thomas Murray at Cristi, Milan.

Left: Sumakh carpet (detail), east Caucasus, second half 19th century. A&L, Florence.