

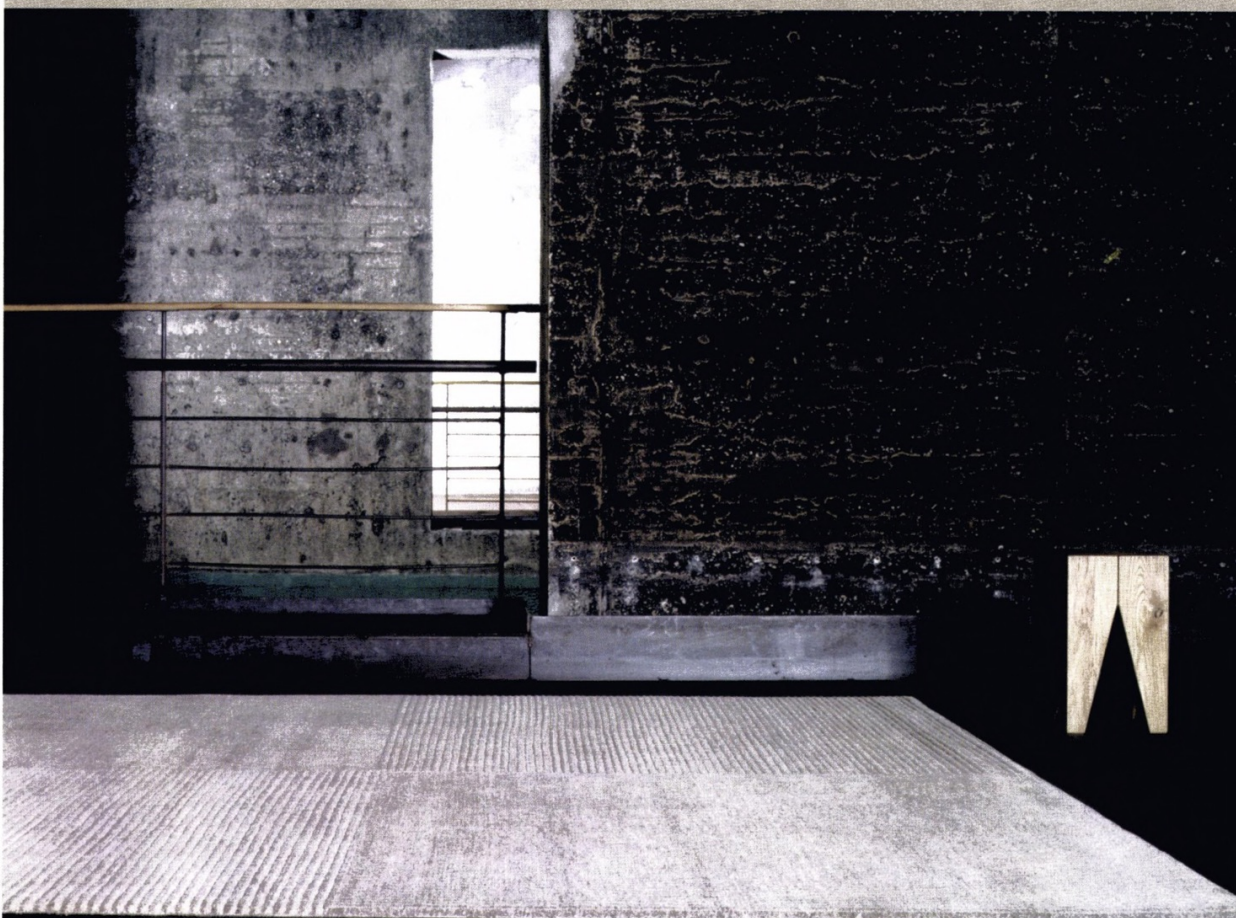
HALI

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CARPET, TEXTILE AND ISLAMIC ART

ISSUE 127 MARCH-APRIL 2003 | WASHINGTON ICOC PREVIEW PART II | CENTRAL ASIAN JULKHYR
BRITISH TEXTILES IN THE VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM | ISLAMIC PRAYER RUGS IN CONTEXT
NOH & KYOGEN THEATRE COSTUME | DOMOTEX & ATLANTA 2003 | HORSES IN ISLAMIC ART

UK £17 EUROPE £19 USA \$34 REST OF WORLD £22 \$44



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Contemporary Rug Art, Tibetan Carpets by Jan Kath

exhibited from 2nd to 23rd of April at the

Alberto Levi Gallery

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Milanese Fashion

Nunzio Crisa reports on the exhibition 'Objets d'affection' at Nilufar in Milan (23 October – 24 December 2002). In this lifestyle show Nazanin Yashar brought together objects from different cultures and mediums in such a way as to challenge the preconceptions of viewers as well as offer fresh insights into artistic inspiration.

The title of this exhibition, 'Objets d'affection', is a phrase borrowed from Man Ray. He used it to describe the Dadaist creatures that appeared in some of his photographs, whose task was to "amuse, disturb, mystify or provoke reaction... and entertain – the only sure road to appreciation".

These words introduced the show's lavish catalogue, which elegantly served to extend the scope of the objects displayed in the finite space of Nazanin Yashar's via della Spiga gallery. The aim of the exhibition was to attempt to trace the 'invisible' threads linking East and West, antique and modern, tradition and innovation. That such relationships exist became evident when looking at an Italian designed carpet from the 1970s juxtaposed with an antique Chinese cabinet and a contemporary hanging lamp. Moreover, the

choice of items, most of which were aesthetically interesting in their own right, invited the interior-design minded visitor to propose affinities between objects through reference to common materials or by suggesting cultural relationships.

European designer furniture from the second half of the 20th century, along with a few 19th century Chinese and Japanese pieces, was complemented by carpets with distinct regional identities. Most were late 19th century Persian and Far Eastern or 20th century European. Among the latter were a 1930s carpet made by Emile Gaudissart (left), a Swedish Arts & Crafts carpet designed by Märta Måås-Fjetterström in 1934, and a powerful Danish carpet from the 1960s.

Recent contemporary inter-

ior design trends have favoured ton-sur-ton palettes, specifically 'earth' tones, so it was no great surprise, especially considering the exhibition's target audience, to see a number of monochromatic flatweaves variously attributed to the



Above: Room setting with *Secret Passage* carpet by Bruni Munari, Italy, 1970s

Left: Carpet by Emile Gaudissart, signed E.G., France, 1930s



Anti-Atlas in Morocco (the type illustrated on the cover of HALI 120), Cappadocia in central Anatolia, and southern Persia. Their calm and minimalist aesthetic makes these items of great decorative value in today's market, as are the antique Tibetan rugs that have long been associated with the Nilufar name.

Among my particular favourites were a mad 1971 Italian 'dragon hearth' runner made up in three separate sections, sold within seconds of the opening, and a cotton pile rug (*dantsu*) from late 19th century Japan which would have been used in tea ceremonies.

This eclectic and well-balanced exhibition attracted a good number of visitors, including people who usually hesitate to enter a carpet gallery, and prefer to concentrate on the gallery's neighbouring premises such as the Dolce & Gabbana or Armani showrooms.

MINIMAL & MODERN

Milan rug dealer Alberto Levi has explored the possibilities of antique carpets in contemporary interiors in a series of gallery exhibitions, latterly involving collaborations with artists, architects and interior designers. For his first show devoted to modern rugs – timed to coincide with the *Salone Internazionale del Mobile* in Milan – Levi has chosen to feature the work of the designer and producer Jan Kath. The German designer's carpets, made in Nepal using Tibetan wool, have quickly gained international recognition, and were recently featured in *Contemporary Rugs*, the influential book by Chris Farr, Matt Bourne and Fiona Leslie. 'Contemporary Rug Art – Tibetan Carpets by Jan Kath' (2-23 April 2003) will feature the entire collection of Kath's designs, alongside contemporary furniture by avant-garde German producers E15.

For Levi, new technology, combined with a more sophisticated market approach to rugs as design, has made possible the encouragement of fresh talent. Designers such as Kath, he says, "will contribute to making 21st century carpets as innovative and artistic as those of the European artists of the Art Deco and Modernist period." He believes that just as the previous generation of carpet dealers helped the public to understand quality in antique carpets, so today's dealers will offer a way of distinguishing between 'art' carpets and mere recreations or reproductions.

