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Martin & Ullman Artweave Textile Gallery

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The Market for Central Asian Ikats

by
Gail Martin

This site seminar presentation will illuminate the history of the market for Central Asian ikat in the west, since the latter part of the 19th century, but with particular focus on the more recent personal experience of the panelist. How is it that these beautiful, vibrantly colored textiles, created within a particular cultural tradition, became known, valued and collected so far away from their place of origin? Although carpets and embroideries from Central Asia have been known to outsiders since well before the 20th century, it was not until well into the 20th century that the ikats from Central Asia became known to the western world. What cultural and/or political forces brought ikat to the attention of foreigners and eventually, by the late 1960's and early 1970's, for sale in large quantities? It was during the early 1970's that my partner and I began to buy ikats. The first ever exhibition of Central Asian ikat was at our gallery in 1972. The desirability of the wall hangings and robes and the search for the earliest, finest and most unusual pieces will come to light via a slide presentation and viewing of wall hangings from the Guido Goldman Collection.

Gail Martin is an art dealer specializing in ancient, antique and ethnographic textiles for more than twenty five years. As co-founder of Martin & Ullman Artweave Textile Gallery (in 1994 renamed Gail Martin Gallery) she introduced rare and artistically significant textiles to this country and was one of the driving forces that established such textiles as fine art in this country. Following travels in Afghanistan and Turkey, she has been instrumental in contributing to the body of knowledge about a variety of Central Asian textiles through her collecting activities, numerous exhibitions and her dedication to the preservation and conservation of these fragile objects. As curator of The Guido Goldman Collection of Central Asian Ikat since its inception in 1975, she has helped build and care for the finest and largest grouping of these resist dyed textiles in the world. Gail Martin is the curatorial consultant to the exhibition, IKAT: Splendid Silks of Central Asia, organized by the American Foundation for Textile Art, Inc.