



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** August 31, 2007

**Contact:** Cyndi Bohlin, Communications & Marketing Manager  
(202) 667-0441, ext. 54 or [cbohlin@textilemuseum.org](mailto:cbohlin@textilemuseum.org)

**Press Reception & Tour: Wednesday, September 26 at 2:00 pm**

## **UPCOMING EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE GENESIS OF THE TEXTILE MUSEUM'S COLLECTIONS**

**Ahead of His Time: The Collecting Vision of George Hewitt Myers**  
**September 28, 2007 – February 17, 2008**

**August 31, 2007, Washington, DC** — An upcoming exhibition at The Textile Museum traces the

growth and interests of its founder, George Hewitt Myers, as a pioneering collector and connoisseur. *Ahead of His Time: The Collecting Vision of George Hewitt Myers* is on view September 28, 2007 – February 17, 2008. Through 28 textiles from many non-Western cultures, the exhibition explores Myers' strategies for collecting as they developed over time and the factors that compelled him to collect textiles above alternate art media. The exhibition also demonstrates how he utilized his collections during his lifetime. Visitors will enrich their understanding of an early 20th-century collector and his skill in amassing the internationally renowned and respected collection of textiles which established The Textile Museum.



George Hewitt Myers, founder of  
The Textile Museum. Archival photo.

### **Myers' Collecting Philosophy**

For George Hewitt Myers (1875-1957), the attraction of the non-Western textiles that formed his collection was their high level of artistic sophistication, which he saw as inspiring and influencing the main traditions of art in the Western world. He was intrigued by the fact that textiles were most often products of anonymous artists, unassociated with a single artist's name or reputation. The guiding light for his collecting was a textile's design. Myers felt the anonymous artists who produced the textiles he collected had an unexplained genius for color, as well as great patience and pride in their work. Impressed by the history and longevity of



Carpet ("Dragon" rug)  
Caucasus  
Late 18th century  
The Textile Museum R36.1.2  
Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in  
1923

--more--

the textile arts, he found that the early weavings from non-Western sources were unmatched by textiles produced in European cultures. Myers continually explored the evolution of design and technique – pursuing the question of “what went before a certain piece to make it as it was.”

When he first purchased a few village rugs in the 1890s, Myers did not anticipate the several thousand textiles he would go on to collect during his lifetime. As the years passed and his finances allowed, however, his interests grew to include other types of non-Western textiles along with examples from earlier periods. Myers began acquiring textiles more methodically in the second decade of his collecting. His aim was to assemble a collection that was as diverse as possible in order to build a comprehensive view of non-Western textiles. In 1925, he orchestrated the transformation of his house into a museum, and of his private collection into a public one. By the late 1930s, the breadth and depth of the Museum’s textile collection rendered it internationally significant.

### **Myers’ Collecting Strategies**

Myers had a good eye, educated himself, knew a lot about the material he collected and relied on knowledgeable people to help him. These qualities allowed him to be experimental in new areas of collecting and to spend less – a necessity because of his more limited purchasing power. Focusing on areas that were not in demand at the time, he avidly collected undervalued textiles such as 15th-century carpets produced in Egypt during the Mamluk Dynasty, in the late 1920s and 1950s, and 17th to 18th century Greek Island embroidery in the 1920s.

The majority of Myers’ textiles were acquired through dealers based in New York, Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, Munich and Cairo. Myers was known as a well-informed and highly intelligent buyer. He always sought advice from a large network of respected scholars, including curators of The Textile Museum and scholars at other institutions. Myers always reserved for himself, however, the right to make final decisions about purchases.

Beyond the personal pleasure he took in owning textiles, Myers supported the use of his collections to educate and instill in people an appreciation of good design, workmanship, ingenuity and beauty through textiles. To increase the usefulness of the collection, he actively engaged specialists to study textiles in his collection and disseminate their knowledge through lectures, publications and exhibitions. Myers himself often selected textiles from the collection to take on tour, lecturing to school and civic groups around the country. He strived to make textiles accepted as an important component of art history and to encourage scientific research on the care and conservation of textiles.

### **Textiles on View in the Exhibition**

Objects in the exhibition include jewels of The Textile Museum’s collections. A highlight is a stunning carpet from the Caucasus, a type often referred to as “Dragon” rug, which dates to the late 18th century. Myers purchased this rug in 1923 from the American Art Galleries auction that sold the famous

--more--

collection of Carl Robert Lamm (1856-1938) and his wife Dora, owners of Näsby Slott, near Stockholm in Sweden. The earliest collected textile in the exhibition is a Caucasian carpet Myers purchased in 1905. After purchasing a tunic identified as from the highland site of Chavin by the dealer, Myers sought the assistance of scholar Morris Crawford to correctly attribute the piece. A late 15th-century embroidered hanging from Spain bought in 1924 from a well-known, New York based dealer illustrates Myers' interest in development and spread of textile designs.

*Ahead of His Time* is curated by Sumru Belger Krody, Associate Curator of Eastern Hemisphere Collections, working in consultation with Ann Pollard Rowe, Curator of Western Hemisphere Collections. The exhibition is complemented by a Web site feature that discusses these topics as well as Myers' life and the evolution of The Textile Museum: [www.textilemuseum.org/AheadofHisTime/](http://www.textilemuseum.org/AheadofHisTime/)

### **Related Programming**

#### **GALLERY TALK & TOUR**

**Saturday, September 29 • 11:00 am**

Join exhibition curators Sumru Belger Krody and Rebecca A. T. Stevens for a tour of the exhibitions *Ahead of His Time: The Collecting Vision of George Hewitt Myers* and *Private Pleasures: Collecting Contemporary Textile Art*. **FREE; no reservations required. Limited to 35 participants.**

---

#### **THE TM FALL SYMPOSIUM: “The Collecting Passion”**

**Friday, October 19 – Sunday October 21**

Complementing and expanding ideas from all three fall exhibitions at The Textile Museum, this weekend conference explores the history and current state of collecting from different perspectives. Participants enjoy a varied program of presentations by scholars and collectors, receptions, exhibition tours and a special “Show-and-Tell” session facilitated by Textile Museum Trustee Michael M. Seidman.

Speakers include: **Neil Harris**, Preston and Sterling Morton Professor of History and of Art History, University of Chicago; **Diane and Marc Grainer**, collectors of contemporary fine craft, past President of James Renwick Alliance (Diane) and Chair of the American Craft Council (Marc); **Harold Koda**, Curator in Charge, Costume Institute, Metropolitan Museum of Art; **Julie Schafler Dale**, owner and founder of Julie: Artisans' Gallery (1973-present), the foremost showcase for clothing as an art form; **Titi Halle**, owner of Cora Ginsburg LLC: a gallery selling exquisite and rare works of textile art from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and **James D. Burns**, a fifty-year collector of rugs and textiles from the Near East and Far East, and author of several books on the subject.

**Early Bird Registration (ends September 30):** \$215/members; \$260/non-members (includes a one-year membership to The Textile Museum); \$175/student (valid I.D. required).

**Regular Registration:** \$260/members; \$305/non-members (includes a one-year membership to The Textile Museum); \$215/student (valid I.D. required).

For a registration form and additional information, visit [www.textilemuseum.org/symposium.htm](http://www.textilemuseum.org/symposium.htm), call (202) 667-0441, ext. 64 or email [reception@textilemuseum.org](mailto:reception@textilemuseum.org). *Generous support for The Textile Museum Fall Symposium was provided by SunTrust Bank, The Jacobs Company, and Diane and Marc Grainer.*

---

#### **FAMILY FIRST SATURDAYS: “What’s in Your Collection?”**

**Saturday, December 1 • 1 – 4 pm**

We are asking young collectors, ages five to 18, to share their collecting passions with us. Please send images of your collection along with a written description to [info@textilemuseum.org](mailto:info@textilemuseum.org) by November 1. Tell us why you decided to collect these particular objects and what they mean to you. Five collectors will be selected to participate in a mini-exhibition on December 1 and be featured on the Museum's Web site! **FREE; no reservations required.**

**--more--**

## **KINDLER CONCERTS**

George and Louise Myers were prolific entertainers and often invited young musicians and composers to debut new work in their drawing room. One of these musicians, Hans Kindler, founded the National Symphony Orchestra in 1931. This series is a tribute to the Myers' support of and dedication to the performing arts.

### **Duo Concertone**

**Wednesday, December 5 • 6:30 pm**

Natasha Bogachek, violin; Zino Bogachek, violin

### **Delta String Trio**

**Wednesday, January 16 • 6:30 pm**

Claudia Chudacoff, violin; Eric Dewaardt, viola; Lori Barnet, cello

### **Baroque Music Works**

**Wednesday, January 30 • 6:30 pm**

Robert Craft, recorder; William Neel, harpsichord; Jacqueline Anderson, violin

Each performance is followed by a wine and cheese reception. **Fee: \$8/members; \$12/non-members.**

**Advance registration required. Call (202) 667-0441, ext. 64.**

---

### **LECTURE: “Good Rug, Great Rug”**

**Saturday, December 15 • 1:30 pm**

Collector and Textile Museum Trustee Fred Ingham leads a lively discussion about recognizing quality in carpets and knowing what's collectible today. **Fee: Free/members; \$5/non-members. Advance registration required. Call (202) 667-0441, ext. 64.**

---

### **LECTURE: “A Generation of Collectors”**

**Wednesday, January 23 • 6:30 pm**

George Hewitt Myers' interest in collecting textiles was shared by many prominent members of his generation. Join Sumru Belger Krody, Associate Curator of Eastern Hemisphere Collections, and Thomas Farnham, a Research Associate at The Textile Museum, for a discussion that explores collecting ideas and tendencies from his era.

**FREE; no reservations required. Limited to 35 participants.**

####

Founded in 1925 by George Hewitt Myers, The Textile Museum is an international center for the exhibition, study, collection and preservation of the textile arts. The Museum explores the role that textiles play in the daily and ceremonial life of individuals the world over. Special attention is given to textiles of the Near East, Asia, Africa and the indigenous cultures of the Americas. The Museum also presents exhibitions of historical and contemporary quilts, and fiber art. With a collection of more than 18,000 textiles and rugs and an unparalleled library, The Textile Museum is a unique and valuable resource for people locally, nationally and internationally.

The Textile Museum is located at 2320 'S' Street, NW in Washington, DC. The Museum is open Monday through Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Admission is free with a suggested donation of \$5.00 for non-members. For further information, call 202-667-0441 or visit [www.textilemuseum.org](http://www.textilemuseum.org). Sign up for the Museum's e-newsletter to receive the latest information on exhibitions, public programs and special promotions!

In 2008 The Textile Museum will open a new 23,400-square-foot venue, located at 421 7th Street, NW, in downtown Washington, DC. This second site almost doubles the Museum's space overall, making possible the presentation of larger and more varied temporary exhibitions as well as public programs and an expanded shop. Read more at [www.textilemuseum.org/secondsite.htm](http://www.textilemuseum.org/secondsite.htm)

<p><b>For more information or images</b>, please contact Cyndi Bohlin at 202-667-0441, ext. 54, or by email at <a href="mailto:cbohlin@textilemuseum.org">cbohlin@textilemuseum.org</a> or visit <a href="http://www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm">www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm</a>.</p>
--