



THE TEXTILE MUSEUM

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## STRIKING 19<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY IKAT FABRICS UNVEILED IN UPCOMING EXHIBITION

*Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats*

will be on view at The Textile Museum October 16, 2010 through March 13, 2011



Robe  
Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Bukhara  
1870s-1880s  
The Textile Museum 2005.36.30  
The Megalli Collection

**September 8, 2010, Washington, D.C.** — The striking colors and bold patterns of ikat, a textile woven from pre-dyed thread, have earned these fabrics international recognition as the latest trend in fashion and interior design. Visitors to *Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats*, opening at **The Textile Museum** on **October 16, 2010**, will discover why the ikat tradition has been considered a cultural treasure in Uzbekistan for over two centuries. The exhibition will showcase a selection of 19<sup>th</sup>-century ikat garments and textiles from the museum's Megalli Collection in engaging, off-the-wall installations that situate ikat production, use and aesthetic significance to Central Asian culture within a socio-historic context. The exhibition also heralds the recent revival of this art form in Uzbekistan after near

extinction during the Soviet era, coinciding with the global popularity of this aesthetic through popular design houses such as Oscar de la Renta, J. Crew, and Pottery Barn. The more than 60 garments and other textiles in the exhibition have never been exhibited before. The exhibition will be accompanied by a full-color comprehensive book, published by The Textile Museum, which will present new scholarship and illustrate the collection in its entirety.

### About the Exhibition

Unlike a majority of textiles that are woven with solid-colored thread or are printed or dyed after weaving, ikat is produced using the reverse process. Individual threads are first dyed with several colors that, when woven together, produce the energetic patterns unique to this textile tradition. Successful application of this complex technique requires extensive forethought and teamwork between various craftsmen and the designer. For this reason, ikat has been celebrated in Central Asia as one of the region's great arts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when costume indicated an individual's social rank, wealth, domestic role, tribal affiliation and geographic origin, ikat was considered the most prestigious material to wear. Alarminglly,



Ikat from Oscar de la Renta's Spring 2005 collection. Photographer Fernanda Calfat. 51299358 (RM) Getty Images.

however, this art form was nearly lost during the Soviet era. Now, 19 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan's ikat industry is currently under renewal by artists using the traditional technique. Ikat continues to gain international recognition with recent trends in fashion and home décor motivated by designers who are inspired by the textile's bold motifs.



Fabric merchant at bazaar selling ikat fabrics. Photograph by Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii, Samarkand 1911. The Library of Congress: LC-DIG-prokc-21725.

With an appreciation for the textile's increasing global popularity, *Colors of the Oasis* will trace the historic development of ikat production and its contemporary revival. The pieces featured in the exhibition were selected from The Textile Museum's Megalli collection, a diverse array of 19<sup>th</sup>-century ikat robes, pants, dresses, *bohce* (wrapping cloth), hangings, fragments and cradle covers donated to the institution by collector Murad Megalli in 2005 and 2009. The exhibition is divided into three sections that guide the visitor through **ikat design and artistic principles**, **the stories of the people who used them and how**, and **the technical aspect of ikat making** and the people involved in this craft. Dynamic installations, including a setting inspired by a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Uzbek interior, life-like displays using dress forms and historic photographs, situate the collection within a socio-historic context and encourage the visitor to appreciate the textile's versatility and

significance to Central Asian culture. Models demonstrating the dyeing process constructed by MICA (Maryland Institute College of Art) students provide insight into how these fabrics are made. *Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats* is curated by Sumru Belger Krody, Curator of Eastern Hemisphere Collections at The Textile Museum.

The accompanying book, *Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats*, is the first significant publication on Central Asian ikats produced in the U.S. in over a decade. The book, edited by Krody, introduces the latest research on ikat aesthetics and costume history with a concise narrative of ikat production in Central Asia by contributing authors Feza Çakmut, Mary M. Dusenbury, Kate Fitz Gibbon, Andrew Hale, Sumru Belger Krody, Sayera Makhkamova and Susan Meller. Beautifully illustrated with high quality images and historic prints, including a detailed catalog of the entire 160-piece Megalli Collection, the catalog is available through The Textile Museum Shop: [www.textilemuseumshop.org](http://www.textilemuseumshop.org).

### **Related Programs**

The Textile Museum plans to inaugurate *Colors of the Oasis* with a weekend symposium, ***Tying the Rainbow: Reexamining Central Asian Ikats*** from **Friday, October 15 – Sunday, October 17**. The distinct collection will be unveiled with an **evening reception** for Textile Museum members and symposium attendees on October 15. A day-long **lecture series** on October 16 will include presentations on ikat's production history, socio-cultural importance in Central Asia and the textile's influence on contemporary global fashion. Speakers include Dr. Anne Bissonnette, Associate Professor and Curator of the Clothing and Textiles Collection at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada; Mary M. Dusenbury, Research Curator at the Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas; Andrew Hale, scholar and *Colors of the Oasis* catalog contributor, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Dr. Jeff Sahadeo, Director of the Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada; Dr. Elena Tsareva, Head of Textile Research at the Kunstkamera Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia; and Philippa Watkins, Senior Tutor in Constructed Textiles at the Royal College of Art, London, UK. The symposium will conclude on October 17 with a **curator's tour** of the exhibition and a **show-and-tell** of Central Asian ikats

from registrants' collections. For more details or to register, visit [www.textilemuseum.org/symposium.htm](http://www.textilemuseum.org/symposium.htm) or call (202) 667-0441, ext. 64.

While *Colors of the Oasis* is on view, The Textile Museum will also host a number of exhibition-related events, including demonstrations, interactive family programs, performances, gallery talks, lectures and the popular after-hours "PM @ The TM" series. For updates or more information on Textile Museum programs, visit [www.textilemuseum.org](http://www.textilemuseum.org) or call (202) 667-0441.

### **About the Curator**

Sumru Belger Krody, curator of Eastern Hemisphere Collections at The Textile Museum, is considered the leading authority on Ottoman Turkish and Greek embroidery. She has been with The Textile Museum for over 15 years and has served as head of the Eastern Hemisphere curatorial department since 2001. Krody's previous exhibitions include *Flowers of Silk & Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery* (2004-5); *Floral Perspectives in Carpet Design* (2006); *Harpies, Mermaids and Tulips: Embroidery of the Greek Islands and Epirus Region* (2006); and *Ahead of His Time: The Collecting Vision of George Hewitt Myers* (2007-8). Krody has previously authored two exhibition catalogs, *Harpies, Mermaids, and Tulips* (2006) and *Flowers of Silk and Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery* (2000). Krody also serves on the board of the Textile Society of America.

### **About The Textile Museum**

Established 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, 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, D.C. The Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free with a suggested donation of \$5 for non-members. For more information, call (202) 667-0441 or visit [www.textilemuseum.org](http://www.textilemuseum.org).

**For more information or images**, please contact Cyndi Bohlin at (202) 667-0441, ext. 78, or by e-mail at [cbohlin@textilemuseum.org](mailto:cbohlin@textilemuseum.org) or visit [www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm](http://www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm).