

Rachel Bucci
Director of Marketing and Communications
202-667-0441, ext. 42

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 10, 2006

Contact: Cyndi Bohlin, Communications Coordinator, 202-667-0441, ext. 17

**Seldom Seen: Director's Choice
from the Museum's Collections
February 10 – July 30, 2006**

January 10, 2006, Washington, DC — Seldom Seen: Director's Choice from the Museum's Collections presents a group of 28 rarely exhibited textiles selected by The Textile Museum's new director, Daniel Walker. Working in consultation with the Museum's curators, Mr. Walker chose each object based on some compelling visual quality or aspect. The textiles included in the exhibition are varied in terms of culture and function, and represent the major geographic areas traditionally collected by the Museum. Included are textiles from South America, Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Japan. "It is a tribute to the richness of the Museum's collections, which number more than 17,000 objects, that an exhibition featuring such first-rate but rarely seen textiles could be presented many times over," noted Mr. Walker.

The exhibition features many special pieces, including a stunning **Persian kilim** acquired by Museum founder George Hewitt Myers in 1926, the year after The Textile Museum was officially established. While widely published, the kilim has not been exhibited since 1987. It was a favorite of Myers, who used the design for his personal bookplate. Like many other classical Persian rugs, the pattern, adapted from designs conceived for manuscript bindings and illumination, features a central medallion, corner medallions, and a cartouche border. Birds and animals, real and imaginary, writhe and romp across a field of vines and blossoms. The kilim is in breathtakingly pristine condition, with luscious colors and shimmering metal-wrapped thread.



Also included is a **Coptic tapestry** which has not been exhibited since 1982. The tapestry, representing an architectural assemblage of two columns and a triangular gable, would have been used as a curtain or hanging. Another treasure, to be exhibited for the first time, is an embroidered **Paracas-style alpaca mantle** from the Museum's extraordinary pre-Columbian Peruvian holdings. The mantle features free-falling ghoulish-like figures with leering smiles and streaming hair.

The exhibition also includes a group of little-known early textiles from the Middle East with inscriptions or animals in roundels. African textiles include a cluster of objects from Cameroon – three **Bamum sculptural hats**, which have never been exhibited, and a **Hausa tie-dyed wrapped dress** of extraordinary vitality. South Asian material includes a **sari** from the Coromandel Coast of India with inlaid silver-wrapped threads and a **skirt from Laos**, on view for the first time ever, embellished with prismatic geometric patterns. From Japan there is an **Ainu elm-bark coat** with brilliant abstract embroidered patterns and a **suo costume** for the Nô theater with rippling surface ornament suggesting constant motion.

Daniel Walker was appointed director of The Textile Museum in May 2005. Prior to that he was the Patti Cadby Birch Curator in Charge, Department of Islamic Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, a position he held for more than 17 years. He has published and lectured extensively on diverse topics related to Islamic art, particularly carpets and textiles. At The Metropolitan Museum of Art Mr. Walker curated the landmark exhibition *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era*, which is accompanied by a book of the same title.

Related Educational Programming

GALLERY TALK & TOUR

Saturday, February 11 • 11:00 am

Join Museum Director Daniel Walker for a tour of the exhibition Seldom Seen: Director's Choice from the Museum's Collections. FREE; no reservations required. Limited to 35 participants.

CELEBRATION OF TEXTILES

Saturday, June 3 • 10 am - 4 pm & Sunday, June 4 • 1 - 4 pm

Visitors of all ages are invited to explore the textile arts and cultures of the world through a multitude of activities and demonstrations in the Museum's exhibitions, historic buildings and garden. Use cloth and thread to create an embroidery inspired by textiles in the exhibition Harpies, Mermaids, and Tulips: Embroidery of the Greek Islands and Epirus Region. Presented in connection with the Dupont-Kalorama Museums Consortium's Museum Walk Weekend. FREE; no reservations required.

--more--

LECTURE: “George Hewitt Myers: An American Original”

Thursday, June 8 • 12 – 1 pm

Often referred to as a ‘jewel’ or a ‘gem’, The Textile Museum is a testament to the vision and unerring eye of its founder, George Hewitt Myers, a pioneer in the appreciation of textiles as an art form and one of America’s earliest textile collectors. Established in 1925, this small museum has assumed a revered place in the international museum community not only for the quality of its collections and library, but also for its leadership in the study, preservation, and interpretation of the textile arts. Join Director Daniel Walker as he takes visitors on an exploration of the life and collection of George Hewitt Myers and how The Textile Museum has evolved over the years. FREE; no reservations required. Space is limited.

GALLERY TALKS: “Seldom Seen: Lunchtime Textile Talks”

Take a break and join Textile Museum curators for a series of lunchtime talks on the exhibition Seldom Seen: Director’s Choice from the Museum’s Collections. Featuring 28 rarely exhibited works chosen by Director Daniel Walker, Seldom Seen highlights textiles from South America, Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Japan, giving visitors an opportunity to explore diversity of the Museum’s holdings. FREE; no reservations required. Limited to 35 participants.

Thursday, June 15 • 12 pm

Oriental Rugs

Daniel Walker, Director

Thursday, June 22 • 12 pm

Southeast Asian Textiles

Mattiebelle Gittinger, Research Associate, Southeast Asian Textiles

Thursday, June 29 • 12 pm

Western Hemisphere Textiles

Ann Pollard Rowe, Curator, Western Hemisphere Collections

Thursday, July 8 • 12 pm

Islamic Textiles

Sumru Belger Krody, Associate Curator, Eastern Hemisphere Collections

##

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 17,000 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 - Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Admission is free; suggested donation is \$5.00. For further information, call 202-667-0441.

For more information or images, please contact Cyndi Bohlin at 202-667-0441, ext. 17, or by email at cbohlin@textilemuseum.org or visit www.textilemuseum.org/about/pressroom.htm.