



ORIENTAL RUG SOCIETY OF NSW

P.O. Box 343 Woollahra NSW 1350

www.rugsociety.org.au

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NEXT MEETING

Thursday 11 April 2013

7.15 pm Refreshments

7.45 Talk



April Talk: Rugs as Islamic Art

All Islamic art collections include colourful ceramics, shapely metalwork, sparkling tilework, brilliant miniature paintings -- and carpets. In fact, what we call oriental carpets are often termed Islamic carpets!

At our April 11 meeting, ORS President Leigh Mackay will explore the theme of oriental carpets as Islamic art, and place them in the artistic context of the three great Islamic empires: Safavid Persia, Ottoman Turkey and Mughal India.

Leigh holds a Masters degree in Islamic studies, and has been a devotee of the arts of Islam since living in Iran and travelling widely in Turkey, Central Asia, India, Malaysia and elsewhere.

'I hope to show why the rugs and carpets we so admire are not artistically isolated — why they are not only 'oriental' but Islamic too,' Leigh says.

Entry is the usual **\$15 for members, \$25 for guests** -- but only \$15 if they join on the night.

ORS Annual General Meeting

At the ORS AGM on 14 March, attended by 28 members, President Leigh Mackay reported that

our Society was thriving, with an average of 40 people attending each talk. The reciprocal relationship with the PHM continues, and the Committee was considering another donation. Treasurer Ruth Larner reported that ORS finances were in excellent shape.

Former Deputy President Matt Dickie left the Committee but intends to remain active in the ORS. Matt was warmly thanked for his past work. Christina Sumner, formerly the PHM's representative on the ORS Committee, successfully stood for election as a full Committee member.

The Executive and Committee elected for 2013 are: President, Leigh Mackay; Deputy President, Gail Broadbent; Treasurer, Ruth Larner; Secretary, Ian Perryman. Committee: Pamela Leuzinger, Leith Conybeare, Peter Court, Mike Gallagher, Sandra Forbes, Christine Inglis, Ruth Larner, Rachel Miller, Christina Sumner.

A report on the Show-and-Tell that followed the AGM appears on the next page.



Membership Renewals

Memberships for 2013 are now due: single members \$45, couples \$55. We regret this will be your last Newsletter if you have not renewed. You can do so by direct debit (instructions on ORS website above) or by posting your cheque to the address above.

Meeting Dates in 2013 - Please Note!

**11 April, 13 June, 8 August, 10 October.
December, tba**

Following the AGM, the evening segued happily into an interesting and wide-ranging 'show and tell'.

Peter Court opened with three unusual, intricately woven ceremonial bands from West Timor. He had bought them in the US, where the vendor described them as headbands; however, his reading confirmed they were waistbands worn by Timorese headhunters! Then, after showing us a beautifully subtle Javanese batik from the 1920s-30s and a Lao shoulder piece (**at left**), Peter produced a contemporary *Wagga*, made for him as a gift. Christina Sumner explained that *Wagga* bags or quilts were part of the Australian bush tradition of thrift and functionality, and were first made in the late 1800s from wheat or flour bags roughly stitched together. The PHM has a good collection of early *Waggas* (examples on its web site). In more recent times, making *Waggas* have become a contemporary patchwork craft.



In contrast, the next item was Pamela Leuzinger's Qashgai gabbeh runner (**right**) from the 1980s, handwoven, heavy and irregular. An audience member commented that the rug looked like an abstract painting, and Pamela explained that was why she loved it

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Matt Dickie, always on for a good tribal, showed us some special bag-faces. The wool of the first one, Luri from western Iran, Iran, was extremely silky and lustrous. Matt also showed two kilim bags, either Baktiari or Luri, from the 1940s, featuring motifs of stylised bird-heads and a 'Union Jack'. Matt explained that the Baktiari and Luri tribes are closely related and still migrate annually from the plains to the Zagros Mountains for summer grazing – today, however, by pickup truck, not horse and donkey.



Sylvia Longfoot (**left, with Ian Perryman**) presented a Shirvan prayer rug from the eastern Caucasus dating from the late 19th century. It was very finely knotted and its age made it relatively rare. More textiles came next: Bob Climpson showed a large ceremonial blanket from North Burma, cotton with supplementary weft, which contrasted with his other recent trophy, a colourfully embroidered Akha jacket and leggings from northern Thailand.

To great acclaim, Ian Perryman flung out a Persian silk tapestry — a copy of a Raphael tapestry

showing Pomona and Pan, their cupid entourage looking rather more Persian than either the early Greeks or Raphael himself might have expected (**right, with Peter Dalton**).

As a finale, Chris Sumner brought out two textiles she particularly loves from her own collection. The first, a large embroidered silk hanging from Uzbekistan, dated from the late 19th century. The second piece was a delicate length of embroidered silk purchased in Aleppo, Syria, the origin and age of which was uncertain, but its charm definitely not.

