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SELDOM SEEN: DIRECTOR'S CHOICE FROM THE TEXTILE MUSEUM'S COLLECTIONS

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 ghou-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 NŪ 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.

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.

DC Emergency Radio Network Looking for Volunteers

The DC Emergency Radio Network is looking for volunteer Communications Specialists. The DC Emergency Radio Network uses inexpensive FRS and GMRS radios to communicate during an emergency. These radios, which have a range of 1/2 to 5 miles, can be purchased at numerous area stores and are easy to use. FRS and GMRS radios are those little walkie-talkie type radios you frequently see families with at the beach or Disneyworld. (And that gives you an idea of how easy they are to use.) The DC Emergency Radio Network works even when cell phones, land line phones and the Internet are down.

DCERN Communications Specialists are the backbone of our emergency communications

network: Communications Specialists are DCERN members who are certain (or nearly so) to be on the air during an emergency.

While hundreds of people in the Washington, DC area are part of the DC Emergency Radio Network, it's important to have a core of DCERN members who can ensure that there's a critical mass of people on the air during an emergency, so that no matter where you are, there will be somebody to talk to.

There's no training needed to become a DCERN Communications Specialist, but I do have guidelines that I can email to you, or which you can download from More material will be prepared for DCERN Communications Specialists soon.

If you're interested in being a

DCERN Communications Specialist, or learning more about DCERN, please email me at or call me at 202-986-9275. There's more information at www.dcradio.org and <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dcern>

DCCA ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The DCCA Environment Committee needs volunteers to help with ongoing activities such as: Street Trees, Tree Guards, Trash and Rats as well as visual pollution such as graffiti.

For more information contact Committee Chair Don Jones at (202) 588-0678 or donald.jones136@verizon.net.

Castles of the Crusades Exhibit at National Geographic

Visitors to the National Geographic Museum at Explorers Hall will catch a glimpse of life in the Middle Ages when two large, intricately detailed models of a Crusader castle and a bustling medieval bazaar go on display on May 12. *The Castles of the Crusades: A View in Miniature* exhibit runs through Sept. 4

A model of the Crac des Chevaliers (Castle of Knights), the largest and best-preserved Crusader castle ever built in the Middle East, located in what is now Syria, shows the castle in 1271 as it is being besieged by the Mamluk sultan, Baybars. The 1:25-scale model covers about 20 x 20 feet and contains some 2,000 hand-painted figurines depicting scenes of military and civilian life, including Christian and Muslim fighters and pilgrims and peasants with their cattle sheltering in the castle.

The model, which reconstructs every detail of the castle architecture and what people and life of the period were like, shows attackers destabilizing the outer castle walls and advancing to the center of the castle using heavy siege machines. Inside the castle one can see the large dormitory that housed 2,000 people, the castle yard, the knights' hall, and the kitchens.

The model was built by German architect Bernhard Siepen and a team from the International Castle Society, based in Aachen, Germany. They worked from maps, drawings, and diagrams, as well as videos and recent on-site measurements.

Siepen and his team also constructed the model of the Bazaar of Aleppo, which presents the color

and bustle of market life as it was in this important Middle East crossroads at the end of the Middle Ages. Aleppo, now the second-largest city in Syria, was then a vibrant commercial meeting point of the Islamic and Christian worlds. It was an important stage on the Incense Road from Arabia and the Silk Road from China. It also received goods from India, Yemen and Iran, and important trade roads linked it to Baghdad to the east, Damascus to the south and Konya to the northwest.

The 13 x 13-foot model shows a section of the bazaar that includes the Friday Mosque, Citadel Hill, the large inn where merchants lodged and traded, and an oriental bath. Featured in the model are 750 figurines, including such craftsmen as goldsmiths, silversmiths, ironware workers, potters, carpet makers and book traders, as well as slaves and the buying public. Also depicted are goods such as wool and textiles, furniture, meat and fish, incense, spices, vegetables, fruit, and cattle. Caravans are included, along with snake charmers, story-tellers, musicians, belly-dancers, and a group of people in front of the mosque listening to a Koran reading.

Additional information on Crusader castles, medieval bazaars, knights and rulers of that era will be presented on a series of panels around the exhibit.

Siepen and members of the International Castle Society created the *French Donjon: Castle of Coucy* model that was displayed at National Geographic in 2000.

For information about go to www.nationalgeographic.com.

The Dupont Circle Citizen P.O. Box 73616, Washington, DC 20056-3616

Dupont Circle Citizen is published by Dupont Circle Citizens Association as a service to members and provides information on DCCA programs and activities and other events of interest to DCCA members. Contributions are welcome, but DCCA reserves the right to edit or hold any piece as space requires. Contributions should be sent to P.O. Box 73616, Washington, DC 20056-3616.

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DCCA also provides meeting reminders, public safety reports and other information on line. **To sign up, send an e-mail to DCCANEWS1@MSN.COM.**

Dupont Circle Citizens Association was established in 1922 to represent the interests of residents of the Dupont Circle Area. Membership is open to all interested persons, and membership information can be found by visiting DCCA's website at www.dupont-circle.com.