

A Persian Kashan Carpet.



Rug-making is one of the earliest forms of art, with literary accounts describing production techniques dating back to the 3rd millennium BCE in the Caucasus Mountains, a region that now makes up Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and southern Russia. From this area, the practice quickly spread across the region, creating the so-called “rug-belt”

which today stretches from Morocco to India, and is centered around Iran, the producer of the world’s finest rugs and carpets. Michaan’s Auctions is proud to offer a fine example, a **Persian Kashan Carpet** (\$8/1,200) in our March Gallery Auction, to be held on Friday, March 15th.

The carpet consists of an eleven-foot, eight-inch by eight-foot, six-inch rectangular rug with a

large interior red field. The carpet’s center field is dominated by a three-layered diamond medallion, in red, ivory, and navy blue, which is surrounded by three concentric rectangular border bands at the exterior, including a triple interior guard and culminating with a triple outer guard.

The innermost of these bands border the

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multi-tiered corner spandrels made up of floral motifs backgrounded by ivory, light, and dark blue. These design elements push the field into a red oval shape, thereby bridging the difference between the exterior rectangular forms and the interior diamonds.

Floral motifs in red, blue, green, cream, and pink are featured throughout the field and borders. The featured motifs present a variety of interpretations, each with a long history in Persian design. The lotus is indicative of rebirth, as the flowers bloom from muddy or otherwise unfavorable waters, while the lily represents purity and spirituality. The peony represents power, especially when combined with the use of the color blue, while the pomegranates symbolize fertility. These meanings are layered onto the use of the color red in the carpet's field, which has

interpretations including beauty, wealth, courage, luck, joy, and faith.

The oldest known carpet was found in the Siberian mountains and is dated to the 5th century BC. Given its advanced design and distance from its reputed origin in Iran, it is likely that advanced weaving techniques existed far before this time. Indeed, contemporaneous literary references by Greeks indicated that Persian rugmaking was already well-known internationally by the year 200 BCE. Traditional Persian rugs can be distinguished from regional alternatives by their high knot count, increasing the rugs' durability and value, as well as their distinctive design, which highlights organic rather than geometric shapes. These elaborate, highly detailed designs stand out from the more austere choices found in carpets from either the Turkish or Caucasus regions, a testament to the

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fine craftsmanship and the symbolic weight of Persian design.

Rugs from the Iranian town of Kashan are responsible for many of the early modern advancements in Persian rug design. Commercial levels of carpet production in the area dates back to the 17th century, as the city's ability to attract the Safavid dynasty's ruling class for holiday visits inspired an increased development of techniques. Kashan carpets are known to be especially dense and therefore durable, largely due to their use of an asymmetrical knot which differs from techniques in other parts of Iran. They also developed a unique medallion and corner design that features a central medallion amidst a field of intertwining flowers, a feature evident in the item for sale at Michaan's Auctions.

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(\$8/1,200) will be offered in Michaan's Auctions March Gallery Auction on Friday, March 15th, which features many fine artworks from notable artists, in addition to excellent examples from the Jewelry and Asian Art departments. The auction is led by the Fine Art Department, which will be offering oil paintings by Frank Duveneck and a lithograph by Stow Wengenroth. Also included in the sale is a contemporary artwork by Pratchaya Charernsook, a micromosaic gold brooch, and a gold pocket watch.

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