

Cordially Invites You to a Special Afternoon
Celebrating the Kashmir Shawl



Mughal shawl detail c1650

With Distinguished Scholar
Frank Ames

From Mughal Whimsicality to Sikh Ostentation:

Over time, the Kashmir shawl has become a bellweather reflecting cultural shifts, and to some degree, socio-political vicissitudes. Such has been the dynamics that have played into one of the most important discoveries in textile design in the past few decades: **The Sikh period shawl**. Highlighting whimsical design ideas, borrowed or otherwise, the talk will journey through the shawl's early Mughal period before reaching the Sikh imperium era of India's last great Maharaja, Runjit Singh (1799-1839).

During this era of Punjab, India's colorful history, a variety of complex and enigmatic patterns emerged in the shawl – some purely geometric, others symbolic. Maharaja Ranjitt Singh's takeover of Kashmir in 1819 had an extraordinary impact on the fashion of legendary Kashmir shawls, giving rise to an outburst of artistic expression on the sub-continent.



Frank Ames, scholar, researcher and curator, deals in rare textiles and carpets. His focus has been Indian and Islamic textiles with extensive research on the history of the Kashmir shawl, culminating over the past thirty years in two groundbreaking publications: *The Kashmir Shawl and its Indo-French Influence* (1986-1997) & *Woven Masterpieces of Sikh Heritage* (2010). He was co-curator of *The Arts of Kashmir* exhibition at Asia Society (2008) and has curated numerous private collections. Besides his talks he has often contributed to Hali Magazine as well as other important journals. He shares his time between India and the US. While in the US, he is based in Manhattan.

Saturday, October 19

2:00–4:00 PM

Home of Sheila & John Dowell
 2480 Filbert Street
 San Francisco, CA 94123

Please RSVP

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Limited Seating; By Invitation Only



Sikh shawl detail c1830

The Kashmir Shawl

Unrivalled in beauty, warmth, and softness, a genuine Kashmir shawl continues to be a prized and coveted object. The shawls remained sought-after gifts across Asia, before making their way westward. By the mid-1800s, with imperial rule, shawls grew into a sweeping fashion trend among European society. Not only were they handcrafted from a rare raw material - wool sourced from Himalayan goats - everything from their designs to their softness was esteemed.

Among the elements specialists research when dating a shawl are patterns in motifs and weaving, and how they evolved over time, the subject of this talk.

Shawl making can be traced at least five centuries in Kashmir. While production today may not compete in scale with its days of glory and royal patronage, Kashmir shawls have endured through centuries as a globally prized commodity. Kashmiris are proud of their long history with the shawl, yet many artisans find themselves migrating to new fields in search for better sustenance.

