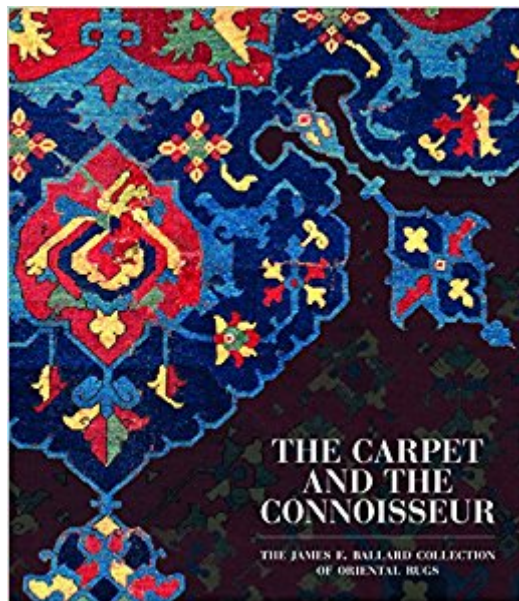




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# The Carpet And The Connoisseur: The James F. Ballard Collection Of Oriental Rugs



## Synopsis

Following several years of extensive research, conservation, and photography, Saint Louis Art Museum's major 2016 exhibition highlights 50 carpets and two Persian pleasure tents assembled by one of the most important early twentieth-century American carpet collectors, James F. Ballard. The unique contents of the collection, outstanding quality of many of the rugs, and detailed technical content make this book a major contribution to the study of Islamic textiles and the field of Islamic art history as a whole. The compelling visual nature of the pieces will appeal to art historians, rug collectors, and the general public alike. The book includes an essay about James Ballard as a collector by Thomas J. Farnham. A second essay by Walter B. Denny introduces the general topic of rug varieties in the Ballard Collection, placing the collection in a larger art historical and historiographic context. The textiles featured in the exhibition are organized according to geographical origin and style, with brief introductions by Denny that provide more detailed art historical context for each group. All items have full catalogue entries, full color illustrations, and front and back details showing technical features. Ballard Collection rugs in the museum's inventory not exhibited are included with a color reproduction and technical data. Contents: Chronology; Ballard the Collector; The Ballard Collection in Context; A short Note on Carpet Technique; Catalogue; Appendix; Endnotes; Bibliography.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Walter B. Denny, guest co-curator for the exhibition *The Carpet and the Connoisseur*, is Senior Consultant in the Department of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Charles Grant Ellis

Research Associate in Oriental Carpets at The Textile Museum, and Distinguished Professor of Art History at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

I just attended the show and purchased the book a few days prior to viewing the exhibit. The book is a worthwhile supplement to viewing the exhibit. Excellent color reproductions of the carpets although the book includes rugs not in the exhibit. Descriptions at times not complete. For example at the entrance to the exhibit a rug with a badly faded border is displayed but the problem is not discussed in the book. Actually most of the carpets are in poor condition which is understandable since the rugs are quite old and were mostly antiques when purchased. A note on the exhibit itself which was in some minor respects disappointing. Two tents were displayed but you could not look in them. The pictures in the book gave you a much better view inside the tents than was available at the exhibit. No rear view of the rugs was available at the exhibit but photos of the backs were provided in the book. Still for lovers of Oriental carpets both the book and the show are must sees.

An important addition to the corpus of oriental rug resource material. Most of the rugs in the Ballard collection have never been published in color before so this catalog fills a gap in the literature and at a reasonable price to boot.

Ballard gets my vote as the greatest rug collector. These are only his gift to the St. Louis Museum, where the exhibition is being held. The other half of his collection is in the Met in NY. Unlike most of the billionaire entrepreneur robber barons of his time, he exclusively focused on rugs only.

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