

OLYMPIA auctions

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

THE PIP RAU COLLECTION OF IKATS, EMBROIDERIES AND COSTUMES, PART 1.

TIMED AUCTION: 19th FEBRUARY - SUNDAY 1st MARCH 2026



Pip Rau in her shop, 36 Islington Green, London N1, 1988

Olympia Auctions is proud to offer in a single owner sale *The Pip Rau collection of Ikats, Embroideries and Costumes, Part 1*. The auction will be accompanied by a printed catalogue.

Pip Rau (1938–2024) was a well-known London dealer and collector of 19th century Asian textiles and costumes. In 1974, she opened a small shop called Rau in Islington, north London, which she ran for 40 years. The shop sold textiles and costumes from Uzbekistan, northern Pakistan and, above all, Afghanistan — a country she adored. The shop on Islington Green attracted an eclectic clientele, including film directors who often came to borrow items from her collection.

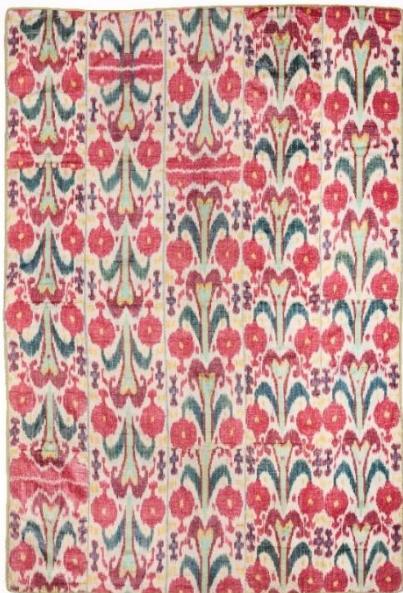
Pip had an innate ability to recognise the quality of textiles of all types, a talent which had established during her time as a student; in the 1950s, she studied at both St Martin's School of Art and the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London.

In the 1970s, Afghanistan was a great place to acquire antique textiles. Having been largely closed to foreigners until the 1960s, by the 1970s the country had opened up to become one of the main stops on the

'hippie trail' from Europe to Nepal, and a country that Pip travelled to time and again to source pieces for her shop and her personal collection.

Highlights of our sale include ikat textiles and costumes from Pip's collection. She found her first ikat in Kabul in 1976 and then went on to develop a passion for these distinct Central Asian textiles. She selected textiles based on their visual impact rather than their technical quality. She viewed each piece on its own terms, primarily responding to its graphic qualities — a characteristic that set her apart from her fellow dealers and collectors.

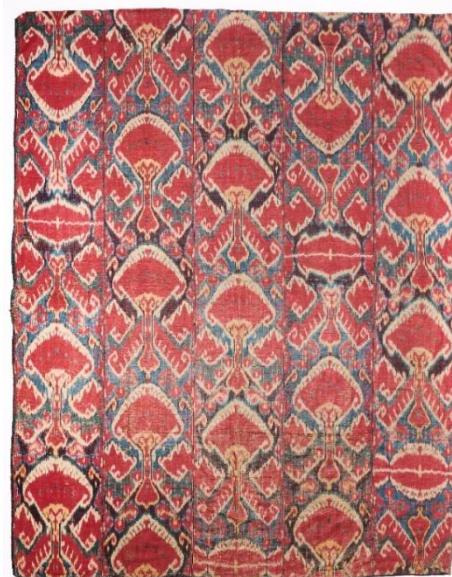
Ikat textiles and costumes from her collection were widely exhibited, including at the Crafts Council in London in 1988. In 2007, the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibited and published part of her ikat collection. A group of around 50 Lakai embroideries from Uzbekistan from her collection is now in the British Museum.



An Ikat Panel
Uzbekistan, second half 19th century
c. 184 x 124 cm
£2,000-3,000



A Shakhrisyabz niche panel, Uzbekistan,
mid-19th century or earlier
Approximately 240 x 165cm
£10,000 - 15,000



An Ikat Panel
Central Asia, mid-19th century or earlier
c. 206 x 145cm
£4,000 - £6,000

Arthur Millner comments; 'We are very excited to be selling this extensive and varied collection from such a celebrated figure in the field of Central Asian textiles. We look forward to welcoming what I hope will be a wide range of buyers, whether collectors, dealers or simply those attracted by the sensational colours and designs. There will be something for everyone, with estimates ranging from £100-£15,000.'



A boy's ikat Khalat, Bokhara
Uzbekistan, last quarter 19th
century. £300 - £500



A collection of embroidered purses and
pouches, Hazara, Afghanistan,
late 19th/20th century. £400 - £600



An ikat Chapan, Uzbekistan,
late 19th century
£300 - £500

Auction

Olympia Timed: Thursday 19th February - Sunday 1st March 2026

Viewing

Sunday 22nd - Wednesday 25th February 2026

The remainder of the collection will be offered in a further auction later in the year, Part 2, including rugs, costumes and embroideries.

~ENDS~

Download hi-res images of the textiles [here](#) (copyright Olympia Auctions).

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About Olympia Auctions

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