

THE FINE ARTS
MUSEUMS OF
SAN FRANCISCO

M. H. de YOUNG
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM

CALIFORNIA Lincoln Park
PALACE OF THE San Francisco, CA 94121
LEGION OF HONOR (415) 750-3667

April 27, 1990

Mr. Christopher Alexander
CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STRUCTURE
2701 Shasta Road
Berkeley, CA 94708

Dear Chris:

I wanted to write to acknowledge receipt of the photographs you sent of objects in our storage. These are all works you are considering as possibilities for installation along with your Turkish carpets. I will now discuss these various works with other curators to see which ones would be available. Two limiting considerations come to mind. Although these objects by and large are of secondary historical and aesthetic importance, they must still be protected from damage. Some of them are sturdier than others and could be considered for use as furniture which could be touched by the public. Others are more fragile and would have to be placed behind a protective barrier or placed on top of a protective platform. These decisions would have to be made on a work by work basis, and we would have to meet with you to discuss the full group.

Another concern, obviously, is that of creating attractive gallery groupings. If too much furniture is used, it could distract from the carpets themselves and begin to raise the question in visitors minds as to what really is the main content of the exhibition. Perhaps you saw the installation of our modern costume show, which included a very successful balance of costumes and accessory objects. This installation illustrated the great potential of such an approach, but was worked out with a great deal of care and planning. I have no doubt that your idea of including some furniture groupings to add a different and human element to the galleries is a good one. It just means that the installation will have to be worked out with much care. Bill White has a lot of experience in this area and would be extremely helpful in working with you to achieve the right balance. I am happy to call Gump's myself to inquire about the possibility of borrowing some lamps when we reach the stage where we know how many would be necessary. You and Bill should get together to work out the installation before that time, however, and I will let him know about our discussions.

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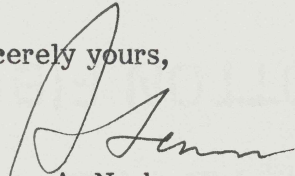
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Thank you also for sending the color xerox of the title page from your book. Although the colors are certainly not accurate, it gives a good idea of what will undoubtedly be a handsome design. In the case of the book, the full long title seems quite appropriate. A book after all is a literary object, so a long descriptive title can be useful and adds a scholarly element. For an exhibition, however, I still feel that something shorter would be better, and also that we really should have reference to your name in the title. Something like "Color and Geometry in Early Turkish Carpets: The Christopher Alexander Collection," would seem most appropriate. Undoubtedly we could figure out a way to get in the ancient-modern connection you want to make, if you really thought it was necessary. But I don't think the full title of the book will work very well for the exhibition from either a graphics or PR point of view. Can you please give it some further thought and see if you can come up with something briefer? I will do the same and will also discuss it here with some of my colleagues.

I have passed along to our Programs Department the information that your wife kindly sent, and they are exploring the feasibility of doing concerts in the galleries. I am sure we can work something out, but I wanted to refer the matter to the people who are in charge of this area.

We will stay in close touch.

Sincerely yours,



Steven A. Nash
Associate Director/Chief Curator

SAN/sp