

ANATOLIAN PILE CARPETS

from the Christopher Alexander Collection

A FORESHADOWING OF 21ST-CENTURY ART

This is an exhibition of very early Anatolian carpets and carpet fragments, including a few non-Anatolian pieces that are directly linked to the Anatolian tradition.

The 75 pieces, dating from the 12th to the 17th centuries, are among the earliest carpets in the world. They constitute a kind of "core" of the essential art of Central Anatolia, and represent the nearest thing we now possess to the artistic origins of the carpet art of the 16th to 19th centuries. Many of these carpets are unique. The only other coherent and substantial collections of this material are in the Turk-ve-Islam and Vakiflar museums in Istanbul.

The essence of great old carpets is their color. These works of art are to the world of color what the Shang bronzes are to the world of sculpture. The traditional nature of this material and its essential force fit directly into the 20th-century process of discovery of non-western art. Just as prehistoric cave paintings, African tribal art, and pre-classical Greek art informed and influenced western art of the 20th century, it is my belief that these carpets will lead to central developments in 21st-century painting and architecture.

The carpets in this collection form the backbone of a book presenting a new theory of carpet design and the significance of carpets. This book, *A Foreshadowing of 21st Century Art* by Christopher Alexander, published by Oxford University Press, will appear in early 1991. The statements that appear on the panels throughout this exhibition are quotations from *A Foreshadowing of 21st Century Art*.

The carpets in the exhibition were assembled by Christopher Alexander and the majority of them belong to him. A few of the carpets belong to the Center for Environmental Structure and are shown by permission of the Center and its trustees.

