

Harvard PhD Candidate Kristen Pearson Named 2025–2026 Hajji Baba Club Research Fellow

Prestigious textile fellowship awarded for groundbreaking work on Kazakh felt carpet traditions in Western Mongolia.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Hajji Baba Club](#), America's oldest organization dedicated to the appreciation of rugs and textiles, is proud to announce Kristen Pearson as the recipient of its 2025–2026 Research Fellowship.

Pearson is an advanced PhD candidate in Anthropology and Inner Asian

Studies at Harvard University. Her research explores how contemporary Kazakh pastoralists in Western Mongolia engage with felt carpets, known as *syrmaq*, as living treasuries of tradition, identity, and evolving social relationships.

"Kristen's work is a brilliant blend of ethnography and textile history," said Zach Zaman, President of the Hajji Baba Club. "Her research not only preserves endangered material knowledge but also sheds light on how handmade textiles continue to shape daily life and identity in nomadic communities."

The fellowship supports Pearson's ongoing dissertation research as well as outreach initiatives in collaboration with Mongolian heritage institutions. She previously led the Endangered Material Knowledge Programme project Nomadic Material Heritage, documenting craft techniques in Kazakh and Uriankhai communities. Pearson also served as Textile Archaeology Fellow for a U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation project from 2022–2024.

The Hajji Baba Club Research Fellowship was established in 2018 to promote original scholarship in the field of carpet studies. It provides financial support and visibility for emerging scholars and independent researchers.



Kristen Pearson conducting field work in Mongolia

Recent Fellows

2024-2025, Sarah Molina, Harvard University – The Poetics of Space: How Carpets Shaped the Safavid World

2023-2024, Dr. Margaret Squires, PhD 2025, The Courtauld, London – Crafting Splendour: Safavid Carpets in Architectural Context



About the Hajji Baba Club

Founded in 1932, the Hajji Baba Club brings together scholars, collectors, and enthusiasts of handmade textiles and carpets from around the world. Through lectures, fellowships, and exhibitions, the Club advances public appreciation for textile arts as a vital form of cultural expression. The Hajji Baba Club is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Learn more at:

<https://www.hajjibaba.org>

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