

PATRON & TRAGEDIAN

PATRON

IN POOR CONDITION is the phrase used by auctioneers and antique dealers to describe an object whose financial value needs to be lowered, irrespective of its artistic merit and historic interest, because no collector and no museum would acquire such pieces.

Sheila. I only met her once, but I remember her name and our deal: thirty for thirteen. She sold me a fragment of a Mediaeval embroidered antependium for 30 quid. "I took it to the V&A, and they assured me it was North Italian, 13th century; but in that condition, they can't accept it."

Subsequently, I noticed that a colleague of mine who taught textile design, displayed various vintage pieces, tagged with country of origin, identified technique and purchasing price, in her classroom. The prices were so low that the kids might have felt, they could afford to collect similar or better examples with their pocket money. I donated the embroidered antependium to add to her educational resources.

PATRON (four rectangular elements holding a lady's pouch) and *TRAGEDIAN* (the two supporting brackets) share the same Shahsevan wool remnants, from Northwest Persia or Azerbaijan. They also share fragments of a tent's bands from Central Asia.

Whereas *TRAGEDIAN* revels in proteiform versatility and falls into the middle size category, *PATRON* is a large sculpture with fewer sinuous forms and a somewhat subdued sense of monumentality. Its main, bulky component can be switched from back to front. The second independent component is very light and can be draped in front or behind the sculpture by tying up its long bands to any chosen points.

PATRON has a frontal, almost rigid character, which does not exclude flexibility and variations; although, as mentioned, not as extensively and intensely as *TRAGEDIAN*'s histrionic poses.

THE TEXTILES salvaged for *PATRON* have contrasting colours and textures. They are listed in the order of appearance from top to bottom of the artwork.

1.

Inner pocket and cloth remnants of a South Indian kurta tailored for Nean in Bangalore and worn by him until the collar was frayed, biological cotton, natural ochre and dark warm grey dyes gained from tree roots, circa 2012. This cloth has been reused to sheathe the aluminium brackets that form the sculpture's wall support, the aluminium segments that form the "necklace" element, and the bands that hold the sculpture's parts together or freely connect them.

2.

Underside of a tent's brocaded bands from Central Asia, circa 1900, red, very dark blue, and beige wool, for the pompom at the top, and ivory, brown and red for the frayed fringe at the bottom of the sculpture, underneath the lady's pouch.

3.

North Indian light cotton, woven in blue, red, white and ochre, late 20th century, sheathes aluminium segments above and below the bigger Persian rug panel.

4.

Borders of a Malayer rug, West Persia, circa 1900, for the upper vertical panel and its rolled “framing sections”, as well as a small lower horizontal panel and its two rolled “weights” further below.

5.

Quchan Kilim woven in Soumakh technique by Kurds of North East Persia or nearby Caucasus, also circa 1900. I handstitched the hole, which was frayed and gaping, into a shape conform to the textile’s diamonds pattern. On the underside, long woolen fibres are not a sign of damage but a normal effect of the Soumakh technique.

6.

Persian or Azerbaijani Kelim, 1900 or later; the fragment is too small to be securely identified. I used it to sheathe four aluminium segments stitched together to hold the Uzbek pouch, and to join it to bands made from the modern Indian kurta.

7.

Silk embroidered lady’s Lakai pouch from Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 1950s, crudely restored with cotton threads in various places. The lining is a typical floral print from the former Soviet Union.

THE RELATIONSHIP between *Patron (of the Arts)* and *Tragedian* is formally determined by a marked difference in size and form. Nevertheless, the two pieces that contrast with one another, consist of similar textiles and therefore have a family resemblance. *Patron* might be a tribal elder who cares about rugs and kelims; *Tragedian* a young woman or a young man, who sings or dances and tells traditional stories. Or they are the same person (or persona) at dissimilar stages of a long life. Sat on a comfortable proto-Perepedil in a nomads’ tent, I toast them with a glass of Dooch while savouring chicken Fesenjoon with Azerbaijani, Kurd, and Iranian friends...

NEAN

Nean’s Vids

LOGICAL MANUALISM

Walzwerk, Münchenstein/Arlesheim,
Baselland, CH, Friday 17th January 2026

Wolfgang Ink Mark Ziegler aka Nean, *PATRON*, multipositionist three-part collapsible textile sculpture, sheathed hollow aluminium rod segments, shaped vintage and antique textiles: hand-knotted carpet, Kelim, Soumakh Kelim, printed cloth and embroidery, from Persia, the Caucasus, India, and Central Asia, handstitched together in Oberwil, Baselland, Switzerland, in 2026.

Photos: Nean, Walzwerk, January 2026



