



The Colorado Textile Group presents

**Christine Martens**

# **Pattern, Process, Ritual: Distinguishing Uyghur Felt Making In Northwest China**

**Tuesday, March 31, 2020**

**Shaver-Ramsey Gallery**

**589 Fillmore (6th Ave. & Fillmore), Denver**

**6:30 social, 7:00 program**



**Felt making** has existed for millennia in the cities and villages of what is now the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of northwest China, homeland of the Muslim, Turkic-speaking Uyghurs. Archeological discoveries give a sense of this ancient art, which continues to flourish in the oases that dot the southern rim of the Taklamakan. We will first examine the processes and tools that distinguish Uyghur felt from those of the Turkmen, Kyrgyz, Turks, and Mongolians, noting similarities and differences. Felt-making workshops in and around Qashgar, Yarkend, Qarghilik, and Khotan are traditionally operated by men, originally utilizing the guild system of master and apprentice. Women participate in family workshops as well, playing an important but unacknowledged role. In Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, women are the sole felt makers.

Secondly, we will examine how Uyghur cultural history, material culture, and the "everyday" exist within the spiritual landscape of southern Xinjiang through participation in shrine visitation and the use of the *risala*, a treatise or guidebook governing the moral, spiritual, and ethical behavior of artisans, shedding light on little known aspects of Uyghur sacred history and accompanying rituals.

**Christine Martens** has a wide-ranging background in the ethnic arts of the Turkic, Uzbek, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Uyghur, and other cultures of Asia. She has published numerous articles in *HALI*, *Hermitage*, and other journals devoted to the textile and Islamic arts, and has lectured at the Parsons School of Design, ICOC, Wadsworth Antheneum, and many academic institutions.

