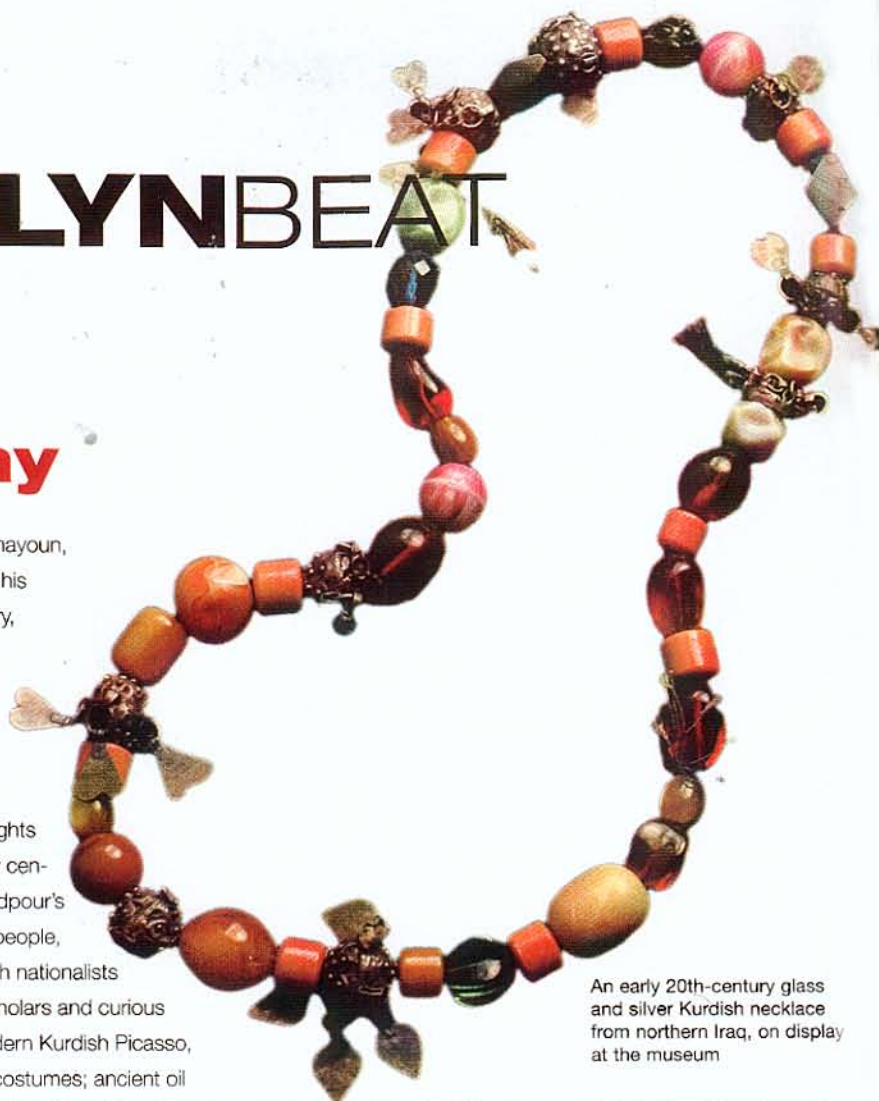


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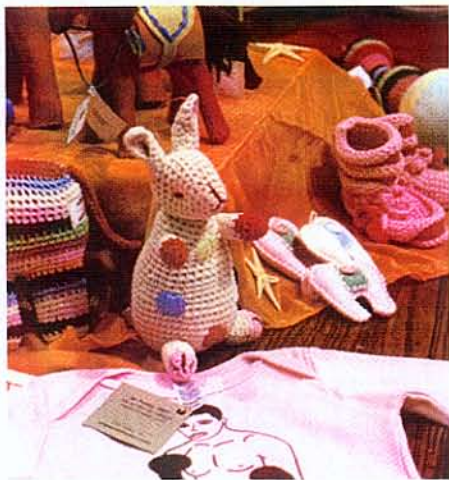
➔ | Kurdish Way

In 1973, Vera Beaudin Saeedpour's Kurdish husband, Homayoun, showed her the *Oxford Concise Dictionary's* description of his people: "predatory," it said. In the Random House dictionary, the word used was "warlike." "Stereotypes are shrieking sirens that deafen us to all finer distinctions," says Saeedpour, 75, who was shocked into action by these reductive definitions. The self-described "Jewish farm girl from Vermont" was inspired to become a scholar of all things Kurdish; in 1986, she transformed her Prospect Heights brownstone into the Kurdish Library and Museum, the only center for Kurdish study in the United States. The aim of Saeedpour's collection is to further understanding of this fiercely proud people, native to a region stretching from Turkey to Iran that Kurdish nationalists call Kurdistan. More than 500 visitors each year (mostly scholars and curious Kurds) come to see displays that include prints by the modern Kurdish Picasso, Mahdat Ali; hand-looped kilim rugs; traditional goat's-hair costumes; ancient oil lamps; silver jewelry; maps; and even her late husband's turban. Saeedpour's library contains more than 2,500 volumes relating to Kurdish history and culture. She also publishes two periodicals—*The International Journal of Kurdish Studies* and *Kurdish Life*—which investigate the historical and modern plight of Kurds in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. Most Americans still have little awareness of Kurds beyond what they may have picked up during the current war in Iraq or back in 1988, when Saddam Hussein gassed Kurds in his own country. But Saeedpour says her efforts have had at least one concrete effect: After numerous exchanges with both dictionary publishers, the definition of Kurds no longer includes the word "bellicose."

Kurdish Library and Museum, 345 Park Pl., Prospect Heights, 718.783.7930. —Lisa Selin Davis



An early 20th-century glass and silver Kurdish necklace from northern Iraq, on display at the museum



⬅ | No Power Rangers Here

In first grade, when the rest of us were wrist-deep in finger paint, Karin Schaefer was learning to knit at an alternative-learning, arts-centric Waldorf school. She grew up to be an artist and educator; now, along with partner Diane Crespo (mother of a Waldorf alumna), she has opened Acorn, a store that features Waldorf-inspired, fair-trade, sweatshop-free toys and clothes created from natural fibers (including some of Schaefer's own wool handiwork). Brooklyn-made kids' clothes, handcrafted felt animals, and wooden playthings from around the globe line the shelves. "We wanted to have toys that inspire creativity and that don't do all the work for you," says Schaefer. A lengthwise slice of a maple tree serves as an imaginative-play area for visiting kids. *Acorn, 323 Atlantic Ave., Boerum Hill, 718.522.3760, www.acorntoyshop.com. —L.S.D.*