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BLACKWORK PANEL English, ca. 1590

Embroidered costume came into fashion in England in the mid-sixteenth century and was out of style by the time of the Civil War. In its earliest manifestations, decorative geometric stitches were confined to the borders of smocks and chemises and were typically executed in a single color of silk thread, with black being one of the most stylish. The repertoire of motifs employed in blackwork gradually expanded to include elaborate floral and faunal designs adapted from new prints and illustrated books. The botanist John Gerrard's *Herball, or Generall Historie of Plantes*, first published in 1597, was the earliest fully illustrated book of its type in England, and it specifically invoked embroidery in its preface:

For if delight may provide men's labour, what greater delight is there than to behold the earth appareled with plants, as with a robe of imbroidered works, set with orient pearles and garnished with great diversitie of rare and costly jewels.

This panel comes from one of the most exceptional assemblages of Elizabethan blackwork to have survived from the period. It likely originated as part of a pair of balloon sleeves, which were fashionable for women's dress in the late-sixteenth century, or as a petticoat worn over a drum farthingale. Silk and silver-gilt threads are worked on a fine linen ground in an array of stitches, including buttonhole, open buttonhole filling, Algerian eye, chain, double running, overcast, and plaited braid, as well as laid work and couching to create the swirling foliage and dense filling patterns. While rich embroidery was often produced domestically by amateur needlewomen—especially those of high rank—this complex piece was probably executed by a professional embroiderer, who worked either for the Broderer's Company (founded in 1561) or in a large private household, based on a design drawn by a professional draughtsman.

Blackwork utilizes a silk yarn dyed with walnut shells, oak galls, or iron salts. These dyes tend to corrode over time, making this piece's preservation all the more remarkable. The gold thread has remained in almost perfect condition, a testament both to the quality of the materials employed in its creation and to the care that this panel received over the centuries. The metallic threads were the result of a laborious process that involved coating a silver wire with a gold skin, drawing it very thin, hammering it into strips, and, finally, winding these strips around a silk core. They would have sparkled in lambent candlelight, an effect that would have been enhanced by the hand-punched spangles that originally accented this piece.

Motifs include a full serrated leaf, a turning leaf embellished with gold, curvilinear stems with leaves and berries, and a partial carnation, pansy, rose, and pomegranate, all potentially symbolic of love, lust, or, alternatively, piety. The sitters in a 1564 portrait of Captain Thomas Lee by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (Tate Britain, T03028) and an anonymous painting of a young boy in an embroidered doublet with voluminous sleeves (illustrated in *The Embroiderer's Flowers*, Thomasina Beck, 1992, p. 13), dated to ca. 1590, wear garments with strikingly similar patterns.

The group of embroideries that includes this panel descended in the family of the Earls of Abingdon, whose extensive collection of needlework was sold at Sotheby's in 1928 following the death of the 7th Earl, the Right Hon. Montagu Bertie (1836-1928). This piece entered the collection of Sir Frederick Richmond (1873-1953), one of the most important collectors of historical embroidery in the early twentieth century. He began as an apprentice at the London draper's shop Debenham & Freebody, rising to the position of chairman by 1927. In 1929, he was created a baronet, and may have celebrated by acquiring at least two of the panels from the Abingdon set. He did not retain this smaller piece for long—a label on the reverse reads, "Present to GH from Sir Fredr Richmond from the Abingdon Collection." Other inscriptions on the reverse identify GH as Geoffrey Hope-Morley (1885-1977), who became 2nd Lord Hollenden on February 18, 1929 and was married that May. Either of these two occasions could have proved the impetus for the gift of this magnificent embroidery.

Of the six known panels from this set, two are in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago (45.161 and 1955.1221); one is in the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh (1929.152); and another is in a private collection (ex. collection Sir Frederick Richmond).

14.5" H x 8.5" W



EMBROIDERED UNMADE MAN'S WAISTCOAT English, ca. 1710

Embroidery from the reign of Queen Anne (r. 1702-1714), with its characteristic quilted ground and vibrant floral motifs, is one of the most recognizable types of English needlework, appearing on furnishing linens and clothing accessories such as petticoats and jumps for women and waistcoats for men. The steps that early-eighteenth-century embroiderers took to create items in this style are overshadowed by the luxurious finished products. This unfinished Queen Anne man's waistcoat allows an opportunity to view the design and the stitching process.

We can only speculate as to why this waistcoat was never completed. But as with other unfinished historical embroideries, including needlework pictures, caskets, and items of dress, it provides valuable information and clues—in this case to the cutting of the pattern pieces, the drawing of the *à la disposition* design, the choices of embroidery stitches, and the sewing together of the waistcoat components.

The fine linen of the garment's exterior is quilted onto a heavier linen backing, with yellow silk creating the vermicular pattern. Although the quilted designs may vary from the coral-like shapes seen here to geometric shapes of circles or diamonds, this component typifies Queen Anne embroidery, serving as the background to rich polychrome flowers. In each of the six waistcoat sections, comprising the left and right front panels, two joined pieces forming the back, and three sleeve pieces (one sleeve panel does not survive), the quilting is fully finished. The embroidery of the left panel of the waistcoat is entirely complete with a delicate floral and foliate trail connected by bracketed scrolls worked in shades of red, pink, blue, green, yellow, and chestnut brown down the center front and across the lower edge. Floral sprays fill in the chest area.

The other unfinished pieces of the waistcoat reveal ink-drawn outlines of floral motifs, leaves in the act of being filled in with gradations of color, and brightly colored silk threads left dangling, giving us today a vivid sense of the embroiderer at work. Their partial execution, like an artist's sketch, provides an important window into the time-consuming craft of eighteenth-century needlework.







STAMPED MOHAIR VELVET WITH CARNATIONS AND POMEGRANATES
French, ca. 1730s

The limited survival of eighteenth-century furnishing wools compared to silks belies their widespread use and popularity during the period. Particularly hardwearing, wool was a practical and less expensive alternative to silk and frequently served as both wall covering and upholstery in domestic interiors across the social spectrum. At the top end of wool fabrics were stamped velvets that imitated the appearance of far more costly and similarly patterned silks. Weaving centers that manufactured wool pile textiles in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries included Amiens, Abbeville, Rouen, and Compiègne in France, and Lille and Tournai in Flanders. Contemporary terminology for wool pile fabrics is often imprecise; the term “velours d’Utrecht,” long used by textile historians to describe stamped wool velvet dating to the seventeenth century and later, first appeared in Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* in 1757 and designated stamped velvet woven with a linen ground and a mohair pile. Although the role of Utrecht in the Flemish industry is still unclear, the term nonetheless conveys the familiarity and exchange of techniques between the two countries.

The *Encyclopédie* illustrates the “machine à gaufrer” that was used in the stamping process. A hollow engraved metal roller, large enough to accommodate two to four heated iron bars, was placed between a heavy wooden press and a wooden cylinder. A crank at the side fed the taut velvet and a separate wool underlayer, that acted as a cushion, between the roller and the cylinder. The combination of high heat and pressure created the designs and made the fabric resistant to humidity and rubbing. The reflection and absorption of light on the different heights of pile are used to great effect here, creating a positive/negative impression between the juxtaposed vertical bands of the design: in the one, dark, raised motifs stand out against a paler, flattened ground, while in the other, pale, flattened motifs are set off by the dark, raised details and ground. Additionally, the sheen particular to mohair enhances the lustrous quality of the pile.

The graceful composition of this deep blue-green panel presents a central curvilinear band containing a serpentine trail with large carnations and stylized flowers, pomegranates, and serrated leaves. At either side are flowering branches with spotted stems and smaller pomegranates. When joined along the selvages, the branches would create an ogival network punctuated by flower heads. The scale and drawing of the motifs relate this wool to woven silks and embroideries of the 1730s that feature luxuriant naturalistic forms characteristic of the Rococo aesthetic. Seen in rooms of the period, this stamped mohair velvet would have added warmth, color, and an imposing appearance consistent with wall coverings in affluent eighteenth-century interiors.

A panel of this velvet is in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago (1998.332).

92” H x 25.5” W



SAMPLER
German, dated 1677

In historic samplers individual motifs and iconography often reveal information about a sampler's origins. In this example, the composition of randomly placed motifs is typical of Germany. The design elements appear in many other German samplers from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century, reflecting the long lasting influence of patterns that were used as tools in teaching embroidery to young girls.

Worked in brightly colored silks on a white linen ground, this piece features a central floral wreath with the initials MSM; the date 1677 appears in the lower right corner. Floral sprays of iris, carnation, rose, and daffodil surround the wreath in a circular orientation. The distinguishing motifs that relate this sampler to others made in Germany include the initialed wreath, the fountain, the vase with three flowers, the potted orange and lemon trees, and the Christian iconography in the lower edge which illustrates the Instruments of the Passion, a collection of objects used to symbolize the suffering and death of Jesus. The sampler's buttonhole edging is another common feature.

Some of these recurring motifs in German samplers, particularly the potted fruit trees and the vase with three flowers, can be found in Rosina Helena Fürst's *Neues Model-Buch* published in Nuremberg, ca. 1676, and in later editions into the eighteenth century. Pattern books for embroidery such as Fürst's and others were valued and used over generations. The sampler made by the unknown MSM in 1677 is part of a lineage of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German samplers; while the young girls who made these embroideries lived many decades apart, the continuity of patterns passed down through teachers and families connects their surviving needlework.

Similar samplers are illustrated in *Samplers from A to Z*, Pamela A. Parmal, 2000, p. 43 (43.979); *Samplers*, Carol Humphrey, 1997, pp. 46-7 (93-1938) and 84-5 (97-1938); and *The Story of Samplers*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1971, figs. 14 and 17.

Provenance: Ex. Collection, Emma Henriette Schiff von Suvero (née Emma Reitzes, July 24, 1873–January 8, 1939); deaccessioned from the Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Austria.

15. 5" H x 11" W



MAN'S COAT AND WAISTCOAT OF EMBROIDERED WOOL Scottish, ca. 1745

This man's formal suit from the mid-eighteenth century, with its high quality of tailoring and the exquisite workmanship of professional embroiderers, attests to the understated elegance often seen in British portraits of the period. While on the Continent, men's formal dress of the 1740s favored more overtly opulent styles in which brocaded polychrome silks dominated, depictions of wealthy Scottish and English sitters—as well as surviving garments—reveal a preference for sobriety combined with display.

The suit exhibits many features typical of masculine fashion of the mid-century. At this date, the distinctive characteristic of the coat was its generous cut that created a full silhouette with wide sleeves and cuffs and deep, flaring side pleats. Additionally, the long sleeves and knee-length of the matching waistcoat were still stylish elements of this garment. In the second half of the century, slimmer coats and increasingly shorter, sleeveless waistcoats became popular. Although a practical choice of fabric for a winter suit, the quality of this wool—known during the period as “superfine”—also speaks to the longstanding superiority and desirability of British wools. As seen in many other extant wool coats and waistcoats, the edges are left raw as the tight weave and felted finish prevented fraying. The coat is lined with red silk taffeta in the body and off-white linen in the sleeves, while the waistcoat is lined with fustian, a napped linen/cotton fabric, for warmth. The selection of wool—rather than a less expensive fabric—for the waistcoat back where it would not have been seen testifies to the owner's willingness to spend additional money on his suit. The pattern pieces of the suit and lining are finely stitched throughout in red silk thread, while a coarse linen thread secures the closely set side pleats at the top and in the lower skirts.

The warm tone of the garnet-red wool serves as a perfect foil for the brilliance and texture of the metallic embroidery that is clearly the work of professional embroiderers. The scalloped and looped bands with stylized floral and foliate sprays that decorate the front edges, sleeve cuffs, pocket flaps, side pleats, center back seams, and hem of the coat and waistcoat are worked in silver-gilt wrapped thread, purl, and spangles. Maximizing the reflective surface of the embroidery materials is the use of satin stitch and couching. The elaborate buttons on both coat and waistcoat include four types of metal thread: flat, crimped, wrapped strip, and purl. On the coat, the buttons are essentially decorative; the buttonholes at the neck and below the waist were likely not used. Instead, the coat would have been worn open, thereby showing off the sparkling embroidery on both pieces. This ensemble may have been embroidered in a workshop that was part of the well-established guild of professional embroiderers in Edinburgh known for producing high-quality pieces including ceremonial robes for official occasions.

In the eighteenth century, clothing contributed to the dignified bearing that was the mark of gentility. The suit's substantial weight, due to the volume and density of the wool as well as the extensive metallic embroidery, would have dictated measured movement by the wearer. In excellent condition, the suit is a splendid example of the sartorial manifestation of masculine wealth and status in the mid-eighteenth century.







WOMEN'S DAMASK SHOES English, third quarter of the 18th century

In the eighteenth century, walking was an art. Women and men gamely sacrificed comfort for the sake of fashion, learning how to properly affect an aura of nonchalance from dancing masters, etiquette books, and their elders. One French dance manual from 1725 advised, "The rate of walking should be moderate, neither too quick or too slow. One suggests heedlessness, the other indolence; avoid these two extremes." French shoes typically had higher and thinner heels than those of their English counterparts, making such delicate strides quite difficult.

The English, ever pragmatic, developed a heel that was markedly thicker and sturdier than those worn by the French. Despite their breadth, the heels on this pair of shoes are elegantly curvaceous, echoing the rounded leather sole that extends up the arch and down the inside of the heel. Covered with green silk damask with a large-scale floral and foliate pattern, the shoes are masterfully stitched, but, intriguingly, unbound. The shoes are in uncommonly pristine condition with very little wear to the sole and no rubbing to the silk above, highly unusual in shoes of this age.

While the shape of the heel, the gently pointed and slightly upturned toe, and the lack of a rand suggest a date in the 1760s-1770s, the silk from which these shoes are made dates from almost a generation earlier. Dress silks were a precious commodity, and material was often carefully refashioned for use in shoes. Here, the shoemaker lined the damask uppers with white glazed linen and white kid leather on the interior footbed. It was generally agreed in this period that women's shoemaking demanded far more skill than men's, as the suppleness and inherent value of the materials required a delicate and dexterous hand. As the *London Tradesman* noted in 1747, "It is much more ingenious to make a Women's shoe than a Man's: Few are good at both, they are frequently two distinct Branches; the Woman's Shoe-Maker requires much neater seams as the Materials are much finer."

The pattern of the silk is very similar to damasks drawn by one of the most successful English silk designers of the eighteenth century, Anna Maria Garthwaite (1688-1763) in the 1730s and early 1740s. A banyan formerly in the Castle Howard collection and now in the Victoria & Albert Museum (T.92-2003) is constructed of a comparable green silk damask whose design has been attributed to Garthwaite. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has in its collection a dress and matching shoes of green damask that has been dated by former Victoria & Albert Museum curator Natalie Rothstein to 1743-45 (1994.406a-c) and bears a remarkable resemblance to the textile used on this pair. A similar pair of green damask shoes, also dated by Rothstein to 1742-44, is in the Snowhill Wade Costume Collection, Gloucestershire (1348810.1).





PAIR OF MEN'S UNDRESS CAPS
English, early 18th century

Beneath the elaborate wigs that fashionable men wore from the mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, their heads were usually shaved. While relaxing at home or entertaining intimate guests, an informal hat—called a nightcap or *negligé* cap in England—was worn in conjunction with a roomy wrapping gown in order to keep warm and to ornament the unsightliness of a shorn pate. Such garments were also permissible for public wear in popular spa towns, where the dress code was more informal than in London. In order to go unnoticed amongst the crowd at Bath, Joseph Addison donned “an embroidered Cap and Brocade Night-Gown,” in which “It was a great Jest to see such a grave ancient Person, as I am” (*The Guardian* No. 174, 1713).

Undress caps took a number of forms, including pointed and square, and were constructed from luxurious silks, velvets, and wools. Many ornate examples incorporating metallic threads, lace, intricate quilting, or polychrome silk embroidery, are extant. However, more humble versions such as this pair, made of fine cotton with undyed natural silk tambour embroidery, rarely survive. The technique is characteristic of the skilled embroiderers working in the area of Bengal on the northeastern coast of India, making these caps an extraordinary ensemble of exotic English imports to have survived together from the turn of the eighteenth century.

The shape is indebted to earlier Tudor caps, which were often constructed from four pointed quarters joined along their curved edges. Possibly created for the same man, this pair of caps was made from four triangular



quadrants of white cotton, embroidered identically with stylized branches, blossoms, and leaves and accented with a border of serpentine guilloche on the wide up-turned brim. The separate pattern pieces were first embroidered on one side, and then flipped over and worked on the other so that the embroidery would show around the entire circumference of the cap with a minimum of cutting.

Portuguese traders were the first Europeans to establish commercial contact with India in the late fifteenth century, creating a huge demand for the exotic goods that they brought back from the East. After the establishment of their trading post at Satgaon in 1536, they began importing a large number of coverlets embroidered with undyed *tussah* (sometimes spelled tussar or tussore) silk, a type of yarn spun from the cocoons of wild silkworms that is a pleasing yellow color in its natural state. The English coveted these “Bengalla quilts” and began to trade directly with the Indians in the 1620s. In 1690, the British East India Company was granted permission to launch a trading post in Calcutta and the region quickly became the main source for a variety of embroidered goods, from bed curtains to garments. Using the tambour, a type of hook, rather than a needle to create exceptionally fine and regular rows of chain stitch, Bengali embroiderers dazzled English merchants with their technical prowess and speed. Almost immediately, English embroiderers began to imitate the distinctive technique with silk that was dyed yellow, though they could rarely match the quality produced by Bengali craftsman, seen to maximum effect on this rare pair of caps.



CAPE

Indian for the Dutch market, third quarter of the
18th century

This cape, made of painted-and-dyed cotton from India and imported into Holland, is the product of international trade and influences. Capes were part of fashionable Dutch women's ensembles in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and this rare example, with a delicate trailing floral design, highlights the crosscurrents of regional European dress styles and aggressive global marketing.

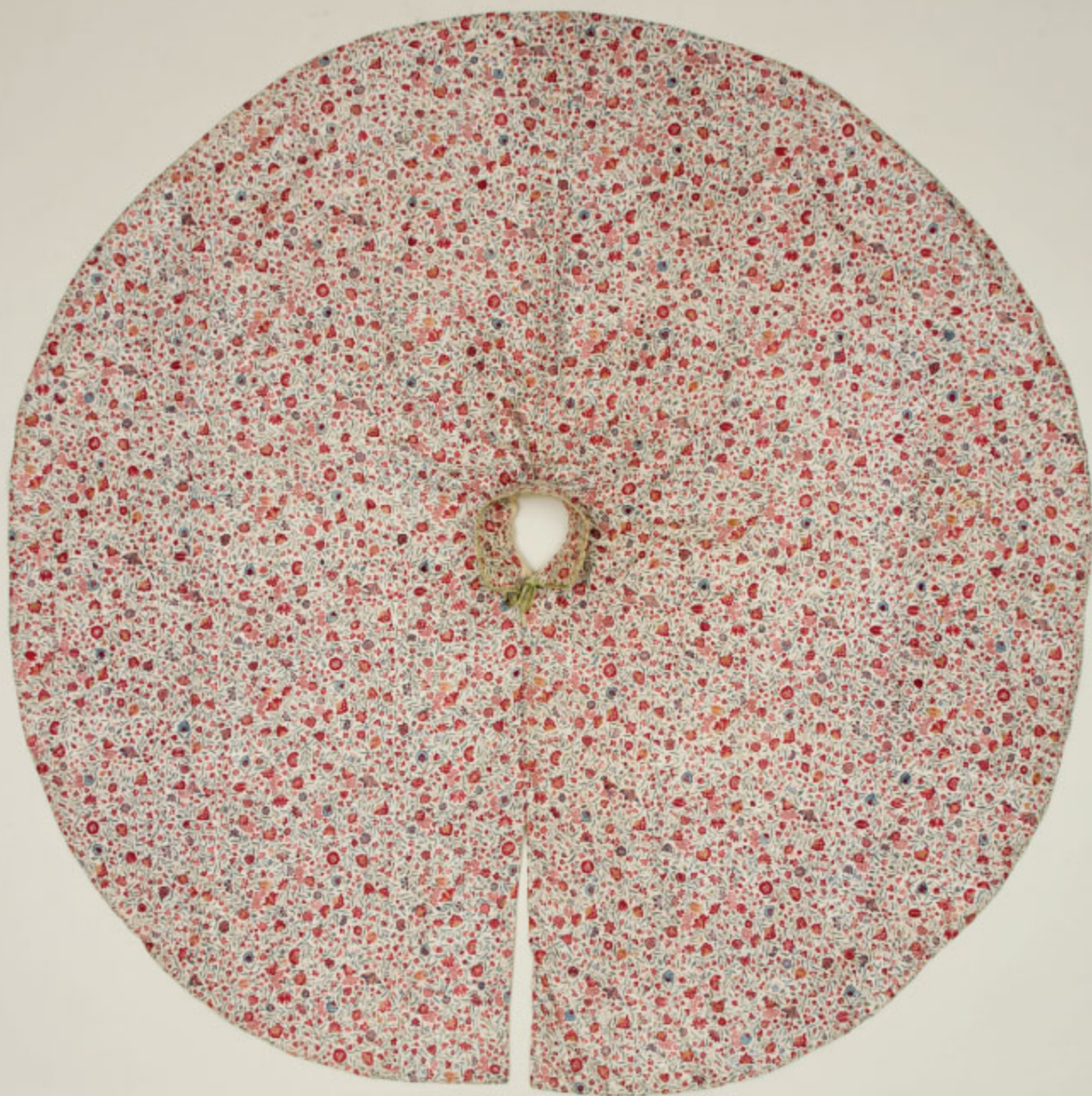
Formed in 1602, the Dutch East India Company became the world's largest trading company until it was dissolved at the end of the eighteenth century. Despite much rivalry between the Dutch and the English for control of spices and other goods in India during this period, the Dutch were strategically involved in textile production and export soon after the formation of the East India Company. By 1610 the Dutch had established successful factories along the Coromandel Coast to produce the richly decorated cotton cloths that were highly desired in the West. Trade in Indian painted-and-dyed cottons increased over time along with their greater use in European fashions, including dresses, petticoats, and banyans, as well as accessories such as caps and capes. For the Dutch and English trading companies textiles were a part of the various goods whose production and marketing involved maritime conflicts and complex business decisions. For the consumers—both men and women—who eagerly acquired these products from Asia, luxury textiles were a sign of status and taste.

From the seventeenth to the eighteenth century the uses of Indian painted-and-dyed cloth shifted from furnishings, as bedcovers and hangings primarily, to dress. Accommodating this expanded use required a change in the design of these cottons from the large Tree of Life compositions well known on Indian palampores, to all-over repeating designs more suitable for clothing. The small, delicate floral patterns such as appear in this cape were not entirely new, however, as they traditionally appeared in palampores as borders, backgrounds, and filling patterns.

Dutch paintings and prints of the eighteenth century illustrate women wearing wonderful combinations of Indian florals, along with stripes and checks, all in an array of colors. The fabric of this cape is composed of narrow repeats that give the illusion of dense, profuse flowers and leaves among the scrolling vines. Lined with wool, the cape is constructed as a full circle, its high collar edged in pale green silk with ties. Before becoming a prized element in a woman's wardrobe, there was first the design and production of the fabric in India, the journey of the fabric from Asia to Holland, the selling of the cloth, and finally the construction of the garment, resulting in an object that tells an entire history of global trade.

A similar circular cape is illustrated in *Sits: Exotisch Textiel in Friesland*, vol. I, Gieneke Arnolli and Sytske Wille-Engelsma, 1990, pl. 57.

62" Diameter





PAINTED SILK TAFFETA WITH FLORAL BOUQUETS
AND MEANDERING BRANCHES
Chinese for the European Market, 18th century

Throughout the eighteenth century Europeans were keen to acquire luxury goods from China—including tea, porcelain, and silks—imported by the English, Dutch, and French East India Companies that had been established in the early and mid-seventeenth century. The vogue for Eastern commodities was so widespread that designers and manufacturers in the West created their own exotically influenced furnishings and decorative arts in a style known as *Chinoiserie* that was characterized by a fantastical and romanticized imagining of the East. At the same time, European merchants commissioned a variety of objects based on Western models from Chinese artisans that display aesthetic aspects of both cultures.

Chinese silks, including damasks, satins, gauzes, and taffetas, were a mainstay of East/West trade during the eighteenth century. Among these, painted taffetas were particularly admired and sought after for both furnishing and dress. Although painted silks *à la chinoise* were copied in special factories established in several European countries, differences in weaving and in the application of paints distinguish Eastern and Western production. This striking, unused length of painted turquoise-blue taffeta exhibits key characteristics of eighteenth-century Chinese painted silks and beautifully illustrates the appeal of these fabrics to Western consumers. Its width of 32.5 inches, unlike typically narrower European silks, its contrasting selvage colors, and its painting method readily identify the origin of this panel. The use of a ground layer of white paint as a base for the top layer and the thickly applied, viscous colors are unique to silks of Chinese manufacture, as are the silver outlines and details. In many surviving pieces, the silver has tarnished due to exposure to the air, but in this example, the freshness of these accents are clearly visible, glittering around the edges and at the centers of the floral and arborescent motifs. Additionally, although printed black outlines that were applied as a first step in the process and used as a guide appear in both European and Chinese silks, in the latter they are entirely covered by paint, giving the impression of free-form brushwork.

The composition and scale of this design suggest that the silk was intended as a furnishing fabric. Bouquets of vivid crimson and pale pink peonies and star-shaped flowers in shades of pink, burgundy, and yellow, with spiky, light-to-dark green leaves, alternate singly and in pairs across the fabric's width, and bright pink bowknots with floating streamers secure the stems. Delicate branches with plum blossoms in muted tones of purple, golden-yellow, and brown meander between and around the bouquets. While the flowers are of Chinese origin, the bouquet motif is distinctly European. The design is fully complete across the panel, but if joined selvage-to-selvage, the outward-facing disposition of the bouquets along the sides would have created gently confronted pairs of these floral sprays. The radiant blue ground that intensifies the vibrancy of the motifs is particularly unusual; most extant painted taffetas have white or pale grounds of pink, green, or yellow.

Whether they provided an oriental touch to a room or were part of a fully exotic interior scheme, Chinese painted taffetas were prized and valuable commodities.

67.5" H x 32.5" W





FRAME-KNITTED SILK STOCKINGS WITH GORE CLOCKS English, ca. 1730

Stockings were an integral element of the fashionable wardrobe for both men and women in the eighteenth century, offering an opportunity for the display of decoration and style. Breeches allowed—or obliged—men to present shapely, muscular calves, while the new hooped petticoat for women, introduced around 1708, permitted tantalizing glimpses of their stockinged legs. The best examples were knitted from fine silk yarns in a tight gauge, ensuring a smooth, flexible fit and providing the ideal basis for a variety of decorative adornments. Ornamental “clocks,” a type of embroidery or knitted decoration around the ankle, were popular from the seventeenth to the early eighteenth century, when shoes with low quarters made the ankle area particularly conspicuous.

Although England produced the best quality knitting by the eighteenth century, the technique was a relative latecomer to the island. Until the mid-sixteenth century, most well-to-do Europeans wore stockings made of woven cloth, which was cut and sewn to the shape of the leg. Despite the occasional use of the bias, these hose provided little elasticity and must have been quite uncomfortable to wear, especially when fashioned from coarse wool. The most sophisticated knitted items at this time came from Spain, whose industry was well established from the thirteenth century, and from where Edward VI is recorded as ordering “long Spanish silke stockings” in 1560. In the mid-sixteenth century, however, the English began to knit with a fineness to match foreign imports.

English dominance of the knitting industry was aided in great part by the invention of the frame knitting machine, originally devised by William Lee around 1589 but not in widespread use until the mid-seventeenth century. In 1657, the Worshipful Company of Framework Knitters was chartered. Improvements in the early eighteenth century allowed the machine to create more regular loops and to work more efficiently, giving English frames the advantage over French competitors who had managed to smuggle designs for the machinery out of the country. In 1724, Daniel Defoe lamented “the increase of the knitting-stocking engine or frame, which had destroyed the hand knitting trade for fine stockings through the whole kingdom.”

Possibly worn by a man, these frame-knitted silk stockings feature white gore clocks set in at the ankles, with foliate zigzags along either side culminating in a star-like flower crowned with a coronet. Created as flat shaped pieces on the knitting frame, they were subsequently sewn up the back seam and around the toe with thread in a coordinating color. The decorative designs, knitted into the stockinette ground in a technique called plating, repeat on both sides, ensuring that the wearer’s feet would be noticed from any angle. They would have been tied with a garter or ribbon around the welt at the top.

Red stockings for men were quite an aristocratic accessory. A commentator in the May 1738 edition of the *London Magazine* wrote that if “a plain man of low Capacity. . . should clap on a Pair of red Stockings, and then, fancying himself an Orator, harangue the House, he immediately deviates from Common Sense.” In William Hogarth’s *The Rake’s Progress* series of 1733, the rake wears red stockings with bright gold clocks in the scenes showing his arrest and imprisonment, highlighting his descent into foppish profligacy. The tavern scene includes the figure of a prostitute wearing blue stockings with a red gore clock, zigzags, and crown in a remarkably similar pattern to the one found on this pair. Hogarth may have meant to portray the rake and his fellows as clinging to an extravagant, though increasingly outmoded, fashion. In England, as elsewhere in Europe, white stockings for both men and women replaced colored examples by the 1730s.

A related pair of stockings is in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum (T.34&A-1969).

29” H





EMBROIDERED SILK EVENING DRESS English, ca. 1829-31

After more than two decades of dresses that pushed the waist up to just under the bosom and kept skirts relatively long and narrow, by 1830, the fashionable silhouette had begun to expand. Buoyed by an array of supports including whalebone, down-filled pads, and a panoply of petticoats, both sleeves and skirts inflated to extravagant circumferences. Proportion was key in this Romantic, historicist era—wide sleeves and hems emphasized a narrow waist, delicate hands, and tiny feet, all revered characteristics for genteel women.

The new silhouette demanded new materials, including more substantial fabrics than the thin muslins and crepes previously in style. These stronger fabrics allowed dressmakers to adorn their creations with embroidery, ribbons, lace, and other heavy embellishments. French fashion plates of the period often depict women in brightly colored ensembles with complex trimmings. While such styles certainly migrated across the Channel, in England a restrained simplicity was also popular. In particular, shades of white were a perennial favorite for evening attire. In August 1830, the London periodical *La Belle Assemblée* reported “we see at least nine white dresses for one that is coloured,” and noted, “The greatest simplicity prevails both in the form and materials of full dress.” *The Ladies’ Museum* for July 1831 informed readers that “the greater number of dresses are made without trimmings.”

Fashioned from a self-figured ivory silk in a small-scale diaper pattern, this elegant evening gown was probably created between 1829 and 1831 based on its round waist. By 1832, leading English fashion magazines such as *La Belle Assemblée* illustrate the new pointed waists for evening. Both the skirt and “beret” sleeves of this dress are lined with sized linen to aid in the retention of the puffed, bell-shaped line, while a triangular floating bertha of pleated silk at the front of the bodice further emphasizes the wide, off-the-shoulder neckline. The skirt is knife-pleated into the waistline at the sides and tightly cartridge-pleated at the back, creating a slight fullness.

Besides a few artfully placed bows of striped white gauze, the sole ornamentation on the dress consists of a lavish embroidery scheme of stylized floral sprigs tied together with ribbons and joined by a meandering leafed vine. The embroidery extends around the edge of a false overskirt panel, and an exuberant asymmetrical bouquet of flowers, buds, tendrils, thorns, and leaves adorns the front of the skirt. Executed in loosely spun white silk, the satin stitch embroidery allows for the utmost contrast with the ground fabric, ensuring the dynamic sparkle of the gown in spite of its monochrome palette. The dress’s deceptive simplicity is also belied by the intricacy of its construction. Three full selvage widths joined as a single panel and embroidered to shape over the seams form the front of the skirt. After the back panels were joined to the front, a thick border of satin stitch was applied in conjunction with a bias trimming of the ground fabric to mimic the effect of an overskirt and petticoat, a visual revival of eighteenth-century dress.

A sister gown in the collection of the Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart, was probably made for the same woman. Embroidered in polychrome silk in the same technique and featuring a similar false overskirt treatment, it is possible to imagine that it was created for her trousseau while the dress shown here served as her wedding gown.



PRINTED WOOL DOLL'S DRESS
American (New England), ca. 1830-40

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the production and sale of dolls for young girls increased significantly in Europe and the United States, spurred both by demand and new techniques of manufacture. During this period, all-wooden dolls that had been available since the eighteenth century remained popular along with the more recently introduced dolls featuring papier-mâché heads, leather bodies, and wooden limbs. While some dolls were sold with their own clothing, it was much more common for girls (under the supervision of their mothers or other adult women) to make outer garments, underclothes, and accessories for this all-important toy. Contemporary children's stories about dolls and their owners, as well as prints illustrating girls playing with their dolls, made a direct connection between the careful attention a young girl gave to creating her doll's ensembles and her own appearance and developing dress sensibility. In a culture in which leisure-class women were expected to devote themselves to the domestic responsibilities of wife and mother, dolls and their clothing served to socialize young girls and prepare them from an early age for the role of fashion in their lives.

Although some homemade dolls' clothes may have lagged behind changes in high fashion, they often reflected contemporary styles closely as seen in this charming pelisse, or coat-dress. The shape, construction, and fabric of the pelisse suggest a date of about 1830 to 1840. This type of garment, with a wide turned-down collar, leg o' mutton sleeves, full, pleated skirts, belted waist, and matching pelerine, or capelet, was fashionable for both women and girls at the time as seen in numerous fashion plates and extant garments. A glazed cotton lining—here bright aquamarine blue—throughout the body of the pelisse further underscores the stylish dress-in-miniature aspect of dolls' clothing. Undoubtedly made from surplus pieces of fabric, the pelisse features a small-scale, brightly colored pattern of roller-printed wool, similar to designs popular from the late 1820s through the 1830s that combine stylized natural motifs and stripes. In this example, vivid red coral branches are superimposed over contrasting stripes of deep brown and brilliant teal blue, set off by fine white lines. Although the printed textile industry in the United States was expanding during these decades, demand for the much wider range of British goods was still strong, and it is likely that this wool was imported to New England.

Made for a large doll that was surely a prized possession, this pelisse may well have resembled a garment worn by her young "Mamma" which, in turn, might have been a smaller version of her own mother's—an apt illustration of the relationship between girls' toys as both playthings and instructional objects and nineteenth-century concepts of femininity.

17.5" L at CB



PATCHWORK POCKET AND HUSSIF
Made by Sabra Gallup
American (New England), late 18th century

Sabra Gallup's pocket and hussif make use of the thrifty technique of patchwork. While patchwork was more typically applied to quilted bedcovers in the eighteenth century, it was also used for a variety of household items and clothing accessories. Fragments of cotton, such as the block-printed designs seen in these two pieces, would have been saved over years of domestic sewing. With the American textile industry in its infancy in the late eighteenth century, floral block-printed cottons of this type were most often imported from England to be made into dresses. In making the pocket and hussif, in which the same fabrics can be found, even the smallest scraps were successfully joined with meticulous industry—although the full patterns cannot be seen, a lovely visual effect is crafted from the rich colors of the browns, tans, reds, pinks, and creams.

This pocket, unusual for its bold, charming statement, "Sabra Gallup her pocket," suggests the efforts of a confident young girl. Decorative cross stitch lettering, that would likely have first been learned and practiced on a sampler, now proclaims her name and property. The hussif, a type of pocket-case also known as a housewife, was used for storing sewing implements including needles, pins, threads, and scissors. That Sabra Gallup's hussif survives along with the pocket bearing her ownership is a rare and wonderful legacy from a young American girl.

Pocket: 16" H x 14" W
Hussif: 16" H x 4" W





PHAA SIN (SKIRT), TAI HUN PEOPLE
Laos, Muang Hun, Oudomsay Province; first half of the 20th century

Textiles play a significant role in Southeast Asian cultures, reflecting attitudes toward gender and embracing relationships within households and communities. Their integration into all aspects of life from everyday tasks to important religious ceremonies and festivities include the production and processing of raw materials, weaving, and their use as dress and furnishings. Both powerful symbolic and ritual objects, textiles are particularly linked to women who, for centuries, have performed all the steps in the creation of these revered and valuable goods. Indeed, women's acknowledged status derives from their involvement in this all-important material necessity and their lives are marked by their connection to textiles. As young girls, they learn to weave, first by observing their elders before sitting at a loom themselves, and then by making plain white cloth before progressing to patterned, multicolored pieces. Weaving is a sign of industriousness and self-discipline, qualities that make young women attractive to suitors, and by the time of marriage, they have woven a variety of textiles that they bring with them to their new families.

While the use of weft patterning to create motifs is characteristic of Southeast Asian textiles, the materials, design, and weaving techniques of this *phaa sin*, or woman's skirt, from the Oudomsay province in northwest Laos, are especially fine and accomplished. Of particular note is the large section of tapestry-woven quartered lozenges at the top of the textile, executed in the complex dove-tailed technique which involves wrapping multiple wefts around a single warp. The brocaded bands showing a procession of *siho* (mythological animals) and horses, in complement with the tapestry woven area, make this skirt rare. The two decorative panels are seamed at the sides with attached bands at top and bottom, forming a tube that comprises the head (*hua sin*), body (*tua*), and foot (*tiin*). As seen in this example, the head and foot are generally cotton, while the body—the largest section with the primary design elements—is silk. The multiple colors present in this *phaa sin* and the complexity of its patterning suggest that it was intended for a young woman. Like most Tai garments, the unstructured skirt is secured to the body through wrapping and tying, and would have been worn with a shoulder cloth.

A similar skirt is illustrated in *Textiles and the Tai Experience in Southeast Asia*, Mattiebelle Gittinger and H. Leedom Lefferts, Jr., 1992, fig. 1.2.

36" H x 26" W (seam-to-seam)





COMEDIN GÅR
HAND-PRINTED VELVETEEN BY STELLAN MÖRNER
Swedish, 1954

Between the 1930s and the 1960s, Sweden was at the forefront of textile design in Europe, employing artists who worked in a variety of media to create some of the most dynamic textiles of the century. Under the influence of formidable figures like Astrid Sampe at the Nordiska Kompaniet Textilkammare (the Textile Design Studio for Stockholm's leading department store) and Austrian émigré Josef Frank at the Svenskt Tenn, designers responded to a myriad of competing avant-garde movements, including constructivism, functionalism, cubism, and folk vernaculars.

Many designers employed by these textile firms were primarily active as painters and architects. Born in Stockholm and raised in his noble family's manor Esplunda in Örebro, Stellan Mörner (1896-1979) is one such figure. Though best known for his surrealist canvases, he was also a pioneering theatrical designer. After earning his degree in Art and Literature from the University of Stockholm in 1921, he traveled to Germany, Italy, and Tunisia. Between 1923 and 1925, he trained in Paris at the Académie de la Grand Chaumière and at the drawing academy of Basil Schoukhaieff. It was in Paris that he first encountered André Breton's *Surrealist Manifesto*. Mörner returned to Stockholm to study at the School of Fine Arts. In 1928, he moved to Halmstad, where he would find his greatest fame as a founding member of the Halmstadgruppen, a collective of artists influenced by cubism. Mörner's "dream landscape" paintings—full of abstracted geometric and architectural shapes suffused with soft Nordic light—embody the Halmstadgruppen's distinct strand of surrealism. He showed these works in major exhibitions in Copenhagen (1935), London (1936), and Paris (1938).

In 1946, Mörner received his first theatrical commission for a production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* directed by Alf Sjöberg at the Dramaten (Royal Dramatic Theatre) in Stockholm. His otherworldly décor consisted mostly of impressionistic architectural screens and floating veils, a treatment that, in fellow set designer Agne Beijer's words, "gave the illusion that the comedy did not rest on any foundation at all but floated freely in a space that modulated from sky-blue to sulphur-yellow, against which were etched a succession of surrealistic forms." Over the next two decades, he designed more than thirty theatrical productions.

Comedin går ("The Show Goes On") is Mörner's proof for the curtain he designed in 1954 for the stage of the Halmstad theater. Hand-printed on cotton velveteen by Erik Ljungbergs in Floda for the NK studio, *Comedin går* is the culmination of Mörner's earlier training and influences, from his painterly ability to mix light and color to the stark abstraction of his work with the Dramaten.

An architectonic tension between a simple grid structure defined by strong red and black horizontal lines, and a system of competing diagonals or struts that form the main pattern, penetrates *Comedin går*. The lozenge-shaped forms convey a sense of three-dimensionality through modulated color delineated by rich jewel tones and tempered by concrete gray and black. A column with perspectival black lines at the left edge conjures a series of receding tunnels or, alternatively, modernist pavilions. Defying a strict vertical or horizontal orientation, the textile is emphatically asymmetrical, yet balanced, creating a kinetic atmosphere that can be compared with the work of the Orphic Cubists, like Robert and Sonia Delaunay. Its motifs also betray the influence of constructivist architecture, in particular the plan for Vladimir Tatlin's "Monument to the Third International" (1917) and the Shukhov radio tower in Moscow (1920-22).

While Mörner was a prolific artist and designer, he produced few textiles, making *Comedin går* a rare and superlative example of his work. The textile is illustrated in *Svenska textilier 1890-1990*, Jan Brunius, et al, 1994, p. 199.

121.25" H x 52" W



LES POISSONS
SLIT WOOL TAPESTRY BY RICHARD LUCAS
Belgian, ca. 1956-57

In mid-twentieth-century Belgium a concerted effort on the part of artists in collaboration with manufacturers brought about a revitalization of the tapestry industry. By the late nineteenth century workshops focused primarily on re-weavings of older cartoons in outdated styles. Recognizing that this centuries-old medium needed to reflect a modern sensibility, leading Belgian artists formed organizations devoted to this endeavor and engaged with established ateliers in the creation of new designs. While these incorporated some traditional elements, overall they presented an entirely different visual impact. The deliberately limited palette with its strong colors reflected that of medieval tapestries, but the overt stylization of human figures and natural motifs and an emphasis on movement produced a dynamic and distinctly twentieth-century aesthetic. In addition to the many important commissions featuring historical narratives or allegorical themes that Belgian artists executed for government and other official buildings that were grand in scale, they also created designs for modest-sized, decorative hangings intended for domestic interiors.

Richard Lucas (1925-1977), a painter, sculptor, and gallerist from Brussels, was typical of the new group of tapestry designers. Lucas studied at the Académie de Bruxelles in the mid-1940s and directed two galleries in that city where he exhibited the work of both Belgian and foreign artists. In 1956 and 1957, he created tapestry cartoons that were woven by the Paris-based firm Braquenié at their manufactory in Mechlin. In *Les Poissons*, Lucas depicts a whimsical scene of marine life in contrasting blocks of color—deep red, bright and pale blue, yellow, black, grey, white, and blue-green. Large and small stylized fish—with gaping mouths, pointed snouts, and spiky fins—swim alone, in twos and threes, and in schools surrounded by long fronds that seem to sway gently in the water’s current. While the shape of the fishes is accurate, their striated coloration is fanciful. The two-dimensional aspect of the image is underscored by the slit tapestry technique in which clearly defined hues abut one another, rather than overlap to produce a shaded effect. Other figurative tapestries by Lucas, including one entitled *Chansons Wallonnes* now in the collection of the Ministère des Affaires économiques in Belgium, display the same bold compositions and masterful handling of color. The playfulness of *Les Poissons’s* subject matter combined with its strong sense of design exemplifies Belgian tapestry production of the mid-twentieth century.

The initials “MRB” that appear in the lower right corner of the tapestry stand for “Manufacture Royale de Braquenié.” This renowned firm, founded in the early decades of the nineteenth century, was a highly regarded purveyor of furnishing textiles—including woven silks, carpets, tapestries, and printed cottons—and was patronized by European royalty as well as wealthy foreign clients. In 1868, the company built a tapestry workshop on the grounds of a seventeenth-century *hôtel particulier* in Mechlin and brought in looms from their Aubusson manufactory in France. In recognition of Braquenié’s contribution to this art form with a long national history in Belgium, King Leopold II granted the atelier a royal warrant in 1875. Beginning in the interwar decades and continuing into the 1970s, the firm was instrumental in the creation of modernist tapestries that were acclaimed at World’s Fairs and other important exhibitions.

Provenance: Braquenié archives.

99.5” H x 47” W



TOP BRASS
Zandra Rhodes for Heal's & Son Ltd.
English, 1964

Zandra Rhodes' screen-printed cotton fabric, with its bold colors and 1960s pop aesthetic, presents a whimsical take on items typically depicted with reverence—military medals. Rhodes designed this print as part of her diploma show at the Royal College of Art in 1964; her theme for that culminating event of her education was medals. She writes that this interest “was originally sparked off by a painting by David Hockney, ‘Generals’. From the way the picture was painted it was the medals that first caught my eye and must have subconsciously also been linking in my mind with the current Pop Art/Union Jack craze.” This design from her graduating show was produced by Heal's as a furnishing fabric that same year.

Rhodes' use of appropriation continued throughout her successful career as she looked at objects, landscapes, cultures, and art from around the world and through history. Light bulbs, Native American feather headdresses, slashed seventeenth-century silks, lipsticks, cactus, lace and shells are among the eclectic items that attracted her attention and were incorporated by Rhodes into textile and clothing designs which, as with *Top Brass*, she made uniquely her own.

Top Brass is illustrated in *The Art of Zandra Rhodes*, Zandra Rhodes and Anne Knight, 1985, p. 15 and *Artists' Textiles in Britain 1945–1970*, Geoffrey Rayner, Richard Chamberlain, and Annamarie Stapleton, 2003, cat. no. 106.

68" H x 50" W



TOP: "TOP PART" BY JAMES MOORE

MIDDLE: "TOP PART" BY JAMES MOORE

BOTTOM: "TOP PART" BY JAMES MOORE

TOP: "TOP PART" BY JAMES MOORE

MIDDLE: "TOP PART" BY JAMES MOORE

BOTTOM: "TOP PART" BY JAMES MOORE



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