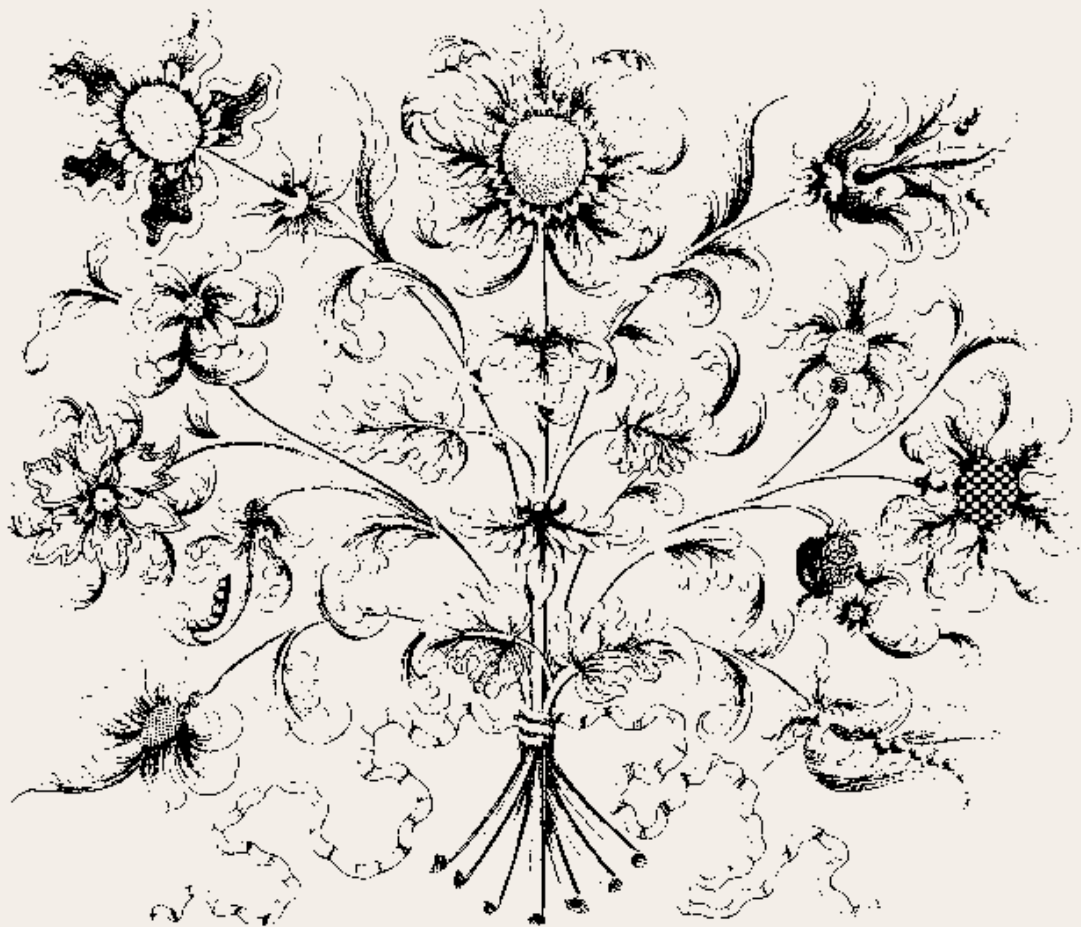


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SPOT SAMPLER INITIALED M.H.L.  
German, dated 1685



As a distinct and longstanding needlework tradition, European samplers functioned primarily as aides-mémoire. In addition to their utilitarian aspect, samplers also offered the potential for a visually appealing graphic statement through the imaginative arrangement of motifs and variety of stitches. Although most often produced by young girls, samplers were originally devised—and continued to be created—by adult women and even professionals.

The sophisticated combinations and juxtapositions of colors, patterns and stitches in this skillfully worked late seventeenth-century German sampler suggest the hand of an experienced embroiderer. The clearly defined rectangular fields of differing sizes are executed in polychrome silk on a canvas ground in tent, rococo, cross, long-arm cross, satin, and Algerian eye stitches. Geometric forms dominate, including squares with *trompe l'œil* effects in gradated shades, chevrons, zigzags, diamonds, and imbricated scales. In the lower registers, individual floral motifs and a beribboned bouquet provide a harmonious counterpoint to the strict regularity of the main composition. The bouquet comprising a range of blossoms was a favorite subject that allowed the embroiderer to demonstrate her proficiency at naturalistic representation.

Pattern books were a much used source of inspiration for embroiderers in this period, and from their first appearance in Germany in the early sixteenth century, they were a commercial success. Several of the elements in this piece—both geometric and floral—relate to designs illustrated in pattern books by Rosina Fürst, published in Nuremberg. Prior to the execution of this sampler, editions of her *Modelbuch* appeared in 1660, 1666, and 1676. A nearly identical sampler dated 1688, in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (104-1880), is illustrated in *Samplers*, by Donald King (1960), pl. 65, and *Samplers in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, by Clare Brown and Jennifer Weardon (1999), pl. 39.

Provenance: Ex-collection Emma-Henriette Schiff von Suvero. Deaccessioned from the Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, in 2003.

21.5" H x 9" W



CHINOISERIE BORDER WITH EXCISE STAMP  
English, ca. 1805

Influences, both cultural and political, on the production of English printed cottons are apparent in this exceptional glazed Chinoiserie border, probably printed at Bannister Hall. English decorative arts often catered to the demand for goods in the Chinese taste, a preference that was unabated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and, as demonstrated by this cotton, found expression into the next century as well. Appropriated motifs of pagodas, bridges and Chinese figures decorate this narrow, block-printed border intended for use in Oriental-inspired English interiors.

Beginning in 1712, England imposed an excise tax on domestically manufactured printed calicoes. It was not until over one hundred years later, in 1831, that all excise duties on printed goods were repealed. Excise stamps, used by officials when collecting duties owed, rarely survive on textiles. The markings seen on a fragment of this cotton include the charge stamp and part of the frame mark. The charge stamp, with a crown and the entwined letters GR, states that the fabric is of "British Manufactury"; the number below would have identified the officer using the stamp. This imprint was applied as proof that the required duty had been paid. Also on this piece (not shown) is a portion of the frame mark—a rectangular stamp, divided into sections, each with a numeral, letter or series of numbers. In attempts by the government to prevent forgery and fraud, dates and numbers were coded and frequently changed. Within this partial frame mark, "54" is the coded date, "M" is the index letter, and the rest is the progressive serial number that identified the length of fabric.



Border: 9" H x 64" W  
Stamped Piece: 9" H x 8.25" W  
(details shown)



NATURALISTIC BROCADED SILK  
French, ca. 1735-40

Luxuriant in its pattern, scale and coloration, this formal dress silk brilliantly conveys the essence of the rococo aesthetic. In the early 1730s, an innovation in the preparatory drawing of silk designs, generally credited to the Lyonnais designer and entrepreneur Jean Revel (1684-1751), resulted in an increased ability to depict more naturalistic, three-dimensional shapes. In the technique known as *points rentrés*, individual wefts of one color dovetail with wefts of another color, producing shaded and modeled forms with distinctly plastic, painterly qualities. The possibility for enhanced pictorial effects was quickly exploited by designers and weavers alike who delighted in creating a profusion of ever-larger motifs including lush florals and foliage, ripe fruits, shells, pastoral vignettes, and architectural elements. Often several of these were combined in whimsical compositions—an expansive bouquet might tower over a diminutive garden folly.

A lavish and complex silk such as this, aimed at an elite clientele, took weeks or even months to produce and would have been woven in limited quantities. The elaborate weave structure juxtaposes areas of tabby, satin and brocading in a multiplicity of textural effects. Small, scattered flowers and an allover wave-like pattern decorate the coral-colored ground; the sumptuous fruit and floral sprays are brocaded in brightly hued silk floss and luminous, silver-metallic-wrapped threads. These opulent silks were made up into women's gowns, men's banyans and waistcoats, and ecclesiastical vestments. Masterpieces of weaving, they were immediate indicators of wealth and the most up-to-date fashion in silk design.

109" H x 22" W





DRAWSTRING PURSE  
Probably English, ca. 1700

This extraordinary purse, brilliant in its combination of vivid colors against a glistening metallic ground, highlights the importance of symbolic gift giving in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Composed of four woven shield-shaped panels, this type of purse is known to have played a ceremonial role in marriage rites. According to tradition, the bridegroom gifted a small donation of money to his betrothed during the service; embellished purses, usually of precious materials, served as elaborate packaging for the symbolic number of coins. There is evidence that this practice existed in Pre-Reformation England, as described in *The York Manual* (1509): "With this rynge I wedde thee, and with this golde and silver I honoure thee, and with this gyft I dowe thee." This custom of "endowing purses" appears to have persisted until the end of the seventeenth century, though the gift was no longer explicitly referred to in the Protestant wedding ceremony.

Small purses such as this stunning example were used throughout Europe as tokens of love. Two designs of particularly English flavor alternate on the tightly woven silver panels, each with charming variations. Both feature a golden vase issuing a central branch of flowers, with two floral vines spreading upwards on each side. The branches bear a multitude of gaily colored flowers, including striped parrot tulips, irises, pansies, and carnations. In one arrangement, two confronted black birds flank a stylized cornflower, while dainty insects with spotted wings flit against the silver field. The other design, grouped similarly, shows exotic chartreuse parrots with sprigs of plump berries in their beaks; in the center is a magnificent open rose with scalloped petals shaded from deep red to the palest pink. The distinctive shape of this flower suggests a Tudor rose, an instantly recognizable symbol of England.

The purse is bound at the edges with a combination of couched and twisted silver-gilt-wrapped thread; gilded metal strip is threaded throughout to accent the trim. Lined in blue twilled silk, the purse cinches closed with finely plaited drawstrings. Golden basket weave tassels with silk fringe and gold loops form decorative pendants from the cord drawstrings, and a terminal tassel adds the final flourish to the bottom of the pouch. The pristine condition of this purse suggests that it was treasured and preserved rather than used. A woven purse with related motifs is in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (552-1901).



ACKWORTH SCHOOL SAMPLERS WORKED BY  
HANNAH HICKS AND HER DAUGHTER RACHEL WILSON  
English, dated 1790 and 1818

Samplers made by young girls at the Ackworth School, a Quaker institution in Yorkshire, England, form a distinctive group of samplers worked from the late eighteenth century when the school was founded through the middle of the following century. Hannah Hicks and her daughter, Rachel Wilson, were Ackworth pupils twenty-eight years apart. In their needlework are embroidered motifs that were taught at Ackworth for many decades and that have come to characterize samplers produced at this austere Quaker learning establishment. The rarity of surviving needlework made by a mother and daughter, combined with the excellence and beauty of the stitching and the known history of the makers, distinguish these two samplers as exceptional works of schoolgirl embroidery.

Founded in 1779 by John Fothergill, the Ackworth School was intended for children of less affluent Quaker families. Hannah Hicks, born October 22, 1774 at Old Saling, Essex, was admitted on April 4, 1789 and remained an Ackworth student until 1791. She married Thomas Wilson, a fellow Quaker, and their daughter, Rachel, born at Houghton, near Cambridge, on October 13, 1804, was a pupil at Ackworth from 1817 to 1818.

As stated in the *Rules for the Government of Ackworth School*, written in 1790, one of the schoolmaster's responsibilities was to teach the female pupils writing and arithmetic. A requirement of the schoolmistress was to instruct the girls reading, sewing, knitting, and spinning. While the samplers worked by Hannah and Rachel exhibit the decorative medallions, birds and floral motifs that identify one type of sampler worked at the school, alphabet and darning samplers were also taught at Ackworth. These didactic sewing exercises provided the girls with basic needlework skills required for marking and repairing linens. According to the rules at Ackworth, it was the female students' responsibilities to "...make and mend their own apparel, the boys' linen, and the house linen; and do such needle work, as may be sent to be executed in the house...." Sewing was taught to the girls not only as a feminine talent but also as a marketable skill for possible future employment as domestic workers.

The earliest medallion sampler in the archives of the Ackworth School was made by Mary Wigham in 1790. Hannah Hicks, whose sampler is also dated 1790, would have been a classmate of Mary's and their needlework, as expected, bears many similarities. (In addition, each of the two girls' samplers includes the initials of the other.) Working with polychrome silk threads and using cross stitch throughout, Hannah Hicks embroidered half-medallions as a framing device for the central rectangular field. This unusual design, combined with the motifs within the field that occur on many samplers from the school, is a defining feature of Ackworth embroideries. The similarity of the medallions to motifs on German and northern European samplers has been noted but it is unknown how these geometric, snowflake-like patterns came to be taught by schoolmistresses as part of an eighteenth-century Quaker education in England.

The half-medallion border and many of the motifs seen on Hannah Hicks's work reappear in her daughter's sampler. Rachel Wilson embroidered her sampler in 1818 with more open ground using only black silk thread. Both pieces contain initials throughout to indicate classmates, and in each, as well as in all surviving Ackworth medallion samplers, the delicate intricacies of the patterns and the attention to decoration belie the strict tenets of plainness central to a Quaker education. Surviving samplers from the Westtown School, a Quaker institution modeled after Ackworth that opened in Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1799, illustrate the flow of needlework education from one Quaker community to another—similar design structures and identical motifs appear on samplers from both schools.

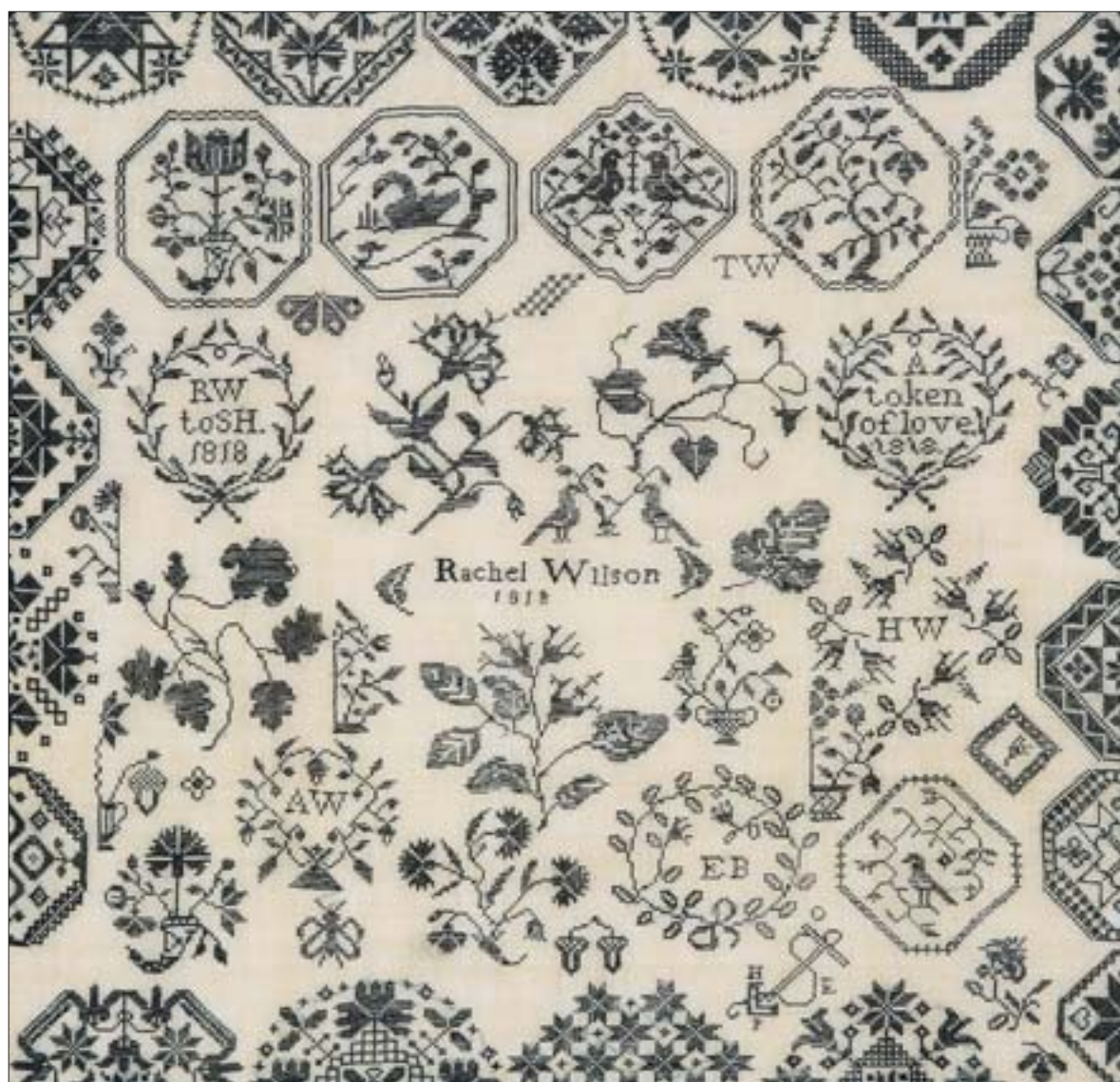
Hannah Hicks's and Rachel Wilson's samplers express through their words and imagery a strong sense of friendship and affection, a desired result of domestic needlework produced not for practical function but as "a token of love."

See: *Childhood Embroidery: American Samplers & Pictorial Needlework 1650-1850*, Betty Ring (1993), p. 291 and *Samplers*, Carol Humphrey (1997), fig. 31.

Hannah Hicks sampler: 14.5" H x 12.5" W  
Rachel Wilson sampler: 12.5" H x 12.75" W









T W W

taken  
of love  
1818

H W

on



MUSLIN DRESS WITH HISTORICIZING TRIM  
English, ca. 1800-05

The striking combination of bright yellow and rich, dark brown in this elegant, early nineteenth-century dress reflects the contemporary interest in the colors of antiquity. The widespread vogue for white muslin notwithstanding, women's clothing depicted in fashion plates and paintings also incorporated vivid and complementary hues inspired by Greek, Etruscan and Pompeian sources. In England, the prevailing neoclassical silhouette was frequently combined with details and trimmings that evoked more recent periods of history, especially the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The zigzag pattern created by the applied brown and yellow silk ribbon was a particularly popular form of decoration. As illustrated in the pages of the deluxe English periodical, *The Gallery of Fashion* (1794-1803), "Vandyke scollops"—the term for this type of ornament—embellish numerous gowns as well as cloaks and hats.

In the last decades of the eighteenth century, cotton was increasingly worn by both men and women across the socio-economic spectrum. Although India produced the finest muslin, by the turn of the nineteenth century both England and Scotland were manufacturing sheer, high-grade cottons. Their soft, draping qualities perfectly suited the narrow, columnar shape of female dress inspired by classical prototypes. The gown's brilliant yellow color, achieved with a plant dyestuff, attests to the skill of eighteenth-century dyers. Its low neckline, short sleeves and long, trained skirt as well as its materials suggest that it was intended for late afternoon or evening wear. Accessorized with a headdress and long gloves, the ensemble's eclectic appropriation of historicizing colors and motifs would have created a stylish *toilette*.



## CREWELWORK CURTAIN

English, early 18th century

In contrast to the often luxuriant, muscular forms that characterize seventeenth-century English crewelwork, this early eighteenth-century crewel embroidered curtain demonstrates a refined sophistication that reflects a blend of European and Oriental sensibilities. During this period, exoticism—especially Chinoiserie—was very fashionable and clearly informed the overall design of this panel. In this exceptional example of finely worked crewel embroidery, intricate flowers of fantastic inspiration twist and turn on elegantly winding branches, while serrated leaves occasionally caress or entwine the sinuous floral vines. Here and there, a fanciful bird with colorful plumage flies close by to inspect a blossom, or lights on a bending leaf. The graceful pattern, full of variation and liberated from any truly discernable repeat, underscores the Asian influence; the asymmetrical composition and color scheme relate to wallpapers and painted silks produced in China for export, and influences of Indian chintzes of the period can also be seen.

Soft, muted pinks, deep reds and multiple hues of green and blue create a harmonious palette for this *tour de force* of crewelwork. Twisted, plied worsted wool threads were used to embroider the three joined linen panels; single-ply yarns were also employed for especially delicate details. The variety of stitches, expertly manipulated by an amateur embroiderer, delights the eye and imparts subtle complexities to this curtain. Leaves are worked in many combinations of stitches; some are formed of spiky blanket stitches, others are delineated in fluid stem stitches. Speckling, diminutive crosses and detached chain stitches add interest and seemingly endless variation to the voided surfaces of outlined leaves. Many leaves are completely shaded with long and short stitches, and in some instances portions of the leaves are solidly worked while others are defined and filled with decorative stitches. The embroidery techniques used to create the floral abundance also add to the repertoire of stitches: rows of closely spaced blanket stitch and buttonhole filling create lacy petals and latticed centers, while satin stitch chevrons grace other flowers.

John Stalker and George Parker's influential *Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing*, published in 1688, may have inspired the fantastically rendered Chinoiserie birds that decorate this panel which was originally part of a bed set. Of the four crewelwork curtains that survive, two are in private collections; a workbag, also in a private collection, is embroidered with identical vines and flowers that grow from a small mound. A comparable curtain in the collection of the National Museums of Scotland (A.1964.508) is embroidered with similar flowering vines, leaves and birds.

74" H x 49.5" W









MAN'S BANYAN OF PAINTED-AND-DYED COTTON  
Indian Export for the European Market, first half of the 18th century

Eastern in origin and informal in nature, the banyan was enthusiastically adopted by gentlemen of leisure in the West in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Worn in the privacy of the home over the waistcoat and breeches, the banyan, or morning gown, was nevertheless a fashionable garment and its exotic, *négligé* qualities often figure prominently in contemporary portraits of the well-to-do, intellectuals and artists. Although many European-made silk banyans survive in museum collections, Indian cotton examples are especially rare.

Both the comfortable, kimono-like construction and colorful exuberance of this splendid banyan readily illustrate its appeal. Particularly striking is the painted-to-form pattern that accommodates the directional elements of the main motifs that reverse at the shoulder. On the body of the banyan, made from a continuous piece of fabric, the flowering vases on columns are right side up on front and back. Specially designed borders for the center opening, sleeve edges and hem complete the sophisticated composition.

This type of painted-to-shape garment might have been made up in India, or exported to Europe essentially as a kit and subsequently stitched together. The superiority of Indian cottons to their European imitations as well as their prohibition in England and France until the second half of the eighteenth century only made these goods more desirable. It may well be that the wearer of this banyan proudly flaunted his fashionable contraband.



WOMAN'S EMBROIDERED LINEN COIF  
English, ca. 1600

An admirable example of careful technique and elaborate ornament, this coif of the late Elizabethan period demonstrates not only the proficiency of the domestic English embroiderer, but also the nuances of thematic personal expression. Abstract ideas revealed through visual imagery were an essential form of communication in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; as it pertained to dress, symbolism was often conveyed through combinations of color and motif. As illustrated by this coif, an informal type of woman's cap, costume articles embellished with bright botanical themes can be viewed simply as decorative, or as objects infused with deeper symbolic meaning.

Embroidery was an intimate medium through which to express personality, allegiances or associations; the flowers that decorate this coif probably held special significance to the wearer. Contained within a network of vigorously coiled stems and arabesques of silver-gilt braidstitch are buds and blossoms of flowers commonly grown in English gardens. The eglantine, a single five-petaled variety of rose, was emblematic of purity and chastity. Carnations, exotic imports from the East, were connotative of love, affection or even betrothal, whereas the cornflower suggested delicacy and refinement. Pansies (so-called after the French, *pensée*) symbolized kind thoughts, making them appropriate motifs for a coif. The flowers' colors were also meaningful: the cobalt and pale blues of the cornflower likely stood for amity, while the deep red of the roses signaled passionate love or courage. Pink also represented love, but of a more tender sort. The purple of the pansies (most of which has since faded to beige) hinted at spirituality and noble intentions. Though yellow and green could express jealousy, their appearance in the verdant foliage symbolizes youthful good health, fecundity and joy.

Parts of the embroidery are executed in satin stitch or delineated with stem stitch, but the majority of motifs are worked in detached buttonhole filling. This labor-intensive technique requires precision and consistency—derived from needlelace-making, it was a specialty of English embroiderers. Finishing details imbue the coif with a magical air: couched spirals of metal-wrapped thread accent the buds and flowers' centers, and tiny spangles shimmer like stars against the linen ground. A coif with forehead cloth in the Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums, Scotland (29/134) features embroidered vines and flowers comparable to those seen on this fine piece.



## NEEDLEWORK PICTURE OF QUEEN ESTHER AND KING AHASUERUS English, ca. 1670

Canvas work served a practical purpose in seventeenth-century furnishings; colorful and relatively simple to make, the amateur embroiderer could create a wide variety of decorative materials for the household. To enliven the typically dark interiors of English homes, needlework pictures of great imagination were made, inspired by popular prints and pattern books. Though embroidered pictures could be purely ornamental in nature, pictorial needlework frequently relied on allegorical and biblical themes to convey more complex messages. Many existing needlework depictions of the story of Queen Esther present loose interpretations of engraved prints; this picture does not indicate a specific source, but shows an individualistic, almost naive, approach to the subject matter. The entire surface of this sensitively wrought piece is worked in extremely fine silk petitpoint (referring to the size of the stitch), also called tent stitch (from the French, *tenter*, to stretch, as the canvas was made taut over a frame to be embroidered).

In the wake of the Reformation, the Old Testament played an important role in Protestant life. Many of the favored themes for canvas work compositions represent Old Testament stories, especially those centered on valorous women. These biblical heroines played prominent roles and were celebrated for their virtues and courage; none was so widely depicted in needlework pictures as Queen Esther. Poet Thomas Heywood included the Jewish queen in his pantheon of notable female figures, *The Exemplary Lives and Memorable Acts of Nine of the Most Worthy Women of the World* (1640), praising her noble yet ultimately “masculine spirited” character. She is indeed portrayed in needlework of the period as a compassionate and brave woman.

Dressed in her royal robes, Queen Esther kneels before her husband, the Persian King Ahasuerus, requesting his presence at a special court banquet. The king extends a golden scepter to his beloved wife, granting her wish. Esther also asks her husband’s permission to invite Haman, his treacherous minister, who has coerced the king to condemn all the Jews in Persia to death. At this banquet, she invites both men to dine a second time; at the feast the next evening, Esther reveals that she herself is Jewish, and pleads not only for her life, but for the safety of her fellow Jews. Following the queen’s successful intervention, and her disclosure of Haman’s devious plot, Ahasuerus revokes the unjust law. Haman’s fate, execution by hanging, is carried out on the gallows he had prepared for Esther’s Jewish kinsman, Mordecai.

It has been suggested that the preponderance of embroidered Old Testament episodes, rather than those taken from the New Testament, resulted from a Protestant interpretation of the second commandment forbidding the worship of images of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints. Another possibility is that the embroiderers perceived links between the actions of these ancient heroines and their own after a period of tumultuous civil unrest. Esther’s fierce, unselfish dedication to saving her people inspired admiration in her husband and earned the loyalty of her kingdom, attributes which contributed to the story’s allegorical appeal in seventeenth-century England. Ultimately, with details such as costume and architectural settings revised, Old Testament pictorial needlework was replete with morals that the embroiderer could relate to her daily existence.

15” H x 13” W





SILK SATIN BROCADE  
French, 1770s

Women's dress of the mid-to-late eighteenth century in France was often fanciful, and novelty became synonymous with all things fashionable. The concept of *nouveauté* caused an increase in the use of ornamental trimmings such as lace, ribbons and *passementerie*, and challenged silk manufacturers to create innovative types of weaves to compliment the finishing touches already in vogue. Textile designs incorporating fur patterns and textures first appeared in the middle of the century, and as seen on this glorious brocaded satin of the 1770s, the leopard motif emerged as a suitably exotic, novel theme for dress silks.

The *trompe l'œil* effects captured here are delightfully convincing. Two gracefully meandering leopard-patterned ribbons trail along the shimmering ivory satin surface, surrounded by vividly colored sprigs and bouquets of chenille roses, carnations and other flowers. The rosettes sprinkled over the ribbons' surface are naturalistic in shape and color—knotted at regular intervals with large bows that secure plumes and floral sprays, the spotted ribbons intermittently reveal mauve "undersides." The luxurious quality signals that this brocade was produced in Lyon, the leading source for exceptional figured silks; the unusual selvedge width (several inches wider than the standard of the day) designates it as a special commission, possibly for a member of royalty.

Garlands of fur ribbons seen on brocaded silks may have been inspired by actual ribbons used for dress trimmings: *ruban tigré*, as leopard-spotted ribbon was called, graced some of the most *au courant* fashions of the second half of the century. This panel was originally part of a gown; a complete *robe à la française* in the collection of the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York (P82.27.1a,b) is made from a brocaded silk related to this example.

51.5" H x 28.75" W



WHITEWORK LINEN BORDER  
English, ca. 1725-40

Admired for its delicacy and translucent qualities, whitework embroidery was widely popular for dress accessories and trimmings throughout the eighteenth century. Less time consuming to make and hence more affordable than the best laces, it was nonetheless worn by men and women of fashion in the form of caps, lappets, kerchiefs, aprons, sleeve and shirt ruffles, and cravat ends. The finest whitework was produced in Saxony, and Dresden merchants supplied lace dealers throughout Europe. Imitations of "Dresden work," as it was called, were made elsewhere on the continent, in England and America, and the term came to designate this particular type of white-on-white embroidery.

Brussels bobbin laces inspired much of the linen and cotton whitework made in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. A variety of embroidery stitches combined with elaborate drawn-thread and pulled-fabric work resulted in a richly patterned yet soft material, characterized by naturalistic and geometric motifs, that successfully emulated its more expensive models. In this border, probably intended for the skirt of a dress, buttonhole, blanket, satin, and feather stitches create the precisely rendered, stylized exotic birds perched on double-handled flowering vases, fruiting branches and floral sprays; pulled-and-drawn-work is used for the strapwork band that provides a unifying element to the overall composition. Buttonhole stitches with tiny picots finish the scalloped, openwork edging.

Made by both professional and amateur embroiderers, the refinement of whitework was a perfect compliment to elegant eighteenth-century fashions.

6.5" H x 148.75" W (detail shown)

*IRIS D'EAU* ROLLER-PRINTED VELVETEEN BY FELIX AUBERT  
French, 1897-1898

As part of the experimental *Groupe des Cinq* and the *Groupe des Six*, both forerunners of the *Art dans Tout* movement in fin-de-siècle Paris, French designer Felix Aubert (1866-1940) was recognized as one of the textile industry's most versatile talents. Working in concert with architects and decorative artists, Aubert proved particularly adept at creating furnishing fabrics for sophisticated interiors. This striking velveteen was manufactured by the Alsatian firm Scheurer, Lauth & Cie.; the pattern is also known to have been printed in 1897 by Pilon & Cie., a Parisian firm that produced most of Aubert's textiles. Demonstrating Aubert's graphic skills and unusual color sense, this outstanding design introduces an iconic motif—the water iris—that was a hallmark of his textile and interior designs.

Aubert was a key contributor to the Art Nouveau decorative vocabulary. Whereas most French Art Nouveau designers incorporated fantastically exaggerated, frenetic whiplash curves in their patterns, Aubert's success relied on his sense of restraint and formality. *Iris d'Eau* shows his mastery of a composition in which lines and rhythm dominate: rising from the center of each fanning spray of slender, pin-striped leaves is a trio of long-stemmed irises. Arranged in a half drop repeat against undulating ribbons that suggest swirling water, the iris clusters touch to form a pseudo-diaper pattern. Aubert's crisply outlined design was rendered especially well on the plush velveteen surface; this type of fabric was well suited to absorbing the heady mixture of colors chosen. As a testament to its powerful visual impact, the *Groupe des Six* chose *Iris d'Eau* to line the walls of the *Galerie des Artistes Modernes* in 1898.

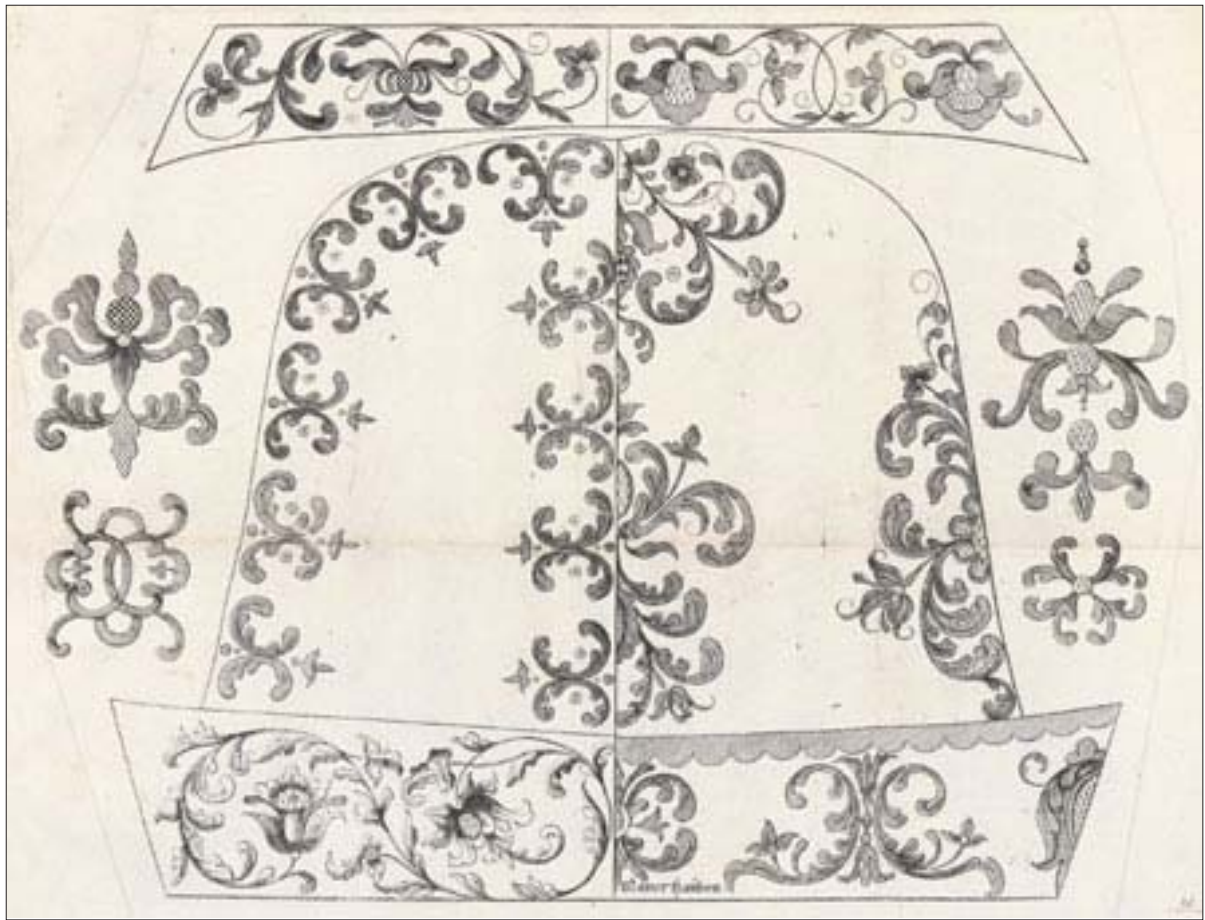
Aubert's water iris appears recurrently in his *œuvre*. An entrance hall furnished by Aubert in 1899 featured mosaic flooring, plaster moldings and enameled stoneware plaques all using a water iris motif nearly identical to those on this printed cotton. Several of his intricate lace patterns, for which he received enthusiastic praise, were also ornamented with graceful irises. Aubert's furnishing textiles for the *Exposition Universelle* of 1900 continued this theme; one of his submitted designs showed three irises threaded together and arranged in a rhythmic half drop repeat, much like this example.

*Iris d'Eau* was printed in multiple colorways on various types of cotton. Examples are found in two important German collections: the Textilmuseum Krefeld (06458) and the Landesmuseum Stuttgart (GT 6516).

41" H x 33.5" W



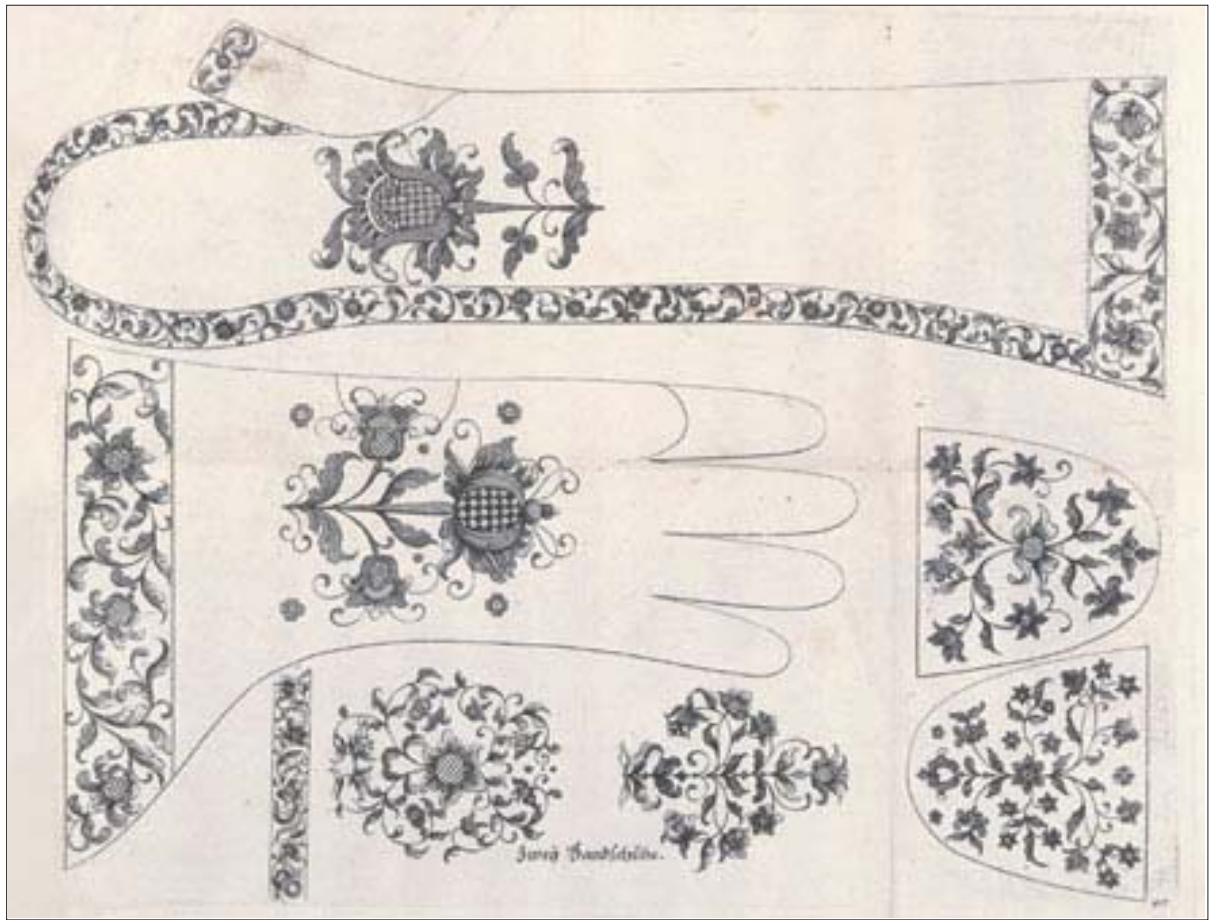




*KUNST- UND FLEISS-ÜBENDE NADEL-ERGÖTZUNGEN;  
ODER NEU-ERFUNDENES NEH- UND STICK-BUCH*  
By Margaretha Helm, ca. 1725

Margaretha Helm, wife of the cantor of the church St. Egydien in Nuremberg, not only taught embroidery, but also painstakingly documented her needlework designs. Compiled in three volumes, her repertoire of ornamental patterns—intended to enhance a variety of dress and furnishing articles—follows the tradition of German pattern publications of the previous century, which focused on embroidery rather than lace. Helm’s collection does include a few templates for cutwork and needlelace, but most of her illustrations feature freely composed floral motifs meant for whitework and polychrome silk and metallic thread embroidery. A series of alphabets (to be worked in counted cross stitch) reflects the practical needs of household embroiderers, yet the engraved flower and fruit designs, inspired by the lavish imagery found on Indian textiles exported to Europe, reveal Helm’s talent for providing her audience with decorative motifs in keeping with the tastes of the day.

The diverse applications for these patterns, as well as appropriate materials, are described in Helm’s own words. Linen, silk, gold- and silver-metallic threads are suggested for the embroideries, while fine linen, canvas, plain- or satin-weave silk, velvet, and wool are indicated as suitable ground fabrics. Several designs call for specific stitches—back stitch and satin stitch, for example—but Helm’s recommendations serve as guidance only, giving the embroiderer artistic license with the range of stitches used. A variety of items could be embroidered following her intricate models. Furnishing designs include those for chair upholstery, cushions, bed covers, and heraldic devices. There are also various patterns intended for costume; among the articles illustrated are aprons, stomachers, slipper tops, shaped and square purses, shirts for men and women, kerchiefs, gloves and mitts, hats and caps, and even a pistol holder and cartridge pouch. Interesting alternatives to these embroidery designs are presented in Helm’s patterns for cord-quilted caps and stomachers.



Helm's work was issued by Johann Christian Weigel, a local publisher who specialized in illustrated, instructional books. Like earlier German pattern books, the collection is prefaced by a note from Weigel to his female readers, which affords a glimpse of the socio-cultural significance of needlework in the upper classes. The editor piously defends needlework as the most seemly of womanly occupations, not only for those of "Bürgerliche" (middle-class) status but also for noblewomen. Weigel further contrasts the habitually frivolous pastimes of the leisure classes to the useful arts of the needle, which have the added benefit of "keeping much money in the wallet that would otherwise spring forth through feminine thoughtlessness." It is worth noting that Weigel published two other women's pattern books, but he adamantly concludes by pointing out that all of Helm's patterns are original, and that therefore the interests of other ladies who have published their embroidery designs are protected. The title to Part 3 reiterates that the patterns were "never previously published."

Only one edition of Helm's collected patterns was printed, thus making the series extremely rare. Few known copies survive, though six institutional copies are recorded in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the New York Public Library; the Clark Art Institute, Massachusetts; the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich; the Staatlichen Kunstbibliothek, Berlin; and the Danske Kunstindustrimuseum, Copenhagen. All except the copy in Berlin appear to include the first part only—the present example, containing nearly all of the engravings and folded plates issued in Parts 1 and 3, is one of the only remaining copies of this fragile and influential pattern book to remain in private hands.

2 volumes, oblong folio (Part 1: 8" H x 12.75" W; Part 3: 8" H x 13" W); 103 engraved plates including two engraved titles.

EGYPTE SCREEN-PRINTED RAYON BY ANDRÉ LANSKOY  
French, 1946

CORTÈGE BY PIERRE LECUIRE WITH POCHOIR ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY ANDRÉ LANSKOY  
French, 1959

The artworks of André Lanskoj (1902-1976) are more than abstractions—they are juxtapositions of shapes, assemblages of colors and studies that explore the interfacing of language with visual imagery. A pioneer of *Tachism*, an artistic movement of the 1940s and 1950s also known as *Art Informel* or Lyrical Abstraction, Lanskoj emphasized the spontaneous in his paintings, combining surges of pure color with more subtle modulations. His efforts to translate language into abstract visual messages are most evident in two of his bold projects: a rare screen-printed textile and his vivid collages for Pierre Lecuire's book, *Cortège*.

Born in Moscow, Lanskoj spent his youth in Russia; in 1921, he moved to Paris and studied at the Académie de la Grande-Chaumière. His first non-figurative works were painted in 1937, with his first Parisian exhibition of abstractions in 1944. As a painter, Lanskoj gave primacy to color, and this holds true for his textile design, *Egypte*. In 1946, French industrialist Jean Bauret invited several *Tachist* artists—including Serge Poliakoff, André Beaudin and Henri Michaux—to experiment with designs for furnishing textiles. One of Lanskoj's contributions to this series was an expressive interpretation of the complex pictorial characters of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. The relationship between the Egyptian writing system and his own glyphs is mainly conceptual: the symbols Lanskoj invented have no inherent meaning, yet their careful placement suggests a text that is meant to be read. Contrasting with the neutral ground, the centered, vertical column is a grid of rectangular cells containing six repeating compilations of mysterious, hieroglyphic-inspired shapes. These cartouche-like compartments are bordered on each side by narrow strips of color blocks with voided linear abstractions. The intense purple and teal hues and vibrant reds and yellow are typical of Lanskoj's exaltation of color.

Working within the theme of synthesizing language, color and form, Lanskoj tried his hand at an exciting tradition: the *livre d'artiste*. His first project was a collaboration with poet Pierre Lecuire; their masterpiece *Cortège*, arguably one of the finest artist-books ever produced, is a dazzling symbiosis of literary and visual material. Lecuire first met Lanskoj in 1948; ten years later, he would enlist his friend to illustrate the long prose poem. At Lecuire's suggestion, Lanskoj created a series of twenty-four compositions for the book in the *papiers collés* method; his challenge was to interpret Lecuire's writing into bold, graphic statements. The author's opening lines set the tone for Lanskoj's luminous color harmonies: "This book is a cortège. It has its colors, action and animation. It blazes, it proclaims one knows not which passion, which justice; it flows like the course of a navigation...." As he achieved with *Egypte*, the vibrant, saturated tints of the abstractions on these particular plates create a language of their own, while the lively arrangement of crisp and jagged forms shows an affinity with the rhythmic cadence of communication.

Remarkable for their dense bursts of color and unfamiliar shapes, the series of collages was masterfully executed in *pochoir* by colorist Maurice Beaufumé under Lanskoj's personal direction. The bold, oversized text was printed by Marthe Fequet and Pierre Baudier, and *Cortège* was released in Paris, December 1959. This copy, signed by both artist and poet on the justification page, was the fifty-fourth of 150 copies to be collated. Although Lanskoj would work on other experimental books and apply his talents to creating Aubusson tapestries, these two examples remain outstanding achievements in the artist's prolific career.

*Egypte*: 106" H x 49.5" W

*Cortège*: 17.625" H x 13" W; 68 pp; 24 illustrations.







CRAY PRINTED COTTON BY WILLIAM MORRIS  
English, designed in 1884

During a prolific career spanning the period in which nineteenth-century England was overtaken by industrialization, William Morris (1834-1896) promoted an alternate vision of life and art. The textiles Morris designed at his workshops possess an exuberant aesthetic poised, at the time of their creation, between earlier textile traditions and a modern sensibility.

*Cray*, a furnishing fabric requiring thirty-four wood blocks to print, was designed by Morris in 1884 and the successful pattern was continually produced over a period of decades in numerous colorways. With its combination of sinuous lines, delicate vines and robust blossoms, *Cray* fulfills Morris's dictum that:

... in all patterns which are meant to fill the eye and satisfy the mind, there should be a certain mystery. We should not be able to read the whole thing at once, nor desire to do so, nor be impelled by that desire to go on tracing line after line to find out how the pattern is made, and I think that the obvious presence of a geometrical order, if it be, as it should be, beautiful, tends towards this end, and prevents our feeling restless over a pattern. (William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art*, 1882)

In 1881, when Morris began manufacturing textiles at Merton Abbey in Surrey, his desire was a return to centuries-old methods of dyeing and printing on fabric. The invention of the first aniline dye in 1856 was soon followed by many other colors. While the English textile industry quickly adopted this technological development, Morris preferred to use natural dyes—indigo, madder, woad—and carved wooden blocks for his handcrafted prints. A page from the Merton Abbey Dye book, 1882-91, provides the formulas for the dyes used to produce the coloration of *Cray* seen here (*William Morris by himself*, ed. Gillian Naylor (1996), p. 128). The printing blocks for *Cray* are at the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, England.

Printed on the selvedge of this example of *Cray* is the address of William Morris's London showroom, "Morris & Company 449 Oxford Street London W." Originally numbered 264 when the shop opened in 1877, the address was changed in 1882 to number 449. Thus, this panel can be dated between 1884 when Morris introduced the pattern, and 1917 when the showroom moved to another London location.


Morris's intensive studies of methods for dyeing with natural pigments resulted in the rich colors achieved by his craftsmen at Merton Abbey. As seen here, the colors of the fabric survive in the saturated and vibrant hues produced when it was originally printed. This large example of *Cray*, with two full selvedge widths joined together, was probably part of a suite of furnishings for an Arts and Crafts interior. Morris's artisanal choices, his rejection of industrially made furnishings and his determined, hands-on approach to changing the aesthetics, and the intellectual processes, of design influenced the decoration of late nineteenth-century English houses.

See: *William Morris*, ed. Linda Parry (1996), p. 268. A matching curtain of *Cray* is in the collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art.

150" H x 70" W (detail shown)







CREWEL EMBROIDERED *COLCHA* COVERLET  
New Mexican, ca. 1820-1850

More than four hundred years ago, the first Spanish settlement was established on the northern frontier of New Spain, in what is now New Mexico. As a colony of Spain from 1589 through 1821, and then as a Mexican territory until 1846, New Mexico had markedly Hispanic cultural roots, yet developed its own unique decorative vernacular traditions. This aesthetic is particularly evident in *colcha* needlework, a type indigenous to the New Mexican region. An outstanding example of crewelwork embroidery, this coverlet displays the characteristic charm and exuberance of the *colcha* technique.

*Colcha* can be applied interchangeably to both the embroidery stitch and the finished textile. The Spanish word in fact means “bed covering”; however, examples of *colcha* table coverings, curtains and altar frontals are also known. The technique is classified as a self-couching stitch—it is in essence a very economical method that provides richly textured surface motifs, yet very little yarn is wasted on the reverse. The subtle shading and curvilinear designs that can be achieved with *colcha* stitch are well demonstrated here. The ecru colored cotton twill is worked predominantly in rich, naturally derived shades of reds, blues and greens; pale golden yellow and orange accents enhance the palette. In the center, a stylized sunburst medallion is surrounded with offshoots of foliate arabesques and bold flowers. This composition is flanked by four floral sprigs, each assemblage of fantastical blossoms tied with a delicate bow. An unusual border of curling S-shaped motifs and lozenges delineates the rectangular field, and is further surrounded by a dense, vigorous frame of floral vines. Confronted pairs of birds, shaded black and tan, are nestled within the design at each corner. The multicolor scalloped wool lace border, a distinctive feature of *colcha* coverlets, adds the finishing decorative touch.

There is speculation as to the origin of the *colcha* repertoire of motifs and the technique itself. European decorative traditions can be identified in this piece, especially with regards to the bowknots and diminutive birds. It has been suggested that Indian painted cottons influenced *colcha* designs; Chinese silk embroideries, imported to New Mexico as shawls and altar frontals, are another possible source. The most direct relationship exists with New England crewelwork—the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821 brought these “workt” textiles with undulating, freestyle designs to the Southwest. The stitch itself, though used exclusively in New Mexico since the mid-eighteenth century, is of mysterious origins: both Asian and Iberian (mainly Portuguese) sources are cited, but this form of self-couching stitch is not typical of Spanish or Mexican needlework.

The Witte Memorial Museum in San Antonio, Texas, has a similar bedspread that was purchased in Mexico (30-4114-93 G). Another comparable example is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (69.124).

90" H x 63" W





BOY'S SUIT OF CHECKED HOMESPUN COTTON  
American, ca. 1800-10

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, changing attitudes towards children and their upbringing resulted in a corresponding change in their clothing. No longer viewed as miniature adults, young boys and girls were acknowledged as separate individuals with their own needs. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) as well as other writings on the subject were enormously influential in advocating loose, comfortable clothing appropriate to children's physical well-being and their pursuit of out-of-door activities.

Found in Salisbury, Connecticut, this charming boy's suit reflects the more informal style of children's dress characteristic of the turn of the nineteenth century. The double-breasted coat is similar to an adult man's and contains a deep interior pocket on the right of the tails—perfect for carrying small toys or treasures. The easy-fitting trousers, however, were adopted from working men's wardrobes and allowed for greater freedom of movement than restrictive knee breeches. The use of blue-and-white checked homespun cotton, a durable and washable fabric, also attests to the suit's practicality for a young wearer. Plain and simply patterned textiles were produced throughout New England in this period, and were staples of domestic clothing consumption. To complete this outfit, a boy would have worn a white cotton or linen shirt with a soft, ruffled collar—in marked contrast to the high, stiffly starched collar bound with a cravat seen on men's shirts.

A man's blue checked linen coat, probably from New England and similar in cut and date, is in the collection of the Costume Institute, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1997.508).