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REDWORK PANEL
Italian, ca. 1600

Italian embroideries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries display a sophisticated use of double running stitch, worked here in red silk on a linen ground to create this exceptional cutwork panel. Within an arrangement of forty-eight squares, individual motifs repeat randomly; additionally, a narrow column on one side contains complete motifs embroidered to fit the reduced space. Most prominent among the design is the rare use of a female head placed among the stylized birds, cupids, floral urns, stags, and other animals typically seen in embroideries of this period. With the portraiture, the simple outlining on the natural linen foundation is used to great effect to capture the profile of a stylish woman enveloped in her ruff.

Redwork embroidery appears in seventeenth-century coverlets, workbags and borders but rarely in the openwork form seen here. Throughout the piece, the cut edges are outlined in yellow silk providing a subtle addition of color to the distinctive red palette. Smaller squares, appearing at the interstices of the patterns, are filled in with a dotted floral pattern also worked in yellow. Only three other examples of redwork in this cutwork style are known: one is illustrated in *Naalden Werken Wonderen*, Museum Willet Holthuysen, Amsterdam, plate 88, and two are in private collections. Looped buttonholes on the panel's side suggest that it may have been used as a pillow cover.

Provenance: Formerly in the collection of Emma-Henriette Schiff von Suvero; deaccessioned from the Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Austria, in 2003.

16″ H x 17″ W

LINEN CUTWORK AND NEEDLELACE TABLE COVER
Italian, ca. 1580–1600

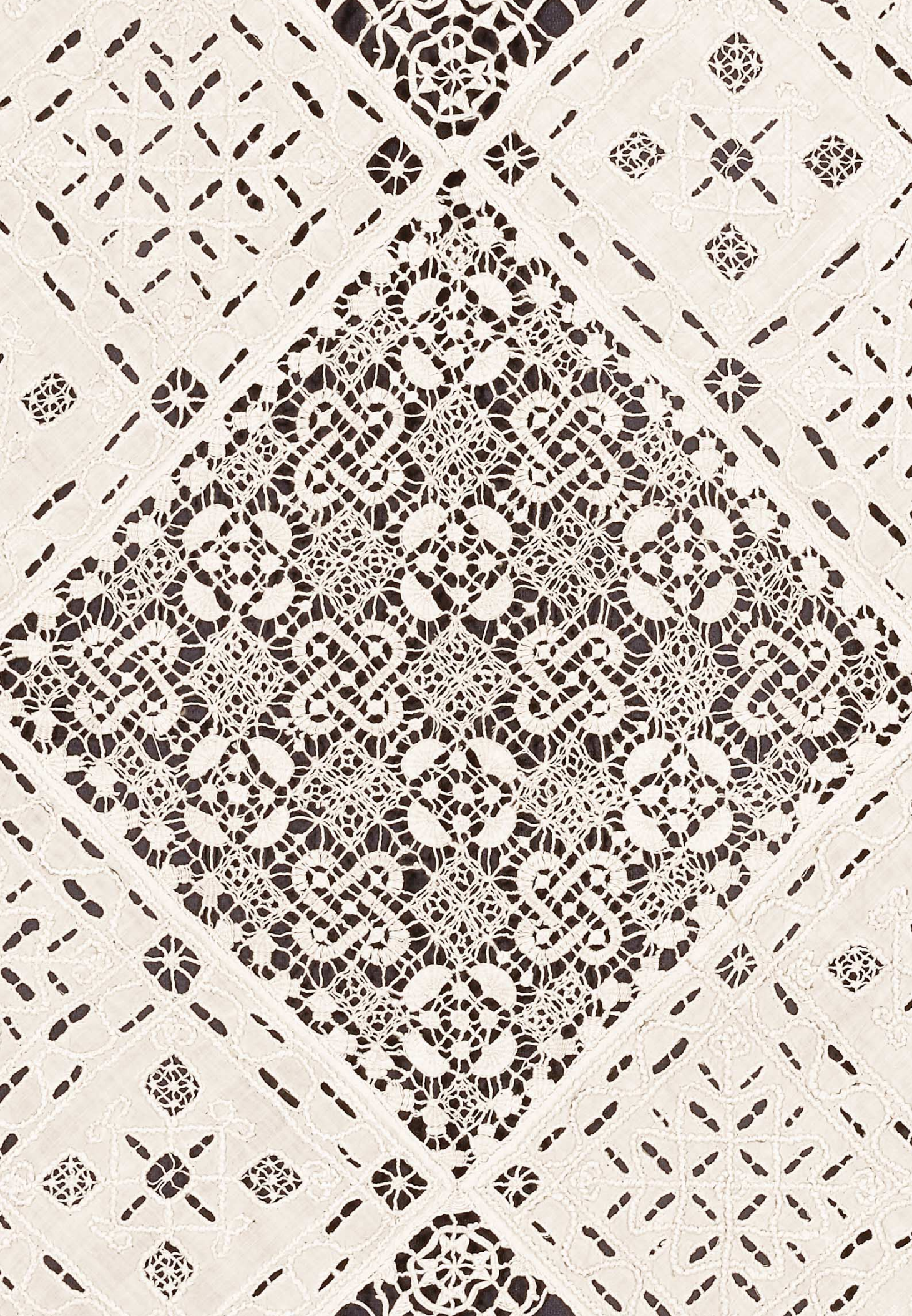
Exquisite in construction and design, this remarkable lace table cover epitomizes the refinement and luxury of sixteenth-century European furnishings. The origins of lace are somewhat obscure; scholarship suggests that the earliest Italian forms of lace—cutwork and needlelace—were derived from fifteenth-century Persian drawn thread work, typically executed in white-on-white. Because of the close trading ties between Venice and merchants in the Near East, it would be reasonable to expect that this type of whitework embroidery served as a model for lacemaking in Europe.

The techniques, patterns and composition of this example hint at an Eastern source of inspiration. Set in a distinctive diagonal checkerboard arrangement—a highly fashionable design for household linens of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries—four different ornate needlelace designs alternate with embroidered squares of *punto tagliato*, the Italian term for cutwork. In total, there are forty-two needlelace squares, thirty cutwork squares and twenty-six partial cutwork squares, representing a staggering amount of labor-intensive handiwork. The intarsia-like array of separate squares joined together with fine stitching bears a striking resemblance to traditional Islamic tilework. Here, the cutwork elements are divided into four quadrants, each with the symmetrical placement of two designs. In these squares, small areas of the woven structure were withdrawn to form open spaces—the edges around the piercings are overcast with buttonhole stitches, and the interstices are accented with needlework bars and delicate fillings. Surface embroidery of single couched threads, secured with regularly spaced stitches, further embellishes the solid linen squares.

In addition, the four repeating design units of needlelace strongly suggest the influence of Near Eastern decorative arts. Interlaced repetitions of star shapes and polygonal ornament may have been borrowed from the Islamic decorative repertoire, but they were sublimated into that of the Italian Renaissance. These intricate, filigreed squares are variations on lacis, a technique which also relies on withdrawing, thread by thread, expanses of warp and weft and then reweaving a pattern with the aid of a needle. Geometric motifs in a lattice or grid arrangement—such as the interlaced knots, stylized flowerheads, starbursts, and spiky-edged rosettes in these squares—are not only related to exotic ornament, but also illustrate the limitations of early lace techniques which were based on the intrinsic linear properties of the woven foundation. Accents of buttonhole stitch add extra definition to the lacis; an applied border of serrated bobbin lace is the culminating touch of elegance.

This pristine cover, of the type seen draped over dressing tables in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century portraits of stylish women at their toilettes, was formerly in the collection of Margaret Simeon, lace scholar and collector; it is illustrated in her book, *The History of Lace* (1979), plate 6. A comparable example, with a horizontal layout of alternating cutwork and needlelace squares, is in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (T.116-1959).

61.75″ H x 72″ W



PANEL OF UNCUT EMBROIDERED SLIP MOTIFS
English, mid 17th c.

A widespread fascination with horticulture characterized Tudor and Elizabethan culture. Publications of "herbals," or illustrated compendiums of various floral and fruit species with detailed descriptions, proved indispensable for botanists, apothecaries, gardeners, and artisans alike. This intersection of natural study and decorative vocabulary manifests itself best within the realm of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century needlework. Perhaps no other category of decorative arts better demonstrates the direct relationship between the gardener's art and the embroiderer's art than needlework slips. This specific type of embroidered appliqué takes its name from contemporary horticulture terminology—a "slip" was a cutting taken from a plant for grafting or cultivation. Period depictions of gardens often show slips planted directly into small mounds of earth, isolated from one another to emphasize their special qualities.

Slip appliqué decoration was a common and practical way to embellish textiles. Typically embroidered in tent stitch, individual motifs were inked onto canvas and worked in neat rows, sometimes backed with a thin layer of silk or fine linen for stability and ease of application. The slips were then cut out and applied to a separate and suitably rich ground fabric, usually satin or velvet. Slip-decorated materials were much less expensive to procure than elaborately woven textiles of the period, and also much more economical to produce within the confines of a home. Though clothing and small-scale items such as cushions, purses and decorative pictures were well-suited for slip appliqués, it is in the category of household furnishing textiles that slips most often appear. No matter how large the curtains or wall hanging, embroidered slips could be worked on a frame of convenient size and then applied to the intended fabric's surface, sometimes in regularly spaced intervals, and sometimes scattered randomly for a charming, informal effect. Slip motifs also had an advantage over entirely surface-embroidered textiles—once the ground fabric had become worn or unfashionable, slips could be detached and reused in other ornamental capacities.

Though simple enough to be made by amateurs of varying skill, slip needlework was also the domain of professional male embroiderers in London and "work women" in the trade. The remarkably well-preserved and rare example of uncut slips seen here is undoubtedly the accomplishment of a specialized workshop. Ten identical pear branches, all worked with dazzling silk thread in extremely fine tent stitch, are aligned in two columns—each motif represents a graft, complete with the "heel" of the cutting. Two pendant pears, primarily of a golden yellow hue with accents of pink, peach and chartreuse to indicate degrees of ripeness, issue from a knobby brown branch with twisting leaves shaded with multiple colors of green and yellow with brilliant white highlights. Also repeated within each slip, and speaking to the English delight in the natural world, is a colorful butterfly at rest on one pear, and a tiny ladybug nestled on a teal blue leaf. The sensitivity to shading extends to the outlines of each separate element. Only the branch and insects are outlined in black, while the pears are picked out in deepest brown, and the leaves in dark green. The results are naturalistic, even though shading and shaping motifs with convincing realism is not easily rendered in a counted stitch technique. Attesting to the unused condition of these slips, the colored silks are as vivid and true on the reverse of the embroidery as on the front.

Though it is uncommon to find slips which remain in this state of preservation, the example seen here was but one of a group of seven unused panels which belonged to lace scholar and collector Margaret Simeon. Of this group, one panel of tulip and anemone motifs is in the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, New York (1992-168-1), and another with anemones is in the Art Institute of Chicago (1993.126). Satin curtains with slip appliqués in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (T54-1883), feature motifs very similar to those embroidered on these uncut panels; it was, in fact, through Simeon's donation that the museum was able to add these curtains to their holdings.

22″ H x 9.5″ W

NEEDLEWORK PICTURE OF RECUMBENT LIONS
Probably American, Philadelphia, first half of the 18th c.

This impressive embroidered picture represents a new enigma in the study of colonial American needlework. In recent years, scholarship has revealed a sub-category of eighteenth-century Philadelphia needlework aptly referred to as the "Tree of Life" pictorial group. There are eight silk-on-silk embroideries documented, all with the common format of a dominant leafy or flowering tree typically flanked by leopards and/or lions, sometimes singly and sometimes in pairs. These pictures were made by affluent Philadelphian schoolgirls within a brief six-year period (1748–1754), presumably under the tutelage of a single instructor. Though the scale, proportions, minor motifs, and animal poses are fairly uniform within this grouping, each picture was worked in a distinctively individualistic manner. Inventive choices, especially in the stitches and colors used, suggest that instruction took place in an informal atmosphere in which a teacher could encourage creativity.

This needlework composition, with its marked visual similarities, is related to these "Tree of Life" pictures and is a strong candidate for a precursor to this distinguished group. The subject matter and placement of motifs are familiar: a lion and lioness, recumbent on rolling hillocks, face a fruiting tree under a flock of birds. Flowers, grasses and a slender oak tree sprout from the mounds, while a startled rabbit, bees, a butterfly, dragonfly, and a diminutive grasshopper surround the felines. Billowing clouds and a radiant sun-face, with the same bulbous nose as seen on the lions, frame the top edge of the picture. Like the girls who created the "Tree of Life" pictures, this young embroideress had remarkable control of her needle, and a unique approach to color. Unlike the other known Philadelphian examples worked in shading stitches on silk panels, this piece is entirely surface-embroidered in counted stitches on a plain-weave linen foundation. Worked in extraordinarily precise tent stitch, sinuous bands of gold-to-tawny modeling highlight the lions' muscular bodies; these tonal modulations are echoed in the verdant ombré shading of the cross-stitch hills, as well as in the leaves of both trees. The lions' expressive faces—she with her whiskers, and he with his red lips and long beard (rather than a mane)—are made all the more charming with the addition of black glass beads for their eyes, also a typical feature of the wild cats in the "Tree of Life" embroideries. An ivory-colored sky, worked in a shimmering expanse of queen stitch, is one of the most remarkable features of this piece.

This needlework picture walks a fine line between English embroidery traditions and the emerging American aesthetic. Early American needlework skills were a direct extension of the English repertoire; thus, it is not uncommon to find attributes shared between the two geographically disparate bodies of work in the eighteenth century. The particular stitches used in this piece are also found in colonial needlework, as is the practice of covering the whole of the canvas with embroidery. However, it is the techniques and stylistic variations employed here which set this picture apart from the established Philadelphia group.

Of significance in the attribution of this piece is a paper strip which accompanies it: "Framed March 1965, Needlework inherited from 5442 Germantown Ave Phila in 1948." The address is of the historic Deshler-Morris House in Philadelphia, a colonial home which was occupied by both families in succession. In 1948, the National Parks Service acquired the Deshler-Morris House, and the Morrises may have at that time dispersed some of the contents amongst relatives; however, it is not clear from inventory records whether this exceptional needlework picture originated in this household.

References: Virginia Jarvis Whelan, "Discoveries in Philadelphia Needlework: The Tree of Life Embroideries," *The Magazine Antiques* (September 2006), pp. 94–103.

15" H x 18" W

SILK SATIN FURNISHING DAMASK WITH BIZARRE MOTIFS
Probably Italian, Venice, ca. 1700

Imposing in its scale and pattern, this two-color silk satin damask successfully incorporates both traditional and fashionable, turn-of-the-eighteenth century elements, as well as Ottoman and Japanese-inspired influences. The sophisticated handling of the design, which results in a highly unusual furnishing panel, balances the pomp of the late baroque sensibility and the surreal aspect of the so-called Bizarre silk style. These silks, dating to about 1695 to 1715, infused European textiles with a pronounced exoticism and reflected a sense of experimentation. This particular East/West combination suggests an Italian—and possibly Venetian—origin. The centuries-old trade and aesthetic exchanges between Venice and the Levant produced reciprocal influences, especially evident in textiles.

The dominant ogival lattice created by the geometric-patterned framework seen here appeared in both Italian and Ottoman silks—especially velvets—from the sixteenth century, and continued to be used in European furnishing fabrics for its appropriately formal quality. The dramatic design features offset, alternate rows of bold and enigmatic motifs that relate to those found in Renaissance and Bizarre silks. A swelling vase, ornamented with stylized floral sprays and foliage, is capped with a rounded apex and scallop-edged collar. This motif is very similar to one in a brocaded silk damask, ca. 1700, illustrated in *Bizarre Designs in Silks* by Vilhelm Slomann (1953; frontispiece and plate XI), while the band encircling the foot of the vase is a familiar detail from late Renaissance ogival-patterned silks. The attenuated, curvilinear stems issuing from its base and passing under the bracketed framework evoke Japanese textiles, and add a sense of depth and movement to the symmetrical composition. A full-blown pomegranate with a calyx-like motif bursts from the top of each stem, partially obscured by a twisting leaf and embellished with a large, crested foliate flourish seen in Ottoman textiles and ceramics. An exotic fruit of Eastern import, by 1700 the pomegranate was a long-standing motif in Western silks. When expanded by the juxtaposition of two or more selvedge widths, the complete pattern unit forms majestic, opposing pomegranate pairs within a lobed enclosure. Entwined around the upper stems are slim, pendant tulips—motifs that appear in both woven and embroidered Ottoman textiles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The long repeat of this silk (34.5″), typical of both seventeenth- and eighteenth-century furnishing fabrics and of Bizarre silks, enhances this impressively conceived design with its powerful forms clearly delineated by the ivory plain-weave motifs against a crimson satin ground. Whether used as a wall covering, curtains or upholstery material, this stately silk would have conveyed both luxury and the height of taste.

153.5″ H x 22.5″ W

PAINTED-AND-DYED COTTON CHINTZ
PANEL WITH BIZARRE PATTERN
Indian Export (Coromandel Coast), early 18th c.

This painted-and-dyed panel attests to the far-reaching and complex cross-cultural influences in eighteenth-century textile design and production. From their introduction into Europe early in the previous century, Indian cottons were increasingly popular; by the latter decades, merchants of the various East India Companies sent "musters"—sheets of paper with commissioned designs—that reflected Western stylistic trends as a means of enhancing sales and profit. Here, the large-scale asymmetric, exotic pattern imitates a type of silk woven in Europe at the turn of the eighteenth century and referred to subsequently as "Bizarre." These dynamic silks—used primarily for men's and women's dress—represent a fusion of Eastern-inspired motifs (particularly Japanese) and a weave structure of satin damask with a shadowy sub-pattern particular to the West. In this furnishing cotton, the simultaneously identifiable and strange forms create an incongruous yet seemingly believable continuum. The dark and light shades of blue used in the background, which required two separate dye baths to achieve different levels of saturation, simulate the shiny and matte surfaces of damask.

The Coromandel Coast of southeast India was renowned for its production of painted-and-dyed cottons which were in great demand in the West. Furnishing textiles from this large export market survive mainly as palampores and small-scale floral patterns on white grounds. It is extremely rare to find a furnishing chintz, not only with a blue ground but also with a pronounced Bizarre pattern. Despite the complexity of long-distance trade arrangements, the time lag between issuing orders and the receipt of goods and the relatively short-lived vogue for Bizarre silks, this remarkable painted-and-dyed panel attests to merchants' sensitivity and adeptness in catering to changing styles. Although prohibitions were enacted in France and England in 1686 and 1701, respectively, against the importation of Indian cottons to protect the native silk and wool industries, it is clear from this chintz that contraband goods suited to a Western aesthetic continued to find their way to European consumers unwilling to forego these striking textiles.

47.5" H x 14.5" W

QUEEN ANNE FLORAL EMBROIDERY
English, 1700–1710

While many extraordinary textiles passed through the hands of Cora Ginsburg in her years in the field of antique textiles, certain pieces she kept to form her private collection. This Queen Anne embroidered small coverlet in pristine condition, with its sinewy yet graceful lines and precise execution, exemplifies Cora's passion, and extremely knowing eye, for eighteenth-century English needlework.

Fanciful leaves and flowers, characteristically displaying the taste in English decorative arts of the period for Eastern influenced design, expand from the hillocks at the panel's lower edge. Silk embroideries of the Queen Anne period often exhibit a subtle yet rich palette—here the embroidery, in shades of green, yellow and pink, reveals highly sophisticated and technically masterful gradations of colors, particularly as seen in the various shapes of leaves. The false quilted ground, a distinguishing feature of Queen Anne embroidery, occurs in delicate scrolling curls, rather than more typical geometric designs of diamonds or circles, adding to the fluidity of this exceptional needlework.

The coverlet was included in "A Schole House for the Needle," an exhibition of needlework collected by Cora Ginsburg, held at Benjamin Ginsburg Antiquary, New York, in 1979, where its beauty was seen then, as it is now, as a hallmark of eighteenth-century English embroidery.

39" H x 41.5" W

WHITEWORK SLEEVE RUFFLES
English, mid 18th c.

Sleeve ruffles (commonly referred to in French as *engageantes*) were an indispensable component of eighteenth-century ladies' dress. Meant to fall gracefully over the elbows, these shaped frills, often of lace, conformed to the style of the sleeve for which they were intended. In the middle of the century, to which period these ruffles date, gown sleeves were close fitting and finished with self-fabric flounced cuffs. These cuffs were narrow in front but fell into deep tiers towards the back. Separate sleeve ruffles were typically sewn into the dress of choice, and removed for subsequent attachment to a different garment; like cuffs, these delicate accessories might have been of single, double or triple layers. Rarely do complete ruffles remain intact as they were so often taken apart and reconfigured to suit the wearer's ensemble. One layer of this two-tiered pair is slightly longer than the others, indicating that there were originally three flounces in each configuration.

Not only do these ruffles demonstrate the superb quality of materials and workmanship, but also the decorative spirit of the rococo age. So-called "weeping ruffles"—most often triple-layered assemblages of diaphanous muslin or gauze—were an extravagant addition to dresses of the 1750s. Dresden work, a counted- and pulled-thread embroidery technique of the type seen here, successfully imitates the intricacies of lace and was considered just as fashionable as its more complicated counterpart. This form of whitework originated in Saxony but was so admired throughout Europe that it soon surpassed its regional associations; though floral patterns predominate in Dresden work, chinoiserie themes, birds, insects, and other motifs of the natural world were popular until the late 1760s. At court in 1740, Mrs. Delany, a skilled needlewoman in her own right, noted the embroidered decoration on the Duchess of Bedford's petticoat: "the pattern was festoons of shells, coral…and sea-weeds...."

These particular ruffles are composed of separate bands of gossamer-light cotton mull embellished with a most unusual pattern of feathery strands of seaweeds, shells, sponges, and other aquatic life. Spiraling conch shells have decorative fillings of basket-weave, zigzag, stripe, and checkerboard patterns; delicate chain stitching forms the branches of seaweed and delineates the marine creatures. As if viewed in a rippling tide pool, these underwater motifs are complemented by the fluidity of the sheer fabric. Finished with a gently scalloped border of geometric Dresden work and a fine edging of twisted thread mesh, these unique accessories are a superlative artifact of eighteenth-century fashion history.

HELEN BRUCE MINIATURE MILLINERY SHOP SCENE
American, early 1950s

The world of the miniature has long held a fascination for adults as well as children, and dollhouses and other small-scale interiors have often been commissioned by these enthusiasts. In the 1950s, the collaboration between Helen Bruce (b. 1880) and Electra Havemeyer Webb (1888–1960) resulted in over thirty highly imaginative, carefully researched and meticulously constructed miniature scenes, depicting domestic and commercial interiors and landscape settings of nineteenth-century America. An important and early collector of Americana, Electra Webb founded the Shelburne Museum in Vermont in 1947 to showcase her rich holdings of objects including weather vanes, carriages and sleighs, furniture, textiles, and toys. In the late 1940s, Webb met Helen Bruce, owner of an antiques shop in New York who also sold dolls and miniature accessories. Shortly thereafter, she began to commission dioramas from Bruce that reflected her interest in American material culture. Although Bruce moved to California in 1951, the fruitful partnership between the two women continued throughout the decade. Their correspondence regarding the creation of the dioramas reveals an extensive and lively discussion pertaining to all kinds of details.

This captivating scene of a milliner's establishment of the 1820s relates to several in the Shelburne Museum that evoke shop interiors and fashionable goods of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and is particularly similar to another millinery vitrine currently on view (1952.414). Standing amidst an abundant display is the painted wooden figure of a potential customer wearing a striped pink silk dress and lace cap. In addition to the beribboned, floral and feather trimmed hats, the marbleized counters and many shelves behind her offer a tempting array of Lilliputian wares including bandboxes, printed cotton and needlepoint reticules, braided silk miser's purses, plain and figured ribbons, kid gloves, seed pearl and paste jewelry, faceted glass perfume bottles, fans, a pink satin fringed parasol, feather sprays, and an ermine boa.

Bruce's attention to historical accuracy is evident in these diminutive objects, many of which date to the period of the scene. In her letters to Webb, Bruce refers to antique ribbons, trumeau mirrors, fans, and vases. Bandboxes—which Webb collected—were especially popular in America from 1820 to 1850. The bandboxes filling the upper shelf and arranged under the counter are made from eighteenth-century printed book papers; some of those used in this scene are identical to papers that appear in a large Hat and Dress Shop at the Shelburne (1952.431) as well as their Millinery diorama.

On the back of this vignette is a label from the well-known New York and Paris milliner and designer, Adolfo, who opened a salon on East 56th Street in 1963 and remained at that address through the mid-1970s. How fitting that these miniature headwear confections might have been displayed among their life-size counterparts.

14″ H x 13.25″ W

CHENILLE EMBROIDERED SATIN GARTERS
French, ca. 1800

Represented in numerous paintings and prints in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a woman's garter was a highly erotic and symbolic object. Scenes of gallantry and debauchery by artists such as Jean-François de Troy and William Hogarth depict this functional yet intimately feminine accessory; its overt connotations of sexuality were sometimes emphasized by woven or embroidered amorous inscriptions. Concealed under full-length gowns and petticoats, garters secured the stockings just above or below the knee. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, short garters incorporating fine metal springs and buckles replaced long ribbons or bands that tied around the leg.

Garters were often romantic gifts from a lover during courtship or a husband-to-be at the time of betrothal. In 1802, the *Journal des Dames et des Modes*, the leading French fashion periodical, included a humorous "catalogue of objects" returned to a young man by his mistress as a result of a quarrel between the two. In addition to three hundred letters and his portrait, the young woman included a pair of garters—one red, symbolizing his passion and one white, symbolizing the purity of her heart.

The refinement of these garters suggests that they may have been intended as an admirer's offering. Of utmost delicacy, the embroidery here underscores the gender associations of these accessories. On a lightly padded ivory satin ground, a trailing vine with diminutive, stylized buds is worked in gradated pink-to-burgundy and light-to-dark green chenille threads, accented with tiny false pearls; along the sides, ivory chenille threads form a shallow, scalloped edging. This type of chenille needlework on garters, particularly fashionable around the turn of the nineteenth century, was in keeping with the restrained ornament of neoclassical dress.

QUILTED SILK SATIN BANYAN
China Trade, English Market, ca. 1760–70

Among the many descriptors used to designate men's at-home dressing gowns in the eighteenth century, the term banyan—referring to Hindu traders—clearly alludes to its Eastern source and context. Although loose gowns appear in European paintings and household accounts in the sixteenth century, their popularity rose dramatically after the formation of the East India Companies in the early seventeenth century. Merchants imported both ready-made examples as well as exotically patterned cottons and silks that were subsequently tailored into easy fitting garments by "Indian gown makers." Throughout the eighteenth century, whether truly of Eastern origin or inspired by oriental prototypes, banyans were a well-established component of the masculine wardrobe, and provided a comfortable alternative to the heavy and often restrictive clothing worn in public. Attired in a gown, cap and slippers, a gentleman could engage in leisurely activities and informally receive friends and trades people. Banyans were often depicted in portraits of artists, writers and *philosophes*, as well as those who wished to present themselves in intellectual pursuits.

In addition to the perennially fashionable T-shaped gowns based on Japanese kimonos, more structured styles were derived from Persian and Turkish dress. Combining Eastern and Western elements, this sapphire-blue silk satin banyan in pristine condition epitomizes masculine sartorial elegance of the mid-century. Professionally made, it is quilted to shape with an allover diamond pattern. The fitted body has a narrow band collar stiffened with rows of quilting and fastens to the right, an Eastern feature; the loops of the double-breasted closure were also common in Asian styles. Fully buttoned with its long, flared skirts, the banyan presents a decidedly Eastern appearance. The fronts can also be buttoned back, creating dramatic, wide lapels which reveal the blue taffeta lining and attached, matching waistcoat that provides additional warmth.

This splendid banyan is identical in color, fabric and style to one in the Brighton Museum, UK (C002338.1), dating between 1760 and 1770 and worn by Captain William Fernell (1720-1770) of Rotherhithe (southeast London), Commander of the East India Company ship, the *Valentine*. The width and selvedges of the satin indicate a Chinese manufacture, while the cotton interlining and the cut suggest that the piece was made up in India. This example is also nearly identical to a quilted blue satin banyan in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (655A-1898), and relates to another blue silk gown in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (968.173.2).

PAINTED-AND-DYED COTTON PALAMPORE
Indian (Coromandel Coast) for the European Market, ca. 1700–1740

Throughout Mughal rule in India (1525–1858), decorative arts reflected a pronounced artistic interest in native flora and fauna. Courtiers and members of the upper echelons of society favored carpets, textiles and clothing patterned with birds and animals amongst rocky landscapes, shimmering ponds and naturalistic vegetation. In a fortuitous development for trading purposes, Mughal tastes and those of Europeans overlapped in the eighteenth century; this exceptional chintz palampore, made by Indian textile artisans for export to Europe, brilliantly captures this cross-cultural confluence.

In the West, the fashionable vogue for chinoiserie, which in the eighteenth century alluded to anything of Eastern (and not specifically Chinese) origin, encouraged exoticism in materials and design. Seen here is the iconic Tree of Life, an instantly identifiable motif of eighteenth-century Eastern and Western symbolic importance. The graceful branches, rendered in soft shades of purple, display a pronounced bark texture with scrolling flourishes. Exuberant blossoms, some recognizable as tulips and densely-petaled peonies, were painted in intense red hues and highlighted with detailed filigree patterns. The sumptuous palette of this painted-and-dyed cotton remains rich and saturated centuries after its creation—even shades of green, the most fugitive of all colors, retain their original luminosity.

Animal and avian denizens of this luxuriant paradise are abundant. Birds of paradise alight on leafy perches, while a diminutive yet regal peacock hovers at center, amidst flamboyant foliage; near a lobed leaf with beaded edges, a hummingbird plunges in the direction of an inviting peony bloom, and nearby (also repeated in two other areas) a startled-looking owl peers straight out from the painted surface. At the base of the tree on the craggy, scale-patterned mound, two spindly-legged cranes—their plumage shaded with delicate hatch marks—dip their beaks into clear blue ponds teeming with fish. Above this tranquil scene, two squirrels with wispy, fringed tails scurry up and down the tree's trunk. A parrot dangling a hooded cobra from its beak in a deadly embrace adds the final flourish of exoticism to the composition. The sophistication and liveliness of these animal depictions are quintessential of Mughal art.

At once exotic and familiar, this palampore would have been perfectly suited to European interior furnishing schemes. Despite the absence of its original borders, this highly refined palampore demonstrates the combination of superb workmanship with the fertile imaginations of artisans working in eighteenth-century India.

89″ H x 50.75″ W

EMBROIDERED SILK SATIN COVERLET
Chinese Export for the American Market, late 18th c.

Prior to the Revolutionary War, merchants in the American colonies were prohibited by English regulations from trading directly with China. Almost immediately following the Revolution, American ships began sailing to Canton—the only port open to westerners at the time—and seafaring men in the young Republic quickly developed a substantial trade with the Chinese. The *Empress of China*, one of the first commercial expeditions from the United States, arrived in New York on May 11, 1785 laden with tea, porcelain, and silk and cotton textiles. While the cargo was not so dissimilar to that originally obtained from England, the accomplishment of obviating this source was a matter of great national pride. By the end of 1790, privately financed American ventures had sent at least twenty-eight ships to Canton.

Chinese merchants quickly adapted their wares to the demands of American traders, as they had been doing with other foreign merchants who preceded them. This magnificent silk coverlet reflects an American preference for restraint in the overall decorative scheme. Arranged in a Chinese-derived composition of a centralized medallion and symmetrically placed corner motifs, the embroidery is worked in masterfully controlled satin stitch with occasional French knot accents and couched thread lattices. At the center, surrounded by a lobed cartouche pierced with leafy sprays, a stylized peony radiates floral and foliate motifs. Spiky palmettes are nestled in the corners of the interior field as well as the border; the rest of the coverlet is decorated with delicate blossoming tendrils. The most visually arresting aspect of this bedcover is the cerulean blue satin ground, the sheen of which may have been enhanced by calendaring, a technique that relies on the application of pressure to smooth the silk's surface.

This coverlet is a rare example of a completely Chinese-made furnishing textile. Dark blue and gold Chinese fringe trims three sides, and the reverse is lined with an unusual plain-weave cotton impressed with a vermicular and flowering vase pattern—also Chinese in origin. Export-market textiles were typically as fine as those made for domestic consumption, and this piece certainly bears witness to the artistry of Chinese needlework. Not only is the double-ply silk thread embroidery impeccable, but the transitions between shades—from pale celadon to deep olive green, and a spectrum of reds including persimmon, rust and mauve—lend a subtle yet exotic air of sophistication to the workmanship. Embroidering a coverlet such as this was likely assigned to several people; each of the three satin panels which compose this piece was embroidered separately and then joined together, which explains the slight variations in colors within the design.

Though many products sought in the China trade were ephemeral by nature—tea, spices, paper goods, even fireworks—many precious textile goods have been preserved through generations of care. This remarkable coverlet is said to have descended in the Rupert and Grubb families of Delaware.

105″ H x 84″ W

KIRA OF RAW SILK AND COTTON WITH GEOMETRIC PATTERN
Bhutanese, Kurtö region, ca. 1900

The *kira*—a large rectangular panel composed of brocaded cloth strips—is the primary garment worn by Bhutanese women. Wrapped around the body over a blouse and petticoat, fastened at each shoulder with silver brooches and secured around the waist with a sash, *kira* serve not only as a functional part of traditional Bhutanese costume but also convey important social and spiritual information to the community. A style of dress that has been worn in Bhutan for centuries, *kira* consist of three panels of silk-brocaded cotton (or cotton and silk blends) joined together in the warp direction—but oriented horizontally on the body—terminating at each end with self-fringe. *Kira* are woven by women on backstrap looms, often in special rooms within the household dedicated solely to weaving. Typically, a single woman would produce all individual panels which form a whole *kira*; the decoration and colors were chosen at her discretion to indicate aspects such as age, wealth and status. Patterning is usually consistent amongst the individual panels, and the weaver's aim is to closely match the banded ends of each length, forming an unbroken border.

This particularly fine example, collected in Bhutan, displays the hallmarks of Bhutanese weaving. The cotton panels, connected with careful hand-stitching, are patterned with *thrima*, a brocading technique which resembles chain stitch embroidery. A complex and exacting method, *thrima* requires great skill and dexterity; because of this, the most complex types of *kira* can take up to two years to complete. In addition to the *thrima* motifs which so richly decorate this *kira*, thin stripes of geometric patterns are created in the *sapma* brocading technique which approximates satin stitch embroidery. Very few of the supplementary brocading wefts are visible on the reverse of top-quality *kira*, and this piece demonstrates such a level of refinement. All motifs are done with raw, unglossed silk in a dazzling palette of natural and synthetic hues. Fittingly, the predominant lozenges composed of many small diamonds seen here are called *phub*, meaning rainbow. Surrounding these are variations on the *dramé*, or eternal knot, an auspicious symbol of Buddhist origin. Other traditional patterns incorporated into the banded ends are continuous, interlaced *yurung* and *therpochay* motifs, both ancient designs also common in Chinese textiles. The incorporation of *tenkheb*—multicolored triangles which mimic the patchwork silks found at Buddhist shrines—at both ends of the *kira* are meant to evoke long life for the wearer. An unusual feature of this *kira* is the alternating red-and-blue striped ground; though many *kira* have precise names, such as blue-ground *ngosham* or the striking white *kushüthara*, this unique striped combination has no known nomenclature. Red and blue, achieved with lac and indigo dyes, respectively, are symbolic of the two complementary forces of the universe.

In Bhutan, the intellectual and religious aspects of weaving are integral to the creation of *kira* and other indigenous textiles. Artistic pursuits and the contemplation of color are viewed as forms of spiritual exercise—in its execution, design and palette, this impressive garment embodies these essential concepts.

A similar nineteenth-century *kira*, also with the combination of red-and-blue stripes, is illustrated in *Thunder Dragon Textiles From Bhutan: The Bartholomew Collection* (1985), plate 16, pp. 28–29.

110″ H x 54″ W

ACHEIQ-LUNTAYA TAPESTRY-WOVEN SILK *HTA-MEIN*
Burmese (Myanmar), Amarapura-Sagaing region, late 19th c.

The everyday clothing of Burmese royalty and laity were, in essence, the same in overall construction; however, it was the fabric from which these garments were made that underscored their significant difference. Though cotton textiles were the mainstays of daily wardrobes, social protocol demanded the wearing of regal silk textiles called *acheiq-luntaya* at court. In Burmese, *luntaya* means "one hundred shuttles," referring to the small metal or wooden shuttles that are required to construct the double-interlocking tapestry weave structure. *Acheiq* refers to the horizontal wave-like motifs purportedly inspired by ripples on the Irrawaddy River, Burma's principal waterway; the fundamental *acheiq* elements could be embellished upon and recombined to create an endless series of composite patterns. The traditional *acheiq* repertoire is indigenous to Burma, but may have evolved from ancient designs of a common Chinese and Southeast Asian heritage. It has been suggested that this type of weaving was introduced to Burma in the eighteenth century by artisans from Manipur, India; *luntaya* is also similar to techniques used by the Tai Leu people of northern Thailand and Laos, though it is significantly more complicated. In the nineteenth century, the Amarapura-Sagaing area of Burma was the chief producer of *acheiq-luntaya* for the royal household. The costliness of *luntaya* textiles was not only measured in the materials—lustrous raw silk imported from China—but also in the extreme labor, skill and time invested in their production.

Sumptuary laws dictated which members of Burmese society could wear these expensive textiles. Privileged men wore lengthy *acheiq-luntaya* garments called *pah-soe*; these were elaborately wrapped about the wearers' hips in various configurations. Ladies of the court wore *acheiq-luntaya* fashioned into *hta-mein*. This rectangular skirt-like garment was worn wrapped high on the waist or over the breast and folded in front with a slight overlap, revealing a glimpse of the wearer's leg when in motion. Above the *luntaya* portion, a waistband of cotton or velvet was added and, below, a length of striped silk cloth was usually attached to the hem to form a train around the feet. A lady's comportment in this fluid skirt was of utmost importance—according to a British observer in nineteenth-century Burma, "its graceful management, in either walking or dancing, is one of the accomplishments of a Burmese belle." The *hta-mein* was often worn in conjunction with a breast cloth and a tight-fitting, long-sleeved jacket of white muslin or silk.

Of exceptional quality and refinement, this courtly *hta-mein* illustrates both simplicity and complexity in *acheiq-luntaya* design. Incorporated below the dark blue figured cotton waistband is a *luntaya* panel with two key *acheiq* elements: *maha kyo shwei taik* (great line golden building), the stepped, undulating bands with small protruding tabs at each peak, and *gamoun*, tendrils of ornamental vine motifs sprouting from wave patterns. These sophisticated foliate flourishes add delicacy to the bold parallel lines of the fabric. Not only was artistry displayed in the weaver's intricate combination of *acheiq* motifs, but also in color selections. A seemingly limitless array of hues was created with natural dyestuffs, both native to Burma and imported. Subtle yet powerful, the coloration of this *acheiq-luntaya* also takes advantage of the interplay between contrasting warp and weft threads for slight variations in tone.

This rare, intact garment was collected in Burma, and was exhibited in "*Lun-taya Kyoe-ghi-geik*: Cloth of Many Shuttles" at Smith College, Massachusetts, in September, 2002. A nineteenth-century *hta-mein* with similar *acheiq* patterning is found in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (9757 IS).

62" H x 42.5" W

JOSEF FRANK PRINTED LINEN, *BOTANY*
Late 1940s – early 1950s

Austrian by birth and trained as an architect in Vienna, Josef Frank (1885–1967) is firmly associated with mid-century Swedish Modern design and, in particular, the furniture and textiles he produced for Svenskt Tenn, a leading interiors firm based in Stockholm. Although he worked within a modernist tradition, Frank nonetheless rejected the austere severity of functionalism and proposed a more balanced and individualistic approach to the decoration of domestic spaces. His brilliantly colored, exuberantly patterned textile designs were instrumental in creating distinctive modernist interiors.

Frank's interest in textiles emerged early in his career. During a trip to Italy in 1909–10, he created his first pattern, and in the late teens he contributed several designs to the recently established fashion and textile department of the Wiener Werkstätte, known for its innovative block-printed cottons and silks. In 1925, following a six-year tenure as Professor of Building Construction at the Vienna Kunstgewerbeschule [School of Arts and Crafts], Frank opened his own home furnishings business, Haus & Garten, in partnership with fellow architects and designers Oskar Wlach and Walter Sobotka. The venture, which lasted until 1953 (well beyond Frank's initial involvement), was both a commercial and artistic success, and Frank's eclectic, highly personal textile designs were widely noted at the time.

In 1933, as the political climate in Germany became more threatening, Frank—who was Jewish—and his Swedish-born wife moved permanently to Sweden. Frank then began his fruitful, decades-long collaboration with Estrid Ericson, the founder of Svenskt Tenn; by the late 1930s, his furnishing designs, as well as their configuration within interior schemes as arranged by Ericson, came to epitomize the Swedish Modern style internationally. Between 1942 and 1946, Frank lived in New York where he produced fifty new patterns for Ericson—some of the most significant of his career and many inspired by American flora and fauna. After his return to Sweden, Frank resumed his position at Svenskt Tenn, where his prolific creativity during the postwar period won him widespread recognition including an exhibition devoted to his work at the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, in 1952.

Frank's concept of interior decoration stressed the importance of plain white walls enlivened by a mixture of color and pattern in draperies and upholstery, which he felt produced a calming effect. Certainly the visual beauty and complexity of *Botany*, with its variety of motifs and rhythmic composition, invite the eye to linger over the richness of its details. Like many of his printed textiles, *Botany* attests to the importance of nature in Frank's oeuvre, his love of strong colors and their combinations and his superb mastery of repeating patterns. The bold, large-scale florals, foliage and butterflies in vivid shades of red, blue, yellow, and green on a deep, wine-colored ground impart a sense of joy and reflect the influence of William Morris, millefleurs tapestries and English crewelwork, sources to which Frank returned many times during his career.

The selvedge indicates that *Botany* was printed in England for Morley-Fletcher, a retailer who sold printed furnishing linens in New York in the late 1940s and first half of the 1950s, and an original paper tag from Chandler & Co, Boston, is attached to the panel. Not surprisingly, many of Frank's more than two hundred textile designs are still in production at Svenskt Tenn. The appeal and spontaneity of both the patterns and the palette have ensured their continuing popularity. In 1945, Tyra Lundgren, a Swedish artist and a contemporary of Frank's, wrote:

> Among all the printed textiles produced in Sweden those designed by Josef Frank and launched by Svenskt Tenn are of foremost distinction….Through their ornamental imagination, brilliant composition and coloristic harmony they cannot be surpassed…it is not just a matter of composition, the carefully modulated colors and the liveliness of the drawing, but above all the charisma of a great artistic personality.

108″ H x 51″ W

RUTH REEVES PRINTED LINEN, *GUATEMALAN DOCUMENT*
American, designed in 1935; reprinted 1940s

Ruth Reeves (1892–1966) figures among the most important American textile designers of the twentieth century. While some of her best known work is strongly associated with New York, including Reeves's designs for Radio City Music Hall and her 1930 textile, *Manhattan*, her work also frequently referenced many sources including motifs and patterns seen on textiles and costumes from around the world. Reeves wrote in 1935:

> …the sensitive eye of the artist must perforce recreate from every valid source, whether it be modern machinery, nature, or primitive symbolism on a Peruvian poncho or a woman's blouse from Guatemala. These forms as they pass through the spirit and the hand of the artist of today, can, in their recreated form…become vigorous expressions of our own era. ("On Designing Textiles," Archives of American Art)

Guatemalan Document illustrates both Reeves's ongoing interest in studying the artistic traditions of other cultures, as well as the commercial market for innovative textiles during the 1930s and 1940s.

Reeves's use of ethnographic materials for inspiration began early in her career when she participated in *Women's Wear Daily* design competitions that promoted the use of non-Western museum materials as starting points for American textile patterns. In 1934 she was sent to Guatemala under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution to study the country's indigenous weaving and textile traditions. Following her return to New York in 1935, Reeves's designs based on her travels in Guatemala, called "adaptations," were exhibited in New York along with the Guatemalan clothing and fabrics which inspired her. M. D. C. Crawford noted in his introduction to the catalogue of this exhibition: "Ruth Reeves is peculiarly fitted to interpret the arts of Guatemala in modern times. For years she has been familiar with these arts and the arts of related people among our South American neighbors through the collections in our museums which she has interpreted from time to time in fabrics and apparel of today." Some of Reeves's designs from this project were produced by R. H. Macy & Co. Of this group of textiles she wrote, "I have in the main created my fabric adaptations in the spirit rather than the letter of the various specimens which inspired me."

In *Guatemalan Document*, Reeves's pattern features bands of stylized geometric motifs interspersed with birds, crouching stags, and small figures; the motifs borrowed from the vocabulary of Guatemalan folk dress become emboldened by the enlarged scale and nontraditional placements of motifs. Reeves's design was produced in an apparel-weight linen, as documented by a 1930s belted day dress fashioned with the stag and bird prominently placed center front. The example seen here, identified on the selvedge as "*Guatemalan Document* by Ruth Reeves/Peruvian Linen," was produced in the 1940s, probably by the firm of Morley-Fletcher, on heavy linen appropriate for curtains or upholstery.

Guatemalan Document was displayed in "Decorative Arts Today," a 1948 exhibition at the Newark Museum, New Jersey, and was also shown in 1950 at the Munson Williams Proctor Institute, Utica, New York.

141″ H x 52.25″ W

This catalogue is dedicated to the memory of
Henry D. Ginsburg
1940–2007

Published by

CORA GINSBURG LLC

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Michele Majer
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with special thanks to Madeleine Ginsburg

PHOTOGRAPHY
Simon Cherry and Michael Fredericks

PRINTED BY
Pressroom Printer & Designer, Hong Kong

by appointment

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