

Cora Ginsburg



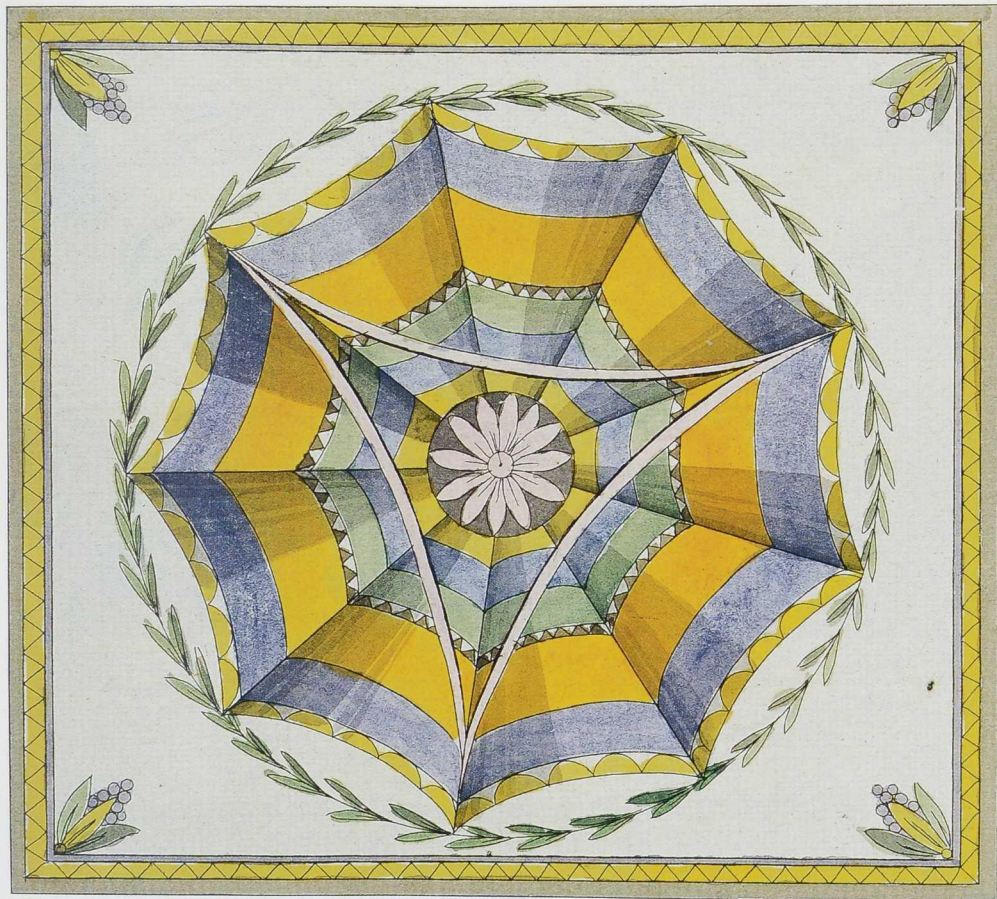
Costume • Textiles • Needlework

TITLE PAGE: Plate 25 from *Manual for Embroidery and Illustration*,
Henrik August Grosch, 1794

BACK COVER: Detail from *The Needles Excellency*, 1636

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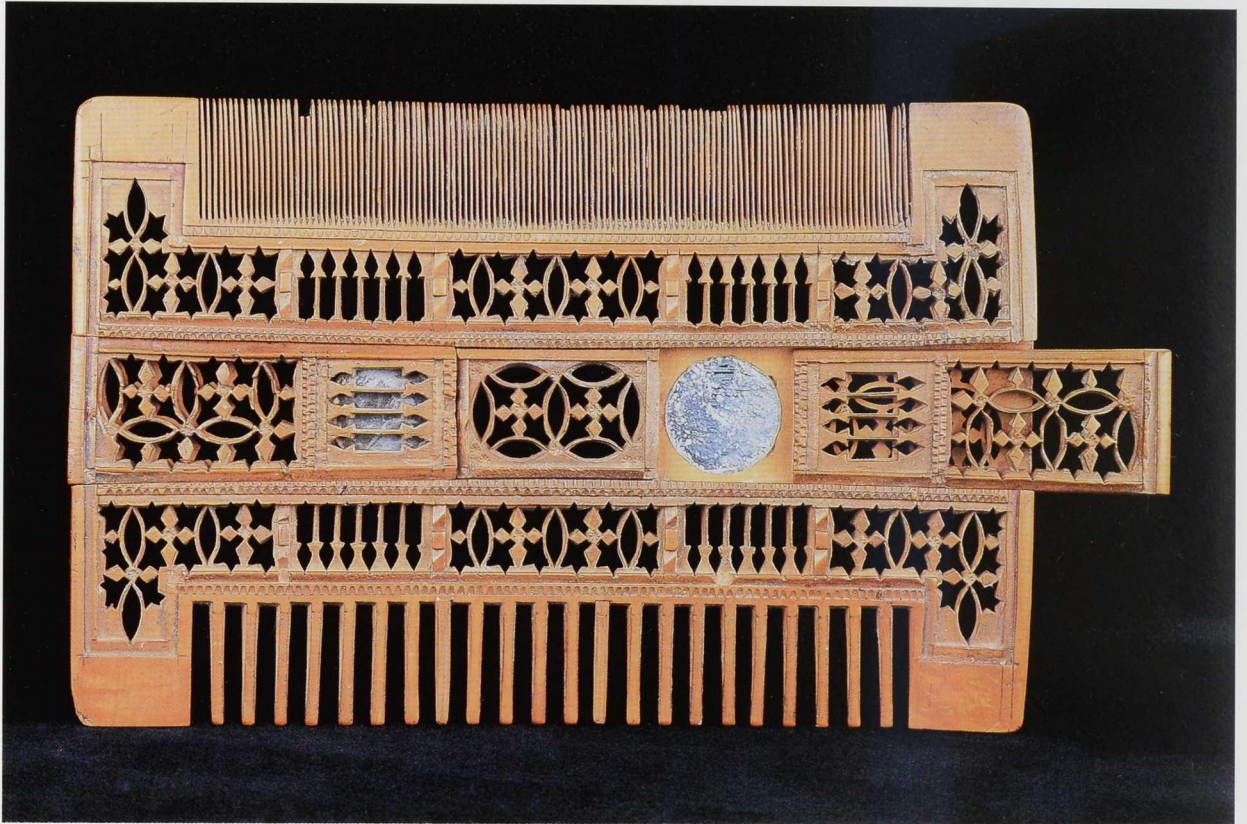


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CARVED BOXWOOD COMB, FRENCH, 15TH CENTURY

The cultivation of feminine beauty through the use of cosmetics and toilet articles was well established in Western Europe by the late medieval period. Although denounced by members of the church and social commentators, the ritual of the toilette was practiced by increasing numbers of women. Recipes for care of the skin, face, hands, and hair were published in special treatises as well as in the more widely available herbals, while a range of ornate toilet accessories was sold in market stalls and by traveling peddlers.

The comb, an essential item in the process of personal enhancement, was itself an object of exquisite workmanship. Ivory and boxwood were the two most preferred materials, with the latter favored for its fine grain. In addition to the decorative Gothic elements of interlocking circles, quatrefoils, diamonds, and arches, combs were often embellished with inscriptions relating to the themes of love and beautification. Carved on this comb in Old French is the phrase "To serve you," an apt message for the owner to read while dressing her hair. Similar to other surviving examples, the comb is also fitted with two sliding covers which open to reveal compartments for cosmetics.

Combs figure significantly in the medieval culture of courtly love and its literature. Among the customary gifts offered by a husband to his bride (or by a lover to his lady), the comb not only represented a bond between the two, but also symbolized the female sphere and ideals of female beauty. In the opening passage of the most famous medieval love poem, the *Roman de la Rose*, Guillaume is greeted outside the Garden of Love by Idleness, a young woman whose entrancing looks he describes in detail and of whom he writes: "By the time she had combed her hair carefully and prepared and adorned herself well, she had finished her day's work." (Quoted in *The Medieval Art of Love: Objects and Subjects of Desire*, Michael Camille, 1998, p. 59.) The very elaborateness of the medieval comb reflects its ritualistic use, and conveys an idealization of womanhood that was the essence of the chivalric code.

4.25" H x 6.5" W



ENGLISH NEEDLEWORK PURSE, LATE 16TH CENTURY

Needlework purses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were luxury items made necessary by the prescribed social etiquette of gift giving. In accordance with New Year's customs, members of the nobility were required to make a monetary gift, of a specified sum, to the Crown. Embroidered purses held the money, serving as gifts themselves and as beautiful coverings to the obligatory offerings contained within. On other occasions the purses were given among friends as gifts for holding perfumes, pomanders, scented powders and other toiletries of the day. Their name of "sweet bags" derives from this use.

Specialized skills of the period were needed to create these small, precious objects from the rich materials at hand. Silk threads were worked in tent stitch; harder to manipulate metallic threads were used to produce the silver ground and overlaid scrolls; the drawstring was made with a special tool called a lucette; and a knowledge of tasselmaking was required for the finishing ornamentation.

With pansies for thoughtfulness, the purse displays symbolic motifs fitting for the purse's role in the complex society for which it was made.

Probably having been the property of John, Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722). The purse was sold at Christie's, May 17, 1892, lot 33.

5" H x 5" W



IVORY MOIRÉ SILK DAMASK OPEN ROBE, CONTINENTAL, C. 1775-80

The subtly shimmering quality of this ivory silk *robe à la française* is created by the combination of a moiré ribbed ground and satin-weave motifs. A finishing technique, whereby the fabric is folded lengthwise and subjected to intense pressure, produces the beautiful "watered" effect. Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (1751-72) illustrates this procedure as it was done in the eighteenth century. Once folded, the fabric was wound onto copper or wooden rollers that were placed on a marble slab directly beneath a large piece of masonry. A water wheel moved the masonry back and forth, applying the necessary pressure to the silk. The ribs of the ground, alternately flattened or left in relief, reflect light differently, resulting in the irregular ripples of a true moiré.

The diaper-patterned serpentine bands interspersed with floral bouquets and bow-knots date the silk to just after the mid-century when such meandering designs were in vogue. The gown was subsequently altered around 1775-80 to update the shape of the bodice front and sleeves. These kinds of fashionable changes were common practice in the eighteenth century when figured silks represented a substantial expenditure and were highly-valued luxury commodities. The undiminished beauty of this lustrous silk with its creamy tone-on-tone effect still perfectly imparts a sophisticated *ancien régime* elegance. The open robe is complemented by a petticoat of almost identical moiré damask.



ENGLISH CREWELWORK CURTAIN, 1709

The characteristic motifs of English crewel curtains – large-scale leaves and branches, rocky hillocks, fantastic flowers and birds – reveal the English needleworkers' appropriation of Eastern aesthetics, yet it is these borrowed features which make English crewelwork eminently recognizable and desirable. The remarkable fact of English crewel embroidery is that within the parameters of these expected designs the results are so original.

A vertical, lofty sense of space occupies this curtain, notwithstanding the densely filled ground. Patterned vines bear leaves so decorative they almost resemble flowers. Exotic birds, Chinese in spirit and highly typical of the period, fulfill the fanciful nature of crewel hangings. One flamboyant bird struts at the bottom edge, two birds hover on branches in the middle, and another at the top displays its colorful feathers. Throughout the curtain clusters of grapes are worked in high relief.

Accompanying the curtain is an embroidered note reading, "Elizabeth Newman Her Work 1709." It is the work, and art, of domestic embroiderers such as Elizabeth Newman which make crewelwork a hallmark of English embroidery.

80" H x 53.5" W

THE NEEDLES EXCELLENCY



Plate 28

*A New Booke wherein are diuers Admirable Workes wrought with the Needle.
Newly inuented and cut in Copper for the pleasure and profit of the
Industrious...The 10th Edition enlarged wth diuers newe workes as needle-workes
purles & others neuer before printed. London: Printed for James Boler [i.e., his
widow Anne Boler] and to be sold at the Signe of the Marigold in Paules
Churchyard, 1636.*

This surviving copy of *The Needles Excellency* is exceedingly rare. One of the earliest of English pattern books, *The Needles Excellency*, and its famous poem by John Taylor "The Praise of the Needle," are essential points of reference in the history of English embroidery. *The Needles Excellency* is the fifth known needlework pattern book printed in England, following Adrian Poyntz's adaptation of Vinciolo, *New and singular patternes and workes of linnen* (London 1591); the publisher William Barley's imitation of Ciotti entitled *A Booke of curious and strange inventions, called the first part of needleworkes* (London 1596); a translation of Vecellio by one R. B., *The true perfection of cutworkes* (London: W. Jaggard 1598, only a 6-leaf fragment surviving); and Richard Shorleyker's *Schole-house for the Needle* (London 1624 and 1632). All of these editions are extremely rare, surviving in one or two copies or fragments of copies each. With the exception of the entirely original *Schole-house*, these earliest English pattern books were copies of popular continental models. *The Needles Excellency* was the first to be based on the influential German pattern book of Johann Sibmacher (Nuremberg 1597 and later editions). The allegorical title faithfully copies the title in the 1601 edition of Sibmacher's *Newes Modelbuch*, and plates 1-27 are reverse copies of the engravings used in both the 1597 and 1601 editions. Plates 28, 29, and 31 are original patterns, consisting of less refined but charming floral designs incorporating bees, a spider, caterpillars and birds, two for embroidery and the third for lace, by an unknown ornament designer. The five unnumbered lacework patterns, which were not included in the first edition of 1631, are based on the woodcut models from Jacques Foillet's *Nouveaux portraits du point coupé* (Montbéliard 1598). The patterns published in *The Needles Excellency* were a definite success – many of its geometrically intricate motifs appear on embroideries throughout the seventeenth century.

John Taylor (1580-1653), self-designated the "Water-Poet," was a prodigious versifier. His introductory poem "The Praise of the Needle" paraphrases Sibmacher's verse preface to the 1601 edition of the *Newes Modelbuch*. Taylor's version opens with a playful enumeration of the moral and metaphysical virtues of the needle, "the Taylor's Javelin, or his Lance," in the course of which he voices a prayer that "for my Countries quiet, I should like, / That Womenkinde should use no other Pike, / It will increase their peace, enlarge their store, / To use their tongues lesse, and their Needles more"; this is followed by a series of sonnets honoring royal and aristocratic ladies renowned for their prowess with the needle. Although second-rate pieces of literature, Taylor's verses are rich in historical detail and the present poem is no exception. Embroiderers and historians of needlework look to this poem for descriptive information and nomenclature. The poem lists contemporary terms for different "works" and stitches, twenty-one in all:



Plate 12

For Tent-worke, Raisd-worke, Laid-worke, Frost-worke, Net-worke,
 Most curious Purles, or rare Italian Cut-worke,
 Fine Fense-stich [*sic*], Finny stitch, New-stitch, and Chain-stitch,
 Brave Bred-stitch, Fisher-stitch, Irish-stitch, and Queen-stitch,
 The Spanish-stitch, Rosemary-stitch, and Mowse-stitch,
 The smarting Whip-stitch, Back-stitch, and the Cros[*sic*]-stitch,
 All these are good, and these we must allow,
 And these are everywhere in practice now.

The only earlier edition of *The Needles Excellency* recorded, and possibly the first edition, was printed in 1631 (anonymously) by Thomas Harper for the same publisher. Only one copy survives, in the collection of Harvard University. Of the present edition, only three other copies are recorded. Two were sold at Sotheby's on May 7, 1929, as lots 288 and 289. Lot 289 is now at the Victoria & Albert Museum. The present location of lot 288 is unknown. A single copy of a variant issue or state with the engraved title dated 1634, but also designated the "10th edition," (and in all other ways identical to this 1636 edition) is in the collection of the Huntington Library. Finally, a "12th edition," dated 1640, is known in seven copies. No copies are known of the second through ninth and eleventh editions.

Provenance: Mary de Saumarez, L. Stilwell, 39 Lancaster Gate (nineteenth-century inscriptions on front endpapers), possibly a daughter of Naval Admiral Lord James de Saumarez, whose wife, Martha, daughter of Thomas and Mary le Marchant, died in 1849 after bearing him three sons and four daughters; and apparently married to one Henry Stilwell, the latter being listed at the above address in the London Post Office Directories until the mid 1890s.

Oblong quarto (164 x 214 mm. [6.5 x 8.25 in.]); 35 (of 36) leaves.

Contents: engraved allegorical title showing dame Industrie seated at her needlework in front of a garden, dames Wisdome and Follie standing at either side of her; 4 typographic text leaves signed A⁴, unpaginated, containing John Taylor's 7-page verse preface "The Praise of the Needle" (A4 verso blank), 5-line white-on-black woodcut initial, type ornament page borders; 30 (of 31) engraved plates, consisting of 25 plates numbered 1-6, 10-13, 16-29, and 31 (lacking plate 15), containing 85 engraved designs for embroidery, plus 5 unnumbered white-on-black plates of lacework designs.

References: Pollard & Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475-1640* (London 1976), 23776.6; Arthur Lotz, *Bibliographie der Modelbücher* (Stuttgart 1963), 156b.



PAINTED-AND-DYED INDIAN COTTON PETTICOAT PRINTED WITH GOLD,
COROMANDEL COAST FOR THE DUTCH MARKET, 1750-75

Established in the early seventeenth century, the Dutch trade in painted-and-dyed Indian cottons enjoyed a great success. Unlike its English and French competitors in the same market, the Dutch trade was not subject to the kinds of prohibitions enacted in these other countries in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries which sought to protect the domestic silk and wool textile industries. As a result, the Dutch East India Company flourished, and a large number of eighteenth-century chintz costumes survive in the Netherlands, particularly in the form of regional dress.

The adoption of these brightly-colored and exotically-patterned chintzes for fashionable dress, in addition to furnishings, originated with the Dutch. The directors of the English East India Company noted in a letter of 1683 to contacts in India that such cottons were "the ware of gentlewomen in Holland but of the meaner sort here." (Quoted in *Origins of Chintz*, John Irwin and Katharine B. Brett, 1970, p. 30.) For informal at-home dress in the morning, upper-class Dutch women of the eighteenth century donned a fitted jacket bodice, the *jak*, and a full, pleated, ankle-length petticoat, the *rok*, worn over layered underpetticoats. This petticoat was worn in the Zaanstreek, a prosperous seventeenth and eighteenth-century commercial region north of Amsterdam.

Indian cottons intended for dress, including petticoats, were produced with designs for a specific type of garment, or as yardage with repeating patterns. Created in the centuries-old technique for which the Indians were renowned, the trailing stems and motif outlines were first drawn out by hand, after which the cloths were mordant and resist dyed. The use of gold and silver as decorative details was probably introduced from Persia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, under the Mughal domination of India. Seen on both furnishing and dress chintzes, these details most often appear in the form of highlights or outlines. Thus, the all-over checked pattern printed on this petticoat is a spectacular display using an extravagant quantity of gold. The brilliance and abundance of the fabric attest to the consumption of expensive imported textiles by fashionable Dutch women of the eighteenth century, and to their significance as symbols of wealth and status.

See: *Sits: Oost-West Relaties in Textiel*, Ed. Ebelte Hartkamp-Jonxis, 1987, no. 49.





ENGRAVED COPPERPLATE PRINTED COTTON, ENGLISH, 1770s

Francis Nixon's invention of printing fabric from engraved copperplates occurred outside of Dublin in 1752 and reached England by 1756. This new technique was a definitive departure from the ancient process of printing from carved wooden blocks. The engraved copperplates allowed for a precision of line and detail which was previously unobtainable. While working from copperplates limits the palette to monochromatic designs (except when additional color is added with wood blocks or pencilling), it is this feature which now defines and identifies these archetypal documents of European textile printing.

Although it can be difficult to distinguish French and English copperplates of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, certain images are characteristically English. Floral patterns of the type seen here reflect an English sensibility. Growing from sinuous branches, the stylized yet realistic flowers and feathery leaves possess a discernible Chinoiserie quality. With its fineness of design and high quality printing, this fabric relates to documented cottons from the well-known English textile firm of Bromley Hall.

63" H x 29.25" W



ROBE (*Chikarkarpe*), AINU PEOPLE, HOKKAIDO, JAPAN, LATE 19TH CENTURY

The clarity and symmetry of design seen on Ainu robes imbues them with a beauty which is both spiritual and earthly. Here, a checked cotton Japanese kimono is transformed by the addition of traditional Ainu needlework. Appliqué bands of indigo-dyed cotton form the maze-like decoration called *moreu* and pale blue chain stitch embroidery provides further elaboration with a pattern known as *chik noka*. These geometric configurations serve as talismanic devices warding evil spirits away from the wearer. Placed purposefully at the neck, cuffs and hem of the robe, the motifs protect these vulnerable openings onto the body.

In a society where the belief in spirits, both good and evil, affected the making of everyday objects, Ainu robes with their symbolic symmetry and imposing graphics embody a sense of beauty and protection — two fundamental reasons for the wearing of clothes.

53" H x 48" W



SILK DESIGNED BY ANNA MARIA GARTHWAITE, ENGLISH, 1752

To anyone interested in English silks of the eighteenth century, Anna Maria Garthwaite's career as a silk designer piques the imagination and provides a fascinating glimpse into the workings of the Spitalfields silk industry. The archive of Garthwaite material at the Victoria & Albert Museum allows some of the most beautiful floral silks of the eighteenth century to be reestablished as the work of this talented designer.

Included in the museum's collection is the drawing for this Garthwaite silk (5989.12). From 1742 to 1756 John Sabatier, a master weaver in Spitalfields, purchased ninety designs from Garthwaite including this one on October 27th 1752. It is also known that Garthwaite created a variation of this pattern which she sold to Simon Julins in 1754 to be woven as a damask (see *Silk Designs of the Eighteenth Century*, Natalie Rothstein, 1990, p. 246).

For an eighteenth-century silk design to be successful when it was manufactured the artistic concept had to be combined with a technical knowledge of the drawloom and its capabilities. Garthwaite's mastery of both is evident. Within this mechanical framework the white lilies and hops of this silk lyrically entwine against a shimmering blue ground.

An example of this silk is in the collection of the Abegg-Stiftung (4873).

33.5" H x 19.75" W



EMBROIDERED TORAH BINDER, ITALIAN, INSCRIBED MIRIAM FOA, 5376 (1615-16)

In seventeenth-century Italy, ceremonial textiles were often donated to synagogues, thus commemorating important events in a family's life. This Torah binder, with its rich palette and bounty of flowers, honors the Foa family. The fineness of the silk embroidery, worked on cream linen, captures the beauty of the carnations, pansies, bluebells and columbines seen among the scrolling bands.

The embroidered Hebrew inscription reads, "Miriam, of the House of Foa, took an offering from that which came into her hands; and she gave it to her husband, Avram. The year of peace (5376 [1615-16]) to the lover of Torah." As with inscriptions on other Torah binders of the period, the writing conveys information about the donor and her family. Written in a style layered with meanings, the phrasing of this factual information provides the knowledgeable reader with several biblical allusions.

A Torah binder in the collection of The Jewish Museum (F 4927), dated 5343 (1582-83), is from the Honorata and Samuel Foa family.

7.5" H x 145" W



CREWEL EMBROIDERED DAY DRESS, FRENCH, C. 1804-6

Simplicity of line and a restrained use of surface decoration are quintessential features that characterize French day dress from the first decade of the nineteenth century. The understated refinement of this particular gown represents the epitome of elegance in the era of Napoleon I. The prevailing influence of neoclassicism is evident in the high-waisted slender silhouette and in the use of white cotton, a contemporary imitation of drapery seen on antique statuary. However, the puffed oversleeve and long undersleeve flaring over the top of the hand are details that deliberately evoke styles of the late medieval period, referred to as *le style gothique*, which also found expression in fashionable dress.

Details of construction and, more precisely, the placement of the embroidery date this gown to the opening years of the First Empire. The wide rounded neckline, flat-fronted skirt, back closure, and concentration of pleats at the center back are dress features typical of the early 1800s. The inverted T-shape formed by the delicate foliate sprays, executed in chain stitch with crewel wools, was first seen on women's court costume at the time of the coronation. Called *à la Mathilde*, this distinctive shape was subsequently used in everyday wear and was especially popular between 1804-6.





ART NEEDLEWORK SAMPLER, ENGLISH, C. 1920

This sampler is a delightful example of early twentieth-century art needlework. Displaying a veritable panorama of the embroiderer's skills, its production may likely be associated with one of the well-known schools for embroidery such as the Royal School of Needlework or the Royal College of Art. Although samplers were no longer used in stitch-work instruction for young girls, they were very much a part of the training established by the art schools for their adult students. Mrs. Archibald (Grace) Christie, one of the leading embroiderers and teachers of this period, published *Samplers and Stitches* in 1920, an influential work that was considered a classic. In its use of highly traditional methods in the interpretation of relevant modern designs, this sampler reflects Grace Christie's statement in her book's preface that "the power obtained through a wide knowledge of technique should and will, naturally, express the changes of fashion which time brings about."

The variety of materials found in the sampler, as well as the two-dimensional stylized images, reflect the freedom of experimentation that was encouraged in contemporary needlework. Down the central band, seventy-eight different stitches demonstrate the embroiderer's repertoire, while appliqué, quilting, cut, drawn and canvas-work have been creatively employed in making the motifs found along the sides. Included amongst these are a group of four patterned squares worked in gold metallic threads; a blue linen appliqué thistle; a pink leather appliqué tulip; and a rooster in filet lace. Undated by its maker, the profile of an exotically fashionable woman places the sampler to the early 1920s.

32.5" H x 15.5" W



ENGLISH SAMPLER SIGNED DOMITIA DUNCAN AND DATED JUNE 23 1738

Domitia Duncan, the maker of this sampler, did something out of the ordinary when she used black wool threads to fill in the background of her work. While samplers from the same period often share similar motifs and use of materials, the black ground seen here is a departure from extant examples. Black backgrounds can be seen on English eighteenth-century needlework pictures but samplers, with their rows of pedantic letters and numbers, typically use as the background the natural color of the linen fabrics on which they are worked.

Domitia Duncan's sampler illustrates the beauty which often resulted from mandatory exercises of the needle. At the top she demonstrates her repertoire of letters and numbers in differing styles and sizes. In a gesture of economy, after embroidering the date 1738 only the numbers 2456910 are included, omitting the figures already worked. Beneath these rote rows, the young embroiderer, taking a step toward refining her skills in pictorial representation, composes a flower basket sumptuously overflowing with roses, bluebells, carnations and tulips.

The rarity of the black background, the sharpness of the colors and the gracefulness of the composition make this piece a true treasure of eighteenth-century needlework.

18.25" H x 11.25" W



FLORAL WORSTED DAMASK,
ENGLISH, C. 1720-30

STRIPED BROCADED WORSTED,
ENGLISH, LATE 18TH CENTURY

Although plain and figured eighteenth-century woollen fabrics survive in far fewer numbers than their silk counterparts, they constituted nonetheless a large and important segment of the European textile industry. Used for both furnishings and clothing — as linings, interlinings and as main materials — woollens were manufactured in a wide variety of weaves and grades and were available at a range of prices. Practical and durable, they provided warmth and hard-wearing elegance in fashionable dress and interiors.

From the Middle Ages, England especially was renowned for its woollen trade which represented a significant contribution to the national economy. The term “worsted” refers to a type of high-quality fabric made from combed, long-staple wool yarns that are lightly twisted prior to weaving and produce a smooth shiny surface. In the eighteenth century, Norwich and Spitalfields were the main centers of worsted manufacture. In addition to domestic consumption, worsteds were also greatly in demand in foreign markets and were exported to Europe, the American Colonies, the West Indies, the Levant and China.

These two rare pieces illustrate the vibrancy of figured worsteds and their relationship to contemporary woven silks. The striped and flowered worsted damask in contrasting shades of red and green is similar in its patterning to silks of the late seventeenth century. The glazed brocaded worsted demonstrates the predominance of ombréd stripes with small-scale florals that were prevalent in late-eighteenth century silks. Functionality combined with attractive designs in a bright palette served to ensure the widespread popularity of these fine quality wools.

An example of the worsted damask is in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum (T675-1974).

Worsted damask: 27.5” H x 18” W
Brocaded worsted: 38” H x 17.5” W





PRINTED COTTON BY RAOUL DUFY (1877-1953), *LES FRUITS
D'EUROPE*, FRENCH, DESIGNED C. 1912

In 1912 the prestigious French textile firm of Bianchini-Férier recognized the promise of applying Raoul Dufy's artistry to the commercial field of textiles. From 1912 to 1928 Dufy painted several hundred designs for the firm which were then translated into both woven and printed fabrics. The pattern seen here, *Les Fruits d'Europe*, is adapted from a woodcut made by Dufy to illustrate Guillaume Apollinaire's volume of poetry, *Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée* (1911). The fabrics manufactured from Dufy's designs, particularly the printed cottons, have a stylistic appearance which distinguishes them from contemporaneous examples and accounts for their important place in the history of twentieth-century textiles.

See: *Raoul Dufy L'Œuvre en Soie*, Anne Turlonias and Jack Vidal, 1998, p. 94; *Dufy Decorateur*, Raymond Cogniat, 1957, no. 17; and *Raoul Dufy la Passion du Tissu*, Honfleur, 1993, p. 60.

34.75" H x 47.5" W

SILK EMBROIDERED LONG CLOTH,
DANISH, C. 1650

Danish needlework of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries includes an important group of red silk-embroidered linen cloths. Related by technique, usage, pictorial themes and a reliance on foreign engraved sources, these embroideries display characteristics that are at once distinctively Danish and indicative of outside influences. The predominance of red silk thread worked in stem stitch and the simplicity of the drawing are hallmarks of this type of Danish textile art. Red silk-embroidered cloths are listed in inventories of royal, aristocratic and upper bourgeois households. This especially fine example is associated with a noble family from Jutland.

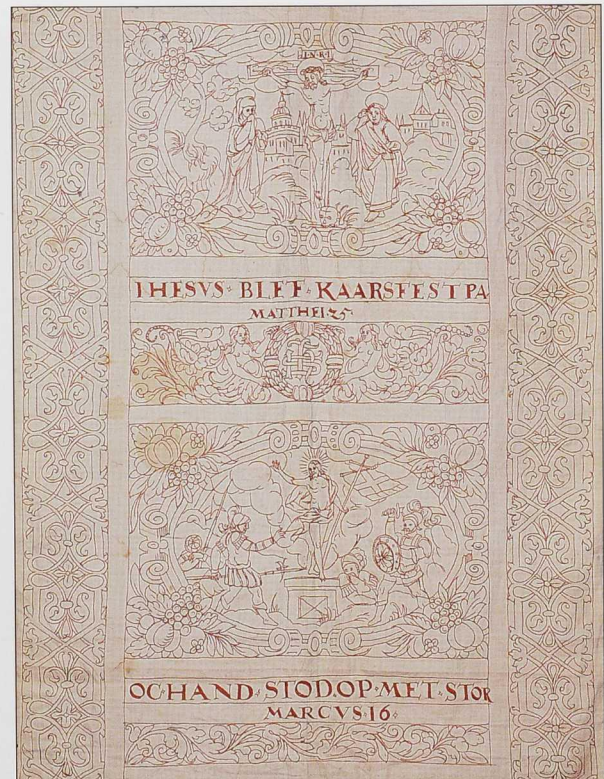
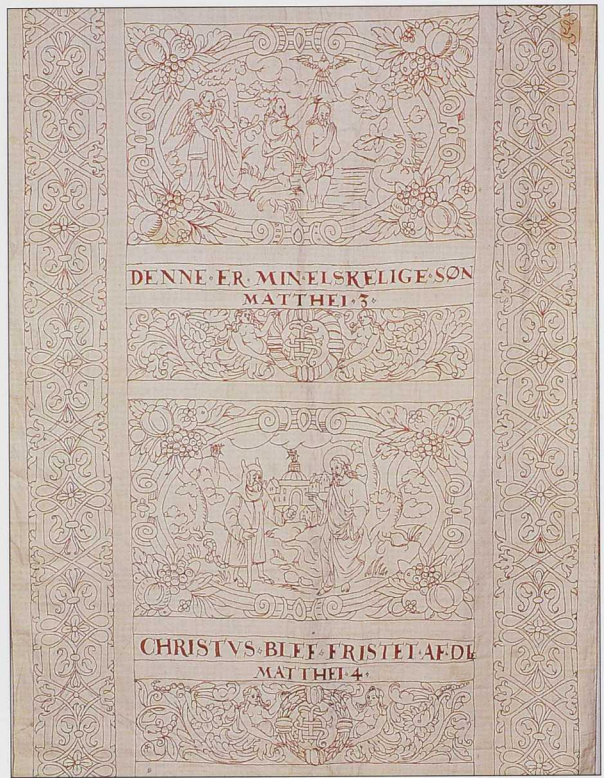
Red-work cloths served primarily as table covers. The custom of layering the cloths, two and three together, is recorded in contemporary sources. Although the setting was secular, the cloths were used in celebrations that marked important religious events, such as Christmas and Easter, and at ceremonies in which religion played a significant role, such as weddings and baptisms. While professional embroiderers were certainly employed in the making of these pieces, wealthy women and their female servants also produced many of the surviving embroideries.

This particular long cloth is one of a group of twenty-six similar embroideries which illustrate stories from the New Testament. Eight scenes depicting the life of Christ are enclosed within oval cartouches decorated with symbolic fruits of grapes and pomegranates. Beneath each image is an inscription, based on the second Danish folio bible of 1589, and a rectangular framework in which paired female grotesques hold up a wreath with the sacred monogram, "IHS." Much of the imagery is based on the works of two German engravers: Virgil Solis of Nuremberg (1514-1562) and an artist whose initials "IM" probably signify Iacob Mores the Elder of Hamburg (c. 1540 - just before 1612). Strapwork and scrolling foliage, familiar elements from late Renaissance ornament, fill the borders.

Deliberately limited in its palette, spare and slightly naïve in its style of execution, this cherished embroidery embodies a moving expression of deeply-held faith.

Illustrated in *Danske Silkebroderede Lærredsduge. Fra 16. Og 17. Århundrede*, George Garde, 1961, p. 422, no. 33.

99" H x 34.5" W



Details shown



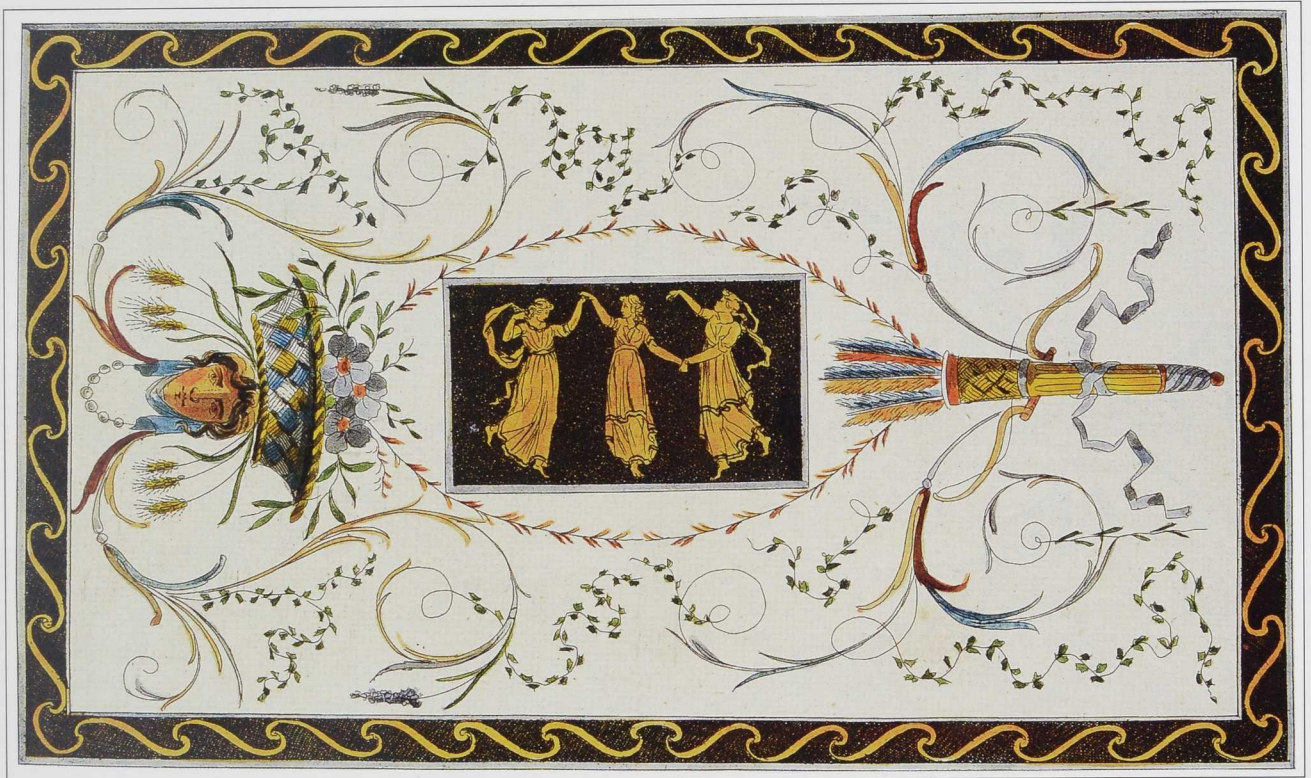
PAIR OF ENGLISH
NEEDLEPOINT CHAIR SEATS,
2ND QUARTER OF
THE 18TH CENTURY

Eighteenth-century needlepoint seat covers allowed for the favored design of hillocks, flowers and leaves, so often found on bed hangings, to be scaled down and applied to carved wooden chairs. The Tree of Life motif, Indian in origin, is translated to the English domestic scene with naturalistic garden flowers. Lilies, carnations, irises, tulips and roses are worked in fine petitpoint using wool and silk threads on a canvas ground.



The making of chair seats was a popular form of eighteenth-century needlework but their intended function as upholstery fabric limited the survival of these decorative coverings. While the chairs on which the needlework was placed often lasted for successive generations, the original needlework, worn from use, was frequently replaced. This pair, with handsome brown grounds, is an exceptional example — an accomplishment at the time they were worked and a rare find today.

17" H x 20" W each



MANUAL FOR EMBROIDERY AND ILLUSTRATION, HENRIK AUGUST GROSCH, DANISH,
1794

HAANDBOG TIL BRODERING OG TEGNING AF HENRIK AUGUST GROSCH.
FÖRSTE DEEL. Med XXVI illuminerede Kobbere, som angive de behörige Farver.
Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1794

Henrik August Grosch's manual of embroidery patterns was the first book of its kind to be published in Denmark. Designs and information such as Grosch presented to Danish embroiderers would have been available from foreign publications but Grosch's book was presumably welcome as a more direct and accessible resource. Typical of eighteenth-century pattern books for embroidery, the author, by way of introduction to the plates, gives his readers practical advice and aesthetic judgments. On the practical side, those wishing to embroider with hair are advised to soak the hair first in lukewarm soapy water to get rid of fatty substances, and then in schnapps for twenty-four hours to strengthen it. As for aesthetics, the colors must be carefully chosen and the designs must be in good taste.

The patterns found in *Haandbog til Brodering og Tegning* are beautifully rendered and neoclassical in spirit. Found among the engraved plates are delicate borders, cartouches and motifs composed of beribboned flowers placed in baskets and urns; architectural motifs including ruins; and the allegorical figures and monuments which define late eighteenth-century style. These were intended for the decoration of dresses, waistcoats, kerchiefs, fire screens, wallets and any other materials which served as canvases for embroidery. With such an enticing book at hand, it is hoped that many Danish needleworkers, inspired by Grosch's visions of ornamentation, applied their craft to the implementation of his designs.

A copy of this book is in the collection of the Museum of Decorative Art Copenhagen (I 9078).

Oblong folio (205 x 305 mm [8.25 x 12 in.]); 6 leaves, paginated [5] 6-12; 25 numbered engraved plates (of 26, lacking plate 1), all finely colored in watercolor.





CHINOISERIE CREWEL CURTAIN, ENGLISH, C. 1720

On this exceptionally rare curtain, the eighteenth-century decorative passion for Chinoiserie is seen in a bold display of motifs. Embroidered in bright polychrome wool threads, the fascinating Chinoiserie figures and animals are placed within a traditional floral border. While similar spot motifs occur regularly in eighteenth-century needlework, their appearance here is a striking departure. Each image is worked in a scale considerably larger than usual; the inclusion of so many figurative motifs, each with its own personality and accoutrements, is surprising; and the selection of an alligator and an elephant reveals an unexpected choice of animals. By melding the fantastic elements taken from the East with the more naturalistic European sensibility, objects of everyday use, such as this curtain, are endowed with an exotic presence.

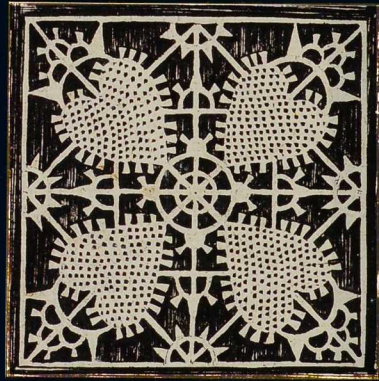
90" H x 72" W

PHOTOGRAPHY:

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