CORA GINSBURG

Costume · Textiles · Needlework

CORA GINSBURG LLC

TITI HALLE

OWNER

A Catalogue
of exquisite & rare works
of art including 17th to 20th century
costume textiles & needlework
Winter 2011–2012

by appointment

19 East 74th Street
New York, NY 10021
www.coraginsburg.com

tel 212-744-1352
fax 212-879-1601
info@coraginsburg.com

REDWORK CURTAIN
British, ca. 1620s

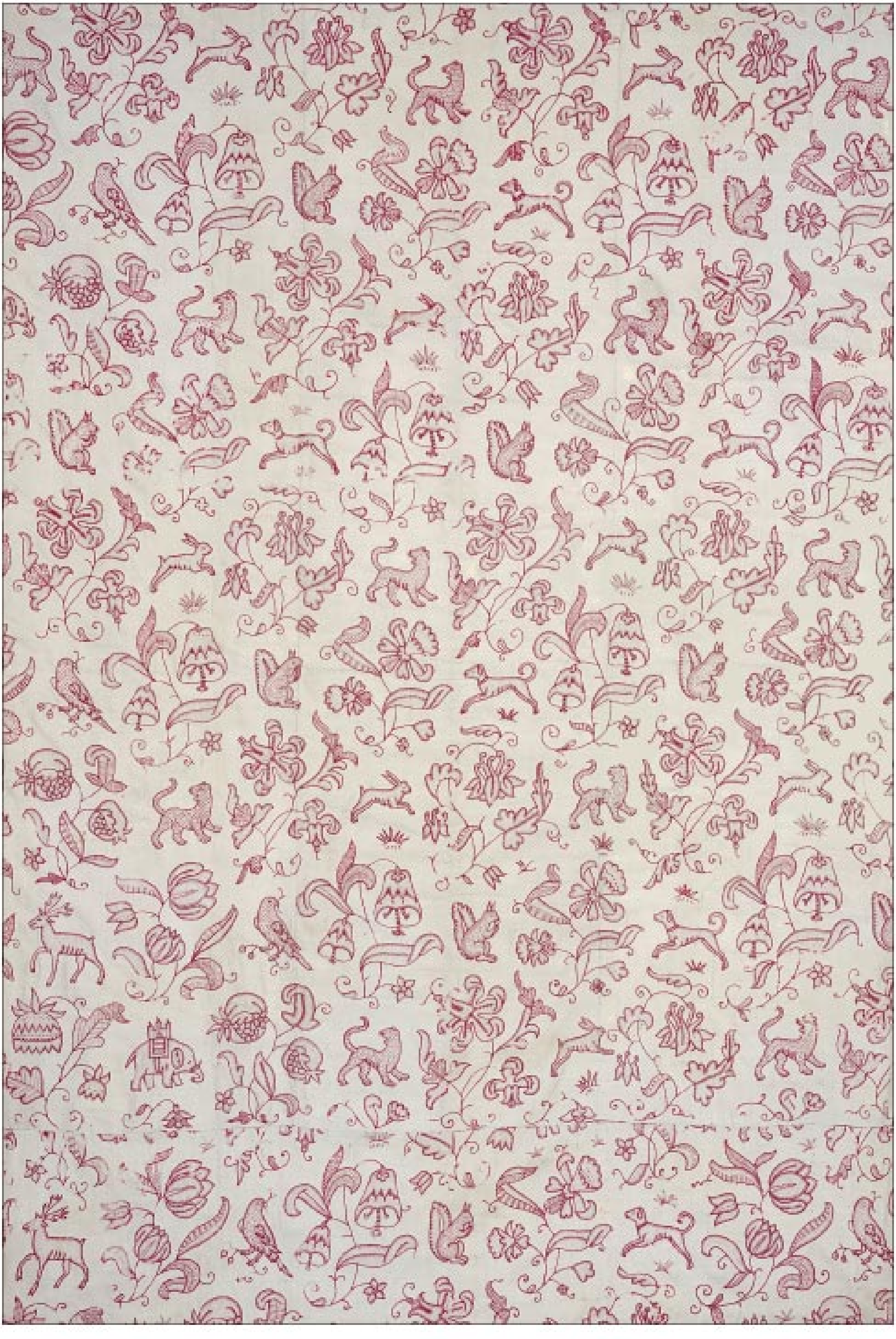
Redwork constitutes a well-known type of seventeenth-century British monochromatic crewel needlework. It was generally done by women of a household to decorate articles of dress as well as a variety of domestic furnishings such as bed hangings, coverlets, cushions, and workbags. These embroideries share characteristics of materials, motifs, and composition in which the individual elements, executed in sturdy, deep red wool threads, are presented in precise, regularly spaced arrangements over a white ground of linen or cotton, or a combination of the two.

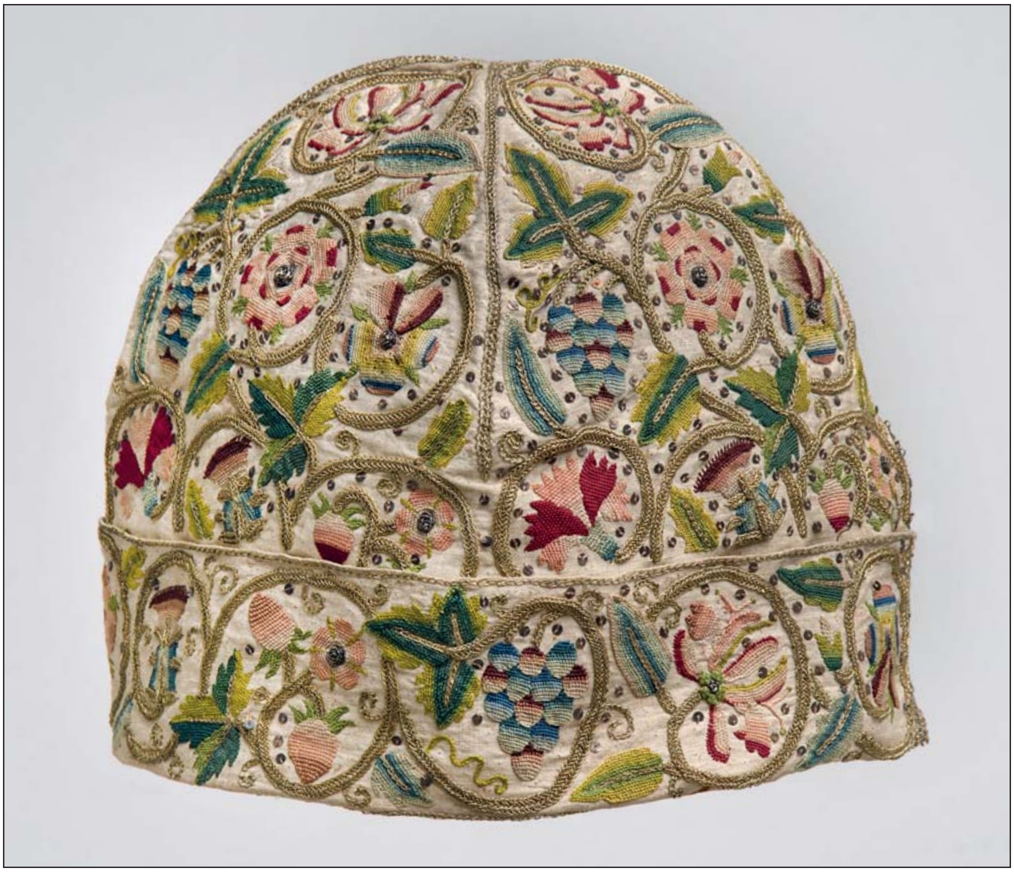
This lively curtain displays a profuse assortment of flora and fauna disposed in horizontal rows and is related to other surviving pieces, attesting to a common vocabulary of stitches and print sources among embroiderers. Across the width of the panel, stylized pomegranates, columbines, tulips, harebells, and fantastical flowers alternate with leopards, rabbits, squirrels, stags, hounds, birds, and a solitary elephant carrying a three-towered castle on its back. Clearly defined against a twilled fustian ground, the solid outlines of the motifs are worked in buttonhole and stem stitches while the details that create shading and volume are executed in speckling, running, feather, chain, and back stitches. A fine red line borders the two long sides of the curtain. Although some groupings of four motifs recur in the panel's bands, the maker of this curtain chose not to adhere to a strictly regular repetition throughout, thereby creating the impression of a more varied repertoire. These plants and animals with their disproportionate scale are familiar from seventeenth-century pattern books, such as Richard Schorleyker's *A Schole-House for the Needle*, published in 1624 and aimed at both domestic embroiders and professional craftsmen. In addition to this type of publication with a defined purpose, herbals, emblem books, and bestiaries also offered a wide scope of figurative material for the embroiderer. In spite of their many similarities, each redwork piece represents the individual expression of its maker, and it was this ability to produce unlimited variations from standard elements that demonstrates the imagination and creativity of the seventeenth-century embroiderer.

Exotic animals not native to Europe including elephants are seen in other examples of redwork. Most depictions of this awe-inspiring creature were not drawn from life—only four elephants were imported into England between the mid-thirteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Although the elephant and castle motif in this piece is unusual, it was widely known at the time. The earliest medieval representation by Matthew Paris, from the *Chronica Majora* manuscript dating to 1241, illustrates the elephant that was presented to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II by the sultan of Egypt in 1229 and that he used in his triumphal entries. In England, the elephant with its castle became part of the coat of arms of the city of Coventry in the mid-fourteenth century. This impressively large and powerful animal was perceived in the West as both a beast of regal triumphs—able to support a castle on its back—and as an allegory of wisdom and chastity, associations that traced their origins to classical antiquity and the Middle Ages.

This curtain, discovered in Ireland in the twentieth century, was likely part of a set of bed hangings and was modified later in the seventeenth or early eighteenth century by the addition of a narrow panel from the same set at the lower edge. A small piece from this set is in the Royal School of Needlework Collection and illustrated in Sally Saunders, *Royal School of Needlework Embroidery Techniques* (1998), p. 53. The configuration of the squirrel, leopard, and rabbit, in particular, closely resembles that in a redwork bedcover, also dating to about 1620, in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago (1986.988). In addition, a related piece is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (40.88a-f).

85″ H x 58″ W



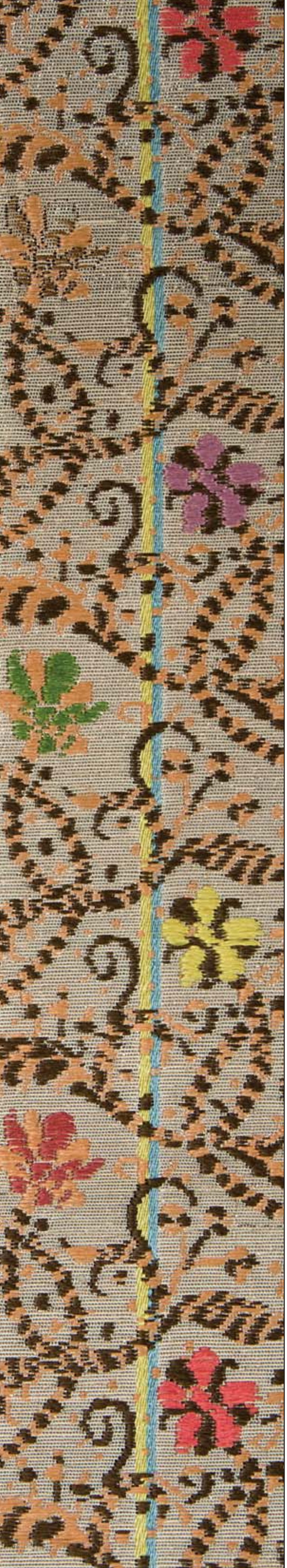


EMBROIDERED MAN'S CAP
English, ca.1610–20

Late Elizabethan and Stuart embroidery stands out for its richness and beauty. Fine materials, including delicate linen, silk threads in saturated colors, and expensive metals were combined with skillful craftsmanship. In the home, embroidered pillows and hangings adorned beds, while needlework carpets and embellished books might be displayed on tabletops. For apparel, a wide variety of clothing and accessories, including smocks, jackets, gloves, and head coverings were elaborately embroidered for both men and women who desired and could afford these articles of luxury. Feminine coifs and tall-crowned, masculine caps, such as the wonderful example seen here, were worn exclusively at home as part of undress—comfortable yet still showy alternatives to more formal hats worn in public.

Here, the careful design features flowers and fruits encircled by scrolling vines. This type of pattern was highly popular and appears on many surviving examples of embroidery from this period. Sometimes the pattern is embroidered solely in black in the monochromatic technique of blackwork, and in other instances, as with this cap, the embroiderer brought the natural motifs to life using polychrome silk threads combined with gilt. The scrolling vines, worked in plaited braid stitch in silver-gilt wrapped thread, enclose carnations, grapes, thistles, roses, pansies, honeysuckle, and strawberries. Small metal spangles dot the ground, adding to the already laden surface. Made from one piece of linen cloth cut above the brim into four joined components, the cap depicts the gracefulness and appeal of the scrolling floral pattern that was a favored motif of Elizabethan embroiderers and tastemakers. Patterns for caps similar in style and decoration appear in Sir Thomas Trevelyon's *Miscellany of 1608,* a compendium of literature and history which also includes patterns for ornamental applications such as embroidery. The provenance of this cap connects it to Sir Thomas Cave (ca. 1622–1666), who was invested as a Knight in June of 1641 at Whitehall, London, and shortly after created 1st Baronet of Stanford, Co. Northampton. He was a staunch supporter of Charles I, who fought in the English Civil war as a Royalist.

An insertion of metallic lace into the bottom of a seam on the back of the cap suggests that it was enlarged for a second wearer at some point in its history. Related caps are illustrated in Liz Arthur, *Embroidery at the Burrell Collection*, 1600-1700 (1995), fig. 34, and Andrew Morrall and Melinda Watt, eds., *English Embroidery from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1580-1700, 'Twixt Art and Nature* (2008); p. 176–7, cat. no. 32.



BROCADED SILK BEARING MANTLE

English or Continental, early 17th c.

A sacred religious ritual in European Renaissance traditions, the christening of a child was an occasion of much rejoicing, even pageantry. A privileged infant was customarily borne to the baptismal font in church upon an embellished cushion and wrapped in a costly bearing cloth. Rare in its survival as an intact object, this sumptuous example is sufficiently rich enough for the offspring of nobility.

The significance of a majestic bearing cloth is well-illustrated in William Shakespeare's play *The Winter's Tale* (1610–11), in which the newly-born princess Perdita is abandoned in the wild, the victim of a courtly scandal. A shepherd and his son find the innocent baby concealed in her special christening cloth: "Here's a sight for thee; look thee, a bearing-cloth for a squire's child! Look thee here; take up, take up, boy; open't." (Act 3, Scene 3) The shepherd preserves Perdita's wrapping as a keepsake, and, in a crucial plot point, ultimately proves her true identity with the jeweled "mantle of Queen Hermione." (Act 5, Scene 2) In this example, three long, selvedge-width panels of brocaded silk—with a glimmering silver background woven with wefts of flat silver strips—are joined together to create a ceremonial cover befitting a royal child. The unique pattern dates to the first half of the seventeenth century, and presents an unusual combination of bold vines and fine stripes. The design is broken down into the sinuous, meandering vertical vine with curling horizontal sprigs superimposed on the paired stripes that alternate pale yellow with blue and coral with aquamarine. All the vines are rendered with dark brown and peach banding, a visually arresting choice. The repeat unit has four floral arabesques partially colored with the same brown and peach wefts that are repeated throughout the length of the cloth, as well as others discontinuously brocaded in shades of saffron yellow, mauve, soft red, grassy green, bright coral, and aqua. This clever use of color makes the short, eight-centimeter repeat seem longer and more varied than it is. Though the silk may have been woven in Italy, it is also likely that it was woven in Northern Europe, England being a possibility. The measured, swaying movement of the vertical lines and the coiling rhythms of the horizontal stems with their leafy flourishes relate stylistically to English embroideries of the period.

Lined with brilliant, paper-thin salmon silk and lavishly trimmed with silver-and-gold metallic bobbin lace with tulip-shaped motifs that echo the colorful brocaded buds, this bearing cloth remains a testament to the importance of a healthy birth and a celebrated rite of passage. That it has not been taken apart and reused for other purposes in the course of its history is remarkable in itself. Few comparable cloth-of-silver brocaded silks of this type exist; an Italian example, dated ca. 1630–40, of similar design is illustrated in Barbara Markowsky, *Seidengewebe* (1976), cat. #377, p. 253. A fragment of cloth-of-silver with the layout of stripes and floral columns, tentatively identified as English and dating to the second half of the seventeenth century, is in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (T.14A-1922).

75″ H x 60″ W (detail shown)

SILK EMBROIDERED LINEN COVERLET

English, ca. 1700–10

At the turn of the eighteenth century, orangeries were prominent features of royal and aristocratic European gardens. Introduced into Spain and Portugal from Arab lands in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, oranges were considered a rare delicacy and by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, wealthy land owners lavished attention on the cultivation of these "exoticks." Contemporary prints depict the numerous species grown during the period, and gardening treatises often devoted specific instructions regarding their proper care, including sheltering them indoors during the harsh winter months. In the early seventeenth century, oranges were equated with the Golden Apples of the Hesperides won by Hercules, and orange trees came to symbolize the rewards enjoyed by the benevolent prince. The most famous orangery in the seventeenth century, built between 1684 and 1686 by Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646-1708) for Louis XIV at Versailles, set the standard for this type of botanical structure in France as well as neighboring countries. Both French and Dutch garden design and horticulture were influential in England in the late seventeenth century, and members of the upper classes constructed orangeries on their estates, some of which were well known at the time.

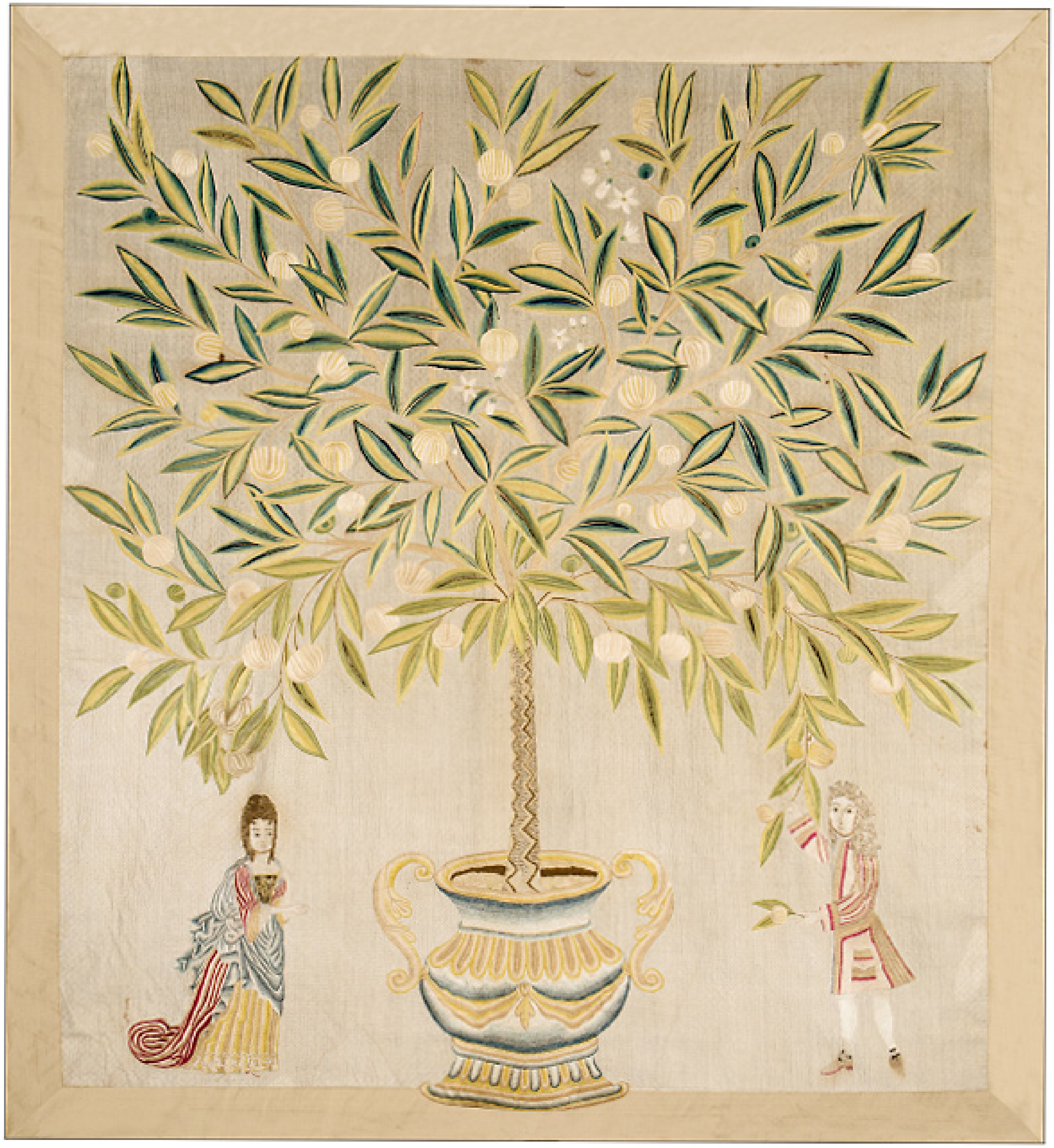
Although the overall aesthetic, types of stitches, and false quilted ground in this professionally worked coverlet are typical of late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century embroidery, the scale of the motifs in this impressive piece is highly unusual. A large, flowering orange tree dominates the coverlet, spreading its fruit-laden branches over the entire upper half of the panel. Below, a fashionably dressed and coiffed couple stand at either side of an imposing, ornate double-handled urn; reaching up to a lower branch, the man plucks a single orange that he offers to his companion. The woman's ensemble, comprising a mantua and petticoat of striped silk, and the man's full-sleeved, wide-skirted coat are familiar from contemporary paintings and engravings. Even the following details of accessories and hairstyles are accurately recorded by the embroiderer: the female figure's high coiffure with small curls at her temples (known as *passagères)*, her embroidered stomacher with faux lacing, the scrolling pattern at her petticoat hem, and her delicate pointed shoes. No less attention was paid to the male figure's attire with his voluminous wig, low-set coat pockets, and solid, square-toed shoes. The use of long-and-short stitches imparts luster to the motifs and reinforces the naturally glossy quality of the orange tree's leaves as well as the silk garments worn by the couple. The fine diamond pattern of the ground is worked in yellow silk backstitch.

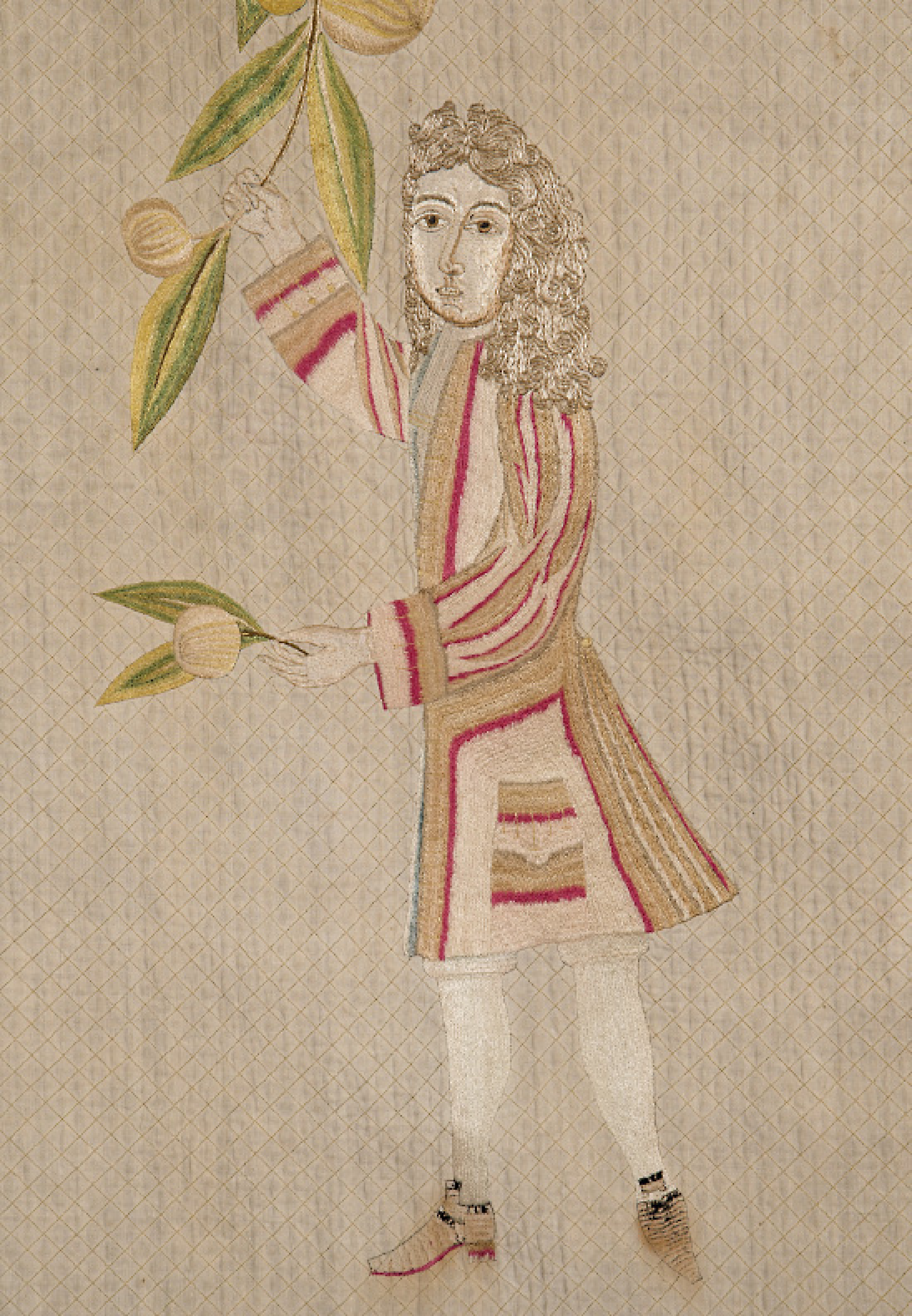
A precise source for the design of this coverlet has not been identified, but similar scenes of elegantly dressed men and women strolling in garden parterres graced by orange trees in large urns appear in numerous Italian, French, and Dutch prints of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Although the curving, leafy handles of the urn add a further decorative element to its swagged and gadrooned body, they also served a functional purpose: a plate from Jan Commelyn's *Nederlantze Hesperides*, published in Amsterdam in 1676, shows the interior of a conservatory in winter with two gardeners lifting a potted fruit tree by the use of long poles inserted through the handles.

In addition to the fruit itself which held a special place at the table, orange blossoms were used to create scented waters for a variety of purposes. In 1690, the English writer and gardener John Evelyn (1620–1706) published a long satirical poem, "Mundus Muliebris: or, the Ladies Dressing-Room Unlock'd and her Toilette Spread," in which he listed the numerous accessories required by a lady of fashion, including twelve dozen gloves, some perfumed with orange water from Martial, a renowned French perfumer, and "whole quarts" of orange water with which to scent her chamber. Around 1700, the French engraver Nicolas de Larmessin III (1684–1755) produced a series of humorous engravings illustrating artisans "dressed" in their wares; among the many commodities that constitute the *Habit de Parfumeur* is a drawer containing essences, pomades, and different *Eaux de Senteur* including *Fleurs d'Orange*.

This piece is illustrated in Margaret Jourdain, *English Secular Embroidery* (1910). At that time, the coverlet belonged to Sir Trehawke Kekewich (1851–1932), a barrister and judge who served as Recorder of Tiverton, Devon, from 1899 to 1920 and as chairman of the Devon Quarter Sessions.

74" H x 66.5" W





BOBBIN LACE FLOUNCE
Flemish (Brussels), ca. 1710–15

From their development at the turn of the sixteenth century and through the eighteenth, needle and bobbin laces were prized luxury commodities. Wealthy elites and members of the clergy spent inordinate sums of money adorning themselves and their interiors, both secular and religious, with collars, cravats, caps, lappets, sleeve and shirt ruffles, flounces, and various trimmings. Indeed, the most elaborate and costly laces that took months, even years, to produce were far more expensive than top-of-the-line silks. Given its important role as a dress accessory that was integral to the *tout ensemble* and as an opulent form of furnishing decoration, stylistic changes in lace design were closely tied to wider changes in fashion. Among the main centers of production in Europe—Italy , France, and Flanders—the latter was known for the incomparable fineness of its linen thread, and Flemish bobbin lace quickly rose to prominence in the early seventeenth century. The bobbin lace technique requires exceptionally skillful manipulation of small shuttles that can number in the hundreds, each wound with a separate thread. The lace-maker follows the contours of a design that has been drawn out on a piece of parchment fixed to a pillow or cushioned support and delineated with metal pins; working from side to side on a small section at a time, she interlaces the multiple threads around the pins to create a highly complex pattern.

In its composition and motifs, this superb Brussels bobbin lace flounce relates to Bizarre silks of the first decade of the eighteenth century. The flamboyance and overall impression of movement created by the swirling forms of swooping and upright peacocks, fantastical birds with leafy tails, large curving foliage with serrated edges, scrolling bands, and spiky pomegranates bear a strong similarity to the exotic, Chinoiserie-inspired silk designs of slightly earlier date. Enhancing the undulating appearance of the lace is the gently scalloped hemline established by the outer edges of floral and foliate forms. The density of the pattern resulting from the close proximity of the motifs and the rich mesh ground are typical of early eighteenth-century Flemish laces and convey a soft, almost cloth-like quality. During this period, Flemish laces developed technical differences that were associated with the cities in which they originated, and Brussels became the most successful of eighteenth-century laces.

It is difficult to determine the original usage of this flounce, whether for dress or for furnishing. A portrait of Cardinal Jean de Rochechouart, ca. 1762, by the Italian artist Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787) depicts the cleric in an alb with a deep border and cuffs of Flemish bobbin lace dating to the 1720s. The flounce may also have trimmed a coverlet or a woman's dressing table. As the key piece of furniture in the highly codified ritual of beautification, the *toilette* was often embellished with sumptuous lace—a perfect complement to the elegant rouge and powder boxes and other containers of cosmetics displayed on its surface.

This lace is illustrated in Margaret Simeon, *The History of Lace* (1979), pl. 63, and in Santina Levey, *Lace: A History* (1983), fig. 319.

25" H x 128" W (detail shown)

WOMEN’S EMBROIDERED SILK SHOES

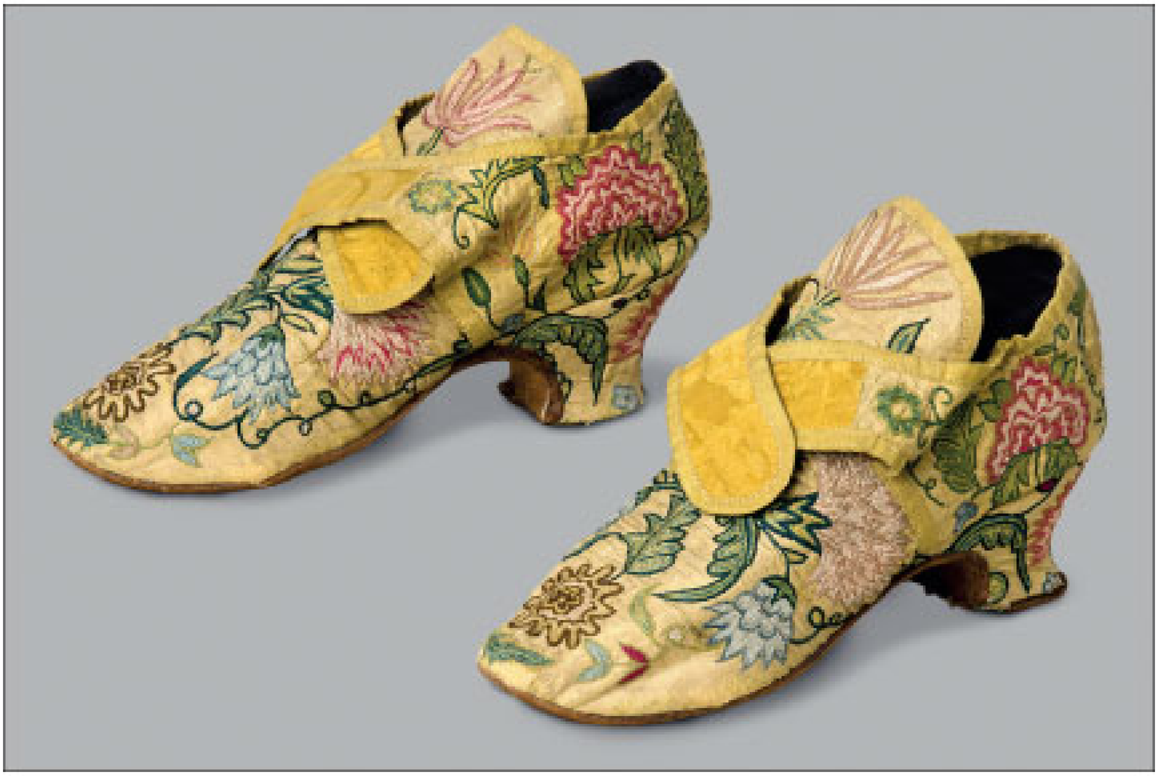
English, ca. 1740s–50s

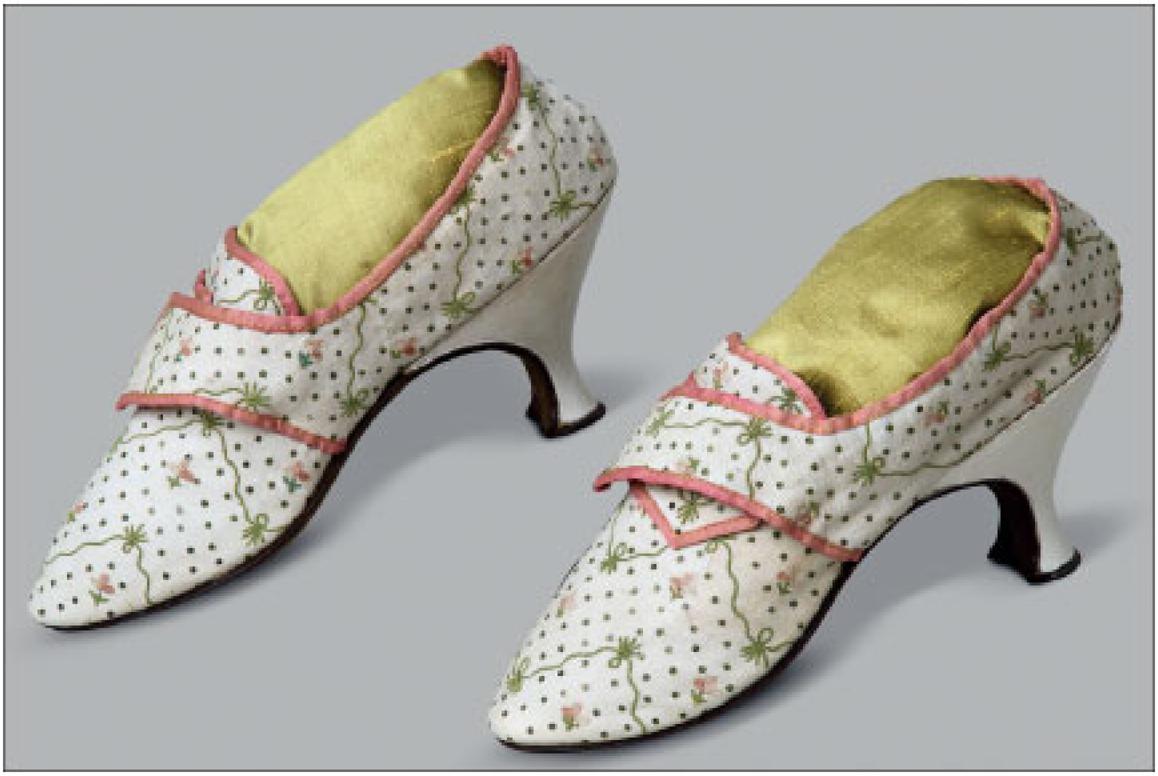
WOMEN’S EMBROIDERED COTTON SHOES

French, ca. 1780s

These two pairs of women’s embroidered shoes illustrate the aesthetics and material options in play in the mid- and late-eighteenth century. The first pair, made of golden yellow silk, reflects a quintessentially English sensibility in terms of basic shape and decoration. In contrast to the French predilection for the elevated, curvaceous heel popularized by Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV, in the mid-1740s, these more sturdy shoes display the English heel style, which was lower, thicker, and more sensible—described in the London Chronicle in 1762 as “broad as a tea-cup’s brim.” The rounded, slightly upturned toes seen here are also more likely to be found on English shoes at this time. Further characteristic of English taste is the exuberant, floral polychrome silk chain stitch embroidery: green foliage, blue cornflowers, pink carnations, fawn-colored rosettes, and mauve tulips adorn the vamps and tongues, while the quarters display large pink and red ruffled flowers, small yellow tulips, tiny blue buds, and lush, serrated leaves. Each heel is worked with a large, centrally placed carnation. Only the latchets—the extended tabs which cross over the vamp and were secured with buckles—are not embroidered; instead, they are a more substantial damask which would have withstood the repeated piercing of metal prongs. In terms of color scheme, scale of motifs, and their arrangement, the needlework is comparable to silk brocades woven in Spitalfields, London, in the mid-eighteenth century when designs of this type were at the height of fashion.

The second pair of shoes, of French origin, shares some construction features in common with the English shoes. Each pair has straight seams where the latchets join the quarters, and both are also made using the same last for left and right. However, the French shoes have much more truncated tongues with sloping curves, and the latchets are set lower on the vamp, a trend that flowered in the 1770s in order to make sparkling buckles more visible underneath the petticoat hem. The major differences illustrated by this immaculate pair lie in the heel type and the use of cotton fabric. The narrow, low-waisted heel has a distinctively slim profile; dubbed the “Italian” heel in the 1770s, a partial wedge spans the arch of the foot, supporting it in a stylish but practical way. Heels such as these were usually leather, often white in color and sometimes reinforced with a metal rod—the very same construction method that would be revived as the stiletto in the 1950s. Setting these shoes apart from most created in the eighteenth century is the use of soft white cotton twill. Cotton fabrics—the finest imported from India—were highly sought after by the *bon ton* and were gradually displacing silks in fashionable attire by the 1780s. Marie Antoinette’s adoption of the so-called *chemise à la reine* played the most visible role in elevating the sartorial status of cottons, and she was vilified for her injurious impact on the Lyonnais silk industry. A prized commodity, the pristine twill used here is embroidered with tambour silk chain stitch, another direct Indian influence. Dainty trefoil buds—each petal a subtly different shade of pink—are placed between the peaks and valleys of gently undulating sage green zigzags accented with loops and trompe l’oeil fringe. Glittering miniature paillettes are attached with green thread in an evenly spaced arrangement, and pink silk faille bindings offset the otherwise pale shoes. Of elegant shape and in a palette that reflects the burgeoning vogue for neoclassical modes, these shoes would have accentuated the shapeliness of feminine ankles and complemented the shorter hemlines of the period. These shoes are illustrated in Musée Galliera, *Le Coton et la Mode: 1,000 ans d’aventures* (2000), cat. #107, p.145.





WOOL EMBROIDERED WALLET INSCRIBED FOR DAVID STEPHEN

American, 1768

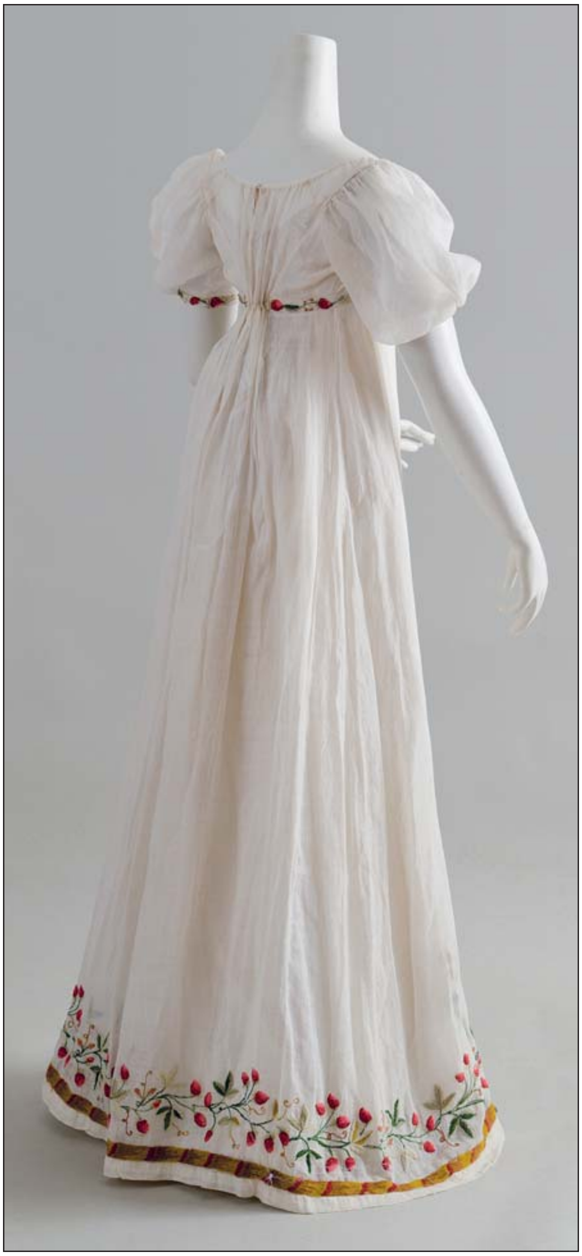
Quotidian dress for colonial American men included an array of accessories—shoes, gloves, handkerchiefs, and hats all contributed to fashionable attire. Included in these personal items might also be a utilitarian yet decorative object such as this bold, colorfully patterned crewelwork wallet, also called a pocketbook. Inside the wallet are the owner's name, David Stephen, and the date the piece was worked inscribed across the top border of the lower pouch. Embroidered with fondness by a woman in David Stephen's life, the inscription serves as a monogrammed tribute to its owner.

Using crewel yarns on a canvas ground, the embroiderer worked her bright palette of wool threads in Irish stitch to create the wallet's graphic design of inverted and interlacing chevrons. Black outlines define the diamond shapes with their gradations of golden ochre, pink, blue-green, and purple hues. The wallet is lined with olive green and indigo wools and has divided pouches for holding money and important papers; its edges are bound with red wool twill. Irish stitch, later known as flame stitch, was popularly used for patterns on wallets, as well as on cushions, chair seats, and a variety of furniture. Able to withstand much wear-and-tear, the durability of crewelwork—for upholstery and other often-used items, such as slippers and wallets—was well-suited to decorate a personalized object that would have been carried and used, as well as cherished.

With its dazzling appearance and ultimately practical form, this wallet is a fitting example of the attractive type of personal item that defined eighteenth-century masculine style. A comparable wallet—a "double pocketbook"—also inscribed and dated, is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston collection (53.2287).

4" H x 7.5" W

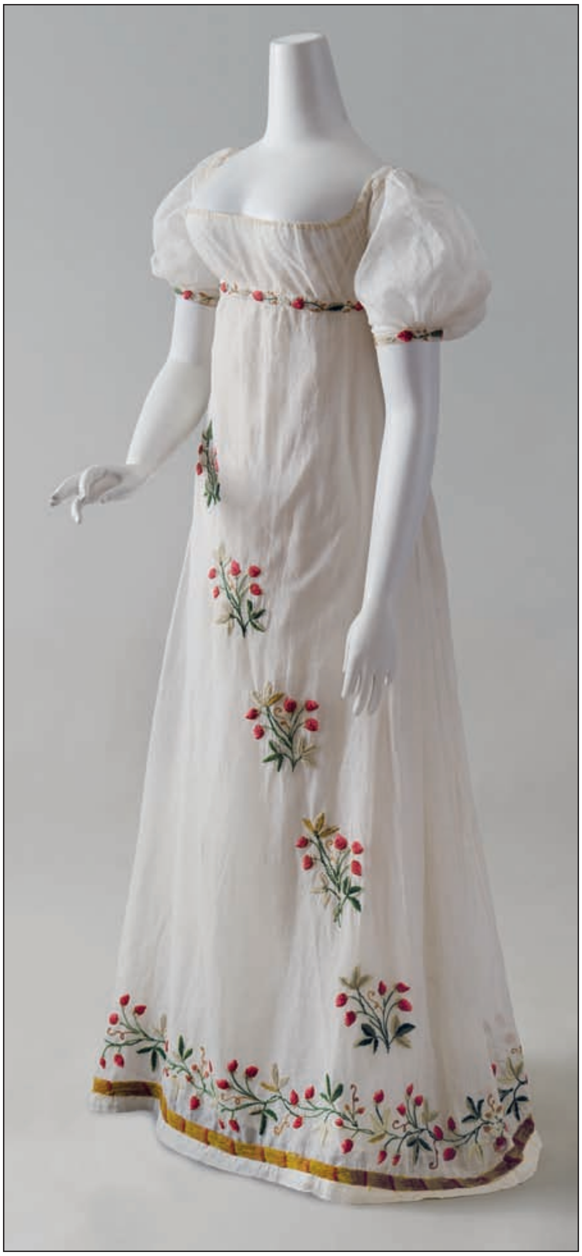
David
1768



CREWEL EMBROIDERED DRESS
French, ca. 1805

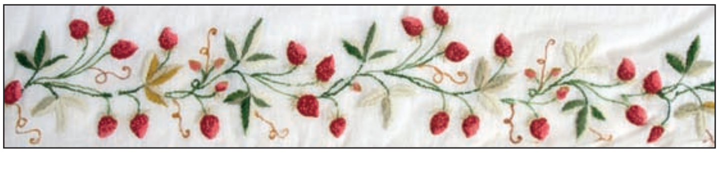
At the turn of the nineteenth century, delicate white mull gowns were *de rigueur* for fashionable women throughout Europe. In the *Journal des Dames et des Modes*, the leading French fashion periodical of the time, hand-colored plates and descriptive columns informing readers of the newest styles frequently featured neoclassical-inspired attire often embellished with all-white or polychrome embroidery in silk, cotton, or wool.

The shape and construction of this semi-formal dress, the use of polychrome embroidery and its asymmetrical placement across the front of the skirt and around the hem, as well as the scale and type of motifs, suggest a date of 1805. By 1804, the white cotton chemise gown that gained popularity in the last decades of the eighteenth century had developed a wide, square neckline, short puffed sleeves, a high waist, back closure, and minimally gored skirt. In 1805, the *Journal des Dames* published several plates illustrating white mull dresses with multicolored embroidery disposed both vertically and diagonally on the skirt front. An example of the latter, with large floral motifs that also ornament the hem, is described as *broderie transversale*; another gown displays purple and green grape clusters around the hem and on the sleeve bands. Here, bold, slightly raised strawberry sprays of graduated size—worked in vivid crewel threads in satin and split stitches, French knots, and couching—decorate the front of the dress, and a continuous strawberry trail circles the hem above a mustard-and-red band. Coordinating, smaller trails appear on the waistband and sleeve bands. The subtle shaping of the skirt, created by two narrow side gores, is particularly evident from the back where the fullness of the fabric is gathered into the waist.



This gown is believed to have belonged to the Comtesse de Pontèves-Bargème, née Marie Antoinette de Paul (1787–1854) who married Louis Balthasar Alexandre, Comte de Pontèves-Bargème (1781–1868) on April 16, 1804. One of the oldest noble families of Provence, the Pontèves-Bargème resided in the Château d'Ansouis from the twelfth century onward. The Comtesse was clearly aware of the latest trends in Paris; her elegant, au courant gown reflects the height of fashion in the French capital at the beginning of the First Empire.

The dress is illustrated in a catalogue published in conjunction with an exhibition, *Costumes de Château: Le vêtement d'apparat et le vêtement domestique en Provence du XVIIIe au XXe siècle* that was held at the Château d'Ansouis in 2007. A very similar gown of white cotton with diagonally disposed floral-and-foliate motifs embroidered in polychrome wool satin stitch, dated 1805–10, is in the collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Inv. 997.22.1).



COMMEMORATIVE PRINTED COTTON HANDKERCHIEF

British, ca. 1820–25

Cloth sometimes serves as a medium for the dissemination of information and ideas. Over the past three centuries in Europe, printing on cotton has allowed for an inexpensive and accessible way to commemorate newsworthy battles and events, political campaigns, and venerable historical figures. While sometimes printed as yardage, commemorative designs more often took the form of kerchiefs. Made inexpensively as novelty items, these "broadsides" were accessories that could easily telegraph the topical affiliations and allegiances of the cloth's owner.

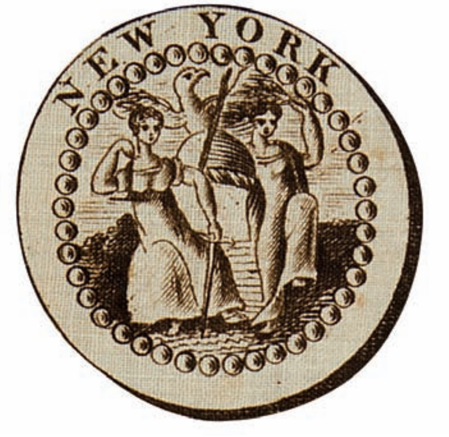
Early nineteenth-century commemorative handkerchiefs often depict themes from American history including the founding fathers and documents relating to important moments in the formation of the country. The Declaration of Independence of 1776—the young Republic's most significant document—was readily printed on cloth, in various colors and compositions, by manufacturers in both the United States and Britain. While the document declares independence from Great Britain, manufacturers there forsook patriotism to produce textiles for the American market that proclaimed America's new status as a country.

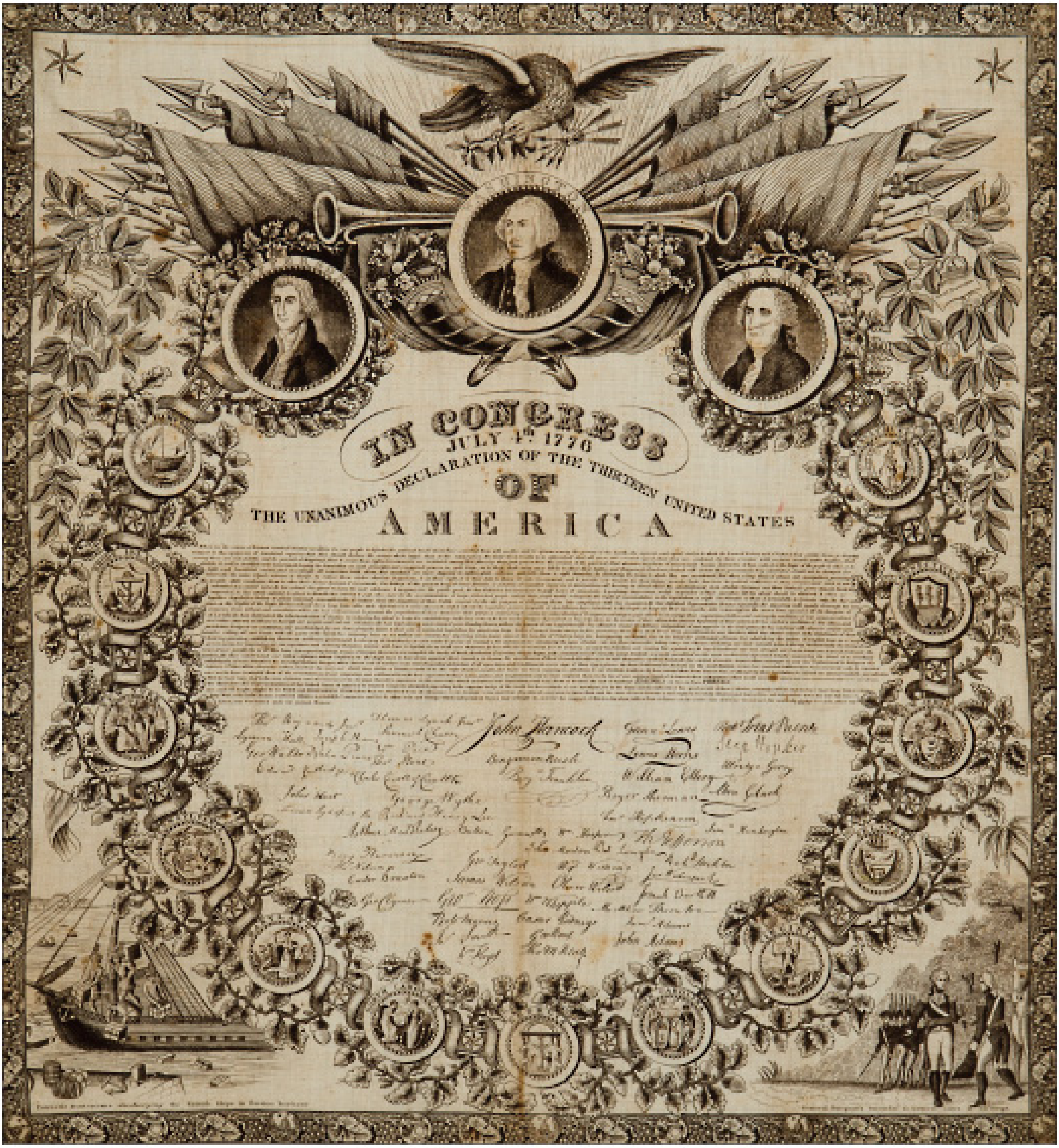
In this copperplate-printed example, a facsimile of the Declaration of Independence, replete with famous signatures, is reproduced in a circular cartouche formed at the top by portrait medallions of George Washington (1732–1799) flanked by Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) and John Adams (1735–1826) and the seals of the thirteen original colonies entwined with oak leaves and acorns. The kerchief's lower left depicts a vignette of "Patriotic Bostonians discharging the Brittish [sic] ships in Boston harbour" and the lower right presents "General Burgoyn's [sic] Surrender to General Gates at Saratoga." A narrow band decorated with stylized leaves, grape clusters, and small roundels borders the majestic wreath which is topped with trumpets, furled flags, and the quintessential symbol of national pride—the American eagle.

Though it may seem an antiquated notion, the popular appeal of the Declaration of Independence's text for use in textiles continues into the twenty-first century: in 2004, fashion designer Stephen Sprouse created a fabric for Knoll Textiles called *Graffiti Camo* that splashes words from the Declaration over a camouflage ground.

An identical handkerchief is illustrated in Herbert Ridgeway Collins, *Threads of History: Americana Recorded on Cloth 1775 to the Present* (1979), fig. 58, p. 72. Examples of this kerchief are in the New York Historical Society (1942.534) and the Winterthur Museum. (1959.960)

31.25" H x 28" W





IN CONGRESS
JULY 4th 1776

THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

QUILT-TOP WALL HANGING
DATED AND INSCRIBED FOR ROBERT STREETEN
American (probably New York), ca. 1803–1820s

A striking artwork that melds household industry with a creative impulse of the highest order, this hexagon mosaic quilt-top—once used as a wall hanging, as evidenced by the attachment of linen tabs on the upper edge—displays extreme clarity in composition in addition to the wealth of cottons used in its impeccable construction. The anonymous maker of this quilt-top, probably related to the dedicatee named in the top and bottom borders, crafted an impressive graphic statement that attests to accomplished design skills as well as high socio-economic status.

In the late eighteenth century, printed cottons proliferated. With a rapid succession of technological innovations, the English cotton industry became the most successful in the world; the beauty and endless array of patterns from their mills stimulated constant demand, especially in America, which was England's premier export market. Among commercial records kept in London, those for printed cotton goods document that the total exportation climbed from over ninety thousand yards in 1765 to the astronomical figure of three million yards by 1800. Thus, while it is not entirely surprising to see such a vast number of patterned cottons in this quilt-top, the sheer quantity is nonetheless an indicator of the family's affluence. Given the considerable influx of fabric, patchwork increased in popularity. Examples dating to the early nineteenth century are characterized by a veritable sample-book range of patterns and overall geometric compositions. Here, small-scale designs including stripes, lattices, polka dots, floral buds, sprigs, vermicular lines, and startlingly modern-looking abstract graphics, span from the end of the eighteenth century to the late-1820s—a clear indication that work begun in 1803 took decades to finish.

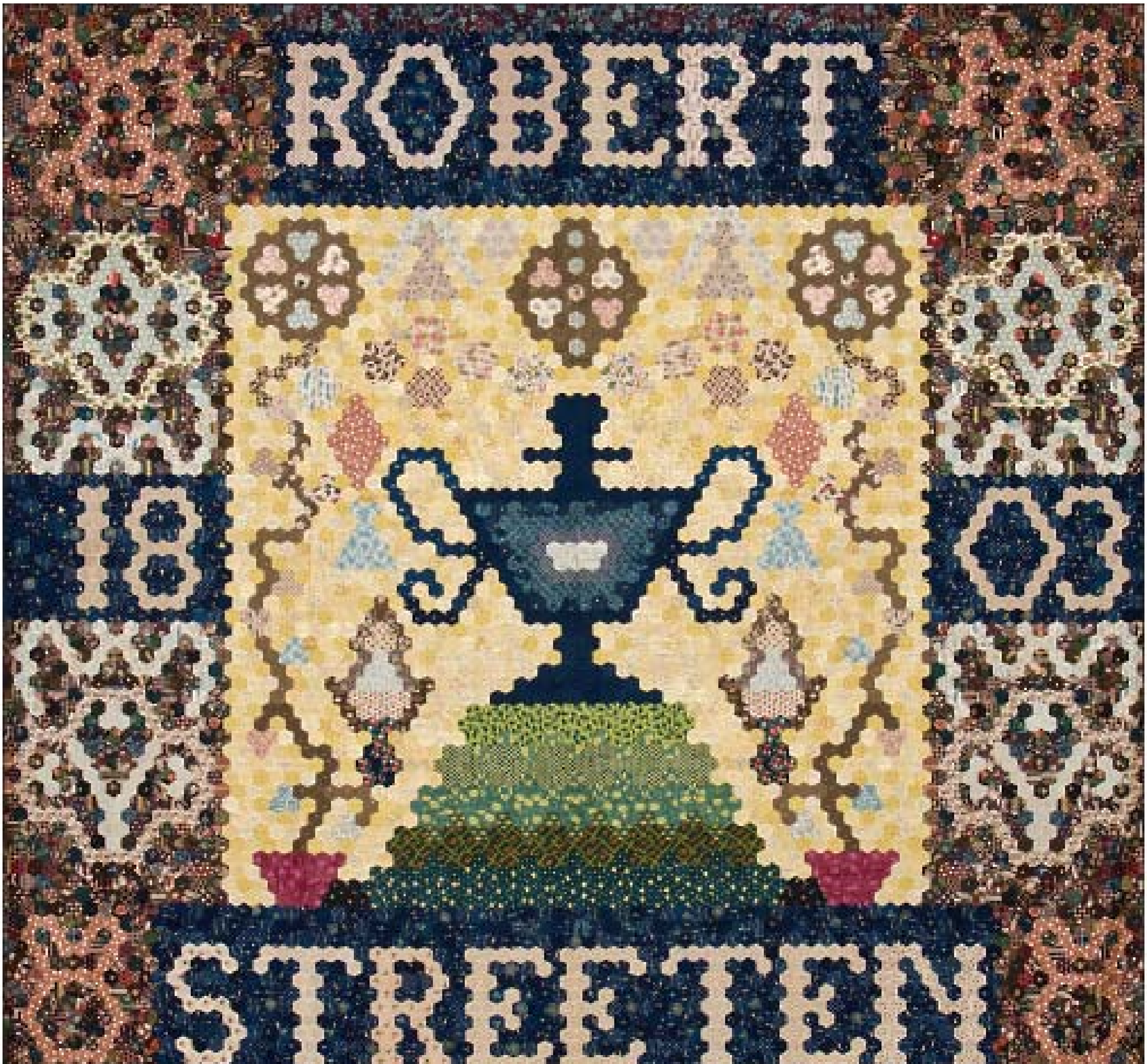
Most nineteenth-century quilters chose the "one-patch" approach in which thousands of pieces of uniform size and shape are sewn into a single sheet. A precise, cumulative set of procedures must be followed to piece enormous one-patch panels such as this example. In January, 1835, *Godey's Lady's Book* explained the laborious steps necessary for tidy completion of a "honey-comb" patchwork:

> To make it properly you must first cut out a piece of pasteboard of the size you intend to make the patches….Then lay this model on your calico and cut your patches of the same shape, allowing them a little larger all around for turning in at the edges. Get some stiff papers…and cut them also into hexagons precisely the size of the pasteboard model. Baste or tack a patch upon every paper, turning down the edges of the calico over the wrong side. Sew together neatly over the edge, six of these patches, so as to form a ring. Then sew together six more…and so on until you have enough….the papers must be left in, to keep the patches in shape till the whole is completed.

There is no margin for error in mosaic piecework: if measuring, cutting, hemming, or sewing is off by a fraction, the pieces will not fit together. Complicating matters, at least two sides of a hexagon will be cut on the bias instead of across the straight grain—this may stretch the fabric out of perfect shape, disastrously throwing off measurements. The creator of this piece clearly displayed her mastery of technique: joined together with approximately seventeen stitches on each facet, the hexagons are uniformly 1.125 inches across, and each side is .625 inches long. Equally astonishing is her sophisticated use of materials within a painstakingly plotted layout. The focal point is a large, double-handled urn resting atop a striated green knoll flanked by vases with climbing floral vines. Carefully sorted into color families—madder reds, pinks, rusts, browns, and aubergines; deep and pale indigo blues; delicate yet still-vibrant yellows; and saturated grass- and teal-greens (which did not appear in the marketplace until 1809)—the patches were assembled in a painterly manner, ingeniously matched in symmetrical placement across the central axis of the composition. Many hexagons still retain the sheen of their original glazed surfaces.

The prominent inscription is rendered in sprigged and pin-dotted white against dark indigo discharge prints which blend together to give the impression of a starry night sky. The date—split between the two sides—corresponds to the birthday of Robert Stratton (1803–1874). Consistency in spelling surnames at this time was not always requisite, and this particular surname appears variably as Straeten and Stratten within records of this genealogical line. It is therefore quite probable that a relative chose "Streeten" when commemorating young Robert's birth. A descendant of the colonial Caleb Stratton family of Boston, Massachusetts, Robert Stratton was born in New York City. The financial partner of a large iron foundry and shops that built steam engines and other machinery, he was a birthright Quaker and married into the respected Macy family of Nantucket. The provenance of this phenomenal quilt-top hanging—a labor of love and intensive effort—suggests that one of Robert Stratton's kin was its guardian until it was discovered in a house in Cazenovia, New York, in the late twentieth century.

80″ H x 80″ W


ROBERT
18
03
STREETEN

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

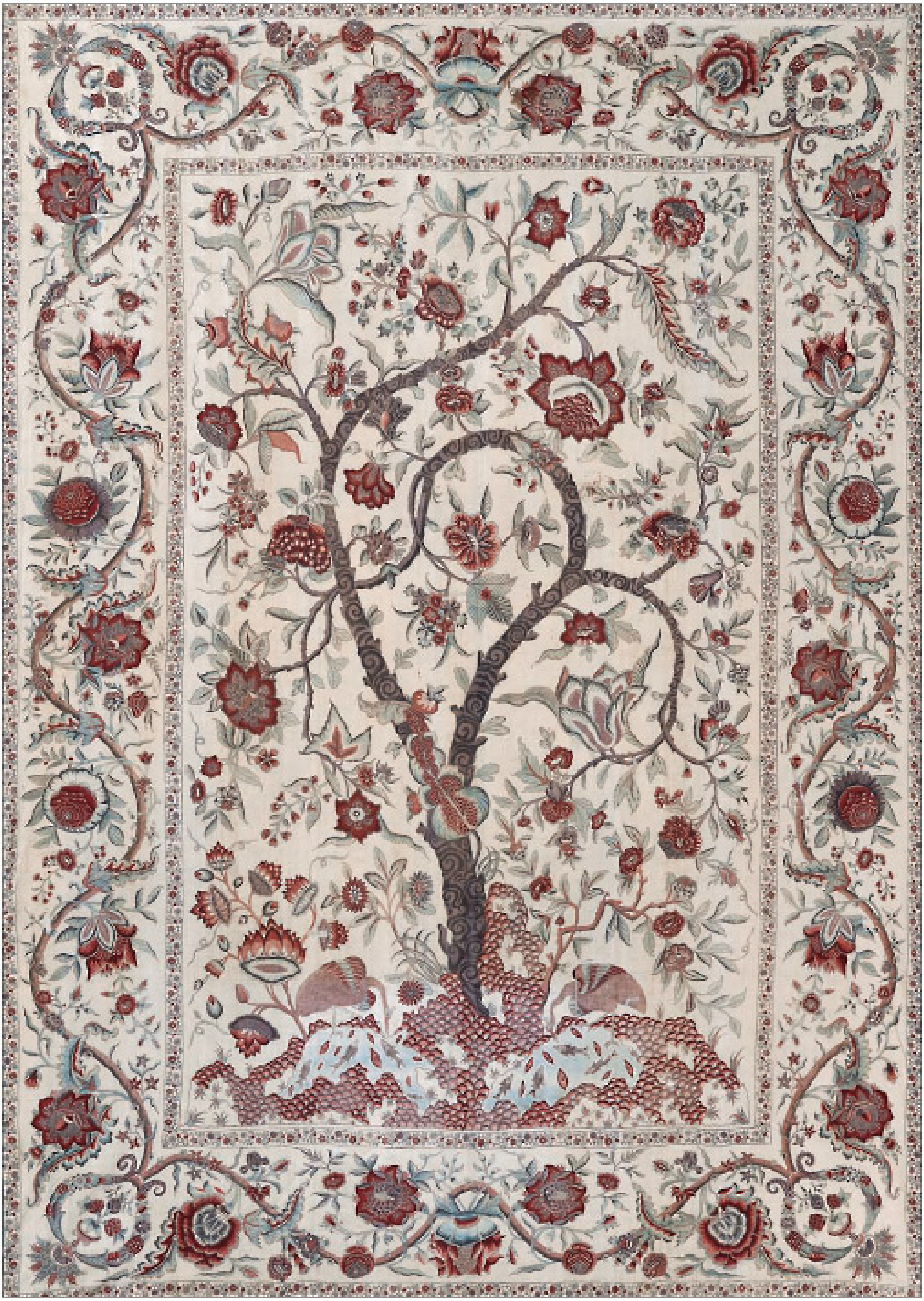
Cora Ginsburg LLC has been privileged to handle many palampores since it was officially founded in 1971. These large-scale furnishing textiles—primarily made as coverlets *en suite* with additional bed hangings or curtains—are often so unique in pattern that reoccurrence of any specific design is extremely unlikely. Variations on standard motifs, such as the elaborate Tree of Life that is the central subject of the palampore seen here, are abundant, but replications are seldom found within this genre. Remarkably, this example affords textile scholars the rare opportunity to consider it in comparison to a nearly identical palampore—though with fascinating, significant differences—that was sold by the gallery in 2008.

Now in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford University, England (EA 2008.57), the first palampore of this design was illustrated in the *Cora Ginsburg LLC Winter 2007 Catalogue*, p. 25. Its twisting, distinctively textured tree in full florescence was repeated faithfully on this palampore. However, there is a key difference: the tree is reversed along the vertical axis, creating a mirror image when both examples are viewed side-by-side. The task of precisely duplicating a pattern was possible as stenciling techniques were sometimes employed by the draftsmen involved. As described by M. de Beaulieu, a French naval officer writing from Pondicherry (on the Coromandel Coast) in his ca. 1734 account of Indian cotton-painting methods, the worker would prepare the fabric by soaking it in an aqueous solution of fat and astringent (usually buffalo milk and *myrobalan* plum extract). It was then followed by "beetling," a form of calendering which smoothed the surface by beating the cloth between two pieces of wood. After this treatment, Beaulieu notes that "he spread it on a table and pounced the design with crushed charcoal." Pouncing, a familiar practice in European decorative arts, involves tracing a pattern on paper and punching closely-spaced perforations along the motifs' contours; "pounce," a dark powder of pulverized graphite or charcoal, was dusted over the paper and pressed through to the underlying surface, thus transferring the design. This method—as opposed to free-hand drawing of a memorized design, or the free-hand copying of a "muster" which served as a reference for the artist—could allow for multiples of any particular design. If the perforated design was turned over, and pounced from the verso, perfectly flipped outlines would result. Undoubtedly, these two related palampores were created from the same pounced template, only with the design orientation inverted.

Aside from this major distinction, smaller deviations are also discernable. In general, only the outlines of the tree, the lush flowers and the landscape are identical; the rendering and details of the motifs are dissimilar enough to suggest the work of different artisans, or perhaps indicate a difference in the intended market for the finished product. With the exception of the paired cranes and their quarry of small fish in placid blue ponds in the rocky mounds, the small but exuberant animal motifs worked into the composition on the Ashmolean palampore are absent here. Though less detailed than the Ashmolean's, this fine example is complete, with a bold, meandering floral vine border between two narrow guard borders with dainty floral tendrils. The Ashmolean palampore is missing all borders—it is intriguing to speculate whether these two palampores would have been finished in the same manner, or whether the incomplete example would have had borders of a different design.

A parallel comparison can be made with palampores found in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (IS35-1950), and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (934.4.14). Illustrated in John Irwin and Katherine B. Brett's seminal study *Origins of Chintz* (1970), Plates 14 & 15 (catalogued on pp. 72–73), respectively, the trees on these two examples are generally the same, only in reverse. The authors also cite the main differences as stylistic in terms of draftsmanship and the use of decorative filling patterns.

89" H x 50.75" W



COTTON BATIK *PRADA* SARONG
Indonesian (Semarang), ca. 1850

The term batik refers to both a resist-dye technique that was introduced to Indonesia from India as early as the tenth century, when finely woven cotton fabrics were imported to the region, as well as to the product itself. Before the designs are drawn or stamped with wax, the fabric is prepared in several steps. First, the cloth is thoroughly rinsed and soaked in vegetable oil to make it more receptive to dyes. Then it is starched to prevent the wax from permeating the material too deeply, and finally, it is smoothed by repeated pounding with a wooden mallet. The designs are applied on both the front and back either with a copper stamp (*cap*) or by freehand drawing with a *canting*, a Javanese-invented tool comprising of a metal reservoir and a handle of wood, reed, or bamboo. In general, women create batik *tulis* (hand drawn), while men produce batik *cap*. The colors seen in batiks derive from tropical plants, including indigo (which produces a deep blue) and *morinda* (the bark of which produces a brownish-purple or red).

Measuring two *kacu* (an irregular measurement based on the width of the cloth), the batik sarong was the most popular garment for both men and women in nineteenth-century Indonesia. The shorter ends of the rectangle were stitched together, forming a tube, which was folded and secured around the waist. The most typical batik design found on sarongs is composed of a decorated main field (*badan*) and a wide border called a *kepala*; the most common form of the latter is a *tumpal*. The *tumpal*, comprising two interfacing rows of isosceles triangles flanked on either side by thin rectangular borders, is believed to have talismanic properties and is particular to Javanese batiks. Additionally, the placement of the *kepala* on the wearer's body denoted social rank; young women and those of lower class wore it in the back, while displaying the *kepala* in the front was designated to more formal dress. For special occasions, such as when made for wedding ceremonies, artisans applied gold leaf to the batik using a glue made from egg whites, linseed oil, and yellow earth—this elaborate technique is called *prada* and was reserved for the elite as the materials were costly. Often, the gold leaf was placed only in the areas visible when folded according to tradition, as seen here, preserving the surface treatment from unnecessary flaking or cracking while minimizing waste of precious gold.

This exquisite example of batik *prada* was produced in Semarang, a major port city located on the northern coast of Java; one of the first three commercial centers of batik, its proximity to affluent Indonesian, Dutch, and Asian consumers was advantageous. Batik produced in coastline towns and cities (categorized as *pasisir*) reflect greater foreign influence than those created in central Java. Their designs held less symbolic value as the makers were not bound by the same sumptuary decrees issued by courts in central Java that dictated styles and forbade commoners from wearing specific patterns. Due to the absence of strict laws in the coastal regions of Java, *pasisir* batik designers were able to use combinations of traditional and foreign motifs that they deemed aesthetically pleasing. *Pasisir* batiks of this Indo-European mixture were primarily dyed in shades of blue and red, and the compositions feature many floral and foliate images similar to those found on Western textiles. Here, the *tumpal* includes stars, blossoms, small animal motifs, and alternating indigo and tawny triangles creating burgundy rhombuses. The *badan* presents an intricate medley of birds and deer amongst foliage and flowers set against a golden-brown ground. Gold leaf delineates and enhances details within the field.

During the nineteenth century numerous batik producers had workshops in Java, many of whom were Dutch women. Although little is known about these women, Carolina von Franquemont is one batik artist who has been identified with a specific body of work. Born in Jakarta to Indo-European parents, von Franquemont had a workshop in Semarang; her sarong designs display considerable European influence, through the intermediary of Indian Export chintzes. Von Franquemont's preferred palette mimicked the reds and blues characteristic of cloth imported to the Netherlands from India, and some of her patterns were in fact borrowed from samples in a Dutch woman's personal journal. This sarong may be attributed to Von Franquemont, as the three-dimensional stylization of the leaves and diverse positioning of animals are decidedly European. Her work is characterized by the impressive quality of the drawing, the details, and the scope of colors—all evident in this piece. A similar sarong, also from the Blok collection, is now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.91.184.330) and illustrated in Rens Heringa and Harmen C. Veldhuisen, *Fabric of Enchantment: Batik from the North Coast of Java* (1996), cat. no. 17, p. 111.

Provenance: Blok Collection, Lisbet Holmes, Henry Ginsburg

42.5″ H x 78.5″ W

MELDODIE
SCREEN-PRINTED LINEN BY STIG LINDBERG
Swedish, 1947

Industrial design in postwar Sweden experienced a surge of creativity that stemmed from a renewed interest in traditional crafts and the commitment on the part of artists and designers to produce attractive, good quality, and affordable objects for the home. Stig Lindberg (1916–1982)—a particularly versatile and prolific artist, designer, and illustrator—enjoyed a long career working in ceramics, glass, and textiles. Although he began as a fine artist, he quickly turned to what he later described as "the art [that] is integral to everyday living." As a young man, Lindberg studied painting at the University College of Arts, Crafts, and Design in Stockholm, and in 1937 he joined the renowned Gustavsberg porcelain factory, then under the directorship of Wilhelm Kåge. Lindberg took over from Kåge in 1949, serving as artistic leader until 1957 and then again from 1972 to 1978.

In 1947, the innovative and enormously influential textile designer Astrid Sampe (1900–2002), commissioned Lindberg to produce fabric patterns for the textile studio that she headed which was part of the premier Stockholm department store, Nordiska Kompaniet. His first textiles were introduced to the public that same year in an exhibition designed by Lindberg that displayed the fabrics on larger-than-life-size ceramic dolls. Over the next several years, Lindberg created about thirty highly original designs for the firm that were printed by Ljungbergs Textiltryck, a company that excelled in the translation of designs to the screens necessary for production.

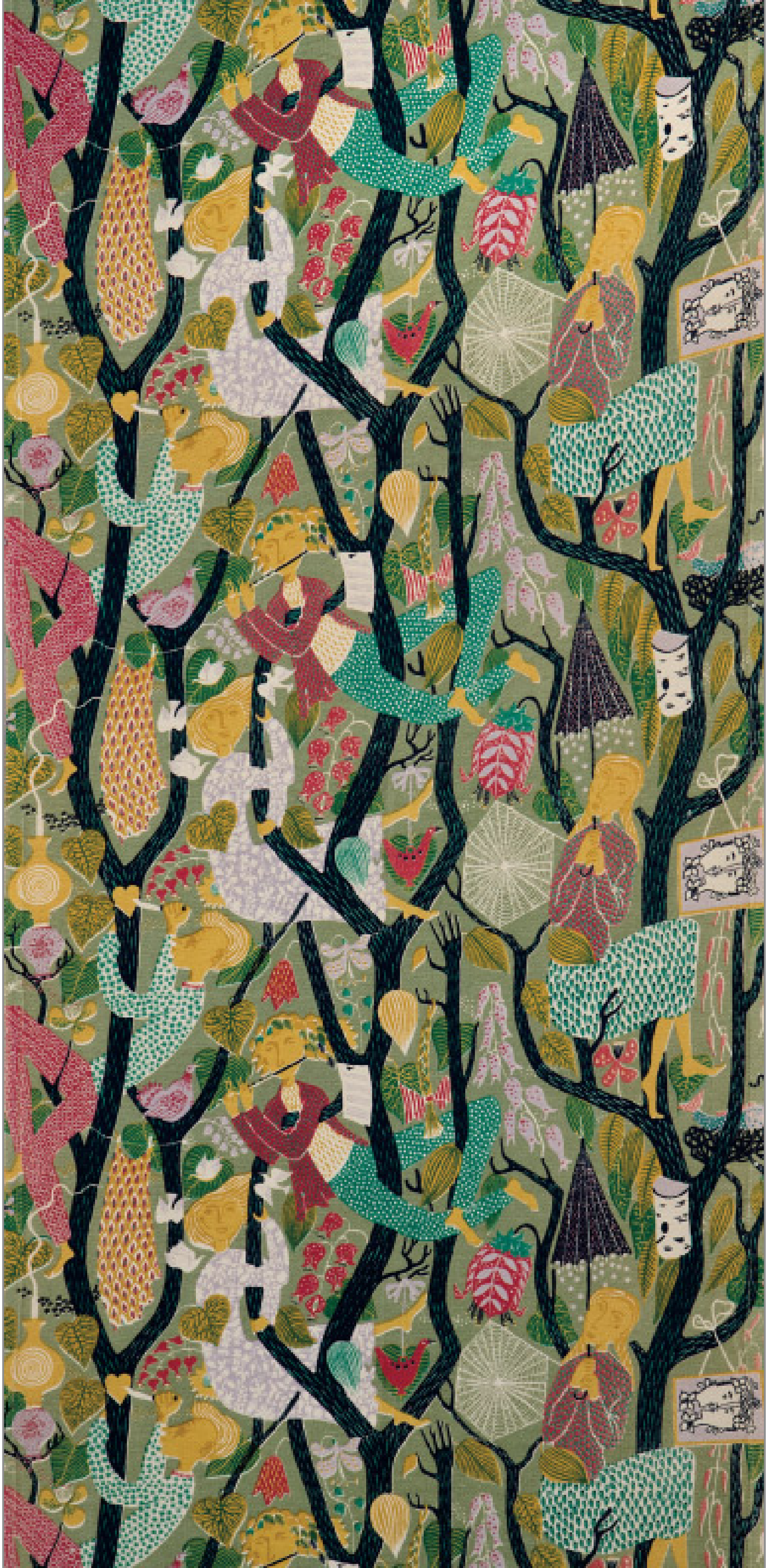
Dating to 1947, *Melodie* embodies many elements characteristic of Lindberg's early textiles: a whimsical playfulness, a subject matter that conveys a fairytale-like story, a strong sense of color, and an elegantly rhythmic composition that relates to the organic shapes and decoration of his ceramics. Against a muted green ground, barefoot young men and women dressed in brightly colored garments with dense patterning entwine their lithe, attenuated forms around three trees with green-flecked black bark and sinuous branches that are also inhabited by birds, spiderwebs, fruits, flowers, fish, and decorative objects suspended from ribbon bowknots. Amid this natural abundance, one young man crowned with a wreath of leaves plays a flute for his companions, while another carves a heart into a tree trunk. Nearby, a young woman holds a half-opened umbrella from which small white stars drift toward her upturned head. This charming fantasy environment draws the viewer into the composition, inviting the discovery of its disparate elements.

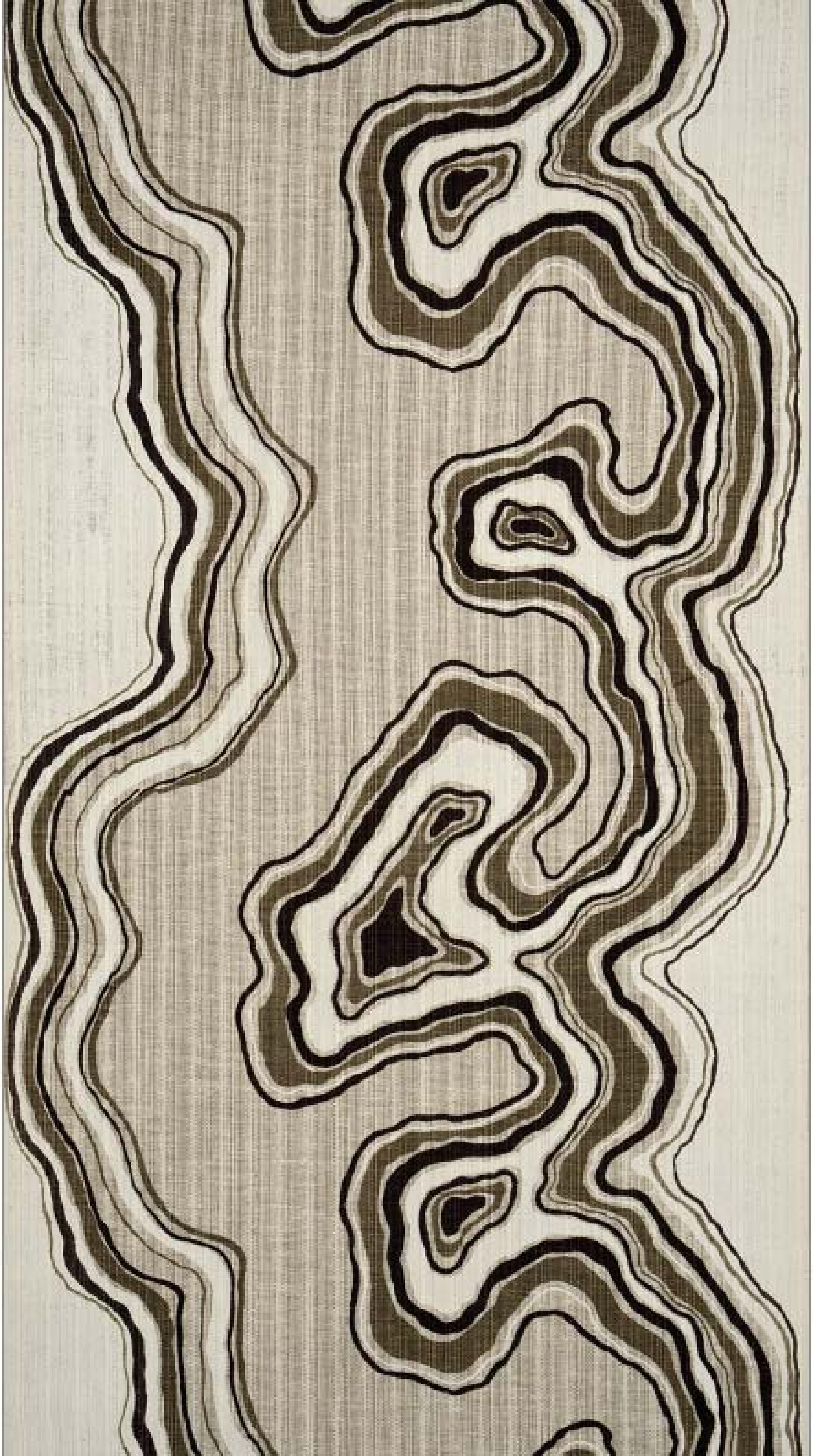
Lindberg's work in all media was well known outside Sweden during the period. In 1952, he was the subject of an article in *Everyday Art Quarterly*, No. 23, published by the Walter Art Center in Minneapolis, which illustrated the designer's dinnerware, stoneware, a book binding, and a printed linen. Another article in the same publication, also from 1952, presented a selection of Lindberg's textiles and ceramics that had recently been on view at the Center and referred to the "free, imaginative approach, which now dominates the field [of Swedish design]." A two-page spread in the Spring 1954 issue of *American Fabrics* featuring contemporary Swedish and British textiles included five Lindberg designs from Nordiska Kompaniet.

The spontaneous qualities, perpetual freshness, and wide range of Stig Lindberg's work have firmly secured his contribution to mid-century industrial design in Sweden; the distinctiveness of his work and its influence on international Modernism have also assured Lindberg a legacy of longstanding appeal.

Melodie is illustrated in Jan Brunius et al., *Svenska textilier, 1880-1990* (1994), p. 218.

123" H x 30" W





CHROMATIC CIRCLES
WOOL-PILE CARPET HANGING BY HERBERT BAYER
American, designed in 1967

A multifaceted designer who primarily considered himself a painter, Herbert Bayer (1900–1985) was a dedicated Bauhaus adherent in Germany before establishing himself in America. As an impressionable young student, Bayer was guided by the formidable Bauhaus faculty, including Walter Gropius (1883–1969) and Marcel Breuer (1902–1981); he became director of the typographic workshop at Dessau, and in 1928 left his master position to pursue his career in Berlin. In 1938, Bayer immigrated to the United States at the request of the Museum of Modern Art for the comprehensive task of curating and designing the first Bauhaus exhibition in America, held at the museum in New York. A true disciple of the Bauhaus doctrine of *gesamtkunstwerk*, Bayer embraced all media and strove to create integrated design systems, especially in his architectural and environmental works. Through the arc of his career, he oscillated between strictly geometric and freely expressive styles, paradoxically both embedded in nature and the cosmos—*Chromatic Circles*, seen here, is a brilliant example of his artistic philosophy in practice.

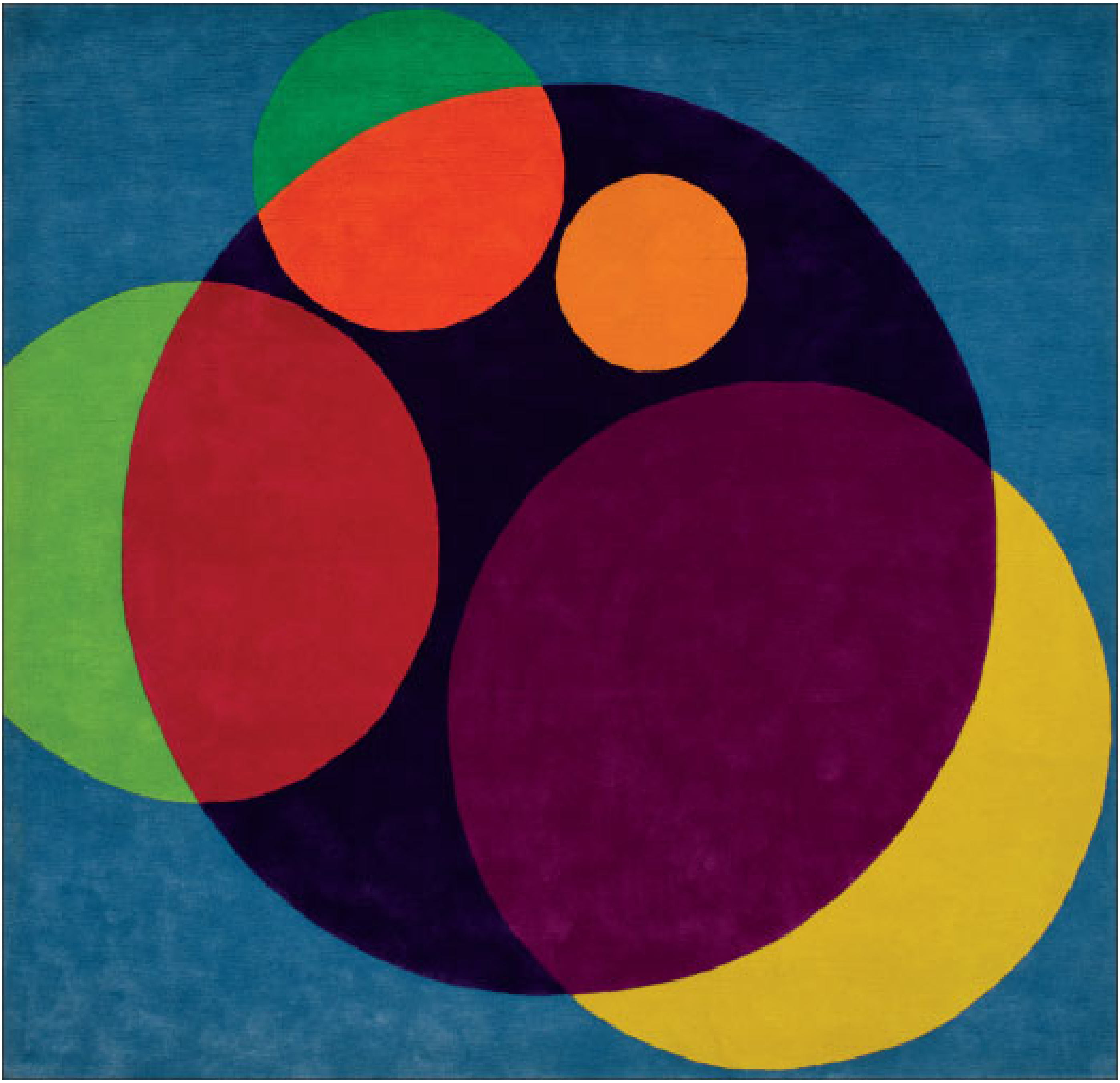
In contrast to his close association with the German Bauhaus, Bayer did not identify with any specific artistic circle in America. He spent less than a decade in New York before settling in Aspen, Colorado, in 1946, at the behest of the Container Corporation of America. Under the director’s auspices, Bayer created the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, a cultural retreat for business executives. It was in this creatively-charged arena of powerful businessmen that he met Robert O. Anderson (1917–2007), chairman of the Atlantic Richfield Company, a leader of the burgeoning energy industry. The two men formed a close bond, professionally and personally, and were jointly committed to creating a unified corporate identity for ARCO. Appointed as artistic guru in 1966, Bayer developed the trademark “ARCO Spark” logo simultaneously with logotype, letterhead, and other graphics; signage, advertising, packaging, and construction projects quickly followed. In addition to offices he designed in New York, Washington, Chicago, Philadelphia, Anchorage, Houston, and Dallas, Bayer oversaw the relocation of ARCO’s headquarters to downtown Los Angeles. On a spacious plaza of gleaming granite slabs, Bayer built twin fifty-two-story skyscrapers (one dedicated to another corporate entity, Bank of America); his sculptural installation, *Double Ascension*, still stands in a reflecting pool as the focal point of the plaza. He expanded ARCO’s visual image by personally selecting artworks and designing carpets and tapestries to complement his interior schemes.

Chromatic Circles is one of several wall hangings commissioned for the Los Angeles ARCO offices. Immediately apparent is the influence of his Bauhaus mentor Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944). Bayer was inspired by Kandinsky well before his Bauhaus days—his treatise *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911) informed Bayer’s ideas about color, in particular. Executed by the American carpet manufacturer V’Soske in nine vivid colors of tufted wool, *Chromatic Circles* is in keeping with Bayer’s post-1966 paintings, which abandoned a monochromatic palette in favor of investigations of color. Here, celestial spheres (reflecting Bayer’s fascination with mathematics and cosmic proportions) hover in a field of sky blue—a color so personal it is often called “Bayer blue” by scholars. At center is the largest orb of intense, deep violet, overlapped by four circles of different sizes and hues. An effect of color transparencies occurs when the orbiting spheres intersect with the purple: acid and emerald green convert to geranium pink and tangerine, respectively, and citron yellow shifts to magenta. Only the lone circle completely encompassed by the violet orb is entirely golden. These color interferences add the pulsating effect of simultaneously receding and surfacing forms; more subtle dimension is imparted by the chiseled contours of the violet sphere, which has a slightly higher pile than the others. Bayer’s own words, from a 1970 statement regarding his Chromatic paintings series, give the ultimate insight into this artwork:

> my particular color experiences of recent years go back to a visit to morocco [sic]…. its isolated accents of bright colors against the purifying background of white in the buildings and the peoples’ dress, the strong contrasts of sun and dark shadows… which opened again my eyes to the world of pure color….impressed by morocco’s [sic] carpet culture, I also have left aside the conventions of the pictorial in order to develop color concepts and to bring forward the self-expressive reality of pure color.

The Herbert Bayer Collection and Archive is part of the Denver Art Museum. Comparable carpets (probably also made for ARCO) in this archive include *Celestial Gate with Fading Square*, 1960s (1991.1266), *Prismatic Gate*, made by V’Soske in 1974 (1995.941), and *Color Progression in Squares*, 1979 (2002.63), a gift of ARCO Corporate Art Collection, Los Angeles.

9’ H x 8.5’ W



Published by

CORA GINSBURG LLC

RESEARCH AND TEXT
Donna Ghelerter
Michele Majer
Leigh Wishner
Liza Cowen

With special thanks to Elizabeth Lay, Milton Sonday, Mark Sorrell, and Jenny von Platen

PHOTOGRAPHY
Michael Fredericks

PRINTED BY
Pressroom Printer & Designer Ltd., Hong Kong

Text copyright: © Cora Ginsburg LLC 2011
Images copyright: © Cora Ginsburg LLC 2011

by appointment

19 East 74th Street
New York, NY 10021
www.coraginsburg.com

tel 212-744-1352
fax 212-879-1601
info@coraginsburg.com