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NEEDLEWORK SWEET BAG OR SACHET English, third quarter of the 17th century

For residents of seventeenth-century England, life was pungent. In order to combat the unpleasant odors emanating from open sewers, insufficiently bathed neighbors, and, from time to time, the bodies of plague victims, a variety of perfumed goods such as fans, handkerchiefs, gloves, and "sweet bags" were available for purchase. The tradition of offering embroidered sweet bags containing gifts of small scented objects, herbs, or money began in the mid-sixteenth century. Typically, they are about five inches square with a drawstring closure at the top and two to three covered drops at the bottom. Economical housewives could even create their own perfumed mixtures to put inside. A 1621 recipe "to make sweete bags with little cost" reads:

Take the buttons of Roses dried and watered with Rosewater three or foure times put them Muske powder of cloves Sinamon and a little mace mingle the roses and them together and putt them in little bags of Linnen with Powder.

The present object has recently been identified as a rare surviving example of a large-format sweet bag, sometimes referred to as a "sachet." Lined with blue silk taffeta, the verso of the central canvas section contains two flat slit pockets, opening on the long side, into which sprigs of herbs or sachets filled with perfumed powders could be slipped to scent a wardrobe or chest. Silk ribbons in periwinkle blue and salmon pink tie over these openings, securing the contents with parti-color bows. While most of the surviving objects called sweet bags are needlework on canvas, many references to silk taffeta and satin sweet bags in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century inventories seem to refer to another, larger type, perhaps in the same format as the present example. The 1578-79 inventory of gifts to the queen lists "a swete bag, beinge of changeable silke, with a smale bone lace of golde." The 1614 inventory of Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, includes, along with "small" sweet bags, "Two verie large sweet bagges embrodred with embosted worke of silver, gold, and coulored silkes, and filled up with ovals of divers personages."

Executed in fine silk tent stitch, this sweet bag teems with lush flora and fauna, evoking Eden and alluding to the scented herbs that were once housed inside. On the front, the three theological virtues of Faith (crushing a serpent representing the Devil), Charity (surrounded by children), and Hope (with an anchor), preside over a garden containing fruits and flowers such as a carnation, rose, lily, pansy, and grapes, while caterpillars, a moth and a butterfly flit between them. The caterpillar and moth may be ironic inclusions, as the bag could have contained bitter-smelling woods such as laurel, cedar, and cypress that were thought to defend against these fiber-eating insects. At the top, a yellow sun gleams between two stately homes with billowing chimneys and real mica windows while a spotted leopard and horned buck flank a grotto pool at the bottom. Gilt silver spangles adhered with small lengths of coiled purl cover the white ground, and the entire scene is surrounded by silver bobbin lace, making the panorama sparkle. Because of their association with the New Testament and, consequently, Catholicism, the iconography of the three virtues is extremely unusual in English domestic embroidery.

Over time, the identity of this form of sweet bag has been lost, perhaps due to the framing of these objects as pictures, or the damage and loss of their pockets and ribbons. The inclusion of spangles throughout the ground and border of metallic lace are conspicuous features of this type of sweet bag, and it is likely that a number of objects in museum collections have been misattributed, for example, two embroidered satin "cushion covers" in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (47.228 and 64.1581), both with salmon-pink taffeta pockets on their versos and ribbons ties. An embroidered picture in the Art Institute of Chicago depicting personifications of Peace, Justice, and Plenty is closest to this panel in terms of imagery, and was probably once part of a sweet bag such as this (1969.326). A satin panel depicting the return of Jephthah in the Lady Lever Art Gallery (LL5261), also contains spangles and metallic lace, and was probably once the front of a sweet bag. A similar panel depicting personifications of Touch and Smell (fitting allegories) on a satin ground is in the collection of Colonial Williamsburg (1962-110). The present sweet bag is the only known example in canvaswork rather than embroidery on silk.

Provenance: From a house in Suffolk, East Anglia, UK.

16" L x 12" W (not including ribbons)

WOMAN'S MODEL OR SAMPLE SHOE European, ca. 1700

Despite measuring just four inches long and under three inches high, this miniature shoe perfectly replicates a full-scale woman's pump from the turn of the eighteenth century. Although fully finished with a lining of white kid and linen, this shoe was probably never meant to be worn, even by a small child (children's shoes from this date typically had flat or very low heels and were less embellished). Instead, this shoe was likely designed by a master shoemaker as a sample for his journeymen to copy or to show clients.

With masterful precision, emerald green damask uppers, heavily embroidered to shape with gilt-silver-wrapped *filé*, *frisé*, and purl threads worked over pink vellum slips, are richly trimmed with a salmon-pink silk binding and silver bobbin lace. Short lappets extend from the quarters to tie under the turn-down tongue, a common feature in shoes from Continental Europe from the seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century. A white leather rand holds the upper, insole, and sole together, and is a further mark of high-quality shoemaking; inserting it in such a diminutive format was no easy task. The one-inch heel, of a distinctive trapezoidal shape at the sole, is covered with fawn wool baize, sewn to the rounded leather sole with contrasting white linen thread, as was demanded of master shoemakers throughout Europe. With its three-dimensional swirling floral embroidery, open sides, and pointed toe, which first appeared in the late seventeenth century and distinguished women's shoes from men's, the shoe can be dated to circa 1700.

In early modern Europe, shoemakers were part of tightly controlled guilds with strict quality control measures, whose origins stretched back, in some countries, to the Middle Ages. In Germany, the earliest guild was formed in 1158, while in England, the Worshipful Company of Cordwainers was founded in 1272 and the Parisian guild of *Frères Cordonniers* began in 1370. These guilds of shoemakers distinguished themselves from the lesser cobblers, who merely repaired shoes, by imposing tests of artisanal proficiency known as masterpieces. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, shoemakers in large cities tended to specialize in making either men's shoes, women's shoes, boots, or children's shoes. Otto Ludwig Hardwig's 1775 entry on shoemaking ("Der Schuster und Pantofelmacher") from P.N. Sprengel's treatise on German arts and crafts notes that after serving the requisite three or four years apprenticeship, "A young master makes for a masterpiece: one pair of cavalry boots, one pair of ordinary German shoes, grain boots of calfskin, one pair of men's of the same, one pair of women's shoes, and finally one pair of ladies' slippers." A fragment of an anonymous German treatise on shoemaking in the Bally Shoe Museum in Schönenwerd, Switzerland also describes the making of children's shoes as a prerequisite for mastery. It is possible that the present shoe was a fanciful take on a child's shoe, or created as a type of demonstration of a master shoemaker's skills in miniature. A professional in the separate embroidery guild probably embroidered the uppers, as with conventional women's shoes.

This object offers a fascinating glimpse into the art and skill of master craftsmen whose livelihoods depended on their ability to offer customers up-to-date styles. A pair of shoes of similar dimensions and construction, identified as children's shoes and dated to about 1710-20, is in the collection of the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich (Inv. I 7-147.148, illustrated in Saskia Durian-Ress, *Schuhe*, 1991, p. 63, no. 62). Another single shoe in Munich has also tentatively been identified as a model shoe (Inv. I 7-140, Durian-Ress, p. 53-4, no. 46). Women's shoes with comparable embroidery on green damask from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2001.345a, b) and the International Shoe Museum, Romans (illustrated in Marie-Josèphe Bossan, *The Art of the Shoe*, 2012, p. 48, fig. 52).

4" L x 2.75" H (shown actual size)



BROCADED SILK ROBE À LA FRANÇAISE
French, ca. 1765

A superb example of the late rococo aesthetic in women's dress, this formal *robe à la française* consisting of a robe, matching petticoat, and stomacher represents the epitome of fashion in the mid-1760s, both in the design of its silk and exuberant applied decoration, which depended on the skills of the *marchande de modes*, or milliner. This artisan played an increasingly important role in the fabrication of women's gowns in the second half of the eighteenth century. While the seamstress was responsible for stitching the minimally cut fabric into a garment, it was the *marchande de modes* who embellished it with a variety of applied decoration, imparting novelty and flair. This branch of the dressmaking industry in Paris was dominated by women, and its most famous practitioner was Rose Bertin, whose extravagant creations for Marie Antoinette and other illustrious patrons brought her international renown and were the envy of fashionable women throughout Europe. Surviving milliners' accounts—including those of Bertin—attest to the enormous sums of money charged for their trendsetting expertise; during this period, the major cost of purchasing a fully trimmed gown was due to the materials used for its ornamentation, rather than the dress fabric.

In Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (1751-72), the entry for *garniture de robe* relates the types of trimmings favored by the *marchande de modes*. Initially, trimming consisted of bands of self-fabric applied around the neck down to the waist that subsequently extended to the hem. This relatively simple type of ornamentation quickly became more elaborate with the addition of rows of flounces, pompons, ribbon bows, silk fringe, tinsel, silk and metal lace, gauze and—more recently according to the entry's author—braid, buttons, and embroidery. Other entries in the *Encyclopédie* associated with the term *marchande de modes* indicate the range of accessories that she created including head coverings, scarves, cuffs, and mantles, as well as other popular trimmings such as cockades, flowers, tassels, feathers, and pleated semi-circular pieces of fabric known as *coquilles*, or shells.

This gown demonstrates the milliner's artistry at enhancing the fanciful silk design with box-pleated self-fabric and a frothy confection of coordinating rainbow-colored silk fly-fringe and gimp. The raspberry-red twilled ground of the dress's fabric is brocaded with meandering white lacy ribbons tied at intervals with pale apricot-colored bowknots and festooned with small clusters of flowers; scattered between the serpentine lines are brocaded polychrome floral sprays. As was typical, the pleated bands along the center front edges are graduated in size from neck to hem. The three-dimensional effect that was an important aspect of applied decoration is especially apparent on the bodice where the thickly applied fly-fringe almost entirely covers the edges of the gown and stomacher. Two matching flounces of pleated and trimmed self-fabric adorn the front of the petticoat. Due to the expense of brocaded silks, less costly fabrics were used in areas that were not seen; in the petticoat, the sides and upper back are of dusty rose twilled silk. Unlike most eighteenth-century silk dresses, this gown is fully lined with a boldly striped silk taffeta in shades of cerulean blue that makes a striking contrast to the richly floral and lace pattern of the main textile, and small pieces of finely checked purple and yellow silk taffeta line the sleeve cuffs. The stomacher is lined with a multicolored silk *chiné*. Characteristic of the interior construction of the *robe à la française* are the pairs of linen tapes across the upper back that enabled the wearer to adjust the dress for a close fit against the corset at the back, emphasizing the dramatic effect of the broad box pleats that hang from the shoulders.

In excellent condition, this splendid complete *robe à la française* confirms the French social commentator Sebastian Mercier's admiring assessment of the *marchandes de modes*: in his *Tableau de Paris* (1782-83) he described them as "artists" whose imaginative creations gave an ensemble its "final graceful touches."





SILVER & ENAMEL *PARFILAGE* OR DRIZZLING SET
Probably French, ca. 1780

Whether in the form of brocaded silks or in the many varieties of passementerie such as fringe, galloon, and lace, the glint of gold added immeasurably to a wearer's prestige in the eighteenth century—and very measurably to the cost of his or her costume. Metallic threads were easily and enthusiastically recycled when fashions or fortunes changed, as they could be returned to the “laceman” from whom they were purchased, or removed from the garment and sold to a goldsmith to be melted down. Consequently, rather than insuring a garment's survival by virtue of its costliness, gold often guaranteed its destruction.

By the late eighteenth century, unpicking metallic filaments became an obsession, a fashion in its own right. Known as *parfilage* in France, where the craze began by the 1770s, the practice later spread to England where it was called *drizzling*. Well-to-do women armed themselves with small, elaborately decorated tool kits such as this example, consisting of a stiletto (or “drizzling pin”), a matching knife, and a pair of scissors, all housed within a decorative case suspended from a chain worn at the waist. They collected the threads in an elaborately decorated workbag, often of satin, and sometimes carried out this work in church or at the theatre—a dexterous *parfileuse* could make up to 100 *louis* a year in this manner.

Contained in a lidded silver case covered with turquoise enamel with a repeating pattern of large white dots and smaller dark blue and black flecks, this rare complete *parfilage* set was probably made in France, as suggested by the prominent fleur-de-lis symbol at the juncture of the scissor handles. The scissors, knife, and stiletto are chased with scrolling floral designs, and each is topped with a small crested bird, a feature common to most other known *parfilage* elements as well (and perhaps alluding to the magpie's proverbial penchant for “picking” shiny objects for its nest). A four-petalled knob decorates the apex of the pointed case, and a chain of circular silver links runs through the fitted cap to secure the elements inside.

As it grew in popularity, *parfilage* gained a reputation as an especially decadent activity, and the word became a synonym for female frivolity. It developed into a ritual of court gallantry and coquetry, in which men purchased specially made golden trifles and trims as gifts for potential paramours. Madame de Genlis, the celebrated musician, author, and educator, was highly critical of the passion for *parfilage*. Her 1782 novel *Adèle et Théodore* included a scene in which a male character describes ten crazed *parfileuses* “tearing away my coat and packing all my fringes and galloons into their workbags,” a story apparently taken from a real-life incident involving the duc de Chartres.

From France, the fad spread to Austria, where Lady Mary Coke recorded an evening spent at the Princess Kevenhuller's in the winter of 1770, noting “All the Ladies who do not play at cards pick gold: tis the most general fashion I ever saw: they all carry their bags in their pockets.” Refugees from the French Revolution may have been responsible for *parfilage*'s latent transformation into the somewhat more respectable “drizzling” in England in the 1790s. Many big houses there kept drizzling boxes in which trimmings from old liveries and upholstery were stored for unraveling and reselling.

By the mid-nineteenth century, drizzling as a social pastime had disappeared as the fashion for silks brocaded with metallic threads concurrently waned. Today, complete sets of *parfilage* tools are rare as elements have been separated or lost. An openwork enameled example is in the Musée de la Renaissance at the château d'Ecouen (ECL1842, misidentified as an etui dating to the sixteenth century), while an example with black enamel identical to the present set is in an American private collection. A similar example in yellow enamel is illustrated by Nerylla Taunton, *Antique Needlework Tools and Embroideries*, 1997, pl. 19. All of these examples are ascribed to French authorship—perhaps a single workshop—based on the quality of the enameling, though none bear any visible marks.

Eighteenth-century fabrics, and even an entire dress at the Royal Ontario Museum, survive that have been entirely drizzled of their metallic threads. This intact *parfilage* set offers a window into an otherwise forgotten social ritual and early instance of conspicuous consumption, and destruction.

Provenance: Anne Blakeslee Black collection.

3.5” H





EMBROIDERED SILK COVERLET WITH CHINESE SLIPS Swedish or Norwegian, second quarter of the 18th century

An imposing scale, exquisite workmanship, vibrant palette, and abundant floral motifs combine in this quilted coverlet to create an exceptionally fine example of eighteenth-century embroidery. Probably made in Sweden, the coverlet exhibits a blend of the high rococo aesthetic that dominated European taste during the period with a touch of exoticism suggested by the inclusion of appliquéd embroidered Chinese slips and the fanciful treatment of some of the floral and foliate motifs.

At the center of the diamond-quilted ivory silk satin field, a lush bouquet of roses, carnations, and stylized flowers spills over the edges of a two-handled golden yellow basket, embroidered with stitches imitating intricate basket-weave patterns. Surrounding the central motif at regular intervals are floral and fruit appliqués whose twisting, crescent shapes underscore their circular placement. A continuous floral and foliate outer border connects the large floral sprays in each of the four corners. Additional slips with fantastical, long-tailed swooping birds perched on flowering branches and dragons on delicate sprigs nestle close to the floral trail. A stately, rhythmic arrangement of vivid polychrome and lacy white flowers alternates with distinctive scallop shells decorated with whimsical leafy wings, all against the radiant blue silk taffeta border quilted in a chevron pattern and piqué stitch. Quilted to a linen backing with wool batting, the coverlet is lined in a block-printed cotton with an all-over pattern of carnations and stylized flowers on serpentine leafy stems in deep red, brown, and beige on an off-white ground. Sweden was not subject to the same prohibitions against the domestic manufacture of printed cottons that were in force in England and France until the second half of the eighteenth century, and it is likely that the cotton used here was produced in a Swedish workshop. A coordinating pink silk taffeta ribbon binds the four layers of the coverlet around the edges.

Although women of the Scandinavian aristocracy and gentry produced refined needlework, sometimes with the assistance of specialist embroiderers, the precision of the stitches as well as the sophistication of the design and use of colors strongly suggest that this piece was made in a professional workshop. The polychrome flowers, leaves, and scallop shells are densely worked in long-and-short and stem stitches and French knots, while laid filling stitches create a textural effect in the white flowers. Many of the coverlet's motifs illustrate the relationship between embroidery and other textile techniques of the same period. The flowers, shown in the splendor of their fullest blossoming, are similar to their outsize counterparts with shaded coloration that appear in naturalistic woven silks of the 1730s and 1740s. Here, graduated hues of red, pink, green, plum, and blue create a three-dimensional look. In addition, the geometric filling patterns in the coverlet's flowers resemble those in Dresden work, in which a cotton or linen ground is embellished with a variety of stitches and pulled and drawn thread techniques, producing an open, airy appearance.

The inclusion of Chinese slips attests to the flourishing maritime trade between Sweden and China that followed the founding of the Swedish East Company (*Svenska Ostindiska Companiet*) in Gothenburg in 1731 until its demise in 1813. Although other European countries—notably England, France, and Holland—formed east India trading companies in the previous century, the Swedish East India Company was nonetheless successful in establishing commercial ties with Chinese merchants in Guangdong (present-day Canton) from whom they purchased tea, porcelain, spices, and silk, commodities that were in great demand in the West. In China, such slips would have been used on bedcovers and robes.

The scale and drawing of the main floral-and-foliate motifs relate to native Swedish as well as East Norwegian embroidery. A Swedish quilted silk petticoat dated 1740-60 in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2009.300.2974) is embroidered in white silk at the lower edge with a large-scale design of flowers and cornucopias, and a loose fitting three-quarter-length apricot-colored silk gown and petticoat embroidered in white silk, dated 1730-40, in the Kulturen Museum in Lund, Sweden features large floral and lace-like motifs similar to those that appear on the present quilt (Inv. KM 65491). Several embroidered silk petticoats in the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, with Norwegian attributions dating to the mid-century have comparable, shaded silk naturalistic and stylized flowers and scalloped lacy bands with filling stitches (OK-1986-0054, OK-09305B, and OK-14907).

In wealthy eighteenth-century homes, the bedroom was a formal space in which bed curtains and coverlets provided both warmth and the possibility for visual display. Although this quilted coverlet ostensibly served a practical purpose in a cold, northern climate, its dazzling, colorful beauty declared its primary intention as an impressive showpiece.

90" H x 83" W





LOOM WOVEN MARSEILLES QUILTED PETTICOAT English, 1760-80

From the beginning of the eighteenth century until slimmer silhouettes prevailed in the 1790s, quilted petticoats were a mainstay of English women's informal dress. While these petticoats sometimes presented an opportunity for women to prove their needle skills, they were also often purchased "off the rack," constituting one of the first truly ready-to-wear goods. Quilted petticoats formed a large proportion of the commodities created for sale at London's warehouses selling the earliest forms of readymade garments such as pockets, cloaks, and shoes. English traders of hand-quilted goods faced stiff competition from foreign imports, however, including inexpensive "Marseilles quilting," a type of stuffed or corded cotton quilting created in the French port city from the seventeenth century. Known as *boutis* in French, this kind of textile could be purchased by the yard to create small accessories like caps and pockets, or elements of casual attire such as women's bedgowns and jumps, or men's waistcoats.

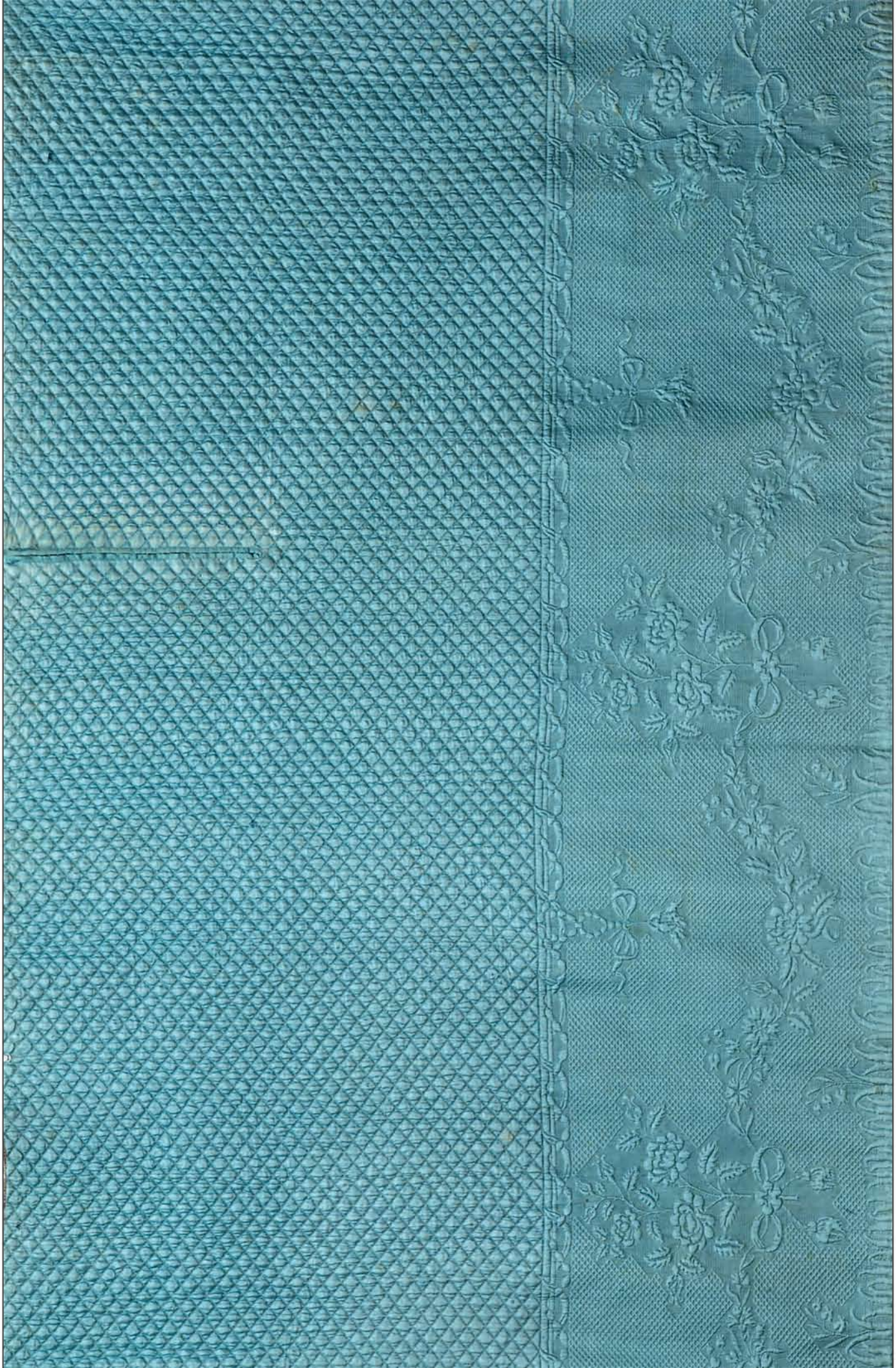
Breakthroughs in mechanized spinning and weaving that occurred in the mid-eighteenth century spurred an obsession with inventing a loom-woven textile in imitation of hand quilting. In 1745, Robert Elsdon claimed a reward from London's Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce for being the "first Inventor and Publisher of Gentlemens Waistcoats, Lady Patticoats Counterpanes &c Work'd in a Loom," though it was not until the 1760s that loom-woven quilting was put into mass production, first in Kidderminster and then Manchester. Known as "Marseilling quilting," "Marcella cloth," "Marsello," or simply "loom quilting," these textiles constituted one of the first true industrialized articles of dress. In 1783, the London Magazine reported that the production of "Marseilles quilting" was so extensive "that there are few persons of any rank, condition, or sex in the kingdom (and we may add within the extent of British commerce, so greatly is it exported) who do not use it in some part of their clothing..." The American colonies appear to have been one of the largest markets for these goods.

Although at first glance this petticoat panel may appear to be hand-quilted, it is, in fact, an example of this earliest type of "Marseilles quilting," woven on a loom as yardage. Two blue silk warps bind a thick brown wool weft in a technique akin to a modern matelassé to create the raised areas of the design. The broad hem border, shown here vertically as it would have been woven, contains serpentine floral garlands and bouquets of roses tied with tasseled bows. At the top of the border ribbons hold pearl rings, which in turn suspend singular blossoms with sinuous bows. At the bottom edge, blades of grass with intermittent foliate sprigs form a literal "ground" for the pattern. The selvedge edges form the waist and the hem, so that the textile was turned ninety degrees after coming off the loom to create petticoats, which could be adjusted for size by cutting off a bit at the top or adding a plain silk yoke to the waist. By the early nineteenth century, when quilted petticoats went out of style, loom-woven quilting was primarily used in the creation of bed hangings and coverlets; some examples of these quilts incorporate borders similar to those that appear on earlier petticoats.

While hand-quilted petticoats from the eighteenth century survive in relative quantity, Marseilles-quilted petticoats are rare. As yard goods, they could be reconfigured as fashions changed, passed down for use in children's clothing or bed linens. Petticoats and panels of this material in silk satin are in the collections of the Museum of the City of New York (45.186.8-12; 42.29); the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1921-34-208); Historic Deerfield (F.495A); Colonial Williamsburg (1986-46); and the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, Wethersfield, CT (see Lynne Zacek Bassett, *Massachusetts Quilts: Our Common Wealth*, 2009, p. 31-32). The only known cotton example is held by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, which also preserves a folding pattern card prepared by Manchester merchant Thomas Smith in 1783 containing small samples of cotton Marseilles quilting (see Florence Montgomery, *Textiles in America, 1650-1870*, 1984, p. 288, fig. D-67 and p. 291, fig. D-69).

Provenance: Descended in the Sargent family of Boston (further provenance available).

55" L x 34.5" W (doubled, as petticoat panel)



MAN'S DRESSING GOWN OR BANYAN
French, ca. 1800 (the fabric ca. 1760s)

Banyans, worn as early as the sixteenth century and popular from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, provided men with at-home attire that was both fashionable and comfortable. The appeal of wearing a banyan can be seen in this example with its stylish cut and fabric that is a statement of luxury. Worn in intimate company in the confines of a bedroom or study, banyans could often be more colorful and richly patterned than a man's streetwear. By the late seventeenth century in France, a craze had erupted for dressing gowns or banyans of flamboyant printed cottons known as *indiennes*, imported from India; in Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* of 1670, the protagonist Jourdain is mocked for his expensive printed cotton gown, a symbol of his pretensions to aristocracy.

Both the cut of this banyan and its fabric illustrate cultural exchanges that took place in the design of textiles and in the evolution of fashions at the time it was made. Styles of banyans vary from loose fitting, wrapped garments inspired by Asian male attire, such as the one seen in a French fashion plate, ca. 1680, "Homme en robe de Chambre" (V&A, E.21429-1957), to more tailored styles with center front button closures as found on many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century examples. Throughout its evolution the banyan always retains a feeling of its Eastern origins. This banyan illustrates the incremental shifts in the silhouettes of men's dressing gowns: the shaped sleeves and the curved back seams relate to eighteenth-century styles while the standing collar looks forward to fashions in banyans of the early nineteenth century.

The most striking element of this banyan is the eye-catching fabric, a type of block-printed cotton that directly imitates embroidery from Gujarat, India. In eighteenth-century Europe, the overwhelming consumer desire for fabrics produced in India, including embroideries, painted and dyed cloths, and block prints, led to numerous trade restrictions enacted to protect home industries in England and in France. To satisfy this desire and stem competition British and French textile manufacturers incorporated the imagery of Indian textiles into their designs, producing adaptations such as the textile seen here.

The fineness of Gujarati embroidery, worked in chain stitch with silk threads on a cotton ground, can trick the senses: until viewed closely it often looks printed. So it is not surprising that European manufacturers copied the embroidered exotic florals and vines and printed them on cloth. Examples of Gujarati embroidery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1970.185.2) and the Victoria & Albert Museum (IS.298-1951) illustrate the unmatched skill of this Indian needlework; the gracefully curving floral motifs that decorate these pieces can be similarly found on the printed cloth of the banyan. Lines of dots mimicking embroidery stitches appear on the banyan's fabric outlining the flowers and leaves. They were printed using a technique known as pinning, where brass pins were nailed into printing blocks so that their heads produced the intricately small dots.

Found in France, the banyan's textile may have been printed in England, which seems to have made a specialty of this type of printed cotton. A paper design for a similar pattern from a Bromley Hall pattern book, dated ca. 1760s-70s is in the Victoria & Albert Museum, (E.458[38]-1955), along with an example from an unidentified British firm (7275.39). Another paper impression from Talwin & Foster is in the Musée de l'Impression sur Etoffes, Mulhouse.

46.5" L





DINNER OR EVENING DRESS English, ca. 1824-26

The decade of the 1820s was a transitional period for women's fashion. Marked by the Bourbon restoration in France and the reign of George IV in the United Kingdom, both of which ended in 1830, the era saw the rejection of erotic, figure-revealing garments for women in favor of a nascent romanticism that looked to the Elizabethan and Valois courts for inspiration. As the waist descended after 1820, sleeves became shorter, puffier, and slid off the shoulder; hems lifted off the ground and widened to support veritable gardens of floral embellishments. Fragile materials like gauze and tulle floated over contrasting satin slips, while fashion plates reveal a seemingly endless parade of demure, windswept young women whose gossamer veils and weightless shawls appear about to carry them off at any moment.

Based on a number of design details, this dress can be dated to the winter of 1824-25 or 1825-26. Made of fine sheer lawn, it features a full-length four panel skirt, with one panel gathered at the back for fullness and a single long pocket slight on the right side. The low slightly squared drawstring neckline is trimmed and piped with a bias rouleau of cherry red taffeta. Four- and five-petalled stylized florets, trimmed again with red taffeta and topstitched ring centers, adorn the short puffed sleeves. The bodice is gathered across the bust into the still relatively high waist, rather than being cut on the bias and molded to the figure, as most other bodices were at the time. This type of bodice *à la blouse* was fashionable in England between 1824 and 1826, after having enjoyed an even greater vogue in France. In July 1824, Ackerman's *Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashions, Manufactures, &c.* noted "Blouses are at present most fashionable in evening dress," drawing attention to those of "clear muslin" embroidered in "coloured worsted."

The puffs of lawn at the hem, known as *bouillons*, are held at intervals by rings of topstitched red satin. Two padded *rouleaux*, above and below, stiffen the hem slightly. *Bouillonée* hems were especially popular in the mid-1820s; an evening dress illustrated in Ackerman's *Repository* in September 1824 featured "a deep *bouillonée* of white tulle, cut bias, and headed with a band of three small rouleaus of pink satin..." By the autumn of 1826, the new French *gigot* sleeves became common, while the waist descended further and the "blouse" style faded away. This dress thus represents fashion on the brink of a distinct stylistic change, as the silhouette widened considerably beginning about 1827 and continuing for roughly four decades.

Although the use of thin linen cambric suggests a warm weather ensemble, the eight boughs of holly that encircle the hem allude to winter wear. Executed in cocoa brown, scarlet, and two shades of green crewelwork, the motifs were strongly tied to the Christmas holiday, during which berry-laden branches were used to decorate churches from December through January. Holly has long been an emblem of English winter celebrations, prized for the color its berries and foliage provide at a time of year when most flowers have disappeared. The traditional English Christmas carol "The Holly and the Ivy," plays upon the pagan associations of holly while also incorporating holly's Christian symbolism: its prickly leaves represent the crown of thorns, its fragrant white flowers symbolize the Virgin's purity, and its red berries refer to Christ's blood. With her hair dressed in tight curls around the face, *à la neige*, the original wearer of this gown may also have adorned her coiffure with sprigs of holly either real or of silk, as fashion magazines of the time often prescribed matching one's hairdo and costume.

Because many of the most fashionable dresses of the 1820s were made of delicate materials and embellished with heavy ornaments, examples in good condition are rare. Dresses with crewel embroidery are even more scarce; a comparable French example in muslin decorated with a yellow neoclassical border at the hem is in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.2007.211.18), dated to ca. 1820.







FRONT



REVERSE

FLAMESTITCH CHAIR SEAT COVER MADE BY ANNA POOR PARSONS
American (New England), ca. 1750s

Flamestitch, a name for the colorful geometric patterning found on this unused chair seat, was a style of needlework favored by women in colonial America. Numerous household and personal items survive that are embroidered with this highly popular type of canvas work embroidery. In rooms flamestitch would appear covering sets of straight chairs or entire wing chairs, or it might be seen adding color to a room when it ornamented a fire screen. Its pervasive appeal extended to personal items as well: men carried flamestitch wallets and card cases; women owned flamestitch purses, book covers, pin cushions, and pockets. A woman such as Anna Poor Parsons (1738–1783), who embroidered this boldly decorated chair seat for her family's furniture, was following a prevailing taste in mid-eighteenth-century New England.

The Parsons family played a significant role in the development of colonial New England. The town of Parsonsfield in York County, Maine, then part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, is named for Anna's husband, Thomas Parsons, whom she married in 1757. In 1771, Parsons purchased a large portion of land formerly owned by the Newichewannock Indians, and in 1785 the town of Parsonsfield, Maine was incorporated. This panel, wrought on homespun linen, was passed down to her relative Mary Abigail (Parsons) Coolidge (1878–1964) and was then carefully preserved by her descendants.

Flamestitch is typically characterized by diamond shapes in gradated colors, with jagged outlining in brown or black. The needed crewel yarns in vibrant shades of colors would have been available to colonial women who could afford these imported goods. Worked in Irish stitch (also known as Florentine, bargello, or Hungarian stitch) as seen on this piece, this counted stitch technique produces vertical stitches on the front of the canvas that delineate the motifs and define the shifts in colors. As with much domestic eighteenth-century needlework, flamestitch patterns that appear at first glance to be alike turn out to contain surprising variations. Within the flamestitch repertoire, the motifs on Anna Poor Parsons's chair seat are among the more unusual. With still vibrant colors, it displays diamonds within diamonds, irregular forms with jutting edges, and diamonds unexpectedly filled with an array of four geometric motifs.

Provenance: Descended from Anna Poor Parsons through the Coolidge family of Massachusetts.

24" W x 18" H

PAINTED AND DYED COTTON PANEL

Indian (Coromandel Coast) for the European Market, third quarter of the 18th century

By the late seventeenth century, mordant- and resist-dyed cottons from India's western coast had taken Europe by storm, introducing an entirely new color palette and design sensibility for both dress and furnishing textiles. Their vibrant hues, fantastical floral motifs, and—above all—their colorfastness, made Indian calicoes or chintzes highly covetable. The enthusiasm for these fabrics, imported by the East India Companies, so alarmed manufacturers of established European textiles that bans against their importation were enacted lasting for much of the eighteenth century, except in the Netherlands. However, loopholes like Marseille's status as a free port and the illicit "re-landing" of chintzes imported only for export to the colonies, allowed French and English consumers to incorporate these textiles into their wardrobes.

With its profusion of exotic floral forms spread rhythmically across a bright white ground, this panel was created to appeal to the European market. It was likely once part of the skirt of a woman's dress, which has allowed for the preservation of a full selvedge width. The ambitiously scaled 26 ½ in. vertical repeat incorporates serpentine cornucopia-like motifs with stripes and patterned fillings. The design is based on the compositional schemes of European bizarre silks of almost three generations before, in particular, the interlocking spiral forms. Intensely colored flowers in shades of blue, red, purple, and pink, with some hints of yellow, present a mélange of recognizable European species such as roses and tulips, freely interpreted by the eyes of Indian artisans, with more fanciful blossoms in the vein of earlier Indian palampores. These various flowers sprout from the same vine or even from other flower heads with a whimsy and sense of freshness that Europeans tried hard to perfect in their own printed imitations.

Copies of Indian chintzes began to appear almost as soon as the originals gained popularity in the late seventeenth century. Western craftsmen never mastered the intricate dyeing process handed down from father to son in small workshops in India, though this did not stop them from attempting to duplicate Indian models using the only method available to Europeans at the time, block printing. At the manufactory founded in 1760 at Jouy-en-Josas, Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf (1738-1815) refined the art of woodblock printing in imitation of Indian cottons using his personal collection of authentic Indian specimens. The most sophisticated woodblock prints of this type were the so-called *perses* or *indiennes*. As Oberkampf later noted, "*Perses*, which I began by imitating and went on to copy, made my reputation, even in foreign countries." These textiles, which required many blocks and were of very large scale, were made in limited quantities and aimed at the nearby courtly market, including customers such as the duchesse de Choiseul and Marie Antoinette. Oberkampf himself also used Indian-style printed cottons to decorate his own home.

This panel was copied directly by Oberkampf's team of designers at Jouy. Two original gouache designs from the manufactory are preserved in the archives of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, replicating motifs from this Indian panel almost exactly (scrapbook vol. AA241, pp. 1-2, both pages marked #5153). Paper impressions of the woodblock prints exist at the Musée de la Toile de Jouy, along with paper impressions of two coordinating border designs. In addition, two printed cotton fragments of the wider border are preserved at the Royal Ontario Museum (934.4.174) and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (BAD FF 14.12).

While scholars have known that Oberkampf's designers had Indian prototypes in hand to copy at the factory, very few of the original chintzes have been identified; two examples are in the Royal Ontario Museum, and another is in the Victoria & Albert Museum (see John Irwin and Katherine B. Brett, *The Origins of Chintz*, 1970, p. 124, pl. 144 & fig. 57; and p. 124-25, pl. 146a-b & fig. 26; and Josette Brédif, *Printed French Fabrics: Toiles de Jouy*, 1989, p. 12 and p. 113). A caraco made of an Indian chintz nearly identical to the present example is in an American private collection. The discovery of this panel sheds light on the legacy of cyclical and reciprocal design influences between Indian cottons and western textiles throughout the eighteenth century.

68" L x 46" W







FRAME-KNITTED SILK STOCKINGS WITH EMBROIDERED GORE CLOCKS Spanish, ca. 1780 or ca. 1820

Fashioned on a frame knitting machine in an extremely fine gauge of approximately 35 stitches per inch, this pair of stockings is part of a recognizable group that has puzzled scholars for years, resulting in a diversity of opinion on their date and country of origin. On this pair, wide white gore clocks set into the ankles are embroidered in shades of pink, yellow, blue, and white with striped pots containing conical cypress trees topped with adorsed pink-crested blue birds. Two blue bands bordered with a thin line of white and containing a running pattern of pink lozenges surround the clocks on the yellow ground, and meet at the peak of the gore. Above, a stylized tree form is topped with a bicolored triangle and two confronted birds, who perch on blue curls.

Further research has led to the conclusion that these stockings probably originate from a common workshop or manufactory in the Spanish region of Catalonia. The province of Garrotxa in Catalonia was a major center for knitwear production in Spain by the late eighteenth century. Barcelona, the region's capital, concentrated on the knitting of silk articles, while Olot, a city to the northwest, specialized in cotton knitting, which gradually superseded that of silk in the following century. A similar cream pair in the Museo del Traje in Madrid has recently been identified on the basis of marks as originating at the manufactory of Joan Farran in Barcelona (CE000779); one leg contains the knitted inscription "B FARRAN" while its mate bears a black stamp reading "DE JOAN FARRAN." The museum also holds another similar blue pair that it has attributed to the Farran manufactory (CE000966). A green pair in the Victoria & Albert Museum (T.156-1971) carries the knitted inscription "E A COSTA" though the significance of this inscription is unknown. The present pair bears a knitted symbol near the leg opening of each stocking, ostensibly the number 8, possibly an indication of the frame number in the factory where the stockings were made.

While no precise precedent for the motifs included on this group of stockings has been discovered, they are probably derived from Spanish embroideries of the seventeenth century and later samplers. Although much cruder, the stylized birds that appear on the sleeves of Salamanca or "Charro" shirts of the seventeenth century may be compared with those that appear on the stockings, and birds also appear in Spanish samplers of the eighteenth century, as do somewhat similar potted trees. It is also possible that this group of stockings, unusual in so many ways, was intended for export to the Spanish colonies of North America.

While their Spanish origin seems clear, a mystery still remains surrounding the date and gender of these stockings. Although the Museo del Traje describes their pairs as men's and dates them to ca. 1780, they may actually have been displayed under the hems of short evening dresses worn by women in the 1820s and 1830s, as their petite size and flashy embroidery suggest. The extravagant stitching on these stockings would have been hidden by men's boots or pantaloons, and it reaches so low on the foot that even men's shoes with the lowest quarters would have obscured the design. Women of the 1820s and 1830s, on the other hand, could easily have shown off stockings like these, as the hems of ball and evening dresses rose above the ankles and shoes became mere slippers. The *Belle Assemblée* reported in March 1820 that fashionable women were promenading in public in "silk stockings with clocks embroidered in different colours; the clocks large, the embroidery very rich and glowing."

Similar stockings are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (C.I.55.52.2a, b; 2009.300.8456a, b; and two fragments, 2009.300.7478; and 2009.300.8447); the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (38.1215a-b, 43.1941a-b); the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (1962-52-15-a, b); the Kyoto Costume Institute (Inv. AC5053 84-39-10AB); and the Rocamora collection at the Museu de Disseny, Barcelona (see Ira J. Haskell, *Hosiery Thru the Years*, 1956, p. 68 and facing page, fig. D).

27.5" L



SILK SPENCER WITH SELF-FABRIC TRIM
English, ca. 1820

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the change in the fashionable female silhouette introduced new forms of outerwear. For most of the previous century, voluminous capes and mantles worn over full-skirted gowns supported by panniers offered protection from cold and inclement weather. The slender, columnar shape that characterized the late 1790s and first decades of the nineteenth century allowed for the adoption of tight-fitting outer garments such as the spencer, often worn over light muslin dresses. Named after George, 2nd Earl Spencer (1758-1834), who is reputed to have set the vogue for these short jackets, the spencer was a mainstay of women's wardrobes from the mid-1790s through the mid-1820s. Often featured in fashion periodicals of the time, spencers were made in silk, wool, and cotton, depending on the season, and trimmed with a variety of materials such as self-fabric, braid, tassels, velvet, and fur.

In impeccable condition, this spencer exemplifies the suitability of these short jackets for elegant promenade and carriage ensembles as advised by English fashion magazines, and its soft brown color seems to have been a point of fashion in 1819. Ackerman's *Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashion, Manufactures, &c.* reported in February that "pale brown" and "fawn-colour" were two of the shades "most likely to be in favour." The October issue illustrated a spencer of "pale fawn-colored *gros de Naples*." The silk is likely sarsenet, a type of lightweight, plain woven or twilled silk that was frequently recommended by the *Repository* for spencers.



The historicizing influence on women's dress that appeared around 1810, superseding the strongly neoclassical line of the previous decade, is also particularly evident in spencers such as this example. In addition to an increasing fullness in the upper body and at the hem, the shape and decorative treatment of collars, sleeves, and skirts were inspired by forms from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. In this spencer, the scallop-edged raised collar, short faux slashed over-sleeves (known as *mancherons*), and long sleeves extending over the top of the hand make deliberate references to late fifteenth-century dress. English and French fashion plates between 1818 and 1820 illustrate similar spencers with stiffened, turned-up collars, extensive decoration across the front, elaborate *mancherons*, and self-fabric bows at the center back waist. In 1820 and 1821, the *Journal des Dames et des Modes*, the leading French fashion periodical, featured several spencers with trimming similar to this example: elongated, stylized self-fabric appliqués, with piped edges and knots, dubbed *pattes*, or paws (plates 1942, 1972, and 1984). A silk dress from 1820 shows an almost identical treatment of the over-sleeve, with piped bands looped through circular openings (plate 1903). A particularly fashionable form of trimming at this time, piping also embellishes the collar, the diamond-shaped bands fastening under the wrists, and the center front edges concealing a hook-and-eye closure. The spencer is lined throughout in off-white cotton and a narrow white silk ribbon stitched to the center back and tied at the front helps secure the jacket's fit under the bust. A fine white cotton or linen ruff evoking late sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century neckwear, known as a *colerette*, would have completed the historicizing effect.



JAMDANI SHAWL
Indian for the Western market, ca. 1800-30

Textile venti (woven winds), *nebula* (mist), *abrawan* (running water), and *shabnam* (evening dew) are a few of the evocative terms used to describe the superlative fineness of Indian muslins since antiquity. Painstakingly time-consuming to make and commanding exorbitant sums of money, muslins also created great wealth and power for those who controlled their manufacture and sale. From the time of the Muslim conquest of Bengal in the early thirteenth century, the region has been associated with the production of these gossamer textiles, centered in the city of Dacca. In addition to the contribution of highly skilled artisans, the exceptional quality of the locally grown cotton was a key factor in the creation of fabrics that are almost weightless on the body.

Of the numerous processes involved in the making of muslins, spinning and weaving were the most important and laborious, and expertise in these areas was often handed down within families. Spinning was done by young women in the early morning or late afternoon, when the air was sufficiently moist to prevent the delicate cotton fibers from breaking. Male weavers working at simple pit looms could spend up to six months producing a single length of muslin measuring 20 yards long and one yard wide. Once the weaving was finished, washer men, bleachers, darners, beetlers (who pounded the muslin with conch shells or wooden mallets to produce a smooth, polished surface), and ironers completed the final steps. On the subcontinent, both men and women traditionally wore muslin garments that were sometimes layered due to the transparency of the material and accessories such as girdles, turbans, and kerchiefs.

Among the myriad varieties of Bengali muslins, *jamdani* were the most exquisite and highly prized. Muslim rulers monopolized all aspects of their fabrication and reserved the best quality *jamdani* for their own use. Woven exclusively by Muslim men, their shadowy brocaded patterns in white or colored cotton require prodigious dexterity; the slightly heavier supplementary wefts, wound on spools, are inserted by hand around fragile, individual warp threads. The term *jamdani* derives from the Persian word *jam-dar*, meaning "flowered" or "embossed," and floral motifs are typical of the repertoire used for these muslins. The field of this long rectangular shawl is filled with an allover network of tiny floral sprigs in a design known as *jhalal*. Other compositional arrangements that characterize *jamdani* include *terchal* (diagonally striped floral sprays) and *buti* (scattered floral motifs). In this stunning example, the border features a regular band of single, daisy-like flowers with continuous double scallops along the outer edges, while a dense, symmetrical bouquet of passion flowers, stylized daisies, and leaves fills one end. The subtly textured stamens of the passion flowers are formed by wefts that wrap in stepped lines around the warps. This *jamdani's* perfection extends to the hem, which is turned under twice and almost imperceptibly stitched.

Although Indian muslins were in great demand in the West beginning in the early seventeenth century, they were particularly fashionable for women's dress from the end of the eighteenth through the early decades of the nineteenth centuries. The neoclassical silhouette in vogue at that time favored these sheer, white cottons that emulated the revealing attire of women in ancient Greece and Rome. Shawls were an integral component of stylish wardrobes, and this superb *jamdani* would have added a diaphanous touch of drapery to the wearer's ensemble. Its long narrow shape is similar to the coveted Indian cashmere shawls of the early nineteenth century, suggesting a comparable date. A related *jamdani* is illustrated in Sonia Ashmore, *Muslin*, 2012, p. 97, pl. 23.

Provenance: Ex. coll. Pat Earnshaw.

103" H x 25" W

SILK AND SILVER-GILT TAPESTRY-WOVEN (*TSUZURE-ORI*) TABLE COVER
THE KAWASHIMA TEXTILE, CO.
Japanese, ca. 1910

The opening of Japan to the West in 1854 engendered a quickly growing interest in Japanese fine and decorative art. Over the next decades, consumers in Europe and the United States developed an appreciative taste for Japanese goods such as woodblock prints, lacquer, porcelain, fans, and textiles. Many leading artists and designers were inspired by the strong affinity for nature, flat, stylized forms, and asymmetry characteristic of Japanese art. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Japonisme*, the vogue for all things Japanese, was an important component of the Aesthetic Movement and Art Nouveau.

Produced around 1910 by the prestigious textile firm Kawashima, this sumptuous table cover demonstrates the remarkable mastery of Japanese weavers and embodies the exotic luxuriance associated with Eastern textiles that made them avidly sought-after commodities among western consumers. Established by Jinbei Kawashima I (1819-1879) in 1843, the company was located in Kyoto, the seat of the imperial court and the center of the high-end textile industry. In the late 1880s, under the leadership of the founder's son, Jinbei Kawashima II (1853-1910), the firm produced textiles for the Meiji palace and launched an interior decoration business, the first of its kind in Japan. Jinbei II traveled to Europe in 1886 where he visited tapestry-weaving workshops in France. On his return to Japan, he introduced tapestry production to his firm's studios, with the aim of expanding his export market. Determined to create works that would rival those he had seen abroad, he commissioned cartoons from well-known Japanese painters.

The table cover is a tour-de-force of tapestry weaving. Unlike most European tapestry which typically employs wool warps in combination with wool or silk wefts, *tsuzure-ori* is woven entirely in silk, often enhanced—as here—with metal-wrapped threads. The fineness of the two-ply silk threads enables the wefts to be extremely closely packed, completely covering the warps to form a smooth, pristine surface. Chrysanthemums, a symbol of the emperor and the imperial family, form a bold cluster at the center of a gold field and a continuous dense border that seems to compress the swirling gold bands representing water within a deep blue ground. The use of solid colors for the motifs, details, and outlines—plum, ochre, green, grey, mauve, ivory, and gold—emphasizes their ornamental aspect. The cover is backed with pale yellow silk satin and interlined with a black and white striped cotton.

An embroidered stamp on the reverse edge of this cover indicates that it was made for export, and there is no question that Kawashima's tapestries were appreciated by foreigners. A similar table cover featuring butterflies at the center was illustrated in the November 1909 issue of the English art magazine, *The Studio*, which noted that this "recent work from the loom of Mr. Jimbei [sic] Kawashima [...] intended to decorate a foreign house [...] deserves notice for its design, essentially Japanese in character." In December 1914, *The Studio* was particularly fulsome in its praise of the Kawashima tapestries commissioned by the Meiji government for the Peace Palace at the Hague, which took four years to complete:

[A]n Imperial order was given to the late Kawashima Jimbei [sic], of Nishijin, Kyoto, a court artist, whose family has long been known for artistic weaving, and who in his lifetime, by consistent efforts and almost incredible patience, devised new methods, improved looms and achieved wonders in the art of weaving. It has been a marvel to many how he was able to put harmoniously together colours that were considered inconsistent and contradictory in themselves [...] Some of the best examples of his work adorn foreign courts and palaces, whither they have been sent as Imperial gifts from Japan.

Kawashima textiles, including tapestries, were exhibited at numerous world's fairs, which Jinbei II considered an ideal venue for familiarizing Westerners with Japanese taste. They were first shown at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889, where the company won a gold medal. They were also featured in fully installed rooms at the international expositions held in St. Louis in 1904 and in Liège, Belgium in 1905, as well as at the Peace Palace in The Hague, which opened in 1913. In St. Louis, Kawashima tapestries decorated the walls, while a table was covered with a textile similar to the present piece. Henry Walters of Baltimore, a habitual collector of Japanese art from international expositions, paid \$6,000 for a Kawashima tapestry depicting a battle scene shown in St. Louis, now at the Walters Art Museum (82.25).

71" x 69" W (without fringe)





HANGING WITH NINE SAMPLERS Mexican, dated 1810 to 1861

Among the textile traditions brought to Mexico following the Spanish conquest in 1519 was that of samplers. As in Europe, the creation of samplers by young girls of genteel families was an important component of their education; in addition to learning a range of stitches that could be used for both decorative and practical sewing purposes, girls were also expected to acquire values associated with femininity including patience, obedience, and diligence. Although most surviving Mexican samplers date to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the motifs were established in the sixteenth century. Pattern books—one of the primary means of circulating designs for samplers in Europe—were less available in Mexico, and, instead, needlework itself served to both record and disseminate motifs and stitches. As this hanging demonstrates, girls and young women using a standardized repertoire nonetheless produced samplers that reflected a sense of individual expression.

The nine complete samplers and smaller pieces of embroidery (all with linen grounds) that have been joined to form the hanging illustrate the motifs, colors, and stitches typical of many nineteenth-century pieces. The pictorial samplers are worked in two main techniques: white-on-white embroidery featuring padded satin stitches, stem, buttonhole and chain stitches, drawn and cut work (known as *deshilado*), and French knots worked in linen thread; and polychrome silk embroidery executed in shaded satin, split, stem, brick, eyelet, and running stitches, with French knots. The samplers with geometric patterns and stylized plant, animal and bird motifs are worked in silk tent and cross stitches and drawn work. Colored glass beads, purl, and sequins—the latter introduced by the Spaniards—add sparkling glints to both pictorial and geometric samplers. The sophisticated needlework and compositions in some of these suggest that they represent a “master sampler” or were embroidered by a young woman with accomplished sewing skills.

The emphasis on religious instruction for girls is evident in several samplers. Most noticeable is the figure of the Virgin as the Immaculate Conception, with a sequined halo, flowing white gown and blue mantle, on the right side. Considered the ideal role model for young girls and women in the context of their domestic responsibilities, she was a highly appropriate motif. During the Viceregal period (1521-1821), birds, animals, and flowers like those that accompany the Virgin here, symbolized women’s moral perfection. The Lamb of God appears in three samplers, one of which also displays the monograms of Mary (AMR) and Jesus Christ (JHS). In contrast to the exemplary Virgin and perhaps included as a cautionary warning to girls, the figure of Xantippe, the bad-tempered, quarrelsome wife of Socrates, sits atop her weary, long-suffering husband at the center of an oval floral wreath. This depiction of the ill-matched couple is based on a late-seventeenth-century print after Henri Gaspar (1635-1701; British Museum, 2010,7081.71).

Most of the samplers include signatures and dates: “Rosaura Munoscano” subtly worked her name (which appears upside down) into the central tulle medallion of her white work piece; “Emiliana Alacazar” documented her name and the completion date—December 1824—of her boldly patterned geometric sampler across its bottom edge; “Soledad Santa Ella” recorded her name and “1856” at the center of her geometric sampler; and the young girl who produced the sampler with Xantippe and Socrates discreetly embroidered her initials, “L. L.,” within a pink-leafed wreath carried by a black and yellow bird, while a macaw holds a banner enclosing the date “1861.” Although the embroiderers of the top panel teeming with brilliantly hued archangels and carnations as well as the sampler featuring the Virgin remain anonymous, they dated their pieces, “1810” and “1821,” respectively.

Not only do these dates represent a significant accomplishment in the lives of the girls who produced these samplers, but they also cover a period of Mexican history that saw dramatic political changes. In 1810, Mexico began its struggle for independence from Spain, which it finally won in 1821 and, after a two-year monarchy, the Republic of Mexico was founded in 1824. Three decades later in 1854, liberals overthrew the country’s corrupt military dictatorship, ushering in a period known as *La Reforma*, and 1861 marked the election of the progressive politician Benito Juárez as president and the invasion by Napoleon III’s forces. Two samplers—the white work at the top right and the polychrome silk at the bottom center—display the crowned, double-headed eagle of the Hapsburg coat-of-arms, indicative of a conservative political ideology. The decision to include this motif may have come from the pupil, her instructor, or her family.

Provenance: Found in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the hanging was assembled in 1921 by a family of American missionaries who fled China in 1912 and settled in Oaxaca, where they collected the samplers.

71” H x 48” W

PRINTED PANEL DESIGNED BY RUTH REEVES
American, 1949

One of the most innovative American textile designers of the twentieth century, Ruth Reeves (1892-1966) is perhaps best known for her work at Radio City Music Hall in New York City's Rockefeller Center. The carpet that covers the hall's grand foyer and the fabric for the walls of the auditorium were created by Reeves for the building's opening in 1932. While Radio City represents Reeves's work in the public sphere, this screen-printed linen panel represents Reeves's work within the intimacy of a private home built and furnished in 1949.

Dr. Harry S. Tschopik, Jr. (1915-1956), an ethnologist at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), and his archaeologist wife Marion, commissioned Reeves to design a textile for their modernist home in Tarrytown, New York, where a community of curators from the AMNH had formed. The Tschopiks spent six years living in Peru studying the Aymaran Indians and collecting native artifacts. When it came to decorating their new home in Tarrytown (designed by architect Robert A. Green), the Tschopiks chose to combine objects collected during their time in Peru with early American furniture. Reeves's textile was planned to draw its motifs from the Peruvian art and unite their eclectic belongings.

That Reeves was selected for this undertaking makes perfect sense given what we know of the designer's career and interests. Her association with the AMNH goes back to the first decades of the twentieth century, during a period when the museum was encouraging industrial designers to use its ethnographic collections for inspiration. She attended classes set up for designers to study artifacts and made frequent use of the museum's study room. Between 1916 and 1922 Reeves participated in the textile design competitions run by *Women's Wear Daily* and organized by M.D.C. Crawford.

In 1934, following her work for Radio City, Reeves traveled to Guatemala where she studied and collected traditional clothing and textiles for the Carnegie Institution. Upon her return to New York, Reeves looked to these examples to design textiles "in the spirit rather than the letter of the various specimens which inspired me." In that same spirit of inspiration Reeves crafted this exceptional custom textile for the Tschopiks' living room. Bold motifs, drawn in a style evoking woodcuts, occupy rectangular fields within the textile's columns. From the family's Peruvian carvings and art Reeves has included images of angels, urns, alpacas and birds, architectural elements, pinwheels of flowers, and musicians and dancers in traditional costumes. Most striking is Reeves's use of strong decorative elements—large scrolls, brackets, and zigzags—to delineate the motifs and emphasize the overall effect. A 1949 article in the *New York Herald Tribune* on the decor of the Tschopik house noted of the textile designed by "Miss Reeves":

It is a warm, rich print on natural linen, done in the colors of the Oriental rug and featuring design motifs taken from some of the Tschopiks' prized Peruvian works of art. Here again the practical test gives new meaning to the old decorator's rule about "welding your room together with one fabric."

The added element of reflective gold leaf throughout the fabric provides further impact, giving a feeling of mosaic tile work to this evocative hanging. The selvedge is signed: "Designed by Ruth Reeves."

For an image of these curtains in situ in Tarrytown, see Ann Pringle, *New York Herald Tribune*, "The Old and New are Good Mixers," October 19, 1949, p. 22. Never produced commercially, only one other piece of the Tschopik textile is known to be extant, a smaller panel preserving a single repeat in the collection of the Yale University Art Museum (1995.49.9; see John Stuart Gordon et al., *A Modern World: American Design from the Yale University Art Gallery, 1920-1950*, 2011, p. 213, fig. 20).

127" H x 49.75" W



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NAMES
ALEXANDER GIRARD FOR HERMAN MILLER
American, 1957

Names is a textile design whose title tips the observer to its content, but also cleverly transforms itself into an abstract pattern of lyrical ease. Designed by Alexander Girard (1907-1993) for Herman Miller in 1957, *Names* brings together two of the many facets of this versatile artist's oeuvre: textile design and typography.

Born in New York City to an American mother and Italian father, Girard was raised in Florence, Italy. The city's rich artistic heritage, coupled with the influence of his father (a master woodworker and collector of antiques), nurtured his immense creativity and inspired him to earn architecture degrees in both Rome and London. Girard returned to the United States in the 1930s and settled at first in New York, where he acquired his third architecture degree and started his own design firm. The versatile designer proved more than adept at conceiving every furnishing detail of residential and commercial interiors, using his keen sense of color, line, and proportion to guide him.

It was through Girard's involvement with the Herman Miller company that his prolific aptitude for textile design flourished. In 1952 he was hired to direct the new division, Herman Miller Textiles. His task for the company was to create seasonal collections that focused on how the textiles would integrate with one another, with the firm's modern furniture, and with overall interior schemes. During his tenure of more than twenty years Girard designed over three hundred woven and printed fabrics, all of which are united by his personal exuberance and distinctive color sense.

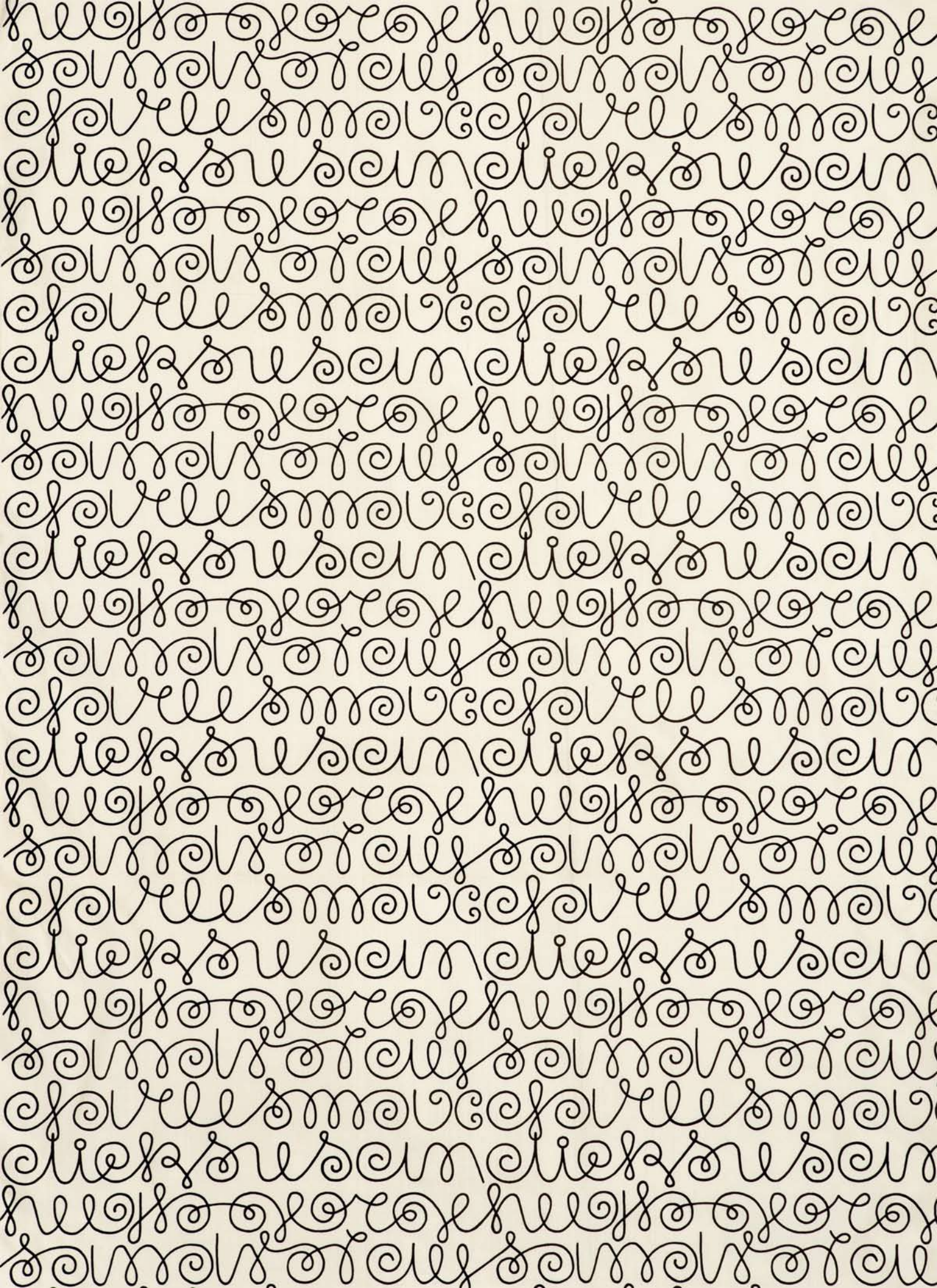
Whether conceived of as branding tools for businesses—most famously for the New York restaurant La Fonda del Sol (1960) and for Braniff Airlines (1965)—Girard had a penchant for inventive typography. Depending on the project, he created type that could be used functionally and decoratively for logos, signage, matchbook covers, and even menu layouts. In the dynamic milieu of modernist typography (the iconic Helvetica was introduced the same year as *Names*, for example), Girard forged his own irreverent lettering systems. He playfully mixed serif with sans-serif, upper with lower cases, and stubbornly ignored warnings not to mix more than three fonts in one project. Sometimes, when designing original lettering, Girard would realize entire alphabets; other times, he fashioned only the letterforms needed for specific words. Akin to having body language, his letters and numerals were expressive in their shape, positioning, and in their combinations.

Captivated by the look of the alphabet and wordplay, it is only natural that Girard would create letter-based textile patterns. *Names* is but one of several of Girard's typographic exploits on fabric. It was preceded in 1953 by *Alphabet Stripe*, and followed by the famous *Alphabet* in 1960; *Number Stripe*, *Computer* (1966), and *Love* (1967) also built on the concept. Notably, all are single-color prints on solid grounds. *Names* is perhaps the most fluid and lacy of these, relying on a cursive, handwritten style. Curlicues and loops almost continuously link the letters in horizontal registers of four repeating lines, each with a set of names, some of which may have belonged to Herman Miller employees. Instantly recognizable are "George" (Nelson), "Susan" (Girard's wife), "Dick," and "Max"—less discernable names may be "Sam" and "Charles" (possibly Eames). Girard's aim was not necessarily to make legible text, but to focus the eye on the abstract qualities of the letters, their curvaceous contours, and their harmonious interplay.

This version of *Names*, screen printed in black on a sheer off-white rayon ground, was intended for window treatments or for use as room dividers. A panel of *Names*, suspended as a scrim from the ceiling of Herman Miller's groundbreaking Textiles & Objects boutique (est. 1961), is visible in a photograph from that year taken by Charles Eames. When stretched flat from selvedge to selvedge, *Names* emphasizes the linear, calligraphic nature of the pattern. When softly rippling, such as in a curtain, it must have hewed closer to Girard's own philosophy on draped textiles: "the picture, as such, is reduced to an abstraction. It is a roundabout direct way of getting broken textural effects."

Names is found in the collections of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum (1998.43.12) and the Dallas Museum of Art (1997.18).

108" H x 50" W (detail shown)





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