

# CORA GINSBURG

Costume Textiles Needlework





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Costume Textiles Needlework  
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*by appointment*

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**NEEDLEWORK PICTURE**  
***THE LABORS OF HERCULES***

English, ca. 1630–40

In seventeenth-century England, needlework pictures most often signified the virtue, piety, and gentility of the young ladies and girls who crafted them (see pp. 4, 5). At the same time, there existed a considerable trade for ready-made, professionally worked embroideries, which were typically executed by male needleworkers. Although women were barred from formal admission to the embroiderers' guild, the Worshipful Company of Broderers, they nonetheless engaged in this specialized workshop production as assistants. This exceptionally rare picture, which presents the Labors of Hercules, was the product of one such professional workshop.

In the story of the Labors, Hercules is goaded to perform twelve seemingly impossible feats by King Eurystheus, the favorite of Hera, queen of the Olympians, who had long determined to destroy Hercules. Here, the visual keystone is Hercules himself, portrayed brandishing his traditional weapon of choice, a club. He wears as a mantle and helmet the skin and head of the lion of Cithaeron (whom he had previously killed after it had preyed upon sheep), a dual allusion to his first labor, the slaying of the Nemean lion. Next to Hercules are the Erymanthian boar (his fourth labor) and Cerberus (the twelfth labor), represented not by the usual tricephalic, monstrous canine but by three domesticated dogs tethered to a tree stump.

In the foreground, two lions attacking a bull and a horse metonymically represent Hercules fighting the Cretan bull (his seventh labor) and the mares of Diomedes (the eighth labor). At the center, a sea monster, probably the Lernaean Hydra (the second labor), wades forebodingly down the river Styx. At top, in the background, the trees and dragon-like creatures may symbolize Hercules's eleventh labor: stealing the golden apples of Hesperides and killing their guardian, the dragon-serpent Ladon. Behind Hercules at the mouth of the Styx stands a colonnaded building, possibly the palace at the entrance to Hades where the eponymous river nymph lived. One of the two other structures, both anachronistically topped with crosses, may allude to the palace at Tiryns, ruled by Eurystheus. The whole scene is framed by a border of pink and blue fruits and silver tulips.

The embroiderer used a multitude of stitches—long-and-short, brick, seed, satin, padded satin, chain, and bullion stitches as well as couching and laid work—in silk thread, silk floss, and silver-wrapped silk threads to create this intricate and multilayered scene. The complexity of the stitching reveals the maker's exceptional proficiency with a needle, visible in such passes as the minute detail on the dogs' paws.

Several motifs were adapted from prints circulating at the time. Hercules's pose derives from a ca. 1563 engraving by the Dutch printmaker Cornelis Cort, after the Flemish painter Frans Floris, which survives in multiple versions from the early seventeenth century. The creature at top right possibly representing Ladon may be adapted from the Italian artist Antonio Tempesta's 1608 etching of Hercules and the same creature. The lion at bottom right and the bull are nearly identical, though rendered in reverse, to those in a ca. 1578 engraving after the Flemish painter Jan van der Straet.

Imagery taken from Greek and Roman mythological sources is especially unusual, as the majority of surviving British needleworks depict biblical scenes, pastorals, portraits of royalty, and allegories. Just one other seventeenth-century embroidery of Hercules is known in a public collection. A similar, though much faded, picture at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum features an identical Hercules, Cerberus, and Erymanthian boar (1981-28-124). Additionally, it includes the use of very similar sophisticated embroidery techniques, such as brick stitch on the bodies of the animals, and bears a similar guilloche border design of fruits finished with couched silver-wrapped cords. Already an exceptionally scarce survival individually, these embroideries together offer a valuable opportunity to link finished workshop productions that were almost certainly executed using the same sources, and possibly even by the same hands.

The dimensions and horizontal shape suggest that this picture could have functioned as the lid to a flat-topped cabinet or hinged box. With only seven of Hercules's twelve labors accounted for, it is possible that the other five labors would have adorned the cabinet's sides. The extraordinary condition and vibrant color indicate that this picture was never used as such, however, and has probably spent most of its four hundred years hidden from light and dust.

11 x 14 ½ in.

MDA





**NEEDLEWORK PICTURES**  
***FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY AND COURTING COUPLE IN A LANDSCAPE***  
English, mid-17th century

These two canvas work pictures are important surviving documents not only of the virtues of, and expectations for, the young women who created them nearly four centuries ago, but also of the growth in appreciation for these objects at the turn of the twentieth century. Iconographically, they exemplify the range of feminine qualities demanded of girls in Stuart England, from didactic Biblical moralism to secular domestic harmony. As works of art, they are powerful material testimonies of the industriousness and needle skills considered mandatory components of genteel femininity. Both were later owned by a collector whose efforts to exhibit and publicize these objects were instrumental in the growth in popular esteem for seventeenth-century English needlework, moving from scorn to admiration.

Considerable time and energy must have been devoted to the creation of the panel depicting personifications of the three theological virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity. Worked in extremely fine tent stitch, the picture also makes use of queen's stitch for the landscape and figures of Faith and Hope. Certain elements such as the hills and costume details have been highlighted with a calligraphic line of couched navy-blue silk cord, while the embroideress also uses braided silk cords to delineate the stems of the flowers, adding dimension.

On the left, Faith is identified by name on the open book she holds (presumably a precious Bible with gold clasps). On the right, Hope grasps an anchor, a potent Christian symbol of the stability of Christ among life's tempests. At center, bare-breasted Charity nurses one child while offering a flower to another and turns her head toward a boy holding a flaming (sacred) heart. The whole is presided over by a smiling sun, which illuminates a hilly landscape filled with insects, birds, and flowers, along with a castle in the upper right. A recumbent lion and stag flank a rocky grotto pool, including coral accretions in the foreground, with the tail of a diving fish visible in its waters.

Distinct from the four cardinal virtues outlined by the ancient Greeks, which applied to all people aspiring to moral righteousness, the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity (or Love) were considered specific to Christian doctrine, having been defined by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13: "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." The iconography of this picture reinforces this idea by making Charity (or Love)—in the guise of a devoted mother—the largest figure, and the center of the composition, to which the landscape itself literally appears to bend in accommodation. Beyond its religious lesson, this picture also offered



a veiled statement of its maker's political ideology: the salamander engulfed in flames perched on the highest hill in the top left and the phoenix flying in the sky on the right were frequently employed as symbols of Charles I by members of his memorial cult following his execution in 1649. Supposedly impervious to fire, salamanders were emblems of strength and patience under duress since antiquity, while the phoenix was perhaps an allusion to the resurrection of the Stuart dynasty.

In contrast, the virtues personified in the picture portraying a courting couple are entirely secular. A man doffs his hat in chivalrous deference to the object of his affection, a woman in a long pink court gown offering him a flower. This pair appears frequently in seventeenth-century English needleworks, as representative of the generic ideal of social harmony between the sexes, and sometimes as representations of the Old Testament characters Rebecca and Eliezer. The source for all of these may be an engraving first printed in 1642 by William Marshall depicting Edward Browne and his wife, which printseller Peter Stent later reissued around 1661 (Fitzwilliam Museum, P.2482-R). Most of the picture is wrought in tent stitch with select areas of queen's stitch and over-embroidery, as in the facial features of the couple and details of their garments. French knots delineate the man's jacket buttons as well as the cobblestones that lead from the castle in the background.

**Provenance:** Both needleworks were formerly owned by Percival D. Griffiths (1861–1937), who displayed them at his country home, Sandridgebury, near St. Albans in the United Kingdom. A chartered accountant by trade, Griffiths amassed the most significant collection of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English furniture and needlework in the first half of the twentieth century. By displaying these objects at numerous exhibitions and publishing them in several seminal books and articles, Griffiths gave this material—heretofore derided by critics as clumsy and “grotesque”—a new caché, as scholars began to interpret it as a uniquely valuable form of material culture. Griffiths had acquired the courting couple picture by 1913, when it was exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London. *Faith, Hope, and Charity* was displayed at Sandridgebury by 1927 and cost him the high sum of £70.15.0. Both pieces, which retain their Griffiths-era frames, were sold by the collector's estate at Christie's, Manson & Woods in May 1939, where they were purchased by a Mrs. Oppenheimer. For further information on these pieces, and more information on Griffiths's collection, see William DeGregorio and Christian Jussel, *English Needlework 1600–1740: The Percival D. Griffiths Collection*, vol. II (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2023), pp. 133, 141, cat. nos. N62, N72.

*Faith, Hope, and Charity*: 11 x 15 ¼ in.      *Courting Couple in a Landscape*: 10 x 13 in.

WDG



## UNCUT MAN'S COURT WAISTCOAT (*GILET*)

Chinese for the French market, 1760s

## MAN'S COAT (*HABIT*)

French (the textile Chinese for the French market), ca. 1775

Often overshadowed by the dominance of the British, the French were, in fact, major players in the maritime trade in textiles throughout the eighteenth century. In 1664, finance minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert established the first *Compagnie française pour le commerce des Indes orientales*, though it was not until 1698, with the arrival of the *Amphitrite* ship at Whampoa, that direct trade between France and China began. Over the next 144 years—until the end of the Canton trade in 1842—the *Compagnie*, in its various iterations, held a monopoly on trade, roughly fifty percent of the time. At other points, notably between 1769 and 1785, trade was open to private merchants and investors, who sent ships laden with huge quantities of silver, wine, and weapons from French ports to the Pearl River Delta, restocking there with lighter cargo: mainly tea, but also porcelain and great quantities of silk.

These two embroidered men's garments, each in a different state of manufacture, offer an illuminating demonstration of the process by which Chinese export "piece goods" (called *étoffes de soie* in French) were commissioned, transformed, and consumed by the West. They are also a testament to the skill of the often-impoorished Chinese silk weavers and embroiderers, whose products, then as now, were renowned for their finesse. The large panel embroidered with men's waistcoat "shapes," as they were known, appears exactly as it left the embroiderer's frame some 250 years ago, while the man's coat, or *habit*, is further along in the finishing process, having been turned from a similar flat panel into a fashionable French garment.

In addition to the bulk commodities that they brought back for investors or *Compagnie* officials, visitors to Canton shopped for smaller local arts and crafts that were available from shops located near the *hongs*, or workshops, including embroideries. "Curiosity brought us every day to different Canton merchants," wrote *Compagnie* engineer Joseph-François Charpentier de Cossigny in *Voyage à Canton* (1798), adding, "It is the men, and not the women, who embroider: their work is well-known in France, and highly esteemed." Charles de Constant, another businessman in Canton, observed, "They [the Chinese] excel in embroidery, which requires only taste and patience. Workers of all kinds in Canton have much perfected the work they carry out for Europeans according to the models that they have given them."

The spectacular uncut waistcoat panel was most likely embroidered after such a pattern supplied by European merchants, with the resulting design intended to be worn at court. Across the full 28 ½-inch width of the luminous ivory Chinese satin, the embroiderer first stitched the entire design of peonies, carnations, roses, and morning glories outlining the fronts, pocket flaps, and collar of a man's waistcoat, in yellow floss silk. He then embroidered over this entirely with silk threads wrapped with a fine strip of gilt-silver, utilizing a characteristically Chinese technique that formed a nearly reversible design on the back, an extravagance that





would have been completely concealed by the lining of the resulting garment. This ostentatious luxury extended to the silk ground itself. Unlike European embroiderers, obliged by relatively narrow silks to crowd their panels with motifs—sometimes even breaking up larger pattern pieces such as the fronts into separate sections—the needleworker here was profligate with the material, scattering the motifs across an abnormally extensive panel measuring over seven feet long.

To add interest, coils of gold purl as well as sequins decorate the center of some flowers. Having never been made up or worn, nearly all of the gold is intact, revealing the glittering effect such a garment was intended to convey. Eleven buttonholes are indicated on the waistcoat shape, but no motifs for the actual buttons appear on the panel, suggesting that gilt metal buttons might have been added by a tailor in France. Remarkably, chalk marks denoting where the design should be cut from the ground are still intact, a precious indication of that tradesman's working process.

The man's *habit* would have arrived in Europe as flat panels like the waistcoat, and then would have been made up by a tailor to suit the wearer exactly. Cut in the fitted style of the late 1770s with a standing collar, its deep blue satin is embroidered mainly in stem stitch with twisted silk yarns in shades of pink, white, lavender, and two shades each of blue and green. The embroidery consists of a serpentine vine sprouting stylized carnations and violets, entwined with a curling blue ribbon. Thirteen large round buttons covered in matching embroidered satin embellish the coat, though they are purely decorative; two pairs of hooks and eyes at the neck and mid-chest actually secure the coat closed. The pocket flaps at the hips are also deceptive. Instead of functional pockets on the exterior of the coat, the tailor inserted deep hidden slit pockets on the interior, cut into the matching blue Chinese silk taffeta lining. These pockets and the sleeves were then lined with Indian cotton, while a fustian (a fabric with linen warp and cotton weft) panel across the back of the coat added warmth. No padding enhanced the relatively narrow chest of the wearer, but the coat's skirts were lined with a springy wadding, possibly of wool or silk, to add body. Since French ships ceased trading with China from 1779 to 1782 while France aided the American colonies in their war of independence, the former date is a reasonable *terminus ante quem* for the coat's manufacture.

While a handful of completed Chinese export waistcoats are known (see *Cora Ginsburg* catalogue Summer 2021, pp. 71–74), no other uncut shapes, nor any men's *habits* made of this material, are known. Similar European waistcoat shapes with four revers pieces are at the Victoria & Albert Museum (T.427-1994; 878-1891), while a French uncut *habit* is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1982.290a–e).

**Provenance:** These pieces descended in the Monistrol family, established at Lorient, France, the headquarters of the *Compagnie des Indes*, from the early eighteenth century. The waistcoat panel may have been commissioned for Julien-Louis de Monistrol (1730–1791), who succeeded his father, André, as postmaster for the company and became *contrôleur* of sales in 1765. When the second *Compagnie des Indes* was disbanded in 1769, Julien-Louis continued to trade with the East on his own account, accumulating a vast fortune. His son François-Louis Monistrol (1761–1821) also followed in his father's footsteps, becoming director of the *Compagnie* in 1792, not long before it was abolished for the last time by the Convention. From 1809 until his death, François-Louis served as mayor of Lorient.

*Gilet*: 87  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 28  $\frac{3}{4}$  in.

WDG





## ROUND GOWN OR CHEMISE DRESS

American (Massachusetts), ca. 1790–1810 (the textile Indian, ca. 1780)

From the 1780s onward, the simple chemise has been the instigator of several seismic revolutions in Western women's fashion. With time, this lowly T-shaped linen undergarment worn closest to the skin by both men and women across Europe migrated outward, first peeking out from collar and cuffs, until eventually all was revealed. The shift, as the women's version was also called, did just that to perceptions of femininity, decorum, and bodily autonomy at distinct moments in the 1780s, 1880s, 1920s, and 1950s. At each point, its popularity upended established hierarchies of age, race, and class, offering women the hope (and men the threat) of release from the tyranny of the hourglass silhouette and the instruments of its artificial maintenance, from the corset to the girdle.

This dress, made from an eye-catching painted Indian chintz, is a rare surviving example from America of that initial transitional moment for the chemise, when underwear became outerwear. Descending with other garments from the Manning and Burnham families of Salem, Massachusetts, it may have been worn by Nathaniel Hawthorne's maternal grandmother, Miriam Lord Manning (1748–1826), like the blue Chinese damask dress published in the 2022 *Cora Ginsburg* catalogue (pp. 11–14), to which it is analogous in size and silhouette.

The dress is simply patterned but meticulously sewn, and its construction is notable for several reasons. Two panels of selvedge-width (44-inch) cotton form the skirt, with seams running down the center front and center back, lacking gores. The upper portion of the dress is imperceptibly pieced, but entirely symmetrical, revealing careful planning and masterful needle skills. Each seam was sewn with tiny stitches in white cotton thread; at this time, women's dresses were more often sewn with linen thread and larger running stitches, which could more easily be unpicked for restyling or recycling. Stress points have been reinforced on the interior with beautifully sewn patches of the same chintz, at the end of the center front placket and at the bottom of the right pocket slit.

Most unusual, though, is that all the shaping (except for discreet tucks at each side below the arm) is achieved by drawstrings: at the neck, high waistline, and two on each sleeve. Rather than a flat patterned back and gathering at the front neck or waist, typical of most dresses around 1800, the neckline and waistline are gathered around their entire circumferences by drawstrings. At the waistline, a strip of linen sewn to the interior forms a channel through which another linen tape is pulled; finished holes in this tape at the center back and each side allow the waist to be collected in a maximum of four separate places. The drawstrings at the neck and sleeves are pulled through channels sewn in the chintz itself. This allows them to be gathered into the fashionable puffed shape, signaling a connection with the so-called *chemise à la reine*, a controversial style of plain white muslin gown popularized by Queen Marie Antoinette and others at the French court in the 1780s. This distinctive sleeve style, visible in portraits painted by Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun, is also evident on one of the few extant *robes en chemise*, at the Manchester Art Gallery, also made of an Indian cotton, and very similar to this dress in terms of cut (1947.1714).

Some historians believe the *robe en chemise* was appropriated from enslaved women working on plantations in the West Indies, who wore simple dresses of white cotton. Others point to the adoption of children's wear styles by women influenced by the liberal philosophies of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who espoused a return to the simplicity of childhood. This dress's patterning is, in fact, more closely aligned with that which was typically used for children's garments around 1800, particularly the sleeves set directly into the neckline. A comparable child's dress of Indian chintz with Albany, New York provenance is at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (1960-81-9).

Straightforward construction allowed the textile to supply the dress's primary ornament. Indeed, it is entirely unadorned except for the chintz's colorful painted and resist-dyed pattern: sinuous flowering branches create an overall ogival lattice, with gnarled logs sprouting flowers and bamboo at the center of each aperture. The fabric, probably produced on the Coromandel Coast in southeastern India, was likely made by several artisans working in tandem over many months. They painted the main motifs entirely freehand, with variations among each of the four distinct pattern elements. The log motifs may be adapted from palampores, either from the smaller flowering trees that often appear to grow on either side of the dominant central tree in examples from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, or from motifs in their borders; see, for example, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (1952-118-1); and Victoria & Albert Museum (IS.2-1961; IM.226-1921; IS.38-1950). The presence of a British East India Company stamp near the front right hem suggests the chintz was imported into North America before 1783, when direct free trade between the United States and the East began following the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Similar chinoiserie-style patterns on chintz became popular in the 1770s; it is possible that the textile was acquired for, or not long after, Miriam's marriage to Richard Manning (1744–1813) in Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1776.





## EMBROIDERED SILK COVERLET (*COLCHA*)

Indian (Bengal) for the Portuguese market, late 17th century

The reciprocal decorative influences of Europe and Asia are evident in the body of extant silk and cotton textiles made in India and exported west via the Kingdom of Portugal's expansive trade networks during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. The long tenure of Portuguese economic sovereignty on the Indian subcontinent began in 1510 with the conquest of Goa—future capital of the Viceroyalty of Portuguese India (Estado da Índia)—on the western coast and continued for the next four hundred years, albeit somewhat curtailed from the seventeenth century on by the presence of the Dutch and the English.

Among the earliest textile exports from the Estado da Índia were the so-called Satgaon quilts and garments—large-scale hangings and covers as well as variations on Spanish and Portuguese courtly fashionable dress—densely embroidered in silk on a cotton foundation. These were much desired in Europe for their fine workmanship and materials, particularly local, wild tussar silk, which naturally possesses a pale golden yellow hue, and creamy, undyed cotton. Craftspeople in Spain, Portugal, and England attempted to replicate the distinctive color palette and designs of Satgaon quilts well into the eighteenth century.

Astute Portuguese exporters forecasted an eager market among the elite and merchant classes back home for such textiles, particularly *colchas*, the term denoting a variety of large-scale cloths made to adorn beds, walls, tables, and floors. By the mid-seventeenth century in Portuguese India, a distinct style emerged within the production of *colchas*. No longer restricted to the subtle, native palette of yellow and white, *colchas* evolved with polychrome and other bicolor versions embroidered with profusive floral patterning. This arrangement developed as a concession to aristocratic Western tastes, notably the recent vogue among European royalty for the floriated carpets made at the Savonnerie manufactory under King Louis XIII (r. 1610–1643) and in the early years of King Louis XIV's reign (r. 1643–1715). Rather than the multiple smaller registers seen on sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century embroideries, these *colchas* contained one large field, sometimes with a medallion, framed by a wide border, very similar to the Louis XIII carpets.

The present *colcha* follows this French compositional format with its viny network of stylized tulips, peonies, and fantastical flowers arranged symmetrically along the vertical and horizontal axes. Worked with characteristic blond tussar silk on a midnight blue satin, and backed in coarse cotton, this coverlet may represent the final stage in the trade of Satgaon-derived embroidered hangings destined for elite European interiors. The floral motifs, which are rendered in chain stitch using a tambour hook, relate closely to those on a discrete group of polychrome silk-embroidered *colchas*, including examples at the Casa-Museu Guerra Junqueiro, Porto (612); Palácio Nacional de Sintra (PNS5796); and Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (2019.78.1, published in *Cora Ginsburg* catalogue 2018, pp. 18, 19).

The composition here differs from that of other surviving *colchas* in the highly unusual inclusion of a bird with outstretched wings, probably a phoenix, in the central roundel, and eight efflorescent urns arranged at a forty-five-degree angle in each corner of the main field and border. The phoenix, with its crested head and long, thinly feathered tail, is a typically Chinese motif suggesting trade and artistic influence in multiple directions. More commonly seen on *colchas* are the pelican sacrificing itself, a popular Christian symbol of the Eucharist, and peacocks. An example in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, features two confronting birds in flight, though of notably different character than the present phoenix (3704 Tec).

The baroque gadrooned urns at the corners are European in shape and are also seen on Savonnerie carpets as well as other Continental decorative arts such as Florentine *pietra dura* (hardstone inlay) and woven and embroidered silks from Spain, Italy, and France. No other Bengal *colchas* with this motif have come to light, though variations exist on other Indian textile arts such as Mughal and Deccani embroidered floor spreads and painted-and-dyed cotton palampores produced along the Coromandel Coast, indicating that this Eurocentric ornamental addition was desirable for the export market as well as for local imperial use. A palampore in the collection of the Rijksmuseum depicts similar gadrooned urns at the corners (BK-BR-988-A).

108 x 72 in.

MDA



## WOOL-EMBROIDERED LINEN COVERLET

Attributed to Elizabeth Hallock  
American (Mattituck, New York), ca. 1749

The delicate scrolling vines on this coverlet, each bearing fanciful flowers and leaves in shades of blue, are believed to be the handiwork of Elizabeth Hallock, who lived on Long Island, in the town of Mattituck, New York, in the eighteenth century. Not only did she embroider the bedcover, but according to a family note about this heirloom, which descended from mother to daughter for over two hundred years, Elizabeth also spun the linen used for the twill ground fabric from flax grown by her husband.

For industrious women in colonial America, producing a functional and decorative bedcover from raw material to finished product was all in a day's work. The sometimes-romanticized image of women during that period flourishing in their domesticity among spinning wheels and dye pots belies their often-laborious chores. By one contemporaneous account in a local newspaper, the wife of Stephen Rogers was noted for the household tasks she completed in one day: "she 'milk'd 8 cows in the morning—made her cheeses—turned and took care of fourscore of cheeses—made a number of beds—swept her house, consisting of three rooms—spun six skains of worsted yarn—baked a batch of bread—churned a quantity of butter—and milked 7 cows in the evening." Elizabeth Hallock's coverlet survives as an example of her diligence as well as her talent in creating an enduring embroidery that has been carefully preserved.

The Hallock line in America is said to have originated with William Hallock, who emigrated from Norfolk, Great Britain, in the seventeenth century and settled in Mattituck, Long Island. In the eighteenth century, William's great-grandson, Zerubabel Hallock II (1722–1800) married Elizabeth Swezey (1722–1806), and between 1745 and 1760, they had six children. The coverlet was possibly made by Elizabeth at the time of her son Zachariah's birth in 1749.

The flow of immigrants from Great Britain to the American colonies brought established traditions in needlework for domestic items, particularly the decoration of bed hangings and coverlets. While late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century styles of crewelwork, with bold exotic florals, evolved in the colonies into less dense motifs, there also developed the use of a palette limited to shades of indigo-dyed blue yarns. This blue-and-white needlework came to typify colonial embroidery when it was documented and revived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the Deerfield Society of Blue and White Needlework in Massachusetts.

While most colonial needlework held in museum collections today represents examples documented from New England families, this coverlet from Long Island relates to two pieces in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art that were both made by Ruth Culver Coleman, ca. 1760–75, on homespun linen, in Sag Harbor, Long Island, a town not far from Mattituck, where Elizabeth Hallock lived. One of Ruth Coleman's coverlets has a polychrome floral center surrounded by a wide border of blue-and-white floral sprays (61.48.1); the second of Ruth Coleman's bed hangings is executed solely in shades of blue, with allover floral sprays and sprigs (61.48.2). Observing the relationship of New England colonial embroidery to these works made on Long Island, the museum's curator Amelia Peck writes:

As far as we know, the pieces were made by Ruth Culver Coleman of Sag Harbor, a small town at the eastern tip of Long Island, New York, even though they resemble work that is regularly attributed to Connecticut. The location does not seem completely out of line when one remembers that Sag Harbor was an active fishing community during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and that New London was not many miles away, easily accessible across Long Island Sound. It is likely that exchanges occurred between the communities at the eastern end of Long Island and those on the Connecticut coast.

Elizabeth Hallock's proficiency as an embroiderer is evident from this coverlet: its composition features almost limitless variations of floral motifs, using predominantly herringbone, fishbone, and stem stitches with French knots, and its execution includes a skillful use of dots, stars, and hatching to provide textures and patterns. This rare coverlet demonstrates the energies and care that went into colonial women's production of items for use in their homes.

95 x 87 in.

DG



## CHECKED MUSLIN DRESSING GOWN, PROBABLY FOR MATERNITY

British or American, ca. 1830–35

Although most married women in the nineteenth century spent much of their lives in childbearing, the material traces of pregnancy are scarce. Surviving examples of day and evening dresses that were made for or modified to accommodate maternity during this long period that emphasized a corseted waist are uncommon or difficult to identify. Subsequently, they may have been further altered, given away, or, eventually, discarded. Loose-fitting dressing gowns constitute what the clothing historian Catriona Fisk characterizes as “ambiguous” in her 2019 article “Looking for Maternity: Dress Collections and Embodied Knowledge.” Worn in the privacy of the home, this type of informal attire was both “maternity-appropriate and equally functional,” allowing for an expanding belly and access to the breasts.

The generous volume and bodice lining of this fashionably styled dressing gown of green-and-white checked muslin dating to the early 1830s suggest it may have been worn by a woman both while pregnant and when nursing. Although these garments were amply cut for comfort, the over four-and-a-half yards of 31 ½-inch-wide cotton used to make this example may have intended it for maternity. Inside, the white cotton lining is stitched to the fitted back and includes a drawstring channel at the waist to adjust the fullness. At the sides, the lining is unattached, and the two long cotton ties would have been secured under the breasts. The wrapper features a spreading collar with a ruffled edge; V-shaped, bias-cut yoke; front placket opening; a ruffle extending from neck to hem; and billowing sleeves that seem to float around the arms. The front fabric is cartridge pleated into the yoke and hangs loose to the hem, while the same pleating controls the fullness at the sides and across the back. Matching piping decorates the yoke, placket, front, sleeve, and shoulder seams. The dressing gown’s stitching indicates that it was likely made at home—perhaps by the wearer herself. Although fashion periodicals provided elaborately detailed descriptions of the latest modes, including at-home garments, they infrequently addressed the needs of expectant mothers. Even *The Workwoman’s Guide*, a how-to for the home sewer published in Birmingham, England, in 1838, that contains exhaustive instructions on how to make a wide variety of “articles of wearing apparel,” dispenses with “nursing gowns” in two sentences.

The finely woven muslin in which heavy white warps and wefts outline a windowpane-check pattern with offset green-and-white squares may have been manufactured in Britain or India. Long sought after by Western consumers for their soft hand and sheerness, Indian cottons, including those with plain white and colored check patterns, were still imported into Britain in the nineteenth century. However, by the late eighteenth century, handweavers in Bolton, England, and Paisley, Scotland, were producing muslins like this gingham that rivaled their Indian counterparts. These lightweight materials were popular for informal morning dresses in the mid-1830s. *The Court Magazine* (1832–37) illustrated floral-patterned peignoirs of Swiss muslin, *mousseline d’Alger*, and mull muslin, sashed at the natural waist, in July and August 1835 and October 1836, respectively.

While pregnant women’s letters and diaries record their concerns about clothing their changing bodies and other issues related to childbearing, visual evidence of expectant mothers in the nineteenth century is rare. A tender drawing of a visibly pregnant Madame Monvoisin by her husband Raymond-Auguste-Quinsac Monvoisin, dating to about 1833–34, depicts her in a loose dressing gown with a flat, wide collar and enormous gigot sleeves, belted above her enlarged belly (Musée des Beaux-Arts-Mairie de Bordeaux, Bx M 8229).

A circa 1830 printed-cotton wrapper in the North Carolina Museum of History with a frilled collar and shallow, piped yoke has a drawstring at the center back and two long ties that extend to fasten at the front (H.1958.62.182). Another printed-cotton wrapper or informal morning dress dating to about 1838 with a ruffled yoke; full sleeves; fitted back; loose, open front; and a similar internal structure is in the collection of the Kentucky Historical Society (1948.12.10). It is thought to have been worn by Jane Maria Smith (née Peers, b. 1805), who married in August of that year and died in 1839, perhaps from complications of childbirth.

**Provenance:** Ex. collection Tasha Tudor. In the Whitaker-Augusta Auction Company sale catalogue, November 10 and 11, 2007, the dressing gown is described as “probably maternity.” A ca. 1835–40 printed-cotton dress with a front hook-and-eye closure for nursing was in the same sale.

MM



## GIRL'S STRIPED SILK DRESS

American, ca. 1834

This candy-striped pink-and-white silk taffeta girl's dress, said to have been worn by Maria Manning (1826–1917) of Salem, Massachusetts, at the age of eight, attests to the sartorial propriety expected of young American girls from affluent families in the early nineteenth century and the return to clothing them in the fashionable attire of adult women. From the mid-eighteenth century, teachings on childhood by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau popularized simplicity and practicality of dress for both boys and girls that enabled physical movement and set them apart visually from their parents. By the 1830s, however, children's clothing once again replicated that of grownups. For girls, especially, increasingly elaborate garments announced, and reinforced, their intended future roles as consumers of fashion. At the same time, girls and boys were firmly instructed in correct behavior that—like dress—was a sign of gentility. In New England, books such as *The School of Good Manners Composed for the Help of Parents in Teaching their Children How to Behave in Their Youth*, published in several editions in Windsor, Vermont, and Boston between 1808 and 1837, relied heavily on Christian precepts to ensure the decorous conduct of young Americans, particularly in the presence of elders.

Intended for a formal occasion, Maria's expertly made and finely finished silk dress with its voluminous *gigot* sleeves, tightly fitting bodice, and full skirt is a scaled-down version of what her mother might have worn. The bodice front is constructed from four bias-cut pieces—two on each side—seamed horizontally and gently gathered at the center to form pleats over the upper chest and create perfectly aligned stripes. At the armhole, the upper fullness of the two-piece, bias-cut sleeves is tightly gathered, creating a balloon-like effect at the shoulder. The four back bodice pieces are cut on the straight grain and fasten with hooks and eyes. The skirt incorporates three 21 ¼-inch selvedge widths and one narrower panel that are knife-pleated into the slightly V-shaped waistband. Its extra length would have allowed Maria to wear the dress for a few years as she grew. Piping decorates the neckline and the center front, armhole, inner sleeve, side, and curved back seams, along with the wristbands, which are secured with hooks and eyes. Bias-cut silk bands edge the neckline and the back seams. The bodice is lined with white cotton, while a sturdy brown cotton lining supports the expansive upper sleeves, narrowing to the wrist. A wide cotton facing serves to hold out the 77-inch hem. The dress's shape, fit, and fabric would have demanded graceful comportment from its young wearer, a mark of feminine bearing acquired from the dancing master and of belonging to the "polite world." Pink-and-white striped silk persisted as a popular dress fabric for young girls into the 1840s, as seen in a portrait of two sisters by Carl Buchna dated 1843, in which the girls wear matching candy-striped gowns (present location unknown).

Beneath her party dress, Maria would have worn petticoats and white cotton or linen drawers that were introduced at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Frequently decorated with embroidery, frills, or tucks, they covered the lower legs exposed by girls' short skirts.

The social context in which Maria wore her silk finery is suggested in several watercolor drawings from 1828 to 1830 by Cecil Elizabeth Drummond (1814–1897), now in the Victoria & Albert Museum. Drummond's teenage works illustrate many aspects of her upper-class home life in Buckinghamshire and record the vogue for stripes in both fashionable dress and interior furnishings, the similarity between women's and girls' clothing, and the attention that girls were encouraged to take with their appearance. In her 1829 depictions of the schoolroom, furnished with red-and-white striped upholstered furniture, and breakfast on Easter Sunday, stylishly attired women, men, and children—including three women and an adolescent girl in striped dresses with *gigot* sleeves—gather to play the piano, draw, read, and enjoy a morning meal (E.2068-1938, E.2060-1938). In another scene from the same year, a young girl in a rose-pink dress and frilled white drawers participates in her mother's toilette (E.2056-1938). Drummond also captured one of her younger sisters or cousins in a deep purple dress and white drawers as she regarded herself in a mirror placing a garland of flowers in her hair—likely imitating gestures observed in an adult female relative (E.2073-1938).

**Provenance:** Maria, the daughter of Robert and Rebecca Manning (née Burnham), was born in Salem on February 7, 1826. The Mannings were a prominent family with generations-long ties to the Ipswich and Salem areas of Massachusetts. Maria's first cousin was the author Nathaniel Hawthorne. For more information, see *Cora Ginsburg* catalogue 2022, p. 14, and the present catalogue, p. 11. Maria probably kept this beautiful dress throughout her life, before it descended to her sister Rebecca and, subsequently, other family members.

MM





## GIRL'S CORD-QUILTED LINEN WAISTCOAT

English, early 18th century

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, quilting was used to decorate clothing for both men and women, including caps, petticoats, and waistcoats. For women, especially, quilted sleeved or sleeveless waistcoats, worn informally at home, offered a welcome alternative to the heavily boned stays that the fashionable conical silhouette required, which constricted the bust and waist. Surviving examples in museum collections illustrate the popularity of these sturdy but flexible garments made in silk, linen, and cotton using a range of quilting techniques—primarily wadded, flat, and corded—to create geometric and stylized floral designs.

The basic tool of the quilter—whether professional or amateur—was the wooden frame that held the layers of fabric taut and evenly stretched while the work progressed. Once completed and released from the frame, the three-dimensional aspect of the quilted materials appeared in greater relief. Among the three main techniques, cord quilting demanded the most skill and accuracy since it involved a painstaking, two-step process. The quilter relied on parallel lines that had been pricked and pounced with powder by the designer onto the outer layer of fabric. She might stitch for a few inches, insert the cord, and continue to the next section, repeating these steps; or, as described in *L'Art du Brodeur* by Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin (1770), she might stitch the entire piece before inserting the cord through a hole in the lining fabric, made with a pointed tool or head of a pin. If the cord fitted too tightly, the finished fabric would pucker; if the spacing was too wide, the resulting pattern would not be sufficiently raised. Like many other extant waistcoats, this quilter used closely spaced backstitching that firmly secures the outer and inner layers; here, however, the backstitch is worked as a stabbed stitch and appears irregular on the reverse. The expert embroidery may be the hand of an accomplished amateur or of a professional who was commissioned to make the waistcoat.

The waistcoat's petite size indicates that it was for a young or early adolescent girl—a rare survival of undress at a time when girls' appearance resembled that of adult women. In addition to the front lacing characteristic of these garments, the laces over the shoulders would have allowed for the wearer's growth. In contrast to the tightly woven linen outer layer, the coarser quality of the linen lining is a common feature of women's waistcoats since it did not show, and its looser weave was easier to stitch through. Finely worked in pale yellow silk thread, stylized flowers and leaves on scrolling stems and alternating diagonal lines cover the surfaces of the four curved pattern pieces. The narrow guards filled with continuous loops along the center front opening and around the skirt edges suggest that the waistcoat was embroidered to shape, although, on the upper part, the motifs extend into the armholes and side seams. Just visible on the back of the right side are small black markings of the pounced motifs. While the design is not symmetrical on the front or back, the florals and foliage are clearly matched and repeat with slight variations in their details. The slimmer line of cord quilted waistcoats may have been preferred for summer, rather than bulkier yet warmer wadded waistcoats that were appropriate for winter.

In addition to individually made quilted items produced in or for affluent households, London shops sold quilted yardage for dress and furnishing. On a visit to the city in January 1717 from her home in Scotland, Lady Grizel Baillie bought—among many other purchases for her family's wardrobe—eleven yards of quilted fabric to make petticoats for her daughter Grisie. Quilted clothing also did not escape the discerning assessment of local thieves, who often pawned high-quality stolen garments. On January 9, 1714, the London *Daily Courant* announced the theft of several silk and wool gowns with matching petticoats, “an Orange-Colour Quilted Silk Petticoat ... [and] a Yellow Silk Quilted Wastcoat [*sic*]” from a house in Westminster.

For women, the waistcoat's figure-revealing suppleness added an element of eroticism to this intimate form of undress. In *The Count de Soissons, A Gallant Novel*, published in London in 1688, the count, disguised as a merchant, visits his paramour, interrupting her toilette. His barely concealed ardor is aroused by her attire that consists of “only one Petticoat ... and a Holland [linen] Wastcoat, cover'd with Lace, thro' which one saw things capable of enflaming the most frigid, with much more reason, him who was passionately in Love.”

A similar waistcoat, dated about 1700 and illustrated in the 1996 *Cora Ginsburg* catalogue, is now at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1996-107-2).

**Provenance:** This waistcoat descended in the Ainslie family in Dorset.

MM

*We thank Claire Thornton, who provided valuable information on the embroidery and construction.*

## BROCADED SILK SACK-BACK GOWN AND PETTICOAT

Scottish, ca. 1750–60 (the silk, English, ca. 1747–52)

This elegant sack-back gown with its matching petticoat and pinked self-fabric trimming is made from brocaded lutestring (or lustring), one of the most fashionable and widely available eighteenth-century dress silks produced in Spitalfields, the center of the English silk weaving industry in London. The alluring high sheen of this lightweight plain-woven fabric was achieved by stretching and heating the warp that had been coated with beer or another starchy substance. In addition to many surviving lutestring garments, references to these silks abound in contemporary letters, bills, and literature. In satirical plays, wealthy, social-climbing mercers who traded in lutestrings—and their wives—were often named for this desirable commodity. In *The Provok'd Husband, or a Journey to London*, performed in 1760, Lady Townly refers to the fifty pounds that she owes to “what’s his filthy Name,” that is, Mr. Lutestring, her former mercer, who now refuses to extend her credit. In *The Clandestine Marriage*, performed in 1766, Miss Sterling relates to her sister that she has purchased a white-and-silver silk for her wedding clothes from Sir Joseph Lutestring and mocks “the airs of Lady Lutestring dress in the richest brocade out of her husband’s shop.” In addition to their glossy appearance, lutestrings created a noticeable rustling sound when the wearer moved. Alexander Pope likens an affected man’s “squeak” to “a high-stretch’d lutestring” in *The Fourth Satire of John Donne* (1735).

The design of this lutestring dates it to the late 1740s or early 1750s when English silk designers created delicate floral-patterned silks that were distinct from the more elaborate creations of their influential Lyonnais counterparts, whose work they had often imitated. Here, rose sprigs and buds, carnations, and primula, in shades of red, green, yellow, pale blue, deep purple, white, black, and gray, are widely scattered over the pale pink ground figured with a trailing vine and tiny sprigs. This floral presentation exemplifies the description of brocaded lutestrings in G. Smith’s *The Laboratory or School of the Arts* (1756) as “either upon a plain or figured ground: the design must be open and airy and composed of various sorts of flowers carelessly disposed and garnished.” The composition is similar to many English silk designs and surviving fabrics in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum dating around 1750 (see, for example, T.395-1977; 5985:8; 5985:9; 723-1905; T.76-1986; and T.86-2003). Although the colorful blossoms convey nature’s bounty of the warm months, lutestrings were worn throughout the year. In this gown, the buttoned stomacher, or *compère*, and the petticoat are lined with glazed cream wool—suitable for winter, or a cool British summer.

In early eighteenth-century Britain, gowns with loose back pleats were known as sacks, derived from the French *sacque*. Around the time that this dress was made, these garments became known by another French term, *negligée*. Barbara Johnson (1738–1825), the daughter of a clergyman who lived in Buckinghamshire, kept meticulous records of her wardrobe including swatches, the amount of fabric she purchased and its price per yard, and the type of garment made up. In 1755, she began to use the word *negligée* instead of *sack* and, by the end of the decade, she no longer used the latter. Among her purchases were two silks resembling this one—in 1748, she acquired a “flower’d silk” for a “Robe-Coat” and, in 1755, she ordered a “flower’d silk Negligee.” In addition to its flowing pleats, this unaltered gown’s square neckline, triple-layered oval sleeve ruffles, pinked self-fabric robings graduated in width from neckline to hem, and flounced petticoat are typical of mid-eighteenth-century sacks, or negligees, that were worn for all but the most formal occasions. The *compère* appeared in the 1750s; in Allan Ramsay’s ca. 1759 half-length portrait of Martha, countess of Elgin, the sitter wears a pink silk dress with this type of bodice.

Pink silk gowns with frothy self-fabric trimmings were much in vogue in the 1750s and 1760s. Other portraits by Ramsay of aristocratic women dating to this period, including *Lady Louisa Connolly* (1759, private collection), *Queen Charlotte with Her Two Eldest Sons* (1764–65, The Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 404922), and *Hon. Laura Keppel and Charlotte, Lady Huntingtower* (1765, private collection), show the popularity for this shade that was deemed becoming for young women. In *Cleora: or, The Fair Inconstant* (London, 1752), the heroine’s ardent admirer enjoys “an opportunity of entertaining his beloved charmer; who was dressed in a suit [gown and petticoat] of pink-colour’d lutestring, which so much heightened the beauty of her complexion, that she looked like a little angel.”

**Provenance:** Formerly at Letterfourie House, Moray, Scotland, and, by descent, through the Gordon family.

MM









## PAIR OF LADY'S WOVEN SILK GARTERS

English, ca. 1725–50

Few garments elicit the same carnal allure today and in the past as women's garters. Prior to the nineteenth century, both men and women wore garters, though only for ladies have they come to represent intimate rituals that continue to the present day through the garter belt. Secured close to the body and hidden under petticoats, garters were powerful symbols of ardor, eroticism, femininity, and marriage for the wearer and the beholder. As such, they were often emblazoned with romantic mottoes either embroidered or, as here, woven into the very fabric. Around 1740, the bluestocking *salonnière* Elizabeth Montagu noted of a fair she attended, "In one booth were nymphs and swains buying garters, with amorous poesies; some only with the humble request, 'when these you see, remember me;' others with a poetical and more familiar 'be true to me as I'm to thee.'" Among the most enduring images of the sexualization of garters are William Hogarth's orgiastic *A Rake's Progress III* (1734, Sir John Soane's Museum, P42) and the sleazy yet tender scenes of postcoital dishevelment entitled *After* (1730–31, The J. Paul Getty Museum, 78.PA.205; 1731, The Fitzwilliam Museum, PD.12-1964).

Hogarth's cheeky, artistic commentaries on societal decencies are contemporaneous with the present silk garters. Probably gifted by a suitor to the object of his affection, they feature the words "LOVE IN TIRE / IS MY DESIRE," woven in white against green, red, and yellow. The couplet's separation across the bands conveys an added poetic charge. Men often wore concealed on their person a lover's favor, and a single inscribed garter was dually encoded with memories of the beloved and her body. What is more, its poem was quite literally completed when brought together with its mate. A nearly identical garter at the Victoria & Albert Museum, with the phrase "AS KISSING WHEN TWO LOVERS MEET," suggests such a uniting encounter (T.42-1955); however, its companion is lost.

The design and dimensions of the present pair and the single garter at the Victoria & Albert Museum are very similar to extant examples woven with slogans and "chequered" Scottish tartan patterning following the Jacobite rebellion of 1745–46, when this intimate accessory was adopted for public support of Charles Edward. In 1748, one English critic lamented in *The Gentleman's Magazine* that "[I] cannot but disapprove when the garter is made the distinguishing badge of a party. It ought to be like the caestus of Venus, and not daubed with plaid and crammed with treason." Pincushions sewn from the same bands were considered equally inappropriate. A Tory magistrate wrote, "It is a monstrous shame that such an ancient necessary appendage to the ladies toilets should be thus jacobitised, and transformed from its primitive use and simplicity into a variegated tool of faction and sedition."

Jacobite garters and examples like this pair were likely manufactured in the same city, probably Manchester, Coventry, or London, where garters and fancy ribbons were produced in large quantity. Some were also exported to the American colonies. Among the correspondence of Mary Spratt Provoost Alexander (1693–1760), owner of a New York City haberdashery business, are two woven samples (New-York Historical Society, Alexander Papers, Series 3; Mary Alexander, 1726–1760).

Garters with amorous inscriptions are a much rarer survival than Jacobite ones, however. In *The Connoisseur*, December 1930, the collector and historian Charles R. Beard offered a colorful theory as to why:

Wedding garters, once very numerous, are, however, far scarcer than those bearing political mottoes. This circumstance must be accounted for by the horseplay which generally accompanied a bridal in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, horseplay from which even Royalty was not exempt. . . . But when scenes bordering upon extreme licence were not uncommon in the Royal Palaces, it is not unsurprising that the rape of a bride's garters in less august establishments frequently resulted in the damage, if not the destruction, of most of her bridal array.

Beard referred to the violent postnuptial act of "seizing the garter," albeit with a bias toward preserving the object rather than the wearer's dignity. This unfortunate practice, wherein the groom's male friends accosted the bride and laid claim to her garter, has been replaced in more recent matrimonial festivities by its far more innocent descendant tradition: tossing the garter. For better rather than worse, this pair has survived intact, perhaps secreted away long ago as a testament to one enduring, confidential bond.

**Provenance:** The Mark Wallis Collection, Surrey, UK

42 ½ x 1 ¼ in. each

MDA

## SILK-EMBROIDERED TABLE CARPET

Italian, mid- to late 17th century

The grandeur of Italy's baroque palaces required equally extravagant textiles whose scale, texture, and colors would appropriately complement their setting. This table carpet, with its flora, fauna, and architectural elements rendered in allover silk floss embroidery, would have brought the outside world in and mimicked the manmade carved stone interior of one such palatial space.

Bouquets of tulips, poppies, roses, and other florals—repeated in mirror image at each narrow end—sprout from trompe l'oeil stone balustrades topped by a variety of animals. On one ledge, a bird snacks on a fruit while a pet squirrel, wearing a collar and leash fastened to a single baluster, stares wide-eyed at the viewer—possibly having been caught in the act of stealing the nut already in its mouth. At the opposite side, a green parrot nibbles a fruit with its stem still attached, perhaps just picked from a tree, and a collared dog with long, fair hair ambles along the ledge. The central field recalls indoor architectural details: beveled diamonds with rosette medallions create depth and evoke a coffered ceiling or a majolica tiled floor.

Executed in “needle-painted” silk shading using long-and-short stitches in a rainbow of hues, the floral and figurative elements may have been inspired by print and drawn sources. The birds and some of the flowers are reminiscent of those in surviving drawings by Giovanni Alfonso Samarco, an embroidery and lace designer working in Bari during the early to mid-seventeenth century; over ninety drawings by Samarco are now in the collection of the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence. As such, this embroidery could represent the output of an atelier working from similar designs that circulated. The embroiderers took pains to precisely depict the shaded silk floss embroidery on the flowers—with French knots used for the anthers—and on the creatures, but the naive forms of some, the disparate scale, and the varied craftsmanship imply no particular fidelity to reality and probably also indicate the involvement of multiple members of an embroidery workshop. For instance, the squirrel is charmingly cartoonish in its outline and features, and the tiny dog—likely meant to represent a large breed—is juxtaposed with exaggerated blossoms of nearly the same size.

The diamond patterning of the central field is primarily worked in *punto floscio*. As this stitch's name implies, floss silks are couched in narrow, parallel rows. Although similar stitches were utilized in Portugal and Spain, the Italian technique of *punto floscio* is distinct from those in that it often covers the entire surface, as on this table carpet with its entirely hidden linen ground. Since the nineteenth century, textile historians have associated *punto floscio* with the Kingdom of Naples; however, it was employed throughout the Italian peninsula, from the northern province of Trentino down to the island of Sicily. Over the polychrome silks, the embroiderers outlined every motif with couched brown silk-wrapped cord, another characteristically southern European technique, seen on ecclesiastical vestments.

This table carpet may have been repurposed from a larger cover, or from directional hangings made to ornament pilasters and walls. A horizontal seam, cleverly disguised within the faux tiled or coffered design, runs through the center, and the balustrades at either end have been bisected, revealing that the embroidery was probably slightly larger in an earlier format. This type of use and reuse was typical of Italian needleworks of this period which, because of their expense, often passed through successive hands until they were no longer salvageable. Indeed, the majority of extant *punto floscio* embroideries exist today in the forms of altar frontals and paraments, some purpose-made but many others the result of the common practice among wealthy women of donating one's outmoded textiles to local parishes, where they were altered. A pair of taller and narrower *punto floscio* hangings, probably once used as pilaster covers, with a composition very similar to the present one—including macaws seated on balustrades, a “tesselated [*sic*] floor” design, and Corinthian columns—sold at the Anderson Galleries in New York City on February 20, 1925.

**Provenance:** Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc., New York, January 1938; acquired by Dalva Brothers, Inc., New York.

59 ¼ x 97 ½ in.

MDA









## SILK BROCATELLE HANGING

Probably by Mathevon et Bouvard

French (Lyon), ca. 1850

Following the revolutions that shook Europe in the late 1840s, Lyon's silk weavers were eager to return to the perceived economic stability of imperial patronage. Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte's crushing military defeats and faltering foreign policy significantly weakened France, but he understood the importance of supporting local industries. First as president (1848–52) and then as Emperor Napoleon III (r. 1852–70), he promoted the Lyonnais Grande Fabrique to bolster his reign and the assumed dominance of French taste, just as his uncle had quite effectively done fifty years earlier.

It was in the shadow of the Canut (Lyonnais silk weaver) revolts and the national revolution of 1848 that this spectacular hanging was produced on the jacquard looms of Lyon's Croix Rousse neighborhood. The Second Empire's unfettered opulence, with its over-the-top revival of the ancien régime style—a defiant symbol of France's resilient preeminence in all matters of fashion and culture—is on display in this figured brocatelle, a complex weave that makes this piece a tour de force of the silk weaver's art.

A network of swirling rococo volutes colored deep bordeaux form the central field and border designs, delineated by a thin band of wildflowers. The dark, gleaming satin contrasts with the muted gold and berry tones of the twilled ground, created by the brocatelle's complicated lampas weave structure in silk and linen with discontinuous supplementary weft patterning. Brocaded cabbage roses, lily of the valley, hydrangeas, and other flowers in tones of pink, lavender, red, blue, yellow, and green populate the remaining interstices and bloom in various directions. The composition is bounded on three sides with an outermost frame of ovals and filigree-like circles.

Maison Mathevon et Bouvard, one of Lyon's most skilled and sought-after textile manufacturers throughout the nineteenth century, probably produced this silk around 1850. The firm wove at least two brocatelles with strikingly similar rococo-esque designs in like palettes of red and gold (Art Institute of Chicago, 1988.52; Musée des Tissus, Lyon, MT 51421.24). A third brocatelle, currently unattributed but closely related to these three in design and color, may also be their work (Cincinnati Art Museum, 1885.16a).

From the 1820s until the 1900s, five French governments as well as the Catholic church patronized Mathevon et Bouvard's looms. Their silks were awarded numerous medals and honors at national and international exhibitions, including the Expositions des produits de l'industrie française from 1823 to 1844 and a series of world's fairs. The firm was initially praised for their grisaille genre scenes and portraiture with meticulous engraving-like detail; in 1827, they won an award for one such silk picture after painter Michel Genod's *Les Adieux du soldat* (1824, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, A 140). Three decades later, their portrait of George Washington earned them the gold medal at the 1855 Exposition universelle and was rewoven for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Mathevon et Bouvard found their greatest patron in Empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III. In 1867, she employed the firm to envelop the *lit à la colonne* at the Palais de l'Elysée in verdant damask. The bed was outfitted for the visit of Empress Elisabeth and Emperor Franz Joseph I to the 1867 Exposition universelle but, ultimately, the bed went unused and was stored away (now on view at the Château de Compiègne). Mathevon et Bouvard also provided the upholstery for the Pavillon de l'Impératrice at that same exposition.

Although it remains uncertain whether this hanging and its mate (Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, 1997-45-1) were created as exhibition pieces, the craftsmanship and scale are consistent with Mathevon et Bouvard's displayed masterworks at those fairs. Given Eugénie's own patronage of the firm, it is also possible these brocatelles were destined for one of the imperial palaces, or were part of an extravagant, one-off commission by another of Paris's wealthy, aristocratic elites at the dawn of the Second Empire.

145 ½ x 63 ½ in.

MDA

## IKAT HANGING (*PARDEH*)

Uzbek (Bukhara or Samarkand), ca. 1850–75

Throughout history, Uzbekistan has been a crossroads, both figurative and literal, between East and West. Successive invasions and conquests, including those by Persians, Kushans, Mongols, Turkic nomads, and Russians from antiquity through the nineteenth century, have influenced the region's culture in myriad ways. Moreover, its landlocked position made it a requisite depot along the Silk Road for millennia. As such, Uzbeks developed their own unique textile traditions that drew upon aspects of their multiethnic past. This is most powerfully demonstrated through the creativity, experimentation, and prolificacy of their ikat production over the course of the nineteenth century. While the origins of ikat's movement into Central Asia are still not fully understood, it is evident that, by the early 1800s, commercial manufacture was already well established in Bukhara, followed later by successful industries in Samarkand and the Ferghana Valley.

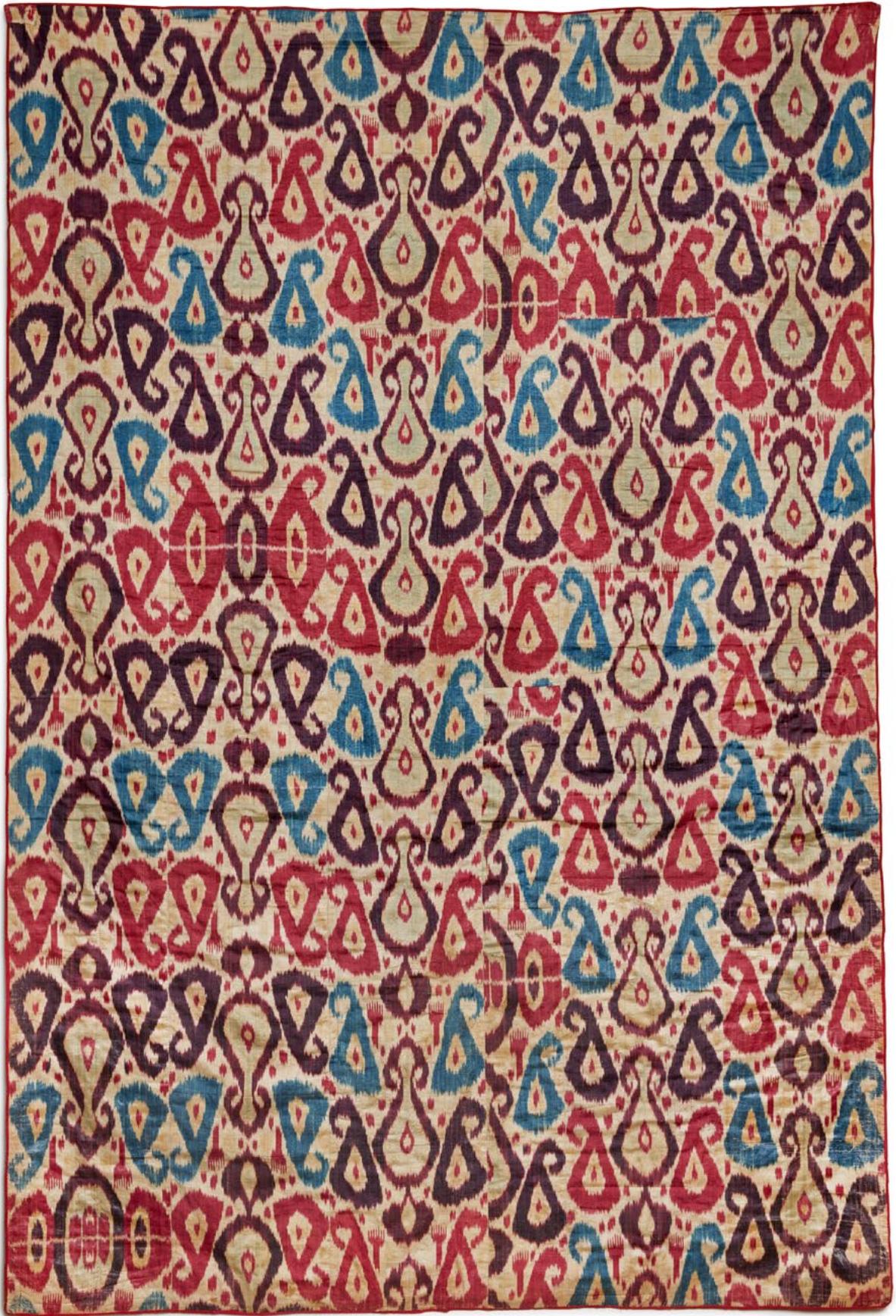
The word *ikat* ultimately comes from the Malay *mengikat*, meaning “to tie,” and involves binding and dyeing the warp and/or weft threads before weaving. In the case of Central Asian ikats, typically only the silk warps are dyed, with undyed cotton utilized for the wefts. As the Malaysian name suggests, threads are tied in small bundles and laid out side by side to be marked with the desired design. These areas are then wrapped using a material to create a resist and placed in a dye bath, with the pigment affixing to the unbound areas only. These steps would be repeated as many times as necessary for each additional color in the pattern. After dyeing and drying, the threads would finally be ready for assembly on the loom and weaving. The resulting woven pattern from this dye process thus appears blurred or clouded, with no distinct outlines, an effect that is also reflected in the poetic Persian terminology for ikats in Central Asia: *abr* (“cloud”) and *abr-bandi* (“tying the clouds”).

This warp-faced plain-weave ikat hanging, or *pardeh*—another Persian term which in Central Asia referred to textiles hung in domestic spaces and used as door and tent covers, curtains, and bedding—probably dates to the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The vibrant warps were dyed no fewer than five times using red, purple, cyan, green, and yellow pigments derived from the natural world. Recent dye analyses of Central Asian ikats reveal the use of madder and cochineal for reds and purples, indigo for blues, and larkspur or pagoda tree buds for yellow. The softly faded golden and celadon hues on this ikat are the result of such organic dyes, which, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, were often replaced by synthetic ones imported from Europe.

Comprising five full selvage-width panels, each measuring about eleven inches wide, and one half-width panel, this *pardeh* combines several classically Uzbek design elements. Symmetrical, elongated pomegranate motifs mix with simplified ram's horns and *botehs* (paisleys), an element drawn once again from Persian sources and rarely seen in ikats. These are interspersed with smaller, talismanic comb-like motifs and concentric so-called eye spots. The reversed orientation of some of the joined lengths, with the ram's horns, *botehs*, and combs turned 180 degrees, creates visual rhythm and variety that is enhanced by the five-color design.

While the Islamic-inspired *botehs* dominate the composition, the hanging's backing fabric—a roller-printed red-and-white floral cotton with blue and green stripes—indicates yet another stage in Uzbekistan's political and cultural transformation. Just as ikat production and trade developed in full force, Russian military campaigns encroached on the region, first under Tsar Alexander I (r. 1801–1825) and continuing with his successors. As part of this colonialist expansion, the Russian Empire imported massive quantities of cheaply produced printed cottons from its factories for use by local populations as garments and bedding. This was intended to ensure Uzbek reliance on Russian products, a measure that continued under Soviet rule in the following century with the establishment of cotton processing and printing facilities in Tashkent and Ferghana. This cotton is an earlier example of Russian roller printing, dating to the middle of the nineteenth century and inspired by the floral furnishing fabrics produced in Britain in the 1830s. The cotton's bands of overdyed indigo complement the blue *botehs* in the silk, although this is a coincidence.

**Provenance:** This *pardeh* comes from the estate of the late Pierre Apraxine (1934–2023), renowned photography collector and curator. Apraxine acquired it in 1972 or 1973 from Vladimir Haustov of Martin and Ullman Artweave Textile Gallery, New York; Haustov had collected it in Kabul, ca. 1972. It was exhibited in *Textiles from the Collection of Pierre Apraxine*, Martin and Ullman Artweave Textile Gallery, January 1987. Until 2022, it hung in Apraxine's New York City apartment, the dynamic composition complemented by its juxtaposition with Italian mid-century design and African artifacts.





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