Fan

Place of origin: Brazil (made)

Date: 1880s (made)

Artist/Maker: Natté, M. & E. Melles (manufacturers)

Materials and Techniques: Turkey feathers (Melegaris gallopavo), probably Chestnut-breasted Coronet (Boissonneaua matthewsii), probably Amazon parrot (Amazona sp.), silk, ivory, beetles

Credit Line: Given by Margaret S. Perkin

Museum number: T.15-1950

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

During the last three decades of the 19th century there was a passion for using parts of dead animals as ornaments, both for the person and the home. This craze intensified during the 1880s, and in spite of numerous contemporary articles exposing the barbarities inherent in this trade, the fashion persisted.

The fan shown here has a stuffed hummingbird amidst feathers and down from a variety of exotic birds. The spray of roses and leaves are actually made of pink, white and green feathers. Resting on the feather foliage are three real beetles. Fans like this one would be intended to enhance the fashions worn at balls, soirées, theatres and weddings.

Descriptive line

Fan with feathers, stuffed hummingbird, beetles and ivory handle

Physical description

Fan composed of an ivory handle, base of pink turkey feathers (Melegaris gallopavo) and centre of fluffy white turkey feathers (Melegaris gallopavo) with probably a stuffed Chestnut-breasted Coronet (Boissonneaua matthewsii) perching on sprays of roses and leaves made of pink, white and green feathers (green feathers are probably Amazon parrot (Amazona sp.)). Stems of wire wrapped with silk. Three real beetles resting on the foliage. Still in its original box.

Dimensions

Height: 415 mm, Width: 290 mm, Depth: 85 mm

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Object history note

RF number is 1950/673.

Fans such as this one were called feather flowers by the manufacturer, and stated on the box for ‘fashions for balls, soirées, theatres and weddings’.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O114619/fan-natte-m-e/