Public access description

This design is a preparatory technical drawing for a patterned silk. It acted as instructions for the weaver about how to tie up the threads on the loom and then weave in the pattern. It is one of a group of 1577 such designs commissioned by a silk manufacturing partnership active in Lyon, France from about 1761-1772. Lyon was the most prestigious centre of the silk industry in Europe from the 1660s onwards. This company was one of its 400 manufacturing concerns mid century and was particularly careful to keep good records, noting on the back of the designs the company name, the number of the design in the design archive or collection, the date the design was made, and minimal instructions on how it should be woven. Such information allowed the manufacturers to go back to the original design work if they received requests for a reweave of the design at a later date. The partnership was called L. Galy, Gallien et cie. from 1761 until the beginning of 1771 when the senior partner Louis Galy retired. Louis Gallien continued the business under the name L. Gallien et cie. into the late 1780s by which time he was specialising in plain rather than patterned silks.

The inscription on the back reveals that this design was completed on 28 February 1763 and was no. 808 in the archive of L. Gallien et cie. The stamp reveals that it belonged to an early 20th century designer who may have used it as inspiration for his own designs.

Descriptive line

for silk, 1763, French; Galy Gallien, ribbons, flowers, polychrome

Physical description

The design is painted in gouache on to point paper (a kind of graph paper). The pattern consists of a ribbon meander in red and pale blue with a garland of flowers weaving around it and a bunch of stylised mixed flowers to the left in pinks, blues and greens. On the front the name of the printer of the paper is engraved along with the type of paper. On the back is inscribed in handwriting in ink the name of the manufacturer, the date of the design, its number, the type of the fabric and some instructions for weaving.

Dimensions

Height: 45.1 cm, Width: 54.6 cm

Museum number

T.412-1972

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O120932/textile-design-unknown/