Design
Place of origin: Spitalfields (designed)
Date: 26/03/1706-1707 (designed)
Artist/Maker: Leman, James, born 1688 - died 1745 (designer)
Materials and Techniques: Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and bodycolour on laid paper
Credit Line: Purchased with Art Fund support and the National Heritage Memorial Fund
Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description
This design is from an album that contains 104 designs for fine woven silk cloth and is dated March 26th 1706/7. A constant supply of fashionable new designs from which to create new lines was required, so patternmakers and master weavers like James Leman supplied a wide range of designs for different weavers. The album contains some of his work from the period 1706-1716, as well as five designs from the 1730s.

James Leman was born in 1688 into a weaving family of Huguenot descent. In 1702 he was apprenticed to his father, Peter, and lived with his family in Stewart Street, Spitalfields in London. Leman's inscription on the design reveals that it was commissioned by Mr Trenchfield, a mercer who commissioned three designs between 1706 and 1712.

Descriptive line
Design for woven silk from the 'Leman Album', pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and bodycolour on laid paper, by James Leman, Spitalfields, 1706-1707

Physical description
Design for woven silk from the 'Leman Album', in pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and bodycolour on laid paper, depicting stylised flowers, including roses and a parrot tulip, as well as fruit, in pink, red, yellow, orange, blue and green and green leaves. There is a basket of flowers at the bottom of the design and brown geometric shapes on the white ground, behind the main floral design.

The design is squared up in pencil for cords and dezines, with dezines numbered in ink.

Dimensions
Height: 60 cm, Width: 26.4 cm, Height: 23.625 in, Width: 10.375 in

Museum number
E.1861:40-1991

Object history note
This is a design from the so-called 'Leman album' which was bought from Vanners Silks Ltd. in 1991. Natalie Rothstein catalogued the designs before the album was bought by the Victoria and Albert Museum. She gave each design a VS number (for Vanners Silks) in her catalogue Silk Designs of the Eighteenth Century. The designs have been subsequently numbered by the Prints, Drawings and Paintings Department, however, a concordance exists.

Historical significance: The designs collected in the album are, with the exception of some fragmentary medieval examples in Italian collections, the earliest silk designs known to exist.

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O65129/design-leman-james/