Public access description

This intriguing hanging is an important early example of the complex techniques of dyeing with resists and mordants that came to be known in the West by the anglicised term 'chintz'. It is, however, unclear whether this piece was actually made under western patronage or simply uses western figures as part of its design. The outer border, which was added in the 18th century, is certainly of the type made for the western market.

The main part of the hanging is divided into two main sections. The upper part shows two men and two youths in Persian dress (although their pale complexions and blue eyes are incongruous), while the lower half shows two European, probably Dutch, men at a table, accompanied by a striped dog and two women in costumes that combine Indian and western elements. A Venetian glass sweetmeat dish is seen standing on the floor, and a European ribbed glass can be identified on the table. Other vessels are in both Chinese and Indo-Persian styles. The figures in the small niches surrounding the main part of the hanging are in Indian dress, and the architectural surroundings of the piece suggest an Indian palace.

A companion piece with similar figures is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

Descriptive line

Wall hanging depicting figures in Persian and European dress, cotton, mordant-dyed and resist-dyed, Coromandel Coast, South-East India, ca. 1640-50, with 18th century border

Physical description

Large hanging of painted and dyed cotton (chintz), depicting figures in Persian and European dress, surrounded by small niches containing figures mainly in Indian dress. There is an added border of later (18th-century) chintz fabric.

Dimensions

Length: 259 cm, Width: 152 cm

Museum number

687-1898

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O88502/wall-hanging-hanging-unknown/