Design

Place of origin: England (made)
Date: ca. 1788-1792 (made)
Artist/Maker: Kilburn, William, born 1745 - died 1818 (designer)
Materials and Techniques: painted in watercolour on paper
Credit Line: Purchased from the funds of the Capt. H. B. Murray Bequest
Museum number: E.894:63/2-1978
Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description
Design for a printed cotton by William Kilburn. He was born in Dublin and was apprenticed to a cotton and linen printer at Lucan, near Dublin. He moved to London and sold designs to calico printers, and drawings and engravings to print shops. The botanist William Curtis employed him to do some of the plates for the Flora Londiniensis. Subsequently Kilburn managed and then purchased a calico-printing factory at Wallington in Surrey. Dismayed at the pirating of his designs, he was involved in a successful petition to parliament in 1787 to protect the copyright of designs. Kilburn's pieces of muslin chintz are said to have sold for as much as a guinea a yard and he presented one of them (a seaweed pattern) to Queen Charlotte. But his exquisitely detailed fabrics had been copied, printed and marketed by rival firms within ten days of their first appearance at Brown, Rogers & Co., the wholesale linen drapers in Cheapside who were the proprietors of most of Kilburn's designs. These imitations were printed in fewer colours on cheaper cloth and, although coarser in appearance, were offered for sale at two-thirds of the price of the original.

Descriptive line
Design from an album of designs for printed textiles (1788-1792) by William Kilburn

Physical description
This design consists of two horizontal sheets of paper that together form one design. It shows eight main vertical stripes that consist of green and brown branches, purple and greenish-yellow seaweed-like plants and flowers and buds in different colours. Only the third stripe from the left depicts what appears to be yellow coral. On the upper half of the design are what seem to be four unfinished stripes consisting of narrower pink stripes. The colour of the background is cream.

Dimensions
Height: 19 cm, Width: 25.1 cm

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Object history note
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URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O155578/design-kilburn-william/