Wallpaper design

Place of origin: England (designed)

Date: 1891 (designed)

Artist/Maker: C. F. A. Voysey, born 1857 - died 1941 (designer)
Essex & Co. (manufacturers)
Newman, Smith & Newman Ltd (manufacturers)

Materials and Techniques: Pencil, black chalk and watercolour, on paper

Museum number: E.267-1913

Gallery location: Prints & Drawings Study Room, level F, case EDUC, shelf 7A

Public access description

Designers like William Morris, Walter Crane and the young Charles Voysey were working at the forefront of design in the late 1880s and 1890s. They considered flat stylised patterns, of the kind seen in this design, more suitable for decorating walls than figurative or naturalistic patterns with shadows and the illusion of depth. This was because they thought that figurative subjects, or those which imitated reality by using perspective and shading, were creating a false impression on a flat surface. The majority of consumers, however, favoured the more traditional styles which were also for sale during this period.

This is a design for intended for both a wallpaper and a textile. The wallpaper manufacturers Essex & Co. bought this design as it is, but the firm of Newman, Smith & Newman, who printed cotton textiles, bought the same design without the bird.

Descriptive line

Design by C. F. A. Voysey for a wallpaper and textile showing plants and bird, 1891

Physical description

Design (unfinished) for a wallpaper and a textile showing a repeating pattern of birds perched amongst plants. The pattern is a half drop repeat with a horizontal mirror arrangement. Only the central pattern unit is coloured in watercolour. The bird is blue, the large leaves above its head are green and the large flower is yellow. The rest of the pattern is in pencil or black charcoal and in some parts the pattern is merely suggested; Pencil, black chalk and watercolour, on paper.

Dimensions

Height: 59.9 cm, Width: 54 cm

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URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O84779/wallpaper-design-c-f-a/