



Stomacher

Not on display

Title/Description: Stomacher

Object Type: Textile

Materials: Linen, Metal, Silk, Silk taffeta

Technique: Chain stitch, Couching, French knot, Long and short stitch, Satin stitch

Measurements: h480 x w280 x d30 mm (framed)

Accession Number: LAC 9

Historic Period: Early 18th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

Credit Line: Donated by Lady Sainsbury, 2010

A stomacher is a triangular panel of fabric, often embroidered, worn to fill the space left between the front sides of a woman's open gown. Stomachers were part of fashionable women's dress for nearly three centuries, from approximately 1570 to 1770. Though its shape changed over time, the eighteenth-century stomacher was usually triangular with tabs along its sides and decorated tabs at its bottom. Stomachers of the period were usually richly embroidered with floral designs. Stomachers were fastened to a gown's bodice or the wearer's stays by pins or ribbon ties. This stomacher has six tabs, five tabs of coarsely woven linen and one of silk taffeta, which would have been pinned to the gown with which it was worn. It is unclear if the tabs are original to the stomacher or if they were replaced at a later date.

The narrowness of this stomacher suggests it comes from the earlier decades of the eighteenth century. The embroidered tabs at the stomacher's bottom, two on each side of its bottom point, would have been pinned to the gown's skirt. The stomacher features a sinuous floral pattern wrought in a spectrum of pink, green, and silver threads. The two sides of the stomacher, divided by a green silk ribbon, are similar but not symmetrical. Both sides exhibit softly undulating tree branches made of silver and green thread and leaves stitched with four shades of green thread. From these branches grow carnations, rosebuds, tulips, wild roses, and other wildflowers. This stomacher was likely stitched by the woman who wore it, and the condition of its embroidery indicates it was well loved.

Isabella Rosner, February 2022

Further Reading

Avril Hart and Susan North, *Historical Fashion in Detail: the 17th and 18th Centuries* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1998).

Four Hundred Years of Fashion, edited by Natalie Rothstein, Madeleine Ginsburg, Avril Hart, Valerie D. Mendes, and Philip Barnard (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984).

Weerada Muangsook, "Stomacher," *Fashion History Timeline*, 2 June 2019, <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/stomacher/>.

Provenance

Late acquisition
