

A rare late-17th century European needlepoint carpet

Sold



## Description

The brown ground embroidered in cross stitch in shades of pink, blue, green, yellow and cream wools. Decorated with a highly stylised repeat pattern of tulip-heads and geometric shapes, surrounded by a chain border. The outer border decorated with a reduced repeat of the main decoration, with tulip heads in each corner. Restored. Probably, English, second quarter of the 17th century

Width: 330.00 cm./10ft., 6.50 in.

Length: 225.00 cm./7ft., 5.00 in.

Needless to say, very few needlepoint carpets have survived from the 17th century. This is an important example, intricately worked, illustrating the quality of the craftsmanship at the time.

Very few needlepoint carpets were made in England to be placed on the floor, during the 17th century, when they were generally made to cover the tops of tables. However, needlepoint carpets were being made on the Continent, and in the late-17th century there was a substantial production in Delft and Leyden of both embroidered and woven carpets, particularly with the floral designs known today as tulip carpets or tapestry. The Continental designs were complicated and sophisticated, and formal designs were favoured giving a stylized effect. Flowers common to the Continent are more profuse and varied, and this is reflected in the design. The colours, usually greens, blues, faded yellows, sometimes faded-brick are similar to the English. The wools employed are much coarser and rougher to the touch, than the English wools.

Although great emphasis must be placed on French influence when looking at needlepoint carpets, there are a comparative lack of French examples. This is probably due to the custom for the nobility to spend most of their time at Court which prevented them from attending to the decor of their estates. Louis XIV introduced the hand-knotted pile carpets to the Gobelins soapworks, known as La Savonnerie, which led to poor imitations, point noue'. Madame de Maintenon founded the Institute of Embroidery to which the nobility of France and Europe sent their daughters to learn these skills, particularly that of canvas embroidery point de St Cyr'. This explains the similarity in design throughout the European Continent.