

Adam Calvert Bentley and Ardgowan Antiques

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Large 19th Century Trojan War Needlework Panel

£3,800

This large and impressive needlework panel depicts an adaptation of the first scene shown on the ninth tapestry in the original series, which is in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

The War of Troy tapestry shows three separate events from the middle of the story, which took place after the death of the great warrior Achilles.

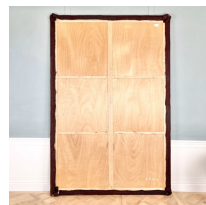
In the offered panel the Amazon warrior Queen Penthesilea promises to help King Priam to defeat the Greek army, which is attacking the great fortified city of Troy. The Royal figures are shown almost life-size, dressed in fine Renaissance style and are accompanied by attendants and worriers in armour, on a carpet of flowers and with the gates of Troy in the background. Hand-worked in gross-point with petit-point details and faces, using coloured wool and silk heightened with metal threads.

SKU: C4167

Height: 250 cm (98.5 inches)

Width: 173 cm (68 inches)

Year: English. 19th Century



THE V&A TAPESTRY

Depicting the story of the Trojan War and the arrival of the Amazon Queen Penthesilea to help the beleaguered Trojans against the Greeks, it is a rare survival from one of the most important sets of tapestry made during the Renaissance.

Intricately woven in wool and silk and measuring 13ft by 23ft (4m by 7m), it was made between 1475 and 1490 in Tournai, in the Southern Netherlands, now Belgium.

The tapestry originally belonged to Charles VIII of France and was the ninth of an 11-piece set, which when displayed, would have covered more than 100 metres of wall.

The during the 1880s, the acquisition was strongly recommended by the prominent designer William Morris and artist Edward Burne-Jones. After seeing it, Burne-Jones wrote to the V&A exclaiming, "I came away with a state of enthusiasm such as I have never felt".

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Several series of the Trojan War tapestries were made between 1460 and 1490 for leading art patrons of the day including Henry VII, but only fragments of these sets survive.

The tapestry had hung in the V&A since 1887, but was removed in the 90s when it became too damaged to display.

During the restoration process, which began around 2004, the tapestry was "wet cleaned" in Belgium with a special machine that uses water vapour and suction to ensure that the fibres were supported at all times and were not wet for too long.

It was then returned to the V&A where it underwent 4,000 hours of conservation work by a team of specialist conservators at the V&A's textile conservation studio.

The tapestry was rested on a repair frame and completely lined with a fine linen fabric, while larger areas of loss and damage were reinforced with heavier linen.

The conservators used synthetically-dyed British wool yarns to match the tapestry's original vegetable-dyed wool warp (lengthwise threads) and wool weft (crosswise threads). The silk weft was repaired with threads from France.

Frances Hartog, one of the conservators, said: "Before we started work, it looked like an old rag because so much of the original fabric had rotted away and there were huge patches of daylight where the fragile fibres had disintegrated.

"It has a very complex design, so it certainly never got boring and I think it looks rather stunning now it resembles its original state."

Peta Motture, the chief curator of the galleries, said: "The restoration of the War of Troy tapestry is a great triumph for us. It is so important because it straddles the two ideas – it looks like a medieval object but was made at the height of the Renaissance period.

"It tells us a lot about luxury living at the time but also shows how so many important ideas and styles from the Medieval period continued for hundreds of years."

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