

Justin Evershed-Martin

Fine Art and Design



A Very Fine Gilt-Leather Chinoiserie Screen

The tooled and stamped leather ground of unusual intricacy, the whole gilded and painted with exceptional delicacy. Retaining its original surface and in very good condition.

England c 1870

H 176cm x W 216cm x D 5cm

(H 69 ¼ x W 85 x D 2 in)

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This remarkably fine screen stands apart from others by virtue of its exceptional detailing and quality of painting. The leather is hand-tooled in a wide variety of patterns to give a subtle texture and depth to the background. The central landscape and bordering cartouches are beautifully painted with a delicacy and sophistication that is extremely unusual on leather and which would have represented substantial investment at the times of its creation.

The drawing of the central scene is directly comparable to hand-painted late 18th century Chinese export wall paper examples of which can be seen at Saltram or Blickling Hall, rather than the more robust designs of the early 18th century that imitated Coromandel lacquer. The images of elegant ladies and playful children in an idealised landscape is typical, but the sensitivity with which they are painted is not. The tooling of the leather is used to emphasise the differing textures of the sky (in small hatched squares) and the water (in concentric quarter circles), and the figures framed by blossoming trees and exotic birds. The whole is bordered with cartouches of individual vases and baskets of flowers.



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