

Object Summary



Object Summary



Polychrome Embroidered Suzani with Floral Motifs

19th century

Uzbekistan (Bukhara)

Cotton, silk threads

Overall: 102 1/2 x 67 1/2 in. (260.4 x 171.5cm)

This hand-embroidered textile is known as a *suzani*, a type of embroidery that originated in urban centers of modern day Uzbekistan. The design is composed of large rows of rosettes, called *lola* (tulip), surrounded by swirling vegetal designs. This style, with floral designs intertwined with meandering vines, and colors palette indicate that it was probably made in Bukhara or a nearby center in the late 1800s. *Suzanis* were an essential element of a young woman's dowry, hand stitched by groups of women in preparation for marriage. Women took great pride in their embroidery skills, as their creations were displayed in their homes and at important occasions, such as weddings and funerals. Women of all social strata, both Muslim and Jewish, participated in the art of *suzani*-making. Traditionally, these textiles were embroidered on strips of unbleached cotton called *kasbah*. This cloth was cut into strips and stitched together. A designated designer called a *kalamkash* outlined the larger elements of the design in ink. The highly respected role of *kalamkash* was usually filled by an older woman in the family or a professional draughts-women who would pass her skills along to her daughter. After the *kalamash* drew the design, the strips of cloth were separated, embroidered by several

Object Summary

women at a time, and stitched together again. The smaller details of the design were incorporated by the individual embroiderers.