

Object Summary



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Polychrome Tile Panel with Birds and Garden Motif

17th century

Iran

Safavid

Ceramic, polychrome pigments

This panel is composed of ceramic tiles depicting lush imagery of flora and fauna set against a yellow background. Songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl surround the central cypress tree, tigers spring from leafy foliage, and flowering plants intertwine. However, a close inspection reveals an incongruous composition: the cypress tree lacks its trunk, and the stems of flowering plants abruptly end at the edges of the tiles. These tiles originated in Iran during the Safavid period (1501–1722 CE). Many of the tiles in Doris Duke's collection (along with many Safavid tiles in collections around the world) originated from the collection of Hagop Kevorkian, an Armenian archaeologist and dealer in antiquities. Following the London Exhibition of 1914, painted tiles from Safavid Iran appeared widely on the international market — some as complete panels and others as individual tiles. This panel was likely assembled from a group of miscellaneous tiles of a similar style to complete an almost harmonious composition. Some of the tiles may have originally formed a composition resembling another set of tile panels in the collection: 48.85.1 and 48.85.2.