

About the Silk Weave Patterns

The hand painted silk velour and satin patterns we hold were created by designers at the Lyon factory of André Donat between c.1840 and 1865, though some are later. On the reverse of most sheets are details of the exact date on which the design was made along with instructions on how it should be set up on the loom. Some of the patterns are signed by Donat. Many of the sheets show signs of use on the factory floor, with pencil corrections, annotations and running repairs. A few even had the original pins still embedded in the paper.

Donat silks were shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and its voluminous catalogue features the following entry:

*1192: Donat, A. Manufacturer of Silks, Place Croix Paquet, Lyons (Rhône)
Waistcoats and dresses, fancy watered silk; grenadine, satin, poplin, &c.*

These wonderful designs were first shown in 2015, at 31 Fournier Street when the house was owned by Rodney Archer. They were originally acquired from the archives of the long closed silk mill by the former curator at No. 31, Trevor Newton. He spent many hours untying bundles of patterns which last saw the light of day in the mid-1870's. This fact accounts for the intense, unfaded vibrancy of the colours.

As Mr Newton commentated:

... they are the original hand painted gouache on squared paper patterns which were turned into punched card templates for weaving into silks and satins on machine looms.

We obtained twenty-three examples of these patterns from Mr Newton, most of which were never shown in 2015. We are pleased to offer them for sale in specially designed, double sided, box frames. The frames are hand finished and painted, using acid-free materials and are glazed with conservation glass.

These beautiful hand painted patterns very much invite close inspection. Our studio is a short walk from Fournier Street in Spitalfields, itself well known historically as an area where Huguenot weavers settled and built the houses in the early eighteenth-century. If you would like to view the collection, please contact us to make an appointment at:

info@possiblemirror.co.uk