

Handheld fire screen, engraved map with with original hand-colour, French text to verso, with wooden handle.

AFRICA ON A FIRE SCREEN

L'Afrique

Author
[after ROBERT DE VAUGONDY, Gilles and Didier]

Publication date
[1767]

Publisher
chez Petit, rue du petit Pont a l'image Notre-Dame,

Publication place
A Paris,

Physical description
Handheld fire screen, engraved map with with original hand-colour, French text to verso, with wooden handle.

Dimensions
(greatest dimensions) 280 by 250mm (11 by 9.75 inches).

Notes
Rare handheld fire screen with a map of Africa.

Face screens were used to shield the face from heat from a fire or stove, this had a dual purpose to

it, one being preventing a red flush to the skin which would be considered unbecoming, the second was to prevent the thick white makeup used by ladies in the eighteenth century, of melting.

The presents screen also doubles as an educational tool, with the verso depicting a map of Asia, and the recto a brief history of the continent. Although the screen is not dated, the text to a similar screen depicting North America mentions, America being discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1491, some 276 years ago, giving us a date of 1767.

The map is based on the work of Gilles and Didier Robert de Vaugondy (fl.1730-1780), one of the leading Parisian mapmakers of the eighteenth century, who published a very similar map of Africa in their hand-held ‘Atlas Portatif’ of 1748.

Little is known about the publisher Petit (fl.1755-1784), whose premises was on the ‘rue petit Pont, although the holdings of several museums suggest that he specialised in the production of handheld fire screens; with screens displaying scenes from contemporary plays, as well as more educational fare.

Due to the screens ephemeral nature, eighteenth century examples in such fine condition are particularly rare.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £2500

Inventory reference: 21967

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