

Basic Detail Report



Shoe

Date

1650 - 1700

Primary Maker

Queen Anne

Medium

Silk, metal thread, leather, wood

Description

Woman's shoe of silk worked with silver thread. The shoe is decorated with an embroidered diamond pattern. The buckle is made of gold and set with paste diamonds. The heel was known as a Louis heel. These shoes belonged to and were worn by the celebrated Sarah, first Duchess of Marlborough, favourite of Queen Anne. They would have been made from the same fabric as her gown and were probably worn only once at a court function or ball. Sarah (1690-1744) and her husband, the Duke of Marlborough, were leading figures in the Glorious Revolution which overthrew King James II. Sarah, under orders of execution, helped Princess Anne, the future Queen, escape down the back stairs of the palace. They then waded through the mud of Pall Mall (where Anne lost her shoe) to a carriage waiting at Charing Cross, from where they fled the city. The Duchess was applauded and feared in her day for her sharp mind, quick wit, and almost complete control over the political leanings of the Queen. Her reputation was cemented by her lengthy memoirs and letters, written after she was replaced in the Queen's affections, in which she savages many members of the royal household. When her husband died in 1722, Sarah became one of Europe's richest women and although not affectionately remembered she managed to exert huge influence in her lifetime and beyond, though arranging judicious marriages of her offspring. Made of hand spun silk, silver thread and composed of extremely fine embroidery, these shoes are the product of hundreds of hours of labour, and a relic of our pre-industrial past. For Sarah, however, they were probably just another pair of shoes.

Dimensions

Object/Work: 85 x 75 x 230 mm