



Dessert Plates (Set of Six)

Date
1885

Primary Maker
Flora Winegar Brigham

Medium
Hard paste porcelain with enamel decoration

Description

This set of six dessert plates was decorated by Flora Winegar Brigham of Amsterdam and Cazenovia, New York. Most nineteenth-century women did not have the opportunity to formally study art in professional studio settings due to societal expectations, lack of access, and prohibitive costs. Consequently, women were encouraged to focus on domestic arts as a form of expression. Amateur china painting became a popular pastime for accomplished young ladies, with periodicals such as *The Art Amateur* providing design inspiration with monthly prompts and step-by-step instructions for execution. These particular plates were manufactured and exported by Theodore Haviland of Limoges, France as glazed white “blanks” solely for individual decoration. Floral sprigs, insects, and scenic cartouches allude to Japonese motifs appropriated by Western cultures as part of the Aesthetic Movement. Brigham studied locally at the Hamilton Female Seminary, and married Professor Albert Perry Brigham, a world-renowned geographer and geologist. She decorated these plates in 1885, three years into her marriage. Brigham’s signature on the underside of these plates suggests her pride in, and ownership of, her work, as well as granting her artistic visibility to guests invited to dine in her home.

Dimensions

Diameter (1997.10.1.1): 8 7/16 in. (21.4 cm) Diameter (1997.10.1.2): 8 7/16 in. (21.4 cm) Diameter (1997.10.1.3): 8 3/8 in. (21.3 cm) Diameter (1997.10.1.4): 8 1/2 in. (21.6 cm) Diameter (1997.10.1.5): 8 1/2 in. (21.6 cm) Diameter (1997.10.1.6): 8 1/2 in. (21.6 cm)