Primary Maker: Ana Asensio
Title: Sampler
Date: 1791
Medium: Linen, silk
Dimensions: Overall: 23 1/8 x 25 7/8 in. (58.7 x 65.7 cm)
Credit Line: Purchased from Elie Nadelman
Object Number: 1937.340

Object Name: Sampler
Classification: TEXTILES

Curatorial Remarks:
This sampler was once part of the folk art collection of Elie Nadelman (1882-1946), the avant-garde sculptor. From 1924 to 1934, Nadelman’s collection was displayed in his Museum of Folk Arts, located in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. The Historical Society purchased Nadelman’s entire collection in 1937. Samplers have a long history, developing over time from personal reference tools into an important component of women’s formal education. By the seventeenth century, the vocabulary of sampler motifs had become international, due in part to the popularity of pattern books that circulated throughout Europe and made their way to America. Viola Nadelman assembled an international sampling of schoolgirl needlework for the Museum of Folk and Peasant Arts including examples made in the United States, France, Germany, England, and Spain. With its four-sided layout and corner tassels, this sampler is typical of those made in Spain and the Spanish colonies. A sampler or ‘dechado’ such as this was typically completed by a girl at age seven or eight to demonstrate her mastery of various stitches. In this example,
Ana Asensio included religious symbols and phrases (Ave Maria Purisima) as well as secular motifs such as an urn with flowers. This sampler’s dense geometric patterning and the repeated Persian stars reflect Spain’s Moorish past.

Physical Description:
Nearly square linen sampler worked in various colors of silk floss; thick border of several rows of geometric patterns on all side, various geometric designs in the center; stitches include cross, satin, back stitch, straight, eyelet.

Markings: embroidered: left of central design, blue floss: "AVE MARIA / PURISIMA [Hail Mary the Purest]"
embroidered: right of central design, yellow and blue floss: "LEIZO / ANA AS / ENSIO / ANODE / 1791 [Ana Asensio made it in the year 1791]"

Related Objects: