Primary Maker: Unidentified maker
Title: Wafer iron
Date: 1717
Medium: Iron
Dimensions: Overall: 33 1/2 x 8 1/4 x 3 1/2 in. (85.1 x 21 x 8.9 cm)
Credit Line: Purchased from Elie Nadelman
Object Number: 1937.1181

Object Name: Wafer iron
Classification: BASE METALS

Curatorial Remarks:
This object 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. The Nadelman's museum was filled to bursting with iron work: cast, wrought, and sheet iron spanning seven centuries and made for a multitude of purposes. Wafer irons were used in Europe as early as the thirteenth century to form the consecrated wafer or host served in the Roman Catholic rite of Holy Communion. The plates of this iron are chased and stamped with a series of motifs including a paschal lamb, or Lamb of God, suggesting that wafers made from it were intended for Easter celebrations. The two plates of this iron are chased and stamped with a series of motifs: one has a central, house-like device enclosing three fleurs de lis and the date 1717, the other roundel with the paschal lamb or Lamb of God central images are flanked by squares with geometric ornament reminiscent of the cut work lace known as reticella,
surrounded by a boarder of stamped motifs composed of leaves and rosettes. The paschal lamb motif suggests that wafers from this iron were intended for Easter celebrations.

Physical Description:
Wrought iron wafer iron; rectangular plates and tapering handles; interior of both plates are impressed with leaves, flowers, and a house and a grid pattern.

Related Objects: