Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Late 16th-Century Tapestry Fragment Cushion with Classical Urn

£165

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REF: 5577

Height: 25 cm (9.8")

Width: 45 cm (17.7")

Depth: 20 cm (7.9")

Description

A handsome decorative cushion made from a late 16th-century tapestry fragment, woven circa 1580 and centred on a classical urn motif. The fragment retains the richly textured surface, subtle tonal variation, and quiet grandeur that make early tapestry so compelling, while its later presentation as a cushion allows the historic textile to be enjoyed as a striking furnishing object.

The design is focused on an urn, a motif drawn from the classical vocabulary that became central to Renaissance and Mannerist decorative arts. Such forms were associated with abundance, beauty, and the rediscovery of the ancient world, appearing throughout the period in textiles, gardens, architecture, and the decorative arts. Here, the urn gives the fragment a strong central presence, framed by the intricate weave and softened by the gentle fading and irregularity that only centuries of age can produce.

Dating from around 1580, the textile would originally have formed part of a larger woven hanging, border, or furnishing panel. Its survival as a fragment offers a rare and tangible connection to the craftsmanship of the late Renaissance, when tapestry was among the most luxurious and labour-intensive forms of interior decoration. Every variation in colour, thread, and texture contributes to its individuality and historic appeal.

Now adapted as a cushion, the piece has a wonderfully tactile, decorative quality. It would sit beautifully in a library, drawing room, bedroom, or interior layered with antique textiles and furniture, while also making a distinctive addition to a collection of early European decorative arts.

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