Ceramic picture - Portrait of Alexander von Humboldt

Ceramics and Glass Collection

Accession Nr.:	6540
Manufacturer:	Mór Fischer's porcelain manufactory (Herend)
Inscription:	Copie des Originals. Zur Wiener Weltausstellung 1. Mai 1873; Herend MF
Materials:	porcelain
Techniques:	gilded; painted over glaze
Dimensions:	height: 69,8 cm width: 52,5 cm thickness: 1,8 cm height: 78 cm width: 64 cm thickness: 4 cm

The absolutely smooth, plain and extremely large and thin, rectangular porcelain plate bears the copy of a photo taken from A. von Humboldt in 1857 (or before). The picture is enframed with gold stripes and four patterns of Greek ornaments. The shades of the photo are hand-painted over- glaze in light and dark brown, as well as in black, with a golden inscription in the middle: *ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT*. There are symmetrical plant motifs below the inscription. The right bottom rows depict a few lines of Humboldt's letter, following faithfully the appearance of the original handwriting: *Herrn Moritz Fischer /Besitzer der K.K. priv. Herender Porzellan Fabrik,/ Welcher durch edle, ausdauernde Bestrebungen wie / durch seinen Kunstsinn dem Gewerbefleie eine / höhere Richtung schöpferisch zu geben gewußt hat / aus inniger und dankbarer Hochachtung gewidmet / von Alexander v. Humboldt./ Potsdam, Oct. 1857*. ("In reliefs and refined, thin delicacy of forms, in colouring and taste of the copied old paintings I have never seen as perfect objects as Your great Herend institute is able to produce the net-like piercing of cups, plates and vases and all deceive the eyes. My sincere gratitude and respect for such a noble and fortunate representative of this aesthetic industrial activity.") With the dedicated photo and letter reproduced on this piece, the respected and famous natural scientist and public personality thanked the porcelain pieces that he had received from Mór Fischer for his 88 birthday. This pictorial *commemoration piece* is an excellent example of the respect of prestige and the methods of advertising at that time and it also represents the high technical standard and imitation talent of the Herend factory.

Literature

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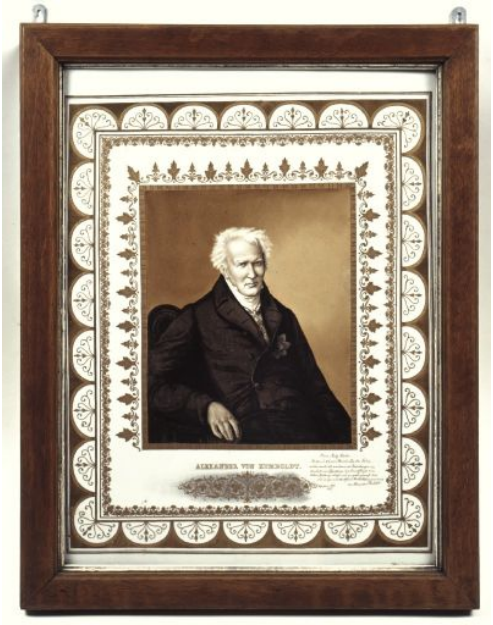

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