


4165

Caroline Herschel

Maura Reilly: Caroline Herschel was a pioneering female astronomer, and this place setting and runner reference her achievements in the field. In 1786 Herschel became the first woman to discover a comet, and until the 1980s she held the record for the most comets discovered by a woman. To reflect this, the runner is embroidered with images of the cosmos, including representations of the eight comets she discovered over an eleven-year span. The eye in the center of the plate suggests Herschel's search through the telescope to discover components of the universe. The illuminated letter *C* on the front of this runner cradles a telescope similar to the Newtonian telescope given to Herschel by her brother, which she used to discover three new nebulae in 1783. The shape that surrounds the name is derived from Herschel's own rendering of the Milky Way. Arranged on the Heritage Floor beneath and around Herschel's place setting are the names of numerous other women who worked in the scientific, medical, and other such fields in the face of prejudice and discrimination against women, such as American astronomer Annie Jump Cannon and French mathematician Sophie Germain.



For more information about these objects, be sure to visit www.brooklynmuseum.org