

# A Patch Stand



*Patch stand, c. 1760. H. 3 1/2", Probably English. Free blown colorless lead glass in the form of a small round flat dish surmounting a plain, slightly tapered stem with folded foot and a rough pontil. Shown with patches of leather. Powdered gum arabic adhesive. Private collection.*

**THE OBJECT:** This week's object is a patch stand; made of free blown colorless lead glass in the form of a small round flat dish surmounting a plain, slightly tapered stem with folded foot and a rough pontil. Facial patches were popular in 17th century France where they were termed *mouches* (flies). The use of patches spread readily to England and the Colonies, where they were in vogue until the end of the 18th century. In France the practice took off when men and women began to wear extensive makeup: hair powder, face paint, rouge on cheeks and bright vermilion lipstick. Beauty marks (moles) were highly regarded and creating false marks of silk or velvet stuck on with mastic became common. Patches were also used to hide the scars of small pox and the skin lesions of syphilis. Popular patch shapes were moon, dot, star and fly. A coach-and-four occurs on a rake's forehead in a period print. Obviously, as well as a patch box, the well-equipped patch wearer would require a patch stand for the dressing table.

In 1719 a Frenchman, Henri Misson wrote:

*"The use of patches is not unknown in French ladies, but she that wears them must be young and handsome. In England, young, old, handsome, ugly all are bepatched until Bed-rid. I have counted 15 patches, or more upon the swarthy wrinkled face of an old Hag threescore and ten, and upward."*

According to Dr. Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell:

*"British ruler Oliver Cromwell supposedly banned them, not because they were sexual immorality, but because they were a sign of aristocratic affectation, making them immoral in the sense of being elitist. Of course, patches came back under King Charles II, who grew up in France."*

**PATCH ETIQUETTE:** According to positioning, a complex system of messaging developed:

- corner of eye—"passionate"
- mid cheek—"gallant"
- nose—"I'm impudent"
- naso-labial fold—"playful"
- corner of lips—"coquette"
- temple—"assassin"
- center forehead—"majestic"

In England:

- right side forehead—Whig supporter
- left side forehead—Tory supporter
- heart left cheek—engaged
- heart right cheek—married

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