



COUTURE EDITION – MEZZETINO

Design: 1759/60

Decor: Vivienne Westwood, 2008

*height 19 cm · product no. 18.960*



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“I was fascinated by the world of the Italian theatre, the Commedia dell’Arte, since I saw some of the major paintings of Antoine Watteau. The French painter portrayed its characters Harlequin & Columbine, the Dottore and Mezzetino, and all the other figures of the wistful theatre of unfulfilled love. To me he unwittingly created a fashion for dressing à la Watteau – after the style of characters in his paintings. He was my main inspiration for the new design of Nymphenburg’s lovely Mezzetino.”

– Vivienne Westwood

Commedia dell’Arte goes back a long way in the career of Vivienne Westwood, the former Queen of Punk and now grande dame of the fashion world. Back in the late 1980s, Watteau’s scenes of Commedia dell’Arte figures inspired the designs for her Voyage to Cythera collection, the title of which she derived from the French Rococo painter’s Pilgrimage to Cythera of 1717.

Bustelli’s Mezzetino wore from the start the typical lozenge-patterned outfit associated with Harlequin. The reason for this “disguise” may be that, a few years before he created the Commedia figures, Bustelli had designed a Harlekin (Harlequin) and Harlekine (Harlequina) pair, and his aim now was to avoid any confusion. Presumably the name of the new figure was therefore changed from Harlekin to Mezzetino.

In contrast to the delicate, highly precise patterning of the original Bustelli design, Westwood goes for a colourful but crudely stitched patchwork costume with her Mezzetino. Only the gold buckles on the shoes and buttons echo the elegance of Bustelli’s figure. Thus Westwood reminds us of the history of the now familiar harlequin pattern and the Italian Commedia dell’Arte – it was only over time that the simple patches became stylised into symmetrical lozenges, just as the simple, occasionally vulgar Commedia dell’Arte itself gradually absorbed the sophistication and elegance it had originally flouted.

Individual figures are only available with Limit No. 16 – 25. It is not possible to order specific numbers. The figures will be supplied with a certificate in a gift box specially designed for the collection.

