

Object Summary



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Carved Wooden Armchair with Mother of Pearl Inlay and Indian Silk Upholstery

19th century

Syria

Wood, mother of pearl, bone, pigment, metal wire, silk

Overall: 28 x 28 x 28 in. (71.1 x 71.1 x 71.1cm)

This wooden armchair is inlaid with mother of pearl and upholstered with silk from India. Created in Syria in the 19th century, this luxury furnishing is an expression of changing tastes and lifestyles while Syria was under Ottoman rule. In traditional Syrian houses, rooms served multiple purposes. Both rich and poor families ate, entertained guests, and slept in a single space. During the day, items such as bedding and clothing could be stowed away in large chests. However, by the 19th century, larger furniture items, such as chairs, tables, bedsteads, and wardrobes came into fashion as the Ottoman empire and its provinces were increasingly exposed to European commodities. Elite and upper class homes transformed to suit this shifting style, gaining bedrooms, living rooms and dining rooms, while poorer families continued to dwell in multifunctional spaces.