

Object Summary

Geometric Medallion (albaq)

Hawai'i

Plaster, polychrome pigments

This medallion (one of four) is composed of a radiating geometric pattern of blue, red, gray and pink shapes. These medallions embellish the spandrels of the arches in the foyer of Shangri La. From afar, this architectural ornamentation appears to be made of inlaid tile or stone. However, it was created using a technique called ablaq, in which a thin layer of plaster is carved and filled with colorful mortar paste. This technique was used to decorate both private residences and public buildings in Damascus during the Ottoman period.