

Object Summary



Carved and Painted Wooden Ceiling with Stellar and Geometric Motifs

1937

Morocco

Kingdom of Morocco

Wood (cedar), polychrome pigments, gilding, bole, varnish

Overall: 218 x 516 in. (553.7 x 1310.6cm)

The ceiling overlooking the foyer is made of richly gilded and painted wood. The colorful geometric and floral motifs painted on the beams are offset by several unpainted beams in the central recessed portion. The ceiling, along with other architectural elements and furnishings, was custom-made for Shangri La by Moroccan artisans working under the supervision of the French firm S.A.L.A.M. René Martin based in Rabat,

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Morocco. This commission coincided with the revival and adaptation of Moroccan traditional arts in the twentieth century during the French colonial rule of Morocco (1912–1956). During this period, a French colonial administrator named Jean Gallotti published a two volume publication, *Le Jardin et la Maison Arabes au Maroc* (“The Arab Garden and House in Morocco”). This publication was owned by Doris Duke and served as a point of reference for both the ceiling and colorful stained glass windows of the foyer of Shangri La. (The design precedent for the ceiling appears as plate 32 of Gallotti’s book). Like museums and schools of traditional arts established during the French administration in Morocco, this book categorizes Moroccan arts by their material and aesthetic qualities, rather than their historical period or cultural context. The ceiling is composed of cedar wood, which is native to the Atlas mountains of Morocco. Because the climate in Hawaii differs greatly from the arid conditions of North Africa, the foyer ceiling has undergone careful conservation.