

Object Summary



Polychrome Marble Inlaid Fountain

c. 1800-1850

Syria (Damascus)

Ottoman

Marble, stone inlay, mother-of-pearl

Overall: 22 7/8 x 48 1/2 in. (58.1 x 123.2cm)

This octagonal, marble fountain was assembled from historic and custom-made marble panels. Like every surface of an affluent Damascene home, the fountain is adorned in intricate patterns of geometric forms and floral

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motifs. The technique used to create these designs is called opus sectile, or “stone mosaic.” The marble is inlaid with glimmering mother-of-pearl, gilding, and multi-colored stones, a style popular in Damascus beginning in the mid-1700s. The fountain occupies the 'ataba — or antechamber — of the Ottoman Gallery at Shangri La, created from architectural elements of a qa’a, or reception hall of a Damascus home. The ‘ataba is entered from the courtyard. Residents and visitors would enjoy the bubbling fountain from the adjacent, raised seating area called the tazar.