



Corbel

Date

19th Century

Medium

Wood and pigment

Description

This object is a 19th century Chinese architectural corbel which once adorned a temple or other similar structure. Typically, corbels are placed at the upper end of exterior walls or other vertical components to assist in supporting the roof structure above. However, by the 19th century Chinese architecture had developed to a point where corbels served a more decorative purpose. Without the need to support weight, they could therefore be made with more elaborate and delicate carved designs. Temple architectural features depicted a wide array of subjects, the most common of which were of scenes from Chinese history, folklore, and mythology. Landscapes, flowers,

geometric shapes, and animals were also commonly depicted. Time and the elements have eroded much of the surface of this corbel to the point where its once vibrant pigments have almost disappeared.

Dimensions

25 × 18 × 5 1/2 in. (63.5 × 45.7 × 14 cm)