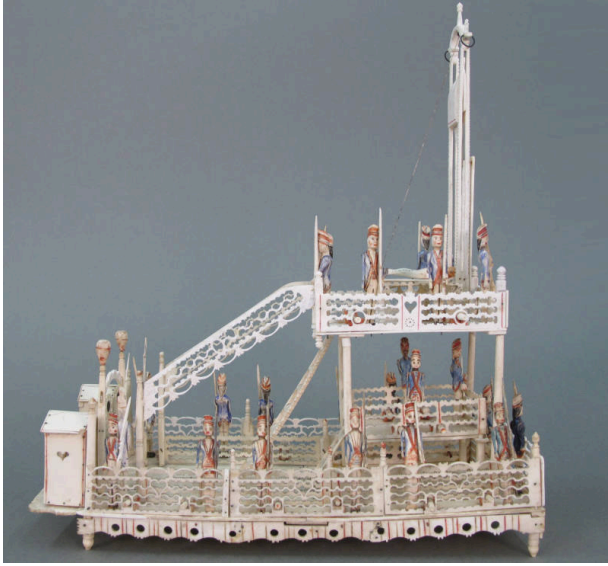


Basic Detail Report



Model Guillotine

Date

1770-1825

Medium

Bone and pigment

Description

Guillotine automaton models made of bone such as this one are a result of the Napoleonic Wars (1770-1825). French prisoners of war who had been captured and imprisoned on ships by English forces were fed a diet of mutton, and the most enterprising of these captives did

not let anything granted them go to waste. Over a lengthy period of time, they softened the bones that came with the meat so that they could be molded and carved like clay. The most famous prisoner of war carvings are exquisitely crafted vessels built from memory in the style of French ships to be sold in English markets. This guillotine appears to have come out of this same tradition. The guillotine was a French execution device, indicating that the blue-coated soldiers decorating the carving are also French, a detail which would otherwise have been consistent with either French or English uniforms. Despite a balustrade decorated with hearts, these examples are deeply unsettling, with the figure in the guillotine even having a detachable head.

Dimensions

15 1/2 x 14 x 5 3/4 in. (39.4 x 35.6 x 14.6 cm)