

Basic Detail Report



Arm Guard

Date

18th to 19th Century

Primary Maker

Yi

Medium

Wood, lacquer and pigments

Description

This is a Yi arm guard from the Sichuan Province of China. Though these guards are sometimes made from wood, they are traditionally made from the leather of yellow cattle. A combination of lacquer and lime creates a hard-outer shell once the fur has been removed. Usually leather straps around the exterior of the guard would secure it to a warrior's shield arm, usually their left arm. The right arm would bear a sword and was left free for added mobility. Yi combat was as much psychological as physical, beginning with boasts and threats before taking

swings. Black pigment made from wood ash symbolizes nobility in Yi culture; red symbolizes bravery and yellow symbolized brightness. Arm guards are undecorated or decorated with geometric and abstracted motifs that usually bestow strength in combat.

Dimensions

11 7/8 × 4 1/4 × 3 1/2 in. (30.2 × 10.8 × 8.9 cm)