

A rare Elizabeth I oak and inlaid 'Nonsuch' chest, Norwich or Southwark, circa 1580

Sold



REF: 3409

Height: 60 cm (23.6")

Width: 117.3 cm (46.2")

Depth: 55 cm (21.7")

Description

Of boarded dove-tailed construction, the front with typical architectural decoration of fanciful towers and archways, within applied parquetry-inlaid arched surround, further bands of decoration to sides framing iron carry-handles, impressive tooled rear board.

This type of inlay is regionally associated with London, particularly around Southwark, from the second half of the 16th century, and was very possibly executed by immigrant German joiners and inlayers. The architectural decoration is popularly assumed to represent Henry VIII's celebrated Nonsuch Palace, Surrey, particularly with reference to the fanciful towers. However, it is more likely to have been derived from 16th-century printed designs, for example those published by Hans Vredeman de Vries, (1527 - 1604).

Literature: Similar examples illustrated, Percy Macquoid, *The Age of Oak* (1925), see pp. 120 - 127, colour plate VIII, figs. 103 - 105; Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: The British Tradition* (1995), p.356, fig. 3:358; Margaret Jourdain, *English Decoration and Furniture of the Early Renaissance 1500 - 1650* (1924), p. 267, figs. 374 & 375; Oliver Bracket, *English Furniture* p. 92, fig. 26, in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.