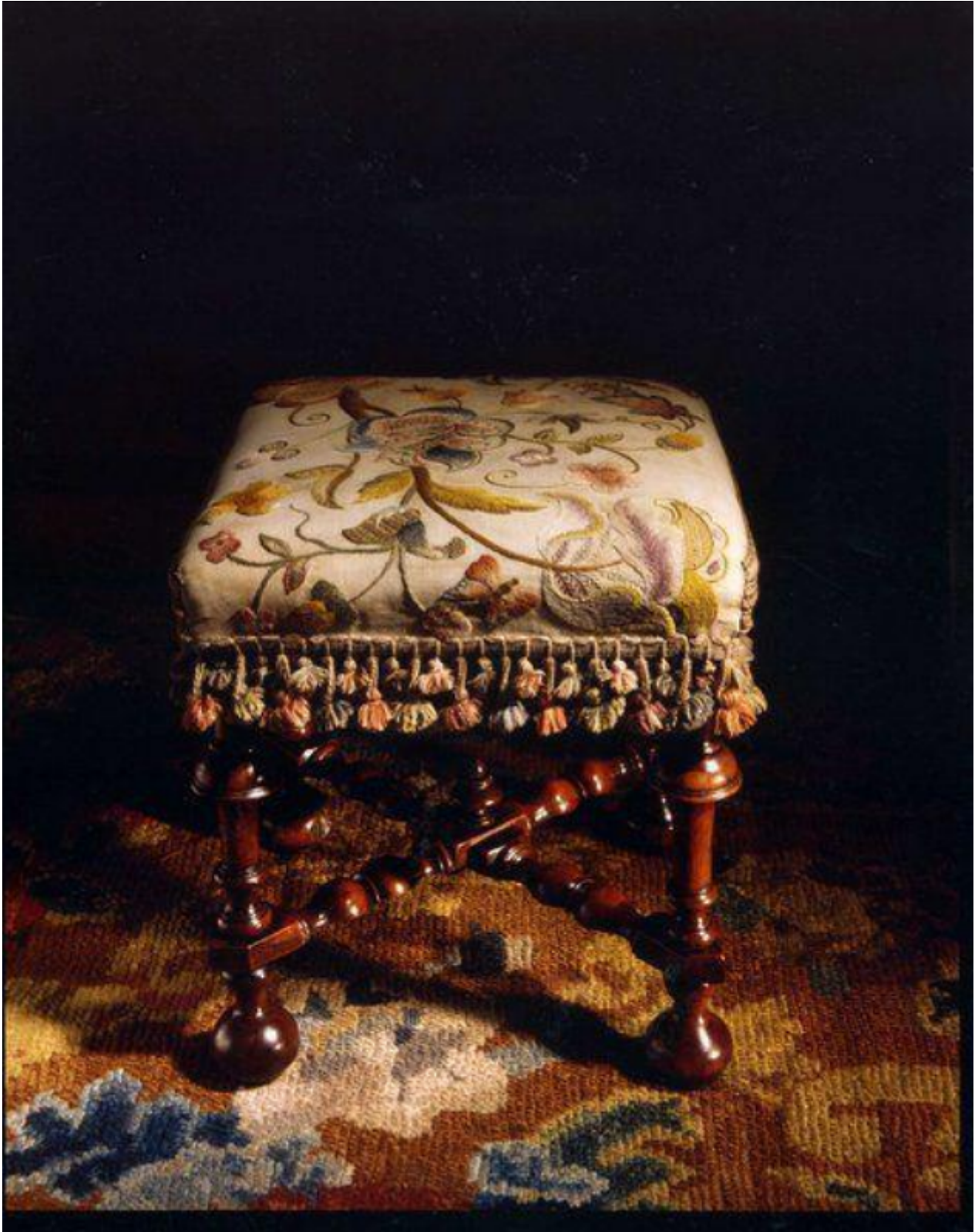


An important, late-17th century, upholstered, yew stool

Sold



Description

The square seat, re-upholstered in an early-19th century crewelwork fragment, decorated with flowers and trailing stems, and trimmed with braid and fringe. Standing on inverted-cup, baluster turned legs on bun feet joined by a split-baluster, turned x-stretcher with a later, turned finial. Excellent original colour and patina. English, fourth quarter of the 17th century. 5127966.

This piece illustrates late-17th century furniture at its best. It is sophisticated, elegant and refined and, over time, the colour and patina have matured to an excellent quality. The importance of this piece is derived from its square shape, petite proportions and quality of design and craftsmanship. There is no other, known, surviving example incorporating these features. The x-stretcher and bun feet, evolved into the design of late-17th century English furniture, in response to Continental fashions. Although the upholstered seat had been introduced in the reign of Elizabeth I, it re-emerged after the Restoration as exiles sought to introduce the comfort they had experienced abroad in their homes. This piece would have been made for a substantial household, probably en-suite with a fine sidetable. Very few late-17th century upholstered stools survive, especially in this condition, largely due to the ravages of damp floors and woodworm. However the quality of this piece has probably served to protect it over the years, as it has been well cared for.

Chairs were only found in limited numbers, in the 17th century, even in great houses, when chests and stools were the ordinary seats in homes and palaces. The chair, which was a symbol of authority, was reserved for the master of the house or distinguished strangers. By Charles II reign tabouret etiquette had become extremely strict, being observed in both private houses and at Court. When travelling in England in 1669, Cosmo III, Duke of Tuscany, made gracious concessions his hosts and hostesses at Wilton and Althorp by allowing for chairs (similar to his own) to be provided for them while the rest of the company sat on stools. James, Duke of York punctiliously observed the prescribed etiquette when he went to meet Catherine of Braganza on her arrival in England and was received in her cabin. He refused the chair placed for him but, on Catherine motioning to a tabouret immediately seated himself. Princess Anne in 1688 showed a similar regard for the rules of precedence. Her tabouret having been set too near Queen Mary's chair, she declined to seat herself until it had been removed to the correct distance.