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A fine, early-18th century, chest of drawers decorated with large, olivewood, parquetry, oyster-veneers

Sold

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REF: 10366

Height: 92 cm (36.2")

Width: 101 cm (39.8")

Depth: 58 cm (22.8")

Description

The top inlaid with oyster veneers, and geometric, stringing surrounded by an inlaid border both in holly. The moulded edge inlaid with oyster veneers. The frieze with two short drawers above three long drawers inlaid with oyster veneers within inlaid borders, and faced with single cross-grain beading. The drawers with replaced handles, locks and escutcheons, and re-run. The sides inlaid with a rectangular border of oyster veneers. The bottom moulded edge inlaid. Standing on replaced bun feet. The carcass pine, the drawers lined in oak. Excellent configuration, colour and patina. Minor repairs to veneers. English, first quarter of the 18th century. 4037851.
References to chest of drawers in inventories and correspondence of the 17th century are comparatively rare, but in the early-18th century their price became within the reach of people of moderate means and many were made in the reign of Queen Anne and even more under George I. This piece is a fine example of a walnut parquetry chest of drawers where the cabinet maker has used rare, large and finely-figured oyster veneers.

In the early-18th century chests of drawers were generally simple in design, veneered with finely-configured walnut on a pine carcass with oak-lined drawers dovetailed in the finer manner that was becoming customary. The drawers in the earliest pieces are divided by single half-round mouldings, then by two smaller half-round mouldings placed side-by side, and from about 1730 a cock-bead is often worked in the edges of the drawers.

Plain veneered chests of drawers of this period often illustrate a remarkable use of exotic-wood veneers being combined with native walnut. The surface was sometimes decorated in parquetry with symmetrically arranged oyster-shells of walnut or laburnum. Contrasts of tone were contrived in the walnut veneers which were often crossbanded with a lighter wood. A favourite method of enhancing the carefully-chosen figured walnut veneers was to inlay the surface with lines of holly or box-wood stringing in geometric patterns.

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