

Finch & C^o



39 An English Bronze bust of a man as Africa

Circa 1800-1820

Size: 23cm high

Africans were first brought to Britain in 1555 and by the 18th Century they were familiar figures in English society. However their depiction in art in the early 19th Century still served to give them a sense of exoticism. Sculptors often portrayed them as the personification of the Continent of Africa, America or the Indies.

By the end of the 18th Century the anti-slavery society was becoming influential and the notion of the free spirited noble savage was gaining currency and contributing to the developing abolitionist case.

Artists began to portray a more powerful and positive, but somewhat romantic image of black people, and this image was not yet tainted with the white supremacist belief in colonial rule.

It was in this romantic spirit that this bronze was created.

AN ENGLISH BRONZE BUST OF A MAN AS AFRICA

AN ENGLISH BRONZE BUST OF A MAN AS AFRICA

CIRCA 1800-1820

SIZE : 23 CM HIGH

LITERATURE

AFRICANS WERE FIRST BROUGHT TO BRITAIN IN 1555 AND BY THE 18TH CENTURY THEY WERE FAMILIAR FIGURES IN ENGLISH SOCIETY. HOWEVER THEIR DEPICTION IN ART IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY STILL SERVED TO GIVE THEM A SENSE OF EXOTICISM. SCULPTURE OFTEN PORTRAYED THEM AS THE PERSONIFICATION OF THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA, AMERICA OR THE INDIES.

BY THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY WAS BECOMING INFLUENTIAL AND THE NOTION OF THE FREE SPIRITED NOBLE SAVAGE WAS GAINING CURRENCY AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPING ABOLITIONIST CASE. ARTISTS BEGAN TO PORTRAY A MORE POWERFUL AND POSITIVE, BUT SOMEWHAT ROMANTIC IMAGE OF BLACK PEOPLE, AND THIS IMAGE WAS NOT YET TAINTED WITH THE WHITE SUPREMACIST BELIEF IN COLONIAL RULE.

IT WAS IN THIS ROMANTIC SPIRIT THAT THIS BRONZE WAS CREATED.