Finch & Co



A FINE HAWAIIAN OVAL WALRUS IVORY WRIST GUARD OR ORNAMENT 'KUPE' E PALAOA'

A FINE HAWAIIAN OVAL WALRUS IVORY WRIST GUARD OR ORNAMENT 'KUPE' E PALAOA'
SMOOTH SILKY PATINA, PIERCED TWICE AT THE BACK FOR CORD
EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE : 5 CM LONG, 4 CM WIDE, 2 CM DEEP – 2 INS LONG, 1½ INS WIDE, ¾ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THE TRADITIONAL HAWAIIAN CRAFTSMAN'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT WAS HIS ABILITY TO BLEND FUNCTIONAL EFFICIENCY AND AESTHETICS IN MAKING EVERYDAY OBJECTS. THIS WRIST GUARD IS MOST BEAUTIFULLY FORMED AND IS A TECHNICAL MASTERPIECE IN ITS OWN RIGHT.
WHALE AND WALRUS IVORY HAS BEEN ACQUIRED FROM WHALERS AND TRADERS BY ISLANDERS SINCE THE LAST YEARS OF THE 18TH CENTURY. BEFORE THEN THE HAWAIIANS WHO, LIKE ALL PACIFIC ISLANDERS DID NOT HUNT WHALES, WERE DEPENDENT FOR SUPPLIES OF IVORY ON THE CHANCE STRANDING OF A SPERM WHALE. THERE IS A BONE WRIST ORNAMENT IN THE HOOPER COLLECTION
(347 . PL 40) WHICH MAY BE AN EARLY FORERUNNER OF THE IVORY KIND.