Finch & Co



A VERY FINE EDO 'HIP' MASK / ORNAMENT

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NIGERIA, BENIN KINGDOM

19TH CENTURY

A VERY FINE EDO 'HIP' MASK / ORNAMENT

FINELY DETAILED LATTICE WORK HEADDRESS WITH 'BEAD' CLUSTERS

ONE PUPIL 'INLAID'

ACROSS THE FOREHEAD ARE SIX RAISED 'IKHARO' OR GENDER MARKS

SUPERB DARK GLOSSY PATINA AND COLOUR THROUGH USE AND WEAR

BRONZE (BRASS)

NIGERIA, BENIN KINGDOM

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 16CM HIGH, 12CM WIDE, 6CM DEEP - 6¼ INS HIGH, 4¾ INS WIDE, 2¾ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

CHIEFS AND TITLEHOLDERS IN BENIN WEAR A VARIETY OF BRASS ORNAMENTS AS PART OF THEIR ELABORATE COSTUMES FOR PALACE CEREMONIES. MOST ARE WORN SINGLY AT THE LEFT HIP, COVERING THE CLOSURE OF THEIR WRAPPED SKIRTS.

BRASS WAS A MATERIAL WITH ROYAL CONNOTATIONS IN BENIN AND ITS USE WAS STRICTLY CONTROLLED, WITH GUILD CRAFTSMEN WORKING UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE COURT. BRASS HAS A COMPLEX MEANING. AS A MATERIAL IT NEVER CORRODES OR RUSTS AND THUS IT STANDS FOR PERMANENCE AND THE CONTINUITY OF KINGSHIP.

PROVENANCE

EX SOTHEBYS, LONDON, ANTIQUITIES AND TRIBAL ART, 13TH DECEMBER 1977, LOT 372

EX BONHAMS, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, TRIBAL ART, 1ST DECEMBER 1993, LOT 19

EX PRIVATE UK COLLECTION

CF: FOR A SIMILAR HIP ORNAMENT SEE: ROYAL ART OF BENIN, THE PERLS COLLECTION; 'THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART', NEW YORK, 1992, NO. 60, PAGE 166 AND 'ART AND ARTEFACTS, THE JAMES HOOPER COLLECTION', STEVEN PHELPS, HUTCHISON & CO, LONDON, 1976, PLATE 235, PAGE 392, NUMBER 1822 FOR A SIMILAR BENIN HIP MASK