Finch & Co



A RARE ANCESTOR SKULL WITH POLYCHROME DECORATION

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HUMAN SKULL, PIGMENT

CENTRAL ISLAND ANDAMAN ISLANDS

19TH CENTURY OR EARLIER

SIZE: 15CM HIGH, 13CM WIDE, 18CM DEEP - 5¾ INS HIGH, 5 INS WIDE, 7 INS DEEP

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LITERATURE

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THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS ARE AN ARCHIPELAGO OF AROUND TWO HUNDRED ISLANDS WHICH ARE IN THE EASTERN BAY OF BENGAL. ANTHROPOLOGISTS BELIEVE THESE ISLANDS HAVE BEEN INHABITED FOR SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS AT LEAST, WITH THE VERY EARLIEST SETTLERS DATING BACK TO THE PALAEOLITHIC ERA. ACCORDING TO THE 'OUT OF AFRICA' HYPOTHESIS, THE ANDAMANESE PEOPLE ARE THOUGHT TO BE THE FIRST GROUPS OF MODERN HUMANS (HOMO SAPIENS) WHO MIGRATED OUT OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT, 100,000 TO 50,000 BC.

AS WITH OTHER INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FROM ANCIENT TRIBAL SOCIETIES, THE ANDAMANESE PRACTICED THE ‘CULT OF THE ANCESTOR’. THE SKULLS WERE OFTEN PAINTED WITH LINES, DOTS, OR STRIPES AND WORN AS ADORNMENT AROUND THE NECK, AS A SIGN OF MOURNING AND FUTURE PROTECTION AGAINST DISEASE AND PAIN.

PROVENANCE

ACQUIRED BY A BRITISH OFFICER FROM A FUNERARY CAVE IN 1881

ACQUIRED BY CARL VON BORG, COLOGNE, IN 1927 (NO. A210)

EX FINCH AND CO, CIRCA 2012

EX MARTIN DOUSTAR, PARIS, FRANCE

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION