

# Finch & C<sup>o</sup>



AFTER BARTHEL BEHAM (ACTIVE 17TH CENTURY)  
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A VANITAS STILL LIFE OF THREE SKULLS, AN HOURGLASS AND YOUNG CHILD

INSCRIBED 'MEMENTO MORI'

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OIL ON CANVAS

17TH CENTURY

(UN-FRAMED)

SIZE: 56CM HIGH, 59CM WIDE - 22 INS HIGH, 23¼ INS WIDE

## LITERATURE

CF: THIS FASCINATING VANITAS STILL LIFE IS A RARE AND EARLY TAKE ON THE GERMAN ARTIST BARTHEL BEHAM'S 1529 ENGRAVING OF THE SAME SUBJECT (BARTSCH 27, HOLLSTEIN PG.35). BEHAM PRODUCED A FURTHER PRINT OF A SIMILAR THEME WITH THE INSCRIPTION 'MORS OMNIA AEQVAT' ('DEATH EQUALS ALL'). THE REASON FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SLEEPING CHILD IN BOTH THESE 'MEMENTO MORI' PRINTS IS NOT OBVIOUS, ALTHOUGH TOGETHER THE CHILD AND

THE SKULLS SYMBOLISE THE BEGINNING AND END OF LIFE. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT BARTHEL BEHAM, WHO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A FOLLOWER OF THE RADICAL REFORMPREACHER, THOMAS MÜNTZER, IS ALSO SUGGESTING THAT HUMANKIND IS NOT JUST EQUAL IN DEATH BUT BORN EQUAL.

**PROVENANCE**

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