



## Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE1021)

Fri, 29th Oct 2021

### Lot 164

**Starting price:** €2500

**Estimate:** €5000

#### **GESSHO: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF A STONE LIFTER**

By Gessho, signed Gessho 月生

Japan, Edo (Tokyo), late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The stone lifter dressed only in a loincloth and wearing a headband, squatting and visibly straining from trying to lift the large boulder before him. As a result of his efforts his testicles are slipping out from the loincloth underneath – rather amusingly the boulder itself looks like a large swollen scrotum. Note the extremely expressive facial features. Excellent and very large himotoshi through the back and underside. Signed within a raised rectangular reserve GESSHO.

HEIGHT 3.9 cm

Condition: Very good condition, beautiful patina, small crack to the side of the boulder.

**Provenance:** The Gabor Wilhelm Collection, Paris. Possibly collection W. L. Behrens (see literature comparison).

Meinertzhagen's notes record that "Gessho is one of the great Netsuke carvers of the 18th century, tho' not very well known." (MCI, p. 78).

#### **Literature comparison:**

Only two netsuke by Gessho depicting stone lifters are recorded. One is a very famous example in the British Museum, gifted by Mrs. H. Seymour Trower, accession no. 1912,1012.7. The other was in the Behrens collection and may very well be this piece. It is recorded (the signature erroneously read as Mokusei) without illustration in Joly, Henri L. (1912) *The W. L. Behrens Collection, Part 1, Netsuke*, no. 5026.