



Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE1021)

Fri, 29th Oct 2021

Lot 24

Starting price: €3000

Estimate: €6000

‡ A RARE IVORY NETSUKE OF A KARYOBINGA

Unsigned

Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The mythical being depicted with her wings drawn-in, the plumage finely incised, the long tail feathers and celestial bands elegantly swaying in the wind. Her hair is tied in a high chignon mounted by a chrysanthemum-tiara, and she holds a leafy lotus flower against her chest underneath. The eagle-like talons are held close to the body and clenched together for compactness. Stunning honey-yellow patina throughout, turning a deep-caramel brown underneath. The asymmetrical himotoshi are generously excavated and provide a long channel for the cord.

LENGTH 6 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and age cracks. Some old chips to edges.

Provenance: The Gabor Wilhelm Collection, Paris.

The karyobinga (kalavinca in Sanskrit) is a fantastical immortal creature in Buddhism, with a human head and a bird's torso, with long flowing tail. It is known for its heavenly music, its voice being a descriptor of the Buddha's voice, and is said to sing while still unhatched within its eggshell. They are sometimes mistaken for tennin (Buddhist angels, lot 23).

Literature comparison:

For a similar netsuke in the Raymond and Frances Bushell Collection, see LACMA, accession no. M.91.250.294.

Auction comparison:

Compare to a similar netsuke of a karyobinga sold at Lempertz, Asian Art, 27 June 2020, Cologne, lot 292 (**sold for 7,000 EUR**).