



Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE1021)

Fri, 29th Oct 2021

Lot 118

Starting price: €2000

Estimate: €4000

A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF THE JUNISHI, ATTRIBUTED TO MASAYOSHI

Attributed to Masayoshi, unsigned
Japan, second half of 19th century

Superbly carved with intricate detail as the twelve animals of the zodiac (junishi). The dragon (tatsu) is in the middle, its head resting on the horse (uma) which faces the monkey (saru), who in turn pets the horse on its muzzle. The tiger (tora) has its paws placed on the ox (ushi) which is next to the goat (hitsuji), over which the boar (inoshishi) jumps over with a mighty gallop, the rabbit (usagi) on the back of the boar is in for a ride. The remaining animals, the dog (inu), snake (hebi), rat (nezumi), and rooster (tori) are underneath the larger animals. The details and fur all very finely engraved. The well-carved underside shows a dense culmination of paws, hooves, and tails, as well as the asymmetrical himotoshi. Interestingly, there is also an oban-shaped reserve for a signature, on which the dog sits, but the piece remained unsigned.

LENGTH 4.1 cm

Condition: Very good condition, a small crack to the cheek of the boar.

Provenance: British private estate.

Literature comparison:

Although unsigned this piece has many similarities with the works of Masayoshi, a pupil of Masanao or Masakazu, who sometimes signed within a similar reserve. For a similar example see Meinertzhagen / Lazarnick (1986) MCI, Part A, p. 487.