



Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE0422)

Fri, 22nd Apr 2022

Viewing:

You may view objects in this auction in our gallery from 19 April to 22 April 2022. We are open Monday to Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM CET, as well as by appointment. On the day of the sale, the viewing will be open until 1 PM CET.

Lot 32

Starting price: €800

Estimate: €1500

¥ AN IVORY NETSUKE OF A MONKEY AND GIANT NAMAZU (EARTHQUAKE FISH)

Unsigned

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

Boldly carved as a reclining monkey with crossed legs leaning against a giant namazu – in this case not a common catfish but the legendary earthquake fish – and using his double-gourd (hyotan) as a pillow. The namazu and monkey both with subtle incision work heightened with sumi. The underside well carved with both animals' bodies and two asymmetrical himotoshi.

LENGTH 4.3 cm

Condition: Very good condition, appealingly worn, expected age cracks, traces of use, a minor nick to the tailfin. Fine and smooth honey-yellow patina.

Provenance: Old Viennese private collection, acquired from Galerie Asboth, Vienna, on 27 May 1993.

Legend has it that certain types of catfish (namazu) are responsible for the earthquakes that plague the islands of Japan. When aroused, these creatures would contort their bodies in such a way that gigantic tremors shook the area for miles and miles. The Shinto deity Kadori Myojin usually attempts to prevent such catastrophe with the help of his magic gourd, but this netsuke shows him as an ape having clearly given up on this valiant yet pointless endeavor.

Literature comparison:

Compare a closely related netsuke, illustrated in Eskenazi (1993) *Japanese Netsuke from the Carré Collection*, pp. 140-141, no. 171, and another in the collection of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, accession number 1986.30.52.

Auction comparison:

Compare a closely related netsuke, also dated 18th century, at Bonhams, *Netsuke from a European Private Collection*, 8 May 2016, London, lot 34 (**sold for 1,875 GBP**).

Trade Certificate: In accordance with new EU regulations that went into effect in January 2022, we have applied for a certificate to sell this item within the EU. We expect the Austrian Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology to issue the certificate in 4-8 weeks. The item can only be shipped / handed over once the certificate has been issued.