



Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE0421)

Fri, 16th Apr 2021

Lot 56

Starting price: €2000

Estimate: €4000

HORAKU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A SEATED BAT

By Horaku, signed Horaku 宝乐

Japan, Kyoto, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a seated bat resting on its large, naturalistically chiseled wings, one folded and hidden underneath its body and the other folded beside its body and forming a pleasing curl at the end. The fur is minutely incised with immaculate precision and the facial expression is amusingly whimsical with tiny inlaid eyes of lustrous dark horn. Large, generously excavated himotoshi through the underside and signature within a typical recessed reserve HORAKU.

LENGTH 3.5 cm

Condition: Good condition, tiny chip inside one ear and one inlaid eye is a later replacement.

Provenance: British private collection.

Horaku carved a great number of bats, each one different, however each also immediately recognizable as a Horaku bat and each arguably better than any other netsukeshi's bat. Some are depicted with one or multiple young, and most singular bats are shown with their wings 'hanging' together. This bat, with its whimsical expression looking upwards, is quite unusual as it appears to use its wings as a cushion.

Auction comparison:

For a related netsuke by Horaku depicting a bat with young, see Bonhams, The Harriet Szechenyi Sale of Japanese Art, 8 November 2011, London, lot 205 (**sold for 7,500 GBP**).