



## Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE0421)

Fri, 16th Apr 2021

### Lot 102

**Starting price:** €1000

**Estimate:** €2000

#### **KOKEI: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF TANUKI HARA TSUZUMI**

By Kokei, signed Kokei 虎溪

Japan, Kuwana, Ise province, early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Edo period (1615-1868)

A finely carved dark wood netsuke, depicting tanuki no hara tsuzumi (belly drumming raccoon dog). The fur is finely incised, the rib cage and spine expressively carved, sharp fangs, upwards turned snout and jovial expression – he is visibly delighted with drumming on his belly. The eyes are inlaid in green-shimmering mother-of-pearl. Typical himotoshi between one of the legs and signature on the underside KOKEI.

HEIGHT 3.1 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Provenance: German private collection.

The tanuki possesses magical powers and can change forms, sometimes into Buddhist monks; they are jovial, but also dangerous, as they have been known to suffocate hunters with their enormous scrotum. The act of drumming on the belly, according to legend, was used by tanuki to beguile travelers and hunters to lead them astray. However, it has also been said that tanuki would get together just for fun, drumming on their bellies under the moonlight, perhaps even with some sake involved.

#### **Auction comparison:**

For a similar netsuke by Kokei see Bonhams, Netsuke from a European private collection, 8 May 2016, London, lot 56 (sold for 2,250 GBP).