



Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE0421)

Fri, 16th Apr 2021

Lot 284

Starting price: €2500

Estimate: €5000

ITSUNOBU: A MASTERFUL LACQUERED WOOD MASK NETSUKE OF A FOX (KITSUNE)

By Mitsunobu, signed Mitsunobu 光信

Japan, first half of 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Well carved with a movable jaw, the mouth opening to reveal rows of sharp teeth and a red tongue. The mask has pierced slanted eyes, semi-pricked ears with the tops hanging slightly down, the features overall neatly detailed and very expressive, one small pierced aperture to either side of the mask, as if to be worn, the mask probably representing a faithful copy of an old Kitsune mask. The mask is covered in cream-colored lacquer, purposely worn to simulate age. The bridge on the reverse with a single himotoshi and the signature MITSUNOBU.

HEIGHT 4 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor surface wear, occasional light scratches, and few minuscule nicks, much of the wear intended by the artist.

Provenance: Ex-collection Arthur Kay (1860-1939), with old labels, collection no. 258. Then European collection P. Jacquesson, acquired in 2005.

Literature comparison:

A closely related wood mask netsuke of a fox by Mitsunobu, also with a movable jaw, is illustrated in Joly, Henri L. (1912) The W. L. Behrens Collection, Part 1, Netsuke, pl. 1, no. 163.