



Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE0421)

Fri, 16th Apr 2021

Lot 92

Starting price: €1500

Estimate: €3000

MASANAO: A VERY RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF A MERMAID AS A CLAM DIVER

By Masanao I, signed Masanao 正直
Japan, Ise-Yamada, c. 1800, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Joly, Henri L. (1912) The W. L. Behrens Collection, Part 1, Netsuke, p. 165, no. 4511.

The mermaid with prominent tailfin swimming horizontally atop a giant hamaguri clam, holding a smaller clam in one hand and a basket filled with clams in the other, her hair neatly incised in numerous strands, part of her tailfin trapped in the giant clam. 'Natural' himotoshi through the tailfin, the underside signed MASANAO. The well-toned wood with a beautiful patina.

LENGTH 4.1 cm

Condition: Good condition with old wear, minor nicks, and light scratches.

Provenance: Ex-collection W. L. Behrens (1861-1913). Then old Viennese private collection assembled within the same family over three generations.

An exceptionally rare netsuke, both due to the very unusual subject matter combining ama (fisher girl) and mermaid, but also as this represents an early Masanao, likely carved from the first of this famous lineage.

BU Behrens