

# Finch & C<sup>o</sup>



88 An Igbo-Izi Elephant Spirit helmet mask, 'Ogbodo Enyi'

*Wood with fine patina, red black and white pigments*

*First half 20th Century*

*Size: 58cm long*

*Provenance: Collected in Africa by a Swedish missionary Josef La Gergren, later purchased from Gallery Legros, Götterburg in 1969 by the architect Kalle Jansson.*

*A number of tribes all linguistically related inhabit the Cross River area on the border between Nigeria and Cameroon. This mask is probably from the Abakaliki area in the North Eastern part of the Niger River delta, which is an area of forest and swamp where the Igbo-Izi people live.*

*The Elephant Spirit Mask, 'Ogbodo Enyi', is carved and used to avert evil spirits and bad luck in a masquerade performance often associated with a significant life event. The mask combines elephant and human forms in one powerful and striking, abstract conception.*

## **AN IGBO-IZI ELEPHANT SPIRIT HELMET MASK, 'OGBODO ENYI'**

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**WOOD WITH FINE PATINA, RED BLACK AND WHITE PIGMENTS**

**FIRST HALF 20TH CENTURY**

**SIZE : 58 CMLONG**

## **LITERATURE**

A NUMBER OF TRIBES ALL LINGUISTICALLY RELATED INHABIT THE CROSS RIVER AREA ON THE BORDER BETWEEN NIGERIA AND CAMEROON. THIS MASK IS PROBABLY FROM THE ABAKALIKI AREA IN THE NORTH EASTERN PART OF THE NIGER RIVER DELTA, WHICH IS AN AREA OF FOREST AND SWAMP WHERE THE IGBO-IZI PEOPLE LIVE.

THE ELEPHANT SPIRIT MASK, 'OGBODO ENYI', IS CARVED AND USED TO AVERT EVIL SPIRITS AND BAD LUCK IN A MASQUERADE PERFORMANCE OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH A SIGNIFICANT LIFE EVENT. THE MASK COMBINES ELEPHANT AND HUMAN FORMS IN ONE POWERFUL AND STRIKING, ABSTRACT CONCEPTION.