Finch & Co



A COLLECTION OF THREE RARE GERMAN TURNED RHINOCEROS HORN DRINKING VESSELS

A COLLECTION OF THREE RARE GERMAN TURNED RHINOCEROS HORN DRINKING VESSELS:
A FOOTED BEAKER AND TWO STEMMED GOBLETS
LATE 18TH CENTURY – EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 11CM HIGH, 11 CM DIA. – 4¼ INS HIGH, 4¼ INS DIA. (MAX)
9 CM HIGH, 9 CM DIA. – 3½ INS HIGH, 3½ INS DIA. (MIN)

LITERATURE

IN THE YEAR 1515 THE FIRST LIVING ONE HORNED INDIAN RHINOCEROS WAS BROUGHT TO EUROPE AS A GIFT TO KING MANUEL OF PORTUGAL. IT CREATED A SENSATION. PEOPLE FLOCKED TO SEE THIS STRANGE BEAST WITH ITS ARMOUR LIKE BODY AND SINGLE HORN RISING FROM ITS SNOUT.

IN 1601 IT IS RECORDED THAT A RARE AND PRECIOUS RHINOCEROS HORN WAS AMONGST THE GIFTS TAKEN TO BEIJING BY FATHER MATTEO RICCI, A JESUIT MISSIONARY, WHO MOST PROBABLY BELIEVED THE EMPEROR WANLI WOULD NEVER HAVE PREVIOUSLY SEEN SUCH A HORN AND WOULD REGARD IT AS AN OBJECT OF GREAT VALUE. IN FACT THE BELIEFS IN THE MAGICAL PROPERTIES AND SPECIAL POWERS OF RHINOCEROS HORN HAD ORIGINATED IN CHINA OVER 1000 YEARS BEFORE EUROPEAN INTERESTS BEGAN. BY THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY, CUPS CARVED OF RHINOCEROS HORN ORIGINALLY MADE FOR THE CHINESE MARKET HAD FOUND THEIR WAY TO EUROPE AND INTO CABINETS OF CURIOSITIES AS TRUE EXOTICA.