Finch & Co



A RARE MARQUESAS ISLANDS WOOD FAN HANDLE 'KE'E'

A RARE MARQUESAS ISLANDS WOOD FAN HANDLE ‘KE’E’
CARVED WITH TWO TIERS OF TIKI STANDING BACK TO BACK
OLD DARK PATINA
FIRST HALF 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 39.5 CM LONG – 15½ INS LONG

LITERATURE

THE PEOPLE OF THE MARQUESAS ISLANDS GAVE ALL IMPORTANT ORNAMENTS INDIVIDUAL NAMES. REQUIRING SKILL AND TIME TO MAKE THEY WOULD BE PASSED DOWN AS TREASURED HEIRLOOMS. FANS WERE CARRIED BY MARQUESAN WARRIORS AND BY OTHER MEN, AND ALSO WOMEN, OF HIGH RANK AS A MARK OF THEIR STATUS. THEY WERE DISPLAYED ON IMPORTANT OCCASIONS AND CAREFULLY CARRIED TO EMPHASISE THE OWNERS IMPORTANCE.
THE TIKI APPEARS ON MOST THREE DIMENSIONAL AND RITUALLY IMPORTANT CARVINGS AND IS A WIDESPREAD AND SIGNIFICANT IMAGE IN MARQUESAN ART. THE TIKI IS LINKED TO THE MARQUESAN BELIEF IN ANCESTRAL PRIMORDIAL BEINGS AND REPRESENTS A FUNDAMENTAL SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL AND SUPERNATURAL POWER OR 'MANA'. OFTEN REGARDED AS BOTH A GOD AND A HUMAN BEING TIKI ARE PORTRAYED REGARDLESS OF SIZE OR MATERIAL SHOWING THE SAME STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS.
AS THE 19TH CENTURY PROGRESSED MARQUESAN ART BECAME INCREASINGLY ORNATE. THE ARTIST GAUGUIN, LIVING AMONGST THE PEOPLE OF THE MARQUESAS AT THE END OF THE CENTURY, ACCURATELY COMMENTED 'GIVE (A MARQUESAN) AN OBJECT Â€¦.. (AND) HE WILL SUCCEED - THE WHOLE HARMONIOUSLY - IN LEAVING NOT A SINGLE SHOCKING OR INCONGRUOUS EMPTY SPACE'.