

Finch & C^o



A FINE CENTRAL AFRICAN, ZAIRE, KUBA CARVED WOOD PALM WINE CUP

A FINE CENTRAL AFRICAN, ZAIRE, KUBA CARVED WOOD PALM WINE CUP
RESTING ON FOUR FLEXED SUPPORTS, THE PATINATED HANDLE CARVED WITH A HUMAN FACE
LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY
SIZE: 18.5 CM HIGH, 13 CM DIA – 7¼ INS HIGH, 5 INS DIA

LITERATURE

USED FOR THE CEREMONIAL DRINKING OF PALM WINE, THE SURFACE OF THIS CUP IS CARVED WITH A GEOMETRIC DESIGN THAT RESEMBLES THE CUT PILE AND WEAVE OF A FINE KUBA RAFFIA CLOTH. IT POSSIBLY ORIGINATES FROM THE KUBA RELATED PEOPLES, THE WONGO.

KUBA ART IS EXCEPTIONAL, SO MUCH SO IT WAS INITIALLY THOUGHT BY EUROPEAN ANTHROPOLOGISTS TO HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY WESTERN AESTHETICS. TO QUOTE AC HADDON 'IT IS, TO MY MIND, VERY SUGGESTIVE THAT THE MOST CIVILISED, CULTURED AND ARTISTIC PEOPLE IN CENTRAL AFRICA SHOULD THEMSELVES OWN THAT HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO THERE WAS A WHITE ANCESTOR SOMEWHERE BEHIND THEM (1910, 55).

HADDON WAS COMMENTING ON EMILE TORDAY, THE HUNGARIAN ADVENTURER, EXPLORER AND ETHNOGRAPHER (1875 - 1931) WHO FORMED MUCH OF THE BRITISH MUSEUMS COLLECTION OF KUBA ART. TORDAY WORKED HARD AT ELEVATING THE IMAGE OF THE PEOPLES OF THE CONGO, A LAND THOUGHT OF IN THE 1900'S AS THE HEART OF THE 'DARK CONTINENT'. THROUGH HIS WORK A MORE POSITIVE VIEW OF THE PEOPLES LIFE AND CUSTOMS, AND AN APPRECIATION OF THE QUALITY OF THEIR ART BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE. HOWEVER, IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT IN RECENT HISTORY THE EFFECT OF TOURISM HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE STANDARDISING, AND NOT THE EXPANSION OF KUBA ARTISTIC VIRTUOSITY.