

Finch & C^o



A RARE PAIR OF THOMAS ONA CARVED WOOD FIGURES, YORUBA, WEST AFRICA
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CIRCA 1915

SIZE: 30CM & 29CM HIGH

LITERATURE

THOMAS ONA WAS A RENOWNED YORUBA ARTIST WHO CARVED COLONIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE FIGURES FOR THE EARLY TOURIST TRADE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY.

THE OBA OR KING IS VIEWED AS SACRED IN BENIN AND HE AND HIS COURT ARE THE CENTRE OF BENIN CULTURE. THIS OBA KING FIGURE CELEBRATES THE RETURN OF THE COURT IN 1914 AFTER THE BENIN PUNITIVE EXPEDITION LED BY THE BRITISH IN 1897, WHICH DESTROYED MOST OF THE PALACE AND CITY AND EXILED THE KING. IN 1914 THE KING'S SON WAS ALLOWED TO RETURN TO RESTORE THE MONARCHY AND BEGAN REBUILDING THE PALACE.

THESE FIGURES WERE COLLECTED IN 1916 AND WERE CARVED BY THE HAND OF THOMAS ONA TO COMMEMORATE THE RETURN OF THE OBA.