Finch & Co



AN UNUSUAL WAX BUST OF A NORTH AFRICAN MAN, WITH ATTACHED PAPER LABEL, ON EBONISED WOOD BASE WITH SILK COVER

AN UNUSUAL WAX BUST OF A NORTH AFRICAN MAN, WITH ATTACHED PAPER

LABEL, ON EBONISED WOOD BASE WITH SILK COVER. WAX, HUMAN HAIR AND GLASS

EYES

'MODELL VAR NACHAHMUNG GESLETZLICH GESCHÍ¼TZTL, EMIL EDUARD HAMMER. KUNST-ANSTALT, MÍ¼NCHEN'

LATE 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 50CM HIGH

LITERATURE

FROM THE 17TH WAX MODELS WERE INCREASINGLY USED FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES, AND AT THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY GAETANO GIULIO ZUMBO FROM SICILY, BUT WORKING IN BOLOGNA, WAS THE FIRST TO MAKE ANATOMICAL MODELS USING WAX. THIS WAS THE START OF A LONG ARTISTIC TRADITION OF WORKING WITH WAX TO DEMONSTRATE THE ANATOMY OF HUMANS, PLANTS AND ANIMALS. IN THE MID 19TH CENTURY IT BECAME IDEALOGICALLY FASHIONABLE TO COMPARE THE RACES OF MAN. THE EUGENICS SOCIETY FOUNDED BY FRANCIS GALTON TO IMPROVE THE OCCURRENCE OF DESIRABLE HERITABLE CHARACTERISTICS BY CONTROLLING BREEDING WAS GAINING AN INFLUENCE. AT THE HEIGHT OF THE VICTORIAN SELF CONFIDENCE WHEN EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION SEEMED TO BE THE

PEAK OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT, AND COLONIAL ENTERPRISE APPEARED TO BE PART OF A NATURAL EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT STRONG NATIONS PROSPERED WHILE THE WEAK DIED OUT. PEOPLE EXISTING IN THE 19TH CENTURY WITH PRIMITIVE CULTURES WERE SEEN AS SURVIVALS FROM A PAST STONE AGE ERA, DOOMED TO EXTINCTION THROUGH CONTACT WITH A SUPERIOR RACE.

MODELS IN WAX SUCH AS THIS ONE BEGAN TO BE MADE OF ALL THE DIFFERENT RACES OF MAN FOR THE SCIENTIFIC COMPARISON OF HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS. COLOURED WAX WAS OFTEN CALLED 'THE SHADOW OF LIFE' AND IS REMARKABLE IN DECEIVING THE EYE INTO MISTAKING ARTIFICE FOR REALITY AND IT IS THIS STRANGE DREAMLIKE QUALITY THAT FASCINATED, AND STILL FASCINATES, COLLECTORS OF CURIOSITIES.