Finch & Co



THREE WEST AFRICAN NIGERIAN YORUBA PEOPLES CARVED WOODEN IBEJI FEMALE FIGURES

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TRACES OF BLUE AND RED POLYCHROME IN THEIR COIFFURE, WEARING BEADED WAIST, ANKLE AND NECK BANDS
PROBABLY EGBA/EGBADO AREA
SIZE: 15.5CM HIGH – 6 INS HIGH

LITERATURE

THE YORUBA, WHO MOSTLY LIVE IN NIGERIA, CONSTITUTE THE LARGEST ART PRODUCING PEOPLE OF WEST AFRICA AND OVER 1000 YEARS AGO HAD FOUNDED URBAN CENTRES OF POWER AND IMPORTANCE. YORUBA ARTISTS UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY STILL CARVED IN THE STYLE OF, AND OBSERVED THE TRADITIONAL ARTISTIC CUSTOMS OF, THEIR FOREFATHERS, AND AS PROLIFIC CARVERS HAVE PRODUCED MANY OUTSTANDING WORKS OF ART.
IBEJI ARE AMONG THE BEST KNOWN OF YORUBA CARVINGS. THE HIGH INCIDENCE OF TWINS COMBINED WITH A HIGH INFANT MORTALITY RATE HELPED TO DEVELOP THIS UNIQUE CULT. THE IBEJI FIGURE IS CARVED FOR THE DEAD TWIN AND CLOTHED AND FED ALONGSIDE ITS LIVE SIBLING. THUS, A RESTING PLACE FOR THE SPIRIT OF THE DEAD TWIN IS PROVIDED WITHIN THE IBEJI WHOSE SPIRITUAL VENGEANCE WOULD OTHERWISE FOREVER THREATEN THE LIVES OF THE FAMILY.