Finch & Co



A TIBETAN BUDDHIST RITUAL DANCE DRUM BEATER

A TIBETAN BUDDHIST RITUAL DANCE DRUM BEATER MADE FROM A HUMAN MANDIBLE
THE INNER EDGE WORN SMOOTH AT THE TWO POINTS WHERE ONCE IT WAS HELD FOR USE. AGED BROWN PATINATION
17TH / 18TH CENTURY
SIZE: 10CM DEEP, 10CM WIDE – 4 INS DEEP, 4 INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THE IMPERMANENCE OF THE HUMAN CONDITION IS A RECURRING THEME IN TIBETAN DEVOTIONAL CEREMONIES. HUMAN BONES ARE USED FOR ALL KINDS OF IMPLEMENTS; CUPS AND DRUMS ARE MADE FROM SKULLS AND TRUMPETS FROM THIGHBONES. HUMAN SKIN IS USED FOR DRUMHEADS THAT ARE BEATEN WITH MANDIBLES SUCH AS THIS.
WOOD IS SO SCARCE IN TIBET THAT THE DEAD CANNOT BE CREMATED ON FUNERAL PYRES; THEIR REMAINS ARE MOSTLY CUT UP AND LEFT ON A HIGH OPEN PLACE TO BE CONSUMED BY SCAVENGERS LIKE VULTURES AND CROWS. TO THE BUDDHIST TIME AND DEATH ARE NOT SIMPLY AGENTS OF FINAL DESTRUCTION, BUT REPRESENT THE TRANSFORMATION, WHICH THE ENDING OF ONE LIFE BRINGS AS A PRELUDE TO OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEXT.