Finch & Co



WEST AFRICAN, LIBERIAN, IVORY COAST DAN CARVED WOOD PERFORMANCE MASK

A WEST AFRICAN, LIBERIAN, IVORY COAST DAN CARVED WOOD PERFORMANCE MASK
HOLES TO THE BASE OF THE CHIN WHERE ONCE A VEGETAL FIBRE BEARD WAS ATTACHED
THE BOTTOM LIP NOW MISSING
OLD DRY CRUSTY PATINA
EARLY 20TH CENTURY
SIZE: 24CM HIGH, 17CM WIDE, 10CM DEEP – 9½ HIGH, 6¾ INS WIDE, 4 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THE DAN PEOPLES OF THE IVORY COAST LIVE IN A FORESTED REGION OF WEST AFRICA AND ALL OF THEIR MASKS, NO MATTER HOW LARGE OR SMALL, CRUDE OR FINE ARE INVESTED WITH THE POWERFUL VITALITY AND SPIRIT OF THE FOREST, AND THIS VITALITY FOSTERS THE WELL BEING OF THE COMMUNITY AND THEIR PROTECTION AGAINST HARM. PERFORMERS WORE THESE MASKS ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS FOR COMMUNAL BENEFIT, A PRACTICE THAT WAS WIDESPREAD UNTIL THE 1960S. THE VARIETY OF MASKS CARVED IN THIS REGION WAS ENORMOUS ALTHOUGH THEY ALL HAVE A FRONTAL FACIAL FORM. THEY ARE CLASSED INTO MALE OR FEMALE, UNUSUAL AND DEVIANT SOCIAL CATEGORIES AND SOMETIMES HAVE A PARTICULAR FUNCTION ASCRIBED TO THEM SUCH AS WARRIOR, DANCER, DEBT COLLECTOR, ACTOR OR SINGER, HUNTER OR DELINQUENT, BY BOTH THE PUBLIC AND THE PERFORMERS ALIKE.