

# *Finch & C<sup>o</sup>*



## **PRE-ANGKOR PERIOD CAMBODIAN CARVED BASALT STONE HEAD OF THE DEITY HARIHARA**

A RARE PRE-ANGKOR PERIOD CAMBODIAN CARVED BASALT STONE HEAD OF THE DEITY HARIHARA

7TH CENTURY AD

SIZE: 31CM HIGH, 17CM WIDE – 12¼ INS HIGH, 6¾ INS WIDE

## **LITERATURE**

THIS ELEGANT HEAD REPRESENTS HARIHARI THE COMPOSITE FORM OF VISHNU (HARI) AND SHIVA (HARA). ARTISTICALLY, THE CULT OF THIS COMPOSITE DEITY HAD DEVELOPED IN NORTHERN INDIA BY THE 3RD CENTURY AD, BUT THE CONCEPTUAL BASIS WAS MUCH OLDER. THE TWO DEITIES SHARE ONE BODY, WITH SHIVA, MALE, OCCUPYING THE RIGHT SIDE, AND VISHNU, FEMALE, THE LEFT. REPRESENTING THE GREAT OPPOSITES OF CREATION AND DESTRUCTION, AND LIFE AND DEATH, THE TWO HALVES ARE DISTINGUISHED BY THE MATTED HAIR OF THE GREAT ASCETIC AND HALF OF A THIRD EYE FOR SHIVA AND A CYLINDRICAL CROWN FOR VISHNU. IN INDIA THIS CROWN IS RICHLY ADORNED, BUT IN CAMBODIAN SCULPTURE IT IS LEFT PLAIN.

RENDERED IN A STYLE OF IDEALISTIC NATURALISM THE FACE IS MODELLED WITH CARE AND SUBTLETY AND IS SUFFUSED WITH SERENITY AND COMPOSURE. THE HEAD IS FROM A STATUE THAT PROBABLY REPRESENTED AN IDEALISED PORTRAIT OF A KING. ROYAL PORTRAITS WERE CARVED AS DIVINE IMAGES AS UPON DEATH THE SOVEREIGN WOULD ASCEND TO THE PRESENCE OF THE GOD TO SHARE HIS BLISSFUL REALM AND SO WOULD ASSUME HIS OUTWARD APPEARANCE. THUS, IN CAMBODIA, KINGS AND QUEENS WERE INCARNATIONS OF THE DIVINE BEING.