Finch & Co



FRENCH CARVED IVORY SINGING DIAVOLO OR DIABOLO

A RARE FRENCH CARVED IVORY SINGING DIAVOLO OR DIABOLO
EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 9.5CM WIDE, 4.5CM DIA. – 3¾ INS WIDE, 1¾ INS DIA.

LITERATURE

DIAVOLO OR DIABOLO WAS A CRAZE IN EARLY 19TH CENTURY FRANCE. ONE CARVED OF BOXWOOD AND SIMILAR TO THIS EXAMPLE IN IVORY IS ILLUSTRATED IN A FRENCH COLOURED ENGRAVING OF AROUND 1810 ENTITLED 'LE BON GENRE NO 5, LEÍ§ON DE DIABLE'. THIS AIM OF THE GAME WAS TO JUGGLE OR BALANCE THE DIAVOLO ON A THIN STRING HELD BETWEEN TWO LONG WOODEN STICKS OR HANDLES AND THROW IT IN THE AIR AS MANY TIMES AS POSSIBLE, CATCHING IT EACH TIME WITHOUT ALLOWING IT TO FALL TO THE GROUND. SOME OF THESE WERE CARVED WITH AN APERTURE TO MAKE THEM 'SING' AS THEY SPUN IN THE AIR.