Finch & Co

PAIR OF AMERICAN SAILORS SCRIMSHAW CARVED SPERM-WHALE TOOTH PORTRAIT BUSTS

A RARE AND UNUSUAL PAIR OF AMERICAN SAILORS SCRIMSHAW CARVED SPERM-WHALE TOOTH PORTRAIT BUSTS
PROBABLY OF A SHIP'S CAPTAIN AND HIS WIFE
CIRCA 1850-60
SIZES: A: 7.5CM HIGH – 3 INS HIGH
B: 8CM HIGH – 3¼ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

IT WAS THOROUGHLY INGRAINED IN THE MINDS OF THE 19TH CENTURY SAILORS THAT IDLENESS WAS JUST NOT ACCEPTABLE, ONE HAD TO BE PRODUCTIVE DURING WAKING HOURS. SCRIMSHAW FILLED THE ENORMOUS PERIODS OF THE TIME THAT EXISTED DURING A VOYAGE LOOKING FOR WHALES.
CAPTAINS, MATES AND SEAMEN WERE ALL INVOLVED IN SCRIMSHAW, BUT NONE OF THE SKILLS NEEDED TO MAKE OBJECTS FROM WHALEBONE AND IVORY WERE THE RESULT OF FORMAL TRAINING. THE SAILOR'S ART WAS A PRODUCT OF THEIR NATURAL INCLINATION, DEXTEROUS HANDS AND CREATIVE MINDS AND IT WAS ALMOST UNIVERSAL AMONGST WHALE-MEN FOR 80 YEARS.