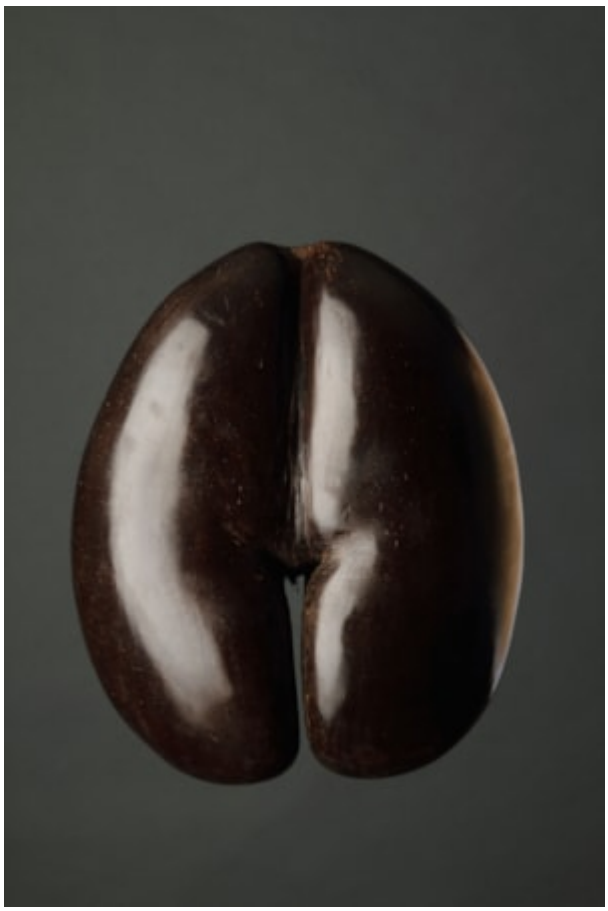
Finch & Co



LARGE DARK SPECIMEN OF AN INDIAN OCEAN SEYCHELLES 'COCO DE MER'

A LARGE DARK SPECIMEN OF AN INDIAN OCEAN SEYCHELLES 'COCO DE MER' OF FEMALE FORM 'LODOICEA MALADIVICA'
19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 30.5CM HIGH, 24CM WIDE, 15CM DEEP – 12 INS HIGH, 9½ INS WIDE, 6 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

SINCE THE LATE 16TH CENTURY WHEN MERCHANT SEAMEN RETURNED WITH EXOTIC SPICES, PLANTS AND GOODS FROM THE INDIES, THESE BEAUTIFUL, SHAPELY NUTS OF THE SEYCHELLES PALM HAVE FASCINATED EUROPEAN COLLECTORS OF CURIOSITIES. THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THOUGHT TO POSSESS POWERFUL APHRODISIAC PROPERTIES AND TAKING OVER 100 YEARS TO FORM AND 10 YEARS TO MATURE, THE NUTS ARE NOW RARELY FOUND. THEY SEEM UNABLE TO GROW NATURALLY ANYWHERE EXCEPT ON THE SMALL ISLAND OF PRASLIN AND A NEIGHBOURING ISLET ON THE SEYCHELLES ARCHIPELAGO, WHICH HAS BECOME A PROTECTED NATURE RESERVE. THE MOST FAMOUS EXAMPLE OF A 'COCO DE MER' IS IN THE ROYAL DANISH KUNSTKAMMER AT ROSENBURG CASTLE IN COPENHAGEN WHERE IT IS LISTED IN THE INVENTORY OF 1737 AS 'COMPLETE, RARE AND BEAUTIFUL'.