

Finch & C^o



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DESERT ABORIGINAL SHIELD 'WUNDA'

A WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DESERT ABORIGINAL SHIELD 'WUNDA' TRACES OF RED OCHRE REMAINING IN THE ZIG-ZAG GROOVES

OLD DARK PATINA WORN SMOOTH ON THE HAND GRIP TO THE REVERSE

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 72CM HIGH, 21CM WIDE – 28 INS HIGH, 8¼ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THESE LARGE FLAT AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL SHIELDS ARE USED AS PROTECTION FROM SPEARS AND BOOMERANGS. 'WUNDA' COME FROM THE WESTERN DESERT AND ARE BEAUTIFULLY ENGRAVED WITH THE USE OF A POSSUM-TOOTH CHISEL. THE INCISED PATTERNS REPRESENT MOVING SNAKES AND WERE ENHANCED BY HAVING RED OCHRE RUBBED INTO THE ZIG-ZAG GROOVES. WHEN HELD IN THE HAND THE ALTERNATION OF LIGHT AND SHADE ON THE UNDULATING PARALLEL LINES CREATES AN OPTICAL ILLUSION OF A DANCING, MOVING IMAGE.

CONSIDERING THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLES PRODUCED THESE SHIELDS IN THE HARSH, BLEACHING LIGHT OF THE DESERT AMONGST DUSTY, WEATHERED AND DECAYING ROCK, NAKED AND UNENCUMBERED BY ANY POSSESSIONS, THEIR WORK IS REMARKABLY ACCOMPLISHED, AND TO THE EUROPEAN EYE, ARTISTICALLY RICH.