

Finch & C^o



WEST AFRICAN GHANA FANTI PEOPLES FEMALE FERTILITY DOLL

A WEST AFRICAN GHANA FANTI PEOPLES FEMALE FERTILITY DOLL 'AKUABA' OF ABSTRACT FORM WITH INCISED GEOMETRIC DECORATION TO THE REVERSE OF THE HEAD

HOLES TO THE SIDE OF THE FACE AND TOP OF THE HEAD FOR BEADS

WHITE INVENTORY NO. 208, TO BASE

LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY

SIZE: 29CM HIGH, 6CM WIDE, 4.5CM DEEP – 11½ INS HIGH, 2½ INS WIDE, 1¾ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THE FANTI ARE GROUPED IN THE COASTAL REGIONS SOUTH OF ASANTE TERRITORIES AND ARE AKAN SPEAKERS WHO SHARE ASANTE TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS. 'AKUABA' DOLLS WERE CARRIED BY WOMEN ON THEIR BACKS TO COMBAT INFERTILITY AND WERE DRESSED AND CARED FOR LIKE REAL BABIES. AFTER A SUCCESSFUL BIRTH THEY WERE PLACED BY THE HOUSEHOLD ALTAR AND SOMETIMES WERE LATER GIVEN TO DAUGHTERS AS EDUCATIONAL TOYS IN PREPARATION FOR MOTHERHOOD. 'AKUABA' WERE ALSO WORN BY EXPECTANT MOTHERS SO THAT THE BABY WOULD BE BEAUTIFUL. THE EXTREMELY ABSTRACT BODY AND THE RIGID, HIGHLY STYLISED FEATURES ARE SAID TO SYMBOLISE THE IDEA THAT THE UNBORN FOETUS IS NOT FULLY GROWN AND SO DOES NOT YET HAVE A PERSONALITY. THE FLAT HIGH FOREHEAD, JOINED UP CURVED EYEBROWS AND SMALL BREASTS AND MOUTH ARE ALL FANTI IDEALS OF FEMININE BEAUTY.