Finch & Co



SOUTH-WESTERN ALASKA NUNIVAK ISLAND YUP'IK ESKIMO HOOPED WOODEN SHAMAN'S DANCE MASK 'KEGGINAQUQ' DEPICTING A HELPING SPIRIT

A SOUTH-WESTERN ALASKA NUNIVAK ISLAND YUP'IK ESKIMO HOOPED WOODEN SHAMAN'S DANCE MASK 'KEGGINAQUQ' DEPICTING A HELPING SPIRIT

WITH TATTOO TO CHIN, CORMORANT FEATHERS ATTACHING TWO FEET AND OTHER APPENDAGES TO THE BENTWOOD HOOPS

TRACES OF RED, WHITE AND BLUE PIGMENTS INSCRIBED WITH: KIPNUK AND INVENTORY NUMBER: 133.14A TO REVERSE

EARLY 20TH CENTURY

SIZE: 27CM HIGH, 20CM WIDE, 7.5CM DEEP – 10½ INS HIGH, 8 INS WIDE, 3 INS DEEP (FACE) APPROX 64CM DIA. – 25¼ INS DIA (MAX)

LITERATURE

THE NAME YUP'IK IS THE SELF-DESIGNATION OF THE ESKIMO'S OF WESTERN ALASKA AND IS DERIVED FROM THEIR WORD FOR PERSON 'YUK' AND '-PIK' MEANING REAL OR GENUINE. TOGETHER WITH MANY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD THEY CONSIDER THEMSELVES 'REAL PEOPLE' IN CONTRAST TO THE LESS REAL OUTSIDERS.

DEPICTING THE FACE OF A SHAMAN OR 'AUGALKUT' THESE MASKS WERE USED BY SHAMAN TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION AND MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE HUMAN AND THE ANIMAL WORLDS AND BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. THE OUTSTRETCHED RED COLOURED FEET SIGNIFY THE POWER OF THE 'AUGALKUT' SUPPORTED BY 'TUNRAT' HELPING OR FAMILIAR SPIRITS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THE SPIRITS REVEALED THEMSELVES THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE MASK AND WERE BOTH DANGEROUS AND HELPFUL. WHEN USED BY THE SHAMAN IN DRAMATIC ENACTMENTS OF PAST SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTERS, THE MASKS HAD THE POWER TO ELICIT THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE FUTURE.

RITUALLY POWERFUL MASKS WERE CREATED FOR EACH CEREMONIAL EVENT UNDER DIRECTION OF A SHAMAN AND THEY WERE USUALLY DISCARDED AFTER USE, THEIR FORCE BEING SPENT. HOWEVER, IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES TRADERS AND REINDEER HERDERS WORKED THEIR WAY ALONG THE YUKON AND KUSKOKWIM RIVERS

COLLECTING MASKS AS THEY TRAVELLED. ADMIRED FOR THEIR ABSTRACT FORMS THEY BECAME A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR THE SURREALIST ART MOVEMENT.