

Finch & C^o



WEST AFRICAN GHANA FANTI FERTILITY FIGURE 'AKUABA'

A FINE WEST AFRICAN GHANA FANTI FERTILITY FIGURE 'AKUABA' CARVED WITH SCARIFICATION MARKS TO THE FACE AND TORSO A FLAT HIGH FOREHEAD DISPLAYING HIGHLY ARCHED JOINED UP EYEBROWS A SMALL MOUTH AND BREASTS OLD SMOOTH RICH LUSTROUS LIGHT BROWN PATINA

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 24.5CM HIGH, 11CM WIDE - 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ INS HIGH, 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ INS WIDE / 27.5CM HIGH - 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ INS WIDE (WITH BASE)

LITERATURE

THE FANTI PEOPLES ARE GROUPED IN THE COASTAL REGIONS SOUTH OF ASANTE TERRITORY AND ARE AKAN SPEAKERS WHO SHARE ASANTE TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS. THESE FIGURES WERE CARVED FOR WOMEN WHO OFTEN CARRIED THEM ON THEIR BACKS INSIDE THEIR CLOTHING AND CARED FOR THEM AS IF THEY WERE REAL BABIES. IT WAS THOUGHT THAT THE FIGURES ENSURED FERTILITY AND IF THE WOMAN WAS ALREADY PREGNANT, THE HEALTH AND BEAUTY OF THE UNBORN CHILD. AFTER A SUCCESSFUL BIRTH, THE FIGURES WERE PLACED BY THE HOUSEHOLD ALTAR AND SOMETIMES WERE LATER GIVEN TO GIRLS AS INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS IN PREPARATION FOR MOTHERHOOD. THE FANTI ARE A MATRILINEAL SOCIETY AND DESCENT IS THEREFORE PRINCIPALLY FROM MOTHERS TO CHILDREN. IT WAS BELIEVED THAT IT WAS CRUCIAL FOR THE WOMEN TO GIVE BIRTH TO DAUGHTERS WHO WOULD CONTINUE THE LINE.