

Finch & C^o



WEST AFRICAN YORUBA CARVED 'ERE IBEJI' TWIN FIGURE

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A FEMALE TWIN FIGURE WITH FINELY CARVED TIERED HAIRSTYLE CONTAINING TRACES OF REKITT'S BLUE THE FACE WITH A WIDE MOUTH BROAD NOSE AND LARGE EYES THE BROAD SHOULDERS WITH LONG ARMS DECORATED WITH HEAVY CAST BRONZE BRACELETS UNDER HER PENDULOUS BREASTS SHE WEARS FOUR STRINGS OF GLASS BEADED WAIST BANDS

A SMALL SECTION OF THE BASE BROKEN AND GLUED

PAINTED INVENTORY NO. TO BASE '0276-1'

EGBADO AREA

LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY

SIZES: 25CM HIGH - 9¾ INS HIGH

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LITERATURE

AMONG THE YORUBA PEOPLE TWINS ARE BELIEVED TO BE POWERFUL SPIRITS, FELLOW TRAVELLERS WITH THE GODS AND ARE REFERRED TO AS 'ORISHAMEJI' WHO IT IS SAID 'ENTER THE WORLD WITH MANY FOLLOWERS'. THEIR IMPORTANCE IN INFLUENCING THE LIFE OF A YORUBA FAMILY IS SECOND ONLY TO THAT OF THE ANCESTORS AND THE GODS.

WHEN A TWIN DIES, EITHER AS A BABY OR LATER IN LIFE, THE PARENTS CONSULT IFA TO LEARN WHETHER AN 'ERE IBEJI' OR MEMORIAL IMAGE SHOULD BE CARVED AND BY WHOM. THEY WILL PROVIDE THE SCULPTOR WITH KOLA NUTS AND A COCKEREL FOR SACRIFICE AS HE PREPARES TO CUT THE TREE FOR THE WOOD WITH WHICH HE WILL CARVE THE TWIN FIGURE. DURING THE PERIOD OF CARVING THE MOTHER WILL SEND FOOD AND AGAIN PRESENT HIM WITH GIFTS OF FOOD WHEN THE 'ERE IBEJI' IS PRESENTED TO HER. UPON RECEIVING THE FIGURE SHE WILL PLACE IT ON HER BACK TUCKED INTO HER CLOTH WRAPPER AS SHE WOULD A LIVING CHILD AND DANCE TO HER HOUSE LISTENING ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE SONGS FOR IBEJI SUNG BY THE WOMEN OF HER COMPOUND.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION THE NETHERLANDS