Finch & Co



A PAIR OF 'LOVING' DOVES ATTRIBUTED TO THE WORKSHOP OF GRINLING GIBBONS (1648 - 1721)

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OLD DAMAGES, FISSURES

FINE COLOUR AND PATINA

LIMEWOOD

ENGLISH

LATE 17TH CENTURY OR EARLY 18TH CENTURY

SIZE: 25.5CM HIGH, 19CM DIA. - 10 INS HIGH, 7½ INS DIA.

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LITERATURE

POSSIBLY A 'NEWEL' POST OR AN ARCHITECTURAL FINIAL. THERE IS NO DOUBTING THE SIGNIFICANCE PLACED UPON THIS BEAUTIFUL CARVING OF TWO DOVES, INTERTWINED, 'EMBRACED', DANCING A 'PLAYFUL DANCE', THEIR BEAKS ENGAGED IN A 'KISS'. THE COUNTRY HOUSE FOR WHICH THIS CARVING WAS DESTINED, MUST HAVE BEEN A HOUSE FULL OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP, FOR THEIR 'TOKEN' OF LOVE, COMMISSIONED IN SUCH A LOVING AND TENDER SCULPTURE, SPEAKS VOLUMES OF THE OWNER AND SCULPTOR OF THIS VERY UNUSUAL SYMBOL OF ENGLISH SECULAR ART.

CARVED BIRDS WERE A 'STAPLE' OF GIBBONS'S WORK. THE FAMOUS 'COSIMO PANEL', COMMISSIONED BY CHARLES II AND SENT AS A GIFT TO THE GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY, COSIMO III DE'MEDICI (1642 - 1723), AT THE TIME WAS GRINLING GIBBONS'S HIGHEST PAYMENT FOR A WOODCARVING, RECEIVING £150 IN 1682. THE UPPER ELEMENT OF THE PANEL DEPICTS TWO BILLING 'TURTLE DOVES' ENTWINED, RESTING UPON 'CARVED' LACE. THE BIRDS WERE THOUGHT TO MATE FOR LIFE, SYMBOLS OF LASTING AMITY AND AFFECTION.

CONSIDERED BY MANY AS GIBBONS'S MASTERPIECE, FOR YEARS THE 'COSIMO PANEL' REMAINED IN FLORENCE WITH LITTLE MORE THAN EXPOSURE TO THE AIR. HOWEVER, IN THE FLOOD OF 1966, IT WAS WASHED OVER BY WATER, AND PARTLY BURIED BY MUD. THERE FOLLOWED SKILFUL RESTORATION, ONLY TO BE 'SINGED' BY A 'FIREBALL' FROM A GAS EXPLOSION IN THE PALAZZO PITTI IN 1984.

PROVENANCE

EX GEOFFREY VAN COLLECTION

THENCE BY DESCENT

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION