Finch & Co



A POWERFUL CARVED 'GREEN MAN' WITH PIERCING EYES AND PROTRUDING TONGUE

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WALNUT

ENGLISH

LATE 15TH CENTURY TO EARLY 16TH CENTURY

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SIZE: 29CM HIGH, 23.5CM WIDE - 11½ INS HIGH, 9¼ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THE ENIGMATIC ORIGINS OF THE GREEN MAN, ALSO KNOWN AS THE 'WILDMAN OF THE WOODS' AND 'JACK IN THE GREEN,' HAVE CAPTIVATED SCHOLARS WORLDWIDE. HIS UBIQUITOUS IMAGE SPANS ACROSS CONTINENTS, FROM THE ANCIENT AZTEC AND MAYAN CIVILISATION'S OF MEXICO TO THE SWAYAMBHUNATH TEMPLE IN KATHMANDU.

IN BRITAIN, THE GREEN MAN'S PRESENCE IS EVIDENT IN OVER A HUNDRED CATHEDRALS AND CHURCHES. HOWEVER, CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE LACKS A DEFINITIVE EXPLANATION FOR THE UNIVERSAL REPRESENTATION OF THE GREEN MAN. IN CHRISTIANITY, THE COLOUR GREEN SYMBOLISES NEW LIFE AND THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE OVER DEATH, MIRRORING THE GREEN SPRING THAT EMERGES FROM WINTER. AS A DEITY OF NATURE, THE GREEN MAN PERSONIFIES FORESTS, AND THERE IS SPECULATION ABOUT HIS CONNECTION TO THE GREEK GOD DIONYSUS, DEPICTED WITH BRANCHES PROTRUDING FROM HIS HEAD, AND POSSIBLY THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GOD OSIRIS, WHOSE PORTRAIT IN THE NEFERTARI TOMB WAS PAINTED IN GREEN.

FURTHERMORE, THE GREEN MAN'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE CELTIC WARRIOR TRADITION OF CAPTURING ENEMY HEADS AS TROPHIES AND DISPLAYING THEIR SKULLS AS MAGICAL PROTECTORS OF CELTIC SACRED SITES IS NOTEWORTHY. IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA, THE GREEN MAN HAS REEMERGED AS A SYMBOL OF ENDANGERED NATURE, RESONATING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY.

PROVENANCE

OLD COLLECTION; NUMBERS: 70, 61 (?) AND PAINTED: DO. 23. 24 (TO REVERSE)

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION