Anthropomorphic Lele Or Kuba Cup In Carved Wood, Mid-20th Century



650 EUR

Period : 20th century
Condition : Bon état
Material : Solid wood
Height : 14.5 cm

Description

Lele or Kuba Anthropomorphic Palm Wine Vessel
Democratic Republic of Congo, Mid-20th Century
Wood, carved and incised H: 14.5 cm
This striking anthropomorphic vessel originates from the Lele or neighboring Kuba peoples of the Kasai region in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Elegantly sculpted from a single piece of dark hardwood, the cup is fashioned in the form of a stylized human head--featuring a serene, closed-eyed expression, geometric scarification motifs, and a sculptural coiffure carved in low relief.
A broad handle arches from the rear of the head, balanced by a stable flaring base, suggesting both functional use and ceremonial significance. Such

Dealer

Art Classique
curiosités, art premier et Asiatique
Mobile : 0032-475272534

Bilzen 3740

vessels were traditionally used to serve palm wine during important social rituals, chiefly gatherings, or initiation ceremonies--marking this piece as an object of prestige and status.
The subtle polish and oxidation of the surface indicate respectful handling and age, dating the piece to approximately the 1940s-1950s. The minimalist abstraction, combined with sharp symmetry and well-defined incisions, highlights the Lele aesthetic tendency toward elegance and restraint, in contrast to the denser ornamentation of classic Kuba works.
A beautiful and rare example of Central African woodcarving, this cup stands as both a functional artifact and a compelling sculptural object.

Condition:
Good vintage condition with age-appropriate wear. Minor surface marks and light oxidation, consistent with traditional use and age.