



Masuane Dagger, Ceram Island



8 750 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : En l'etat

Description

Jean-Pierre Dutilleux

Collection ANTHROPOMORPHIC HANDLE

AND ZOOMORPHIC SHEATH Masuane people,

Ceram (Seram) Island, Eastern Indonesia

20th century -- Field collection

Carved wood, plant

fibers, metal

An important ceremonial dagger

consisting of a handle carved in the round

depicting a stylized human figure with simplified

features, the arms folded against the torso in a

posture of protection or contemplation. The

handle, deeply weathered, shows even wear

consistent with long-term, historical use. A

binding of braided plant fibers secures the

connection to the sheath. The carved wooden

sheath is one of the most remarkable elements of

the ensemble. Its openwork front features a

complex geometric design combining radiating

Dealer

Collection

Rare & Unusual Objects

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patterns, stylized anthropomorphic forms, and symbolic elements likely linked to local beliefs. The lower section ends with a carved animal head with an open mouth, reminiscent of a crocodile or a large monitor lizard--a recurring figure in the symbolic systems of Eastern Indonesian cultures, associated with protective power and the spiritual world. The metal blade, now oxidized, retains a simple and functional silhouette typical of Ceram's ritual objects, where the ceremonial and symbolic value of the object far outweighs the technical sophistication of the craftsmanship. The piece as a whole exudes a particularly strong sculptural presence, enhanced by the quality of the patina and the balance between human and zoomorphic forms. The ceremonial daggers of the Masuane groups of Ceram occupy a unique place in the traditions of eastern Indonesia. Far beyond their utilitarian function, they serve as objects of prestige, markers of authority, and mediators between the visible world and spiritual forces. The combination of a protective anthropomorphic figure and a predatory animal figure reflects a dual conception of power: human mastery and supernatural power united in a single object. With its rich sculpted iconography and highly embodied character, this example ranks among the most evocative ceremonial objects from the Ceram region. Length: 54

cm

PROVENANCE Jean-Pierre Dutilleux

Collection Collected in situ during fieldwork in

eastern Indonesia.

PUBLISHED Specimen reproduced in: TRIBES - The First People

VILO Publications Under the description "Dagger with

carved sheath"

The set includes: o a copy of the

book, o as well as an original photographic print,

numbered and signed by Jean-Pierre Dutilleux,

taken during his fieldwork among the peoples of

Ceram. The interplay between the object, its

publication, and the photographic documentation

lends this set a documentary and curatorial

dimension that is particularly rare in the primitive

arts market. Look at this piece. Look at its form, its

balance, its visual power. We do not create the work. We do not replace the artist. We do not presume to dictate what he intended to express or convey. We simply strive, with humility, to shed light on its journey: the one that saw it come into being, the one that carried it through time, the one that preserved, selected, and passed it on. In turn, we accompany it on the journey it still has ahead. For a work of art never belongs entirely to the one who owns it. It passes through the eyes of viewers, across places, and through generations. Our role is simply to provide the conditions for it to continue to be seen, understood, admired, and passed on.