



Ekpo Mask



2 800 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Material : Solid wood

Height : hauteur : 33 cm (43 cm socle inclus).

Description

An Ekpo society mask from the Bini people, originating from the region of the former Kingdom of Benin (present-day Edo State, southern Nigeria). This elegant anthropo-zoomorphic mask represents a human-antelope head. The delicately lowered eyelids and the gaze symbolically directed toward the ground endow the piece with a profoundly internalized and meditative expression. The clear forehead is surmounted by a slightly flattened headdress supporting two slender horns, symbols of power and spiritual connection. Carved from a soft wood, the work retains superb traces of kaolin over a beautifully nuanced, ancient brown patina. Its remarkable lightness, combined with intense traces of internal wear, is an indisputable sign of great age and prolonged ritual use. Worn

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during the dances of the Ekpo society, this mask combined human features and animal symbols to invoke protective spirits, regulate justice, and strengthen the moral authority of the group. A stylistically very similar example, published in the literature dedicated to the arts of southern Nigeria, is currently held at the Dallas Museum of Art, confirming the museum quality and rarity of the present work. Date Late 19th - early 20th century. Provenance Collected in situ in 1962. Brent & Martha Ashabranner Collection, Washington D.C., 1982 (a copy of the original certificate will be provided to the purchaser). Belgian private collection. Literature LUNSFORD, John (dir.). African Art From Dallas Collections. Exhibition catalogue (Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, July 26 - September 4, 1972). Dallas: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1972, p. 59. Condition Minor losses consistent with age and use. Dimensions Height: 33 cm (43 cm base included).