



PROANTIC

LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Rare Equestrian Tau Tau, Toraja, Sulawesi



5 200 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : En l'etat

Material : Solid wood

Width : 74 cm

Height : 93 cm

Depth : 15 cm

Description

Rare equestrian Tau Tau, Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi (Celebes), Indonesia Monoxyloous carved wood Late 19th - Early 20th century (circa 1880-1910) Dimensions: 94 × 74 × 15 cm This remarkable sculpture depicts a horseman mounted on his horse. Both rider and mount were carved simultaneously from a single block of wood, forming a monoxyloous composition conceived from the outset as an indivisible whole. This unity of conception gives the sculpture exceptional visual strength and remarkable formal coherence. The animal is unmistakably a horse, distinguished by its elongated neck, refined head, upright ears and slender legs. The rider adopts a calm, dignified posture, conveying rank and authority rather than movement. The composition is governed by strict frontality and a balanced

Dealer

Galerie Un Pas de Côté

Ethnoarchéologie

Mobile : 750320533

16 rue Guesnault

Vendôme 41100

treatment of volume, both characteristic of Toraja ritual sculpture. The face is powerfully stylised, with a broad forehead, geometric nose and fixed gaze of remarkable intensity. The deliberate simplification of the forms favours spiritual presence over naturalistic representation. The horse itself is superbly carved, notable for the elegance of its neck, the accuracy of its proportions and the quality of its modelling, all of which contribute to the monumentality of the composition. The surface displays a rich, old patina of warm brown and honey tones, enhanced by consistent handling wear and natural signs of age, attesting to a long history of preservation. This iconography remains exceptionally rare within Toraja art. While Tau Tau funerary effigies are well documented, equestrian representations are extremely uncommon. A closely comparable sculpture was formerly published by the American specialist Mark A. Johnson Tribal Art under the title Wood Ancestor Figure (Tau-Tau) Riding a Horse, which he described as "the only known example of a Tau-Tau figure riding a horse." This reference encourages further research into this unusual iconography, whose precise ritual function has yet to be fully understood. Through the quality of its carving, the elegance of its composition, its monoxylous construction and the rarity of its iconography, this sculpture stands as a particularly significant example of early Toraja art. Provenance Former collection assembled through Jean-Pierre Osenda, Paris, during the 1970s. Millon, Tribal Addiction! sale, Paris, 2024. Acquired at this sale.