



Guardian Of Sleep - Gurage Ethnic Group, Ethiopia Late 19th - Early 20th Century



3 800 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Quelques manques

Material : Solid wood

Width : 16

Height : 96 cm avec le socle 126 cm

Depth : 6

Description

Sleep Guardian - Gurage People, EthiopiaLate 19th - Early 20th CenturyRare Sleep Guardian carved from a single block of hardwood and attributed to the Gurage people of the Ethiopian highlands.This tall anthropomorphic guardian is distinguished by its remarkably restrained silhouette, crowned by a stylized paddle-shaped head and decorated with deeply carved vertical grooves extending across its entire surface. The harmony of its proportions, the quality of its carving and its rich dark brown patina give the sculpture an exceptional presence.The extreme austerity of this figure is not the result of technical simplification but of deliberate abstraction. Reduced to a few essential volumes--a stylized head, an elongated body and the rhythmic sequence of deeply carved vertical

Dealer

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grooves--the sculpture transcends simple human representation to embody a protective presence. This economy of form gives the work remarkable sculptural strength, whose striking modernity recalls certain explorations of twentieth-century sculpture. Among the Gurage, the traditional house was far more than a dwelling; it was regarded as a protected domestic and spiritual space where the living, the ancestors and benevolent unseen forces coexisted. Set directly into the earthen floor of the house, these guardians were intended to ward off malevolent influences, protect the household during the vulnerable hours of sleep and preserve the harmony of family life. The lighter and heavily worn lower section clearly reflects its prolonged insertion into the ground, while the beautifully aged surface and deep carved grooves testify to decades of use and natural ageing. The designation "Sleep Guardian" is now recognized by several museum institutions, including the Centre Pompidou in Paris, which preserves a comparable example attributed to the Gurage people. Combining sculpture, domestic architecture and spiritual symbolism, this remarkable work is an outstanding testimony to the protective traditions of the Ethiopian highlands.