



## Akan Head, Terracotta On A Pedestal, Kwahu People, Ghana



11 500 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Height : 73 cm.

### Description

Terracotta. Height: 73 cm. Without base: 58 cm x 40 cm. From the 15th to the 18th century, the southern Akan peoples, primarily in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, used terracotta heads in the funeral rituals of their chiefs or the royal family. During these ceremonies, which could take place up to two years after the chief's death, a head or statue representing the deceased was sculpted and carried through the village. It was then left on the deceased's grave or placed on an altar where libations were offered to it. The production of terracotta portraits of members of royal families and their entourages was entrusted to women--potters and ceramic artists--whose workshops were once controlled by the queen mothers. A variety of regional styles developed among various Akan groups from 1600 to

### Dealer

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1965. We present this major work from a private collection in France, purchased in 1996 from a French gallery owner based in Togo, who also crafted the ebony pedestal. We do not have the documentation to verify this, but we are in contact with the collector. A remarkable work with a perfect circular shape; its rounded form corresponds to one of the most significant styles of the Kwahu people--an ethnic subgroup of the larger Akan community in Ghana that lives primarily in the eastern region of the country, on the steep heights of the Kwahu Plateau--often nicknamed the "natural fortress"--overlooking Lake Volta to the west. The sublime face of this funerary terracotta, with its delicately summarized and suggested features, tends toward abstraction and Cubism. One might think, for example, of Paul Klee's painting *\*Senecio\** (1922). Our terracotta piece masterfully bridges the interests of Cubists such as Picasso and Braque--who were primarily interested in the geometry, structure, and planes of the African object--and those of Surrealists such as Breton, who sought mystery, myth, and ritual function.