



Small Shishi-mai Mask - Showa Period (1926-1989).



380 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Width : 26 cm.

Height : 17 cm.

Depth : 18 cm.

Description

Japan - Showa Period (1926-1989). Small shishi mask carved from wood and lacquered red (with minor chips); the eyes, fangs, and inside of the mouth are gilded; the eyebrows are black; and the mane is purple. The forehead is adorned with nine metal bells; the lower jaw and tongue are articulated via a cord, and the ears via another. Dimensions: 17 x 26 x 18 cm. Sold with its custom-made base. Dimensions with the base: 31 x 26 x 18 cm. Notes: Japan has a long tradition of lion dance, known as Shishi-mai (???). Although it likely originated in India and is now widespread in many Asian countries, it is believed to have been introduced to Japan from China during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). In Chinese culture, lions already symbolized protection and power. The Japanese adapted this

Dealer

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dance to incorporate it into their own spiritual traditions, particularly Shinto. Now fully integrated into Japanese culture, the dance is frequently performed at Shinto shrines during the New Year to purify, protect, and bring good luck. The dancers are accompanied by flutes and drums (taiko). The mask's movable jaw is a key feature that allows the dancer to snap the lion's mouth shut--a gesture considered apotropaic (warding off evil spirits). The lion is a guardian and protector; it drives away demons and purifies the surroundings. During the Shishi-mai, the act of the lion "biting" a child's head is believed to bring health and good fortune.