Medusa Mask Made Of Polychrome Caltagirone Earthenware, Early 20th Century



995 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Material : Earthenware

Length : 8

Width : 30

Height : 37

Description

ITALY, CALTAGIRONE (Sicily)Probably early 20th centuryMedusa mask or GorgoneionPolychrome glazed earthenware in high relief.Handwritten inscription "Caltagirone" on the reverse.Dimensions: 37 × 30 × 8 cm.This spectacular head of Medusa, crafted from polychrome earthenware in the tradition of the workshops of Caltagirone, Sicily, attests to the remarkable enduring influence of ancient models in Mediterranean decorative arts.In Greek mythology, Medusa is the most famous of the three Gorgons, monstrous creatures whose gaze had the power to petrify anyone who met it. Beheaded by Perseus, her head became, as early as antiquity, a powerful apotropaic symbol, intended to ward off misfortune and drive away evil forces. Known as the gorgoneion, this effigy

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played an important role in Greek architectural ornamentation, particularly in Sicily, where it appears notably in the great sanctuaries of Selinunte.Our mask draws on this ancient iconography with a particularly striking expressive freedom. The face, with its fixed, wide-open eyes, is distorted around a gaping mouth that seems to be letting out a scream. A profusion of snakes, rendered in high relief and tightly intertwined, frames the figure. Their scaly bodies, rendered in shades of green and yellow, contrast with the pallor of the face, while a few touches of red highlight their menacing tongues. The vividness of the polychromy, the vigorous modeling, and the almost theatrical exaggeration of the features lend the work as a whole a singularly expressive presence.Caltagirone, one of Sicily's oldest and most important centers of ceramic production, has for centuries carried on a tradition of craftsmanship enriched by Greek, Arab, and Italian influences. Probably created in the early 20th century, this work continues that tradition, in which motifs inherited from antiquity are freely reinterpreted by ceramic artisans.With its generous dimensions, rich decoration, and almost unsettling power of expression, this Medusa is a remarkable decorative object that bridges the gap between ancient mythological imagery and Sicilian folk tradition.