



Ancient Roman Bronze Head Of An Elephant, 2nd Century A.d.

10 000 EUR



Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Iie siècle après j.-c.

Material : Bronze

Length : 5

Height : 2,3

Description

BRONZE HEAD OF AN ELEPHANT

Roman Empire, 2nd Century A.D.

Bronze

2.3 x 5 cm

1 x 2 in

PROVENANCE

Leo Mildenberg (1913-2001) collection, Zurich

English Private Collection

Private Collection, Florida, USA

EXHIBITED

Cleveland Museum, Animals in Ancient Art from

Leo Mildenberg Collection, 21st October-29th

November 1981

Dealer

Cavagnis Lacerenza Fine Art

Ancient Art, European Sculpture and Works of Art

Tel : 0039 0282398401

Mobile : 0039 3392671374

Via Marsala 13

Milano 20121

This beautiful cast bronze elephant head is a

protome, which in ancient art was a decorative element consisting of a head - sometimes with part of the bust - of a human, animal, or fantastical figure. The present artwork was in fact probably part of a furniture piece, such as a couch or chair. Its features are extremely realistic, and resemble the large elephant head couch attachment once in the James Loeb collection, donated to the Staatliche Antikensammlungen in Munich, acc. no. 50.

In classical times, animals often carried supernatural powers, or conveyed certain characters in the collective imagination. Elephants were symbols of strength, power and ferocity. They were extensively depicted in Roman households, as a representation of the supremacy of the Roman Empire.

Besides exhibiting the skillfulness of ancient craftsmen, this sculpture is a testament to one of the largest ancient animal sculpture collections in modern times, once owned by Leo Mildenberg.

Leo Mildenberg was the Vice President of the oldest bank in Switzerland, the Bank Leu, in Zurich, founded in 1755. He was also responsible for the exhibition and cataloguing of ancient coins, owned by the Bank. Dr. Mildenberg developed an interest in ancient history, with a particular appreciation for small, precisely carved bronze artworks.

This small but powerful bronze sculpture, was displayed in a temporary exhibition at the Cleveland Museum in 1981, titled "Animals in Ancient Art from the Leo Mildenberg Collection", and the press release stated: "Leo Mildenberg, a director of the Bank Leu in Zurich, Switzerland, and one of the world's foremost authorities on ancient coins, has over the past thirty years assembled an extraordinary collection of animal figures from ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian and classical cultures."

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+39 02 82398401 (also whatsapp)
info@cavagnislacerenza.art

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Via Marsala 13, Milano
www.cavagnislacerenza.art

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