



## From the Curious to the Extraordinary (06 May 2021)

Thu, 6th May 2021

### Viewing:

Viewing by appointment only.

Sun 2 May, 11am - 5pm

Mon 3 May, 11am - 5pm

Tue 4 May, 10am - 5pm

Wed 5 May, 10am - 5pm

Thu 6 May, 10am - 12pm

Please contact the [Department](#) to book an appointment.

## Lot 48

**Estimate:** £600 - £800 + Fees

### NATURAL HISTORY: A RARE BEZOAR (HAIR BALL)

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5cm diameter

Provenance: Viktor Wynd's Museum, London.

Wynd writes: "In olden times Bezoars were more valuable than gold and mounted in elaborate gold and gem studded holders in medieval treasuries. They were believed to possess quite extraordinary supernatural powers including being a universal antidote, potentates fearing death by poisoning from the Shahs of Persia to The Holy Roman Emperors would anxiously dip theirs in their drinks. The Sixteenth Century French Royal Physician Amboise Pare was something of a skeptic who unusually for his day liked to experiment to see what treatments worked and did not work; wishing to test the efficacy of a Bezoar he procured a cook who had been sentenced to death for stealing silver and made him drink a poisoned draught in which Pare dunked a bezoar on the promise of his life if he survived. He spent seven hours in agony before dying, however whilst Pare was convinced others merely muttered that he'd used the wrong type of poison and carried on convinced of the bezoar's power. I am in love with my Bezoars – few things are capable of giving me such intense feelings of pleasure, for me they are more beautiful, and infinitely rarer, than pearls. In fact they are very similar to pearls as they form in the gastrointestinal tracts of mammals, often around alien objects, perhaps a tooth that has either been swallowed or grown in the wrong place; perhaps an ever enlarging ball of hair, this is slowly polished and perfected by the animals gut into the most perfect and most beautiful shiny spheres."

The Viktor Wynd Museum of Curiosities, Fine Art & UnNatural History is a contemporary reinterpretation of a Pre-Enlightenment Wunderkabinett or Cabinet of Curiosities. It is the creation of artist and writer Viktor Wynd, who has just opened a Falmouth branch of his museum inside the National Maritime Museum. His most recent book 'The UnNatural History Museum' was published by Prestel in 2020.