

DAVID AARON



Steatopygous Idol

Ancient Iran

1st Millennium B.C.

Terracotta

H: 31 x W: 20 cm

This magnificent idol is an exceptional example of Amlash ceramic sculpture. The curves of the unmistakably female form are strongly steatopygous. Full hips swell, fecund, below narrow shoulders. The figure is nude, the limbs stylized and rounded. Two arms rest upon the chest and below the breasts. Large, high, rounded buttocks extend from behind. She stands on circular pad feet. Five incised lines decorate the neck, probably representing jewellery, and her ears protrude from a headdress. The ears are pierced, and might possible have been decorated with earrings originally, as is the case with some Amlash bulls. The piece has the squat femininity often found in very early sculpture, and possesses all the mystery and allure of spiritualised fertility. It recalls much earlier Neolithic figurines in its simplicity. Decontextualization makes the exact function of such idols unknown, however, given the number of similar figures found in the same area and indeed her form itself, a religious, possibly apotropaic reading, as a goddess, worshipper or protector, seems most apt.

Exhibitions

'Amlash Sculpture from Iran', Betty Parsens Gallery, 24 West 57th Street, New York, 23rd September - 19th October 1963.

Literature:

Advertising Poster, Amlash Sculpture from Iran, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, 1963.

Boisgirard Paris, Bronzes et terres cuites du Louristan et de la Caspienne, 26 September 1980, lot 15
(illus.)

G. Fehe'rvá'ri et al., Art of the Eastern World, Hadji Baba Ancient Art, London, 1996, p. 28, no. 11.

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