

NEOLITHIC AEGEAN IDOL

Greek-Early-Greek, 5th-4th millennium B.C.

Marble

H: 8.3 cm

Reference: 14220



The figure of a woman combines both realistic and schematic features; one should guess if the partial representation of her legs (only the thighs are modeled) means that the figure was conceived as seated. Equally, the neck is omitted. Nevertheless, the body with rounded, corpulent forms is rendered based on a good knowledge of female anatomy. The represented parts such as the protruding belly, pubic triangle and rounded thighs and buttocks are distinguished on the front and respectfully on the back, and also on the sides. Especially noticeable is the position of the arms in the composition, which are folded and raised to the level of the neck. Seen from the front the shapes of the folded rounded elbows which are put close to each other produce the effect of two large pendant breasts so typical in the figures of the steatopygic type. Also typical is the triangular face; two vertical grooves mark the long nose and a horizontal groove marks each eye; ears and hair are not indicated.

This female figurine is very particular in that it has no other precise parallels. A modeled protrusion on its back could be a small bag or a basket slung on her back to carry a child. The piece recalls some Neolithic Aegean figures from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection in New York, who carry their children on their backs without the bags. If the piece was left unfinished and the protrusion was never sculpted to represent a child, is probably not the case, and this specific composition should be attested to a sculptor who was looking for variants of a canonical type.

CONDITION

Good condition.

PROVENANCE

Acquired on the US art market, 2001.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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