

# Galerie Hioco

## Bronze seated musician (P395)



### What do we like in this sculpture?

- Its rarity, which makes it an exceptional object.
- Its plural style, where influences contribute to create an aesthetic of its own.
- Its remarkable state of conservation, as evidenced by the preservation of its details.



## I. Detailed description

Seated musician (P395)

Bronze

1st - 2nd century

Pre-Funan culture

H: 4,33 inch

### **A witness to the Bronze Age in Southeast Asia**

This bronze, dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., attests to the influence of the Dong Son culture, which extended beyond the borders of Vietnam to Cambodia and Thailand. This exceptionally rare figurine depicts a seated musician playing the khen - a mouth organ attested to as early as the Bronze Age in Southeast Asia. Intended to be suspended, as evidenced by the ring at the top of the figure's head, this figurine was probably used as a balance weight.

Despite some traces of erosion, the remarkable quality of the bronze casting is visible in the details that are still present: this is particularly the case for the long braids of the figure, which are very subtly delineated.

### **The harmony between figurative representation and geometric decoration**

This remarkable object is related to the Dong Son style through its spiral decoration. The spiral pattern on the musician's body gives a dynamic and geometric force to the character's body shape. The treatment of the face reveals an influence from the ancient civilisations of central and southern Indochina. The round face - whose eyes, nose and mouth are still particularly well defined - as well as the hairstyle composed of long curly braids in the shape of small snail shells are all elements that contribute to the figurative strength of the subject. Thus, the Pre-Funan culture to which this bronze belongs is at the crossroads of various influences, and subtly combines geometric decoration and figurative force.

### **The Pre-Funan culture: at the crossroads of influences**

Excavations at the Lang Vac cemetery in Vietnam and Ban Chiang in Thailand, as well as more recent excavations by Charles Higham around the Mun River in northern Thailand, have uncovered numerous objects with spiral decoration. This suggests a wider context for this culture.

A comparable piece - without a musical instrument - came from the collection of Dr Kurt Sandmair, Munich, and was exhibited at the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in Berlin. These bronzes were intended to be suspended by their rings and used as scale weights.



## II. Image of the piece – front view



III. Image of the piece – left three-quarter view



#### IV. Image of the piece – left profile view



V. Image of the piece – back view





VI. Image of the piece – right profile view



VII. Image of the piece – right three-quarter view





## VIII. Provenance: in all transparency!

- . This piece comes from a former Belgian collection.
- . We are always very cautious and diligent about the provenance of the artworks we offer. Ensuring the seriousness and reliability of the information given by the former owners is one of our priorities and we then guarantee this origin by engaging our responsibility.
- . In order to reinforce this guarantee, we systematically verify that these artworks have not been registered as missing or stolen. As Interpol has granted us the right to directly consult their database of stolen or reported items, we verify by ourselves and issue a certificate attesting to this.

## IX. Condition report: our scientific approach

This sculpture has a natural green patina, almost similar to the colour of jade, created by the oxidation of the metal. Some areas, especially on the seat and on the back of the figure, have a darker colour. X-ray examination of this piece confirmed its very good state of preservation: the texture and density are homogeneous, no breakage or restoration was detected. We have of course the CIRAM certificate of analysis with the X-ray. A few cracks are visible to the naked eye, notably on the right knee and on the left elbow of the figure, which is not surprising for an archaeological piece such as this.

*Please note that since we are not conservators or restorers, it must be understood that any condition report we made is a subjective qualified opinion, even if we do our best efforts. Prospective buyers should inspect the piece to satisfy themselves as to condition.*



## XI. Comparable museum artwork – Musée Cernuschi

A situla from the Dong Son period decorated with spiral motifs from the collections of the Musée Cernuschi:



Situla thạp  
Between 500 BC and 50 BC  
Bronze  
Jar  
Legacy: Ledoux, Pierre  
M.C.2008-7



## XII. Comparable museum artwork – Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET)

A Dong Son seated figure in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of New York:



**Title:** Seated Male Figure

**Period:** Bronze and Iron Age period, Dongson culture

**Date:** 500 B.C.– A.D. 300

**Culture:** Vietnam

**Medium:** Bronze

**Dimensions:** H. 3 1/2 in. (8.9 cm)

**Classification:** Sculpture

**Credit Line:** Friends of Asian Art, Purchase, The Vincent Astor Foundation Gift, in honor of Wen C. Fong, 2000

**Accession Number:** 2000.287



### XIII. Our guarantees: for a serene acquisition!

- More photos will be sent to you on request.
- In case of purchase, we will establish an invoice that you can pay by bank transfer.
- You will receive our certificate of authenticity with the photo of the artwork, its detailed description and the mention of the provenance.
- We will define together the shipping modalities and we will take care of all customs formalities if you live outside of France.
- If you do not like the piece, we give you the possibility to return it to us and we will assist you with the resulting terms and conditions.

