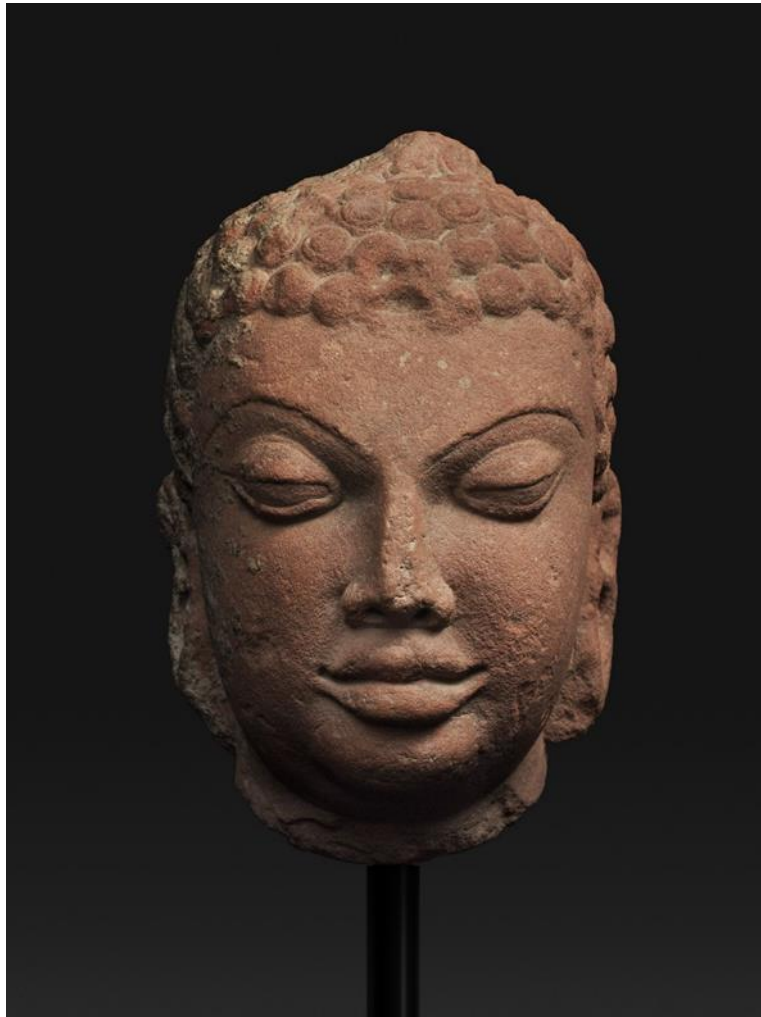


Galerie Hioco

Gupta head of Buddha (P589)



What do we like in this sculpture?

- The timeless serenity that radiates from this majestic face with perfect features.
- A magnificent example of the Gupta period, considered the classical period of Indian art.
- Its remarkable state of preservation compared to other surviving works of the period.



I. Detailed description

Head of Buddha (P589)

Mottled red sandstone

Northern India

Mathura, early Gupta

Second half 4th century CE.

H 6, ¼ inch.

The Gupta period (4th - 6th century) is often considered as the classical period of Indian art. Measuring 16 cm in height (6 ¼ in), the mottled red sandstone and the style link it more precisely to the school of Mathurā.

Buddha Śākyamuni: an exceptional being

Heir to the very first images of the Buddha, this delicate sculpture shows with great refinement the distinctive iconographic features of the Blessed One. The elongated earlobes indicate his renunciation of princely life. The cranial protuberance or *uṣṇīṣa*, clearly visible here, is the symbol of his wisdom and enlightened mind. The hairstyle that covers the cranial bump consists in small and thin articulately rendered snail-shell curls and is characteristic of the period. The poetic texts describe his half-shut eyes in the shape of lotus petals.

An aesthetics marked by humanity

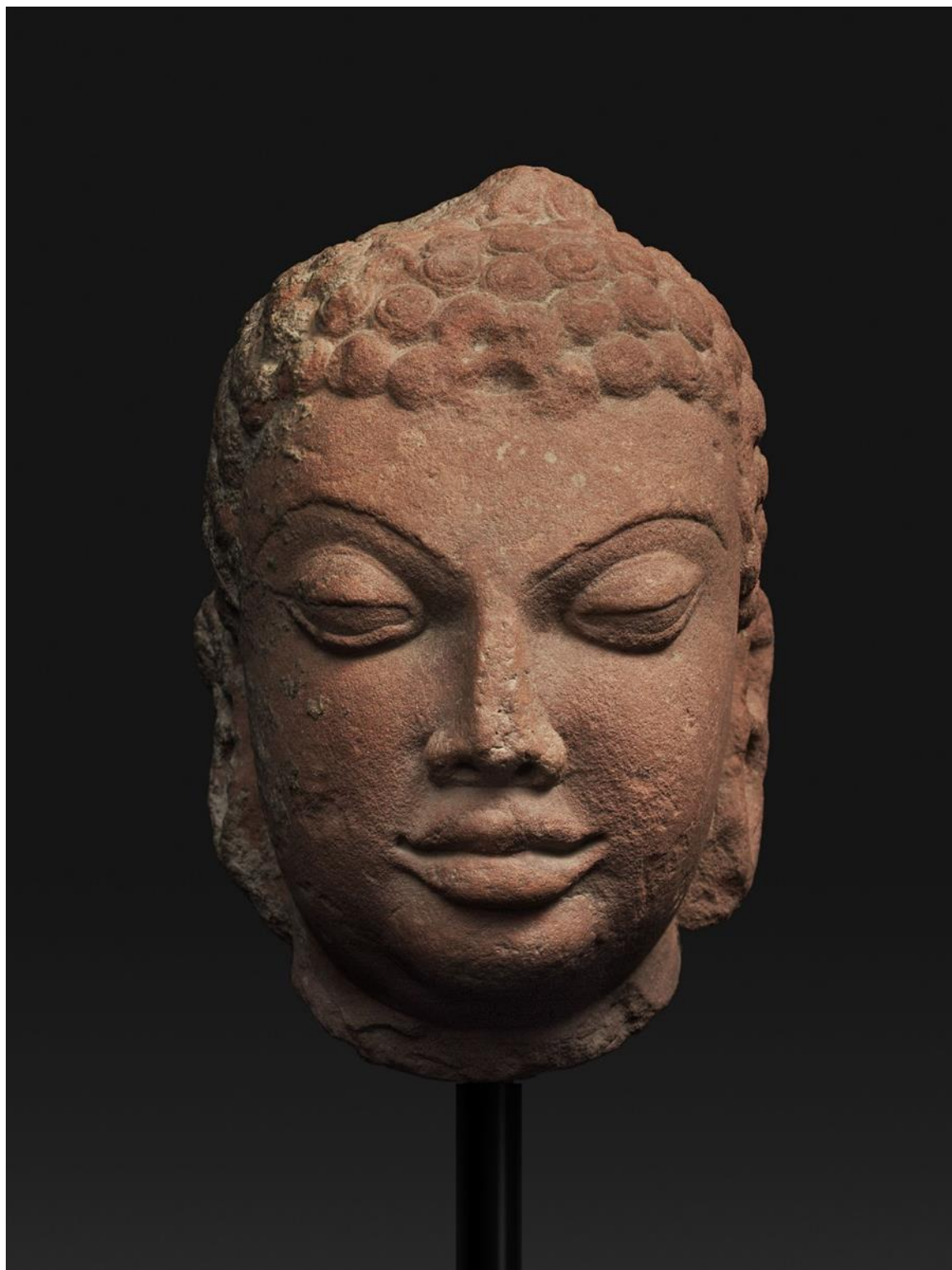
This head is a perfect example of an image that beautifully combines an accessible human figure with the sublime. The sweet humanity, so valued in Gupta sculpture, is evident in this finely carved face with sensuous lips and full cheeks. One must also admire the arched eyebrows and the very smooth carving of the recessed parts around the nose, mouth and chin which is quite exceptional.

However, his downcast eyes indicate a remove from the mundane and reflect his state of meditation and perfect beatitude. The slightly downturned corners of the lips also imply concentration.

The delicacy of the carving, the high quality of the sculpture and the incredible charisma emanating from this Buddha head make it a magnificent example of the artworks produced at the beginning of the Gupta period.



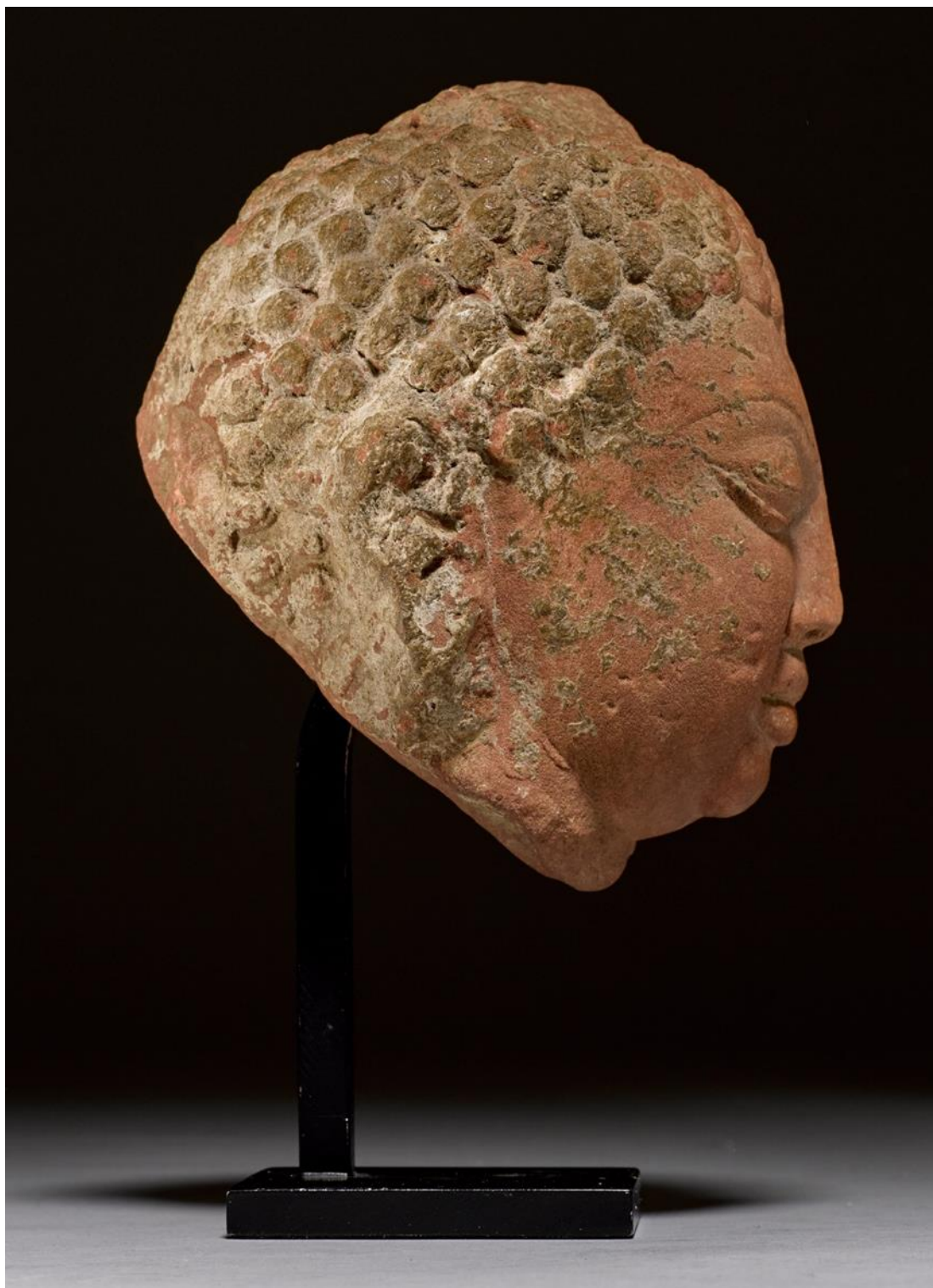
II. Image of the piece – front view



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



IV. Image of the piece – right profile view



V. Image of the piece – back view



VI. Image of the piece – back view



VII. Provenance: in all transparency!

- . This piece comes from the private collection of a doctor from northern German-speaking Switzerland, who died in 1997 and who had owned the piece since the 1960s.
- . 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.

VIII. Condition report: our scientific approach

This Buddha head from the Gupta period (4th - 6th century), made of mottled pink sandstone and measuring 16 cm in height (or 6 ¼ in), is in a good state of conservation. Some losses are obvious but quite logical considering its age and the known fragility of these elements: part of the cranial protuberance or uṣṇīṣa is missing, and slight losses are visible on the cheeks and forehead. These breaks are old, as evidenced by the weathered surface. The sculpted surface is overall slightly eroded. Minor restorations have been detected on the chin, lips, nose and upper eyelids.

Compact concretions cover the hair and right proper ear, and only partially on the right side of the face. These concretions probably result from contact with the ground in situ and at an earlier time. In the rear, two holes were probably made to attach the head to a stand and have both been filled. A third, more central hole allows the rod of the current stand to be inserted.

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.



X. Comparable museum artwork – The Cleveland Museum of Art

A acephalous seated Buddha from the collection of the Cleveland Museum in the United States:



Seated Buddha
AD 400–430

Northern India, Uttar Pradesh, Mathura, Gupta period
(c. 320-550)

Red mottled sandstone

Overall: 82 cm (32 5/16 in.)

Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund 1973.214



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

A 5th-6th century Buddha head from the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, New York:



Title: Head of a Buddha
Period: late Gupta period
Date: late 5th–early 6th century
Culture: India (Uttar Pradesh, Mathura)
Medium: Red sandstone

Credit Line: Gift of Doris Rubin, in memory of Harry Rubin, 1989
Accession Number: 1989

Dimensions: H. 10 in. (25.4 cm); W. 5 5/8 in. (14.3 cm); D. 6 1/2 in. (16.5 cm)
On base: H. 14 3/4 in. (37.5 cm)
Classification: Sculpture



XII. 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.

