

Galerie Hioco

Detailed file – *Ganeśa* (P386)

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What do we like in this sculpture?

- The representation of *Ganeśa*, one of the most popular gods in the Hindu pantheon: He is the god of knowledge who removes obstacles and makes rituals, as well as any human undertaking, run smoothly.
- The remarkable dynamism of the god's movement, making here a dance step.
- The impressive size of course, making this sculpture an extraordinarily charismatic artwork that captures all the attention.

I. Detailed description

***Ganeśa* (P641)**

Sandstone

Central India

10th-11th century

H. 100 cm or 39 ½ in

The son of *Śiva*, this elephant-headed deity is one of the most popular gods in the Hindu pantheon, as can be seen by the great number of replicas throughout the Subcontinent.

The animal head is intriguing, and only poorly explained by several legends that arose belatedly (not before the 17th century). According to the *Śiva Purāṇa*, the goddess *Pārvatī*, wife of *Śiva*, had her residence guarded by *Vighneśvara*, "The King of Obstacles", which she made out of dust mixed with a bit of her own flesh. When stopped at the entrance to his wife's chamber, *Śiva* decapitated the guard. Facing the wrath of his wife, he promised to give him life again, as well as the head of the first creature that came by. Which was an elephant, whose head he used. The composite being was immediately proclaimed the child of the divine couple. Assimilation by Hinduism of a pre-Vedic aboriginal cult, encountered by the Brahmans as this religion was constituted over the centuries preceding the Christian era, is the most probable hypothesis for the origin of the deity.

The god of the lower castes, with a great following in the countryside, *Ganeśa* is also worshiped fervently by most Brahmans, who - among other gods - offer up a prayer to him before every ceremony, because *Ganeśa* removes obstacles and makes rituals, as well as any human undertaking, run smoothly. He has only one tusk. He broke off the second to transcribe the epic saga of the Mahabharata, which was dictated to him by the sage *Vyāsa*.

"Lord of the *gaṇa*", he is the head of a troop of deformed dwarf musicians (*gaṇa*), singing and dancing to entertain *Śiva* and *Pārvatī*, especially after their wedding, when the young bride lies down next to her divine lover in his home on Mount *Kailāsa* in the Himalayas. That is why many sculptures, like this one, show *Ganeśa* as if he were dancing.

As the right hands have been broken off, it's impossible to certify his attributes. The first left hand might be holding between the thumb and index finger a round sweet which the god loved. The second left hand holds the cord, which is frequently seen in the iconography of the god who arose in the South.

Ganeśa also appears in another context. He accompanies the group of seven Mothers (*Mātṛkā*), fierce Hindu goddesses linked with the protection of young children. On this stele, they surround the elephant-god. Their images are too highly eroded to make it possible to identify them. It is thought that *Maheśvarī* (*Mahiṣamardinī*), slaying the buffalo-demon with her trident, is at the top of the stele just above the god's head.

The simplicity of the jewelry would tend to date the work from an early date in spite of the undeniable dynamism of the movement, the piece's highlight.

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II. Image of the piece – view 1



III. Image of the piece – view 2



IV. Provenance

- . This piece comes from a private collection in England, since the 1990s.
- . 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.

V. Condition report

This Central Indian stele representing Ganeśa dancing is made of sandstone, dated from the 10th-11th century and is 100 cm high (or 39 ½ in). Some losses are evident: three of the god's right hands or parts of his arms are missing, as well as his knee and lower part of his right proper leg. The axe that went up to the level of his right proper ear, the upper end of it, as well as the right defense of the deity have disappeared. The left hands are preserved for the most part. The left foot is missing as is part of the base. All the faces of the Mātṛkā at the top of the piece have disappeared. All these breaks are old, as evidenced by the eroded aspect of these surfaces. Asperities are to be noted on the whole sculpted surface, which presents a logical wear-rounded condition considering the age of the piece. No restoration was detected.

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.

VI. Comparable museum artwork - 1

A sandstone *Ganeśa* in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, measuring 91 cm in height, or 36 in:



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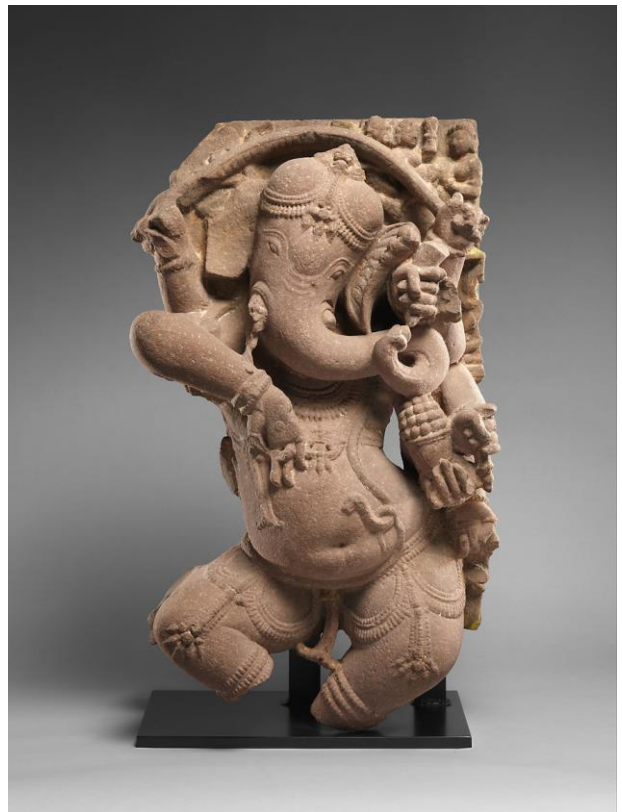
Dancing Ganesha 10th century

India (Madhya Pradesh); Kalacuri

📍 On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in Gallery 241

Object Details

Title:	Dancing Ganesha
Date:	10th century
Culture:	India (Madhya Pradesh); Kalacuri
Medium:	Mottled red sandstone
Dimensions:	H. 36 in. (91.4 cm); W. 20 in. (50.8 cm)
Classification:	Sculpture
Credit Line:	Gift of Florence and Herbert Irving, 2007
Accession Number:	2007.480.2



VII. Comparable museum artwork - 2

A sandstone *Ganeśa* in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in the United States, measuring 59 cm in height, or 23 ¼ in:

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Dancing Ganesha

India, Madhya Pradesh, 11th century

Sculpture

Sandstone

23 1/4 x 16 x 5 1/2 in. (59.05 x 40.64 x 13.97 cm)

Gift of Dr. Alvin O. Bellak, Philadelphia (M.88.221)

[South and Southeast Asian Art](#)

Not currently on public view

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *El Universo de la India: Obras Maestras del Museo de Arte del Condado de Los Angeles*. Santiago: Centro Cultural Palacio La Moneda, 2012.

VIII. Our guarantees

- 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.