

Galerie Hioco

Dancing Ganeśa (P675)



What do we like in this sculpture?

- The richness of the sculpted details and the finesse of the modelling.
- The striking impression of lightness and movement.
- The illustration of a very widespread cult in Hinduism, and of a mythology going back to ancestral times.



I. Detailed description

Dancing Ganeśa (P675)

Sandstone

Central India

10th-11th century

H. 15 in

An ancestral mythology

The son of Śiva, this elephant-headed deity is one of the most popular gods in the Hindu pantheon, as evidenced by his numerous representations throughout the subcontinent.

His animal head intrigues, awkwardly explained by several rather late legends, not earlier than the 7th century. According to the Śiva Purāṇa, the goddess Pārvatī, wife of Śiva, had her flats protected by a guard, Vighneśvara, 'Lord of Obstacles', whom she made from dust mixed with a flap of her own flesh. Śiva, stopped at the entrance to his wife's room, beheaded the guard. In the face of his wife's anger, he promised to revive him and provide him with the head of the first being to pass by. This was an elephant whose head was taken. The composite being was immediately proclaimed a child of the divine couple. The assimilation by Hinduism of a pre-Vedic aboriginal cult, encountered by the Brahmins as that religion was constituted in the centuries before the Christian era, is the most likely hypothesis as to the origin of the deity.

Ganeśa, a particularly venerated god

The god of the lower castes, much prayed to in the countryside, Ganeśa also receives fervent worship from the Brahmins who, among other things, pray to him before each ceremony because Ganeśa removes obstacles for the smooth running of the rituals, as well as for that of any human undertaking. He has only one defence. He cut off the second to transcribe the great epic of the Mahābhārata dictated to him by the sage Vyāsa.

"Lord of the gaṇa", he is the leader of a troupe of deformed musical dwarfs (gaṇa), singing and dancing to entertain the couple of Śiva and Pārvātī, especially after their nuptials, when the young bride lounges near her divine lover in his abode at Kailāsa in the Himālaya. This is why on many sculptures, as here, Ganeśa is depicted sketching a dance step.

The god here possessed many arms and two of his traditional attributes are clearly identifiable: the axe (Śiva's classical weapon) and the rope, as is common in iconography of the god originating from the south. He could also be holding between the thumb and forefinger of one of his right hands, a dumpling of sweets that the greedy god is fond of.

Directly above the god, the representation of a vidyādhara reinforces the benevolent character of the sculpture. Holding a lotus flower, the vidyādhara are beings with magical powers living in a wonderful world and throwing jewels or garlands to the deities.

A refined sculpture

The remarkable quality of the sculpture in this work must be emphasised, particularly the details of the face, the trunk and the jewellery of the god. The strength of this representation lies in the extraordinary skill of the Indian sculptors who were able to convey such a feeling of lightness and movement to such a corpulent deity.



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 French private 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, although fragmentary, is in a good state of preservation. It has been broken at the level of the god's knees: the feet and legs are missing. The left hand is also missing, as well as two of his right hands and forearms. It is also noticeable that the stone has an eroded appearance in some places, notably on the left thigh and on the upper part of the axe. Traces of pink pigments can be found in the most recessed areas of the relief, which certainly testifies to a cultic context. It was customary for worshippers to smear pigments, ointments or other substances on the statues displayed in the temples during rituals. Given the popularity of the god, as well as the age of the sculpture, this residue is not surprising. No traces of restoration have been 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.



XI. Comparable museum artwork – The Walters Art Museum

An 11th century relief depicting Ganeśa, from the collections of LACMA, USA



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)

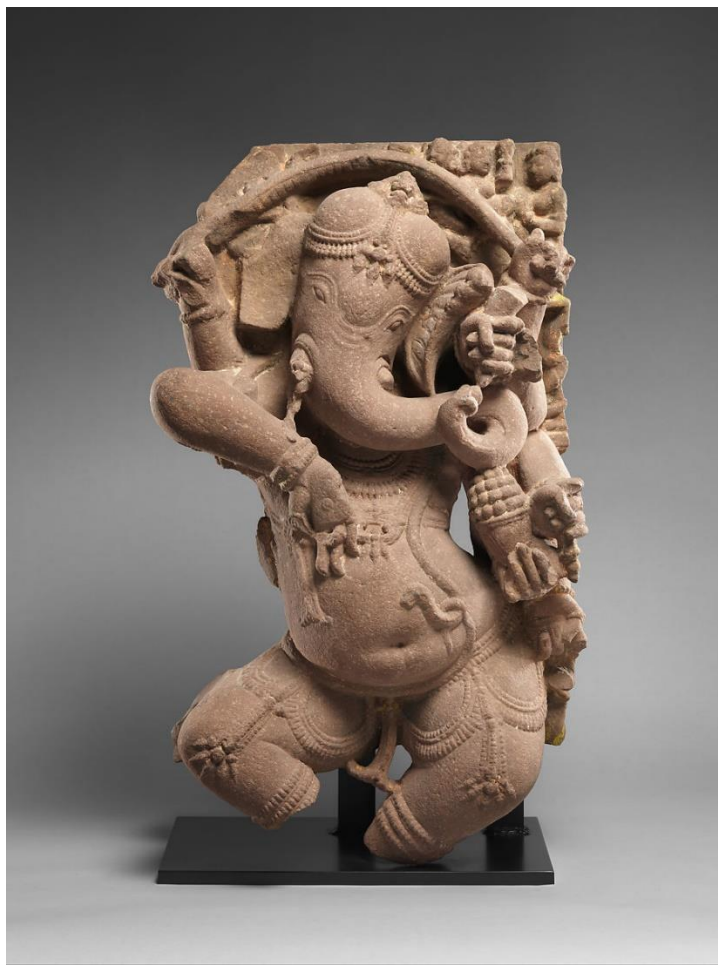
[South and Southeast Asian Art](#)

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



A 10th century dancing Ganeśa in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of New York:



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



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.

