

# Galerie Hioco

Gupta Head (P687)



**What do we like about this sculpture?**

- Its atypical, finely sculpted features.
- The originality of the dark colour, which gives it modernity and elegance.
- The richness of the ornamentation and the attention to detail.

## I. Detailed description

### ***Sūrya Head (P687)***

*Terracotta*

*Bangladesh*

*4e-6e century, Gupta period*

*H. 21 cm*

Provenance : Private collection, France

### **The majesty of Sūrya**

The god Sūrya, god of the Sun, is probably represented here. He wears a serene, subtle indolent expression, while his full lips seem to be smiling in a knowing way. Heavy eyelids fall over his almond-shaped eyes, surmounting a straight, thin nose. Despite the absence of some of its attributes, these features are characteristic of the representation of Sūrya during the Gupta period, as are the well-drawn curls that frame his round face. A richly ornamented diadem surmounts the god's head, giving him a majestic aura that was once underlined by a nimbus, which only a part has been preserved from the ravages of time. The left earring is also preserved, a testimony to the care given to ornamentation in the Gupta period.

### **The Golden Age of Indian Art**

The Gupta period is often referred to as the golden age of Indian art. The important development of art and literature, as well as the emergence of numerous regional workshops, gave rise to a taste for ornamentation, as well as for the refined character of representations. Terracotta became a material of choice for artists, as this head of Sūrya shows. Terracotta was given a major decorative role, particularly in the ornamentation of temples and stupas, which were entirely covered with sculptures, pillars and lintels. Terracotta is used for both secular and mythological representations, and this work belongs to the second category, bearing witness to the know-how of Bangladeshi artists.

### **A witness to Gupta art**

In fact, Gupta art has often come down to us in religious form; this is probably due to the quality of execution and the particular care given to this type of work. This representation of the Sun God is a virtuoso demonstration of Gupta art and its codes of beauty. The softness of the features and their atypical elegance is characteristic of this period, as is the richness of the ornamentation and jewellery. The use of terracotta, which gradually declined thereafter (with the exception of the Bengal region), is also very characteristic of this period. The degree of preservation of this work should also be emphasised, despite the apparent fragility of the terracotta.

II. Photo of the artwork – front view



III. Photo of the artwork - left side view





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IV. Photo of the artwork – right side view



V. Photo of the artwork – Back view



## VI. 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.

## VII. Condition report : our scientific approach

This Gupta head is made of terracotta, dated around the 4th-6th century and measures 21 cm in height. The work is in a good state of conservation, with the face well preserved. The nimbus is fragmented, only a fragment is still visible. A part of the hair on the right side of the head is missing. The black colouring is well preserved. Small traces of restoration are supposed on the chin and forehead.

*Please note that we are neither conservators nor restorers, and therefore any condition report we submit is a subjective analysis that we issue with reservation, even though we take it very seriously and professionally. Potential buyers are invited to examine the piece themselves to ensure its condition.*



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IX. Comparable artwork – The Metropolitan museum of art, New-York



*Metropolitan Museum bust, Ve-VIème century, India (Bengale) or Bangladesh, Terracotta.*

## X. 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.