

Large Anatolian Idol

Kusura Type, 2700-2100 B.C.

H: 18.5 x W: 7.3 cm

Marble

Anatolian

2700-2100 B.C.

A highly simplified anthropomorphic idol carved from creamy marble. The form is largely abstracted, with a round ovoid (the head) at the top of a slender neck, with two triangular projections (arms) on either side of a rounded body. The piece is extremely thin depth-ways, creating a clear facing orientation. Kusura Type idols are also known as ‘violin idols’ as their form resembles that of the instrument.

The form of the Kusara Type idols remained consistent throughout the Bronze Age, and coexisted with more naturalistic depictions of the human body, attesting to a clear intention behind their abstraction. The stylised figures are thought to represent a crouching female, and are typically association with a ‘mother goddess’ and fertility. Their purpose remains a subject of debate among scholars, but their presence in sanctuaries and tombs suggests that they were used as votive offerings and grave goods.

Exhibitions

Ägypten, Orient und die Schweizer Moderne: Die Sammlung Rudolf Schmidt (1900-1970), Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, Basel, 25 March-31 July 2011, no. 54.

Literature:

A. Weise (ed.), Ägypten, Orient und die Schweizer Moderne: Die Sammlung Rudolf Schmidt (1900-1970), exhibition catalogue, Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, Basel, 25 March-31 July 2011, no. 54, p. 159.