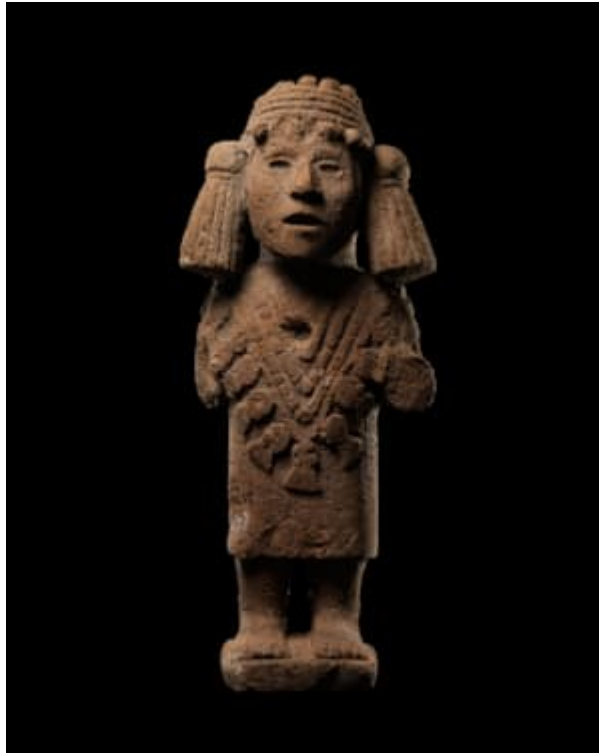


DAVID AARON



Statue of Chalchiuhtlicue

61 x 0 cm (24 x 0 inches)

Stone

Mexico

Circa 1400-1521 A.D., Post-Classic Period, Aztec (or Mexica) Culture

Standing figure of the Mexican goddess Chalchiuhtlicue carved from grey volcanic stone with a reddish-brown patina. The goddess stands frontally with her feet shoulder width apart. Her true left arm, now damaged, would have been raised at ninety degrees to the chest. She wears a skirt and a poncho with triangular panels that fall over her chest and back. She also sports her distinctive headdress of several wide bands of fabric, adorned with two large tassels framing her face on either side and lined with round amaranth seeds. Two long strands hang down the goddess's back. A multistrand pearl necklace drapes elegantly over the front of the poncho. A cavity in the solar plexus would originally have held a valuable stone inlay. Her facial features are rendered simply but clearly – the eyes and mouth are recessed ovoid forms, with the triangular nose in raised relief between them.

Chalchiuhtlicue, or 'She of the Jade Skirt', is an Aztec goddess of water – encompassing rivers, seas, and rainstorms – as well as of fertility, serving as patroness of childbirth. She was a major goddess for the Nahuas in the Postclassical period of central Mexico. Closely associated with water god Chalchiuhtlatonal, wife and/or sister of the rain god Tlaloc, mother of moon god Tecciztecatl, or wife of senior deity Xiuhtecuhtli (depending on the text), Chalchiuhtlicue was a central figure in the Aztec pantheon. The goddess was believed to help Tlaloc to rule the paradisaical kingdom of Tlalocan, bring fertility to crops, and protect women and children. She held a dual role as life-giver and life-ender. Once, in retaliation against her mistreatment by Tlaloc, Chalchiuhtlicue is said to have released 52 years of rain, causing a flood that extinguished the Fourth Sun and prompted the development of our current world (the Fifth Sun). She also built a bridge between heaven and earth, allowing those in her favour to travel between the two in the form of fish.

Exhibitions

America Antiqua: Vergeten Indiaanse Grootheid, Rotary Club Sint-Niklaas, Sint-Niklaas City Council, Vlaams Instituut voor Amerikanistiek, Stedelijk Museum van Sint-Niklaas, Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, 2-30 November 1975, no. 21.

Art de Mésoamérique, Meso-Amerikaanse Kunst, Société Générale de Banque, Brussels, 17 November 1976-8 January 1977, no. 104.

Literature:

America Antiqua: Vergeten Indiaanse Grootheid, Rotary Club Sint-Niklaas, Sint-Niklaas City Council, Vlaams Instituut voor Amerikanistiek, Stedelijk Museum van Sint-Niklaas, Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, 2-30 November 1975, pp. 17, 45, 58, no. 21.

Art de Mésoamérique, Meso-Amerikaanse Kunst, Société Générale de Banque, Brussels, 17 November 1976-8 January 1977, no. 104.