



Female figurine

On display

Title/Description: Female figurine

Born: 0250 c. BC - 0100 c. BC

Object Type: Figure

Materials: Terracotta

Measurements: h. 87 x w. 46 x d. 20 mm

Accession Number: 274a

Historic Period: 3rd century BC, 2nd century BC

Production Place: Northwest Pakistan

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

The earliest figurines found in the Indian Sub-Continent are from the Indus Valley civilisation (2,300-1,700 BC) where they were made in stone or terracotta. From this time onwards simple figurines representing the mother goddess have been found all over India. Clay is an essential part of Indian culture, "mother earth" governing their livelihood and religion, and so these figurines suggest spiritual meaning. They were probably for everyday, domestic use which accounts for their warmth and vitality. Similar objects are still made today.

This figurine's body was modelled by a village craftsman out of soft clay, and pellets were added to indicate the eyes, hair, breasts and jewellery. The simplest of tools would be used for final decoration and to indicate the legs. The dark patina probably resulted from constant handling because of its spiritual significance.

Description taken from the 'Art From The Indian Sub-Continent In The Sainsbury Centre' catalogue by Margaret A. Willey (Sainsbury Centre, UEA, 1995).

Provenance

Acquired by the Sainsbury Family in 1957. Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.

