



Crouching hare

Not on display

Title/Description: Crouching hare

Object Type: Animal, Figure

Materials: Bronze

Measurements: h. 86 x w. 36 x d. 118 mm

Accession Number: 619

Historic Period: AD 1-200 (c.)

Production Place: Roman Empire

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1978

This highly naturalistic bronze sculpture of a crouching hare is likely to have been an ornament for a larger object such as a piece of furniture. A corroded rectangular hole under the rump indicates attachment with iron.

One ear is now broken, and inlay in the eyes is lost, but this little animal remains a gem of antique modelling. Ear back and with nostrils seemingly aquiver, a model of contained energy looks all set to spring and run.

Hares have been important in the myth and folklore of many cultures, with some detecting a hare in the pattern of dark patches on the moon. One Aesop fable tells how the steady and slow tortoise beat the speedy hare in a race. The libidinous hare was sacred to Aphrodite and Eros, and live hares were often presented as love gifts. The Romans may have introduced the brown hare to Britain.

—

Ian Collins, journalist and writer
