

COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Head of Venus

Roman Imperial,
ca. late 1st—early 2nd century A.D.

Marble

h: 22.5 cm; 8 7/8 in.

Provenance:

Art Market (Paris) between 1911 and 1951, based on the tailored varnished wood socle stamped Kichizo Inagaki (1876-1951);
Armand Trampistch Collection (1930-1960);
By descent to C. G. Deschamps;
Hôtel des Ventes de Monte-Carlo, Archéologie (19 January 2022), lot no. 169;
Private Collection (Belgium), 2022.

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Wood socle stamped Kichizo Inagaki (1876-1951)

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The present marble head depicts the goddess Venus. Her head is frontal, with a slight bend to the left in the neck. Her features are delicately sculpted: her sensitively rendered eyes are characterized by thick, well-defined upper eyelids. The arches of her brow gracefully extend from the bridge of her nose. Her mouth is half-open, with lips arched and corners slightly upturned. Her hair, encircled by a headband, is centrally parted into two partitions of curls, which are gathered in a low bun on the back of her neck.

Based upon the goddess' hairstyle and proportions, she belongs to the Medici type. Classical sculptures can be identified based on other known versions, some of which are attributed to specific Greek masters. In this case, the Medici type is identified with the Venus de' Medici, currently housed in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. This sculpture itself was based on a Hellenistic Greek bronze sculpture of the nude goddess, a theme introduced by the Early Hellenistic sculptor Praxiteles, who created the now lost Aphrodite of Knidos. The bronze on which the Medici type is based was most likely created by a follower or emulator of Praxiteles, in the 4th century B.C. Certain stylistic choices, in particular the rendering of the eyes, point to a Trajanic date for the present head, ca. late 1st—early 2nd century A.D. It is an attractive, masterful Roman rendering of a Hellenistic Greek subject.

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Comparanda:



(left) Venus de' Medici, Uffizi Gallery, Florence. *(right)* Venus of Medici type, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 52.11.5.