

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



## *Statuette of Aphrodite and Eros*

Roman Imperial, 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

Marble

Height: 24.5 cm; 9 5/8 in.

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### Provenance:

Sotheby's, London, 26th April 1971, lot 193 (measurement incorrect);

Claude & Jeanine Vérité collection, Paris, 1971-2019;

Hotel des Ventes Monte-Carlo, 12th October 2019, lot 166;

Private collection, London.

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The present miniature sculptural group represents Aphrodite (or Venus), the goddess of love, and her companion Eros (Cupid), the personification of desire. The goddess stands partially nude, in the process of wrapping herself with a himation. Her undergarment, lightly rendered, with incision across the torso, appears wet and thus slick against the goddess' body, revealing her breasts and belly button. The composition, perhaps a composite from multiple different sources, was likely based originally on life-size sculptural groups. For example, position of Eros, in flight over the left shoulder of the goddess, is reminiscent of the group which also includes Pan now at the National Archaeological Museum, Athens (inv. no. 3335).

Aphrodite was first depicted nude by the Greek sculptor Praxiteles in the mid-fourth century B.C. in his commission for the cult statue for her temple at Knidos. Following this major innovation, a wide variety of compositions featuring the nude goddess were created throughout the late Classical and Hellenistic Periods. Depictions of Aphrodite were hugely popular and widely available throughout the Roman Empire. The present example was most likely votive, to be dedicated by its user at a shrine in the hopes that the goddess might fulfill their prayer.