



Head of Medusa

Catalogue Number
HMF 2574

Artwork Type
Drawing

Date
c.1950

Dimensions
paper: 367 x 282 mm

Medium
pencil, wax crayon, watercolour wash

Signature
(added later) pencil l.r. Moore/49

Inscriptions
pencil u.l. Head of Medusa

Ownership
unknown

More Information

The decorated circle beneath the head of Medusa in this drawing is based on the Phaistos Disc, a clay tablet from Minoan Crete stamped on both sides with a spiral of as-yet-undeciphered symbols. The layout of Moore's disc bears remarkable similarities to Side A of the Phaistos Disc, and several of the symbols are copied directly from the Minoan tablet. As the drawing predates Moore's first visit to Greece, he must have been influenced by a reproduction - either the plaster cast in the British Museum collection, or a photograph in a book - rather than the original disc, which remains on Crete. The standing figure on the right of the drawing is a Kore, a type of Archaic Greek sculpture of a young woman. Korai stand rigidly upright, with their feet together and often with one arm extended in front of them, wearing a long garment - a peplos or chiton. Korai were often given as offerings to the gods - the largest surviving group come from the Acropolis in Athens, and seem to have been offerings to Athena.