

Containing beauty

Kohl containers from Ancient Central Asia



Object in focus exhibition



15 August 2024



Clore Centre, British Museum



16:00-19:00

Free

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Beauty casts a spell over the human imagination. Humanity has always been inclined to seek and create it. Rarely does a civilization exist without methods, materials and vessels of adornment.

Kohl, a substance used to beautify the eyes, was in widespread use among the ancients. It was not just a tool for personal adornment, but was also used for medical and religious purposes. Ancient Middle Eastern civilizations took great interest in it and created exquisite containers made of various materials to preserve it.

These ancient Central Asian kohl containers, cast from copper alloy, rest on three legs. All are decorated with scrolled leaves and vines, and one container has a stopper in the form of a humped bovine animal.

Label:

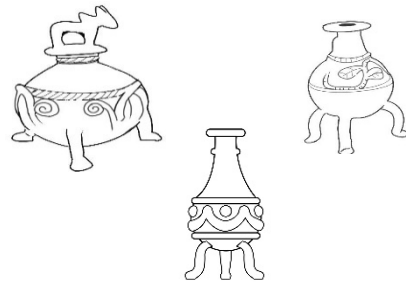
Kohl containers from Ancient Central Asia

1st- 3rd century CE

Copper alloy

Central Asia

2013,6001.3452



This set comprises three kohl containers made of copper alloy, each supported by three legs. They are adorned with twisted leaves and plants, with one container featuring a stopper shaped like a humped bovine. Discovered in a tomb in the Iranian city of Perm, this set dates back to the period between the first and third centuries CE.