Artist: Isis and Horus
Title: Isis and Horus
Geography: Egypt
Period: Late Period, Dynasty 30 - Early Ptolemaic Period
Date: 380-180 BC
Culture: Egyptian
Medium: Faience
Credit Line: Gift in memory of Dr. Charles Shute
Dimensions: 5 3/8 x 1 1/2 x 2 1/2 in. (13.7 x 3.8 x 6.3 cm)
Object number: 2000.004

Label Text: This large amulet or votive offering made of brilliant blue faience is of a type that is first found in the Ramesside Period but becomes increasingly popular in the Third Intermediate Period and into the Ptolemaic Period. It represents the goddess Isis nursing her son Horus. She wears a throne hieroglyph (st) on her head that writes her name, Isis, as well as a vulture headdress, a particularly popular piece of headgear worn by goddesses and queens in the Ramesside through the Ptolemaic Period. Isis sits on a throne decorated with a reed matting, which may refer to the marshy landscape of Lower Egypt in which Isis protected Horus from his jealous uncle Seth until he reached adulthood and was able to defeat him. In this small sculpture Isis is represented as a nurturer and protector of the young male king, a representation that may have had particular resonance during the Ptolemaic Period in which royal women often took a stronger role. The function of this small sculpture is unclear. It may have been an amulet meant to draw on the power of the figures represented or the regenerative symbolism of the marsh and mother and son; alternately it may have served as a votive offering in a temple or shrine setting, or even as a devotional object in a domestic setting.

Exhibition History: MCCM Permanent Collection Galleries, April 2000 - Spring 2001
MCCM Permanent Collection Reinstallation, September 2001 - Present