

Basic Detail Report



Vessel

Date
1200-1500 CE

Primary Maker
Taíno

Medium
Ceramic

Description

This vessel comes from the Taíno people who resided in the Dominican Republic, made 1200-1500 CE. The vessel includes multiple layers of rich symbolic imagery including fertility symbolism, which references a shaman's role as guardian of fertility. The shaman was entrusted with assuring the health and fertility of humans, as well as the health and fertility of plants and animals. Additionally, the shape of the vessel may also represent a stylized bat-form with wings outstretched. The bat was associated with shamanism as a symbol of the power of night and darkness. The vast majority of Taíno art to survive the colonization of the Greater Antilles were objects that were either already used in caves as parts of rituals or were moved there following the arrival of Columbus to protect them. Dating as far back as the second century BCE, migrations of forerunners to the Taíno brought knowledge of pottery making to the Caribbean. Additional waves of migration served to further change the way that pottery was made until around 1000 CE, after which point the various cultures and groups are referred to by the umbrella term Taíno. The various subgroups that constituted the Taíno created a wealth of different pottery styles, though their earthenware can be characterized by commonly featuring abstracted anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures with much of the supplemental decoration done as high-relief geometric linework.

Dimensions

18 3/8 × 19 1/4 × 9 in. (46.7 × 48.9 × 22.9 cm)