Basic Detail Report

Stool (Dujo)

Date
1000-1500 CE

Primary Maker
Taíno

Medium
Wood

Description

Ceremonial wood stool, or dujo, from the Taíno culture of Haiti or the Dominican Republic dating to about 1000-1500 CE. This is an exceptional example of a shaman's "trance meditation" seat in the form of a winged anthropomorphic/zoomorphic quadruped indicating that the shaman's soul is in soul flight and has transformed. The function of the duho was primarily as a prestige object. These types of stools were only owned by caciques and members of the elite Nitaíno caste, composed of nobles and shamans. They were mostly carved from wood but were also made from stone and coral and were in many cases gilded by pounding gold into sheets, or inlaid with shell. The anthropomorphic carving of the head and the feet is a depiction of zemí spirits. In many cases the figural carvings of a duho would replicate that of a cacique's zemí. Similar stools are still used by indigenous peoples in South America, though it is estimated that only 100 or so duho still exist in the world. 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

13 1/2 × 9 × 24 1/2 in. (34.3 × 22.9 × 62.2 cm)