

Basic Detail Report



Horn

Date

200 BCE - 300 CE

Primary Maker

Huastec

Medium

Ceramic

Description

This is a naturalistic ceramic effigy of a conch shell from the late Preclassic era in the Huastec culture from Colima, Mexico. It is a funerary offering found in a shaft tomb, but due to the blackening around the mouthpiece it could also have been used as a musical instrument. The Pre-Columbian inhabitants of Mexico took these shell horns with them to the afterlife, but not always in their organic form. Many of these 'shell trumpets' were actually made from ceramic. They were created to very similar specifications as their organic counterparts, including the mouthpiece shaping, so that the dead could bring their music with them into the afterlife. The blackening around the mouthpiece of this ceramic shell could also indicate use, so perhaps these ceramic objects held significance in life as well as in death. The creation of effigies out of ceramic was a very common practice which was not at all limited to shells.

Dimensions

6 × 8 3/8 × 15 1/2 in. (15.2 × 21.3 × 39.4 cm)