



Cooking Pot (Vaegatoina)

Date
19th to 20th Century

Primary Maker
Amphlett Islands

Medium
Clay

Description

The pots from the Amphlett Islands are the most popular and widely traded of all industries within Southern Milne Bay. According to the legends of the Amphlett people, the skill of pottery originated from the Trobriand Islands. The primordial ancestors of the Trobriands emerged from a cave and as they migrated and settled, they would bring clay and the art of pottery with them. The dissemination of pottery gradually evolved and became known as kula, which the Amphletts described as a system of ceremonial exchange between the people of neighboring islands who depend on one another for indispensable goods and services. The creation of pots on the Amphlett Islands is considered women’s business, men were responsible only for bringing the women clay and helping them distribute the pieces once they were finished. Amphlett pottery is characterized by its unique potting process and distinct form. Pots are crafted upside down and have an unmistakable lip, or rim, that surrounds the mouth of the vessel. Decoration of these pots consists of grooving and stippling designs across the lip and upper portion of the bowl. All pots made by the Amphlett people were ornately decorated in the same unique style, it was, instead, the size of a particular vessel that determined the amount of importance endued into the object. Based off of its smaller stature, this pot would be classified as a vaegatoina, an everyday cooking pot.

Dimensions

3 1/4 × 9 3/8 × 7 3/8 in. (8.3 × 23.8 × 18.7 cm)