

Basic Detail Report



Vessel

Date
mid to late 16th Century

Primary Maker
Inca

Medium
Ceramic

Description

This unique object is a handmade spouted ceramic pitcher from Northern Peru or Southern Ecuador which dates to the mid to late 16th century. During this time, the Inca Empire, as well as many other Indigenous communities, were attacked and forcibly incorporated into the Spanish Colonial Empire, and as such the vessel exhibits a combination of Indigenous and Iberian features. The shape of the pitcher itself is a departure from traditional Peruvian and Ecuadorian convention, especially in the spout, which exhibits a design commonly seen in European ceramics. The front of the neck, however, displays a stylized anthropomorphic face featuring narrow eyes beneath slender brows, ridged cheeks, a rounded chin, and large ears with holes in the lobes for earrings. Anthropomorphic faces are commonly found on South American vessels, but the features of this one most closely resemble those made by cultures residing in the Northern Andean highlands. Nevertheless, it is difficult to make a definitive attribution as to the cultural origin of this pitcher's visage, especially given the time period during which it was made. While it may be a signifier of resistance to assimilation into colonial culture, other sources show evidence of post-colonial vessels sporting small cherubic faces reminiscent of European religious art, suggesting an attempt to blend together Indigenous and colonial traditions.

Dimensions

7 1/4 × 6 1/2 × 6 in. (18.4 × 16.5 × 15.2 cm)