



Whistling bottle in the shape of an owl

On display

Title/Description: Whistling bottle in the shape of an owl

Born: 1000 - 0100

Object Type: Animal, Bottle

Materials: Earthenware, Paint

Measurements: h. 192 x w. 196 x 138 mm

Accession Number: 772

Historic Period: 11th-2nd century BC

Production Place: Ecuador, South America, The Americas

Cultural Group: Chorrera

Credit Line: Purchased with support from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1980

This highly polished whistling bottle is made of an orange-buff clay with dark areas indicating imperfect control over firing. The upper part of the bottle has a red slip, and the face of the owl is covered with a crusty white pigment. The lower part of the vessel is decorated all over with reserved circles produced by a 'negative' or 'resist' technique. Initially this area of the pot was covered with an orange-slip, and the bottle was fired. Afterwards, a resist substance (possibly wax) was painted onto the circular zones, and the vessel then exposed to a small, sooty fire. Carbon was absorbed into the zones unprotected by the wax coating, but this smudging process did not affect the resist-protected circles, which retain their original orange-colour. With time the fugitive black material tends to disappear and the design becomes almost invisible. This same combination of red slip and black resist painting occurs on a Chorrera bird-shaped bottle illustrated by Lathrap et al.(1975: no. 371).

Warwick Bray in Steven Hooper (ed.). 1997. Catalogue to the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection. University of East Anglia.

Provenance

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from John Stokes, New York, on the advice of Robert Sainsbury in 1980 out of income from the Sainsbury Purchasing Fund.
