



Standing figure

On display

Title/Description: Standing figure

Object Type: Figure

Materials: Earthenware

Measurements: h. 327 x w. 115 x d. 70 mm

Accession Number: 776

Historic Period: AD 800-1500

Production Place: Ecuador, South America, The Americas

Cultural Group: Manteño

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

This hollow figure, made of highly polished buff-coloured clay, has a vent hole at the top of the head and two more behind the shoulders. This arrangement is explained by the construction of the piece. First, the body and the legs were made as a near cylindrical, hollow armature, and the arms were added to the walls of this. In consequence, the figure consists of three separate compartments; the main vent connects with the body, and the subsidiary vents open into the cavities of the arms.

The designs on the body were incised or scratched into the clay when this was already hard (and perhaps after firing), and were further embellished by zones of a fugitive black pigment, which continues over much of the back. The reserved circle on the left breast is characteristic of designs made by 'negative painting' or 'resist smudging' (see UEA 772).

The style of this piece is unusual. The body painting or tattooing, is compatible with the Manteno style of the central coast (AD 800-1500), but the facial features are not typical of classic Manteno and may show the influence of some other region. A thermoluminescence test carried out by the Research Laboratory of the British Museum confirmed that the figure was probably made between AD 1240 and AD 1590, compatible with the late Manteno age.

Warwick Bray, 1997

Entry from Steven Hooper (ed.), Catalogue to the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection. University of East Anglia, 1997.

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.
