



Incense Burner Lid

Date

ca. 400-700

Primary Maker

Teotihuacán

Medium

pottery, pigment and mica

Description

Elaborate ceramic incense burners or incensarios from Teotihuacan have been found as far south as Guatemala and Honduras, indicating the wide range of influence of this great Mesoamerican city. This lid is composed of a

cylindrical core to which numerous ceramic and mica ornaments have been applied to create an intricate design. The central human figure wears a butterfly mask on the nose, a symbol associated with fertility and the spirits of the dead. The circular appliquéd pieces represent stone mirrors, artifacts widely used in Mesoamerica by shamans and priests for divination and other magical purposes. Incense burners were probably constructed and disassembled several times, and served as dynamic portable shrines. Many have been found disassembled in burials and temple offerings. Ceramic production was a major economic activity in Teotihuacan and intense archaeological investigations in the area have revealed special sections of the city dedicated to the manufacture of these objects.

Dimensions

Overall: 19 1/2 x 21 1/4 x 13 3/4 in. (49.5 x 54 x 34.9 cm)