



Baby Figure

Date

ca. 1500-400 BCE

Primary Maker

Olmec

Medium

pottery, slip paint and pigment

Description

Hollow baby figures are common in Olmec ceramics and represent ageless, genderless figures possessing supernatural powers. This beautiful example shows typical iconographic conventions: a seated posture with extended arms and open legs, and an emotionless face that still transmits a sense of gravity in its expression. Lacking any garments or ornaments, the only decoration is a skull cap

Painted in bitumen. The figure itself is covered in white slip paint with traces of red pigment still visible on some parts of the body. Variations in posture and expression, along with a lack of adequate provenience for most of these hollow baby figures, makes it difficult to identify the specific function or significance of these objects. Some interpretations suggest they are purely symbolic images, while others explain them as portrayals of important individuals within Olmec society. It is undeniable that the early artists who produced these images possessed both a sophisticated clay modeling technique and a keen eye for the realistic portrayal of human forms.

Dimensions

Overall: 10 1/8 x 8 1/2 x 4 1/2 in. (25.7 x 21.6 x 11.4 cm)