

Basic Detail Report



Urn

Date

ca. 600-900

Primary Maker

Maya (archaeological culture)

Medium

pottery

Description

Like many incense burners and urns from the Maya area, spikes protrude from this piece just as they do on the trunk of an immature ceiba (*Ceiba pentandra*) tree, the world tree in Maya cosmology. This piece also portrays the Mesoamerican understanding of life and death – on one side of the vessel is a death mask, on the other is a human or god face. A knotted rope connects the two. The imagery suggests the vessel was made or used in rituals that connected the Underworld of death with the upper world of the living.

Dimensions

Overall: 13 x 18 5/8 x 15 in. (33 x 47.3 x 38.1 cm)