



Shaman Figure

Date

ca. 300 BCE-300 CE

Primary Maker

Colima

Medium

pottery and slip paint

Description

This shaman or warrior figure is one of the most expressive objects from the Lowe's West Mexican collection. His raised right arm holds an axe in a menacing gesture and in his other hand is a trophy head. A second figure emerges from the shaman's torso with its head between his legs. While reminiscent of human birth, the main figure is clearly male following the gendered conventions of Colima art. The shaman may be giving birth to another shaman, perhaps his apprentice or spirit helper. However, the second body, whose limbs, head, and torso are clearly visible, could also be a

representation of the skin of a dead captive or sacrificial victim, in keeping with the trophy head held in the shaman's right hand. The horn on his forehead may be a symbol of his shamanistic status, although similar figures have also been interpreted as warriors. Despite the emotionless expression, the posture and visual attributes are powerful enough to transmit a sense of vitality and awe.

Dimensions

Overall: 14 x 9 1/8 x 5 1/4 in. (35.6 x 23.2 x 13.3 cm)