

Basic Detail Report



Mask

Date

ca. 250-550

Primary Maker

Teotihuacán

Medium

greenstone

Description

The masks made by artists at Teotihuacan are renowned for their impenetrable tranquility and are perhaps the most iconic art from this ancient city. Long the object of collectors, such masks have been found throughout

Mesoamerica at sites like the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan, where they were appropriated by Aztec elites as a symbol of prestige. The shape of classic Teotihuacan masks is standardized, with the basic features formed by intersecting horizontal and vertical planes carved in stone. This mask, made of precious greenstone, has eyes and teeth, which were originally inlaid with shell, obsidian, or pyrite. It shows the typical wide forehead, robust nose, and linear eyes and mouth. The rectangular ears are pierced, indicating that ornaments of jade or metal were probably attached. Despite the basic standardization in the general shape of these masks, with predominately square or rectangular configurations, there is great variation in detail and visual expression in each individual piece. This mask achieves the greatest naturalistic effect of the three included in this exhibition.

Dimensions

Overall: 8 1/4 x 8 3/4 x 4 5/8 in. (21 x 22.2 x 11.7 cm)