



Temple Model

Date

ca. 300 BCE-300 CE

Primary Maker

Nayarit

Medium

pottery and slip paint

Description

Nayarit art commonly depicts group scenes in architectural settings. While many are peaceful domestic events or communal celebrations such as the ballgame, this temple model has a more explicitly ritual focus. Elevated on a large supporting platform, the temple has a pyramidal roof and steep staircase. A human figure, clearly a sacrificial victim, lays motionless on the stairs with a deep chest wound, an indication that a sacrifice has been performed and the victim's heart has been removed as an offering to the gods. This temple model offers a powerful representation of one of the most extensive of Mesoamerican religious practices. Sacrifice

was seen as necessary for the origin and maintenance of the cosmos and human life, and was a complex and thoughtful process. The Nayarit tradition is characterized by a great variety of themes depicted in three-dimensional ceramic objects, and the dramatic representation of ritual sacrifice seen in this piece serves as a vivid reminder of the central role religion played in the lives of ancient Mesoamerican people.

Dimensions

Overall: 10 x 5 1/2 x 8 3/4 in. (25.4 x 14 x 22.2 cm)