



Anthropomorphic Feline Forest Spirit (possibly Boraro)

Date

300 BCE-200 CE

Primary Maker

La Tolita

Medium

pottery and paint

Description

This figure represents a wonderfully energetic and symmetrical feline in slightly anthropomorphic stance. The jaguar symbolizes the male force in nature to the Indians of the Amazonian lowlands of Colombia. It is the most important figure in the mythology of the La Tolita culture. The sculptor has turned the forelegs of this example to expose the underside of the paws making the claws more visible. Under the influence of such

hallucinogens as ayahuasca, shamans would assume the identity of the jaguar who was regarded as the messenger between the sacred and secular worlds. To the Desana Indians of northern Colombia, an anthropomorphized, fanged jaguar with erect phallus fits the description of a mythical monstrous man-like forest spirit known as the Boraro (G. Reichel Dolmatoff, 1975).

Dimensions

Overall: 10 3/8 x 7 x 6 3/8 in. (26.4 x 17.8 x 16.2 cm)