Basic Detail Report

Head

Date

19th to early 20th century

Primary Maker

Akan people

Medium

pottery

Description

Memorial terracotta heads, or sometimes entire figures in terracotta, are placed near Akan cemeteries, called “place of pots." The practice seems to have been mainly found among the southern Akan peoples in Ghana and Cote d’ Ivoire. The oldest know terracotta memorial heads date from around the 15th century and the arrival of the Portuguese. Some scholars have suggested the heads might have been inspired by European use of figures of Saints; however, using terracotta heads and figures in funerary or burial contexts seems to be an indigenous and widespread African practice.

Dimensions

Overall: 9 1/8 x 5 1/2 x 5 1/8 in. (23.2 x 14 x 13 cm)