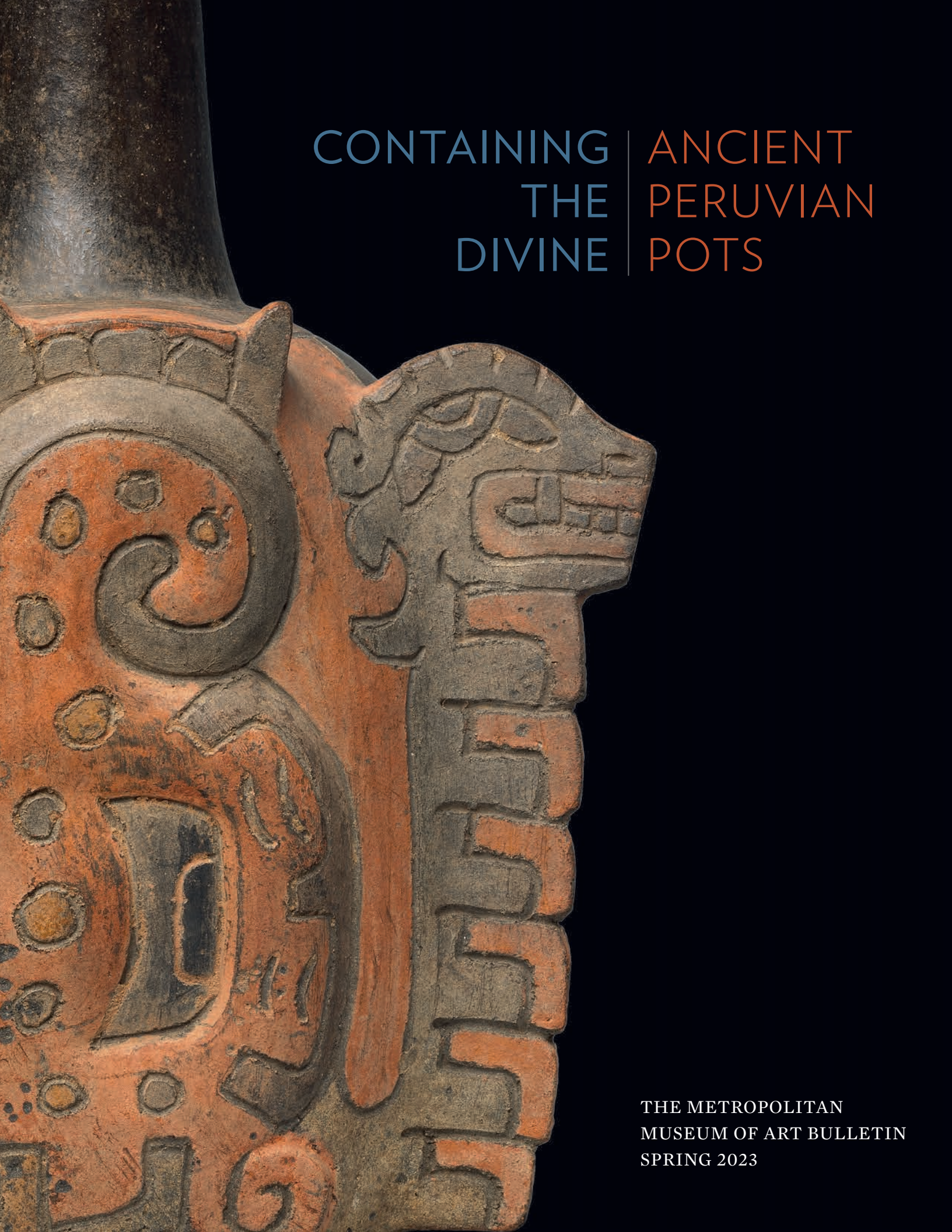

# CONTAINING THE DIVINE | ANCIENT PERUVIAN POTS

THE METROPOLITAN
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SPRING 2023

# CONTAINING THE DIVINE | ANCIENT PERUVIAN POTS

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New York

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Front and back cover illustrations: details of bottle with caiman, Cupisnique, Tembladera, Peru, 1000–800 BCE (fig. 14). Inside front cover: detail of Francisco Laso (Peruvian, 1823–1869), *Inhabitant of the Peruvian Cordilleras*, 1855. Oil on canvas, 54 3/8 × 34 5/8 in. (138 × 88 cm). Pinacoteca Municipal Ignacio Merino, Municipalidad de Lima, Peru. Inside back: detail of stirrup-spout bottle with confronting figures, Moche, North Coast, Peru, 500–800 CE (fig. 24). Page 4: detail of stirrup-spout bottle with owl, Moche, North Coast, Peru, 200–500 CE (fig. 4).

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# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Pottery is one of the world's most ancient and widespread technologies. While clay vessels can be found throughout the archaeological record, in certain times and places pottery took on an extraordinarily important role as a primary bearer of meaning. In ancient Peru, for example, a region where writing as we understand it was not practiced, ceramic vessels became the expressive medium par excellence, essential for both ritual practice and the exchange of ideas. The evocative works featured in this *Bulletin* explore some 2,500 years of creative exploration in the Andes, taking a close look at remarkably imaginative works that served as conduits to worldly and divine power.

This *Bulletin* was prepared in concert with *Containing the Divine*, a display of forty sacred vessels from the Andes and Indonesia on The Met's Great Hall Balcony from May 25, 2022, to September 29, 2023. The temporary closure of The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, where these works normally reside, made possible this striking juxtaposition with other vessels from across Asia, expanding and enhancing our understanding of the formal and conceptual relationships of ritual objects. The installation and the accompanying *Bulletin* were informed in part by conversations and collaborations with colleagues from around the globe, allowing us to reconsider this area of The Met collection in new ways. Organized by Maia Nuku, Evelyn A. J. Hall and John A. Friede Curator for Oceanic Art, Hugo C. Ikehara-Tsukayama, Senior Research Associate, and Joanne Pillsbury, Andrall E. Pearson Curator, all of The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, *Containing the Divine* provides rich opportunities to reflect on devotional practices and interactions with divine power as well as occasionally arresting (perhaps even perplexing or humorous) moments, such as when visitors first encounter vessels in the shape of seemingly violent root vegetables.

The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing will reopen in 2025 after an extensive reenvisioning, some 150 years after the first ancient Peruvian vessels entered The Met collection. The Museum's interest in this field waxed, waned, and then waxed again over the course of its history, ultimately becoming, arguably, the finest comprehensive collection of ceramics outside Peru. Hugo C. Ikehara-Tsukayama and Joanne Pillsbury were joined by their colleague Dawn Kriss, Associate Conservator, Department of Objects Conservation, as authors of this *Bulletin*, and I am grateful to them for deepening our understanding of these works not only in terms of their formal interest and as part of a broader contextualized past, but also as objects that have continued cultural relevance and meaning today. I also want to acknowledge and thank Alisa LaGamma, Ceil and Michael E. Pulitzer Curator in Charge of The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, for her support of this project.
The quarterly *Bulletin* series is made possible in part by the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, established by the cofounder of *Reader's Digest*.

**Max Hollein**
*Marina Kellen French Director*
*The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

In 1987, Victor Flores Capuñay, a *curandero* (traditional healer) from Trujillo, Peru, placed nine ancient ceramics and six stone figurines on a *mesa*—an assemblage of ritual objects—in order to cure his patient's "soul loss," or "bad-air ailments." These disorders were believed to be caused by powerful *huacas*, referring to the ancient ruins that dot the landscape of Peru's North Coast (fig. 1).[1] The ancient objects joined a diverse group of shells, swords, and crosses, as well as other items of recent manufacture, which Flores Capuñay carefully arranged to harness the power of *gentiles* (pagan ancestors), nature, and Christianity to help him fight maladies, promote good fortune, and combat the work of other sorcerers. These rituals, performed as battles between the healer and forces of evil, continue today in Peru, challenging contemporary notions about the stark division between past and present and reminding us how ancient and modern beliefs intersect in sometimes unexpected ways.

In Andean communities today, ceramic vessels gathered from *huacas* or passed down through families are considered to be active agents or entities that have substantial power. Pots found at archaeological sites, for example, can be held responsible for causing illness; in one case, a *curandero* identified a certain pot as the source of a *huaquero*'s (looter's) malady.[2] The vessel was initially in demand by *curanderos*, who wanted the pot to help them in their *mesas*, but they soon discovered that it was too strong—or too evil—to be controlled. To avoid more harm, the *huaquero* was forced to return the pot to its *huaca* and offer a guinea pig sacrifice to avoid losing his life.

The practice of removing goods from burial sites in Peru is not a recent phenomenon; indeed, it can be traced to Indigenous pre-conquest times.[3] Tomb looting accelerated in the colonial era, however, largely with the purpose of extracting ornaments of gold and silver, and then widened in the late eighteenth century to include ceramics as both individuals and institutions sought to meet a desire to understand an ancient past: part of a broader impulse during the Enlightenment and beyond to reveal and contextualize human origins. Looting continued in later centuries, driven by different factors, including the rise of the art market in the last 150 years. These practices devastated thousands of ancient sites across Peru and in the

**1.** *Mesa* assembled by healer Victor Flores Capuñay, 1987

process erased the archaeological context of the works they contained, limiting a broader understanding of pots linked to a specific place and time.

Looting is also the primary means by which healers source antiquities for their *mesas*, and both *curanderos* and traditional *huaqueros* (individuals or families engaged in small-scale extractions) exist in a world where archaeological sites are considered powerful *huacas* and the pottery found in them, often referred to as *huacos*, are valued outside the discourse of cultural heritage or the art market.[4] These *huaqueros* operate at the margins of legality, but the practice is seen as accessing an inheritance left by their ancestors: one that they can beseech for help in supporting their families. The *huaquero*'s actions imply a relationship with an enlivened entity (the archaeological site), and his or her success depends on the willingness of the *huaca* to give its treasures away or, instead, to cause harm, even "eating" the *huaqueros* alive.

Beyond the communities in which such objects are consigned meaning and power, these ceramic vessels, particularly ancient ones, are often viewed as passive objects. Functional and utilitarian, they are sometimes seen as the less glamorous cousins of monumental stone sculpture and gold regalia and are thus overlooked as bearers of meaning. Their ubiquity has also worked against them in terms of aesthetic appreciation. Yet in ancient Peru, pottery was very much considered a primary "canvas" for the expression of ideas and, more important, the activation of divine power. Literally of the earth, ceramics connect communities, both now and in the past, with an animate landscape, the realm of the ancestors. In antiquity, ceramic vessels acquired their vital potency in the hands of their creators, which was further strengthened through use in ritual practice. Today, these vessels achieve transformative strength through their connection to a distant past and, especially, to their source, the *huacas* themselves, the tangible legacy of the vibrant religious centers that once populated the Peruvian landscape.

**2.** Gourd-shaped bottle. Topará; Peru, 200 BCE–100 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 5 ¾ in. (14.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Nathan Cummings, 1963 (63.232.55)

## Ancient Peruvian Pots

Four thousand years ago, artists in the Andean region of South America began transforming clay, a readily available material, into vessels. These works ranged from simple pots for everyday tasks to elaborate bottles for ritual use. Delicately modeled and decorated, such containers were a means of connecting with divine powers, but they were also essential to the public feasts that were held to establish and strengthen communities. What the vessels were meant to hold, and how to interpret their complex imagery, is still largely unknown. There was no tradition of writing in South America before the sixteenth century, when Spanish script replaced established methods of recording information, such as the complex, knotted cords known as *khipu*. The depictions of supernatural beings, animals, and people, however, reveal aspects of religious traditions that thrived for thousands of years before the rise of the Inca Empire in the fifteenth century. These pots once held physical substances, but they also contained—and indeed still embody—ancient Andean concepts of imitation, transformation, power, and cosmological knowledge.

Ceramics developed in South America relatively late compared to rock art and textiles, which predate pottery by thousands of years. Prior to the introduction of ceramics in the second millennium CE, vessels were made from gourds (*Lagenaria siceraria*), and the first ceramics in Peru, including bottles, were shaped in ways that resemble gourds, a style that continued for hundreds of years, often alongside more inventive forms (fig. 2). Pottery, as an innovation, provided greater flexibility than its botanical counterpart in both form and function. The high plasticity of clay permits an infinite array of shaping possibilities, and once exposed to intense heat through firing, it transforms into ceramic, a durable and robust material that can withstand the rigors of everyday use.[5]

Once the technology was adopted, ceramics quickly became a primary medium for the expression and circulation of ideas. Expanding upon the relatively simple shapes of the gourd, Andean potters created a broad repertoire of styles, which served multiple purposes and reflected a multitude of cultural traditions that developed and faded through time. The Met's collection of ancient Peruvian pottery primarily features works from the coast, a striking desert landscape where, under normal conditions, little or no rain falls outside the periodic, and occasionally catastrophic, El Niño events (fig. 3). The Peruvian coastal desert is bisected by rivers, however, which bring life-giving waters from the Andes mountains to sustain communities of varying scales, from villages to cities. Potters in these settlements created an array of ceramic objects, from figurines to architectural


**3.** Map of Peru with archaeological sites and regions discussed in this *Bulletin*

**4.** Stirrup-spout bottle with owl. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 200–500 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 9 ½ in. (24.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Nathan Cummings, 1966 (66.30.5)

ornaments, but most production was dedicated to containers for food and drink. The greatest artistic attention was lavished on serving vessels such as bottles, bowls, plates, and cups: fancier versions of more utilitarian ceramics. Potters also created specialized ritual vessels, including bottles with unusual spouts. Occasionally depicted in ceremonial scenes painted on vessels, these bottles were the focus of some of the most creative and inventive imagery known from the ancient Americas.

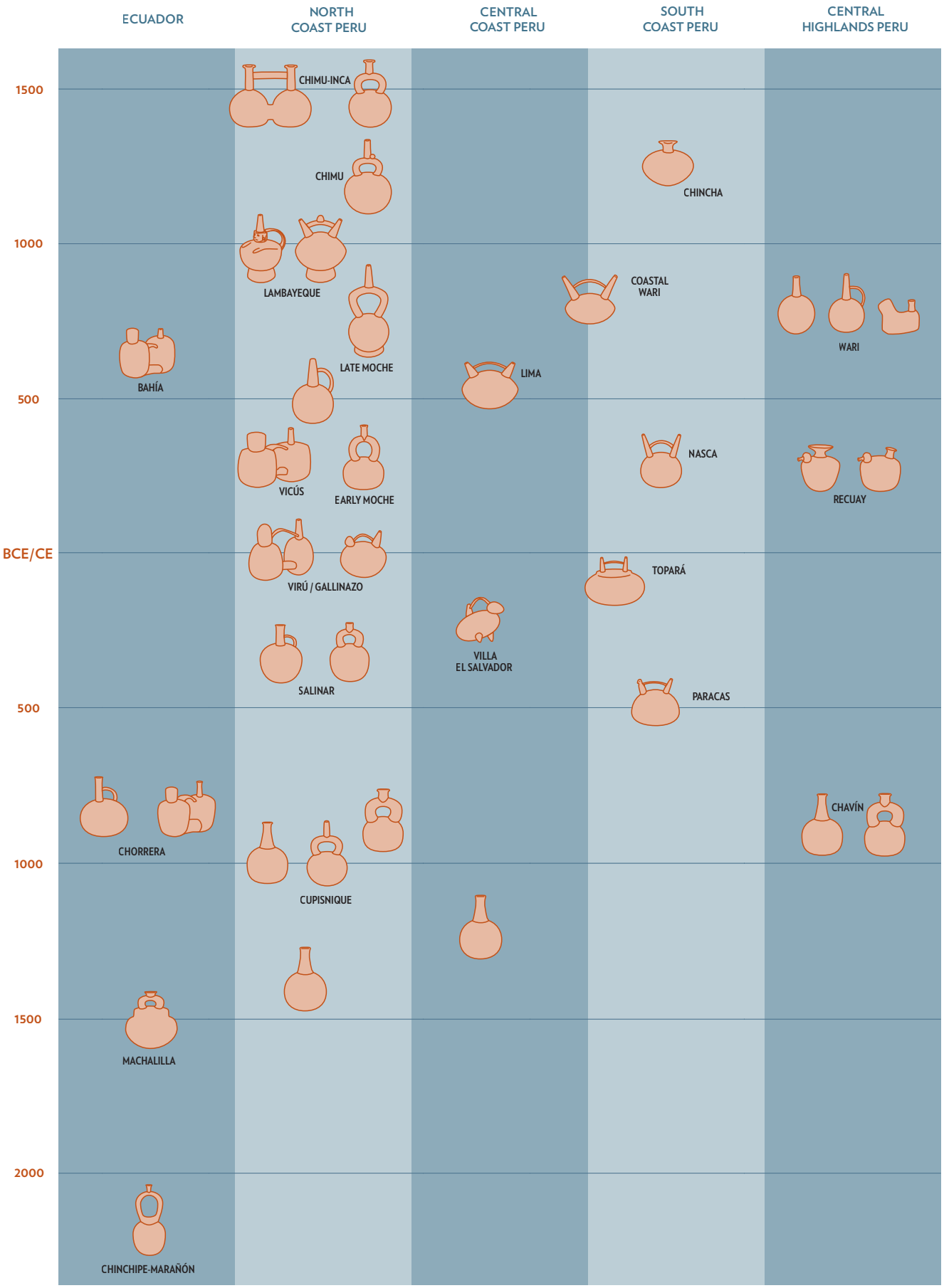
While such vessels are easily broken, their sherds endure, leaving us with a persistent record in a way that other, more fragile organic materials such as textiles do not. We know from studying such vessels that Andean communities had clear preferences for certain shapes, colors, and themes, for example, and because of these choices modern archaeologists have viewed ceramics as a reliable indicator of cultural identities, and changes within them, over time. On Peru's North Coast, potters excelled at creating bottles modeled in the shapes of animals, vegetables, and human or supernatural figures (fig. 4). They preferred a limited palette: generally either the color of the clay body itself, which they altered through firing, or a bichromatic approach of red and cream. Potters on the South Coast demonstrated a greater interest in polychromy, painting their vessels with a range of colors, including orange, red, purple, and yellow. The imagery can be complex, and it remains poorly understood. On one example, a flying figure holds a staff or axe, its face partially obscured by an elaborate nose ornament evoking a feline's whiskers, but without contemporary texts it is difficult to know with certainty who or what is depicted (fig. 5).

North and south were also divided by a predilection for specific spouts and handles, a taste that was as enduring as it was distinct (fig. 6). So-called stirrup-spout bottles—named in modern times after the spout's resemblance to a riding saddle stirrup—first developed in what is now Ecuador, were adopted by potters on Peru's North Coast around 1200 BCE, and remained the most recognizable vessel type in this region for the next 2,700 years. On the South Coast, potters favored a different type of bottle, one that generally has either a single spout with a strap handle or two spouts connected by a bridge. Initially created by Paracas potters on the South Coast during the first millennium BCE, the spout-and-bridge bottle and its variants reached the Central Coast in the following centuries and finally spread to other parts of the Central Andes along with the expanding Wari Empire between 600 and 900 CE.

In some ways, such bottles are impractical—they are difficult to fill and empty—implying that their use was restricted or otherwise limited to certain events. Some, such as Nasca spout-and-bridge bottles, made in the first centuries of the Common Era on the South Coast, seem to have been used exclusively in funerary contexts.[6] Similarly, on the North Coast, stirrup-spout bottles were closely associated with ritual practice, judging from the depictions of them on other vessels (see, for example, fig. 38). The stirrup spout likely provided a useful handle, but its primary appeal may have been symbolic. By manipulating the flow of liquids, the spout could have represented the circulation of water from rain to lakes, rivers, plants, and, ultimately, people. The water cycle may have been an organizing principle that aided Andean communities in understanding the complexity of the world and their place within it.

Some vessels were, for reasons still unknown, intentionally broken before being deposited in burials; other pots were smashed and buried in caches, perhaps as offerings. In contrast, some vessels show evidence

**5.** Double-spout bottle with flying figure. Nasca; South Coast, Peru, 300–500 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 6 ¾ in. (17.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Purchase, Arthur M. Bullowa Bequest, 1996 (1996.174)




**6.** Diagram of main bottle forms from Peru and Ecuador before the sixteenth century

**7.** Neckless jar with complex scene. Paracas; South Coast, Peru, 350 BCE–60 CE. Ceramic and post-fire paint, H. 12 1/16 in. (30.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979 (1979.206.741)

of repair, suggesting that they were highly valued and used over a long period of time. Pairs of holes would be carefully placed on either side of a crack, presumably to reinforce their walls with twine (fig. 7, with repair holes visible in left half).[7] In other cases, a broken spout was secured to the body of the vessel, also with twine (fig. 8).[8] These repairs speak to the long use-lives of these objects, but also to the distances they traveled over time. The vessel with a broken spout, for example, was likely created more than 100 kilometers from the location of its final deposit at Huaca de la Luna, in the Moche Valley. In some cases, burials may have been only the most recent context for these objects before they were excavated hundreds of years later, when they continued their "social lives" in communities and museums, taking on new roles and new meanings along the way.

**8.** Moche bottle (with repaired neck and handle) from Huaca del Sol, La Libertad, Peru

## Emerging Styles on the North Coast

The earliest Andean potters relied on techniques that remain elemental to the technical repertoire of any ceramic artist today. Through coiling (placing rolls of clay on top of one another) and careful hand-modeling (using one's fingers or tools to shape vessel walls), these potters created a wide array of objects, from cooking and storage vessels to elaborate ceramic sculptures. Early potters emphasized the contrast between textured and polished surfaces in their ceramics, suggesting that these works were intended to provide both a visual and a tactile experience (fig. 9). In comparison with later firing technologies, the kilns and open firepits used during this period were less efficient, frequently producing surfaces with hues of dark browns, grays, and blacks owing to the high content of carbonized material in their paste and fire clouds (darker patches on the surface resulting from something touching the vessel during firing). Some very fine graywares and red-slipped vessels are exceptions that would have required improved firing technology.

Predatory animals such as felines were a favored subject in early Andean ceramics. This grayware vessel (fig. 10) depicts an *otorongo* (jaguar), a powerful feline from the Amazon rainforest, and a *macanche* (boa constrictor). Fierce, strong, and agile, these animals are cunning hunters that use surprise attacks to catch their prey. Two San Pedro cacti, known for their hallucinogenic properties, are modeled on either side of the vessel. Ritual participants who ingested a beverage made from the cacti might have perceived themselves transforming into a jaguar or a snake, and thereby perhaps subsuming some of their desirable attributes. The remarkable details on such vessels were clearly meant to be observed at close range, at least by some beholders. Four zoomorphic heads lightly incised in profile on the shoulder further amplify the vessel's message of power and predation.

Artists often rendered these felines in imaginative ways, sometimes reducing the composition to the creature's most noticeable features. On one simple bottle with textured grooved lines, a smooth mouth emerges: a fang, seen in profile, that is doubled and mirrored to become part of a powerful maw seen from the front (fig. 11). These vessels, associated with the cultures known today as Chavín and Cupisnique, were used in large gatherings

**9.** Stirrup-spout bottle. Cupisnique; Peru, 800–500 BCE. Ceramic, H. 9 5/8 in. (24.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1969 (1978.412.40)

**10.** Stirrup-spout bottle with feline and snake. Cupisnique; Peru, 1200–800 BCE. Ceramic, H. 9 ½ in. (24.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Harris Brisbane Dick and Fletcher Funds, 1967 (67.239.17)

**11.** Bottle with fang motif. Cupisnique; Peru, 800–500 BCE. Ceramic, H. 7 in. (17.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Judith Riklis, 1983 (1983.546.12)

at monumental ceremonial centers; some were smashed and discarded, while others were reused before they were eventually deposited in burials.[9] Either way, the objects were removed from circulation, prompting a need for further production, displays of chiefly hospitality, and opportunities for creative exploration.[10]

Early Andean ceramics vary in quality, and some clearly received greater attention in their manufacture, suggesting that they were destined for a specific use or specialized role. A vessel in the shape of a feline, for example, was carefully polished, and then small circles were engraved on the surface, perhaps in emulation of the spots on a creature's pelt (fig. 12). Such fine works may have served as gifts or been displayed prominently in rituals, where the iconography perhaps signaled rank and authority.

The combination of modeling, incision, burnishing, and combing used on some vessels resulted in striking compositions that appear entirely abstract to modern eyes, but the designs on others are engagingly direct, such as a bottle depicting a three-dimensional mouse whose tail, rendered in low relief, extends to the edge of the vessel's shoulder (fig. 13). The combination of the high sheen of the burnished sections such as the spout with the robustly textured surfaces creates a dynamic formal contrast that animates the composition. Muted, matte tones of gray, black, and tan were more common in early ceramics—as noted above, the color typically derived from the hue of the clay body itself—but occasionally potters applied polychrome pigments, such as vibrant reds, after firing to create a more dramatic visual effect. One tall bottle said to be from Tembladera, in the Jequetepeque Valley, has well-preserved surface paint (fig. 14). The head of a composite, supernatural creature with feline, bird, and caimanlike features is rendered snout up, with a curling tongue that emerges from the fanged mouth. To the right of the eye, a flange on the side of the vessel details

**12.** Feline-shaped stirrup-spout bottle. Cupisnique; North Coast, Peru, 1200–800 BCE. Ceramic, H. 9 1⁄8 in. (23.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1968 (1978.412.217)

**13.** Stirrup-spout bottle with mouse. Cupisnique; Peru, 800–500 BCE. Ceramic, H. 8 in. (20.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Louis Slavitz, 1988 (1988.277)

**14.** Bottle with caiman (front and back). Cupisnique; Tembladera, Peru, 1000–800 BCE. Ceramic and post-fire paint, H. 12 ¾ in. (32.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1967 (1978.412.203)

a vertebral crest terminating in a feline head. The back of the vessel features another vertical, abstract pattern that perhaps represents a spinal column with feathers or scutes, the bony plates found on alligators, crocodiles, and caimans (fig. 14).

The malleability of clay allows for considerable exploration of three-dimensional form, and ancient Peruvian potters experimented with shapes and surface decoration, often combining the two in order to subtly evoke multiple creatures in a single vessel, subverting simple readings of the sculptural form. A stirrup-spout bottle that outwardly appears to represent a seated monkey, its legs in low relief and its head cocked to one side, is revealed to be a more complicated composition when held and rotated (fig. 15). The other side of the vessel reveals a lightly incised stylized animal head, shown in profile, with a snake-like tongue that extends toward the monkey's head. From this perspective, the monkey's legs become the snake's body, and the circular spots evoke the pattern of a predator, the *macanche*. The monkey's head is tilted because it has been ensnared amid the snake's coils. By rotating the bottle, the viewer observes two animals in opposite and complementary perspectives, both formally and conceptually. The potter gave the monkey, a diurnal animal—and here the prey—a red, modeled body with black features, such as its face. In contrast, the snake, a nocturnal predator, is rendered two-dimensionally in black slip with red body markings. Predator and prey, opposing forces, are thus inventively united.

## South Coast

Artists explored color more thoroughly on Peru's South Coast. On early vessels, such as those made by artists on the Paracas Peninsula in the first millennium BCE, paints

were applied after the vessel was fired. Hundreds of years later, ceramicists developed methods to incorporate pigments before firing a vessel, achieving a more durable result. Paracas potters created spout-and-bridge vessels, for example, by incising designs in the clay before firing and then, after firing, applying paints frequently made with powdered minerals and organic binders (fig. 16).[11] The resulting delicate surfaces imply that these bottles were not for everyday use. With the body of the ceramic fired to black and dark brown tones in a reducing atmosphere—one in which oxygen is limited, creating smoky, smudging conditions—the post-fire white, red, orange, yellow, green, and blue colors appear particularly vivid.

Early Paracas artists borrowed imagery from their northern neighbors, including that of highly stylized, almost abstract felines. A cat's features could be geometricized into a series of parallel, incised lines that were then filled with color. In one bottle (fig. 17), bands that form the elegantly curved eyes and brows meet at the center of the face at a small nose sculpted in relief. Two small, upright ears and a menacing mouth revealing crossed upper and lower canines complete the stylized visage, which appears just below a spout with a modeled bird head that functions as a whistle.

Descendants of the Paracas tradition, Nasca artists developed bottles with colorful, durable surfaces capable of withstanding greater use. Potters applied slips (mixtures of clay and water, with minerals added for color) before firing. Because mineral slips change color under high temperatures—and mastering the creation of a smooth slip surface with the expansion and contraction of the ceramic under the extreme heat of firing presents

**15.** Stirrup-spout bottle with monkey and snake (front and back). Cupisnique; Peru, 1200–800 BCE. Ceramic and slip, H. 11 ½ in. (29.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Harris Brisbane Dick and Fletcher Funds, 1967 (67.239.6)

**16.** Feline-shaped spout-and-bridge vessel (side and back). Paracas; Ica Valley, Peru, 800–400 BCE. Ceramic and post-fire paint, H. 6 7/8 in. (17.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979 (1979.206.1148)

**17.** Spout-and-bridge bottle with feline face. Paracas; Ica Valley, Peru, 800–550 BCE. Ceramic and post-fire paint, H. 7 in. (17.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Nathan Cummings, 1962 (62.266.72)

**18.** Double-spout bottle with shark (front and back). Nasca; South Coast, Peru, 1–400 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 6 ¾ in. (17.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Cummings, 1964 (64.228.70)

an immense technical challenge—this innovation would have required intensive experimentation over the course of many generations.

The Nasca region is well known for the spectacular geoglyphs etched into the desert landscape, and in recent years archaeological excavations have revealed the remains of habitations and large ritual centers as well. Specialized workshops near these ritual centers produced finely slip-painted ceramics, which were also made in domestic settings, telling us that such fineware was not limited to those of elite status. Large ritual centers such as Cahuachi may have been places of pilgrimage and thus were occupied only periodically. Following festivities there, vessels would have been distributed, and participants would thus have returned home bearing objects of prestige and religious knowledge.

Early Nasca vessels often feature a single image such as a bird, plant, or fish—either on its own or repeated several times across the sides of a pot—outlined in black against a creamy-white background. Spout-and-bridge bottles sometimes have a pair of these animals, one on each side of the vessel. On one example, a lively, anthropomorphized shark swims along, empty-handed (fig. 18). On the other side of the vessel, the shark grasps a disembodied head in its hand, its reddened mouth revealing teeth with red dots, suggesting drops of blood. What is the meaning of the two depictions? Are we meant to see these as two moments in time, a before and a bloody after? Themes of conflict and predation, if that is what these are, abound on other examples, such as a small bowl with an enigmatic scene of large raptorial birds decapitating human beings (fig. 19). The white background is filled with spears, heads, and circular objects that could be sling stones: projectiles hurled to soften an enemy force in battle.

The Nasca style dominated ceramic production on the South Coast until 650 CE, when the Wari Empire—an expansive state, centered in the Andean mountains, that once controlled a large portion of what is now Peru—began to influence the coastal region. The Wari heartland, in Ayacucho, is geographically close to the Nasca pampas, and Wari potters quickly adopted the palette and ceramic technology developed by Nasca artists. Coastal artists themselves articulated a hybrid style, combining imperial Wari iconography with local pottery traditions. One such bottle features a modeled feline head, characteristic of the Andean highlands, with the colorful slip style developed on the coast by earlier Nasca potters (fig. 20). Painted on the

**19.** Bowl (front and detail of back). Nasca; Peru, 1–400 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 3 3/8 in. (8.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1961 (1978.412.63)

**20.** Bottle in the shape of a feline. Wari; Peru, 600–900 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 8 in. (20.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Purchase, Arthur M. Bullowa Bequest and Rogers Fund, 1996 (1996.290)

**21.** Double-chambered bottle. Wari; Central Coast, Peru, 800–900 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 5 5⁄8 in. (14.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Nathan Cummings, 1967 (67.167.35)

flasklike body of the vessel, the feline's claws grasp another animal, perhaps a reference to imperial reach and power.

The impact of the expansion of the Wari Empire was particularly noticeable in the sudden mixing of previously distinct regional styles, suggesting increased interactions and exchange among populations. Bottle shapes such as the spout-and-bridge type, once largely confined to the South Coast, were now being created elsewhere, while other types usually associated with the North Coast, such as the double-chambered vessel, were found along the entire coast. An example of the latter features a bottle on one side and a dignitary on a stepped platform on the other; a chevron pattern, a characteristic Wari motif, decorates the handle (fig. 21). The dignitary wears a four-cornered hat typically worn by high-status Wari men. He holds a *Spondylus* shell—the casing of an imported tropical bivalve that was perhaps the most highly valued material in the ancient Andes—further underscoring his elite status. Yet the vessel itself, particularly in its relatively simple painting style, pales in quality compared to those from the Ayacucho heartland. Also a whistling vessel (the mechanism is located in the open mouth), it is a work that speaks to a desire to emulate and appropriate the styles and symbols of power.

## Desert Kingdoms of the North

Over the course of some six centuries, the Moche built thriving regional centers from the Huarmey River Valley, in the south, to perhaps as far north as the Piura River, near the present-day border between Peru and Ecuador. They did so by developing coastal deserts into rich farmlands and by drawing upon the abundant maritime resources of the Pacific Ocean's Humboldt Current. Although the precise nature of Moche political organization is a subject of debate, these centers, and the monumental earthen platforms associated with them, shared unifying cultural traits such as religious practices.

Prolific and inventive, Moche potters created a striking new style on the North Coast during the first centuries CE. While their early vessels portray animals and humans with considerable fidelity (see fig. 4), later examples feature one or more animals fused with the bodies of warriors in compositions that dissolve the boundaries between species. A vessel in the shape of a warrior on bended knee, for example, shows him holding a shield and a war club and wearing a crescent headdress with two circular protrusions: the standard attire of a Moche warrior (fig. 22). But the face of the warrior is clearly that of a hawk with no

**22.** Stirrup-spout bottle with warrior. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 500–800 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 10 1⁄4 in. (26 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Nathan Cummings, 1963 (63.226.8)

**23.** Stirrup-spout bottle with fox warriors (front and lateral view). Moche; North Coast, Peru, 500–800 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 11 ¾ in. (29.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 1882 (82.1.29)

suggestion that the figure represents a human in a hawk costume. On another vessel, two warriors, one painted on either side, run swiftly through a desert landscape, indicated by a wavy ground line and cactus plants (fig. 23). Here the warriors' faces and tails are those of foxes, keen hunters known for their speed and cunning, while the warriors' regalia is carefully detailed, down to the patterns of their tunics. Are we to understand these figures as supernatural beings or mythological heroes? Or do they symbolically represent distinct classes of Moche warriors, with the selection of animal reflecting their prowess in hunting? While these questions cannot be answered with certainty, in Moche ceramics it seems clear that animals were not part of a natural world to be dominated but, rather, were beings to emulate and whose abilities—flying, swimming, hunting—were desired.

Early Moche bottles were made by coiling clay to build up the vessel, but eventually the use of molds, which was more expeditious, became widespread. Molds facilitated an increase in production, and workshops near ritual centers expanded, facilitating the development and distribution of fine ceramics.[12] The vessel bodies were shaped by two-piece molds, and then the stirrup-spouts, formed with the help of wooden rods, were attached.[13] The introduction of molds did not, however, diminish the degree of variation or creative expression in such vessels, as Moche potters finished mold-made works in different ways, such as modeling and painting distinct headdresses, ear ornaments, and other details, so that no two are exactly alike.

The bottle with the fox warriors was painted in a style known as fineline, developed by Moche artists to depict myriad aspects of life in increasing detail over the course of their history.[14] The first examples in the style were relatively simple, often featuring a single figure executed in a reddish-brown slip, which was applied with delicate brushes made of human or animal hair over a creamy-white background. The surface was then

burnished before firing, likely with stone or bone polishers. The contrast between the mechanical reproduction of these bottles and the elaborate nature of the painting style raises the question of whether the potter and the painter were the same person. Technical analysis on archaeologically recovered bottles indicates that they were made using local raw materials; thus, the existence of stylistically similar depictions in different valleys could have involved artists traveling between communities.[15] Based on an archive built during decades of research, archaeologist Christopher Donnan and his colleague Donna McClelland have identified dozens of possible individual artists or groups of artists.[16]

Fineline painting became more complex after 500 CE and began to incorporate compositions that suggest specific narratives. On one vessel, a figure with prominent fangs who is shown wearing a feline headdress, snake earspools, and a snake-headed belt sits on a throne and engages in lively conversation with an anthropomorphized iguana wearing a bird headdress (fig. 24). The figure raises his index finger to the iguana, who responds with joined, raised hands, as if in supplication. The pair is repeated on the other side of the vessel, although this time the figure has prominent wrinkles, perhaps suggesting the passage of time (see also inside back cover). The iguana and "Wrinkle Face" (as he has come to be known) are depicted frequently in Moche ceramics, and the scenes we see on vessels may represent specific moments in the complex sagas of culture heroes.[17] These lively characters remind us that a rich mythology surely once accompanied these objects, and that their stories—perhaps linked to an oral tradition that may have been part and parcel of the act of viewing these vessels—were revealed as observers slowly turned them in their hands.

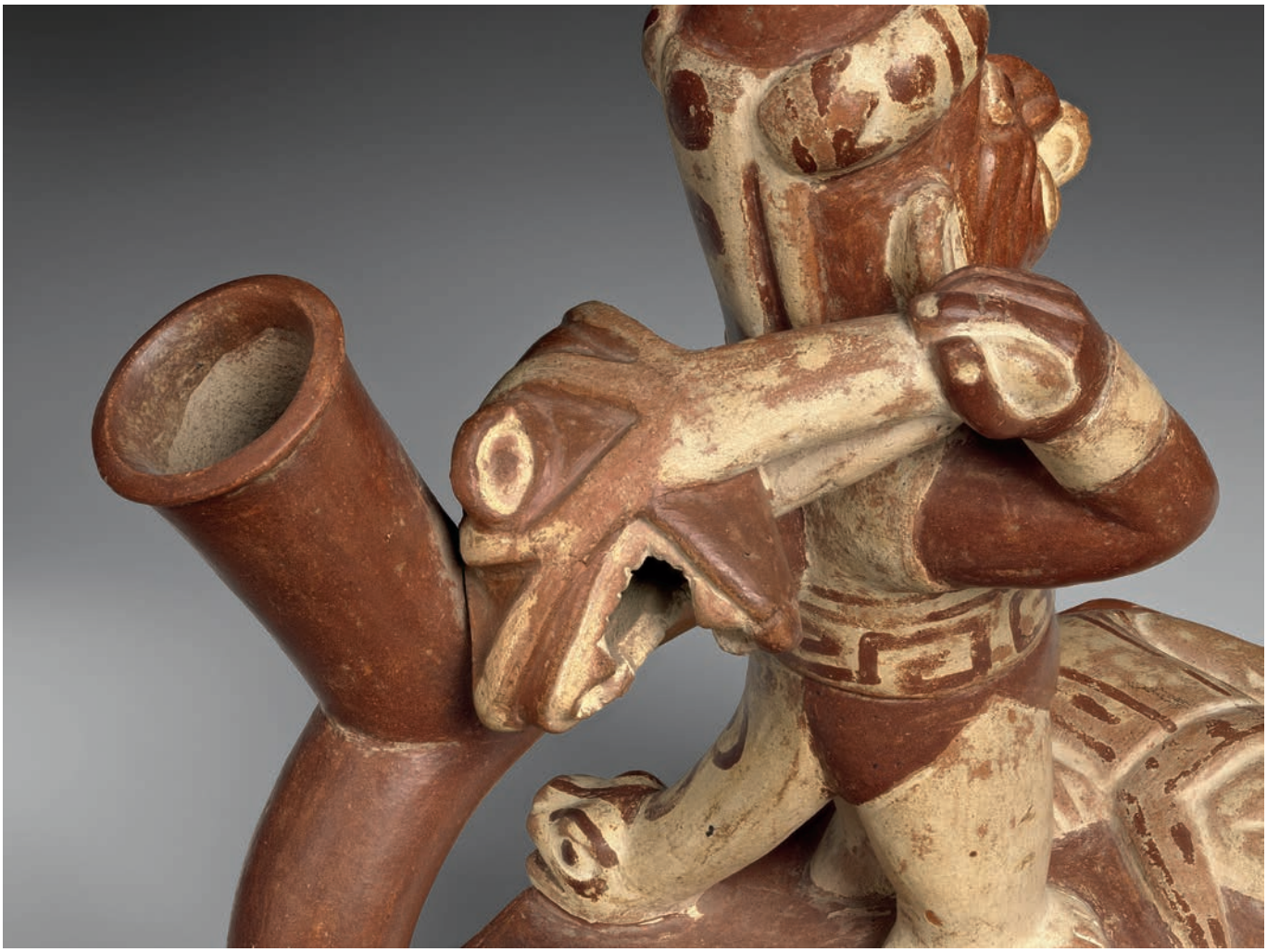
It is tempting to see different vessels as representing different scenes from a common myth. For example,

**24.** Stirrup-spout bottle with confronting figures (front and back). Moche; North Coast, Peru, 500–800 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 9 in. (22.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1961 (1978.412.70)

**25.** Stirrup-spout bottle with decapitation scene. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 200–500 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 7 ½ in. (19.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Bequest of Jane Costello Goldberg, from the Collection of Arnold I. Goldberg, 1986 (1987.394.630)

on one bottle, a three-dimensional standing figure has the deep wrinkles, fanged mouth, feline headdress, and snake-headed belt seen in other representations of Wrinkle Face (fig. 25). Often shown in sacrifice and combat scenes, he is seen here holding a *tumi* (a crescent-bladed sacrificial knife) in his left hand, and with his right hand he appears to be tossing back an open-mouthed fish head, presumably just removed from the body that now lies in front of him on the platform (fig. 26). A second vessel, a blackware stirrup-spout bottle—the bottle's limited chamber is entirely perfunctory, serving here largely as a platform for the dramatic action—seems to present a reversal of fortune, as Wrinkle Face is supine on the platform and struggles for control of a war club with a fishlike creature shown leaning over him (fig. 27). Should we view these combat scenes through the lens of the contemporary healing practices described above, performed as battles between a *curandero* and malevolent forces?[18] Or are the frequent oppositional pairings in ancient Peruvian ceramics about capturing dramatic moments that distill existential or cosmic struggles?

In the centuries after the fall of the Moche civilization, the Chimú kingdom rose and conquered most of the Pacific coast from present-day Ecuador to the modern Peruvian capital of Lima. By this time, the use of molds was widespread across the Andes, and potters produced large quantities of vessels, resulting in a certain stylistic homogeneity. Gray-black ceramics fired in a reducing atmosphere became the signature ware of the Chimú. Little attention was paid to the forms after they were removed from the molds beyond a careful burnishing of the surface, often resulting in a high gloss that resembles the sheen of silver, which by this period had become, along with other precious metals, the prestige medium



**26.** Detail of stirrup-spout bottle with decapitation scene (fig. 25)

**27.** Stirrup-spout bottle with combat scene. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 200–500 CE. Ceramic, H. 4 ½ in. (11.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979 (1979.206.412)

for aesthetic expression.[19] Yet there may have been other reasons for a rejection of earlier styles such as fineline and polychromy. Chimú blackware may, for instance, have been intentionally archaizing, harking back to the muted palette and, occasionally, to the subject matter of Cupisnique vessels created some two thousand years earlier (fig. 28).

## Imperial Design

At the time of the Spanish conquest of Peru, in 1535, the Inca Empire dominated much of western South America, unifying the region via a network of some 25,000 miles of roads. The largest in the ancient Americas, and at the time one of the largest in the world, the Inca Empire came from humble beginnings in the Cusco region to vanquish rival kingdoms such as the Chimú in a little over a century. The Inca, who called their empire Tahuantinsuyo—"realm of the four parts"— imposed an imperial style in architecture, ceramics, and other arts to varying degrees across their domain. Regional styles continued to flourish, however, often with the adoption of Inca motifs and shapes, and within the Cusco heartland itself, Inca potters developed an elaborate fineware reserved for the Inca ruler and his relatives.[20]

Inca imperial ceramics are characterized by superb craftsmanship and a limited repertoire of distinctive shapes, including a bottle type known as an *urpu* in Quechua, the modern language descended from that spoken by the Incas. These bottles have globular chambers, pointed bases (for ease of pouring), and tall necks

**28.** Stirrup-spout bottle with feline. Chimú; North Coast, Peru, 1100–1470 CE. Ceramic, H. 11 ¼ in. (28.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Cummings, 1964 (64.228.17)

with a flared rim. Large *urpus* (up to 45 inches in height) were used for storage; they could be transported easily by porters, who would run a rope through the handles and across the animal-head lug on the shoulder of the vessel. Smaller versions (fig. 29) served votive purposes at sacred sites across the empire. Most include panels of geometric patterning delicately painted in polychrome slips, usually black and red on a cream-colored background.

Other Inca vessels are more idiosyncratic in shape and conception. A small, shallow, slightly incurved libation bowl with three short supports and panels with insects painted on the exterior merits close examination (fig. 30). A second, smaller bowl, formed in the interior of the outer bowl, was pierced on the bottom, its chamber connected to a cream-colored spout in the shape of a llama neck and head. The second spout, in the shape of a bird neck and head, connects to the larger, outer bowl. A third animal, a spotted jaguar, lounges across the lip of the vessel and grips the rim with its paws. This structurally complex, iconographically rich work was likely deployed in rituals designed to ensure the fertility of the lands.

## Containers of Substances

Most fine ceramics from ancient Peru are containers—bottles, jars, bowls, and other vessels—presumably designed to hold liquids or other materials. Traces of their contents, left behind in microscopic amounts in the interiors of the vessels, are beginning to be analyzed and identified, revealing an array of substances that were once present, including beer. Recent studies have brought to

**29.** Small *urpu* (jar). Inca; Peru, 15th–early 16th century. Ceramic and slip, H. 8 5⁄8 in. (21.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1961 (1978.412.68)

**30.** Double bowl (side and top). Inca; Peru, 15th–early 16th century. Ceramic and slip, H. 3 5⁄8 in. (9.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979 (1979.206.1149)

**31.** Corn stalk-shaped vessel. Nasca; South Coast, Peru, 1–600 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 10 ¼ in. (26 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Purchase, Judith S. Randal Foundation Gift, 1989 (1989.62.1)



light various recipes for the beverage in use at the time, including beers with a range of ingredients, such as maize (corn) and molle berries (*Schinus molle*).[21] In the first millennium BCE, maize beer may have been a feature of celebrations at sites such as Cerro Blanco, a major ceremonial center in the Nepeña Valley, but it was not the dominant tipple: beverages made from crops such as manioc were also prevalent.[22] After 500 BCE, however, maize beer, known today as *aqha* or *chicha*, became the most important ceremonial drink in the Andes, and it has remained so in traditional communities.

Vessels that may have held beer often celebrate corn imagery, such as a Nasca vessel that depicts the key components of a corn plant, from the roots to the cobs, without leaves or husks (fig. 31). A pair of Inca ritual vessels known as *pacchas*, created centuries later, combine the shapes of a foot plow, a cob, and an *urpu* into objects that neatly summarize the process of planting, harvesting, and fermenting corn (fig. 32).[23] *Pacchas* functioned as ritual watering devices: liquids would be poured into the top of the jar and would then flow through the foot plow into the earth, symbolically feeding it to ensure continued success in the agricultural cycle.

Beer, essential for the maintenance of social cohesion, was a key component of ritual celebrations on both local and imperial scales. The imagery on ceramic vessels occasionally provides insight into such gatherings. A *paccha* from an earlier period, with a wide body, a flared neck on one side, and a spout on the other, presents a lively scene (fig. 33). Made by a Recuay potter in the Callejón de Huaylas, a valley in the Andean highlands, the vessel depicts seven small figures standing in front of a wall with a painted frieze; they surround a larger figure lying on its stomach. The larger figure, perhaps a *curaca* (lord) or ancestor, wears an elaborate crescent-shaped headdress, usually indicative of high or even supernatural status, and circular ear ornaments. Two individuals approach the large being and present a camelid, held on a lead. Five women flanking the being hold cups, reminding us that the exchange of liquids was at the heart of Andean ritual practice, crucial to the maintenance of social relations among members of a community but also between the community and ancestral power.

## Containers as Bodies

Pots are often conceptually associated with people not only within the field of archaeology, which views ceramics as being diagnostic of specific communities and cultures, but also in the way we speak of clay vessels, such as

**32.** Pair of *pacchas* (ritual vessels). Inca; Peru, 15th–16th century. Ceramic and slip, H. 8 ¼ in. (21 cm); H. 8 9/16 in. (21.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Rogers Fund, 1986 (1986.383.1, .2)

describing bottles as having necks, shoulders, and bodies. In the ancient Andes, this relationship between pots and people was often made explicit, with vessels created as effigies or as models of persons, animals, or plants. Potters also created containers that were sometimes thought either to be embodiments of vital powers or to be inhabited by supernatural beings, blurring the boundaries that separate "things" from beings.

During the seventeenth-century campaigns that sought to eliminate Indigenous religious practices, Spanish colonial authorities described communities in the highlands of the province of Lima venerating small jars (*cantarillos*) as the physical bodies of deified beings and offering them food and drink. A jar known as Coca Mama was dressed in an *anacu* (long tunic), *lliclla* (mantle), belt, collar, and ear ornaments.[24] Another vessel, known as Llanca Anaco, wore a camelid skin and was said to have ceramic "brothers" and "sisters," including one named Coya Huarmi.[25] Other vessels from the same region were described as having faces.[26] The tradition of what archaeologists call "face-neck jars" extends back to at least 500 BCE and continued through the time of the Inca Empire (fig. 34). The capacious bodies of these vessels, surmounted by detailed heads through which liquids would presumably flow, provide rich potential for interpretation, as community members were believed to partake of the bodies, and perhaps the life forces, of leaders and maybe even vanquished enemies through their ritual use, as seen in one example fashioned as a prisoner stripped of his loincloth and restrained by a rope around the neck (fig. 35).

Vessels were also made in the shape of heads. Nasca jars boast elaborate headdresses, and the faces were painted with wide-open eyes, eyebrows, and occasionally

**33.** Vessel with ritual scene (front and back). Recuay; Ancash, Peru, 200–700 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 8 ¼ in. (21 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1966 (1978.412.153)

**34.** Vessel with face-neck. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 200–800 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 12 1/8 in. (30.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum Accession (X.2.222)

**35.** Prisoner jar. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 200–800 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 10 ¾ in. (27.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Judith Riklis, 1983 (1983.546.6)

mustaches and beards (fig. 36). Made near the site of Cahuachi, the most important ceremonial center of the South Coast in the first centuries CE, such containers were used in the large feasts that brought together hundreds of people from communities both near and far.[27] Those who attended these gatherings returned home with vessels as testaments to their connection with powerful places and as bearers of religious meaning. As noted above, finely painted Nasca serving vessels have been found in the refuse of households from all levels of society, but head jars have been found only in the most affluent homes.[28] Nasca head jars were also placed in the tombs of high-status individuals whose heads or whole bodies were removed, suggesting they could serve as symbolic stand-ins for missing bodies or body parts.[29]

For a few centuries in the middle of the first millennium CE, Moche artists excelled at creating "portrait vessels," so called because their striking naturalism seems to reflect an attempt to evoke specific individuals (fig. 37). Using molds, Moche potters made multiple versions of the same head, but with variations in details such as the ear ornaments.[30] In some cases, it is possible to recognize what appears to be the same

**36.** Head jars. Nasca; South Coast, Peru, 100–500 CE. Ceramic and slip. Left: H. 7 13⁄16 in. (19.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1961 (1978.412.61). Right: H. 8 in. (20.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Davis Neal, 1970 (1970.245.1)

**37.** Bottles with portrait heads. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 500–800 CE. Ceramic and slip. Left: H. 11 in. (27.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Cummings, 1964 (64.228.22). Right: H. 10 3/8 in. (26.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 1882 (82.1.28)

person represented across multiple vessels, tracing their growth from youth to middle age.[31] All portrait vessels that have been found through scientific excavation have been recovered from high-status burials, where they were part of larger assemblages with other vessels. There is no evidence to suggest that the portraits represent the entombed individuals, as portraits of men have been found with women, and portraits of the same individual have been found in multiple tombs. These vessels may, however, have had extended lives before their respective burials. Evidence of wear on the portrait vessels, for example, as well as sherds of them in trash heaps, suggest that they were used in life before being deposited in tombs. Scenes on two fineline works depict them in ceremonial settings, including one where we see a dignitary, shown seated atop a platform beneath a roof ornamented with war clubs, facing a portrait head vessel (fig. 38).

**38.** Vessel with ritual scene. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 500–800 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 11⅜ in. (29 cm). Museo Larco, Lima, Peru (ML013653)

**39.** Bottle with fox head. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 500–800 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 12 ½ in. (31.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Nathan Cummings, 1963 (63.226.6)

Whom do the portrait vessels represent? It is tempting to see them as depictions of heroic leaders or victorious warriors, possibly communal ancestors.[32] The idea of a head as a vessel may be less celebratory than punitive, however, as colonial accounts of Inca warfare describe the tradition of converting the skulls of enemies into drinking vessels. Furthermore, the similarity of the stirrup-spout form to a rope through a skull—the traditional method by which heads taken in battle were transported—casts a shadow over any explanation of the imagery as heroic, as disembodied heads are often depicted in the hands of triumphant warriors and fearsome supernatural figures.[33] Yet a bottle in the shape of a fox head with a warrior's headdress complicates this reading, reminding us that these vessels often defy precise interpretation (fig. 39).

Moche potters were keen observers of the natural world, and many of their vessels, particularly those from earlier periods, reveal careful attention to the details of human and animal physiognomy. But it would be a mistake to see these as straightforward genre depictions. As

**40.** Stirrup-spout bottle with manioc form. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 600–800 CE. Ceramic and slip, H. 12 ½ in. (31.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Cummings, 1964 (64.228.57)

art historian Lisa Trever has noted, Moche subjects often resist Linnaean classification because the depicted object could be at once animal, vegetable, and mineral.[34] One unusual example presents an unexpected combination of a fanged human head emerging from a potato body (fig. 40). The tail and limbs are shaped like the roots of manioc, another important vegetable in the ancient Andes, while the limbs are positioned to evoke the movement of an insect or a crustacean. By manipulating clay and pigments, water and fire, this artist created a being that is simultaneously potato, manioc, and human—a restless, dangerous root vegetable.

Other vessels, perhaps likewise inspired by the capricious shapes of tubers, are amorphous, provoking perceptual uncertainty. One such example—a swirling mash-up of recognizable features, including a grimacing mouth with fangs, nostrils, eyes, and legs, but also fins and a beak—is at once a complex composite of a wrinkled human face, an owl, seals or fish, and a crustacean (fig. 41). The composition blurs the boundaries between

**41.** Tuber-inspired stirrup-spout bottle. Moche; North Coast, Peru, 500–800 CE. Ceramic, H. 9 ¼ in. (23.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Cummings, 1964 (64.228.26)

**42.** Double-chambered bottle. Colonial; Peru, early 17th century. Ceramic and glaze, H. 5½ in. (14 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum Accession (X.2.292)

species—it is not clear where one figure ends and the other begins—and ultimately confounds easy analysis.

## Afterlives of Antiquities

The Spanish capture of the Inca emperor Atahualpa in Cajamarca in 1532 was the decisive moment in what became a decade-long campaign to establish the new Viceroyalty of Peru, one that saw a devastating loss of Native American life through newly introduced diseases against which the Indigenous population had no resistance. Parallel to the military invasion, a spiritual conquest was mounted to destroy any vestiges of Indigenous religious practices, resulting in incalculable numbers of objects being rooted out and destroyed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As ancient sites were plundered in the search for gold and silver, the ceramic vessels found in the course of ransacking them were tossed aside by the Spanish, who considered the material of no value and the forms of little interest.

Despite these prevailing forces, in many communities aspects of traditional life continued, albeit in new ways. In the first century or so following the Conquest, Peruvian potters began to incorporate European technologies and motifs in their ceramics. An early colonial double-spout-and-bridge vessel, for example, retains an ancient bottle shape, but its glossy surface was achieved with a glaze, a mixture containing silica and metal oxides and other materials that creates a hard, glassy surface after being fired at very high temperatures (fig. 42). The double body may represent two lucumas (*Pouteria lucuma*), a fruit native to Andean valleys. The small bird on one spout contains a whistling mechanism, continuing a tradition established some 2,500 years earlier.

By the late eighteenth century, ceramics that once had been tossed aside became part of a new interest in antiquity manifest in both Europe and the Americas. Baltasar Jaime Martínez Compañón, a Basque cleric appointed to a bishopric in Peru by Charles III of Spain, worked with a team of artists to document both the present and the past of the province of Trujillo in the 1780s. Inspired by the king's sponsorship of excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii, the bishop set out to discover his own American antiquity, documenting the finds in a volume of watercolors, one of nine devoted to life in the province.[35] Some of the antiquities illustrated in those works survive to the present day in the collections of the Museo de América, Madrid.

Antiquities continued to be unearthed in the nineteenth century both intentionally, for the creation of local collections as well as for the expanding market for antiquities abroad, and unintentionally, as sites were uncovered through the expansion of agricultural fields or as a result of modernizing interventions, such as the construction of railroads.[36] The collections assembled in the second half of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth were truly staggering in size: José Mariano Macedo (1823–1894), a Peruvian doctor, amassed a collection of some 2,000 works, which he eventually sold to Berlin's Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde (Royal Museum of Ethnology, today's Ethnologisches Museum of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin).[37] The same museum acquired the Wilhelm Gretzer collection, totaling some 44,000 works, in 1907.[38] Peru's own national museum was established in Lima in 1822, and a later, private museum, the Museo Larco, assembled some 45,000 works by the middle of the twentieth century.

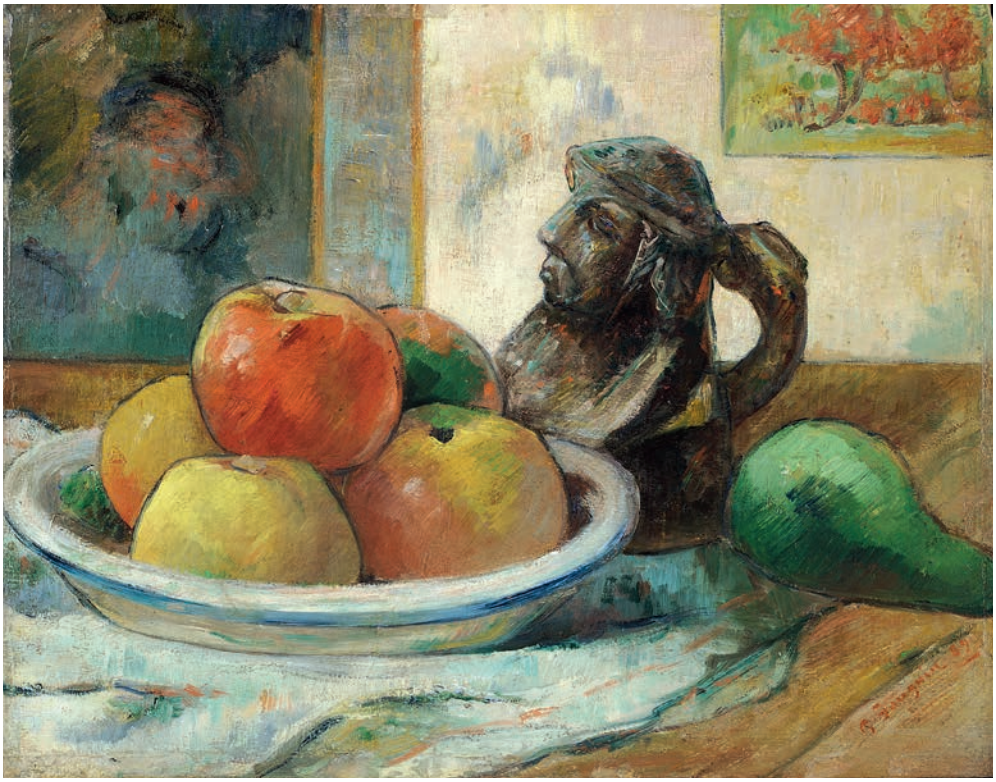
The Met began acquiring ancient Peruvian ceramics in the late nineteenth century, but on a much smaller scale. One of the earliest acquisitions still in the Museum was purchased from the Honorable Richard Gibbs, U.S. envoy to Peru, with funds provided by Henry Gurdon Marquand (1819–1902), a financier, collector, Trustee of The Met, and, eventually, the institution's second president (see fig. 23). The Museum's interest in ancient American art waxed

**43.** Pitcher. British, ca. 1880. Designed by Christopher Dresser (British, 1834–1904). Linthorpe Pottery Works (1879–89). Glazed earthenware, H. 4 15/16 in. (12.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Florence and Herbert Irving, 2016 (2016.178.7)

and waned over the course of its history, and by 1914, having decided that such objects were not appropriate for an art museum, The Met had largely stopped collecting American antiquities.[39] In time the Museum came to regret this decision, and by the 1960s it had resumed collection activities in this area. One of the first exhibitions of ancient American art after this resumption of interest at The Met was devoted to Peruvian ceramics from the collection of Nathan Cummings (1896–1985). A collector of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European painting and sculpture as well as Peruvian pots, Cummings purchased two South American collections formed in the early twentieth century: one from the Wasserman family of Buenos Aires, and the other from the Gaffron family, whose patriarch practiced medicine in Lima and received pots as payments for medical services. Cummings eventually gave half his collection to the Art Institute of Chicago and the other half to The Met, where it was featured in an exhibition in 1964. The Met's collection has continued to grow since that time, primarily with the watershed gifts of Nelson A. Rockefeller (1908–1979), which established a new home for the display of ancient Peruvian ceramics (and other traditions) in 1982.[40]

Scientific archaeology developed alongside the formation of museum collections in the nineteenth century, as scholars and amateurs alike sought to understand the history of the Americas before the arrival of Europeans. Lavish folios and more accessibly scaled volumes dedicated to Peruvian antiquities were published in the second half of the nineteenth century, among them Ephraim George Squier's (1821–1888) influential *Peru: Incidents of Travel and Exploration in the Land of the Incas* (1877).[41] Such publications, in tandem with the increased prominence of collections on public display in museums, inspired a number of artists, including the prominent British industrial designer Christopher Dresser, who counted Peruvian ceramics among his many wide-ranging interests. Dresser's small pitcher with a strap handle and spout recalls both the shapes of ancient, South Coast ceramics and the geometric patterning of Inca slip painting (fig. 43).

Expanding museum collections in Europe and Peru, along with the increased circulation of archaeological publications, provided a rich trove of imagery for artists, who could employ the subject matter as a powerful allegory of strength and independence from Europe and the colonial legacy. Paintings such as Francisco Laso's *Inhabitant of the Peruvian Cordilleras* (1855) incorporated a representation of a Moche ceramic vessel—a prisoner vessel—as a pivot around which the artist explored com-



**44.** Paul Gauguin (French, 1848–1903). *Still Life with Apples, a Pear, and a Ceramic Portrait Jug*, 1889. Oil on paper mounted on panel, 11 1/4 × 14 1/4 in. (28.6 × 36.2 cm). Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Cambridge; Gift of Walter E. Sachs, 1958 (1958.292)

plex ideas about ancient history, the subjugation of Indian populations, and Peruvian national identity (see inside front cover).[42]

Within what we think of as the European avant-garde, the French artist Paul Gauguin explored issues of personal identity in a number of ceramic works and paintings. Born in Paris, Gauguin spent part of his childhood in Peru, where his mother, Alina María Chazal, had family.[43] Chazal was an admirer and collector of ancient Peruvian ceramics, which were considered "barbaric" by other French colonists. Gauguin, like his mother, prized the power of these works, seeing in them great strength and freedom, and on occasion referred to himself as an "Inca," establishing a dialectic between his constructed identity as a non-European "other"—in this case, meaning a well spring of primal power and creativity rooted in his Peruvian ancestry—and as a Parisian art-world insider.[44] His *Still Life with Apples, a Pear, and a Ceramic Portrait Jug* features what is unmistakably a seated Moche-style vessel, a sentinel, perhaps as a stand-in for Gauguin himself, in homage to the painter Paul Cézanne (fig. 44).[45] Gauguin's assertion of his Inca heritage was further underscored by a ceramic self-portrait of the same year (fig. 45). There is no question but that these references were conscious and intentional.

**45.** Gauguin, *Pot in the Shape of a Head (Self-Portrait)*, 1889. Stoneware, H. 7 11/16 in. (19.5 cm). Designmuseum Danmark, Copenhagen

**46.** Juan Javier Salazar (Peruvian, 1955–2016). *Lembrança dos bandeirantes peruanos*, 2011. Ceramic and glaze, H. 5 ⅛ in. (13 cm). Museo de Arte de Lima, Peru; Gift of the artist (2011.13.1)

Such assertions of outsider status, whether real or imagined, create space for exploration and for a critique of dominant power structures. Peruvian artist Juan Javier Salazar, after studying in Portugal and Lima, positioned himself as apart from the established institutions of the modern nation-state to launch visual commentaries on global economies, climate change, and national identities. Salazar's artistic practice drew on elements of Peruvian history to address contemporary themes and issues such as economic inequality and resource overexploitation. His small, feline-shaped double-spout-and-bridge "bottle," *Lembrança dos bandeirantes peruanos* (2011), complete with tiny paws sketched on the underside, can be seen from above mimicking the shape of the modern country of Peru (fig. 46). The title, translated as "Souvenir of Peruvian Bandeirantes," references the Portuguese word for flag and, by extension, a detached military unit or raiding party; in contemporary parlance, it can also mean fortune hunters. Salazar likened artists to *curanderos*—the traditional healers—in the belief that the objects they create can transfer energy and meaning.[46] In a performance work in Lima in 2002, the artist distributed plush toys in the shape of Peru to riders of the city's buses, with the idea of giving people the chance to metaphorically claim ownership of their country. Both historical and geographical in context, *Lembrança dos bandeirantes peruanos* and the plush toys subtly critique the history of exploitation of Peru's natural resources but also the art market, contributing to a broader strand of the artist's oeuvre in which he seeks a formal means of giving back to Peruvians the possibility of holding their country in their own hands.[47]

## Notes

1. This healing *mesa* was described in Donald Joralemon and Douglas Sharon, *Sorcery and Shamanism: Curanderos and Clients in Northern Peru* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), pp. 111–22. On *mesas*, see Douglas Sharon, "Andean Mesas and Cosmologies," *Ethnobotany Research and Applications* 21 (2021), pp. 1–41, https://ethnobotanyjournal.org/index.php/era/article/view/2623. On *huacas*, see Tamara L. Bray, "An Archaeological Perspective on the Andean Concept of *Camaquen*: Thinking through Late Pre-Columbian *Ofrendas* and *Huacas*," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 19, no. 3 (October 2009), pp. 357–66.
2. Débora L. Soares, "Working with *Huacos*: Archaeological Ceramics and Relationships among Worlds in the Peruvian North Coast," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 21, no. 3 (2021), pp. 364–65.
3. Jean-François Millaire, "The Manipulation of Human Remains in Moche Society: Delayed Burials, Grave Reopening, and Secondary Offerings of Human Bones on the Peruvian North Coast," *Latin American Antiquity* 15, no. 4 (December 2004), pp. 371–88.
4. On the relationship between *curandero*s and looters, see Soares, "Working with *Huacos*," pp. 365–68.
5. Prudence M. Rice describes clays as "a fine-grained earthy material that becomes plastic or malleable when moistened" and as a result of the natural degradation of rock-forming minerals in the environment; Prudence M. Rice, *Pottery Analysis: A Sourcebook* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 36. The exact composition of a particular clay varies according to regional geology, with traditional potters mostly recognizing them in the landscape owing to their varying plasticity.
6. Kevin J. Vaughn, "Craft and the Materialization of Chiefly Power in Nasca," in *Foundations of Power in the Prehispanic Andes*, edited by Kevin J. Vaughn, Dennis Ogburn, and Christina A. Conlee, Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association 14 (Arlington, Va.: American Anthropological Association, 2005), pp. 113–30.
7. Christina A. Conlee, "Decapitation and Rebirth: A Headless Burial from Nasca, Peru," *Current Anthropology* 48, no. 3 (June 2007), pp. 441–42.
8. Moisés Tufinio et al., "Excavaciones en la Sección 4 de Huaca del Sol," in *Proyecto Arqueológico Huaca de la Luna: Informe técnico 2013*, edited by S[antiago] Uceda and R[icardo] Morales (Trujillo: Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, 2014), p. 116. See also Carlos Wester La Torre, *Chornancap: Palacio de una gobernante y sacerdotisa de la cultura Lambayeque* (Chiclayo: Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2016), p. 282, for a repaired Moche vessel, created around the seventh century CE, found in a Lambayeque burial from several centuries later (1100–1350).
9. The Cupisnique and Chavín styles are related to Chavín de Huántar, a religious complex in the highlands. Excavations there have revealed extensive remains from feasts dating to the first millennium BCE, including in the Galería de las Ofrendas at Chavín de Huántar, where hundreds of finely made bottles and bowls of different styles were found together with food remains. Similar finds have been reported from coastal sites, including Cerro Blanco in the Nepeña Valley.
10. Hugo Ikehara and Koichiro Shibata, "Festines e integración social en el Periodo Formativo: Nuevas evidencias de Cerro Blanco, valle bajo de Nepeña," *Boletín de Arqueología PUCP*, no. 9 (2005), pp. 123–59.
11. It is worth noting that the blue colorants on some Paracas vessels contain indigo, a plant-based pigment, known also to have been used as a dye in Paracas textiles. See Dawn Kriss et al., "A Material and Technical Study of Paracas Painted Ceramics," *Antiquity* 92, no. 366 (December 2018), pp. 1492–510, and esp. pp. 1505–7 on indigo.
12. Santiago Uceda and José Armas, "Los talleres alfareros en el centro urbano moche," in *Investigaciones en la Huaca de la Luna, 1995*, edited by S[antiago] Uceda, E[lías] Mujica, and R[icardo] Morales (Trujillo: Universidad Nacional de La Libertad, 1995), pp. 93–104; Glenn S. Russell and Margaret A. Jackson, "Political Economy and Patronage at Cerro Mayal, Peru," in *Moche Art and Archaeology in Ancient Peru*, edited by Joanne Pillsbury, Studies in the History of Art 63, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers 40 (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2001), pp. 158–75.
13. A detailed explanation of the construction technique can be found in Christopher B. Donnan and Donna McClelland, *Moche Fineline Painting: Its Evolution and Its Artists* (Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 1999), pp. 28–31, 44–45.
14. Ibid., pp. 13–23.
15. Michele L. Koons, "External versus Internal: An Examination of Moche Politics through Similarities and Differences in Ceramic Style," in *Ceramic Analysis in the Andes*, edited by I[sabelle C.] Druc (Blue Mounds, Wis.: Deep University Press, 2015), pp. 57–82.
16. Donnan and McClelland, *Moche Fineline Painting*, pp. 186–89.
17. On Wrinkle Face, see ibid., pp. 64–66. On Moche art and mythology, see Krzysztof Makowski, "Las divinidades en la iconografía mochica," in *Los dioses del antiguo Perú*, edited by Krzysztof Makowski, 2 vols. (Lima: Banco de Crédito del Perú, 2000), vol. 1, pp. 137–75; Jürgen Golte, *Moche, cosmología y sociedad: Una interpretación iconográfica* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos; Cuzco: Centro Bartolomé de Las Casas, 2009).
18. Douglas Sharon and Christopher B. Donnan, "Shamanism in Moche Iconography," in *Ethnoarchaeology: Monograph IV—Archaeological Survey*, edited by Christopher B. Donnan and C. William Clewlow Jr. (Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 1974), pp. 50–79.
19. Cathy Lynne Costin, "Techno-aesthetic Ceramic Traditions and the Effective Communication of Power on the North Coast of Peru," *World Archaeology* 53, no. 5 (December 2021), pp. 881–902; Izumi Shimada, "Sicán Metallurgy and Its Cross-craft Relationships," *Boletín Museo del Oro*, no. 41 (1996), pp. 27–61.
20. On Inca pottery and rank, see Craig Morris, "Enclosures of Power: The Multiple Spaces of Inca Administrative Palaces," in *Palaces of the Ancient New World: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, 10th and 11th October 1998*, edited by Susan Toby Evans and Joanne Pillsbury (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2004), pp. 308–10.
21. Chemical analysis of Wari beakers from Cerro Baúl (600–1000 CE) indicates that settlers were consuming beer made from molle berries. See Patrick Ryan Williams et al., "Archaeometric Approaches to Defining Sustainable Governance: Wari Brewing Traditions and the Building of Political Relationships in Ancient Peru," *Sustainability* 11, no. 8 (2019), p. 2333.
22. Hugo C. Ikehara, J. Fiorella Paipay, and Koichiro Shibata, "Feasting with *Zea Mays* in the Middle and Late Formative North Coast of Peru," *Latin American Antiquity* 24, no. 2 (June 2013), pp. 217–31.
23. Rebecca Stone-Miller, "Mimesis as Participation: Imagery, Style, and Function of the Michael C. Carlos Museum *Paccha*, an Inka Ritual Watering Device," in *Kay Pacha: Cultivating Earth and Water in the Andes*, edited by Penelope Dransart, BAR International Series 1478 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006), pp. 215–24.
24. The jar known as Coca Mama was venerated in the town of San Gerónimo de Copa, Cajatambo. See Mario Polia Meconi, *La cosmovisión religiosa andina en los documentos inéditos del Archivo Romano de la Compañía de Jesús, 1581–1752* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Fondo Editorial, 1999), p. 174.
25. Ibid., p. 179. It was not uncommon that Andean deities, at least during the sixteenth century, were related using kinship terminology.
26. Ibid., p. 537: "en cuya prinçipal fuente tenia de varro antiguo forma de un rostro de Demonio."
27. Vaughn, "Craft and the Materialization of Chiefly Power," pp. 119–20.
28. Kevin J. Vaughn, "Households, Crafts, and Feasting in the Ancient Andes: The Village Context of Early Nasca Craft Consumption," *Latin American Antiquity* 15, no. 1 (March 2004), pp. 61–88.

29. Lisa DeLeonardis, "The Body Context: Interpreting Early Nasca Decapitated Burials," *Latin American Antiquity* 11, no. 4 (December 2000), pp. 363–86; Conlee, "Decapitation and Rebirth," pp. 438–45.
30. For instance, the portrait head in The Met collection (82.1.28) can be compared with a similar one in the Museo Central-BCRP, Lima (ACE-0906), or another in the Museo Larco, Lima (ML013550).
31. Christopher B. Donnan, *Moche Portraits from Ancient Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), pp. 141–59.
32. Mary Weismantel, "Many Heads Are Better than One: Mortuary Practice and Ceramic Art in Moche Society," in *Living with the Dead in the Andes*, edited by Izumi Shimada and James L. Fitzsimmons (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), pp. 76–100.
33. Joanne Pillsbury, "Moche Portrait Vessels," in Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000– ), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mphv/hd_mphv.htm (accessed September 2021). Severed heads with ropes through the crania are sometimes referred to as "trophy heads."
34. Lisa Trever, "A Moche Riddle in Clay: Object Knowledge and Art Work in Ancient Peru," *The Art Bulletin* 101, no. 4 (December 2019), pp. 18–38.
35. Joanne Pillsbury and Lisa Trever, "The King, the Bishop, and the Creation of an American Antiquity," *Ñawpa Pacha* 29 (2008), pp. 191–219; Lisa Trever and Joanne Pillsbury, "Martínez Compañón and His Illustrated 'Museum,'" in *Collecting across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World*, edited by Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 236–53, 325–32, pls. 9–10.
36. The earliest works of Peruvian ceramics to enter The Met (but later deaccessioned) were acquired by Walton W. Evans, who worked on the Arica-to-Tacna railroad in southern Peru.
37. Stefanie Gänger, *Relics of the Past: The Collecting and Study of Pre-Columbian Antiquities in Peru and Chile, 1837–1911* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 101–59. See also Joanne Pillsbury, "Finding the Ancient in the Andes: Archaeology and Geology, 1850–1890," in *Nature and Antiquities: The Making of Archaeology in the Americas*, edited by Philip L. Kohl, Irina Podgorny, and Stefanie Gänger (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), pp. 47–68.
38. Beatrix Hoffmann, "Wilhelm Gretzer and His Collection of Peruvian Antiquities at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin," in *PreColumbian Textiles in the Ethnological Museum in Berlin*, edited by Lena Bjerregaard and Torben Huss (Lincoln, Neb.: Zea Books, 2017), pp. 8–14.
39. Joanne Pillsbury, "Aztecs in the Empire City: 'The People without History' in The Met," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 56 (2021), pp. 12–31.
40. The Museum generally does not acquire an antiquity unless provenance research substantiates that the work was outside its country of probable modern discovery before 1970 or was legally exported from its probable country of modern discovery after 1970. For more on The Met's policies, see The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Collections Management Policy*, September 13, 2022, https://www.metmuseum.org/-/media/files/about-the-met/policies-and-documents/collections-management-policy/Collections-Management-Policy.pdf.
41. Joanne Pillsbury, ed., *Past Presented: Archaeological Illustration and the Ancient Americas*, Dumbarton Oaks Pre-Columbian Symposia & Colloquia (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2012).
42. Natalia Majluf, "'Ce n'est pas le Pérou,' or, the Failure of Authenticity: Marginal Cosmopolitans at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855," *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 4 (Summer 1997), pp. 875–89; Natalia Majluf, *Inventing Indigenism: Francisco Laso's Image of Modern Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021).
43. Gauguin's maternal grandmother was the French-Peruvian socialist writer Flora Tristan.
44. Paul Gauguin, Le Pouldu, to Theo van Gogh, November 20 or 21, 1889, in *Gauguin by Himself*, edited by Belinda Thomson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), p. 111. See also Theo van Gogh to Vincent van Gogh, December 22, 1889, in Belinda Thomson, "Paul Gauguin: Navigating the Myth," in *Gauguin: Maker of Myth*, by Belinda Thomson et al., exh. cat. (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), pp. 12, 229n8.
45. Dario Gamboni, "Animation and Personhood: Gauguin's Still Lifes as Portraits," in *Gauguin: Portraits*, by Cornelia Homburg et al., exh. cat. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada; London: National Gallery, 2019), pp. 197–225, esp. p. 202.
46. For an interview with the artist discussing these themes, see Rodrigo Quijano, "Juan Javier Salazar: La realidad entera está en llamas," *Artishock: Revista de arte contemporáneo* (January 20, 2018), https://artishockrevista.com/2018/01/20/juan-javier-salazar/.
47. Emilio Tarazona, "Droughts, Precipitation, Overflows . . . : Aspects of the Work of Juan Javier Salazar Seen Vis-à-Vis Climate Change and Socioeconomic Change in Contemporary Peru," in *Sur, sur, sur, sur/South, South, South, South: Séptimo Simposio Internacional de Teoría y Arte Contemporáneo*, edited by Cuauhtémoc Medina, SITAC 7 (Mexico City: Patronato de Arte Contemporáneo, 2010), pp. 128–47. See also Salazar's action *Perú Express* (2002), for which he distributed stuffed toys in the shape of the country to riders on city buses on July 28, Peru's annual independence day; "Juan Javier Salazar (1955–2016) *Perú Express*: El intento final de un artista por entender al Perú," La Mula TV (November 1, 2016), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtBPoGuHxIg.