

Vessel Description

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Overview

The object is a round vessel, glazed in a natural medium-gray color that comes across as almost bluish under fluorescent lights. The form is a figurative bird. The size is modest without being miniature – a household object. The coloration is also understated – this object reveals its elegance and quality to the keen observer. The details on it are picked out in a darker color, from almost brown at the base to dark gray on the body. The effect is naturalistic and aged, like a sepia photograph or weathered river rocks.

The body is almost spherical and sized to fit easily in the palm, like a handball. It tapers at the bottom into a short, flat base, around half the width of the widest point. There's a narrower, funnel-shaped opening at the top of the form. The funnel flares outward at the top like the smokestack on a steam engine, about half the height of the body but much more slender. The other opening is a spout, representing the bird's head, extending at an angle from the upper section of the vessel. If the smokestack is at midnight, the spout strikes 2 o'clock.

Base

The base is, perhaps, the simplest aspect of the form. As noted above, it is a round, roughly straight-sided cylinder into which the spherical body connects (resting like an orb in a pedestal). The design here features bold parallel lines running horizontally around the circular base, which continue up the first quarter of the spherical body.

Body

The body of the vessel is pleasantly round. It is covered in figurative detail: teardrop shaped wings sketched out on either side, calligraphic curlicue feathers extending along the bird's back and up its neck, elegant lines demarcating breast and wing from back, a set of striking brushstrokes curving from under the wings toward the tail.

The bird's wings are tucked against its body, with individual feathers gracefully traced out and some light cross-hatching at the joint where the wing meets the body. There's a delicate protrusion in the form itself at the wingtips – they extend just slightly above the otherwise rounded body, offering some grip in the hand.

At the very top of the body, the parallel lines from the base return. This time, as the spherical form narrows at its pole, they manifest as concentric circles of varying thickness and luminosity, increasingly dense – the rings of Saturn running around the funneled opening.

Protruding features

The pouring spout transitions smoothly from the bird's neck, covered in feathers, to its head. There's a sculpted aspect to the head itself, with features shaped in clay and outlined in the darker pigment – prominent, expressive eyes, a scalloped crest, some gentle ruffled feathers near the bird's throat. The bill is rounded, hooting, and contoured with straight brushstrokes along its length.

Finally, the bird's tail protrudes from the body, roughly opposite the head. It's proudly lifted, wavy like a pennant in the wind or a drawing of a flame. Decorative lines sketch out its contours.

Impressions

What a mysterious, charming little form! It's fanciful, even slightly magical – like an illustration of a mythical roc in ancient folklore. The painted design shows dramatic range from bold brushstrokes to slender calligraphic fillips. The bird's personality and sense of purpose come through in its graceful wings, the noble arc of its neck, the prideful lift of its tail. It bears its purpose with dignity but without solemnity. It endears and enchants. I like it very much.

The simple base allows for your imagination to fill in the unstated. Is the bird floating, perhaps, the lower third of its body concealed by the waterline? You could set it adrift, let it waft proudly away with the current, off on its own adventure.