

Taíno

Pre-Columbian Art and Culture from the Caribbean



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THE Taíno: An Introduction to the Art of the Ancient Caribbean

The Taíno culture, located in the Greater Antilles, was a highly social society, and created some of the world's most intriguing artifacts - celebrated for their exceptional craftsmanship, intricate detail, and evocative mythology. Even today, the popularity of the Buena Vista Social Club expresses a long tradition of singing and music, which has its origins going back to the Taíno culture from the ancient Caribbean. This collection contains 174 museum-quality works of art which were assembled over a 30-year period, providing a comprehensive survey of Taíno artifacts that suggests highly social tribal communities. The collection encompasses two time periods: the early Sub-Courian Period, c. 2500 BC – AD 400, and the Classic Taíno Period, c. AD 1000 – 1450. This collection would be almost impossible to re-create. This collection would be almost impossible to re-create today.

This first section of the catalog showcases selected full-color plates from this Taíno collection, followed by an illustrated essay, bibliography, and lastly, an illustrated catalog of the complete collection of museum-quality 174 individual objects, crafted in bone, ceramic, shell, stone, and wood. The objects are on par with the quality of the collections at the American Museum of Natural History, The Michael Rockefeller Wing of the Metropolitan Museum, and the Smithsonian Institution, which houses the oldest US Taíno collection - dating back to the late 1800s. The 174 objects in the catalog at the end of book are organized by type, and include stone idols, blades, celts, mortars and pestles, personal amulets, jewelry, and lapidary tools.

Many of the objects in the collection are made of stone. Taíno stone sculptors had a versatile range of stylistic skill sets and they created beautiful stone works, combining realism as well as abstraction. For the Taíno, choice of stone and color was intentional. Bright white stones like quartz represented the sky, cosmos, and infinity, and black stones, such as diorite, were associated with the night and visiting spirits. Green stone represented the sea, which was viewed as a portal into the otherworld. Individual stone idols and amulets were used as microcosmic devices to open a portal of access to larger forces of nature. Taíno stone and shell miniatures are particularly interesting because of how finely they were carved, which required great technical skill. Many of the stone works in the collection doubled as both utilitarian tools and sacred objects: elaborately carved blades and celts, mortars and pestles decorated with sacred animal deities, and intricately carved amulets representing a pantheon of animist deities.

The Taíno animist cosmological system placed an emphasis on interconnectivity with the spirit world. The mortars and pestles featured in the collection were used to grind food as well as to prepare powerful psychoactive compounds. Psychedelic rituals were conducted as a means of connecting with ancestors and deities. Tribal leaders purged their stomachs with ritual *vomitivos* - elaborately carved vomit sticks - prior to ingesting psychoactive brews made from plants in the region. During healing rituals, tribal leaders would guide participants to swallow small stone amulets, which were believed to ward off evil spirits. These small stone amulets, carved to represent a variety of stylized anthropomorphic animal deities, were also kept as personal effects. The animal deities in the Taíno pantheon were intended to induce states of psychological connection to a variety of animal archetypes and the spirit world, including dogs, owls, and bats, who were associated with the underworld, frogs, which represented fertility, and marine animals symbolic of reverence for the ocean. In addition to the dynamic sculptural form of the pieces, many of the amulets also possess miniature two-dimensional relief carvings of coded symbols, such as concentric circles. This concentric circle pattern represents the center of the world, the center of a collective of individuals, and the navel of the human body - each perceived by the Taíno as a conduit to the sacred realm.

The collection presented was thoughtfully selected over a 30-year period, for quality, artistic merit, and authenticity. I am proud to present this collection to collectors, academics, and art enthusiasts who are fascinated by the artifacts left behind by the Taíno and their ancestors. Prices available upon request.



An early mortar in the shape of a stylized turtle. Width: 16 in.



A very early stone handle
ax that fits perfectly in
a human hand.
Height: 9 in.



Three stone figures used in important ceremonies: a boundary marker, a ceremonial celt, and a Macorix head.



A *vomitivo*, carved from a manatee rib (right), used to induce vomiting prior to consuming entheogens, and a *zemi* (three-pointer stone) of an ancestral dog head (left). Heights vary from 7 in. to 15 in.





17 amulets, crafted from a variety of different materials, representing a range of animist deities, including monkey and crouching dog deities.



Eleven early flint blades, used for skinning animals and as points for weapons, such as lances and spears.



Six slender tools crafted from stones in a variety of colors, used for fine work.



Five petaloid stone axes crafted from a variety of stones. The word “petaloid” denotes the petal shape. African cultures independently developed similar stones, referred to in Africa as “lightning stones,” and African slaves brought to the Caribbean recognized the stones and labeled them as such.



A fragment of a dog's head from a large, three-pointer, spotted stone.



A large, carved stone male virility deity with phallus pointing upwards. These figures are extremely rare and only found in caves.
Height: 22 in.
Width: 6 in.



Triangular three-pointer stone with head.





Eight stone pestles depicting a variety of facial expressions.
These were ceremonially broken off from ceramic vessels that were “killed” in effigy.
Average height: 4.5 in.



Three mortars and pestles used for preparing food and entheogens.



Mortar and pestle adorned with stylized animist bird deity, which could represent psychic flight and transcendence. Matching mortar and pestle were discovered together, which is a rare occurrence. Mortar width: 16 in. Pestle height: 6 in.



A necklace of bonefish ribs.



Necklace of shells that have been hand carved and reshaped. Some shells have been shaped into tooth-like structures.





An assortment of carved adornments. The principal object is a carved shell bracelet with incised bird heads in profile facing one another. The group also contains ear lobe ornaments, bird head ornaments carved from shell, and three coral and stone miniature pointers that when turned upside down resemble shark's teeth.



Eight ceramic *adornos* depicting a broad range of expressions. These heads were ceremonially broken off of ceramic vessels that were “killed” in effigy. Average width: 2 in.



Necklace featuring stylized keys used as beads, carved from shell.
These shells are extremely hard, and difficult to carve, requiring skilled expertise and many hours of carving.



Insights into the Taíno - An Illustrated Essay

The history of Caribbean cultures is complex and covers a large geographical area and time period that begins as early as 4,000 BC. In fact, the Caribbean Sea is larger than it appears on Mercator maps and globes. The total distance across the Greater Antilles from Cuba to Puerto Rico is 1,225 miles, which is longer than the distance between New York and Miami (1,090 miles). This is quite an area, inhabited by many islands, which explains why cultural development differed in time and by island, allowing for highly varied artistic styles.

The Taíno emerged as the group of people who inhabited the Greater Antilles, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Haiti, and Puerto Rico, beginning about AD 600. The exact origin of the Taíno is unknown. There is no linear historical course preceding the development of the Taíno culture. However, there were earlier groups that preceded the Taíno from the following periods: the Lithic Period, Casmiriod Period, Ostinoid Period, and Saladoid Period - dating as early as 2,500 BC to AD 600. The Taíno were the result of an ongoing transformation of these earlier cultures, which took place over the course of hundreds of years. The Taíno, a cultural group with common beliefs and customs, eventually emerged during the Ostinoid Period, settling primarily in the Greater Antilles.

Christopher Columbus sought an alternate route to India that would avoid the treacherous route that led through Istanbul. When he landed in Hispanola, the Taíno were first people he met. The Caribbean islands were also inhabited by Caribs, Guanahatabey, and Igneri from Cuba. In his first letters back to Spain, Columbus reports that the Taíno were a peaceful and kind people. On the other hand, Columbus reported the Caribs to be an aggressive and warlike group. The term "Arawak" refers to the other tribes that share the same language structure as the Taíno, which originated in the Orinoco basin of Venezuela.

Colombus had the insight to arrange to include a place for Friar Ramón Pané on his first voyage to the New World in 1492. Friar Ramón Pané was later commissioned by Columbus, c. 1498, to observe and study the Taíno and their religion. Pané's writings tell us more than any other source about Taíno culture, and his works were the first anthropological writing describing the cultures of the Americas. Spaniards were appalled by the Taíno religion and are said to have burned hundreds of Taíno artifacts, believing them to have represented the devil. Few artifacts were carried back to Spain, and as a result, the Taíno culture is not well represented in Spanish museums. Among the earliest recorded Taíno artifacts are the shell necklaces in the German Museum of Ulm, which were brought to Germany by a slave trader in the 17th century. (Pané, 1489).

The Taínos were divided into 3 groups: Classic Taíno, Eastern Taíno and Western Taíno. The Eastern and Western Taíno were fringe groups with a less developed culture living on the outskirts of the main islands. The Classic Taíno, who emerged around AD 600, were the most developed Caribbean culture and had stable agriculture, hereditary chiefs, and a large pantheon of deities and myths, with corresponding art as an expression of their beliefs. These art objects range from elaborate carved wooden and stone statues to miniature carved sculptures and amulets. Amulets were made in a diversity of materials, including bone, shell, and hard stones. The Taíno also produced low fired ceramics as containers for foodstuffs.

The Taíno culture quickly disappeared within one generation after the arrival of Columbus and subsequent European colonization. This was mainly due to the deathly effects of smallpox, a highly contagious disease which the Taíno had never encountered. The second contributing factor to the decline of the Taíno culture was the European plantation owners, who enslaved the indigenous population to harvest sugar cane and tobacco. These products were then imported back to Europe to satisfy the Europeans' great appetite for sugar, tobacco snuff, and cigars. The eradication of the Taíno culture is considered the first genocide known since the Europeans discovered the Americas.

Against the Grain

In *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States*, James C. Scott, a professor of political science at Yale, explores how the manipulation of fire and slash and burn agriculture led to the formation of states and city states. Scott writes that early hunter gatherers were egalitarian, hunting only for what they needed and distributing their goods equally. The invention of slash-and-burn agriculture increased the square footage of arable land, which allowed for planting crops of grain such as corn, which were high yield, flavorful, and easy to consume as well as store, resulting in surpluses. Growing grains led to seasonal predictability, easy storage, and the ability to be accounted for - and thus taxed - ultimately leading to a **hierarchical** social structure and the formation of states and countries. (Scott, 2017).

Our lives deeply are shaped by this trend, whereas the Taíno natural environment was resistant to grain agriculture and thus taxation. The Taíno were mainly hunter-gatherers, relying on small mammals, fish, tubers, and tropical fruits in the environment to provide nourishment. The Taíno did farm tubers, such as cassava and sweet potato (their principal root crops), and would occasionally farm small crops of beans, corn, peppers, peanuts, and tobacco. However, tubers, the Taíno's primary source of nourishment, have migratory growth patterns. Rather than using conventional agricultural techniques such as slash-and-burn, the Taíno would create mounds of earth, known as *conucos*, to facilitate the growth of cassava and other root crops in the soft alluvial soil. These mounds were approximately three feet high and nine feet in circumference, arranged in regular rows to prevent erosion, improve drainage, and preserve mature cassava and sweet potatoes below ground. Fully grown cassava and sweet potatoes would last in the *conucos* for up to 6-9 months before spoiling. (Rouse, 1992, p. 12)

Once the cassava roots exhausted the minerals and water in the soil in one area, the roots would migrate, and the Taíno would build new *conucos* in another area. The migratory nature of cassava crops conditions created a loosely structured system of semi-migratory tribal groups, rather than a top-down hierarchical civilization controlled by a king or government through taxation.

Taíno Tribal Systems and Social Structures

The Taíno had a system of leadership and social hierarchy, including chieftains, shamans, and artisan classes. The abundance of plant and animal life in the region, including rich marine and animal food sources as well as naturally growing tropical fruits and tubers, allowed the Taíno the leisure time in which to develop their own unique culture, art, cosmology, and medicine.

During the Saladoid Period, the centers of some of the villages were made into cemeteries where ancestors were buried. Toward the end of the Saladoid Period, *caciques* (tribal leaders) had become the center of the culture, with their households located at the center of each community. The power of each tribe was based on their cacique's wealth. Caciques pursued corporate strategies and formed relationships with neighboring groups as a part of the polity. Wars were fought among the territories, and marriages arranged to solidify alliances. Leaders, including the caciques, were punished for intransigence or departing from cultural or hierarchical norms.

Caciques oversaw a system of local leaders known as *matunheri*, who were the sub-chiefs of the major villages. The individuals who took on these roles went through different forms of training, and ceremonies were held depending on age, rank, and gender. Revered leaders were believed by their tribes to live beyond death, and ancestors' bones were preserved in shrines as a form of reverence.

Taíno societies had specialized craftsmen who were assigned to become specialist artists and trained in a particular craft. After marriage, most Taíno would be trained in a trade that was common to their tribe, and trades tended to stay specific to each tribe. Husbands would accumulate amulets and use these amulets to pay his wife's tribe, after which, his wife could join his tribe. High-status males were polygamous and able to take on as many wives as they could support.

Taíno women had social standing and wealth. Women's roles in Taíno society were considerably varied, and social and political positions as leaders and artisans were open to them depending upon their social standing. Women also had significant roles in trade negotiations and were present on many occasions as gift givers. The chroniclers of Taíno history were aware of this status of women. On one occasion, there was a note about the employment of women as carpenters. The position of women is important considering that their inheritance of rank and wealth was matrilineal.



A large stone marker used to delineate a ballcourt.

Life or Death Ballgames

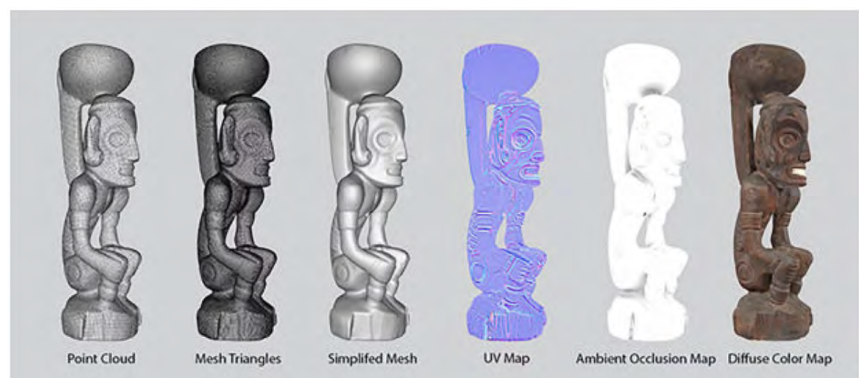
Life-or-death competitive ballgames in which the losing team was sacrificed were practiced throughout the ancient Caribbean. Ballcourts for these games were mainly found on the major islands of the archipelago and fewer on the outer islands of the Caribbean, such as Antigua, Turks and Caicos, and St. Croix. Ballgames were played with an emphasis on bestowing power and status upon the individual chiefs whose players won the game. These ball fields were lined with carved stones, irregular in size, used as ballcourt markers, such as the one seen above. In Puerto Rico, many ancient stone belts were also found, associated with ballgames which were played during festivals (*areítos*). The *yugos* - stone yokes - found at these sites, were complete stone rings - shaped to fit around a human waist. These were worn by ball players to protect themselves during play. The yokes also kept the participants "grounded" or physically stabilized.



Taíno Cosmology

Much information on Taíno religion and myths comes from Father Pane's 1498 report to Christopher Columbus, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*. The Taíno animist cosmology is reflected in their art, with skillful use of symbolism to describe cosmic deities who controlled the forces of nature. The most important myths related to the creation of the sun and moon, which were believed to have emerged from a cave. Many myths and legends surround the *zemis* (ancestor spirits), including the belief that ancestral spirits could influence the weather and control the elements, including earth and water. *Zemi* sculptures were considered sacred, and were portrayed in three basic sculptural forms (1) as human figures with fierce expressions or animal features, (2) as triangular stones with human faces and (3) as abstract triangular stones, used as talismans to influence the forces of creation.

The *zemi* portrayed as a fierce, crouching figure is a recurring theme in Taíno art that appears in a variety of media. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a rare wood *zemi* in their collection, (below at left), a crouching figure with a fierce grimace. This theme that you will see recur in various forms throughout this catalog. Using photogrammetry



software tools, researchers at the Metropolitan Museum of Art were able to map a 3-dimensional image of the structure of the inside of the *zemi* (above). Large stone and wood *zemis* were placed outdoors in public spaces, and small *zemis* were kept as personal effects. The most rare and valuable *zemis* were made of *Lignum vitae* (iron wood), one of the hardest woods known. Spanish priests destroyed many of these *zemis* during colonization. The few that have survived were hidden from the Spanish in caves, and subsequently survived.



Triangular Stone Zemís

According to the archaeologist Jose Arrom the name of the supreme Taíno deity, or *zemi*, is *Yucahu*, the spirit of the cassava root. The cassava, also known as manioc root, was the primary source of sustenance for the Taíno. *Atabey*, the mother of *Yucahu*, was considered the supreme female goddess deity, associated with abundance and fertility. Another important deity is *Opiyelguabiran*, the canine guardian of the dead. This *zemi* (ancestral spirit) was believed to come out of the house at night and enter the forest. In the Taíno myth, the people would seek him and bind him, but he escaped to the forest. Stone carvings and amulets of canine zemís with legs drawn up but whose arms are not bound are the perfect depiction of the dog deity. This posture was intended to reflect control over the world of the dead. The theme of capture and escape is an allegory of death and transmutation.

Large stone 3-pointed zemís depicting deities and ancestor spirits are among the most prized objects from the Greater Antilles. The Taíno were had access to carborundum, a rare hard mineral found in the smaller islands of the Caribbean, which allowed for excellent stonework. Columbus observed these carved stone 3-pointer zemís placed on stools beside tribal leaders, and he was told they were spirits in charge of good weather, good crops, and childbirth. 3-pointer *zemís* were intended to rejuvenate both the earth and the human body.

Jesse Fewkes, who thoroughly studied and assembled photographs of Taíno art for the Smithsonian, created a typology for these 3-pointer stone zemís, out-

lined in the *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report to the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution*. There were four stylistic phases in the development of 3-pointer stones during the Taíno Phase. Fewkes describes these types as follows: [1] those with a head on the anterior end [2] those with a head on the anterior side of the conical projection [3] those with a conical projection modified into a head [4] and those without a head or a face. (Fewkes, 1922).



Taíno Stone Face to a Large Three Pointer (above) is the face of the central god *Yucahu*, and falls within the classification of zemís of the first type. A similar 3-pointer, now in the Berlin Museum in Germany was originally found in Puerto Rico. This face is a fragment that was originally a part of a large 3-pointer, with the face at the anterior. It may have been broken, because it was used as a hammer.

Top left: Two abstract triangular miniature hand-held 3-Pointers, used to influence the weather and ensure an abundant harvest. Above: Front view of Taíno Stone Face to a Large Three Pointer, a Type 1 Zemi.



Taíno Stone Three-pointer of Yúcahu, the Supreme Spirit (above), is a complete 3-pointer of the first type, with a grimacing animal head and hind legs, as opposed to a human head. This sculpture was executed with good proportions, and the mouth and eye sockets would have once held inlays of shell or gold. Professor Otis T. Mason describes this style as a monkey (Mason, 1877). A similar example in white island sandstone is illustrated in *L'Art des Sculpteurs Taínos* (Kerchache, 1994, p.292).

Type 4 three-pointers vary considerably in size and material. Most are stone, others are corral, and some are shell - all with smooth surfaces with no inscriptions or carvings. *Miniature Stone 3-Pointer*, (right) is an example of this type. They have been excavated from a variety of locations, extending from the Caribbean

Coast of Venezuela to the Lesser Antilles. The type 4 three-pointers found in Venezuelan excavations were reported to date back as early as 400 AD. Similar three-pointers were found in larger numbers in the Lesser Antilles, and paradoxically date to the more recent Classic Taíno Era.



Small 3-Pointer Zemís

Triangular totems are among the earliest form of Taíno art and change in style over time. The earliest triangular totems go back to the Casimiroid Period and are more acute in angle, whereas the later forms are more elongated. Small, quartz 3-pointers were made in the Orinoco River Basin of the Venezuelan mainland as early as 400 BC and were brought into the Caribbean by the predecessors of the Taíno. Saladoid Period 3-pointed zemís were smaller than those made during the Classic Taíno Period. Saladoid artists

lacked the technology to create large, complex stone objects as the later Taínos were able to. The Saladoid cultures sought stones and corals with an initial natural triangular shape that was intrinsic to the shape of the finished idol they wanted to create. Coral is both hard and brittle, and was valued based on texture, and used only by ancient sculptors. These, smaller, personal triangular totems are also thought to represent the cassava god *Yucahu*, who personifies abundance and agriculture.

Examples of 3-pointers in hard stone first appear in the Greater Antilles circa AD 800, with the development of the Taíno. This group consists of shell and corral ornaments as well as stone 3-pointers of the Type 4 category. The mysterious Type 4 amulets are triangular with smooth rounded edges mimicking the form of a shark tooth; sharks are the largest predators in the Caribbean. The purpose of Type 4 zemís is unknown, but it is speculated that they were used as summoning devices for supernatural forces during *cohoba* rituals, or possibly as healing devices (Fewkes, 1922).



Beads

In addition to the figurative stone *idolitos* which were drilled for use as beads, decorative, non-figurative beads were made from coral, bone, ceramic, shell, and stone. Shell beads were made from snails, conchs, and other marine shellfish, as evidenced by a large ancient shell bead factory found in the Bahamas. Bone beads were crafted from the ribs of the bonefish, small bird bones, and other small land animals. Hard stones also were made into round decorative beads, selected for their color and hardness so that they could be pierced with a bow drill without splitting. (Littman & Kegan, p. 147).



Ornamentation

In the Taíno animist cosmology, each natural plant, animal, and mineral substance was believed to be imbued with its own supernatural significance. According to the Taíno origin myth, the hero *Guahayona* (“our first lord”) acquired a copper-gold pectoral with a string of stone beads from the spirit world, thus establishing the metaphysical power of the *guanín* (gold-copper alloy) and *çibas* (stones), affiliating gold and bright stones with the astral realm. Caciques and noblemen were distinguished by their garments, woven of the finest cotton, and adorned with the most colorful feathers, shells, and stone beads. Reddish shells, such as the *Spondylus* and Cherry Jewel Box, or *Chama sarda*, and ornaments of reddish orange copper-gold alloy and Spanish brass were associated with the bright, remote part of the sky. Body paint, made of natural red and black natural dye, was used with hand-carved stamps to create repeating geometric designs on the skin.

Gold was rare in the Caribbean and was mainly found in alluvial form in shallow riverbeds. The largest gold and *guanín* (gold alloy) pieces were reserved for jewelry for the most important chieftains. Lesser caciques and noblemen wore necklaces made stone and crystal amulets, and other small personal animal totems ornaments carved of shell and bone. Any remaining gold not used for pectorals was hammered into miniature earrings and nose rings and placed in the eyes of zoomorphic amulets and sacred zemis.





Figurative Amulets

The resource-rich environment and semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Taíno may explain why so much of the highest quality art objects are miniature portable stone works. These stone amulets would have been worn or carried with their owners to make journeys hunting and gathering, or to move to new locations in accordance with growth patterns of tropical fruits and tubers. Durable, portable art objects allowed an individual to have a reflective, contemplative, or religious experiences at any time or location. It is perhaps the cultural difference between nomadic and modern society that makes Taíno art so intriguing.

Miniature figurative stone and shell amulets served as personal charms or totems, to which supernatural qualities were attributed. These small amulets demonstrate great lithic skill and a keen sense of style, offering researchers the opportunity to learn about a rich iconographic universe.

The amulets represent a pantheon of animistic deities based on animals native to the Caribbean. Each amulet was believed to possess the cosmological characteristics of the specific animal depicted. These hybrid human-animal figures take on mythical qualities affiliated with various animals such as

flying, seeing in the dark, and visiting the souls of the dead. Canines were believed to be guardian spirits, whereas owls were seen as messengers carrying information from ancestor spirits.

In *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, Ramon Pane describes how the caciques would use small amulets during medicine rituals. The cacique would suck on the afflicted body part of an ill person, then spit out a small stone amulet which was previously hidden in the cacique's mouth. This sleight of hand would give the impression that evil spirits were removed from the body, creating a placebo effect intended to cure the patient. Amulets were sometimes placed on the forehead of a patient with the intention to heal the sick. Caciques would also use these amulets to communicate with various ancestors and deities for the purpose of commanding the forces of nature.



The form of a crouching figure depicted as fierce anthropomorphic deity recurs in Taíno art throughout time and in a variety of media at all scales, as evidenced above. A large wooden duho (life-size wooden stool) from the Arte del Mar exhibit at the Met-ropolitan Museum of art in 2021 is shown above, with three miniature stone amulets from the David Bernstein collection, representing the same theme of the crouching figure deity with varying levels of detail and stylization. These crouching figures can be humanoid or anthropomorphic. The miniature stone amulets, enlarged to show detail, range in size from .75 to 2.25 inches.

Hallucinogenic Rituals

Cohoba is a hallucinogenic snuff powder made from a potent concoction of ground psychoactive plants including tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*), magic mushrooms, (*Psilocybin*) and DMT made from the *Anadenanthera* plant. *Cohoba* ceremonies date back to the Saladoid Period; archeologists found early psychedelic paraphernalia among the Saladoid graves. Saladoid ritual practices were revived by the Taíno, which led to the intensification of the ancestor worship, oracle consultation, and initiation rites. During these psychedelic cohoba rituals, shamans would alter their consciousness to merge with mythological beings and communicate gods, nature spirits, and ancestors.

Purging the body was an important part of the cohoba ritual. The ceremony involved a time of fasting and purging for a few days to even weeks prior to the ingestion of psychedelic substances. Purging of the digestive tract was administered by forced vomiting using a *vomitivo*, a bone or wooden vomiting spatula. These spatulas were usually made of bone with a preference for rib bones from the manatee, *Trichechus manatus manatus*. Other *vomitivos* were carved from the shells of large marine gastropods, almost always perforated, with the holes used to hang the spatula, indicating its ritual value. These vomit spatulas are rare and elaborately carved.

Other impressive wood and bone sculptures from the Taíno culture were created for use in conjunction with the cohoba ceremony including figurative idols, stools, snuff tablets, and stuffing tubes.

Beautiful stone mortars and pestles carved in the forms of various animal deities were used to carefully grind the preparations of psychoactive ingredients, which were inhaled with snuffing tubes made from bifurcated animal bones or carved wood. These paraphernalia were often decorated with elaborate curvilinear incised motifs, perhaps representing the cosmic forms reported to be visualized during psychedelic journeys. These journeys would entail contact with ancestors, mythological deities, and the afterlife.



A rare, large carved stone head which was originally attached to a very large pestle (as illustrated above). The head alone, which measures 3.25 in. height x 3.75 in. wide, represents a deity in human form. The original pestle was likely 10-11 in. tall, and would have been used to pound the seeds to prepare a psychedelic brew for a religious ritual, likely using the entheogenic plant species.

Ceremonial Mortars & Pestles

The handles of these beautiful ceremonial stone mortars and pestles used represent a pantheon of Taíno nature spirits and deities. These anthropomorphic deities feature a range of animals, often with large heads, exaggerated eyes, and fierce skeletal grimaces, indicating a psychedelic journey across the veil between daily life and the underworld of spirits of the dead. These mortars and pestles, while functional and utilitarian, can be appreciated as true artistic creations due to their esoteric nature, indicating a close relationship between the Taíno and their supernatural deities.



Taíno Stone Mortar and Bird Pestle (below) would have been used to grind entheogenic plants to prepare hallucinogenic compounds for religious rituals. This particular mortar and pestle was found together in Haiti by a Peace Corp volunteer.



Agriculture and Hunting

The Taíno took advantage of both the fertile land and the rich, warm island currents. The geography of Puerto Rico is that of a long coastline, fertile volcanic soil and mountains, with altitudes of up to 3000 feet. There was a rich diversity of flora and fauna, including cassava root, which was the primary food source. Other crops included beans, squash, sweet potato, peanuts, and fruits such as palm tree berries, custard apples, guava, and papaya. The Taíno diet was supplemented by animal protein from land animal, including caimans (small crocodiles), dogs, iguanas, *juita*, monkeys, snails, snakes, and

turtles. These animals were often represented in Taíno art and personal adornments. Live turtles were taken along as food on the lengthy canoe excursions. One of the turtle species, *Chelonia mydas*, now known to be extinct, is depicted ubiquitously in Taíno art. Iguanas were also prized by the Taínos as a food source. The Taíno also hunted birds, including parrots as both a food source and for their feathers. The word “barbeque” also originates from the Taíno. Other crops included rubber, tobacco, and the psychedelic *cohoba* snuff made from *Anadenanthera* tree.

Stone Axes, Celts, and Other Tools

Simple flint knapping points and blades were found on many of the Caribbean islands, dating back to 1,000 BC. or earlier. These points, scrapers, and knives were often selected for their natural striations and colors. The stones were then knapped on both sides, creating bi-facial blades. The most ubiquitous of these axes from the Classic Taíno Period are referred to as “Petaloid” (petal-shaped) stone axes. These petaloid stones were highly polished, with minor variations of shape, and were shown to be held to a split wood shaft on a vertical plane. There are a few known *adz*s, which were held on a horizontal plane and acted more like a traditional woodcutting axe. Other stone tools ranged in shape from cigar-shaped, to slender awl shapes - used to work small areas. The preferred color stones for making celts and adzs tended to be green, gray, and black. Visually, these tools are quite pleasing.



Ranging in shape from oblong to petaloid, these Seven Small Greenstone Celts were used as tools for fine work. The varied shapes allowed for fine work a variety of sizes of amulets. (Above, right).

Cassava

Starting in 200 BC, the Taíno's ancestors began burying small 3-pointed fertility stones in cassava planting sites. This ritual was conducted to ensure that the cassava deity *Yucahu*, the supreme spirit, would bring a bountiful harvest. The Taíno relied primarily on cassava, which were available year-round. Flint and stone blades enabled the Taíno to harvest cassava by cutting the plant's roots as early as 400 BC. Roots were grown in artificial mounds of loose earth known as *conucos*. Raw cassava juice contains toxic acid, which was squeezed out of the cassava with a special device. The remaining pulp was ground into flour. The flour was then made into cakes baked on ceramic griddles.

Fishing

The Caribbean islands provided both saltwater and freshwater marine resources. A myriad of fish were caught, smoked, and salted for storage including: bonefish, eel, herring, lizard fish, manatee, porgy, snapper, sardines, sea bass, sea bream, shark, tigerfish, yellow grouper and yellow jack. The Taíno also ate conch, crabs, crustaceans, oysters, and welks. So much fish were consumed that certain species were sometimes depleted, with bonefish providing the most meat of any of local fish.

Queen conch shells were carved to provide a variety of expedient tools, including hoes for digging soil, picks for peeling casaba, and hammers for gorges to exhume charred wood from bases ranging from cassava troughs. Clam shells were used for cutting yuca tubers and human hair. Large Welk oyster shells were used as tools to carve wood. Corral was used as an abrader. (Rouse, p.13). This collection includes a necklace (*right*) made of spines from the bonefish, which were native to the Caribbean islands.

The early Taíno captured fish and turtles in weirs as well as using basket traps, bows and arrows, hooks and lines, and nets. Gauges made of shell were used to determine the size of the mesh openings in nets, and flat, thin stone weights were used as sinkers when casting nets. Spears with sharp flint points were used to hunt larger fish and manatees.

The Barbescio plant, which is harmless to humans, contains a substance that is toxic to fish and causes them to asphyxiate. Poison from the Barbescio plant was tossed into the water in the weirs to make the fish slower. This method of hunting fish through asphyxiation is not unique to the Caribbean and is found around the world.

Fish would be kept fresh wrapped in leaves or barbequed on wooden racks and preserved for later consumption. The flesh of the queen conch can be preserved by drying. Fish can also be air dried for 6 months as well as salted. Turks and Caicos were known to have the finest salts. These salts were crucial for the Taíno's diet and electrolytes, and for preserving meat. These same salts were known to have been imported to the Northern Colonies (America) for George Washington to use for curing meats. Salted fish allowed the Taíno the necessary provisions to make long canoe trips, for example, the trip from Hispaniola to Turks and Caicos was 125 miles, which could take 24 hours of paddling to complete





Ceramics

The Taíno culture produced a great variety of low-fired ceramic vessels with a proliferation of shapes and styles, often with incised geometric designs. Taíno ceramic effigy vessels offer remarkable iconographic value, because they represent important figures in Taíno mythology. A notable feature of Taíno ceramics is the placement of “adornos” or decorative handles, which were sculpted in the form of human and animal faces. The designs of the handles (adornos) on Taíno ceramic vessels range from simple geometric points to complex representations of animals such as frogs and bats. Each ceramic vessel has a base, a shoulder, and a flattened area with a motif. After smoothing and polishing, a slip was sometimes applied to the relatively soft surface. Handles were then sculptured as animal deity heads or other cephalic forms.





Conclusion

This collection of art objects from the Formative Period and The Classic Taíno Period is unique in encompassing the full range of authentic Taíno artifacts. I have been dealing with Taíno artifacts since I first sold the Fred Olsen collection in 1982, which is now in the collection of the Library of Congress' Latin American collection in Washington DC. At first, I could not find many books on the Taíno aside from the 25th and 34th volumes from the Bureau of American Ethnology, and *ON THE TRAIL OF THE ARAWAKS* by Fred Olsen. More books have been published since 1979, and many during the 1980s. Archaeologists have come to recognize the importance of Taíno art and have studied all aspects of the Taíno people, from their culture and religion to their trade patterns and lifestyle. Professor Irving Rouse of Yale University first was introduced to Taíno art by Fred Olsen, and Rouse visited Olsen many times at his home in Antigua. Rouse's book *THE Taínos: The Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*, published in 1992, has been a great source of insight into the Taíno culture. I have found that looking at Taíno art in museums and in books is a great way to appreciate the special uniqueness of the Taíno artistic style.

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Important Figurative Stone Carvings

01



Large Taíno Carved Stone of a Deity

This deity has large, deeply carved, stylized eyes below an arched brow. His chin rests on arms held closely to his chest, and he sits on his haunches, with knees pointing forward and toes pointing downward. This classic contemplative pose appears in many early Taíno figurative sculptures, and is suggestive of the deity Baibrama, who symbolizes healing, renewal, and verdant crops. At the navel area is a protruding bellybutton, indicative of fertility. The prominent navel appears often as a theme in stone Pre-Taíno art. The bottom of the statue has been worn to a smooth taper for the purpose of setting the statue into the ground. Stone carvings taller than 15" are rare in Taíno art. The stones used by the Taíno to craft large figures were speleothems - rock formations found in caves, usually composed of limestone or dolomite. Most of these figures were used as perimeter markers that lined the ball courts of ancient Taíno centers in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Many of these figures are still in situ at archaeological sites with ball courts, such as Caguana (Puerto Rico) and the Corrado de los Indios (Dominican Republic). There are known carvings in caves in the region with similar facial features. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a similar figure carved of sandstone.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 23 5/8" **Retail:** \$24,500.

inv# M7105

02



Taíno Stone Pillar Effigy with Incised Owls Front and Back

This stone effigy features abstracted owls carved on both the front and back. The owls have ribbed torsos and wings wrapped around the sides of the stone. Owls were considered spirits of the dead and were both feared and revered by the Taíno.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 6 1/2" x Width: 5"

Retail: \$9,750.

inv# M3080

03



Taíno Stone Three-pointer of Yúcahu, the Supreme Spirit

Known as *triangulillos*, these three-pointed stones are unique to the Caribbean. Also known as zemis, they are symbolic of the spirit realm and the forces that imbue life with fertility. The large cone represents the primordial mountain rising from the ocean. This three-pointer portrays a zoomorphic figure with a crowned face and curled hind legs. The bat-like nose, which often occurs on three-pointers, has been identified as Yucahu, Lord of the Sky. Yucahu is the patron spirit of Yucca, the staple crop of Taíno agriculture. Large three-pointers belonged to elites and chiefs. The three-pointers were believed to bestow power, wisdom and a connection to the spiritual world on their owner, passed down from his ancestors. This three-pointer is carved of soft sandstone. The surface has been weathered by time. The tall cone and lack of detail indicate that this piece is from an earlier period prior to the Classic Taíno Period.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 10" x Height: 9 1/2"

Retail: \$22,000.

inv# M3055

04



Taíno Stone Face to a Large Three-Pointer

This face is likely a fragment of a large three-pointer that was carved from speckled granite. The face is of the classic crowned style that most likely represents of the agricultural deity Yucahu, the supreme deity associated with the cassava harvest. The Taíno valued broken works, especially those believed to be endowed with a spiritual essence. A very similar fragment from Puerto Rico is in the Smithsonian Museum's archives. This example is good for understanding how hard stone zemi were crafted, based on the view from the "killed" back.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length from chin to forehead: 5 1/4"

Width from ear to ear: 6 1/2"

Retail: \$3,250.

inv# 99208

05



Taíno Carved Stone Zemi Fragment of Type II

This incised three-pointer fragment falls into the Type 2 category of three-pointers which are typically anthropomorphic in their imagery. According to written Spanish accounts, these pieces were associated with fertility and were commonly stored in shrines associated with the cohoba ceremony, an ancient Taíno ritual in which participants consumed psychedelic snuff made from the *Anadenanthera* plant. This example is useful for authentication purposes, as it is well carved and reveals the inner carved structure.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height" 2 1/2"

Retail: \$1,800.

inv# 99256

06



Taíno Problematic Stone Representing a Manatee

This "problematic stone" was described by Fewkes in the Smithsonian's 34th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnography 1912-1913, p. 116-124. From the Dominican Republic, it represents a found object that was likely revered as a talisman of the volcano gods, which would explain why it was treasured by the Taíno. No two are alike.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Condition: with some restoration to the lower tip.

Dimensions: Length: 7 1/2"

Retail: \$3,900.

inv# M2064

07



Taíno Stone Figure Fragment with Double Imagery

When standing upright, this fragment presents a figure of a crowned shaman in a trance with his arms to his chest. When viewed from the opposite side, the figure transforms into saurian creature with a pronounced spinal column, round deep-set eyes, and a wide, grimacing mouth. The figure is carved from a soft white stone and has been broken in half. This piece is a wonderful example of dualism in Taíno art.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 800 - 1000

Condition: Lower half is missing.

Dimensions: Length: 3 1/4" inches

Retail: \$1,600.

inv# M7163

08



Taíno Carved Stone Depicting a Large Eyed Abstract Figure

This deity figure has pecked ears, eye sockets, a simple mouth, and arms held to the sides with a vertical cut for the tapered legs. It may have been used as a personal talisman.

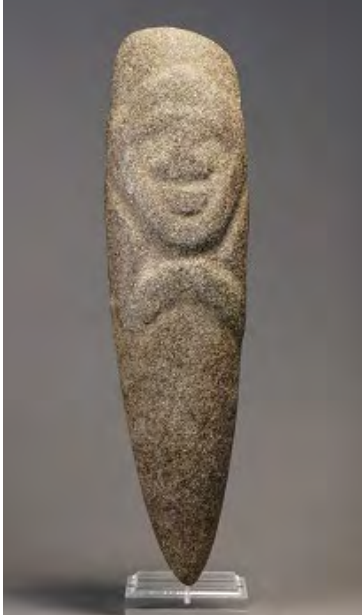
Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height: 3" x Width: 1 1/4"

Retail: \$450.

inv# 98237

09



Large Taíno Celt Carved with a Face

This ceremonial celt features a deity face, cone-shaped headdress, and hands held to stomach. Two similar celts are illustrated in Rene Herrera's 1964 *Estudio De Las Hachas Antillanas*, p.140-144.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Length 12" x 3" (30cm x 8cm)

Retail: \$8,500.

inv# N1042

10



Taíno Stone Pestle with Carved Face

The face carved on this pestle appears to be in a trance, as if it is undergoing transformation from a shaman to a deity. This is a particularly rare large example with a high degree of artistry and a humanoid face.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height 8"

Retail: \$4,000.

inv# 88058c

11



Taíno Large Carved Stone Fragment of a Deity Head from a Pestle

This head would have once been the top of a very large pestle, and is most likely representative of a Taíno deity in human form.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height 3 1/2" x Length 3 3/4"

Retail: \$3,700.

inv# 99188

12

**Taíno Stone Carved Cylindrical Implement with Face**

Its shape implies that it functioned as a tool, but the highly detailed creature's face, coupled with the absence of wear and tear, suggests a more ceremonial purpose.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: H: 8"

Retail: \$2,600.

inv# 98124

13

**Unusual Carved Brown Stone with a Face on Front and on Side**

This is a unique object with unknown use. One possibility is that it was some a ritualistic amulet.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Condition:

Dimensions: Height" 2" x Length: 3"

Retail: \$1,200.

inv# 89091

Sub-Courian Balls & Pounders

14



Taíno Neolithic Tan Egg-Shaped Grooved Stone Grinder

This oval stone grinder has five grooves that follow its circumference. Despite its primarily utilitarian function (it was probably employed for grinding foods and pigments), its rudimentary character is imbued with a charm brought on by its decorative ridge surface.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Neolithic, c. 1000 - 400 BC

Dimensions: Length: 3"

Retail: \$750.

inv# MM056

15



Taíno Stone with Two Nipples

These stones have been found in Neolithic graves and were used in a variety of ways: as weapons, grinders and abstract idols. Present day shamans use these ancient pieces to ward off bad spirits.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: 3 3/4" by 2.5"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 98204

16



Taíno Rectangular Sharpening Stone with Two Channels on Each Side

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Casimiroid, c. 4000 BC

Dimensions: Length: 5.5" x Width: 1.75" x Height: 1.5"

Retail: \$350.

inv# 98236

17



Pre-Taíno Pyramidal Stone

This stone fits perfectly the palm of the hand and may have been used as a hammer. However, it does not show signs of wear, which also indicates that it may have been a ceremonial object.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height 3 1/2"

Retail: \$250.

inv# 96119A

18



Pre-Taíno Round Pounding Stone

This pounder is large enough to grasp and pound on the flat sides.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries,
c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Length: 3 " x Width: 3.25" x Height: 1.5"

Retail: \$300.

inv# 98162

19



Pre-Taíno Round Grey-Brown Pounding Stone

Completely round pounding stone, with flat top and bottom.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries,
c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Diameter: 3.25" x Thickness: 1.75"

Retail: \$300.

inv# 98165

20



Pre-Taíno Circular Polishing Tool

This rounded stone is polished on all surfaces. One side has an incised "V" as if it were pointing to some place.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Neolithic,
c. 1000 - 400 BC

Dimensions: Diameter: 1 3/4" x Thickness: 1/2"

Retail: \$225.

inv# 98198

21



Pre-Taíno Stone Conical Shaped Pounder

This conical shape is a rare form of pounder. The bottom face is smooth from use.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Ostionoid, c. AD 200 - 900

Dimensions: Height: 3" x Diameter: 2.5"

Retail: \$350.

inv# 98183

22



2 Taíno Spinning Tops

These are more than likely children's toys, similar to modern day tops. They are often found buried with children.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: D: 2 1/4" & 1 1/4"

Retail: \$250.

inv# 98133

23



Pre-Taíno Stone Graduated Grinder

This particular form is one of the rarer types for pounders, and this poulder fits nicely into the hand. The bottom face is smooth from use.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Ostionoid, c. AD 200 - 900

Dimensions: Height: 2 1/4" x " x Diameter: 2.5"

Retail: \$275.

inv# 98238

24



Pre-Taíno Medium Sized Spherical Shaped Pounder with Three Concentric Grooves

This tan colored stone pounder is just large enough to fit in the palm of the hand.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Diameter: 3.25" x Height: 2.5"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 98163

25



Pre-Taíno Gray Stone Ball of Unknown Use

This stone ball shows no signs of wear and could have been for ceremonial use, or for use as a weapon.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Saladoid Culture, c. AD 600

Dimensions: Diameter: 2"

Retail: \$300.

inv# 98084

26



Pre-Taíno White Stone Ball and Disc

These white stone balls, or shperoliths, are more than likely some type of gaming pieces. They are commonly found in children's tombs as offerings and the size of the stone generally correlates to the age of the child.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, c. AD 1000 - 1300

Dimensions: D: 1.5" & 1 1/4"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 98119

27



3 Pre-Taíno White Stone Balls

Excavated examples of such perfectly round balls indicate that they were ceremonial, but their use remains enigmatic. Similar examples are illustrated in Dacal Moure and Rivero De La Calle, "Art and Archaeology of Pre-Columbian Cuba" (1996: pl. 1). It is possible that these stone balls were used as projectiles for slings.

Provenance: Haiti, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Diameter: 1", 7/8", 3/4"

Retail: \$350.

inv# 98120

28



Three Small Taíno Stones Balls Different Stones

These stones are graduated in size, and of different colors: white, grey, brown, and marbled. Special care was taken to make these stones perfectly round. These small stones have been found in tombs of small children, with the largest stones buried along with the older children. These stones may also have been used as projectiles for slings.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Diameter: 9, 1.2 & 1.3"

Retail: \$450.

inv# 98500

29



Pre-Taíno Miniature Circular Stone Mortar

This small mortar was probably used to crush small amounts of potent drugs. The incised circle around the outside may have been used to run a string to rotate the mortar with a push and pull.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Diameter" 1 7/8"

Retail: \$250.

inv# 98164

Ceremonial Mortars & Pestles

30



Taíno Janus-head Pestle

Double-headed imagery is pervasive in Taíno art. This is a classic Taíno pestle, typically used for grinding hallucinogenic seeds. They may have also been used as personal idols in the home for worship.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 6 1/4"

Retail: \$9,500.

inv# M4038

31



Taíno Stone Mortar and Bird Pestle

This mortar and pestle were found together and carved from the same stone, thus forming a complementary pair. The mortar is pleasantly spherical with a fairly deep concavity, while the top of the accompanying pestle was sculpted as a bird. A pestle and mortar set of this quality doubtless belonged to a wealthy chief or high-ranking lord.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Mortar Diameter: 7 1/2" x Pestle Height: 5 1/2"

Retail: \$14,000.

inv# 98122

32



Pre-Taíno Sandstone Mortar and Matching Pestle

This is a classic example of a Casmirian pestle that was later reworked by the Saladoid. This pestle would have been used to grind hard objects like nuts and seeds.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Saladoid Culture, Pre-Taíno, c. 400 BC - AD 600

Dimensions: Pestle Height: 4" x Width: 2.5"

Mortar Height: 3 1/4" x Diameter 6"

Retail: \$2,800.

inv# 98182

33



Pre-Taíno Carved Stone Mortar in the form of a Turtle

This is a classic Saladoid mortar. Very few mortars are published, and most are plain circles. This mortar is distinguished by the turtle shaped design around the edges. The shape of this stone indicates that it was used as a mortar for grinding food. The only other mortar in the shape of an abstract turtle is in the Berlin Volkerkunde Museum. It is from Haiti and is illustrated in the 34th Annual Report of the Smithsonian, 1912 on plate 113.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Length 11" x width 9"

Retail: \$15,600.

inv# M3076

34



Taíno Stone Oval-shaped Mortar with Abstract Animal

This piece is unusual because of the embellishment of the rim design, perhaps representing a turtle, sacred to the ancient Taíno. It was likely used for ceremonial purposes; a more utilitarian object would have been plainer and exhibited more signs of wear.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Neolithic Taíno, Casimiroid, Courian Subseries, c. 2660 BC - AD 240

Dimensions: Diameter: 8.5" x Height: 3"

Retail: \$9,500.

inv# 98121B

35



Taíno Large Graystone Ovoid-Shaped Mortar

Large mortars were probably used for the preparation of foodstuffs in community festivals, of which this one is certainly representative.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 13 1/2" inches x Height: 4 3/4" inches

Retail: \$6,750.

inv# M7109

Utilitarian Mortars & Pestles

36



Taíno Miniature Grey Stone Mortar

It's possible this mortar was used to grind small seeds or other fine plant materials. Along the circumference is a groove.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Casimiroid, c. 4000 BC - AD 400

Dimensions: Diameter: 2"

Retail: \$350.

inv# n7010

37



Pre-Taíno Long Slender Tapered Pounder

This is Neolithic Saladoid stone pounder and roller. This roller implement is fashioned from a brownish gray stone into a tapered shape with the wide end highly polished.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Neolithic Taíno, Casimiroid, Courian Subseries, c. 2660 BC - AD 240

Dimensions: Length: 11 1/2" x 1 1/2" diameter at the widest end.

Retail: \$3,400.

inv# MM044

38



Taíno Stone Slender Conical Pestle

Although a common form of pestle, this one is in good condition, considering its intended use for grinding foodstuffs and medicinal plants. The bottom surface is smooth and covered with a dark slip.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Height: 6 1/2"

Retail: \$950.

inv# 98185

39



Taíno Conical Pestle of Speckled Stone

This is a classic Taíno pestle design, and this pestle may have been used to prepare cassava, other plant foods, or psychoactive compounds. The bottom surface is smooth and covered with a dark slip.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Length: 5 1/4"

Retail: \$700.

inv# 98131

40



Pre-Taíno Large Oblong Pounding Stone

This is a Saladoid stone tool. The flat ends were for used pounding plants and foodstuffs, and the curved sides for grinding.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Length: 4 1/2" x Width: 2"

Retail: \$1,200.

inv# n7006

41



Pre-Taíno Large Spherical Pounder of Coral

This is a particularly large sphere for pounding and just fits into a hand. It is made of very hard coral.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Diameter: 4 1/4"

Retail: \$900.

inv# n7008

Biomorphic Pestles

42



Taíno Gray Speckled Stone Pestle Depicting a Zoomorphic Being

This is a large and well-carved, good example of a pestle that is half-human, half-animal.

Provenance: Greater Antilles, Sub-Courian Period, c. 2000 - 100 BC

Dimensions: Height: 5" x Diameter at base: 3 1/2"

Retail: \$6,000.

inv# M4001B

43



Large Taíno Painted Brown Stone Pestle with the Head of a Large Eared Animal Deity

A strange creature, perhaps part animal and part human carved from a natural brown stone. The defined mouth and nose suggest a humanoid, while the back appendages suggest bent hind legs. The lens shows significant wear, indicating that it was frequently used.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height: 5 1/2" x Diameter of the base: 2 1/2"

Retail: \$4,800.

inv# 98207

44



Taíno Striated Stone Pestle depicting a Stylized Figure

This stone was surely selected for the beauty of its natural grey and white striations.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height: 4" x Width at base: 2 1/2"

Retail: \$3,200.

inv# 98202

45



Taíno Carved Stone Gray Stone Pestle with Anthropomorphic Crouching Figure

The body of this figure, which is hunched on all fours, assumes a frog-like appearance as it perches horizontally across the base. A deeply incised cleft runs the length of the back and buttocks creating the illusion of a backbone, a Classic Taíno sculptural convention.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 4 4/3"

Retail: \$2,900.

inv# MM054

46



Taíno Carved Dark Stone Pestle with Owl Deity

Seen straight on is the face of an owl with large eyes and heart-shaped face. Seen from above is an abstract face that represents an animal with large eyes and a pudgy nose, possibly a dog. The round lens lends itself to crushing seeds.

Provenance: Haiti, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 6"

Retail: \$2,750.

inv# 98429A

47



Taíno Carved Grey Stone Pestle with Crouching Figure

The front of the pestle displays an owl's head with ears. The ears double as crouching legs, as seen from the back. The lens of the pestle is tapered from wear.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 4"

Retail: \$2,450.

inv# M4062

48



Taíno Carved Stone Pestle Handle Section with a Monkey Deity Head

This finely finished pestle handle has incised circles on the top and the back of the deity's head, which creates an abstract face.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 4" x Diameter: 2"

Retail: \$1,700.

inv# 98199

49



Taíno Small Pestle with Crouching Deity Turned into a Double Face

This classic Taíno pestle can be read as either a face or a crouching figure both from the front and the back.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height 3 1/2"

Retail: \$1,200.

inv# 98146

Blades & Axes

50



Neolithic Taíno Group of Eleven Xillex White Blades for Assorted Uses

This type of sharp flaked flint stone tool is categorized as Casmirian, and precedes the more complex Courian blades of stone, bone, and shell. These bifacial napped tools were fashioned into hide scrapers, circular knives, spoons, knife blades, or spear heads, and were probably used to kill and butcher animals.

Provenance: Greater Antilles, Sub-Courian Period, c. 2000 - 100 BC

Dimensions: Longest: 10 1/2"; shortest: 5"

Retail: \$3,750

inv# MM017X

51



Group of 6 Neolithic Taíno Xillex Blades

This type of sharp flaked stone tool is categorized as Casmirian, and precedes the more complex Courian blades of stone, bone, and shell. These bifacial napped tools were fashioned into hide scrapers, circular knives, spoons, knife blades, or spear heads, and were probably used to kill and butcher animals.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Neolithic, c. 1000 - 400 BC

Dimensions: Length: Longest: 10 1/2"; Shortest: 5"

Retail: \$2,500

inv# MM017G

52



Neolithic Taíno Flaked Stone Dagger with Very Sharp Point

This type of flaked stone tool has been assigned to the Courian subseries and belongs to the same tradition of flaked-stone working in which the artisans collected fine grained rocks and struck them with hammerstones to chip off a succession of irregularly shaped flakes. These tools were probably used to kill and butcher animals.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Length: 9"

Retail: \$875

inv# MM028

53



Neolithic Taíno Flaked Stone Knife with Worn Point

This Courian flaked stone dagger-type implement has a back that is smoothly flattened. It is characterized by a tradition of flaked-stone working in which the artisans collected fine grained rocks and struck them with hammerstones to chip off a succession of irregularly shaped flakes. ^

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Length: 7 1/2"

Retail: \$400

inv# MM029

54



Pre-Taíno Neolithic Nipple Axe

This celt was clearly incised as to depict swimming fish. The motif of the triangular design in the neck area reoccurs thousands of years later in Taíno art.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Height: 7 1/4" x Width: 4"

Retail: \$2,500

inv# 99004A

55



Taíno Triangular Double Ring Haft Axe Head

This seems to be one of the more common shapes for Taíno axes. The lack of any real wear on its surface indicates ceremonial use.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Height: 7 3/4"

Retail: \$1,500

inv# 98132

56



Sub-Courian Sandstone Nipple Axe Heads

Axes of this type were fashioned from basalt and igneous rocks, and they are among the earliest dated tools found in the Caribbean. They were secured to wooden handles for use by pre-ceramic people who migrated into the region from South America, beginning about 6000 BC.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Height 6" inches.

Retail: \$1,400

inv# 98211B

57



Neolithic "Nipple Cap" Style Axe-Head

These nipple-capped style axe heads are so called because their obscured petaloid forms are designed with a ridge at the hafting point. The grooves would have been for using string to secure the axe-head to a wooden axe handle. This type of axe is found predominantly in Hispaniola.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Neolithic, c. 1000 - 400 BC

Dimensions: Height: 6"

Retail: \$950

inv# 94314

58



Taíno Round Stone Axe Head with Groove in Center

This small round stone axe head would likely have been affixed to a wooden axe handle and used as a hammer or a weapon.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Height: 2 1/2"

Retail: \$275

inv# 99530

Celts & Adzs

59



Group of Four Subcourian Ceremonial Petaloid Celts

These celts were selected for their lovely color and natural striations. They show no signs of wear, which indicates that they were used ceremonially and were likely cherished by their owners and passed down through multiple generations. Rene Herrera Fritot discussed and illustrated the configuration of celts in his 1964 book *ESTUDIOS DE LAS HACHAS ANTILLANAS*.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Neolithic Taíno, Casimiroid, Courian Subseries, c. 2660 BC - AD 240

Dimensions: Tallest: 9 1/4" - Shortest: 3"

Retail: \$9,000.

inv# MM324

60



Large Slender Grey-Green Stone Petaloid Celt

This large celt is in almost perfect condition with graceful proportions. Generally, the larger celts have many flaws, while this one has none to the naked eye.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period c.AD 600

Dimensions: Length 11 1/4"

Retail: \$5,000.

inv# mm0527

61



Large Petaloid Grey and Green Marbleized Celt

This large celt is made of finely polished, dark green and gray marbleized stone. The naturally beautiful coloration and calculated smoothness of this stone indicate that this celt was used for ceremonial purposes.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 9" x Width: 3 1/4"

Retail: \$4,500.

inv# MM052A

62



Taíno Large Black Petaloid Celt

The smoothly polished surface and finely tapered teardrop form of this petaloid stone celt indicates that it was intended as a ceremonial object. The term "petaloid" refers to the elongated, flower petal shape. Black stone celts are among the scarcest of stone celts because the stone was particularly hard and required greater skill to carve.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 10" x Width: 3"

Retail: \$4,500.

inv# MM016

63



Taíno Large Petaloid Stone Celt with Gray, Blue, and Greenish Tones

Smoothly carved, stone, petaloid celt in grayish blue-green is impressively large and finely honed. Examples of petaloid stone celts are illustrated in "Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY" Washington, 1907, pl XII.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 10 1/2", Width: 3 1/2"

Retail: \$4,500.

inv# MM048

64



Taíno Greenstone Petaloid Celt

Petaloid celts of green and dark diorite stone were symbols of rank and never show signs of use as tools. They may have also been traded as currency or passed down to family. This celt has a notch at the tip that indicated use. Nice root marks.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Archaic Period, c. 4000 - 300 BC

Dimensions: Length: 8"

Retail: \$4,000.

inv# 99270A

65



Taíno Beige Petaloid Stone Celt with Good Proportions

Petaloid celts carved from mottled tan stones rarely show signs of any use. These celts were probably symbols of prestige and were perhaps used as currency.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Condition: There are 2 small nicks.

Dimensions: Length: 7"

Retail: \$1,750.

inv# MM045C

66



Seven Small Dark Greenstone Celts as Tools

Ranging in shape from oblong to petaloid, these stones were used as tools for fine work. The varied shapes allowed for fine work a variety of sizes of amulets.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Length: 1 1/4" to 2 7/8"

Retail: \$1,500.

inv# 99454

67



Five Taíno Celt Tips Reconfigured into Tools

These five broken celts were reconfigured into small tools. They do not show signs of wear and were possibly used as hammers or for carving shells or other soft materials. These are very useful as study pieces, as they have the original polish, and "outer skin" thickness intact, and show rich root marks. It is possible that these may have been broken intentionally for ceremonial needs.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: Varies from 1" to 2 1/8"

Retail: \$500.

inv# 99386

68



Three Pre-Taíno Stone Adzs of Different Colors

Each adz would have been lashed perpendicularly to a wooden shaft so that it would strike its target to make a wide cut. Adzs are rare in comparison to petaloid celts. The tips were lashed to the shaft, and the adzs shows signs of use. Adzs were previously thought of as poorly shaped celts. They are now understood to be rare.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Casimiroid, c. 4000 BC - AD 400

Dimensions: Top: Length 9"

Center: Length 7 1/4"

Bottom: Length 6 3/4"

Retail: \$4,500.

inv# n7009

69



Taíno Petaloid Green Stone Adz

The edge and tip of this adz are well preserved. The green stone has color variation due to intentional heating of the stone by the artisan who created it. The upper edge exhibits indications of repeated sharpening, resulting in a downward slant. Good root marks.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Length: 8" x Width: 2 1/2"

Retail: \$2,500.

inv# 98265

70



Pre-Taíno Large Polished Grey-Green Stone Adz

This stone appears to be a petaloid celt, but the underside is flat and has a pecked area. This flattened area was for attaching the stone to the top of a staff for swinging in an arc to chop along the horizontal edge.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Length: 9 1/4" x Width at widest point: 3"

Retail: \$1,800.

inv# mm038A

71



Six Pre-Taíno Gray-Green Stone Chisels

These chisels were carved from distinctively colored hard stones and are nicely polished and do not show wear. These chisels were likely used for ceremonial purposes.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Length: 3" to 5 1/2"

Retail: \$2,800.

inv# 98266

72



Taíno Green Stone Skeletal Figure Amulet in Crouching Position

Although small, this amulet probably had inlays of gold or shell in the eyes. It was carved from precious green stone - highly valued by the Taíno because it was the color of the Caribbean Sea, the source of life and the threshold to the otherworld. It was probably a center pendant to a necklace.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height 2"

Retail: \$3,000.

inv# MM245

73



Taíno White Shell Pendant of a Crouching Bat with Grimacing Mouth

Bats were considered messengers of the dead who visited the living during the night. This is a particularly large example of a bat that must have been crafted from a very large conch shell. It was probably a center pendant to a necklace.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height 3 1/8"

Retail: \$3,500.

inv# 94246

74



Taíno Shell Amulet of Long-necked Deity

This highly abstract and unusual carving is made from one piece of shell. This deity has a bat-like nose, large teeth in a wrap-around grin, a long neck, and arms folded over the chest. The legs contort in a forward curl terminating in prominently featured incised toes.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height: 1 3/8"

Retail: \$875.

inv# 98424

75



Taíno Carved Greenstone Venus Amulet

This greenstone female figure is carved in low relief with arms crossed over her chest and a baby strapped in a bundle on her back. This amulet is decidedly rare for its maternal aspect and its naturally symbolic association to fertility. The stone is a rare form of green quartz

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Ostionoid, c. AD 200 - 900

Dimensions: Height: 2 1/4"

Retail: \$3,500.

inv# 98140

76



Mainland Green Stone Amulet of a Bat

It is extremely rare to find Taíno amulets made from jade or jade-like stone. The pointed ears, blunted muzzle, and the position of the extremities which resemble folded wings suggest that this is a bat idol. It's quite rare to see an amulet with inlaid stone eyes intact and perfectly set.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1.5"

Retail: \$3,250.

inv# 98220

77



Taíno Variegated Green Stone Frog Zemi

This abstract zemi representing a frog was carved from a rare green stone with lovely striations. Many species of amphibians still inhabit the large islands of the Greater Antilles. The Taíno considered frogs symbols of fertility because the coqui frog mates in the spring at the beginning of the rainy season in the Caribbean.

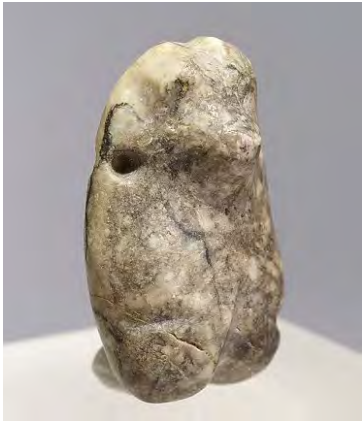
Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 1 7/8"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99327

78



Taíno Rare Stone Amulet of an Agouta

This amulet of a shrew is based on the species known as the Hispanolan solenodon. The solenodon is the only mammal that releases venom for protection and is identified by its elongated nose. This solenodon is only found in Hispaniola and directly descends from the Prehistoric Era. It is a very rare subject.

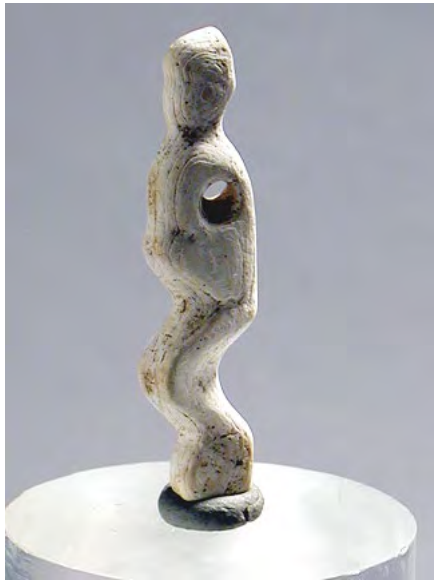
Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 1 1/2"

Retail: \$1,000.

inv# 99369

79



Taíno Shell Figurative Silhouette Amulet

This slender, delicate figure is a marvel of Taíno craftsmanship. This shell was worked as an abstract crouching figure with eyes, arms and legs softly modeled, and the suspension hole drilled through the back.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 7/8"

Retail: \$600.

inv# 99342

80



Taíno Carved Light Gray Stone Miniature Crouching Figure

This is a highly detailed figure for its small size. The hole runs vertically through the figure.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height: 3/4"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99309

81



Small Taíno Amulet of a Crouching Monkey in Blue-Gray Stone

In this lovely example, the craftsman selected a blue-grey stone not common in the area. The crouching figure is carved with nice details, with a simian face, large ears, and a phallus. This amulet is quite artistic.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height: 1"

Retail: \$825.

inv# 99365

82



Taíno Gray-brown Stone Amulet of Crouching Dog Deity

Dogs were believed to escort the dead to the otherworld and to also watch over their spirits. They are often shown on amulets, and were worn as protective charms in memory of important ancestors.

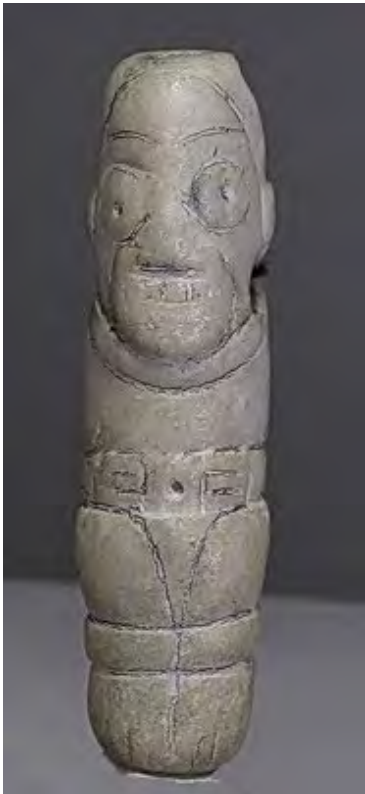
Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 1/2"

Retail: \$900.

inv# 99212

83



Taíno White Marble Amulet of Elongated Crouching Male Figure

This amulet has been carved into a smoothly elongated cigar-like form of a crouching male figure. The facial features are characteristically Taíno, including the broad nose and round eyes with indented pupils. It most likely represents an ancestral figure, probably a chief. It functions as both a tubular bead and an amulet, indicating that it was an important carving for the Taíno. The facial features are carefully detailed, and the arms, bent at the elbows, are folded uniformly over the belly of the figure where the hands flank a prominently incised navel, considered by the Taíno to be the spiritual center of the body and a conduit to the otherworld. When people died, they were said to have lost their navels. A similarly detailed amulet is illustrated in "Taíno: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture from the Caribbean" (1998: pl. 36).

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 2 1/4"

Retail: \$1,950.

inv# 99211

84



Taíno Shell Amulet of Elongated Crouching Figure with Large Phallus

Although highly abstract, this slender talisman represents the dog-like deity that watched over the spirits of the dead.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 3/8"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99277

85



Taíno Carved white Stone Amulet of a Crouching Skeletal Figure

It is hard to determine whether skeletal amulets represent ancestors or celebrants in cohoba ceremonies. Ancestor worship was the focus of Taíno religion, in addition to a great many animistic spirits that controlled the natural forces.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1"

Retail: \$1,800.

inv# 99338

86



Taíno Gray-white Stone Crouching Hybrid Dog-Bat Amulet with Bulging Eyes

This small carved stone amulet holds the curious distinction of raised and rounded bulging eyes, in contrast to most types which have concave depressions in place of the eyes. The pointed ears signify a bat, but the crouching position indicates a dog figure.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 1/8"

Retail: \$850.

inv# MM102

87



Taíno Mottled Stone Amulet of a Crouching Figure with a Wide Mouth

The amulet is also made of a speckled stone from St. Martin. In this case, the abstract crouching figure was very subtly carved out of a white and black stone. The vertical holes also are the eyes.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 1/2"

Retail: \$500.

inv# 99341

88



Taíno Stone Re-Carved Amulet Crouching Figure

Although quite abstract, this bead was carved with a figure in the crouching position characteristic of Taíno art. It is an unusual example with a jaw extending into the back paws.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 1/4"

Retail: \$675.

inv# 99346

89



Taíno Mottled Amulet of a Crouching Figure

The Taíno likely made these ornaments from this unique speckled stone from St. Martin. The patterning intentionally creates visual ambiguity, representing dualism and otherworld spirits.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 13/8"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99340

90



Taíno Miniature Amulets of 2 Crouching Dog Figures

Dogs were believed to escort the dead to the otherworld and to also watch over their spirits. They are often shown on amulets and were worn as protective charms in memory of important ancestors. When a chief died, some of his amulets were buried with him, but the majority were given as gifts to secure the allegiance of lords to the successive chief.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 6/8" each.

Retail: \$350.

inv# 99373

91



Taíno Group of Small Dog-like Deities in Various Types of Stone

Dogs were believed to escort the dead to the otherworld and to also watch over their spirits. They are often shown on amulets, and talismans such as these were protective charms in memory of important ancestors.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Green: 7/8"; b/w: 5/8"; b/tan: 1 1/4"

Retail: \$475.

inv# 99278

92



Taíno Amulet of a Abstracted Stone Crouching Figure

This strange figure is extremely abstract with only a straight line for a mouth and pronounced crouching legs. It has both vertical and horizontal drill holes. There is drilled horizontal suspension hole across from the mouth.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 7/8"

Retail: \$275.

inv# 99321

93



10 Tiny Carved Stone Stylized Crouching Figurative Amulets

These miniature amulets are microcosms of the original larger amulets; they are near-perfect replicas. Shamans would have given a small amulet to a suffering person to swallow in order to ward off evil spirits. These protective amulets were also worn on necklaces.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1/2" to 1"

Retail: \$2,000.

inv# 99529

94



Seven Broken Figurative Amulets of Different Materials

These broken amulets are historically significant because the broken points reveal the method of carving and drilling. They all seem to have been broken at the horizontal suspension hole. The amulets were not discarded; they were found in tombs and were valued even as fragments. Several of the pieces still have traces of red pigment.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Lengths vary from 1/2" to 1"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99390

95



Taíno Stone Miniature Amulet with Janus Head

Double-faced Janus skeleton figures share the same body, carved as a phallic shape. Images of skeletal faces with erect phalluses are characteristic of Taíno art and seem to symbolize the dualism and paired opposition of life and death.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1"

Retail: \$450.

inv# 99224C

96



Taíno White Stone Large-Headed Amulet with Stylized Headdress

This amulet has an enormous head, a stylized headdress or hairdo, and simplified facial features. The seemingly legless, disproportionately small body has two drill holes which function both for suspension and to distinguish the arms which curl inwardly. When viewed from the back the shape of the buttocks is revealed, indicating that this is a crouching figure.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1"

Retail: \$300.

inv# 99226

97



Taíno Stone Dog Pendant

Dogs were believed to escort the dead to the otherworld. They were worn as protective charms in memory of important ancestors. **Provenance:** Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1.5"

Retail: \$650.

inv# 98392

98



Taíno Shell Amulet in the Form of a Pelican Head

This shell amulet is incised as a pelican head in profile, with the suspension hole in the center of the head naturally forming the eye. The shell used to create this amulet must have originally been quite in to provide a flat surface with a curve to form the pelican's beak.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 3 3/4"

Retail: \$1,500.

inv# 99221

99



Taíno Stone Birds' Head Pendant

Birds are common motifs in Taíno art and were surely consumed as food by the Taíno in addition to being valued for their plumage. These pendants were worn by shamans.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: 1 1/4"

Retail: \$450.

inv# 98224

100



Taíno Shell Ornament in the Form of a Double Bat

The circular mouth openings in each bat head suggest that this ornament was sewn onto a garment or headband. Bats were considered to be messengers of the dead from the otherworld, and clothing appliques such as this represented the spirit of a revered ancestor.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 1 1/2"

Retail: \$350.

inv# 99335

101



Taíno Miniature Stone Amulet in the Shape of a Duck

The duck is a common motif in Taíno art, and ducks were surely consumed as food. This miniature bead is particularly charming for its small size, with modeled wings and beak. There is a suspension hole through the neck. The stone is a type of quartz with a warm honey color.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1/2"

Retail: \$425.

inv# 99336

102

**Taíno Quartz Amulet of a Rare Antillean Nighthawk**

The Antillean Nighthawk is a rare nocturnal bird that once inhabited the Greater Antilles in greater numbers and is now endangered. Bird feathers were valued for their ornamental qualities. This miniature example was selected for the purity of the quartz stone.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 1/2"

Retail: \$175.

inv# 99366

103

**Taíno Carved Shell Amulet of a Figure with a Bat Face**

This bat deity amulet features a stylized human figure with bat-like features, such as large ears and a pug nose. There are two suspension holes below each ear. This amulet was likely originally the central bead on a larger beaded necklace.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 1/2"

Retail: \$2,250.

inv# 98149

104

**Taíno White Shell Amulet in the Form of a Toucan**

This stylized bird form including the large eyes, beak, and plumage was favored by the Taíno. The hole at the bottom of the amulet is an unusual design and indicates that the amulet may have been placed on the forehead. The shell is especially white.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 1/2" x Width: 1/2"

Retail: \$500.

inv# MM182

105



Taíno Stone Amulet of an Owl

A re-carved bead from a larger broken amulet, in the form of what appears to be an abstract owl.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Length: 1 1/4"

Retail: \$125.

inv# 99330

106



Taíno Stone Seated Dog-like Deity Figure

This amulet is an abstracted crouching variation on the theme of the Taíno dog deity.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 7/8"

Retail: \$900.

inv# 99322

107



Taíno Tan Stone Amulet with a Chubby Dog Crouching Figure

Dogs were believed to escort the dead to the otherworld. They are often shown on amulets, and were worn as protective charms in memory of important ancestors.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 1/8"

Retail: \$450.

inv# MM104

108



Three Taíno Carved Shell Abstract Frogs

These delicate miniature appliques belonged to a larger set that once covered the cape of a chieftain. The Taíno conquered their neighbors on the Turks and Caicos Islands in the Bahamas to obtain the best shells in the region.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 5/16" each

Retail: \$350.

inv# 99310

109



Three Taíno Carved Shell Abstract Frogs

These delicate miniature appliqués belonged to a larger set that once covered the tunic or cape of a chieftain.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 5/8" each

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99311

110



Six Taíno Miniature Shell Abstract Frog Ornaments

These extremely delicate miniature appliqués likely belonged to a larger set that would have covered the cape of a chieftain, or they may have been elements to a necklace or bracelet. The Taíno conquered their neighbors on the Turks and Caicos Islands in the Bahamas to obtain the best shells in the region, for the production of jewelry. At least one archaeological site there has been identified as a craft village.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height Range: 3/8" to 7/8"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99357

111



Six Taíno Miniature Shell Highly Abstract Frog Ornaments

Frog-shaped amulets were often worn as protective charms in memory of important ancestors. These examples have amulet suspension holes as well as vertical drill holes, suggesting that each frog was made in the same abstract linear format in descending size. The smallest frog in this group is one of the smallest known pieces of its kind.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1/4" to 1 1/4"

Retail: \$550.

inv# 99359

112



Taíno Abstracted Dolphin Amulet

This amulet represents a dolphin and was carved from a manatee bone. The exaggerated eyes and teeth are carved in typical Taíno fashion. This may have been the central amulet of a necklace with surrounding shell beads.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 3"

Retail: \$1,750.

inv# 96096

113



Taíno Mottled Green Stone Amulet in the Form of a Crustacean

The Taíno ate a lot of marine life, especially species in the shallow water close to the shoreline, including turtles, crustaceans and shells. In this case, the green stone echoed the color of the Caribbean from where the crayfish came. Crustaceans were rarely seen in Taíno art as amulets.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 1"

Retail: \$350.

inv# 99362

114



Taíno Miniature Appliqué

This is a rare portrayal of the skull of a cacique (tribal chieftain) seated on a ceremonial duho. A duho is a carved wooden seat used by Taíno caciques for spiritual medicine rituals. The lower part of the duho depicts two animal heads.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 1/2"

Retail: \$750.

inv# 98134

115



Taíno Speckled Stone Amulet of a Chief Sitting on a Duho Stool

This is a rare portrayal of a cacique seated on his ceremonial duho. Duhos were seats that only chiefs were allowed to use. The speckled quartz stone matrix had obvious appeal to the Taíno craftsman.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length 2"

Retail: \$600.

inv# M4072

Portable Three-Pointer Amulets

116



Taíno Coral Large Miniature Three-Pointer

Coral three-pointers were made as early as 400 BC. Over time, the three-pointer's form evolved to a longer profile. This example is large for its type and is well modeled with a polished surface. The smaller three-pointer shows the relative extremes in size.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height Range: 2 ½ "

Retail: \$950.

inv# 99347

117



Taíno Set of Three Stone Zemi Three-Pointers

The set consists of three Taíno stone zemi three-pointers. One is marble, the other two are coral. Similar coral and marble zemis are pictured in L'Arte Taíno, page 187.

Provenance: Cuba, Classic Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Range from 1 ¾" wide & 1" high to 2 ¾" wide to 1 ¾" high.

Retail: \$600.

inv# 99144B

118



Two Taíno Miniature Three-Pointers in Early Sculptural Stages

One of these three-pointers is sandstone with two indentations, and the other is stone with a face in the front and legs in the back. These stones are in the early stages of carving, revealing the design process.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99223B

119



Three Taíno Coral Miniature Three-Pointers

Small coral three-pointers were made as early as 400 BC, and were brought into the Caribbean by the predecessors of the Taíno. It's possible that these examples belong to this early migration period during AD 400 to 800.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height Range: 1/2 to 1"

Retail: \$300.

inv# 99448

120



Six Early Phase Taíno Coral Miniature Three-Pointers of the Early Phase

Small coral three-pointers were made as early as 400 BC and were brought into the Caribbean by the predecessors of the Taíno. It's possible that these examples belong to this early migration period during AD 400 to 800.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height Range: 1/2 to 1"

Retail: \$600.

inv# 99447

121

**Two Taíno Marble Miniature Three-pointers**

These were well carved from hard marble, which would have made the task more difficult due to their small size.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Condition:

Dimensions: Height: 1/2" and 5/8"

Retail: \$350.

inv# 99372

122

**Two Taíno Hard Shell Miniature Three-Pointers of Unusual Shape**

These unusual shaped three-pointers, used as personal totems, were made of carefully selected seashells such as welks. The unusual shape may be from provincial manufacture.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1/2" to 3/4"

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99350

123

**Five Taíno Miniature Quartz Three-Pointers**

Quartz and rock crystal were prized for their power as sacred stones that enabled shamans to see into the otherworld of spirits and ancestors. This group of three-pointers is from the earlier Taíno period.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height Range: 1/2" to 1 1/4"

Retail: \$650.

inv# 99348

Small Stone Heads

124



Taíno Pecked Stone Head Talisman

This small stone was carefully polished and then pecked all over the back and around the sides of the face and mouth. It is not an amulet but probably functioned as a protective talisman.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height 1 1/8"

Retail: \$375.

inv# MM244a

125



Taíno Carved Shell Skull with Deep Socket Eyes and Ear Ornaments

This is a head broken off from a carved figure. It was broken at its weakest point, at the drill hole beneath the chin.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 5/8"

Retail: \$250.

inv# 99157

126



Taíno Carved White Marble Amulet of a Deity Head with Closed Eyes

This head was once a part of a larger figurine. Broken in ancient times just below the chin, the stone was re-carved and used as an amulet.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 3/8"

Retail: \$500.

inv# 98425

127



Taíno Stone Skull Head Fragment with Earrings and Skull Cap

This fragment from a figurine represents the portrait of a deceased chief, complete with earrings and the rounded caps worn by caciques and cultural heroes from the spirit world.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Height: 1"

Retail: \$450.

inv# 99337

128



Small Tan Stone Ball with Incised Face

The face has eyes encircled with a mask. This stone could have been used as a talisman.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Saladoid Culture, c. 100 BC - AD 600

Dimensions: Height: 1 1/8"

Retail: \$150.

inv# 99365B

129



Taíno Stone Amulet with Central Drill Hole

This wonderfully abstract amulet, whose rounded shape is echoed by the large circular drill hole, portrays a chief with his cap indicating high status.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 1/4"

Retail: \$200.

inv# 99319

130



Taíno Stone Jutia Fragment

The rat-like creature known to the Taíno as the jutia was a highly sought after food source. The jutia has distinctive facial features, notably large eyes and a short, flat muzzle. Jutia occasionally appear as amulets and other art forms. Consumption of jutia took place on such a large scale that it is now almost an extinct species in the Caribbean.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 1"

Retail: \$175.

inv# 99323

131



Taíno White Shell Three-Pointer with Unusual Face

The face is made around the shape of the shell and was carved as a three-pointer. This one is unusual in that the mouth with its carved teeth is open and has a small hole. The grimacing face surely represents a spirit from the otherworld.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: 1 1/4"

Retail: \$250.

inv# 98222

Ornamentation - Necklaces

132



Taíno Pez Espada Necklace

This necklace is comprised of approximately 50 ancient carved bonefish spines. Each spine is drilled at the base and strung so that all of the elements can hang with the same orientation outwards. This necklace was re-strung with modern string.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 20"

Approximate size of each bone: 2 1/2"

Retail: \$3,700.

inv# 99225B

133



Taíno Necklace Composed of Operla Snail Shells

These cone snail (*gastropoda Conidae*) shells were by the ancient Taíno as beads and would have been worn on necklaces by people of high wealth and status. The beads are ancient, but this necklace is modern assembled, with a design that resembles an ancient necklace.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 21"

Retail: \$3,500.

inv# 99376

134



Taíno Stone and Shell Necklace

This necklace has an assortment of stone and shell beads put together to give the viewer a sense of what ancient Taíno necklaces would have looked like as worn by chiefs. Only chiefs were allowed to wear necklaces of stone beads, which are featured in the creation story as documented by Columbus' missionary, Fra Ramón Pané.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 28"

Retail: \$1,800.

inv# 99375

135



Taino Necklace of 40 Stylized Shell Key-Shaped Beads

This beautiful necklace features abstract key-shaped beads carved from very hard shell. The "keys" feature delicate craftsmanship with many small details which would have required great skill and effort to create. The necklace likely belonged to a cacique and may have been used as part of a healing ritual.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Keys vary in length, with an average of 1 1/2".

Total length of necklace: 9".

Retail: \$1,800.

inv# 99770

136



Taino Necklace with a Variety of Carved Discoidal Shell and Stone Beads

The shell and stone beads in this necklace are varied in size, material, and color, including several rare miniature turquoise beads. There are several carved shell beads known as llaves, or key-shaped forms. All the stones were drilled and polished. The Taíno artists were known for their miniature stone works, including beads, amulets, axes, and even miniature three-pointers (zemis).

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Necklace Length: 26"; Beads range in diameter: 1/10" to 1/2"

Retail: \$1,200.

inv# 99391

137



Section of a Taíno Shell Necklace with Original Ancient Stringing

This woven section illustrates that the Taíno were talented weavers. Each Operla shell was individually notched and strung and knotted on each length of double-stranded, three-ply cotton cord. The band is tightly woven, with nine two-ply cord wefts.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length of Weave: 1 3/4"

Shells vary in length from 1/2" to 3/4"

Retail: \$375.

inv# 99385

Ornamentation - Beads & Pendants

138



5 Taíno Graduated Carved Cone Snail Shells

Each of these graduated beads were carved from the cone snail shells (*gastropoda Conidae*), a species common to the Dominican Republic. They were each carved with a slit for stringing and cut or sliced at both ends. The smallest beads were the hardest to work without breaking.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: H: 1/3" to 1/2"

Retail: \$100.

inv# 99384

139



Taíno Necklace with Nine Carved Stone Beads in Varying Sizes

Necklace of nine Taíno carved stone cylindrical beads in a variety of sizes. It took great skill to drill long holes and sometimes even greater skill for small stones, as they often break in the drilling process.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 1/4" to 2"

Retail: \$900.

inv# 99379

140



Three Long Taíno Stone Beads

These unusually large and heavy stone shaped beads would have required great skill to be able to drill. These beads represent a variety of types of shapes, from slender to ribbed and tapered. Such large beads would have been reserved for high status individuals.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 2" to 3.5"

Retail: \$550.

inv# 99378

141



Set of Six Taíno Cylindrical Stone Beads

These beads are examples of the delicate craftsmanship that the Taíno employed even for the simplest of ornaments. Cylindrical beads were carefully shaped and drilled. It took great effort to drill longitudinally, especially if the bead was slender or long. The beads range in shape from cylindrical, to tapered, to plain discs (discoidal).

Provenance: Dominican Republic, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1/4" to 2"

Retail: \$300.

inv# 99377

142



Taíno Shell Square Dress Appliqué

This miniature shell appliqué belonged to a larger set that once covered the tunic of a chief. It's hard to imagine the time and care required to make such an ornament.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 5/8 x Width: 6/8"

Retail: \$50.

inv# 99370

143



5 Taíno Canine Teeth Pendants

This rare, small group of matching canine teeth probably came from wild dogs and were drilled with suspension holes. In the Caribbean, the dog substituted for the mainland jaguar and was a primary predator, indicating fierceness and strength. These teeth were carved, sometimes with faces, perhaps representing deities. They would have been worn either as a single pendant or strung together in a group as a necklace.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length Range: 1 to 1 1/2"

Retail: \$1,250.

inv# 99355

144



Taíno Stone Belt Clasp

This stylized ornament is chipped on the right side but originally had two matching ends. Taíno belt clasps are quite rare, as only a very few are known.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 2"

Retail: \$300.

inv# 99331

145



Taíno Group of 38 Shell Discs

These shell discs, used as a widespread form of currency, were typically made from the best queen conch shells (*Stombus gigas*), which lives in sea grass beds just off the shore. The discs were carefully string sawed from the pointed tips of the shells and then the hole was enlarged with a hard tool of crystal.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Diameter: average 3 to 5 mm

Retail: \$200.

inv# 99374

Ornamentation - Bracelets

146



Taíno Shell Bracelet with Incised Opposing Birds

This bracelet is made from a large hard shell and incised with opposing birds' heads on the top and on the bottom, separated by rows of horizontal lines.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Width 1 1/2" x Length 2 1/4"

Retail: \$3,500.

inv# 98235

147



Four Taíno Shell Bracelets with Abstract Frog Imagery

Frogs are considered symbols of fertility in Taíno religion.

The central circle design represents the navel, or axis mundi, that pierced the center of the earth and was a conduit that led to the spirits and ancestors of the otherworld.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length Range: 1 1/4 to 2 1/4"

Retail: \$800.

inv# 99333

148



Six Taíno Bone and Shell Bracelet Elements

These ornaments have two drilled holes at either end. They were used as either bracelet elements or necklace clasps. It is hard to find shell ornaments with such good patina still intact.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Condition: Mounted on a custom made Plexi base.

Dimensions: From left: 1 1/4, 1 3/4", 2.5", 1.5", 1 1/4", 1"

Retail: \$900.

inv# 98372B

Ornamentation - Ear Spools & Labrets

149



9 Taíno Shell, Bone and Clay Ear Ornaments

These earspools are typical of the types worn by the Taíno and their predecessors from the Amazon Basin of South America. They are still worn today by contemporary tribes in the Amazon.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1 to 2 1/4"

inv# 99351

Retail: \$950.

150



Ten Taíno Stone Lip Labrets

Conically shaped labrets are unique to the Taíno. These labrets were made from a wide variety of stones including agate, marble, and serpentine. Labrets were usually reserved for facial décor for people of status.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height Range: 1/4 to 1/2"

Retail: \$1,400.

inv# 99352

Ceramics - Utilitarian

151



Taíno Large Ceramic Vessel with Winged Bats

This large feasting bowl would have been used when the Taíno held large festivals in the plazas of their communities, during which singing, dancing and ball games could last for days. Part social and part ritual, shamans and chiefs would go into trances to communicate with spirits and ancestors during these festivals. The bat is a common motif in Taíno art, and symbolized spirits and ancestors in the otherworld. This type of vessel is found in the Dominican Republic and is considered a good size.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 5" x Diameter: 11" inches

Retail: \$7,500.

inv# 99524

152



Pre-Taíno (Igneri) Ceramic Bowl with Bat Shaped Handles

The Igneri were Arawak-Ostionoid people who inhabited the Greater Antilles from the third through tenth centuries. Their ceramics can be identified by the bat shaped handles, broadly incised designs and tiered bases. The Ostionoid Igneri inhabited the zone around Altos de Chavon, and similar vessels are discussed and illustrated in Commemorative Catalog, 1992: 15 and 47.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Ostionoid, c. AD 200 - 900

Dimensions: Height: 5" x Width 8"

Retail: \$3,600.

inv# 99160

153



Taíno Ceramic Bowl with Geometric Incised and Opposed Linear Tab Handles

The Igneri were Arawak-Ostionoid people who inhabited the Greater Antilles from the Third through Tenth centuries. Their ceramics can be identified by bat-shaped handles, broadly incised designs, and tiered bases. The Ostionoid Igneri inhabited the zone around Altos de Chavon, and similar vessels are discussed and illustrated in an Altos de Chavon commemorative catalog published in 1992.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 7" x Width: 12"

Retail: \$4,000.

inv# 99227

154



Taíno Ceramic Libation Bowl

This small bowl has a rim of which dips on two sides and was used to drink during ceremonies. The bowl has nice proportions and can be comfortably held in two hands. Has well defined rim

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 2 1/4" x Width: 4 3/4"

Retail: \$750.

inv# 99151

155



Taíno Group of 14 Round Ceramic Seals or Stamps

This eclectic group of ceramic seals of is decorated with various geometric designs, one with zoomorphic motif (frog or bat) on the grip. The Taíno dipped these stamps in pigments made from crushed bija and jagua seeds and then imprinted them on their own skins for ceremonial events. Similar examples are illustrated in

"Altos de Chavon", p. 28.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Largest diameter: 3"; Smallest diameter: 1 1/4"

Retail: \$900.

inv# 99155

Ceramics - Adornos

156



Taíno Ceramic Top to a Jar Depicting a Bat's Head

Large jars were often made with narrow spouts and decorated with effigies. This is one of those spouts and is unusual as depicts a bat which is very rare in Taíno art.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Diameter 3" x Height 4"

Retail: \$900.

inv# M4055

157



Set of 8 Taíno Ceramic Anthropomorphic Faces

These heads were used as adornos (decorative handles) on ceramic plates and bowls.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Approximately. 1-3" in height.

Retail: \$1,200.

inv# 99450

158



Set of 7 Taíno Ceramic Animal Faces

Provenance: Dominican Republic, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Approx. 1-2 1/2"

Retail: \$350.

inv# 99451

159



Set of 8 Taíno Ceramic Animal Faces

These anthropomorphic animal heads were used as adornos (decorative handles) on ceramic plates and bowls.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Approx. 1-3 in.

Retail: \$800.

inv# 99452

160



Set of 7 Taíno Ceramic Animal Faces

Each of these faces were adornos that broke off from vessels.

Adornos were almost like handles and placed on each end of the bowl or dish. Most adornos were simple, or had some

incising, **Provenance:** Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500 **Dimensions:** Height: 1" to 2"

Retail: \$950.

inv# 99543

Lapidary Tools

161



Taíno Bone Drilling and Incising Marker

The hollow bone tube has marks and different size drill holes used to determine the size of a drill bit. The cross hatch indicated the thickness of a scribe tool.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Dimensions: Length: 1 3/8"

Retail: \$275.

inv# 98501

162



3 Taíno Stylized Shell Carving Tools

These three beautiful, stylized shell carvings were used as tools for burnishing and incising clay objects.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Courian Subseries, c. 2000 BC - AD 250

Dimensions: Length: 2 in, 1.5 in, and 1.5 in.

Retail: \$400.

inv# 99660

163



Taíno Shell Eye Inlay with Circular Motifs

Circular shell ornaments of this type were used as inlays for the eyes of zemi statues. The interior "void" pupil area was usually filled with gold or black shell.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Diameter: 1 1/4"

Retail: \$200.

inv# 99216

164



Two Taíno Carved Shell Discs that Could be Eyes for a Idol

The shell with the central hole could have had a center pupil in a different material, and may have been part of a larger sculpture. The other shell has its pupil indicated by small drill holes around the center hole.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Diameter: 1 5/8"

Retail: \$250.

inv# 99312

165



5 Taíno Shell Disc Ornaments

These discs were of unknown use and vary in size and thickness. These could have been eyes or inlays for larger idols.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Diameter Range: 3/8" to 1 "

Retail: \$100.

inv# 99358

166



8 Taíno Carved Shell Beads in Varying States of Completion

These different shells reveal the carving process of the ancient Taíno craftspeople. These shell beads would likely have been intended for teeth or eyes, or for necklace elements.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Height: 1/2"

Retail: \$160.

inv# 99382

167



Four Taíno Carved Mother of Pearl Beads

These four delicately carved beads are made from a pearlescent species of ocean shell, likely a clam or mollusk. The shells are thin and tend to break if drilled or carved. It is quite rare to find them intact.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 1/4" to 7/8"

Retail: \$100.

inv# 99389

168



Taíno Shell Necklace Section on the Original Hemp Cord

There are 22 matching square-shaped shell beads each with a drilled hole in the center. The individual beads are almost identical in size and shape and were originally part of a longer choker style necklace. Each bead is elaborately attached both to each other and to the braid. There are 8 paired cords of string making up the choker and 4 paired cords run through the bead hole, using a complicated technique of bead stringing without the use of knots. The cord and the beads are from an original necklace. It's quite rare to find the original hemp cord intact.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, Early Classic Period, c. AD 600 - 1000

Condition: The cord and the beads are from an original necklace.

Dimensions: Length of section: 2"; Size of bead: 5/16"

Retail: \$350.

inv# 99380

169



Taíno Carved Shell with Matching Bead

These snail shells were in abundance and made both individual cut beads as well as utilizing the entire shell as a single necklace element. They appear to be crafted from the same shell.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Condition:

Dimensions: Height: 1/2"

Retail: \$50.

inv# 99381

170



Set of 3 Taíno Ovoid Shell Mouth Elements

These three carved shells demonstrate the differing degrees of complexity in fabricating miniature stone mouths, with the largest being a completed open mouth and the other two as incomplete mouths. These mouth elements would likely have been inlaid into a larger wood or stone carved idol or deity figure

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Width: 3/4" to 2 5/8"

Retail: \$150.

inv# 99525

171

**Taíno Shell Teeth Inlay**

This type of inlay represents a set of teeth that were set into the mouth cavities of zemi spirit images. In this case, the large size of the inlay suggests that it was placed in the mouth of a wooden figure or statue. The size and the thickness indicate that it must have been carved from a very large bivalve.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, Taíno, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 2 1/2"

Retail: \$175.

inv# 99334

172

**2 Sets of Taíno Carved Oblong Shaped Teeth**

The oblong shaped sets of teeth were to be inserted into wood carvings with deep profiles like serpents or crocodiles. The larger set is tapered at the back to fit into a deep mouth.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Length: 3/8" to 1 1/2"

Retail: \$250.

inv# 99528

173

**3 Sets of Taíno Carved Shell Teeth**

These teeth show the variety of different shaped teeth. The teeth were string saw cut. Shell teeth were set into figurative amulets or wood carvings or strung on a necklace.

Provenance: Dominican Republic, c. AD 1000 - 1500

Dimensions: Width: 3/4" to 1 1/4"

Retail: \$300.

inv# 99526

For further details and additional images of all 173 objects in the collection, visit:

https://www.precolumbianart4sale.com/exhibition/19/exhibition_works/

Prices are available upon request at dbfinearts@gmail.com.

A Word on Distinguishing Forgeries from Authentic Taíno Artifacts

Since the explosion of interest in ethnographic art beginning in the late 1940s, there has been an ever-growing market for forgeries of Pre-Columbian art, which has intensified with the invention of the Internet. There is a preponderance of fake Taíno art manufactured in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, passed through the US and Europe, and ultimately sold on the secondary art market. There are two primary methods for determining whether an artifact has been forged – stylistic, and technical. Many forgeries have such grossly exaggerated stylistic elements that they are easy to spot. Others more subtly depart from the stylistic canons of the original artisans and require an expert eye to discern. Technical analysis of forgeries involves scientific and archaeological methods of authenticating the time-period, region, and material composition of an artifact. There is an informal consensus among antiquities experts that technical authentication methods should not be published, as the knowledge would be used by forgers to improve or modify their techniques.

With my 40 years of experience researching and collecting Pre-Columbian and Taíno art, I can share some information with my clients on how to avoid forgeries from a purely stylistic standpoint. Inauthentic Taíno artifacts tend to have larger and more exaggerated facial features, as well as geometric designs that are irregular or clumsy, whereas authentic Taíno carvings are more sensible. Authentic Taíno *duhos* (small to large-scale carved wooden zemis). Crouching wood figures are extremely rare and susceptible to being faked. Ancient wood found in caves was often used to create these wooden figures and stools. Buyers are tempted to purchase these rare wood objects if the wood looks aged, but aged wood is not an automatic indicator of authenticity. Fancy stone-handled axes are also rare and subject to being faked. Forgers often carve the blades to depict animals or figures towards the top of the handle; their carvings do not reflect the sophistication of the Taíno's abstract and stylized aesthetic.

To get a feel for identifying forgeries stylistically, it is useful to look toward the literature on the Taíno. One of the most important researchers of Taíno art is the collector and archaeologist Manuel Antonio García Arevalo. He has a fine museum of Taíno art. Arevalo told me that every Taíno artifact has both dual aesthetic and functional purposes. I have also found that the well-illustrated 25th and the 34th annual reports of the Bureau of Ethnology are among the best references that can help distinguish authentic Taíno art from forgeries. (*The BAE was dissolved in 1965 and ultimately absorbed by the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, however the reports are still available from booksellers online*).

Other well-illustrated references include: (1) Rene Herrera Fritot's *Estudio De Las Hachas Antillanas*. La Habana Cuba, 1964, an excellent book on stone celts and axes. (2) *REAL, RECENT, OR REPLICA: Pre-Columbian Caribbean Heritage as Art, Commodity, and Inspiration*, edited by Joanna Ostapkowicz and Jonathan A. Hanna, (3) *CARIBBEAN FIGURE PENDANTS: Style and Subject Matter of the Greater Antilles*, by Vernon James, and (4) *ARTE del MAR: Art of the Early Caribbean*, published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2020, available online at Metmuseum.org, and (5 & 6) Lawrence Waldron's two texts, *Pre-Columbian art of the Caribbean - and Handbook of Ceramic Animal Symbols in The Ancient Lesser Antilles*.

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