Form - Coming Up for Air

Object: Form

Place of origin: Tommerup Stationsby (made)

Date: 2001 (made)

Artist/Maker: Oyekan, Lawson, born 1961 (maker)

Materials and Techniques: Earthenware; handbuilt

Museum number: C.22-2005

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

Born in London of Nigerian parents in 1961, Oyekan was raised in Nigeria, before returning to London in 1985, where he now primarily works. His large and ambitious sculptural forms, such as this example, have a raw, earthy character, and have been said to recall giant termite mounds. However, by-and-large, his work resists literal reading. Essentially abstract in nature, and assembled from pads of clay in a manner that suggests a very direct and intuitive handling of the material, his forms possess an essentially mysterious and indeed poetic quality. This is enhanced by an obscure and illegible calligraphy that covers their unglazed surfaces. The forms nevertheless embody certain humanistic characteristics, both through scale and proportion, as well as other attributes. The numerous small gaps that are a characteristic element of their forms can be seen as eyes, lending the forms the status of observers. Similarly, the light-admitting nature of the apertures also provides a metaphor for the healing of the body.

Descriptive line

Sculptural form, "Coming Up for Air" by Lawson Oyekan, Tommerup Stationsby, 2001

Physical description

Tall, vertical form in red earthenware, constructed from pads of clay, the surface roughly pierced and incised with illegible calligraphy.

Dimensions

Height: 195 cm, Width: 38 cm approximate

Museum number

C.22-2005

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O115651/coming-up-for-air-form-oyekan-lawson/