



## Sculptural vase with 8 mermaid figures

### Date

ca. 2015

### Primary Maker

Magdalena Pedro Martínez

### Medium

ceramic (barro negro)

### Description

Sculpture with removable dolls/mermaids inserted by pins (a. Main vase b-i. removeable mermaids). The barro negro (black clay) ceramic tradition in San Bartolo Coyotepec

(Oaxaca, Mexico) dates to some 2,500 years ago, owing to the presence of black clay at a particular site in the village. Whereas barro negro has been historically associated with utilitarian cookware, Magdalena Pedro Martínez, who is also a medical doctor, creates figurative barro negro sculptures. She learned to work in this tradition in her family's ceramic workshop. She specializes in female figures in traditional dress of different regions in Mexico. In this way, she is also working within the costumbrista tradition, the practice of representing the daily life of everyday Mexicans in art and literature. These representations, which originated in Spain, were often romanticized images of "tipos populares" (popular types) that might have been depictions based on regional dress or types of labor. For Magdalena Pedro Martínez, however, working within costumbrismo is not a romanticization; rather it is a way of perpetuating the regional traditions that she saw disappearing. For her, the work is a form of preserving Mexican culture. She works with her husband and daughter, Naomi Magdalena Santos Pedro. This particular piece features small-scale removable figures placed on a round structure. Within this one piece, then, there are representations of various Mexican traditional dress, rendered in tremendous detail and with contrast between areas of matte finish and areas burnished with quartz for a glossier finish. The figures are all hand built and wood fired at a low temperature. Magdalena Pedro Martínez is a frequent exhibitor at the International Folk Art Market.

### Dimensions

12 1/2 × 13 × 13 in. (31.7501 × 33.0201 × 33.0201 cm)