

Basic Detail Report



Devil

Date

1980s-1990s

Primary Maker

Burgess Dulaney

Medium

Unfired mud, glass marbles, ceramic plate shards

Description

Devil with abbreviated torso, head built-out horns, prominent ears, and nose. Gouged out eyes (with marble eyeballs) and mouth with ceramic teeth. Dulaney was the

second youngest of 12 children, and lived his entire life in Itawamba County, Mississippi, near Fulton. He never attended school and could not read or write. He worked on the family farm, raising cotton, corn and hogs. In his spare time, and when he became too old to do the physical labor of farming, he gathered the Mississippi mud from the clay pits behind his family home to sculpt his human, animal or otherworldly figures, as well as some vessels. The devil was a favorite subject of his. Over time, and through trial and error, he learned to identify his preferred mud (“the stickier the better”), process out impurities with his own spit, and dry the sculpted pieces slowly so they would not crack. The use of teeth from shards of a broken plate suggests he was familiar with the tradition of Southern face jugs that sometimes did the same. Indeed, the part of northern Mississippi where he lived, 18 miles from the Alabama border, was known as a “Jug Town” where in the early 20th century there were nearly 100 active potters. As well, there were near his family property Mississippian Indian mounds, where Dulaney and his siblings sometimes found ceramic sherds. Burgess Dulaney’s work came to the attention of collectors and later museums because he gifted or bartered a number of pieces to various local merchants—such as the local veterinarian, funeral parlor, drugstore, etc. Dulaney never created his work for sale, just for his own satisfaction and to give away. A teacher at the local junior college, Robert Reedy, learned about Dulaney’s work in this way and took an interest, introducing several collectors to the work, including the Lowes and the Rosenaks. Dulaney was included in an exhibition in 1987, *Baking in the Sun: Visionary Images from the South* (University of Southwestern Louisiana), featuring 16 artists in all. His sculptures are in the Mississippi Museum of Art, the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, and the American Visionary Art Museum (LAddison).

Dimensions

12 1/2 × 9 × 6 in. (31.7501 × 22.86 × 15.24 cm)