Primary Maker: Simone Leigh
Title: Basse Terre
Date: 2017
Medium: Fired clay, porcelain, resin, India ink
Dimensions: Overall: 33 × 18 × 18 in. (83.8 × 45.7 × 45.7 cm)
Credit Line: Purchased through the generosity of Pamela and Arthur Sanders, Pam and Scott Schafler
Object Number: 2017.74

Object Name: Bust
Classification: SCULPTURE

Curatorial Remarks:
The Brooklyn-based artist Simone Leigh draws upon forms, techniques, and visual cues from across Africa and its diaspora--the communities of descendants scattered around the globe--to reflect on continuity and change. The title of this bust refers to one of the Guadeloupe islands in the Caribbean. One of Leigh's central themes is the black female body as a "repository of lived experience" containing strength, knowledge, and healing wisdom. Here, the body's beehive shape and textured surface reference the mud dwelling structures traditionally made by the Musgum people of Cameroon and Chad. The eyeless features suggest an inner life that we, the viewers, cannot fully apprehend. Basse Terre is part of Simone Leigh's Anatomy of Architecture series. The steeply-domed body is coil-built, and the head is covered with pale, hand-rolled porcelain roses that reference the piecework performed by women on a continual basis.