





*The Steven Michaan Collection  
of North American Tribal Arts*

# *The Art of the Spirit World*

NORTHWEST COAST

*By Steven Michaan*

*Foreword & Introduction by  
Dr. Peter T. Furst, Ph.D.*

*Photographs by Steve Tucker & Chuck Dorris  
Artifact descriptions by Steven Clay Brown  
Design & Digital by Chuck Dorris, Exit49, Inc.  
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*Dedicated to my wife, Nevine, for her constant inspiration and patience with me and my collecting, and Susan Fierro, my editor and friend. Without her constant patience, dedication, encouragement, and hard work, these books would not have happened.*

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*Auk Indian Shaman with ermine skin in hair and wearing a fur cape, carved amulet necklace, holding raven rattle, c.1900*



## Shamanism

by Dr. Peter T. Furst, Ph.D.

*"A man does not become an angakog (shaman) because he wishes it himself, but because certain mysterious powers in the universe convey to him the impression that he has been chosen, and this takes place in a dream."*

Knut Rasmussen

*Across Arctic America: Narrative of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921-1924*

Shamanic religions are animist, with a belief that everything in the environment has a soul and is sensate, including humans, plants, animals, rain, mountains, rocks, rivers, thunder, lightning, stars and planets, even man-made tools.

The terminology of shamanism is Siberian or Central Asian, as were, of course, the ancestors of Native Americans, who ventured from their Asiatic homelands in small bands of hunters and food collectors as long ago as 35,000-40,000 years, traveling on foot or in primitive but water-tight boats of animal skins stretched over driftwood or bone across ice-free coastal or near-coastal waters.

Siberia bequeathed us the terminology and the basic definitions ("shaman" came into German, English and other languages by way of Russian, from the Tungus *saman*, with earlier roots in Sanskrit, for the technician of the sacred and Master or Mistress of ecstasy and the spirits. This was because it was encountered and studied there earlier than anywhere else by educated travelers and natural historians, who witnessed its practices first-hand and described them as though they were primarily a northern Arctic phenomenon that had no comparable beliefs and practices anywhere else.

They did discover that the practitioners of shamanic techniques of treating illness functioned primarily in societies that valued the ecstatic-visionary trance, even regarding it as the primary religious experience. They treated the shamanic cosmos as though it was stratified, with varying numbers of cosmic levels, but nowhere less than three that are accessible to him or her in out-of-body travels of the soul, in other words, in the ecstatic visionary trance.

Notwithstanding the shaman's mastery of ecstatic techniques, there are varieties of religious ecstasy that do not properly belong with shamanism, hence, not every ecstatic is a shaman. As the late Mircea Eliade, professor of comparative religion at the University of Chicago and author of the classic *Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1964), put it, what sets the shaman apart from other mystics or ecstatic is that he or she specializes in an ecstatic trance "during which his soul is believed to leave his body and ascend to the sky, or descend into the underworld."

Another distinction concerns the special relationship the shaman has with the spirits. Many people claim to have such an intimate connection, whether in the form of controlling them or being possessed by them. But the shaman's affinity with the spirits is of a different order: the shaman recruits his helpers from among the spirits of animals, plants, and other phenomena to assist him or her in encounters with the extra-human sphere, with the supernatural masters or mistresses of game and plants, the rulers of sky or underworld, and the ghosts of the dead. The helping spirits accompany shamans on celestial or chthonic out-of-body journeys, assist them in overcoming obstacles and dangers, do battle on their side or in their place against demons and sorcerers, help locate and retrieve lost or stolen souls, and so on.

Shamans are recruited by various means: they may inherit their vocation or receive a supernatural call, most commonly through a serious illness that responds to no treatment until the candidate agrees to obey the summons to shamanhood. Others may decide to take up shamanising of their own free will, or they may be designated for the purpose by family, lineage or clan (as among the Tungus). However, almost always the individual has been "chosen by the spirits."

Future shamans may also believe to have been selected by virtue of having survived some dramatic event, after being struck by lightning, falling from a high tree, or successfully undergoing an ordeal that can be homologized with an initiatory ordeal. As an example of the latter, Eliade (1987:203) mentions the case of an Inuit (Eskimo) who spent five days in icy water without his clothes becoming wet.

The one thing sign that can definitely be ruled out is psychopathological or neuropathic sickness. Eliade (ibid) rejects it absolutely. It is not true that shamans are or have to be neuropathics, he writes, on the contrary, those among candidate shamans who have displayed aberrant behavior "have succeeded in healing themselves." Indeed, he writes, the shaman's initiation is frequently precisely the solution of the psychic crisis brought on by the first symptoms of election or call."

What is clear from the cross-cultural evidence is that the shamanic vocation often implies a crisis that simulates the symptoms of madness or, in the case of the Inuit, what has been wrongly called "Arctic hysteria." But, according to Eliade, one cannot become a shaman until one has resolved this crisis, usually by overcoming sufferings that are exactly like the ordeals of passage from youth into adulthood, or into a new status in the society.



“Just as in puberty rites or rites of entrance into a secret society the novice is ‘killed’ by semi-divine or demonic beings whom he sees dismembering his body and putting it back together. Recovery from the ordeal, then, is tantamount to a cure, and one cannot become a shaman until one has also recovered from one.”

This element of dismemberment by an initiatory demon is found in many indigenous shamanic cultures, from Siberia to the Canadian Arctic, and in the Americas southward from the Northwest Coast through the southwestern desert and the tropical forests of Amazonia to the Tierra de Fuego. In his classic work, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1964), Eliade effectively demolished the oft-repeated notion that the Arctic shaman’s spontaneous ecstatic trance could be explained as a form of “Arctic hysteria,” a condition that according to Ake Ohlmarks (1939), a Swedish author and historian of religion, is supposedly brought on by the environment of extreme cold, desert-like solitude, long nights, and vitamin deprivation, giving rise to “cosmic oppression” especially acting on those, especially shamans, with a nervous constitution. In the sub-Arctic, in contrast, according to Ohlmarks, the shaman is no longer subject to the stresses of an Arctic environment and so has to satisfy himself with a semi-trance with the aid of what he calls “narcotics.”

Whatever the route by which the shaman may have come by his office—and shamanic training more often than not requires years of perseverance, deprivations and self-sacrifice—to be recognized as such he or she must have undergone two different kinds of instruction. First is the ecstatic route, in which the candidate is taught by the spirits and ancestor-shamans through dreams and ecstatic-visionary trances, and second, instruction by a master shaman in the shamanic curing and ritual techniques, the multitude of spirits of plants and animals, the sacred geography, the mythic history of the shaman’s society, magical songs, the special language to which only shamans are privy, and so on.

Of course, an experienced shaman already knows the sacred geography, the path to the center of the universe, the opening in the sky through which he or she must pass safely, or with minimal injury, on their way to the highest heaven. (The pulsating aperture through which shamans must pass and make it back with only slight injury to remind that they are human and not spirit, have their analogy in the Symplegades, the clashing islands of Greek mythology that bar the way for Jason’s Argonauts in their quest for the Golden Fleece.)

There is a whole string of related myths in world literature whose message is that only spirits, heroes, and the dead, can make it safely to the Otherworld and back to tell the story.

So, for example, in one Eskimo tale, an angakok on his way to plead with the goddess in charge of sea animals to release a few to be hunted by his people, who are starving because of a tabu violation. First he must make it safely down a furious whirlpool, and then pass through a pair of rapidly pulsating icebergs at just the moment when they open up. Only after these ordeals does he reach the goddess in her abode at the bottom of the sea. He makes it safely, but to remind him that he is a man and not a spirit, the ice crushes the stern of his fragile kayak. When he sees the goddess, she is filthy with the sins of humankind, and unkempt because she can’t comb her hair, because her fingers were turned into flippers when her father cut them off to lighten the kayak in which he tries to return her to her husband. He is really an Arctic tern, a bird Eskimos often blame for making storms worse. Transformed into a seal, the goddess travels to the bottom in company with her father, who has been transformed into a dog that guards her animals, and the storm subsides.

In an Iroquois myth, the lone survivor of a party of young warriors attempting to go to the end of the earth must pass a giant pair of clashing rocks. To reach his goal, he must cross clashing masses of ice evade injury to his fragile skin boat. He paddles furiously to reach the dangerous islands at the precise instant when the way opens and he slips through as fast as he can, lest he be injured or crushed by the falling ice. The hero or heroes of this Native American version of the classic Greek myth of the Symplegades, the clashing islands that stood in the way of Jason and the Argonauts. The mythic travelers are not explicitly shamans, or even candidate shamans, but the Indian art historian and historian of religion Ananda Kentish Coomeraswami has made the *Symplegades*, the clashing islands of classic Greek mythology the “type motif” for the virtually world-wide quest through what Eliade called the “paradoxical passage.”

With respect to the erroneous but persistent equation between shamans and the mentally ill in some of the older literature, Eliade points out that shamans tend to have a sometimes astonishing capacity to control even ecstatic movement, and often have more mental and physical endurance than other members of their social group—as guardians of the rich traditions and esoteric knowledge, and as performers of a vast corpus of sacred and magical songs and evocations—often also command a much more extensive vocabulary than their compatriots. Thus, the poetic vocabulary of a Yakut shaman contains about 12,000 words, while the ordinary language of the rest of the community has only about 4,000.

The same applies to the shamans of other indigenous societies. Anthropologist Johannes Wilbert, who for nearly four decades has worked with shamans of the Warao of the Orinoco Delta in Venezuela, has found the same differential between the vocabularies of the Warao specialist in the sacred and that of ordinary Warao.

### Sickness, Intrusion and Soul Loss

In both Asia and the Americas, a shaman considered sickness, intrusion and soul loss common causes of illnesses that required intervention. Sickness intrusion was the shooting of a projectile bearing an illness from afar into the victim by supernatural means, either by a human enemy or a sorcerer whose services had been secured against payment, or even by an offended god or spirit. There are also instances where the shooting of such a projectile had the purpose of “killing” a novice shaman with his or her miraculous revival as a different person replete with newly acquired powers.

Alfred L. Kroeber (1929:274) writes of master shamans of the Southern Maidu in California shooting novices with magical objects called ci’la as part of their training. The novices would fall to the ground as though dead and be revived by the shaman who, against payment of a fee, would suck the magical projectile from their bodies and continue to treat them for several days until the novices had regained their full strength. Shamans also shot each other in contests or demonstrations of their magical power: “the shaman would smoke,” writes Kroeber, “then take his arrow-like ci’la and, looking between the novices’ legs, shoot it from a miniature bow of quill with a woman’s hair, at a man perhaps ‘a mile off,’ who dropped. The shaman then revived him and he was new, stronger than before.” Brushing the intrusive pathogen to some central place and sucking it out in the form of a physical object – a thorn, perhaps, or a seed, or a pebble.

It used to be assumed that soul loss and sickness intrusion were mutually exclusive, but the literature shows that although the one may predominate over the other in some instances as the primary cause of illness, more commonly they coexist. According to Eliade, in Siberia and Central Asia, “rape of the soul” is by far the most widespread among the several conceptions of the cause of illness, hence its recovery is one of the principal aspects of the shaman as healer. In fact, the curing of sickness, which required the discovery and neutralization of its supernatural cause, and not just the removal of symptoms – sometimes through great expenditure of psychic and physical energy on the part of the curer – is surely one of the primary and most immediately apparent functions of shamans in traditional societies, whatever other roles they fulfill.



*Skoon-doo-oo-yak [Skundoo], shaman of the Eagle Tribe, c.1898-1920*

*The Steven Michaan Collection of North American Tribal Arts*  
by Dr. Peter T. Furst, Ph.D.

The importance of the objects in this collection is enormous.

Wood, walrus ivory, and abalone shell have always been abundant on the Northwest coast of North America. From the eighteenth century on they were the primary materials from which indigenous artists produced some of the greatest and most timeless art in the Indian Americas north of Mexico.

There is no word for “art” in the Western sense in indigenous languages, and no such concept in their world view. To quote art historian Allen Wardwell, a leading scholar of this great tradition, former curator at the Art Institute of Chicago of what is thankfully no longer called “primitive art,” and author of, among other works, the authoritative *Intangible Visions: Northwest Coast Indian Shamanism and Its Art* (1996), these works can be considered true art:

"The images most often brought to mind are those of objects associated with prestige and the display of important family crests in the form of zoomorphic images. Totem poles, large painted seagoing canoes, Chilkat blankets, painted house fronts, storage boxes, and the masks, rattles, and other paraphernalia made for long feasts and ceremonial cycles, become the hallmarks of the art. Less well known but at least as important, however, are the art objects that were made to accompany the performances of the shamans, those individuals responsible for controlling events caused by supernaturals.

In their original context, these objects inspired respect, awe, and sometimes even dread. By acting to connect the shaman with his spirit helpers, they were articles of great power that could not be looked casually or even exposed unless under the proper controlled conditions. Contact with these objects by those who did not know how to handle them was dangerous and to be avoided. When not in use, they were kept in boxes either in parts of the shaman's house that were sealed off from visitors or in caches in the forest so that the uninitiated would not encounter them."

Of course, not all Northwest Coast art was shamanic, though much of it, including the grandest, the “totem poles,” would not have been possible without the shamanic concept of transformation, and religions that invested not only animals and people with sentience and a soul, but even the man-made environment. In the absence of documentation, it is often difficult to tell whether an art object is shamanic, or a symbol of noble ancestry, social position, and wealth. But perhaps it does not matter, because it can be both at the same time. Totem poles, so named, or misnamed, because whites, especially missionaries, assumed them to be objects of worship as tribal icons or “totems,” rather than memorials to mythic ancestors that usually had the form of animals. They need not have been of large size and predatory life- ways, but could be of any size from small, like the frog, mouse or squirrel, whale or grizzly bear.

Curiously, animal ancestors were never depicted with characteristics that, like fangs or claws, would mark them visually as carnivorous predators, and therefore dangerous to hunters, such as grizzlies, black and brown bears, mountain lions, wolverines, or killer whales. In fact, especially the last were honored as “shaman makers,” meaning one who facilitates passage in ecstatic-visionary dream states into the vocation of specialists in the sacred. These were most often “called by the spirits” by means of an illness whose cure depended on their willingness to take up the onerous duties of the shaman.

Totem poles and other oversized art, such as the great zoomorphic feast dishes of the Kwakiutl of British Columbia (pronounced Kwagool), are testimony to what could be called a Northwest Coast version of “megalthic thinking,” even the artists here worked with wood not stone, as had the Olmecs, the founders of ancient Mesoamerica's first civilization.

To all appearances, what seems to have impelled their artists three thousand years ago to laboriously transform raw basalt with what was essentially a Stone Age tool kit into memorials to illustrious rulers, or and what might have been alter-like replicas of sacred mountains with gods emerging into the light from gaping caves. While the raw multi-ton raw material for this art had to be floated fifty or more miles downriver from their closest sources in the Tuxtla Mountains in southern Veracruz, giants of Northwest Coast art like the totem poles could be worked close to home.

Some well-preserved poles still tower over old indigenous villages inhabited by Native people who, though like the Haida, Tsimshians or Tlingit, have long been Christianized, (sometimes to undesirable ends), remember the ancestral myths depicted on them, and honor the animals with songs that celebrate long-ago deeds from myth time. Thus, people living in the old village of Kitwang'gool on the Upper Skeena River in southern Alaska, know the stories of the poles so well these can still be heard even on non-ceremonial occasions being chanted or sung to the rhythmic sounds of empty beer and soft drink cans filled with pebbles to serve as substitute drums. The carvers of totem poles know their subject matter so well they carved, and still carve, the them freehand, employing only an axe, adze, and curved knife without prior drawings or photographs. Towering cedars that survived the clear-cutting that has become the regrettable norm of the timber industry, are stripped of bark and branches and carved from memories more than a century old.

Northwest Coast Indian art can be divided into two categories: Heraldic, proclaiming social status, clan and family history, and wealth, of which the host of a festive occasion is expected to distribute some as gifts to the guests; and Shamanic, including amulets, animal masks; zoomorphic war helmets; headdresses, storage boxes for food and the “water of life,” actually urine, preferably that of women, and tangible treasures like staff



and bentwood containers for the "water of life" (actually urine, especially women's), to which therapeutic and life-restoring properties were, and in some traditional households, still ascribed, and, of course, masks and ornaments that helped with or depicted and reinforced transformation.

In the absence of documentation, it is not always easy to determine whether the object was used exclusively by a shaman, such as his grave house containing his remains and magical paraphernalia, or only occasionally. The boundaries between the two categories tend to be indistinct, or movable from one to the other. Three thousand years after the Olmecs, their distant cousins in northwestern North America left their mark on history with monumental art no less impressive, but destined for a much briefer lifespan.

Everyday and ceremonial activities were centered on communal houses strung along the narrow coasts. These cedar wood dwellings were roughly square and often of enormous size, with gable or shed-roofs resting on massive posts of cedar and other woods from three to fifteen feet in height and two or more across. The houses were sheathed in cedar planks several inches thick and two or three feet wide.

The largest house known in the south was a communal dwelling five hundred feet long and seventy feet across. Built by communal labor, and sheltering several families in their own private spaces along the walls, these houses were considered alive and sentient, called by the names of the clans, family lineages, crest animals, or hereditary nobles that had commissioned them (e.g. Whale House, Grizzly Bear House) and sheltering several related families. The main hearth fire was located directly below the smoke hole in the roof that allowed the smoke to escape. The hole also served as cosmic passage between this world and the home of the celestial spirits in a universe that was conceived, as it invariably is in the Indian Americas, as multi-level, with the earth between an underworld and the heavens. Shamans alone had the capacity to travel up or down through the roof hole in ecstatic-visionary out-of-body travel of the soul.

For the nobles were reserved the privileges and prestige of sponsoring public performances of ritual reenactments of the founding of the lineage, and the commissioning of masks and outfits for these ceremonies, and for the totem poles bearing crests and three-dimensional images of ancestors in animal form. Northwest Coast societies were chieftainships headed by the highest-ranking member of the most prestigious family in a village, but he or she was less a decision-maker than the spokesman for the family and repository of its accumulated tangible and intangible wealth and supernatural power,

His power was thus largely nominal, status having been a function of his generosity in holding feasts (potlatches) and distributing property, sometimes to the point of at least temporary personal impoverishment.

There could also be a blending of the offices of chief and shaman. The latter was most often the most important member of his kin group, to the point where among the Kwakiutl (pronounced Karol) of British Columbia, they were addressed by the same honorific, *papaxa*. However, there was this difference: shamans, as experts in the medicinal flora, intermediaries with the spirit world, and practitioners of the ecstatic-visionary trance, and more prosaically, prognosticators of the weather and future events, like the migrations of game animals were curers, and chieftains were not.

All Northwest Coast nations shared the same basic religious ideology, according to which animals were repositories of souls equal to those of humans. Finally, the offices or vocations of shaman and chief, though hereditary, were open to both men and women.

Of the art forms most common on the Northwest Coast, amulets and animal masks were the most widely distributed, although some groups were more specialized in one than the other.

The Arctic Inuit, for example, were renowned for the variety and artistic quality of their amulets. Perhaps their skill arose from necessity, as they required protection from one of the planet's most inhospitable climates. They also made and employed masks with multiple personalities and associations. Their climate-conditioned skills may have helped inspire a similar reliance on the protective power of the amulet and transformative power of masks among the Tlingit.

The right to demonstrate transformation was a hereditary part of the intangible treasures owned by noble families. Having noble parents did not, however, automatically confer noble status. That was attained by inheriting the name and physical identity of an ancestor in animal form. Thus, if parents had four noble names, their first four children, be they male or female, had the status of nobility, while from the fifth on their offspring had the status of commoners.

Still, that "commoner" class included master carvers of masks, totem poles, rattles, house posts and the large seagoing canoes, qualities that were both lucrative and held in high esteem.

Finally, all noble families marked their descent from a supernatural being, or an animal whose own heritable quality did not depend on its cunning, physical strength or position on the food chain, but because of a role it was a protagonist in an origin myth. Thus, a field mouse or squirrel might as easily be found among the mythical ancestors as might an animal that to us would carry greater prestige.

Tangible and intangible "treasures" might be gifts for a good done by the recipient, who thereby becomes the founder of a noble lineage. In one Tlingit tale, a female forest spirit called a Dzonokwa rewarded a cure

from arrows that near-fatally wounded her while raiding a private fish trap with sumptuous gifts of treasure as well as heritable status of nobility. Her reward included her own dwelling and its animal guardians; her daughter, herself a Dzonokwa, as wife; and her urine box, drops of the contents of which had restored life to the father of the man whose arrows had wounded her, and who had died during his son's absence in her pursuit.

Nor did a transformation mask or war helmet representing an animal donor of nobility necessarily exhibit characteristics a Tlingit or Haida would instantly recognize as belonging to a specific animal.

The origin myth being recited on a festive occasion did that. For the missionary, or other uninitiated foreigner, of course, they would all have been "demons." That would have been especially true when, in 1804, hundreds of Tlingit wearing the masks and wooden helmets of their tutelary animals, and armed with spears, bows, war clubs and firearms, burst out of the forest and attacked the palisade Russian fort of Sitka.

One can imagine the horror and fear their wooden helmet masks, some atop slat armor like that worn by Japanese samurai, descended on the Sitka garrison of Imperial Russian infantry reinforced by armed fur traders and civilian merchant settlers, until the fortunes of war turned with a heavy bombardment of Imperial Russian naval guns, sending the Tlingit warriors fleeing northward. Their losses in defense of their physical and spiritual independence matched those of the Russians, numbering on each in the hundreds, but spelling ultimate doom for the native peoples in the last major armed conflict between the Indians and the Russians until 1860, when the United States purchased Alaska for the bargain price of 7.2 million dollars (90 million in today's money).

No one knows the history of the bear war helmet (opposite) that is the pride and joy of this collection.

Its age and damage suggest that it was worn and lost by its owner in the armed rebellion for independence that by only a few years almost coincided with the young American nation's War of Independence.

Its original owner must have been a member of the noble family of Kitwanga Wolves of the Chilkat Tlingit, because they were the only ones entitled to wear the bear as their crest. By its style and wear it probably was carved in the 1740s, more than fifty years before it helped inspire the Battle of Sitka, the last major armed confrontation between Natives and Europeans before the United States purchased Alaska for the bargain price of \$7.2 million dollars in 1860.

It disappeared after the Battle of Sitka and resurfaced in 2012 at a country auction consigned by a private American owner, who fortunately preserved it until it could rejoin the company of the other, similarly pedigreed Native American works of art in this collection.



### The Battle of Sitka

The Battle of Sitka in 1804 was the last major armed encounter between Alaskan Indians and Europeans. The main fighting groups on the Native side were the Kiks.saádi ("The Ones from Kiks" Frog/Raven clan) and, on the Russian side, agents of the Russian-American Company supported by the Russian Imperial Navy.

Led by Alexander Baranov, the first Russian assault on the Tlingit fortress at Sitka (then Shisgi Noow) was repelled, but after three days of merciless bombardment by Russian naval guns, the Tlingit warriors, surrendered the fort and disappeared into the forest to begin a search for new tribal lands to the North.

A few warriors stayed behind as a rear guard and settled near the Russian fort that replaced the Tlingit's on the same site and launched sporadic attacks on the Russian settlers until the sale of Russian America to the United States in 1868.

In September 2004, the bicentennial of the Battle of Sitka was observed with a traditional "Weeping Ceremony" by descendants of the estimated 750-800 Tlingit warriors who fell in the battle. They were joined by a direct descendant of the Russian commander Baranov, who had been seriously wounded in the first days of the assault.

Though much reduced in numbers, and with much of their traditional life-way only memory, the Tlingit Kiks.saádi clan itself survived to observe and commemorate the battle with dances, songs, old-style masks, and rescued, or recreated, ceremonial art.





Masked Dancers-Qagyuhl (Kwakiutl)  
*Edward S. Curtis c.1911*

### How the Kiks-a-de Clan obtained its Treasures A Tlingit Story as related to Edward S. Curtis

His wife having recently died, there lived on the island of Kiks, a man alone with his son. The boy was a good fisherman, whose traps were always full with salmon that passed by on the way to their spawning grounds. He also caught many fish with pole and hooks. For some weeks all went well, and almost every day father and son were able to empty their traps and fillet their catch for smoking and drying

But one day and the next the boy was disappointed to find not a single salmon in his traps. Looking around, he saw signs that someone had come out of the forest, stolen his catch, and disappeared with it into the underbrush. Angered at so brazen a violation of custom, for fishing spots are inviolate as private property, he returned home empty-handed, but decided to return the next day with his father, hide near his fishing spot armed with bow and arrows to discover the thief in the act.

And so the following day father and son went to conceal themselves behind some driftwood, and wait for the thief. The culprit turned out to be not human but a Dzonokwaa, a hirsute “Wild Woman of the Woods” who has a mane of unruly hair, pendulous breasts, and among her property The Canoe that Paddles Itself.

The boy aimed his arrows at her and letting go, gravely wounded the apparition, but failed to kill her. Again he drew his bowstring, five times altogether, but succeeded only in wounding her. The wounded Dzonokwa escaped back into the forest, and father and son returned home, the boy intending to set out the next day to follow her tracks and a trail of blood she had left from her wounds amid the litter on the forest floor, determined to find where she lived and finish her off.

Meanwhile, taking only his bow and arrows and provisions for a few days, he bade his father goodbye, promising to return as soon as he had found the thief and taken their just revenge. This he was sure would take but a few days.

He found the trail of blood until it sank into the ground. Nevertheless he forged on, determined to find her house. But soon he saw his progress blocked by a lake so large and deep he could not even see the other side. Try as he might, there was no way to get across. Exhausted from his long and fruitless walk through stand after stand of giant cedars, and dejected by his failure to make good on his promise to his father, he cried himself to a fitful sleep.

When daylight returned, he found himself awakened by the appearance out of the lake of a young woman with long unruly hair, who introduced herself as the Dzonokwa’s daughter and asked why he had been crying. He told her that he had been on his way to her mother’s house, but the lake had made it impossible to get there to take his revenge for the theft of his and his father’s fish. The Little Dzonokwa told him that she had left her mother grievously wounded and crying out in

pain as she was lying covered by blankets in a corner. She begged him to help, but he demurred. Eventually though, he agreed to take a look at her mother’s wounds, but first needed to get across the lake.

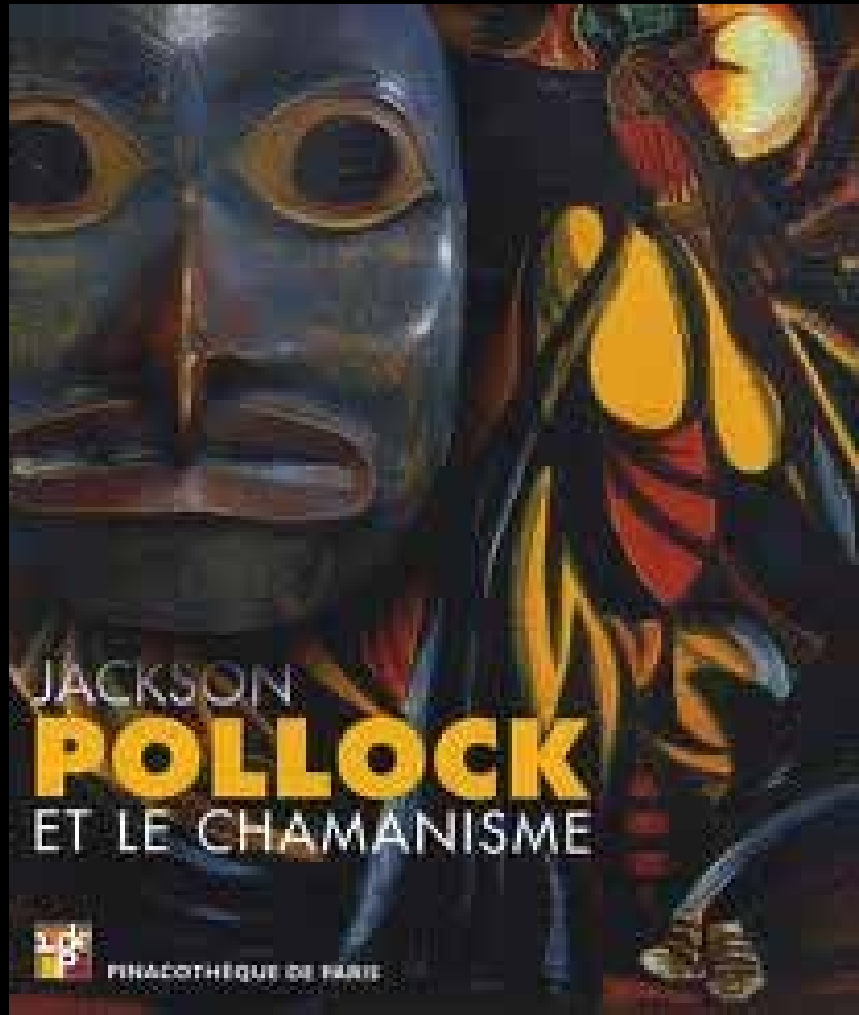
“That is no problem,” the Little Dzonokwa replied, “I will carry you across on my back.” And so she did, but when he arrived at her mother’s house, he found the door barred by a pair of fearsome Sisiutls, who threatened to strike at him with their sharp teeth, first from one side and then the other. To protect himself, he pulled up a bunch of white hellebore, masticated the leaves, and spat a large mouthful of the juice into the gaping jaws of the Sisiutls. At once they nodded off, leaving the way open for him to get inside without harm.

In the house, which was constructed of cedar planks and beams, he saw many masks of animals and other carvings. The Little Dzonokwa’s mother he found lying in obvious pain on her bed. She told him of the many treasures that will be his if he agrees to cure her Unable to resist her entreaties, and urged on by the daughter, he agreed and began spontaneously to shamanize. He sang singing curing songs while circling her bed, and one by one pulled out his arrows.

The Dzonokwa recovered, and true to her word, among the treasures she had promised was the Little Dzonokwa for a wife; that she will make him into a powerful shaman, with many animal spirit helpers and victories over witches. She will give him her house with all its contents; including shields of beaten copper; teach him many other curing songs to augment his; how to diagnose and cure illnesses; the names, effects, and appearance of medicinal plants; how to hold séances for flights of his soul from body into other worlds, and not least, make him a great carver of rattles and masks of different woods; soul catchers of bone; amulets of walrus ivory and hardwood; many protective amulets of ivory, bone or wood; and bent-wood storage boxes for food, blankets, beadwork, and items of clothing and adornment.

Especially tempting was the carved and painted box in which she had preserved her urine as the life-restoring “Water of Life.” Finally, a particular treasure to take back with him was this story, and the right to act out the history of family and clan in familial and shamanic settings.





## Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme

*Jackson Pollock and Shaman Art*

Many of the pieces in this book were shown at this landmark exhibit at the Pinacothèque de Paris in 2008 and clearly illustrate the link between Abstract Expressionism and Pacific Northwest Coast Tribal Arts. These pieces are marked by a representation of the show's poster.

The following was written for the show catalog by Marc Restellini, the director of the Pinacothèque de Paris and translated by Ann Cremin.

"It has been noted that for creative minds, bridges between various cultures provide a newly exhilarating approach, with a return to a founding culture, sometimes giving artists the only possibility to look at their mundane world. These bridges between cultures also allow an escape from the daily round whenever political and economic climates prove especially difficult. And, finally, they provide the artists with a means of broaching worlds unknown to the majority of mere mortals. The artist, to his intense satisfaction, thereby sets himself apart from most people by setting foot on unexplored territories.

And so it was for Pollock who, early in his career, took an interest in Shamanism. The exhibition presented in the Pinacothèque de Paris is an illustration of this revolutionary re-reading of his body of work.

Like Gauguin, Picasso or Modigliani, Pollock was interested in Primitivism, more specifically in Amerindian art forms. That is a proven fact. But tradition has it that the passage to the "dripping" period – a.k.a American Abstract Expressionism – marks a setting aside of that interest, opening up a new period in his art, from which every Amerindian reference had vanished.

When Stephen Polcari first mentioned to me the idea that Pollock had been, quite apart from the artist's interest in American Indians, very attracted by Shamanism and that it had an unimaginable impact on his art, I at first deemed this theory to be foolhardy, even far-fetched. But my own personal interest in the influence of Primitivism on modern art led me to examine his theory with interest. The confrontation with the work itself seemed to bear out his notion.

The demonstration became perfectly obvious to me in a completely fascinating manner: Pollock Shamanism represented the finality of a thought process, as well as a passageway through mystical portals, allowing him to reach out to worlds that most people can never attain."

As the demonstration became ever more evident, connections with Surrealism began to impinge and more specifically with André Masson, who was one of Pollock's foremost references along with Amerindian art.

That is how, little by little, the "drippings" seemed to me quite obviously not just purely abstract works, but also symbolic works containing references to Shamanism or to Shamanic rituals. That demonstration naturally led me to a complete re-reading of Pollock's oeuvre.

Henceforth, the abstract logic vanished to leave place for the artist's deliberate desire to have us believe in the object's disappearance in order to, as initiatory Shamanic rituals, let us accede to mystical portals that everyone cannot behold, but which was reserved for some "chosen few."

Pollock was a child of Jungian analysis. For him the concept of the unconscious and of initiation or initiatory rituals was very powerful.

The concept of reaching other worlds was very clear, as can be seen in the knowledge of the Indian world that Jackson Pollock had at that time, as well as through the exhibition on Amerindian art organized by MoMA in 1941.

The confrontation with Masson and with Surrealism in general, sensitive to the same preoccupations when faced with an America in total recession, undergoing one of the worst crises in its history, must have given Pollock an urge to bring forth a new man, to re-model "the common man", in Polcari's words, the one who put up with his life without being able to provide it with meaning, so as to finally accede to a means of re-awakening.

That way of thinking seemed all the more interesting since it linked up with that of Gauguin, Picasso, Modigliani, Brancusi, Derain and Matisse, all of whom sought in Primitivism solutions to their period's problems by going back to the sources and to nature. Quite certainly, the path taken by Pollock was one of the most ambitious, intellectually speaking, as the psychoanalytical and primitive concepts are reached.

This exhibition "Pollock and Shamanism," whose subject is totally in keeping with my own approach as an art historian, could only take place in the Pinacothèque de Paris. I feel it is really important to offer the largest possible public this new view on one of the major American artists of the 20th century.

It is shown at the same time as the exhibition devoted to Georges Rouault, an example of the bridge between civilizations and mysticism.

The juxtaposition of these exhibitions demonstrates that all over the planet, the great artists' preoccupations are finally very similar.

Demonstrative, clear-sighted, scientifically organized by Stephen Polcari who guided me and accompanied me in the choice of the works on view, this exhibition is, it must be admitted, outstanding. There is no doubt about it, the viewer's look at Pollock's body of work will be transformed.

The "Drippings" are seen in a new light. Pollock is no longer simply the brilliant abstract artist throwing his paint at the canvas placed on the floor according to movements dictated by abstract aesthetical choices. Pollock's wish was quite other: that gesture had as its finality to present a subject even as it gave the illusion of abstraction and of an absence of subject (that is the very definition of abstraction, when the work has no subject matter.

Pollock set aside abstraction to enter into a sphere of "nonobjectivity."

Should the very existence of abstraction itself not be subject to revision?

Marc Restellini  
*Paris*





*The Plates*



Tsimshian or Haida  
**Totem Pole**  
Red Cedar & Paint  
80" Height  
*c.1870*













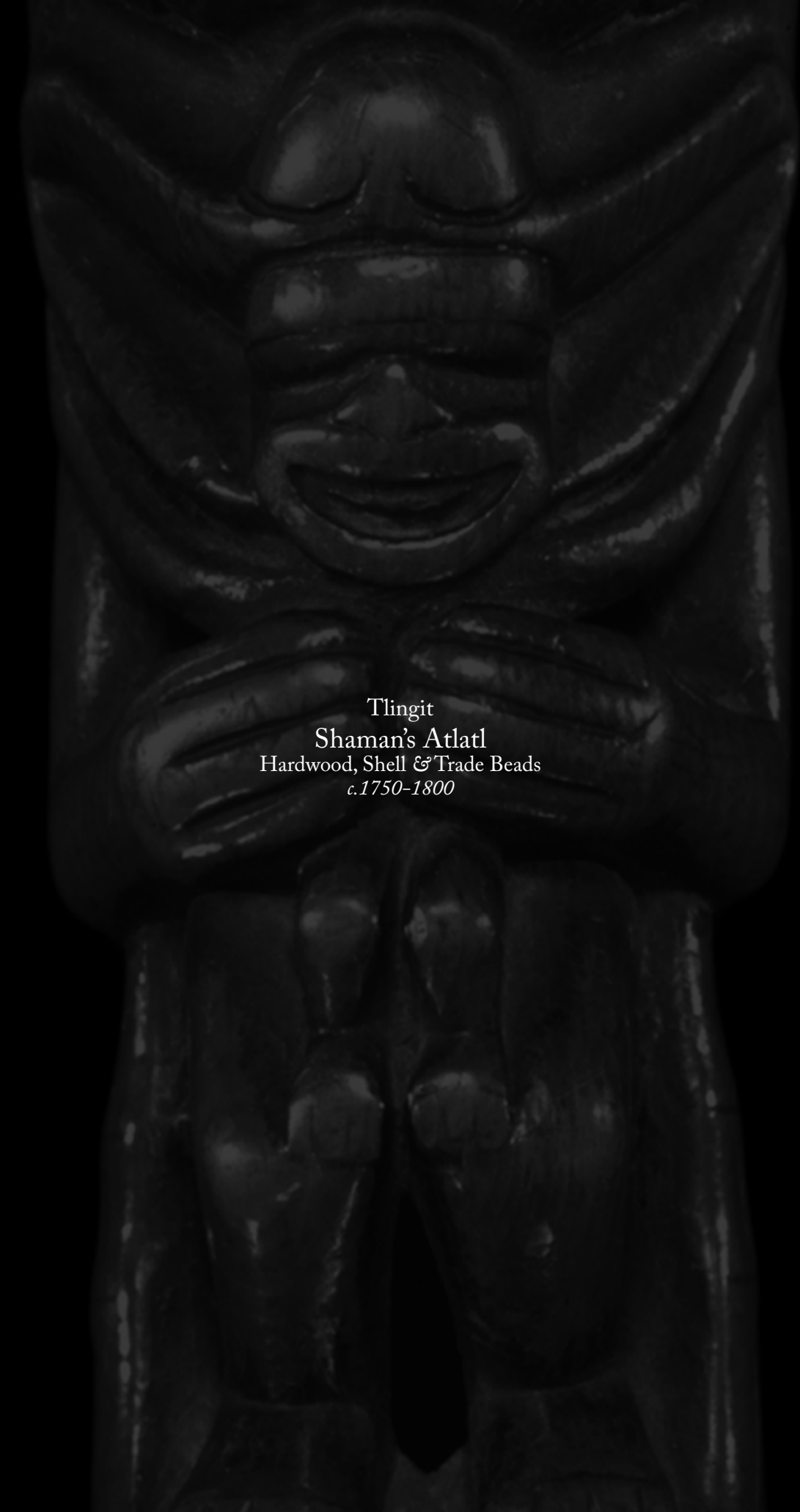


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Tlingit  
Shaman's Atlatl  
Hardwood, Shell & Trade Beads  
*c. 1750-1800*













Tlingit  
Humanoid Bear War Helmet  
Spruce & Paint  
12¾" Length  
c.1740-1780





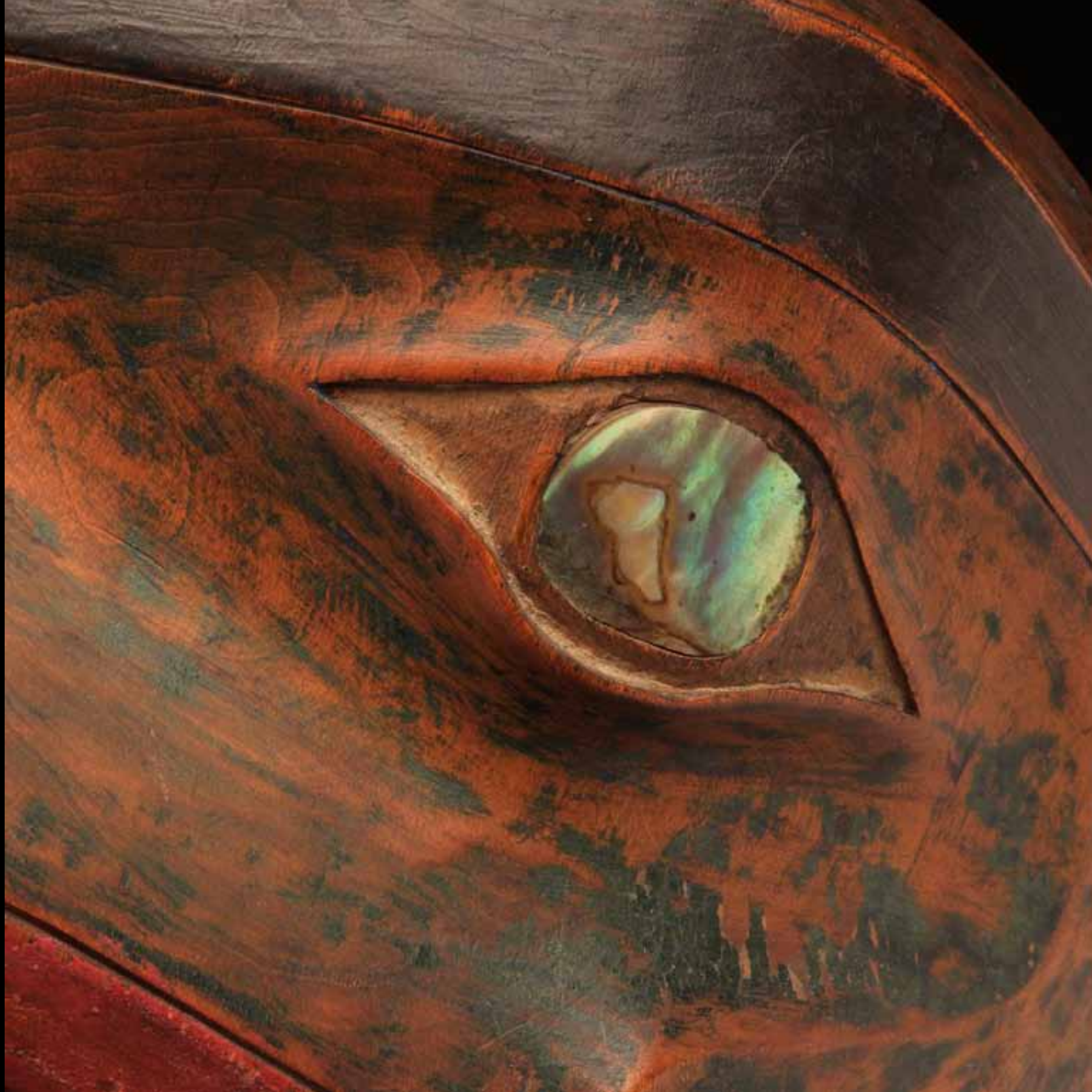




Nishga  
**Forehead Mask / Headpiece**  
Hardwood, Paint, Abalone Shell & Copper  
5 ¼" Height  
*c.1790 - 1820*











Tsimshian  
Headdress Frontlet  
Hardwood & Paint  
5" Height  
*c.1750 or earlier*









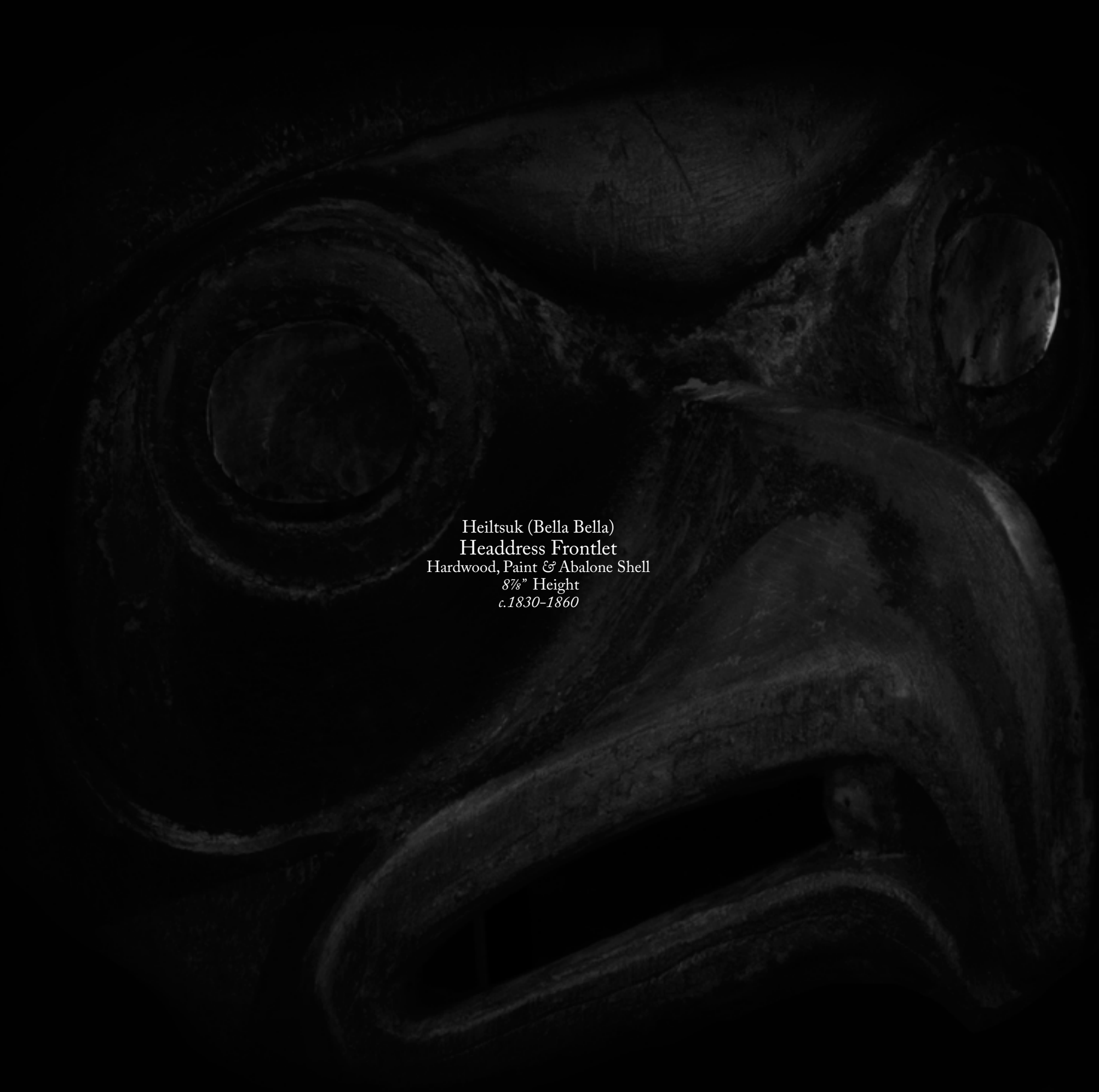
Tlingit  
Shaman's Mask  
Alder, Abalone Shell & Paint  
9" Height  
*c.1860-1880*











Heiltsuk (Bella Bella)  
Headdress Frontlet  
Hardwood, Paint & Abalone Shell  
8 1/2" Height  
c.1830-1860





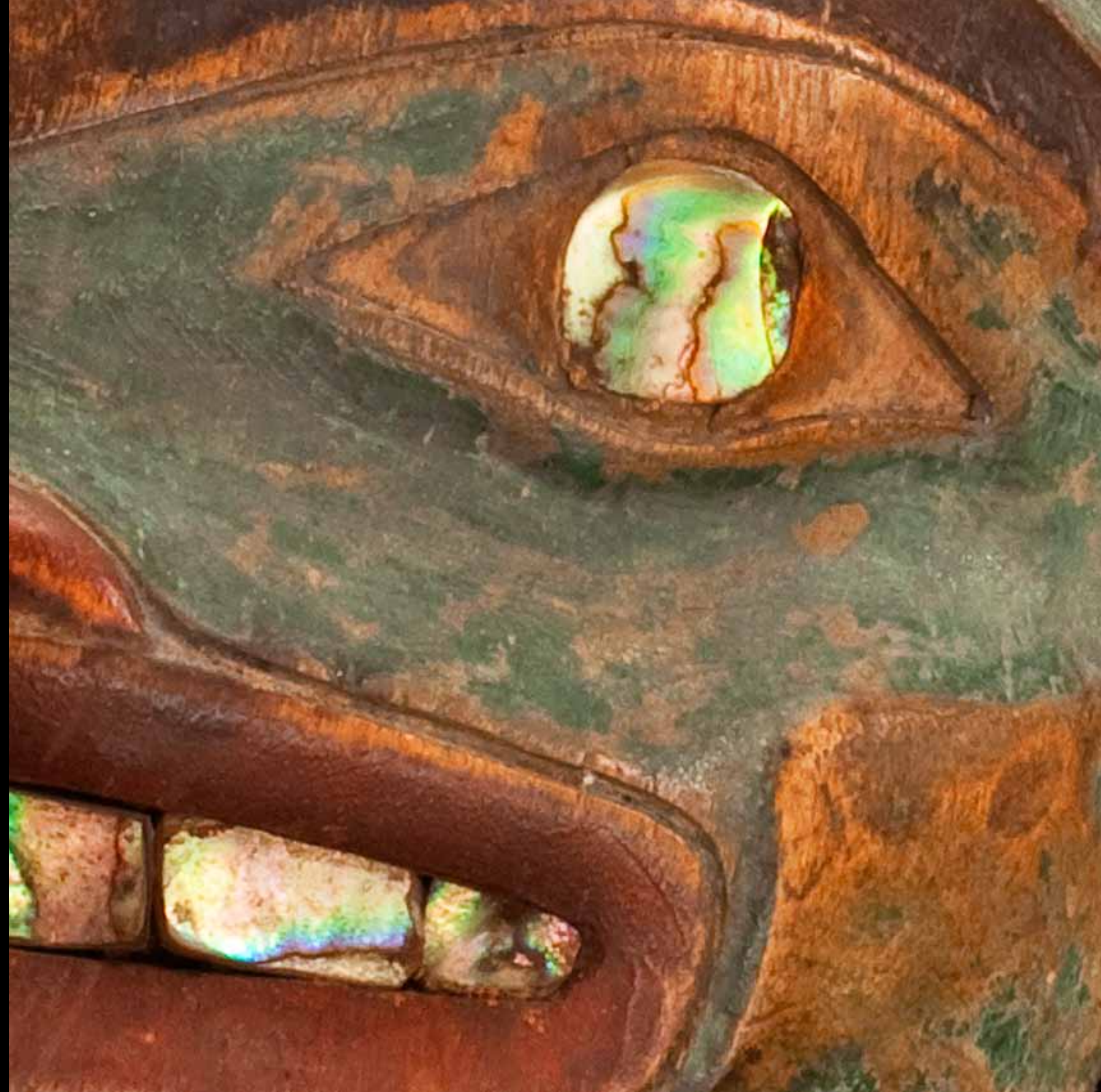




Tlingit  
Dorsal Fin Headdress Finial  
Hardwood, Paint, Abalone Shell & Human Hair  
10½" Height  
c.1840-1860











Tlingit  
Pipe Bowl  
Hardwood, Copper or Brass, Paint & Abalone Shell  
5" Height  
*c.1820-1840*









Tsimshian  
Sheep Horn Bowl  
Dall Sheep Horn & Mountain Goat Horn  
6¼" Length  
c.1820-1840









Coast Salish, Halkomelem  
Sxwaixwei Comb  
Yew  
6" Height  
*c.1820 - 1860*











Coast Salish  
Bone Club  
Whalebone  
20 1/2" Length  
*Pre-contact, before c.1575*





Tsimshian  
Chief's Club  
Caribou Antler & Iron  
20½" Length  
c.1780-1810



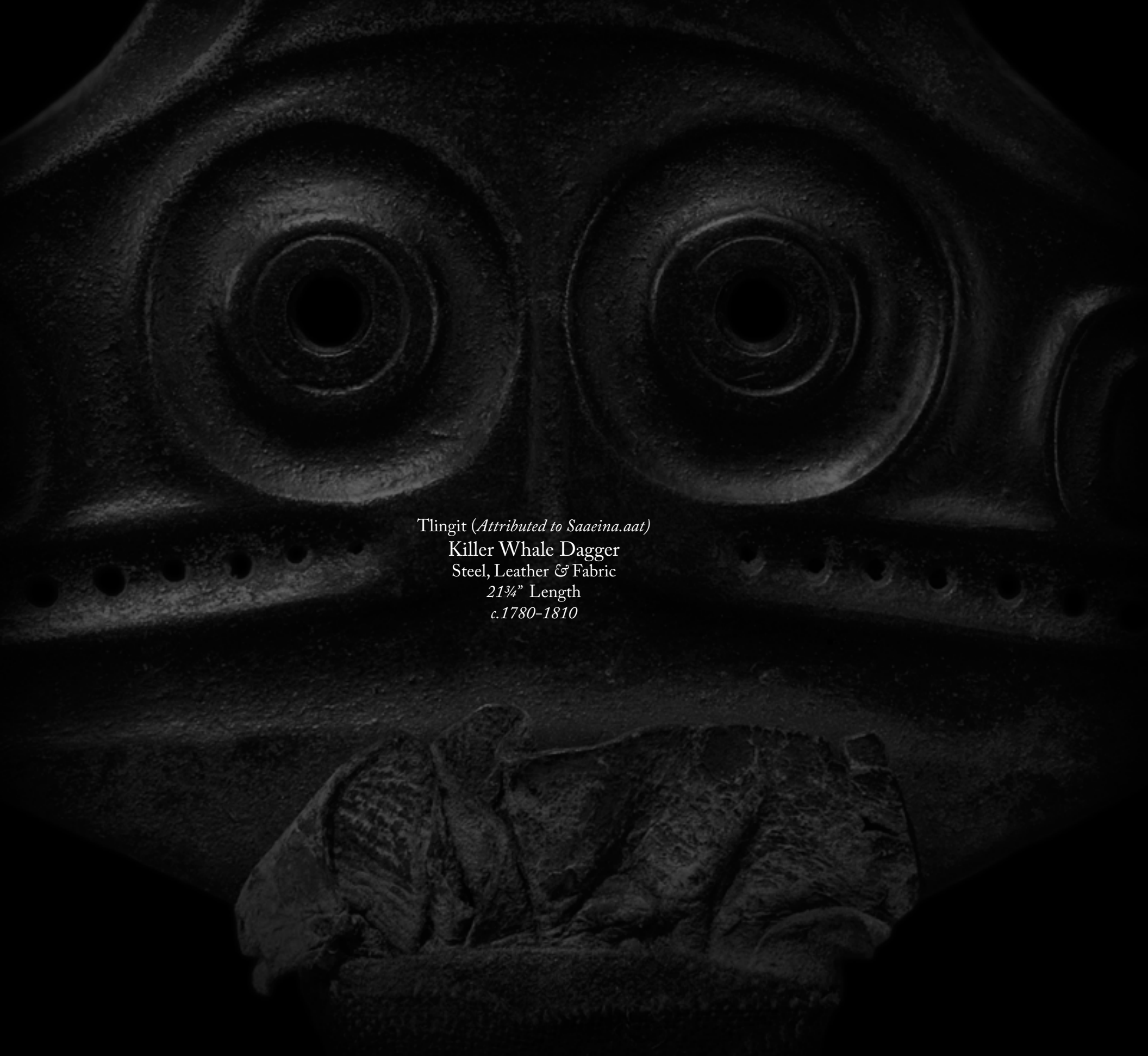












Tlingit (*Attributed to Saaeina.aat*)  
Killer Whale Dagger  
Steel, Leather & Fabric  
21¾" Length  
c.1780-1810











Tlingit  
Steel Dagger/Eagle Image  
Steel, Wood, Abalone Shell, Copper & Leather  
14" Length  
*c.1780-1810*











Kwakwaka'wakw Gwatsinuxw (Quatsino) Band  
Sea Otter Bowl  
Hardwood & Beads  
*10 ½" Length*  
*c.1780-1820*












Tlingit or Haida  
Miniature Grease Bowl  
Hardwood  
3 ½" Length  
*c.1800*







Tlingit  
Shaman's Deer-Hoof Rattle  
Hardwood, Sitka Black-Tailed Deer Hooves, Dew Claws, Fiber & Paint  
12 $\frac{3}{4}$ " Length  
*c.1850-1880*















Tlingit or Tsimshian  
Raven Rattle  
Hardwood & Paint  
10 ½" Length  
c.1780-1800













Haida  
Whale Rattle  
Hardwood & Paint  
9" Length  
*c.1880*









Coast Salish  
Mat Creaser  
Hardwood & Beads  
5" Length  
*c.1860-1880*







Tlingit  
Ornamental Sculpture  
Hardwood & Paint  
2" Diameter  
*c.1850-1890*






Tlingit  
Soul Catcher  
Bear Femur, Abalone Shell & Hide Cordage  
6 $\frac{5}{8}$ " Length  
c.1870







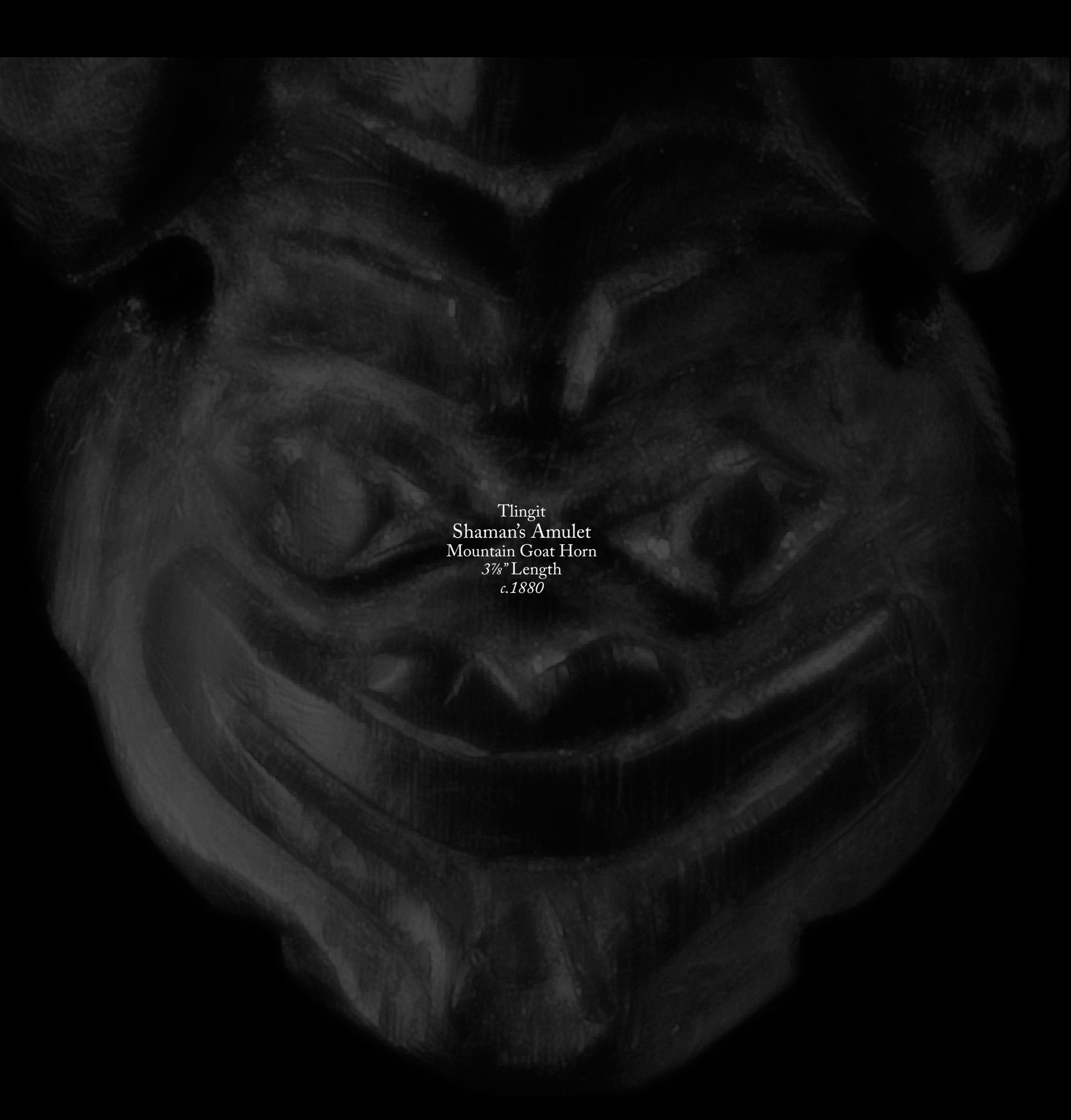




Tlingit  
Shaman's Amulet  
Ivory & Abalone Shell  
4½" Length  
c.1840-1860







Tlingit  
Shaman's Amulet  
Mountain Goat Horn  
3 7/8" Length  
c.1880



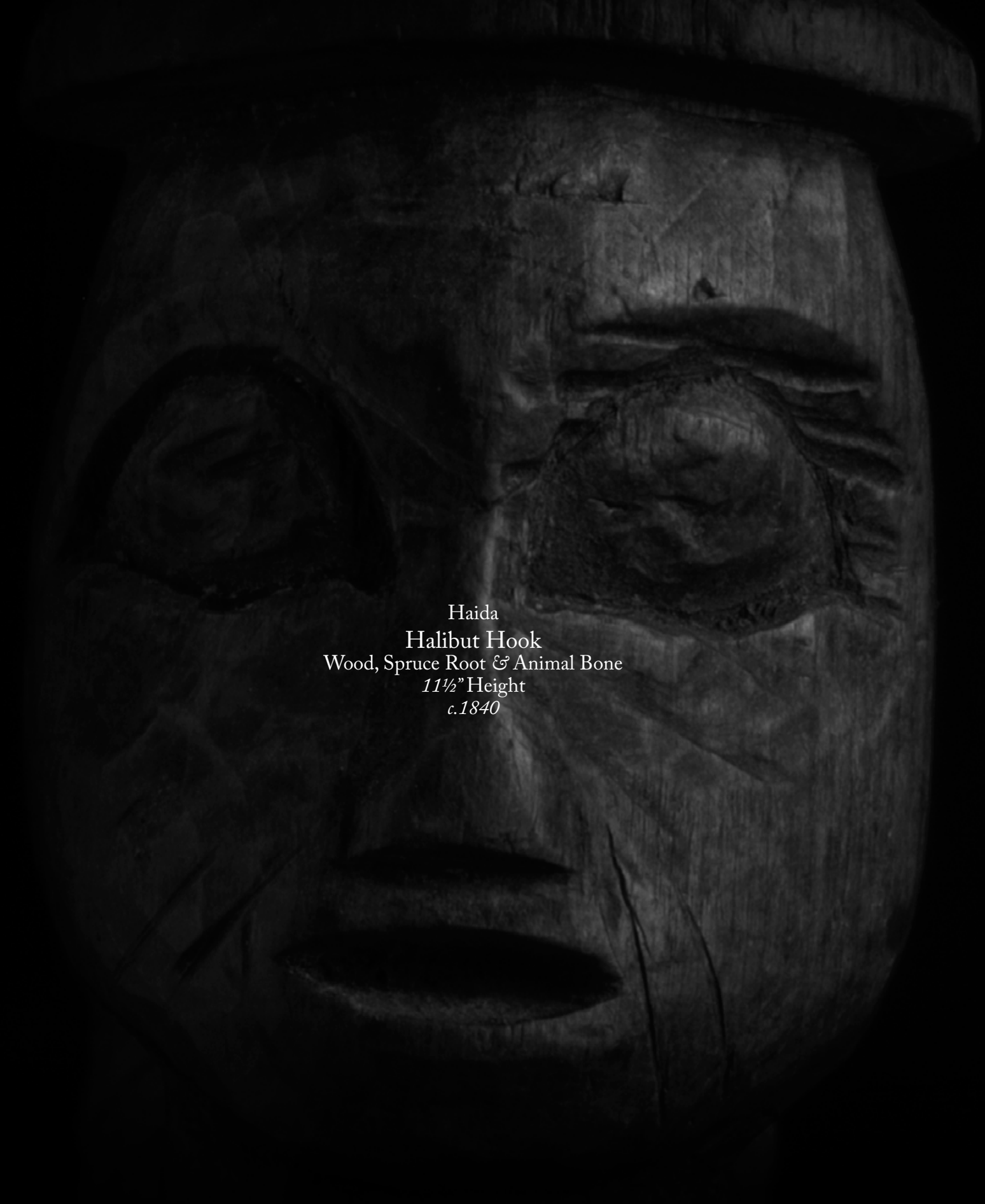




Haida  
Halibut Hook  
Wood, Spruce Root & Animal Bone  
12 1/2" Height  
c.1880







Haida  
Halibut Hook  
Wood, Spruce Root & Animal Bone  
11½" Height  
c.1840





Haida  
Halibut Hook  
Wood, Spruce Root & Animal Bone  
10¼" Height  
c.1820







Tlingit  
Halibut Club  
Hardwood  
23" Length  
*c.1880-1890*











Tsimshian  
Soapberry Spoon  
Alder or Birch  
15½" Length  
c.1840-1860











Tlingit  
Shaman's Figures  
Wood, Paint & Human Hair  
6½" Height (*without hair*)  
c.1820-1840







Tlingit  
Frog Bowl  
Wood, Paint & Abalone Shell  
7 ½" Length  
c.1860





Makah/Nuu-chah-nulth  
Line Serving Spool  
Yew  
13" Length  
*c.1700 (or earlier)*



















Tsimshian or Haida  
**Totem Pole**  
Red Cedar & Paint, 80” Height, c.1870



This is an example of a monumental totem pole scaled down to a smaller size.

The smallest traditional sculptures to contain this degree of detail were goat horn spoon handles, usually about seven to nine inches long. This totem pole illustrates one of the grand characteristics of Northwest Coast art: the ability to successfully change scale at will, from huge to tiny and all in between, with no true loss of monumentality. Without something to reference for scale, it’s impossible to tell from a photo just how large or small this or other fine sculptures actually are.

The refinement of this carving dramatically illustrates the evolved state of totemic art in that period of time. Few full-sized totem poles of the early nineteenth century featured this level of sensitively modeled sculpture, with nearly full-rounding of limbs and subtle detail in the human and animal faces. These kinds of skills evolved more quickly in small-scale carvings, which allowed a great deal of sculptural experimentation and development in a very short time per carving. Over the course of the nineteenth century, these advanced skills were then translated back into the larger-scale work from which it all had evolved in the beginning.

The figures on this pole are carved in a style that suggests the artist could have been either Haida or Tsimshian, as it displays characteristics of both carving traditions. A small bear crouches at the top of the pole, perched on the corona of a sun-rimmed thunderbird face. There once was a beak attached at its center, which extended the sculptural depth of the original log from which this was carved. Beneath the thunderbird-in-sun image sits a man with his knees drawn up to his chest, his hands clasped before them. These figures illustrate characters in the clan histories and mythologies that are the foundation of the northern Northwest Coast social system.

Below the man is a raven or similar straight-beaked bird, its wings wrapped about itself and beak against its breast. The two-dimensional carving on the raven’s wings indicate by their style that this is not an early carving, but one most likely created in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. At the base of the pole is a large bear, crouched in what is often called the hocker position, with the head and forelegs of a large frog protruding from its downturned mouth with feet resting on the bear’s forelegs.

The original purpose of this totem is not known. It may have been carved for a Native home during the transition from large communal plank houses to small, single-family dwellings based on movement to a Euro-American model which was implemented by missionaries and government agents. This radical change in dwelling style was intended to separate native people from their past and to accelerate an acculturation process desired and enforced by the dominant culture. A smaller heraldic pole outside such a home may have passed the anti-cultural scrutiny of zealous Indian agents.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*



Tlingit  
Shaman's Atlatl  
Hardwood, Shell & Trade Beads, 15 ½" Length, c.1750-1800



The Northwest Coast artist's predilection for fully embellishing the forms of functional objects is well represented in this spectacular early work. Atlatl (a term from Nahuatl, the Aztec language), is the name given to what is sometimes referred to as a 'spear-thrower', an implement used in launching a spear-like dart or arrow with additional leverage and considerably more force than could be brought to bear with a hunter's arm alone.

The atlatl fell out of use when the development of the bow and arrow spread throughout the globe. The Tlingit people adapted the bow early in their cultural development, so no examples of atlatls or their projectiles have been found, with the exception of this piece and perhaps a other dozen ritual pieces. Widely diverse in carving styles, these pieces share a single characteristic: they are all non-functional. The position of the fingerhole relative to the grip is such that a hunter could not comfortably operate the device as an effective spear thrower and the nature of the imagery suggests that they were employed as "spiritual weapons," used to battle malevolent spirits and witches who were thought to cause disease in shaman's patients.

No two Tlingit atlatls show much representational similarity from one to another, though more than one example appears to have been made by the same carver. The entire range of carver's styles and imagery seen in this relatively small group of objects is truly remarkable.

The carver of this exceptional atlatl did his work with remarkable skill and refinement. The dense wood allows many small details, such as the front and rear paws of the humanoid bear at the top of the tool. The toes of the adjacent otter are similarly detailed and both figures share crescent-shaped cuts in the wood. Small glass beads are inset in the otter's eyes, a subtle and highly effective embellishment.

All the sculpture in this work is roundly defined and deeply modeled, with evident signs of a master's experienced hand. This highly individualized style of work can be seen in several other existing atlatls, of which this is the most elaborate.

The figures include a humanoid bear at the top end, with another being riding on his back and grasping his shoulders. Beneath the bear's jaw the trachea is exposed above the tip of the atlatl's working side. The secondary creature above appears to be an emaciated otter, with representations of vertebrae along its back and its long tail stretched along the back ridge of the atlatl. On each side of the weapon, below the otter's tail, a formline face of unknown identity is relief-carved in an archaic style. The bird's wings are wrapped around in front of its body, and archaic-style formline patterns cover their surface.

The bird's feet clasp a small creature that arches over the finger hole, possibly another long-tailed land otter. Below the finger hole, a totemic bear stands with bent knees, grasping a small human figure before it. The bear's large brow and ears flank the finger hole, and the man's head is perched just below the bear's large rounded snout. His face has the mouth drawn back into a grin, and the eyes are closed as if in trance. The man's arms are flung back below the bear's lower jaw, and his knees protrude just below the bear's encircling fore-paws. The bear's feet stand upon the head of a spirit image that has bulging, closed-slit eyes, a short snout, and skeletal pectoral fins or flippers. The fine detail of the bony fins echoes the similar refinement of the humanoid bear's paws above. The lower jaw of the spirit image appears to have gone missing at some distant point in time. On the front face of the tool, on each side of the dart hollow, the flat edges of the hollow are grooved with fine knife cuts from end to end.

On the reverse side of the atlatl, one sees the back and rear end of the bear, its legs bent forward from the ankles. The carver evidently had a sense of humor, something not often so overtly expressed in Northwest Coast art.

Exhibited: Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*

Tlingit  
War Helmet Humanoid Animal  
Spruce & Paint, 12 ¾ Length, c.1740-1800



Looking at this remarkable helmet, one is struck by the liveliness that grins out from within it. Despite such apparent gaiety, Tlingit carved wooden helmets were designed for a single purpose : protecting a warrior's head from the blows of war clubs and the gashes of fighting daggers.

To serve this purpose, helmets were minimally hollowed out to create a thick dome to cover the top and sides of the head. Some writers refer to Tlingit clan hats with delicately carved, thin rims as "helmets," but this is a misnomer. The Tlingit language has two distinctly separate names for tribal headgear. Clan hats were carved of spruce roots or cedar bark, and often had mask-like sculptures of clan emblem creatures integrated into the carving, as did war helmets. There any similarity ended, as the delicately carved wooden rims of typical wooden clan hats offered precious little protection in a hand to hand axe fight.

War helmets were usually carved from spruce, a tough wood more dense than either cedar or alder, which were the usual choices for masks and clan hats. The density of spruce made for a heavier carving, more apt to stand up to the anticipated abuse of the object. The carving of war helmets also included an unexpected and little-known design characteristic: The grain, or long fibers of the wood structure (not to be confused with the pattern of the tree's circular growth rings), was oriented from side to side, or ear to ear, rather than front to back, as would ordinarily be the case in a forehead mask or a clan hat. Running the grain from side to side made it more difficult to carve the form and the details of sculptural clan emblems but it made the helmet much less prone to cracking when struck by a frontal blow from an opponent. The life of the warrior was clearly of greater concern than the degree of effort required of the carver.

This obviously aged and combat-experienced helmet exhibits all of the characteristics alluded to above. It is further imbued with not only the spirit of its maker, but also with the spirit and energy of those who wore it and received the blows and gashes that have left their marks on this venerable artifact.

Helmets were originally made as the property of those who wore them in battle. Helmets which attained respect for their roles in fights that elevated and safeguarded the power of the clan were raised to the status of clan ownership. They became "a valued and esteemed object", known in the Tlingit language as 'at.oow. The survival of this helmet, despite the obvious damage it sustained, suggests that it was retired from combat duty and had attained the elevated status of 'at.oow.

Objects of 'at.oow status were brought out on ceremonial occasions and displayed with others of their kind: clan hats, daggers, weapons and certain types of woven hats or garments including some Chilkat-style robes and tunics. Bringing out the 'at.oow was and is intended to manifest the spirit presence of the ancestors who owned and used the objects in times past. At funerals and memorial services, the 'at.oow are employed to assuage the grief of those who have experienced losses the community has come together to recognize and mourn.

Several characteristics of the carved details indicate that this work was executed early in the historic period, possibly prior to the physical arrival of European and American traders and explorers.

Trade goods, including iron and steel woodworking tools, arrived on the coast well before the appearance of Euro-American people themselves. The very first Spanish and English explorers noted the presence of ferrous-metal blades and tools, and heard the native names for these substances, indicating a long period of familiarity with these foreign materials.

Exhibited: Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*



Nishga  
Forehead Mask / Headpiece  
Hardwood, Paint, Abalone Shell & Copper, 5 ¼" Height, *c.1790-1820*



In a culture in which wealth and cultural status were important family values, the display of one's clan and lineage origins on ceremonial occasions was a high priority, as was the sense of pride and place in history that went with it. Clan and family leaders wore sculptured headpieces that represented the crest symbols of their lineage.

Crests are the embodiments of one's clan and family history in a symbol of the creatures and ancestors who created that history. Headpieces might depict a single crest symbol, as does the subject work, or they might be more elaborate compositions with several crest emblem creatures or ancestors incorporated into main and subsidiary images. Clan crest headgear took many forms, including forehead masks of crest images, flared rim hats of wood with incorporated crest imagery or elaborate hats carved in the form of creatures bodies as if they were wrapped about the wearer's head, sometimes with subsidiary figures attached.

This headpiece is in form of a forehead mask which would be worn so that the carved image reposed on the forehead down to just above brow level. Leather ties extend around from each side of the mask that would secure it on the wearer's forehead. This compact sculpture appears to depict a bear of which the Grizzly and the Brown Bear were the crest of numerous First Nations lineages in differing language families.

Though no ears are present in the carving of this headgear, the image includes several other indications of a bear representation. The low, rounded nostrils and protruding tongue are common bear characteristics, and the placement of the copper and abalone shell inlays suggests the order of a bear's teeth. In addition, a piece of bear hide with the hair still attached is part of the forehead mask's means of attachment to the wearer.

The attribution of Nishga manufacture in this work is based on the style of the sculpture. The narrow, wide eyebrows and lips, small eyes and defined cheekbone structure all indicate a Nishga artist in the making of this early and sculpturally refined carving.

The tasteful use of abalone shell inlay in the eyes, teeth and nostrils indicate the high cultural status that this sculpture once enjoyed. Abalone shell was a rare commodity imported by trade from far to the south in California and Mexico, which raised their value and cultural status. Native abalone was abundant, but the comparatively small shells have a pale and irregular interior, making them less suitable for inlay.

The subtle ridges and hollows exhibit a great deal of masterful refinement, setting the work in this mask well above the average measure of craftsmanship, which is all the more remarkable considering the less sophisticated tools that would have been available and in use in this early period of historical time on the Northwest Coast.

Provenance:  
Lt. George T. Emmons on the Nass River, British Columbia  
Heye Foundation, Museum of the American Indian

Tsimshian  
Early Headdress Frontlet  
Hardwood & Fiber, 5" Height, *c.1750 or earlier*



Early examples of Tsimshian frontlets collected by European explorers in the late eighteenth century indicate that their traditions and conventions were entrenched in the area for a long period of time. By the middle nineteenth century, the frontlet and headdress tradition had traveled as far south as northern Vancouver Island, where it has enjoyed a widespread and enthusiastic expression ever since. Many headdresses and carved frontlets of northern and central coast manufacture have been collected among the Kwakwaka'wakw of Vancouver Island, indicating where and from whom the tradition made its way to them.

In looking at the historical record of extant frontlets, one becomes aware of what may have been the progression of their development from simple to more elaborate sculptural forms, and a similar progression in the use and elaboration of abalone shell inlays. The earliest frontlets, as shown by the documented examples collected in the late eighteenth century, employed minimal or even no shell inlay. Though there was often a thin rim bordering the central sculptural figure, no inlay was used on the rim, the only embellishment being fine parallel grooving across its width.

By the mid-nineteenth century, frontlets with multiple figures and numerous small inlays, including fully inlaid outer rims, were to be found in all the tribal styles of the northern and central coast. Much rarer and less often encountered are examples with simpler sculptural forms and minimal inlays, along with other early design characteristics, which must have been the older examples from which the later, more elaborate expressions of the form evolved.

This small, unusual frontlet appears to be just such a rare and very early example of the tradition. Lacking a bordering rim, the carving is composed of just the central image, probably representing a bear or wolf. The snout of the creature extends out from the fairly flat form of the face, and the head of a human being is carved there between the teeth at the end of the mouth. The snout is fairly long and narrow, which suggests a wolf is represented, but the low ears may argue in favor of the bear identification. The frontlet contains no abalone shell inlay and the face is made up of a formline composition with early archaic style characteristics.

The tiny human face has a particularly archaic sculptural form that reflects the two-dimensional design of the major face. Four small holes were drilled close to the outer edges, through which the frontlet was sewn to the headdress form that supported it.

In museums and private collections interim examples of frontles appear to bridge the gap between very early forms like this piece and the more elaborate examples of the nineteenth century. Each finished frontlet appears to have provided inspiration to successive artists who further developed the original idea with greater elaboration and expression, carving for the clan leaders who wore these ceremonial headpieces in dances that demonstrated a peaceful introduction between hosts and visitors.

In the hands of the artists of many successive tribes and regions the characteristics of headdress frontlets evolved in many different directions, though always retaining the central figure, or figures, and basic forms of the original tradition.

Provenance: The Dundas Collection



Tlingit  
Shaman's Mask  
Alder, Abalone Shell & Paint, 9" Height, *c.1860-1880*



Tlingit shamans were the healers of their culture, treating the spiritual causes of disease and divining the future for the appearance of upcoming events. Part of their occupational equipment was a set of masks, representing the shaman's various helping spirits which were called on for assistance in matters of the spirit world. Mask sets of this type usually numbered eight, each with different identities.

The descendants of the shaman-owner identified the spirits of these masks at the time of Emmons' acquisition prior to 1888 and the range of spirits represented gives some indication of the highly personal and specific nature of such images.

Frequently, these mask sets were not carved by the same maker. Old, damaged masks would be replaced, some would be retired and new ones might be added by successive generations of shamans. Some sets do include a majority of carvings by the same artist. This is the case with a group of six masks now in the American Museum of Natural History which include several examples by the same carver of this mask, an artist who worked in the area of Yakutat/Dry Bay on the coast of the Gulf of Alaska or possibly at a nearby village such as Hoonah near Icy Strait.

Referring to the related examples, one sees that this artist used a very similar eye form on each of his masks. The particular shape and proportions of any carvers' eyelid lines are a primary diagnostic feature, and these are distinctive enough in this example to justify a relational connection between this mask and the American Museum of Natural History set.

The carving of this mask suggests that it represents a bird of an unknown species. One mask of the American Museum of Natural History set has a similar downturned-beak-type nose and it was identified as the spirit of a puffin.

The spirit images came to the shaman in visions and dreams, so any bird, human, or other creature, dreamed of or actual, could become the subject of a shaman's mask.

This mask features very large and prominent eyes, though that appears to have more to do with the carver's style than the particular spirit being represented.

The small holes in the eyes may once have held small tufts of human hair, as can be found on certain other shaman's masks and are a regular feature of this carver's work. Holes this small would be of little to no use in terms of actually seeing out of the mask, and in fact most shaman's masks have *no* eye holes, as they were only briefly worn in limited ritual situations. Other similar characteristics include the eyebrow forms, the relatively flat lips and the handling of the bridge of the nose/forehead area.

This carver surely made many more masks than these, as the range of sculptural forms exhibited in this single example, as well as the piece's overall refinement indicates an experienced artist.

Provenance: The Andy Warhol Collection  
The Heye Foundation; Emmons  
Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*

Heiltsuk (Bella Bella)  
Headdress Frontlet  
Hardwood, Paint & Abalone Shell, 8 7/8" Height, *c.1830-1860*



A peace dance ritual incorporating headdresses with elaborate frontlets began in the Nass River Valley and quickly spread to neighboring villages and tribes. As the ritual was adopted by these tribes, each incorporated their own sculptural styles into the carving of the frontlets.

As the tradition spread, locally favored ideas were conventionalized and became regular features of the transplanted traditions. In the Heiltsuk/Nuxalk region of the Central Northwest Coast, the area of Milbanke Sound and the long inlets Burke and Dean Channels east of the sound in the mainland, a pentagonal form of the rim developed into a common feature of frontlets made by those groups.

The Heiltsuk sculptural style often included fairly shallow eyesockets with shallow, conical orbs with the eye situated at its peak. This typical Heiltsuk eye form can be seen in both the main and subsidiary faces on this fine older frontlet.

The main image is either an eagle or thunderbird, as indicated by the downturned beak. The lower, smaller face is humanoid in character, but has more of a mammalian snout than a human nose, and is therefore impossible to identify without specific information from the original owners of this headpiece.

Both figures have iridescent abalone shell inlaid in the irises of the eyes. In the eyes of the lower face, the shell forms the entire circle of the eye, while the bird has a narrow band of carved-out area around the inlaid shell. This may have once held the edge of a brass washer that was domed out to form the iris of the eye, a common technique in Heiltsuk and Nuxalk frontlets. Eyes made in this way produced a special flash of light when the bright shell caught the firelight inside the ritual's dancing house.

The thin rim of the frontlet is not conceived as a defined border of the central sculptural area, but rather the rim surface continues unbroken up to the edges of each carved face. In the narrow zone between the two faces, small rectangular mortises once held added pieces carved in the form of the bird's feet and talons.

The outer rim may have originally just been painted with triangular forms pointing inward toward the figures, and small rectangles of abalone shell appear as though they may have been inlaid between them at some later point in time. Three of these pieces have small holes in them, which are most likely remnants of a previous usage of the shell. These were probably once sewn to a garment and later re-purposed as inlay for this frontlet.

Two larger abalone pieces flank the humanoid/animal face at the bottom of the composition. Four sets of small paired holes pierce the outer edges of the rim, through which the frontlet was sewn to the headdress framework. Swan skin, ermine pelts and upright sea lion whiskers were also attached to the frame, completing the entire ensembles of the peace dance headdress.

Eagle down was placed in the top of the headpiece within the 'cage' of whiskers, and was shaken out by the rhythmic head movements of the dancer, to float gently down around the performer in a sign of peaceful intent and friendship.

Provenance: The Covarrubias Collection  
Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*



Tlingit  
Dorsal Fin Headdress Finial  
Wood, Paint, Abalone Shell & Human Hair, 10 ½" Height, c.1840–1860



The orca, or killer whale, with its impressive tall black dorsal fin, is one of the most iconic clan emblems of the Northwest Coast, easily recognized on totem poles, house and screen paintings, as well as clan hats or other forms of ceremonial headgear.

In most sculptures, totem poles, clan hats or headgear, the dorsal fin must be carved from a separate piece of wood and attached to the main sculpture, which is carved with the grain (the long fibers of the wood), running perpendicular to the direction of the fin. This dorsal fin is one of these, made to attach to a separately carved whale sculpture.

The usual method of attachment was by means of a carved tenon at the base of the fin, which steadied itself in a matching mortise (a hollowed cavity) carved in the whale's body. The length of the tenon on this fine early dorsal fin suggests that it most likely was made to fit a whale's body that was carved as an elaborate headpiece or a canoe figure. A wooden clan hat or simple headpiece would not require such a long tenon, nor would there be room for one as they would be hollowed out quite thin. It may be that the whale's body was formed as a sculptural figure that attached to a more elaborate headgear, or perhaps to the bow or stern of a ceremonial canoe, and was not hollowed out in the extreme fashion of the above-mentioned headpieces.

The dorsal fin is of a median size, and may have fitted a whale sculpture as long as three feet from head to tail. It appears to be of a size that could fit a headpiece of some type, but it is too small for a full sized totem pole. The humanoid head carved at the base of the fin has both human and whale-like qualities to its face, and may represent a transformation between the two.

Origin stories of the killer whale crest emblem differ between various coastal peoples, and have remained a part of the oral history of the areas where the killer whale crest is prominent. One such story from the Tsimshian includes a character called Gunarhnasimgyet, who rode the whale by clinging to its dorsal fin.

The refined carving of the face in this piece fin may have originated among either the southern Tlingit or Tsimshian, but perhaps is more in the style of Tsimshian artists of the early nineteenth century.

An early form of the blue-green paint pigment sourced from native mineral deposits was applied to the eyesockets and upper fin. This was a highly valued pigment that was reserved for the most prestigious ceremonial works. The finely executed inlay of iridescent abalone shell also elevates the visual impact and cultural status of this orphaned but important and memorable sculpture.

The hanks of human hair inset into the rear edge of the fin lend the impression of water cascading off the fin. The hair most likely was obtained from a respected female relative of the maker or owner, and it was considered a privilege to have one's hair employed in this way.

Tlingit  
Pipe Bowl  
Hardwood, Copper or Brass, Abalone Shell & Paint  
5" Height, c.1820–1840



This stout and seemingly serious-minded fellow sits on his haunches with his chin on his hands, gazing ever-forward through iridescent shell eyes. Exquisitely carved, it's a large handful of a pipe, though not as large as some of its kind. The hole at the center back was for the pipe stem, of which many were temporary things, mere branches of shrubs with the pith burned out. Others were carved and refined lengths of wood or bone. Few Tlingit pipes feature inlaid abalone shell, and its presence here indicates that this was the pipe of a high-ranking clan leader, shown wearing a decorated robe or tunic that features a crest image on his back. The owner may also have been a shaman, or a descendent of one, as the lobed or segmented hat rim shown here suggests the idea of a shaman's crown of goat horns, carved in a minimalist representation. The robe may represent the type of hide tunic often owned and worn by shamans with images of their spirit helpers painted on the front and back.

The carver was a master of clean sculptural lines and refined definition, which appear in all aspects of this small but monumental work. The sides of the nose include small cuts that represent wrinkles in the skin, and the attention to detail in the eyes, eyesockets, hands and feet is similarly remarkable.

The tobacco smoked in such pipes came to the Tlingit by way of English and Spanish explorers and later fur traders, and was the *nicotiana rustica* common to those sources, which originally had been introduced to them by Native peoples of the eastern seaboard in centuries past.

Tobacco was smoked in grand sculptured pipes like this at community rituals such as house-raisings and funerals, and was employed to carry the prayers of the living into the spirit world, calling for assistance from the ancestors and great people of the past.

Tsimshian  
Sheep Horn Bowl  
Dall Sheep Horn & Mountain Goat Horn  
6¼" Length, c.1820–1840



This unique and graceful small carving is a masterpiece of sculpture and design and is distinguished by its uncommonly beautiful and ingenious use of mountain sheep horn. The gently curling horns of the Dall Sheep, found in the higher elevations of the Pacific coastal mountain range, provide one of the most remarkable materials employed by Northwest Coast carvers.

The horn is easily carveable and holds extremely fine detail. In this example, the carver utilized every available fraction of an inch of what was apparently a very large horn to create the bowl, as reflected by the very slight curve that the figure follows from head to foot.

The concept of the reclining human figure is an old one and the face is distinctly Tsimshian in style, sculpted with all the refinement and detail of a full-size mask or totem pole face. The prominent cheekbone ridge, thin drawn-back lips, and nearly straight profile are all characteristics of Tsimshian sculpture.

The black eyes are inlaid with mountain goat horn, the wide mouth has two rows of teeth, between which protrudes the figure's tongue, and usually depict a trance state or spiritual communication in shamanic objects such as rattles or amulets. The use of this device in this bowl suggests that it may have been created as a vessel in which a shaman could prepare herbal preparations.

The bowl shows no apparent sign of being used to serve seal oil, the common condiment eaten with dried or smoked fish, which was the intent of many wooden and horn bowls. This tiny vessel seems to be too small for even an individual serving of oil, suggesting that it may well have been used by a Tsimshian shaman.

Provenance: The Honorable Simon Cameron, United States Senator  
Secretary of War to President Abraham Lincoln.



Coast Salish, Halkomelem  
Sxwaixwei Comb  
Yew, 6" High, c.1820-1860



This rare comb exhibits a Sxwaixwei, an image that is both powerful and sacred to the Coast Salish people of southwestern British Columbia. The Sxwaixwei was a mythological being said to have risen from a lake, and was the subject of masks that were a central part of regalia of ritual dancers who performed at ceremonial gatherings and cultural events. Their performances discouraged evil spirits and insured that spiritual conditions would be correct for the event.

This comb is very much like a miniature Sxwaixwei dancer's mask, which invariably contained several traditional elements, including the two small bird heads on the top, protruding peg-like eyes and a snout-like nose. The mouth was often shown open, with the lower jaw and the tongue hanging down nearly vertically below the upper mandible. On this comb, the tongue hangs down and overlaps the top of the comb, blending with it smoothly and providing a basis for a banded design.

Typical of Northwest Coast combs from nearly all parts of the coast, the teeth of this Sxwaixwei are fairly small and rather coarse in scale at their bases. The tapered form of each tooth brings it to a thin, diminishing end about two inches from the base of each tooth, giving the overall appearance of delicacy and lightness.

The style of carving seen in this comb indicates an early sculpture, comparable to the earliest surviving nineteenth century Sxwaixwei masks, which are very few in number. The smoothly finished, rounded forms of this comb and an absence of any carved or painted details on the face of the creature, show this to be a predecessor to later Sxwaixwei masks, and suggests a possible timeframe of between 1820 and 1860 for its creation.

Provenance: The Hooper Collection  
Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*

Coast Salish  
Bone Club  
Whalebone, 20 ½" Length. Pre-contact, *before 1575*.



This very old war club is similar in general appearance to the whalebone clubs collected from the Nuu-chah-nulth and Makah peoples since the late Eighteenth Century.

Like many of the Nuu-chah-nulth examples, the pommel is decorated with a composite design of two faces, one above the other, produced by incising grooves and small hollows into the bone surface. The carved imagery in this club has an archaic appearance, suggesting a very long history. This one differs from most Nuu-chah-nulth clubs in the form and width of the blade. They are generally wider at the business end, tapering from the bluntly pointed tip to become narrower toward the handle. Nuu-chah-nulth examples are also frequently decorated along the blade with incised patterns of various types in shallow relief, where the surface of this blade is uncarved.

This club is comparable to one recovered on Hartstene Island in Southern Puget Sound and once housed in the Burke Museum in Seattle. The two clubs feature an untapered blade and similar pommel images, though the carved decorations differ in individual style. On these and other early examples from the southern coast, the pommel design consists of a human-like face that appears to be wearing a headdress, an evidently enduring war club image.

The upper face in this club is shown with no lower jaw where it overlaps the forehead of the main figure and the two faces are intertwined by the pattern of grooves and hollows that curve around the back of the head. A small hole is pierced through behind the face for a leather or fiber handle loop.

War Clubs of this type are apparently the oldest weapons from the Northwest Coast. A similar archeological example has been dated to c.500 BC. Passed from generation to generation for centuries, the clubs were used in the defense of the tribes as resources against outside aggressors, as well as during offensive attacks to acquire territorial influence or slaves.

Tsimshian  
Chief's Club  
Caribou Antler, 20½" Length, c.1780-1810



Northwest Coast artisans created fearsome weapons with the same sense of beauty and refinement that they incorporated into the most delicate amulet or rattle.

One such beautifully crafted object of power is this consummately decorated club carved from caribou antler. Clubs in this form, often referred to as 'slave killers' in the ethnographic literature, were most often if not always made by Tsimshian artists, and were carved for chiefs and clan leaders not only as weapons, but also as emblems of their chiefly status and power.

Northern caribou, also known as reindeer in the Eurasian Arctic, produce a stout set of antlers, losing them yearly following the mating season. Elk, which are known in some areas of the coast, also produce large sets of antlers that may have been used for clubs of this kind.

Only a relatively small group of antler clubs is known to exist, numbering around sixteen examples, which are scattered through the museums and a few private collections of the world. Of them all, the expanse of decorated surface and the degree of refinement in this outstanding club surpass any others.

This club features the sensitively carved head of a bird, possibly an eagle, canted slightly to the right as if the creature was turning to see something off to the side. The neck feathers, body, wings, feet, and tail are masterfully composed in the early nineteenth-century style of formlines and cover the surface of the antler all the way to the end of the handle. Other clubs include two-dimensional representation of the limbs and/or feet of the crest image relief-carved along the cylindrical surfaces of the antler, but all the others known save this one have no carving on the grip area itself. These features alone would set this club apart, but the carver has gone a step further in his enhancement of this weapon.

About halfway up the top length of the club is the head of a small bird, whose body, wings, and tail extend down toward handle. The rounded, bulging belly of this small bird, probably a fledgling, is carved from the remaining base of a branching tine that is most often cut off and completely smoothed down in other clubs.

Of all other known examples, only two have retained the base of this extra branch or tine. One, in the University Museum in Philadelphia, retains the tine-base but has nothing carved upon it. The carver of another example utilized the extra volume of the cut-off tine's base to sculpt the head and body of a reclining human figure. Neither of these, however, exhibits the degree of graceful adaptation seen here in the sculpture of the subsidiary bird, and the distribution of the fledgling's wings and body right across the surface of the carved forms of the primary eagle image. The fledgling's feet are shown drawn up close to its belly, grasping the lower jaw of an upside-down face that represents the bird's own tail. The tail feathers extend from the top of this tail-face toward the club handle.

The highly gifted and experienced artist who made this club also made an earlier one, which was collected in 1863 by the Anglican missionary Rev. Robert Dundas at Old Metlakatla, British Columbia. That club features the same accomplished early style of two-dimensional design work, recognizable as being composed and executed by the same hands, with smoothly rounded elements and comparatively small carved-out areas. That club exhibits a bear or wolf's head at the striking point, with its body covering the club surface down to but not including the grip area. Until the subject club emerged from obscurity in 2010, the Dundas club (now in the Art Gallery of Ontario, illustrated in *Tsimshian Treasures, the Journey of the Dundas Collection*) had been considered by many to be the paramount example of its type. If it had to be deposited from that perch by another carved club, it seems appropriate that it would be this piece, a stellar example of the same artist's work.

Provenance: Dr. Lucius Duncan Bulkley





Tlingit (*Attributed to Saaeina.aat*)  
Killer Whale Dagger  
Steel, Leather & Fabric, 21¾" Length, c.1780–1810

Steel and copper fighting knives were common accessories for Tlingit men in the nineteenth century, as interclan feuds and warfare were common and often deadly. The development and creation of highly embellished steel daggers to fill this need appears to have reached its zenith among in Southeast Alaska in the early nineteenth century. Many outstanding examples in museums and private collections collected in that era illustrate the extraordinary levels of skill and refinement that were reached by Tlingit metalsmiths.

The piece's unusual blade shape features beautifully curving edges and a center hollow defined by raised ridges that parallel them. The pommel is formed by a large section of steel hammered out wider than the blade and depicts two whale head profiles surmounted by a single tall dorsal fin. The whale heads are embellished with hollowed areas and raised lines that define round eyes and eye sockets, oval nostrils and a mouth defined by tiny holes drilled in graduated sizes to indicate spaces between the whale's teeth.

The pommel's sculptural features suggest that the lines and hollows were created by a combination of hot chasing and engraving, using steel tools or stone punches of varying shape and size to indent the background and raise the ridges and lines to create the whale design.

The dorsal fin is integrated into the profile head composition by means of a raised ridge that parallels the shape of the fin and smoothly connects to a raised line defining the top of the heads. This fin, with its angular U-shape, is an archaic style, and has two small holes that pierce the hollowed center of the fin.

The clear design and refinement of the weapon's form as well as the design and execution of the pommel mark this as a truly outstanding early work.



Tlingit  
Steel Dagger/ Eagle Image  
Steel, Wood, Abalone Shell, Copper & Leather, 14" Length, c.1780–1810

Large, one-piece steel or iron daggers with elaborated pommels (such as the preceding weapon in this collection) were made as clan heirlooms and represented as weapons of warriors who had given their full measure in defense of clan interests and survival. Beautifully made, yet less elaborate examples, such as this one were made and worn by individual clan members as weapons of self-defense.

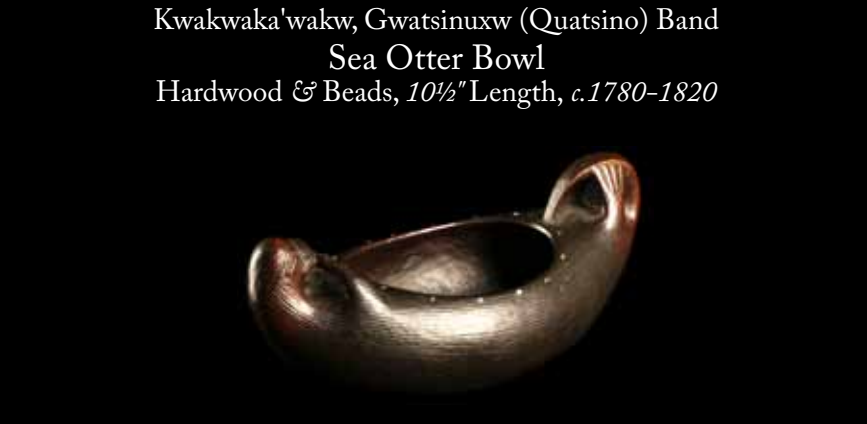
The finely carved eagle's head at the pommel of this dagger indicates the clan of its owner and is a symbol of both the man's ancestors and contemporary relatives, for whose honor he would fight.

The blade of this knife was forged in the traditional native style, with twin sharpened edges and a defined ridge down its center. It has a narrow tang bound between the two halves of a wooden grip, one side of which is attached to the carved pommel. The grip is wrapped with a rawhide strip that secures the pommel to the blade and provides a firm, reliable grip.

The bird's head is set in a dynamic angle to the blade, depicting an eagle with fierce expression and numerous teeth set within the mandibles. These, the eyes, ears (or crest feathers), and nostrils are set with iridescent abalone shell, a sign of the wealth of trade and high cultural status.

Though few have survived, such a dagger would have originally been worn in a sheath with shoulder strap, made of either tanned hide or cloth, and possibly embroidered with either bead or quillwork.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*



Kwakwaka'wakw, Gwatsinuxw (Quatsino) Band  
Sea Otter Bowl  
Hardwood & Beads, 10½" Length, c.1780–1820

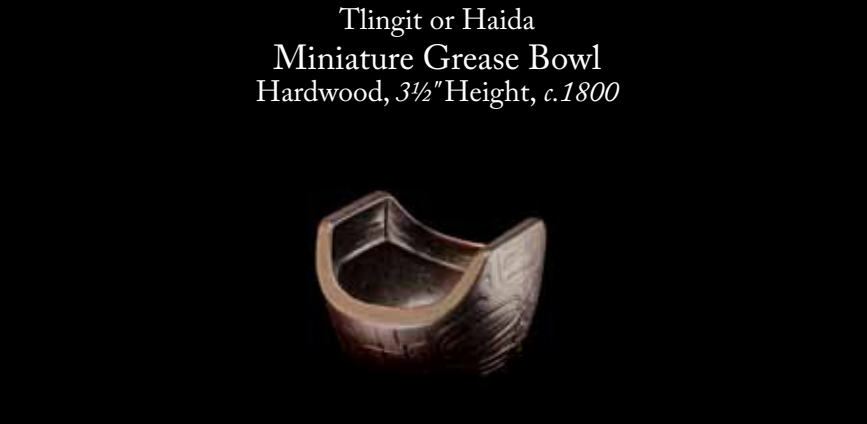
The sea otter was a significant animal in the history of the Northwest Coast. Sea otters were hunted for their luxurious pelts, which Northwest Coast peoples sometimes incorporated into garments used as ceremonial regalia. When Capt. James Cook's expedition spent time in Nootka Sound and later entered the port of Canton, China, they found that the otter pelts they had traded for buttons and nails were worth significant sums on the Chinese market. On their return to England, the news set off an international rush for the soft brown gold of otter pelts.

Despite such cultural significance, there are very few carvings that pay homage to the creature. Depicted floating on its back devouring its food, this carving depicts one of the animal's most familiar poses, as they often repose, feed and even sleep on their backs afloat.

Functionally, the bowl was made to serve fish or seal oil as an accompaniment to dried or smoked fish. Grease bowls of this kind from the southern Northwest Coast are often conceived as an animal-form sculpture that has been hollowed out. On the northern coast, such a vessel is more likely to be conceived as a traditional abstract bowl form to which are appended the head, limbs, and tail of the represented creature or crest emblem. The hollowing of both these vessel types often includes, as in this case, an opening much smaller than the bowl itself, resulting in the thinned-down and deeply undercut rim edge that lends a refined and delicate quality to the carving.

Carved in an early style, the entire surface of this bowl is lightly textured with tiny, parallel grooves that run around and across the various parts of the otter and bowl. This type of finely grooved surface is a very old finishing technique seen on documented objects from the earliest historical period.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*



Tlingit or Haida  
Miniature Grease Bowl  
Hardwood, 3½" Height, c.1800

Small, beautifully refined bowls such as this are one of the great visual deceptions of Northwest Coast art: bowls carved to this same traditional form and embellished with two-dimensional design to the same or a similar degree are often quite large, as much as 14 or 15 inches in width. This elegant miniature, however, is barely as wide as the palm of an average human hand. Saturated with the Eulachon oil, a commonly enjoyed food condiment in the Pacific Northwest, the vessel's surface has been oxidized nearly black.

Eulachon, also known as candlefish, are small smelt-like fish that live in deep waters throughout the year. In the early spring they migrate into the tidal reaches of mainland rivers to spawn where they are netted. Thousands of little fish are eaten fresh, hung to smoke and dry for preservation, or made into oil, which has been an important item of diet and trade from aboriginal times to the present.

This particular personal grease bowl is an outstanding example of its kind. The refinement of the design composition and the execution its relief-carving are both signs of a skilled master's hand. The patterns appear to depict a bird image and its classically angular style of design is known to have extended back into the eighteenth century.

To serve the oils, special 'grease bowls' were carved and while some were very large and used by groups, small bowls such as this example were made for personal use with meals, enlivening the taste of meals of dried fish or roots.

Such a bowl is a remarkable tactile experience to actually use, cradled easily in a single hand for easy dipping dried halibut strips or meat for a memorable meal.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*



Tlingit  
Shaman's Deer Hoof Rattle  
Sitka Black-tailed Deer Hooves, Dew Claws, Fiber & Paint  
12½" Height, c.1850-1880



Hollow, dried deer hooves and dew-claws were often employed by Shaman of the Northwest Coast as percussive musical instruments. Sometimes they were attached by leather thongs to the calves or ankles of a dancer (as among the Coast Salish), or to the fringe of a northern-coast painted leather or Chilkat-woven dancing kilt or apron. Occasionally hooves were attached to steam-bent or sculptured wood forms for use as hand-held rattles, as in this unusually detailed example.

A dynamic pair of bears is represented here in the carved form of the 'handle' of the rattle, to which a large number of deer hoofs (the larger, triangular shapes) and dew-claws (the smaller, rounded ones) have been attached with threadlike fibers.

Decades of use are indicated by the polished surface of the waist of the main image, where the user would grasp the object. Shaking the rattle produces a complex, sonorous rattling sound that is unique to this form of the instrument.

Composed of two bears, the larger, elongated animal is carved with humanoid elements and proportions, representing the shaman himself and indicative of the transformational state that is at the core of the shamanic experience.

The smaller bear appears to represent the *yeik*, or spirit helper. With its head and forelegs perched between the shaman's bear-like ears, the *yeik's* body drapes down the neck and upper back of the larger figure. Its feet are represented as an additional pair of bear's head images and are indicative of the ethereal, spirit form of such shamanic characters.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*  
160

Tlingit or Tsimshian  
Raven Rattle  
Hardwood & Paint, 10½" Length, c.1780-1800



One of the great icons of Northwest Coast art, the raven rattle is said by Native oral tradition to have originated on the Nass River, one of the large trade conduits that connect the Pacific Coast with the continental interior, and home to the Nishga'a branch of the Simogyet, or Tsimshian-speaking peoples.

No one knows just how the enigmatic imagery of the raven, human, tail-bird-head, and sometimes frog came to be assembled in this arrangement, but evidence suggests that it was codified long ago. The image most likely evolved within the shamanic tradition, where the passing of esoteric knowledge is symbolized by the sharing of tongues. Frogs symbolized the shaman's ability to travel in different worlds, from the living to the spirit, just as frogs could live in both aquatic and terrestrial environments.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the raven rattle had become the exclusive prerogative of chiefs and clan leaders. It was shaken with a circular, whirring motion during a peace dance, with the dancer attired in an ermine-embellished headdress with carved frontlet. Eagle down in the headdress flew out with the dancer's head movements, drifting down around the performer as a symbol of peaceful intent.

This rattle exhibits several early characteristics, found mainly in the two-dimensional designs that embellish the raven's breast and tail feathers, as well as the ovoid-shaped relief in the breast-face and carved-out areas. These traditional design elements are more typical of earlier historical-period styles and are small and narrow when compared to later examples.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*

Haida  
Whale Rattle  
Wood & Paint, 9" Length, c.1880



Rattles on the Northwest Coast were employed as a means of contacting and placating spirits in ceremonial contexts.

The sound of the rattles is said to soothe spirit energy and to call beneficial spirits to lend help to the living in their endeavors, such as memorializing the dead and passing hereditary names and cultural privileges on to their descendants.

Rattles owned by an individual would be carved to reflect the emblem of their clan, in this case a whale. With a low dorsal fin, no apparent teeth and a long narrow pectoral fin, this rattle most likely represents a hump-back whale, a crest of certain Raven moiety clans.

Tlingit society is divided into two halves, known in anthropological terms as moieties, which today are most often identified as Eagle and Raven. In the recent past these were known as Wolf and Raven.

The humpback, a baleen whale with a low, arched dorsal fin and long pectorals, is raven side, while the Orca or Killer whale is known as an eagle-side crest emblem among the Tlingit. Haida and Tsimshian clans have a different arrangement and relationship of crests and moieties.

This rattle embodies a simple, straightforward representation, with a primarily sculptural form that contains few but significant references to the Northwest Coast two-dimensional design system.

The head of the whale is composed in reflection of the two-dimensional formline painting style, seen in the placement and relationship of the round eye to the position of the mouth, snout, and back of the head. The snout includes an arched nostril form, even though this type of whale has blowholes on top of its head rather than forward-pointing nostrils. These are a convention of the two-dimensional design style that supercedes a naturalistic concept of the whale's appearance.

The pectoral fins, and possibly the tail, do not contain any two-dimensional design development. No formlines embellish the form of the fins, though the shapes of the fins themselves reflect that of a typical formline U-form.

The unpainted area below and behind the pectoral fins does in fact reflect the lighter underbelly of a humpback whale, a concession to naturalism that was becoming more prevalent in the late nineteenth-century period. The black pigment used in the painted surfaces contains graphite, which adds a certain grayish sheen to the surface that is often seen in nineteenth-century Northwest Coast objects. The red used in the rattle appears to be the trade pigment vermilion, also known as cinnabar, which was commonly imported for trade purposes by English and American fur-traders.

Provenance: The Bishop H.R. Powell Collection  
American Museum of Natural History, 1898  
Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*



Tlingit  
Matt Creaser  
Ivory & Abalone Shell, 5" Length, c.1860-1880



The small hand tool known as a mat creaser is a wonderful example of Northwest Coast functional artistry. Such a creaser is a completely utilitarian object, almost invariably decorated with some degree of representational design and/or sculpture.

This lightly embellished mat creaser features the head and tail of what is most likely a sea-bird, which may have been the owner's guardian spirit. The bird's head and neck reach out from the rounded body represented by the form of the creaser, and a small tail shape representing raised tail-feathers nestles on the rear of the tool.

The creaser is employed in the making of cattail or tule-reed mats, which were used as bedding and wind abatement within the grand cedar-plank houses of the southern coast, where such plants once grew abundantly in huge wetland tracts. Mats were also used to cover frames built of light wood members to create temporary shelters for traveling and fishing or other resource-harvesting camps. These served like portable tents with canvas covers, which in turn became available in the late nineteenth century and largely replaced the use of the indigenous reed mats.

Cattail stalk and tule-reed mats were not truly woven, but were essentially sewn together with a two-strand twine made from twisted cattail-leaf fibers. Extensive lengths of such twine were used in conjunction with a long wooden needle and the creaser. The long wooden needle would be used to pierce laterally through the laboriously gathered cattail stalks or tule reeds from side to side, sewing together large numbers of parallel reeds in this way. The rows of stitches were usually about four inches apart, running horizontally through the reeds back and forth over the width of the mat. The creaser was used as each reed or row of stitching was pierced by the needle, and was run along the top of the needle to crease the reeds firmly over the needle's top ridge.

Tlingit  
Ornamental Sculpture  
Hardwood & Paint, 2" Diameter, c.1850-1890



Miniature sculptures on the Northwest Coast take many forms, from amulets, shaman's figure masks, hair ornaments and combs.

The historical use for this object is unknown, though it appears as though it could have functioned as either a part of a larger sculpture, a toy or a hair ornament.

The compact face is carved in a totem-pole sculptural style, and could be of Tlingit or Tsimshian manufacture. The form of the cheeks and the wide, narrow lips suggest a Tsimshian artist, though the overall style could as likely be Tlingit, based on the work in some model totem poles from that area. The expression of the face seems to be a bit on the dour side, but it's nonetheless got a good deal of character and refinement in the carving.

The size of the hole that pierces the woodcarving is about three-quarter of an inch and may have been a hair ornament, used to draw up strands of long hair until they were favorably positioned.

Objects of cross-cultural design were often made for fur trade workers such as the employees of the Hudson Bay Company, who had forts on the northern Northwest Coast at Fort Simpson and Fort Wrangell, though the Wrangell fort was abandoned in the 1840s.

Silver bracelets, wooden salad sets of serving spoon and fork, and other related objects can be found in collections around the country, usually brought back from employment or journeys on the Northwest Coast by family ancestors.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*

Tlingit  
Soul Catcher  
Bear Femur, Abalone Shell & Hide Cordage, 6 3/8" Length, c.1870



"Soul Catcher" is the name applied to a type of shamanic amulet carved in this typically carved as a tube with slightly flaring ends, adorned with a symmetrical relief-carving representing a shaman's clan crest emblems and/or his spiritual helpers.

A Soul Catcher would be worn around the neck with the attached cord and was employed in a spiritual journey of soul recovery. Illness or other forms of imbalance were attributed to spirit intervention or possession, and it was the job of the shaman to travel to the spirit world to recover the 'lost soul' of his patient. The amulet was used to contain the captured soul within it, plugged in place with wads of shredded cedar bark or other material, and return the lost soul to the living world and its rightful owner.

Carved by master artists, Soul Catchers reflect the best of the conventions and traditions of the Northwest Coast two-dimensional design system. Others, possibly including this example, were most likely carved by the shamans themselves, who may or may not have been taught the detailed conventions of the northern coast art form. Nonetheless, the piece displays the powerful diverging symmetry of the twin-profile classical format, in a more personal carving and design style.

The design work on Soul Catchers, as seen here, was frequently embellished with iridescent abalone shell pieces inlaid into the bone surface to represent teeth and to highlight design elements as desired by the carver. A profile animal head, a common theme, adorns each end of this object, suggestive of wolves or possibly sea lions, though only the original owner and carver would have known their true identities. At the center, a humanoid bear cub crouches with a bold appearance and subtle sculpture in its face, possibly representing one of the shaman-owner's helping spirits, known as *"yeik"* in the Tlingit language.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*

Tlingit  
Shaman's Amulet  
Ivory & Abalone Shell, 4 1/2" Length, c.1840-1860



Amulets were primarily employed by shamans on the Northwest Coast, but many people in these cultures may have kept small pieces of material (shapes made of stone, bone, horn, etc.) or simple carvings as talismans for their own well being and protection from spiritual harm. An early drawing (from the 1780s) of a high-ranking Haida woman includes an English silver fork worn about her neck on a cord, the first of this exotic material to be used as jewelry. Shamans' amulets are usually recognizable by certain types of imagery they include that are unique to the shamanic calling, such as emaciated people or animals (with skeletal features), octopus suckers, figures in transformation, land otters, and similar themes. Amulets were made of bone, horn, ivory, and sometimes wood or stone.

This interesting small sculpture is made of whale ivory, deeply relief-carved into three interrelated figures. The amulet may have been strung on a deer or moose-hide cord through the pierced opening below the neck of the human figure along the top. The top head may be a whale or dolphin, with round, inlaid eyes, a rounded snout and large mouth. What are probably pectoral fins stream back from the rear corner of the head and are split into two long digits or feather-like forms.

At the opposite end of the amulet, an even more difficult creature to identify is shown with separately carved lobes in a row behind it. This represents the creature's backbone. The head also has round inlaid eyes, and an unusual form that arches up over the animal's snout. This may represent the head of a large whale species like a humpback or bowhead. Between the two heads spans the carved form of a reclining human figure, its hands crossed over its belly. The mask-like face has large abalone-shell inlaid eyes and an open mouth, which indicates that the figure is singing. This image most likely represent the shaman himself, spirit-traveling with the two creature images to a realm between life and death, the spirit-universe of the shaman.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**  
*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*



Tlingit  
Shaman's Amulet  
Mountain Goat Horn, 3⅞" Length, c.1880



Amulets were shamanic talismans, carved of bone, ivory, and sometimes horn, as is the case for this unusual example.

Mammalian ears, four legs and long stout tail suggest that this amulet represents one of a shaman's universal helper spirits, an otter. The head of the creature is not only unusual for being depicted as a comparatively flat face looking straight upward, but also because of a small humanoid face carved in the otter's mouth.

Transformation is a common theme in shamanic objects and designs, and the human face may indicate the shaman's spirit within the otter, assuming the animal's form. Frequently seen in Tlingit shamanic imagery, land otters sometimes appear as emaciated forms with exposed vertebrae to emphasize their otherworldly aspects.

Amulets were sometimes carved by the shaman himself, and sometimes by commission with recognized artists, made to manifest the shaman's helpers for the patients and observers involved in a healing ritual or divination. The artistry displayed in this amulet suggests that it was created by a skilled traditional carver, and the broad brow and large eyes indicate a Tlingit origin for this sculpture. Tlingit shamanism remained strong into the last decade of the nineteenth century, while in other regions, such as among the Haida, missionary influence had greatly curtailed their traditional activities by that time.

The shaman would imbue an amulet with his spirit, and sometimes left the amulet with a patient, held in place or bound to the afflicted area, in order to better affect a cure. Shamanic objects were held in high and cautious esteem by the general populace, who feared and respected the unfathomable power of the shamans.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**

*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*

Haida  
Halibut Hooks  
Wood, Spruce Root & Animal Bone, 10¼" to 12½" Height, c.1880



Halibut hooks were made of two different types of wood. A baited barb would be lashed to the lighter variety with spruce root. The denser wood was usually carved.

The distinctive V-shaped Native-style halibut hook is an intriguing artifact of incredible artistic beauty, and a marvel of engineering which exploits the fish's natural behavior.

The Pacific halibut is a super predator, a large, flat fish with both eyes on the top side of its head and a mouth that opens sideways. On the sea floor, it literally vacuums up anything that might be prey, including whole fish and octopus.

Halibut can grow to monstrous size which would be impossible for the fisheremn to handle, but the hook makes a moot consideration. The V-shaped hook "sorts" halibut by size. One that's too small can't get its mouth around the baited section and any that are too large take the whole hook in their mouths, then expel it without ever getting caught. Those that are just the right size, however, take the baited half of the V into their mouths. When the fish finds that it can't swallow the bait, it expels it forcefully, sending the sharply-angled barb into the side of its mouth. As long as the hook's materials held against the fish's struggles, it could then be hauled to the surface at the fisherman's leisure.

Beyond this extraordinary functionality, each of these three hooks is remarkable for the virtuosity of the carvers who created them. Clan images, spirit figures and mysterious hands adorn each piece respectively and each calls for ancestral and spiritual assistance in different ways.

Tlingit  
Fish Club  
Hardwood, 23" Length, c.1880 -1890



Like many food gathering clubs of its kind, this fish club is carved in the form of a sea lion.

The sea lion was seen as a powerful hunter with free run of the ocean; graceful, strong, and fast. The sea lion nearly always catches its prey and such natural prowess made it an appropriate power image for a hunter's or fisher's hunting implement.

In hunting sea mammals or catching large fish it was important to subdue the animal or fish to keep it from upsetting the hunter's canoe or breaking a hunter's leg. A solid strike with a club such as this was good insurance against such mishaps, but beyond their utility, they reflect a war club tradition of decorated weapons that pay homage to both the prey and its sacrifice.

On the Northwest Coast, masterful, iconic objects have always inspired successive versions of themselves. By this iterative process, subgroups of object types have developed a continuity and each example exhibits new characteristics and details that were alien to the source.

This club follows the basic form of the sea lion type, with a large head on the tip and a straight body form with the tail and rear flippers terminating at the handle end. The addition of a reclining human on the back of the creature is totally original and makes it unique.

The tragedies of the late contact and settlement period of the second half of the nineteenth century greatly diminished the old Tlingit systems of apprenticeship. Nonetheless, surviving artists were still called upon to create objects.

With less instruction and knowledge of art tradition, these later artists were left to their own devices and created new aesthetics based on existing works. This piece is a masterpiece of those new traditions and is a unique and remarkable expression of the carvers own individuality.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**

*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*

Tsimshian  
Soapberry Spoon  
Alder or Birch, 15½" Length, c.1840-1860



Soapberries are small round berries that ripen in early summer in the mainland river valleys and dry habitats at the entrance to Puget Sound and the Gulf of Georgia.

When mixed with a more or less equal amount of water, a small handful of berries can be whipped into a large amount of egg-white-like foam. It has a naturally bittersweet taste that can be sweetened with honey. Soapberry froth was and is often served at feasts and potlaches, originally from carved wooden bowls distributed to groups of guests who ply the foam with their individual paddles.

The foam is sometimes referred to as 'Indian ice cream', and is eaten with flat-bladed, paddle-like 'spoons' that are made specifically for this purpose. The blades of the spoons are frequently decorated with two-dimensional designs, either relief-carved or painted (usually not both). Designs seen on soapberry spoons are usually unique and may represent clan crest designs or family identifiers. The spoons were sometimes made in matching sets with a special basket or bent-corner container to store them in.

The handle of the spoon was usually a plain, straight cylindrical form, but in rare instances, such as this piece, a sculptural figure was incorporated into the form of the handle. In this exceptional spoon, a small beaver peers down the length of the blade, its paws drawn up to grasp the end of the blade on either side of the handle. The beaver's tail is draped down the back of the handle and blade. The animal is so skillfully carved that the creature radiates a delightful energy and mischievousness that could only come from long familiarity and observation.

The sculptural style in the face indicates a Tsimshian artist, and the roundness of the medium-weight formlines on the blade, which compose an abstract, minimalist design of a bird, are typical of early nineteenth-century Tsimshian style.

Exhibited: **Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme**

*Pinacothèque de Paris, 2008*



Tlingit  
Shaman's Figures  
Wood, Paint & Human Hair, 6½" Height (*not including hair*)  
*c.1820-1840*



Tlingit shamans employed a number of ritual objects to assist in their healing and divination processes. Masks, amulets, rattles, drums, and small human or spirit figures like the group illustrated here all found use in shamanistic rituals.

Some shaman figures were intended to represent the shaman himself, and included a miniature set of masks the same as the typical set of eight that each shaman possessed and employed in their work. These represented the various personal spirits that each shaman made and kept contact with throughout their lives and which they called upon for assistance in their rituals. Other figures represented the spirits themselves, each one differing according to the appearance of the individual spirits.

This set of four spirit images shows a distinct relation of each to the other in terms of their size, physical composition, and painted decoration. Each is carved in a traditionally Tlingit style, particularly noticeable in the sculpture of the faces. Wide eyebrows and protruding noses and lips are typical of many Tlingit shaman's masks, and these features are prominently on display here. The expressions and mouth detail of each figure differs and represents each spirit as individuals who are related by identical costume and coloration. The use of human hair in these figures is particularly striking, as it is an elder's gray hair, which further projects the group into that realm between life and death which is the dominion of the shaman's calling.

In actual usage, the figures could be placed on the affected area and assist in drawing the offending malevolent spirit from the patient's body.

Sometimes they were left with a patient following a ritual healing in order to maintain spiritual contact with the shaman and better effect a cure.

Tlingit  
Frog Bowl  
Wood, Paint & Abalone Shell, 7½ Length, *c.1860*



Frogs were principal characters in many traditional stories that were (and still are) part of the oral history of Tlingit culture.

Like the character of the prince in shining armor in Western literature and children's stories, the frog was the character who rescued maidens from ordinary lives and magically transported them to another existence, in this case a watery underworld paradise where they were celebrated as princesses and queens.

To the shaman, the frog was equally important as both an illustrative example and a "yei", a spiritual helper. Like the shaman who existed in the physical world and made frequent passages to the spirit world, the amphibian frog comfortably existed in both the terrestrial and aquatic worlds with equal mastery, with each environment providing the from with different skills : ie., hopping on land, and swimming under water. This parallel made for easily understood "medical" explanations of shamanic healing practices of earthly illness, which were thought to be remediable only in the spirit world.

While the exact purpose of this bowl or container is not known, it could easily be a shaman's carrying case for small objects or could possibly be a dowry box to be given to a maiden on the occasion of her wedding.

Technically, the piece is delicately carved and broadly detailed so as to represent all frogs and pay honor to them. The piece is unusual in that it represents a single creature without any of the combinations and metamorphisms that unite multiple spirits, characters and creatures in single sculptures.

Extravagantly set with abalone and masterfully carved, the object was either from a family of great wealth and cultural status or a shaman with sufficient resources to commission such a carving or produce it himself.

Makah/Nuu-chah-nulth  
Line Serving Spool  
Yew, 13" Length, *c.1700 (or earlier)*



The Nuu-chah-nulth people live on the west coast of Vancouver Island and face the open waters of the Pacific Ocean. Their relatives, the Makah or Qwidicci'aht, live on the northern tip of the Pacific coast of Washington State.

Both groups were whalers, hunting both grays and humpbacks in the early spring when the mammals migrated north to the feeding grounds of Alaska. Eight crewmen in a 35-foot sculpted canoe paddled in search of the creatures, using a variety of specialized equipment for this greatly valued and dangerous task. They were armed with an eighteen-foot harpoon shaft, tipped with a point made of elk antler barbs with a sharp blade of mussel shell, and killing lances for dispatching the whale after it was harpooned. Long harpoon lines made of twisted cedar branches (known as withes) connected the harpoon head to a set of four sealskin floats, designed to slow the progress of the whale and keep it afloat. Sometimes more than one harpoon pierced the whale, and a long time passed before it was sufficiently exhausted to approach closely for the final dispatch.

The whale was then towed back to the village beach, where it was floated up on the high tide, to be flensed of its blubber and meat, which would feed and nourish the tribe for many weeks or months. The bones and baleen (the whale's food-filtering features), were cleaned and saved for use in special applications, including tools and weapons carved from the dense, hefty sections of bone. Whaling was also a spiritual occupation, undertaken for the survival of their world and respected for the physical strength and power, in teamwork, that such a monumental task required.

The making of the harpoon line was a refined and specialized task. The main float-line of cedar withes was long and large, two inches and more in diameter. This was attached to the harpoon head by a smaller lanyard, made of whale sinew wrapped tightly over its full length (about ten or more feet) with a small cord of spun nettle fiber. The whole was wrapped (called 'serving' in English) with a long, narrow strip of smooth and shiny cherry bark, which made a strong and abrasion-resistant line three-quarters of an inch or more in diameter.

The task of serving the sinew line with nettle cord was made easier by the use of a special long spool, like the one shown here. The space between the two heads of this implement was entirely filled with tightly wound nettle cord before use. The fine, strong cord was applied to the harpoon lanyard by rotating the spool snugly around the lanyard, laying the nettle cord tightly around the surface of the lanyard turn by turn over its entire length.

The carved embellishments of this spool are in the form of human heads facing outward. These beautiful and greatly refined sculptures most likely represent revered ancestors who were the greatest whalers of a family line, and their spirits were being called upon for assistance in each new whaling endeavor.

The sculpture of these magnificent faces is very archaic in style, closely related to the style of carvings recovered from the Ozette archaeological site south of Cape Flattery, Washington, where parts of five houses in the village were inundated by a huge mudslide between 300-500 years ago. The anaerobic mud preserved the collapsed structures and the contents of those houses, and in the 1970s thousands of objects and artifacts were excavated from the site. Every kind of board, tool, weapon, carving, weaving, and container was recovered from the ancient mud, including some examples of objects that had not survived or been seen in more recent historic times. A small number of serving spools were recovered at Ozette, but none with quite the sculptural depth and refinement of this exceptional example.

Objects such as this important work were handed down through the generations, revered both for their age and history. It's not out of the realm of possibility that this spool may therefore date back into the time of Ozette before the slide, created in one or another contemporary Nuu-chah-nulth or Makah village of the day.

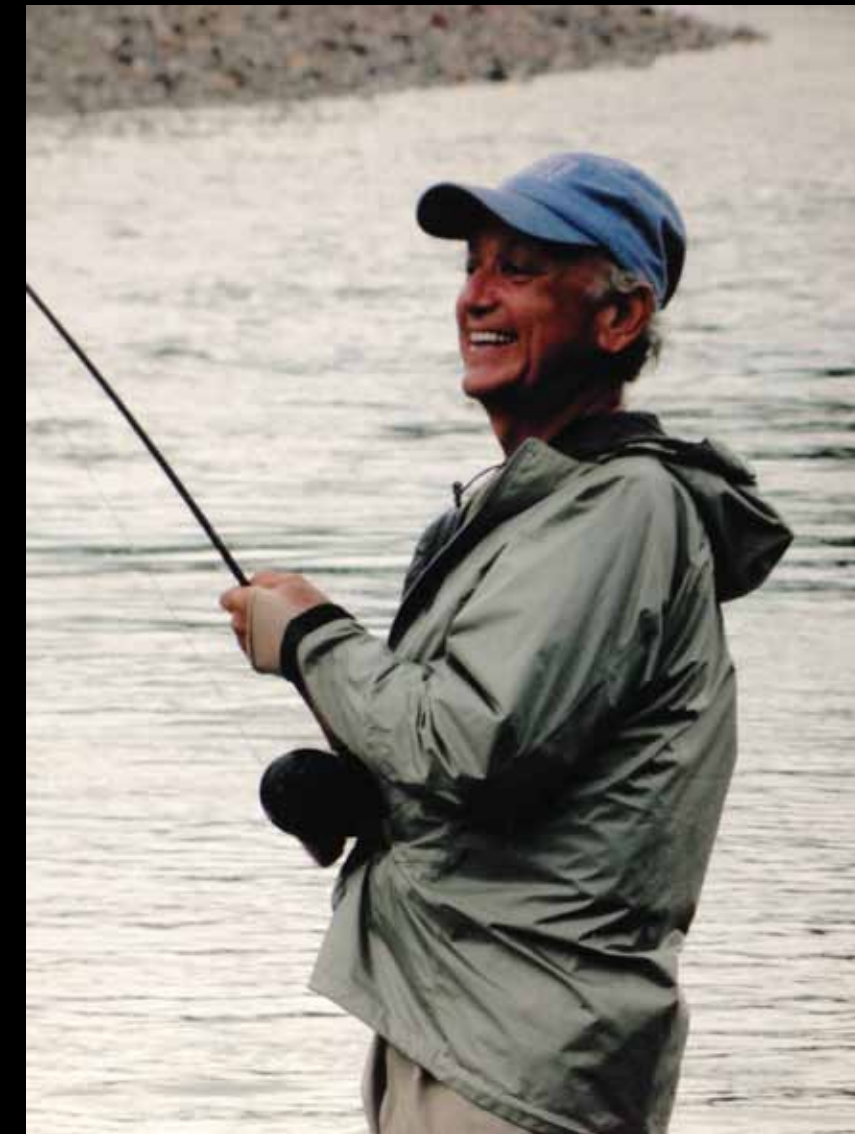


## *Biographical Information*

### Steven Michaan

Steven Michaan is a collector's collector. In his youth, he began collecting stamps, coins, swords and antique firearms.

As a university student at U.C. Berkeley, Michaan assembled a collection of M.C. Escher prints that he bought from the artist himself, and Edward S. Curtis photographs. Michaan spent the next decade collecting Arts & Crafts and specializing in Louis Comfort Tiffany stained glass windows.



*The author Atlantic Salmon fishing on the Cascapedia River in Quebec.*

Always an avid fisherman, Michaan began collecting the best examples of fish decoys. His collection was the basis for major museum exhibits, notably, “Beneath the Ice: The Art of the Fish Decoy” featured at the Museum of American Folk Art in New York in 1990-1991.

His interest in fishing and fish decoys and his passion for collecting expanded to include Northwest Coast and Eskimo halibut hooks and other fishing implements. From there, Michaan launched into a new field: tribal arts. Michaan specialized in collecting shaman artwork from the Northwest Coast and Arctic regions.

Michaan's Northwest Coast tribal arts collection evolved and received international recognition and praise when it became the basis for the exhibit “Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme” held at the Pinocatheque de Paris in 2007-2008. “Jackson Pollock et le Chamanisme” was a ground-breaking show that tied Jackson Pollock's early abstract expressionistic works directly to Northwest Coast shamanic art. Over 25 pieces from Michaan's collection were represented in this exhibit.

In this collection, Michaan showcases North America's tribal arts as a unique contribution to the world of art, perception, and the spirit world.

Michaan has previously authored the book on his fish decoy collection, “American Fish Decoys,” published in 2003, and co-authored “Beneath the Ice,” published in 1990. He has three children and lives with his wife in Westchester County, New York.



## *Credits*

### Dr. Peter T. Furst

Graduated from UCLA in 1966 with a Ph.D. in Anthropology. Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the State University of New York at Albany and Research Associate at the University of Pennsylvania of Archaeology and Anthropology and at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture/Laboratory of Anthropology in Santa Fe, N.M.

For the past half-century, Furst's principal interests and publications have been, and continue to be, Native American religions and shamanism, especially of the Huichol Indians of northwestern Mexico, and the religious symbolism of pre-Columbian art.

Dr. Furst is the author of fifteen books and over a hundred published papers, chapters, book introductions and reviews.

### Photo Credits

#### Page 6

Auk Indian Shaman with ermine skin in hair, wearing a fur cape and a carved amulet necklace, holding a raven rattle, c.1900.

*Alaska State Library*

*Tlingit Shaman, c.1900*

*Collection: Winter and Pond, c.1893-1943*

*Photographer: Winter and Pond*

*Image ID no.: ASL-P87-0243*

#### Page 9

Skoon-doo-oo-yak [Skundoo] shaman of the Eagle Tribe

*Alaska State Library*

*Collection: Case and Draper, c. 1898-1920*

*Photographer: Case and Draper*

*Image ID no.: ASL-P39-0448*

#### Page 10

Masked Dancers--Qagyuhl (Kwakiutl)

*The Steven Michaan Collection of North American Tribal Arts*

*Photographer: Edward S. Curtis*

*Photographed in 1911 and published in 1915.*