Pacific Northwest Coast Native Art

OF THE WILLIAM A. EGAN LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SOUTHEAST

the Collection

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
SOUTHEAST

learn · engage · change

www.uas.alaska.edu

UAS is an AA/EO institution

Artwork photography by Ron Klein

Design by UAS Public & Media Relations, 2011

Welcome

Long before the University of Alaska Southeast William A. Egan Library opened its doors on January 15, 1990, the process of selecting the building's artwork was well under way. The Alaska Percent for Art committee began recommending artwork for the library in 1988 after soliciting proposals from 14 artists. The committee's work was approved by the UAS Chancellor and the University of Alaska Board of Regents, and a total of $72,114 in art commissions was awarded. All of the artwork in the library is from the Northwest Coast region of the United States.

William A. Egan served as Alaskan's governor for 12 years between 1959 and 1974, and he devoted nearly 50 years of his life to Alaska politics. In overseeing many changes that swept Alaska from territorial status to statehood to booming oil producer, he became one of the state's most respected leaders. Egan's belief in the need for higher education in Alaska never wavered.

Level Two

Main Library Entrance

1 Four Mas ks

Edna Jackson

The four female masks are made of cedar bark paper. Below the two center masks are shredded and spun cedar bark rings which encircle Eagle and Raven. Designs representing Eagle or Raven are painted on two of the women's cheeks. The artist initially deemed her attempts at this artwork unsuccessful because she sought to duplicate traditional carved wooden masks. Paper is not a traditional material used in Tlingit art. After experimentation in the paper making medium, however, she discovered a more successful approach by focusing on the inherent qualities found in handmade paper.

2 Aak'w House Posts

Steve Brown and Wayne Price

The house posts, carved in red cedar, are derived from an early Stikine Tlingit style. Each portrays characters from Tlingit legends. Tlingit society is divided into two sides (moieties), Raven and Eagle, with each side subdivided into clans and each clan characterized by one or more emblems or crests.

As you face the house posts, the Raven post on the left recalls how Raven stole the sun and carried it into the sky. The Dog Salmon, a Raven crest, is shown swimming upstream. On the lower portion of the post is Good Luck Woman (L'enaxxeet'ak'w). Tradition has it that anyone who comes in contact with her will have good luck. Misfortune, however, awaits wandering children who meet her for they are

carried away into the forest. At the base of the post are stacks of mussel shells from a recent meal.

The Eagle post on the right shows the Big Dipper asterism in human-animal form wearing a crown of stars. The next figure shows the shaman (Ixt). He wears the bear's ears and fringed robe as a sign of his role as spiritual healer and prophet.

The Weasel is an Aak'w tribe emblem and sometimes acts as the Ixt's helper.

3 Head Canoe

Steve Brown

This red cedar panel symbolizes that all humans and animals share in the spirit of life. The canoe carries some of the animal spirits of Tlingit mythology, representing each side of Tlingit society and some clans. The prominent figure is Raven holding the moon in his beak, a reference to the story of Raven bringing moonlight to the world. Next is Bear, from the Eagle moiety, clutching the gunwales of the canoe. Behind Bear is Frog, from the Raven moiety. Behind Frog is Eagle, Raven's opposite; on the bow and the stern are figures of Killer Whale. The dorsal fin of the rear Killer Whale extends above the gunwale, suggesting that he is part of the canoe, but in some respects, apart from it. On the bow is a human figure grasping the gunwales as he is carried along on the supernatural ocean by his spirit friends. The Head Canoe is a reminder of the benefits and kindness given by the animal spirits. Their gifts include medicines, dreams, intuitive wisdom, and inspiration that lead mortals through the voyage of life.

4 Circular Wooden Panels: Raven and Eagle

Nathan Jackson

These panels are made of red cedar and are four-and-a-half feet in diameter. They are four inches thick in the center and taper off to a thickness of one-and-a-half inches at the edges. In Northwest Coast art, as in life, Raven's beak is long and pointed, while Eagle's beak is shorter and curved downward.

Raven is a leading figure in Northwest Coast mythology. He is the trickster and creator; he loves to tease and trick, to woo and win; he is clever and cheats. It is Raven who gave the world the sun and the moon, the stars, the rivers and lakes, the fish and other animals.

Entertaining stories of Raven's adventures are found along the Northwest Coast, throughout Alaska and even in parts of Siberia.

Eagle is a symbol of power and prestige and is, in many respects, Raven's opposite. In traditional Tlingit culture, persons must marry opposites: Ravens to Eagles, Eagles to Ravens. The panel reflects this social balance in Tlingit society.

5 Eagle-Shark Panel

Jennifer Brady Morales

This panel is comprised of sixteen yellow cedar boards with the grain running vertically. The paint is acrylic. Graphite was added to the black paint to make it glisten like old, traditional paint. Shark is the principal crest of the Wooshkeetaan clan of the Eagle moiety. This relationship is illustrated by having Eagle's head and claws form the upper portions of Shark. The "S" shapes on the upper side of Eagle's wings serve a dual purpose: they represent the backbone of Eagle and Shark.

The human figure in the front dorsal fin depicts a husband while the figure in the second dorsal fin symbolizes his wife with a lip plug or labret. The lower pectoral fins show their son and daughter. The children are shown without teeth and only four fingers to symbolize their immaturity. This combination of family figures, symmetrically balanced in splayed design, honors the importance of clan and family in Northwest Coast societies.

Level One

6 Big Dipper Panels

Nathan Jackson

The Big Dipper (Yax-te) is an important crest of the Aak'w Tlingit. The crest is said to have been given to the Aak'w' warriors after a battle near Klawock. One panel depicts Raven and the other Bear. The copper discs not only highlight the animal crest, but also show the big dipper in the night sky over Aak'w village and the city of Juneau.

Level One

Display Case

Plaited Utility Basket

Jan Criswell

This square basket is made from plaited red cedar bark. Northwest Coast weavers used various local materials for their baskets. Red cedar grows in southern Southeast Alaska and in British Columbia and was used by Tsimshian and Haida craftsmen in making many objects. Farther north, among the Haida and Tlingit, most weaving was done with spruce roots, as red cedar is seldom found north of Prince of Wales Island.

Midwinter Ravenstail Robe

Cheryl Samuel

The ravenstail style of weaving was a predecessor of the technique used in making Chilkat robes and tunics. The technique had not been used for the past 150 years until its recent revival by artists such as Samuel. This modern blanket does not use traditional colors or fibers. It represents the colors of the winter beach, with a black warp and silk strands of mauve, blue-green, steel blue, and pink.

The center is black with a design in the color of mussel hearts. The pattern across the top represents dark mountains with a single ray of golden hope streaming from the peaks. The long tassels flow with the tides, reflecting the hues of winter light. The collar is trimmed with marten fur.

Open Weave Clam Basket

Jan Criswell

This basket is made with spruce roots gathered in Juneau. The open weave was designed for baskets used for harvesting shellfish and other resources so that the items could be washed after being collected.

Haida Storage Basket

Mary Lou King

This is a mid-sized storage basket woven from spruce roots collected in the Juneau area. Baskets such as this were woven in various sizes and used for holding household items. The skip-stitch pattern in the weaving on the top section is called "st'alaaw" in Haida, meaning slug or snail.

Haida Ceremonial Hat

Mary Lou King

The ceremonial hat is made of woven spruce roots. Since spruce roots swell when wet, the hat is waterproof when worn in the rain. The pattern in the weave is call "k'uhichihaangaat" in Haida, meaning spider web.

In the past, such hats were sometimes topped with small spruce root rings known as potlatch rings. An important person could add a ring for each major memorial feast or potlatch sponsored.

Bentwood Box

Ray Watkins

Bentwood boxes were made throughout the Northwest Coast and some of the finest were made by Tlingit and Haida craftsmen. To make such a box, a plank was grooved, or kerfed, into four sections. The wood was then steamed or moistened with boiling water and quickly folded into rectangular form. The final corner, where the ends come together, was fastened with spruce root lacing. A cover and bottom were then added. Such boxes were used to store food, ceremonial items and family heirlooms.

The Tlingit design on this box portrays a Killer Whale with bared teeth. The small face on top represents the spirit of the whale at the blowhole.

Cylindrical Basket

Delores Churchhill

This basket represents weaving techniques of the Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian. The cresting wave design was used by all three S.E. Alaska tribes. The bottom third is Tlingit,

woven clockwise as the basket is held right side up. The Tlingit use Maidenhair fern, sunbleached grass and spruce roots except for the Wrangell weavers who often use cedar bark. The middle third is Alaskan Tsimshian who also weave clockwise with sunbleached grass and Maidenhair fern. The Alaskan Tsimshian were influenced by the Tlingit to compact twine, as originally they plaited their baskets with red cedar bark. The upper third of the basket is Haida, woven counterclockwise and upside down with spruce and alder bark. The cresting wave design is surrounded by a strawberry design. The lid design includes Tlingit fern fronds (on the nob), Haida red cedar tree branches and the outer Tsimshian design of red cedar sunbleached grass representing smoke house racks.

Carved Bowl, Seal Design

Ray Watkins

The bowl is made of alder wood and inlaid with operculum shells. Bowls like this were used for storing and serving foods such as dried fish, fish eggs, dried berry cakes, seaweed, eulachon oil, and seal oil. The bowl represents a seal sitting on a rock, warming itself on a sunny day, arching its long hind flippers and stretching its head upwards.

On ceremonial occasions a bowl such as this was sometimes filled with food and oil and presented to a distinguished guest. A gift of this sort brought great honor to both the recipient and the donor.

Raven Headdress

Harry Calkins

This modern piece was inspired by the traditional headdress of the Nuxalk (Bella Coola) Indians of British Columbia. The Nuxalk design is a variation of the styles used by more northerly people such as the Tsimshian, Haida, and Tlingit. Traditional headdresses were made of cedar. The attached pieces such as the head, tail, and wings are trimmed with cedar bark.

This is a modern interpretation in which the head, tail, and wings trimmed with cedar bark. The head, body, and tail are formed of one piece to which the wings are attached. The surface design is Nuxalk, but differs in that traditional hats were painted black, red, and blue on natural wood. Here the artist used silver and black.

Such headdresses were worn on ceremonial occasions by the celebrants. Today, old hats are family treasures, and only out for display at major ceremonies.

Ravenstail Apron

Delores Churchill

The design and weaving of this apron incorporates Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian art forms. The materials used include merino wool, fur, and deer hooves. The weaving is done with a handspun warp.

The top portion is a Haida weave called spider web. The central section, traditionally made of leather with a porcupine quill trim, represents the seasons of the mountains and is a Tlingit design. The bottom section, representing lightning, is a Tsimshian design.

Level One

Mourant Courtyard

Eagle Totem Pole

Joe and T.J. Young

After accepting the gift of the Raven totem pole, UAS became aware that, without an Eagle totem pole to complement it, the Tlingit sense of balance between the moieties would be missing. In 2009, fundraising began and an Eagle pole was commissioned to match the Raven pole. The Sealaska Heritage Institue and Sealaska Corp. donated the 15-ton, 45-foot red cedar log for the totem. The Native student group Wooch.een worked with elders of the Aak'w Kwáan to identify the Eagle clan crests to be featured on the totem. They wanted to give special recognition to the Wooshkeetaan, an Eagle clan from the Juneau area. Hydaburg-based Haida artists Joe and T.J. Young carved the pole on campus underneath the eves of the Egan Classroom Wing. The pole features Eagle to represent all Eagle clans, Shark, Wolf, and Thunderbird, with Shark representing the Wooshkeetaan.

The pole raising celebration in the spring of 2010 was particularly sweet for Native elders and the UAS Wooch.een student club, who worked on the fundraising and organization efforts.

"There's definitely a kind of an understanding or acceptance on campus for Native students. I'm glad this is going on in my generation," — Ricky Tagaban, Wooch.een member, UAS student

Haa Shagoon Gaas'ee (The Raven Totem Pole)

Tommy Jimmie Sr., Wes Willard, Leo Jacobs, and Nathan Jackson

The totem pole is visible from the library's outside entryway. The 38-foot red cedar totem pole overlooks University of Alaska Southeast buildings and Auke Lake. Raven is the top figure on the totem pole. Raven, a symbol of the Aak'w Tlingit's heritage and a source of creativity and worldly wisdom, stands on the sun.

Other carved figures on the totem pole, from the top down, are a person holding a copper which is the symbol for wealth; the sea lion split by the man which is strength; and the beaver at the base refers to diligence.

Four Tlingit carvers from Haines created this totem pole during an exhibition at the 1964 World's Fair in New York. The pole was later raised by Chevron, U.S.A. at their refinery near Nikiski on the Kenai Peninsula south of Anchorage. After the refinery closed in 1991, the pole was donated to the University of Alaska Southeast by Chevron, U.S.A. and Robert F. Williams, a former president of the University of Alaska Board of Regents who worked for the company.

The totem pole raising ceremony on the UAS Juneau campus took place on October 3, 1993. About 300 people from throughout Southeast Alaska attended.

Level One

Mourant Courtyard

Raven

Lisa Rickey

Prominantly featured in the Mourant courtyard outside the Egan Library, Raven is a steel sculpture created by artist and UAS alumna Lisa Rickey. Installed in 2008, the sculpture utilizes modern materials and a contemporary design aesthetic to capture the character of Raven.

About the Artists

Steve Brown

Steve Brown has had a long career as a carver, researcher, author and museum curator. His mediums include wood and metalwork. He currently resides in Washington State.

Harry Calkins

Harry Calkins, after teaching Alaska Native Arts for four years, has moved to the Midwest where he currently teaches math. In his spare time, he continues to create art inspired by Northwest Coast Indians and the people of China, Japan and India.

Janice Criswell

Janice Criswell is a Tlingit/Haida artist who has taught Northwest Coast basketry at the University of Alaska Southeast for several years. She learned to weave Raven's Tail robes from Cheryl Samuel and baskets from Delores Churchill. Her work is in various museum and private collections.

Delores Churchill

Delores Churchill is a Haida artist and weaver of baskets, hats, robes and other regalia. Her exhibited works include utilitarian and ceremonial objects made of spruce root, cedar bark, wool and natural dyes. She has received numerous awards including the National Heritage Fellowship Award.

Edna Jackson

Edna Jackson is a life-long Tlingit resident of Kake, Alaska who has worked and exhibited in the mediums of paper, beadwork and jewelry.

Nathan Jackson

Nathan Jackson is Chilkoot Tlingit of the Raven moiety, who has been creating artwork since 1959. His projects include masks, screens, panels, house posts, totems and jewelry. He has instructed wood-carving and design at several institutions, and his work is found in museums and private collections throughout the world. He currently resides in Ketchikan, Alaska.

Leo Jacobs Sr.

Leo Jacobs Sr. was a Tlingit artist of the Coho Clan, from Haines, Alaska. He carved many art pieces, and museums across the United States own his work.

Tommie Jimmie Sr.

Tommie Jimmie, Sr. is a Tlingit resident of Juneau, who has been carving since the age of 14. He is

from the L'uknax.ádi Clan of the Raven Moiety. His art includes totems, smaller wood and stone carvings and jewelry. In addition to his work on the Raven Totem at UAS and in "Auke Village" close to the ANB Hall downtown, two totems in the Sitka National Historical Park are solo creations. Tommie Jimmie, Sr. has also been a musician.

Mary Lou King

Mary Lou King is a long time resident of Juneau who learned her basketry skills from at UAS from Selina Peratrovich, Janice Criswell and Delores Churchill. She has also authored and taught in the field of outdoor education.

Jennifer Brady Morales

Jennifer Brady Morales is a late Tlingit/Tsimshian artist who has worked and exhibited in the mediums of silver, wood, ivory and painting. She has also created drums.

Wayne Price

Wayne Price is a Wooshkeetaan Tlingit master carver who has carved over 20 traditional and non-traditional totems. He currently resides in Haines, Alaska where he owns the Silver Cloud Art Center.

Cheryl Samuel

Cheryl Samuel has had a long career as a weaver, researcher, author and teacher. She is associated with the revival of Raven's Tail weaving. She was adopted by the Eagle/Wolf Clan of the Chilkat Tlingit.

Ray Watkins

Ray Watkins began carving and studying Northwest Coast Art in 1978. He was adopted into the Raven Sockeye Clan of Haines. He teaches carving at UAS and has received awards for his work; many pieces are in public and private collections.

Wesley J. Willard

Wesley J. Willard was a master totem carver and lifelong Chilkat Valley resident until his death in 1994. He demonstrated his carving skills at the 1964 World's Fair in Seattle. He was also an accomplished musician and danced with the Chilkat Dancers.

T.J. Young

T. J. Young, a member of the Yaadaas Eagle Clan of the Kaigani Haida, is from Hydaburg, Alaska and was introduced to Haida art by his grandfather Claude Morrison. In addition to carving totems and ceremonial objects he has studied in Vancouver's Northwest Coast Jewelry Arts Program.

Joe Young

Joe Young, from the Yakw'laanaas Raven Clan, is T.J. Young's brother and also from Hydaburg. He began drawing in junior high school and learned the basics of carving from Warren Peele. Prior to carving the Eagle Pole on the UAS Juneau campus, the Young brothers completed poles which stand in the Sitka National Historical Park and Hydaburg Totem Park.

Bibliography

The following books are in the Egan Library Collection:

Brown, Steven Clay. Native Visions: Evolution in Northwest Coast Art from the Eighteenth through the Twentieth Century. Seattle: Seattle Art Museum & University of Washington Press, 1998. **E78.N78B76 1998**

___. Spirits of the Water: Native Art Collected on Expeditions to Alaska and British Columbia, 1774-1910. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000. **E78.N73S657 2000**

Busby, Sharon. Spruce Root Basketry of the Haida and Tlingit. Seattle: Marquand Books, 2003. **E99.H2B87 2003**

Holm, Bill. "Art". Handbook of North American Indians. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990. Vol. 7. 602-632. **Ref. E77.H25 V.7**

___. Northwest Coast Indian Art: an Analysis of Form. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965. **E78.N78H6**

Jensen, Vickie. Totem Pole Carving: Bringing a Log to Life. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003. **E99.N734J44 2004**

Jonaitis, Aldona. From the Land of Totem Poles: The Northwest Coast Indian Art Collection at the American Museum of Natural History. New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1988. **E78.N78A45 1988 Oversize**

King, J.C.H. Portrait Masks from the Northwest Coast of America. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1979. **E78.N78K56**

Lobb, Allan. Indian Baskets of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Portland, OR; Graphic Arts Center Publishing Co., 1990. **E98.B3L63 1990**

Mailin, Edward. Totem Poles of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Portland: Timber Press, Inc., 1998. **E98.T65.M35 1998**

McNair, Peter; Hoover, Alan; Neary, Kevin. The Legacy: Tradition and Innovation in Northwest Coast Indian Art. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981. **E78.B9M29 1984**

Meuli, Jonathan. Shadow House: Interpretations of Northwest Coast Art. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2001. **E78.N78M485 2001**

Norris, Karen; Norris, Ralph. Northwest Carving Traditions. Atglen, PA.: Schiffer Pub., 1999. **E78.N78N67 1999 General Ref. Oversize**

Samuel, Cheryl. The Chilkat Dancing Blanket. Seattle: Pacific Search Press, 1982. **E99.C552S25 1990**

___. The Raven's Tale. Vancouver, B.C.: The University of British Columbia Press, 1987. **E78.N78S34 1987**

Shearar, Cheryl. Understanding Northwest Coast Art: A Guide to Crests, Beings and Symbols. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000. **E78.N78S446 2000**

Stewart, Hilary. Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians. Vancouver, B.C.: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984. **E78.N78S762 1984**

___. Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979. **E78.N78S764 1979**

___. Looking at Totem Poles. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993. ebrary. Web. 18 Aug. 2010. **E98.T65 See Internet Access**

___. Totem Poles. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990. **E98.T6S74 1990**

Thom, Ian M. Challenging Traditions: Contemporary First Nations Art of the Northwest Coast. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009. **E78.N78T45 2009**

Wardwell, Allen. Tangible Visions: Northwest Coat Indian Shamanism and its Art. New York: Monacelli Press with the Corvus Press, 2009. **E78.N78W283 2009 Oversize**

The following materials in media format(s) are in the Egan Library Collections

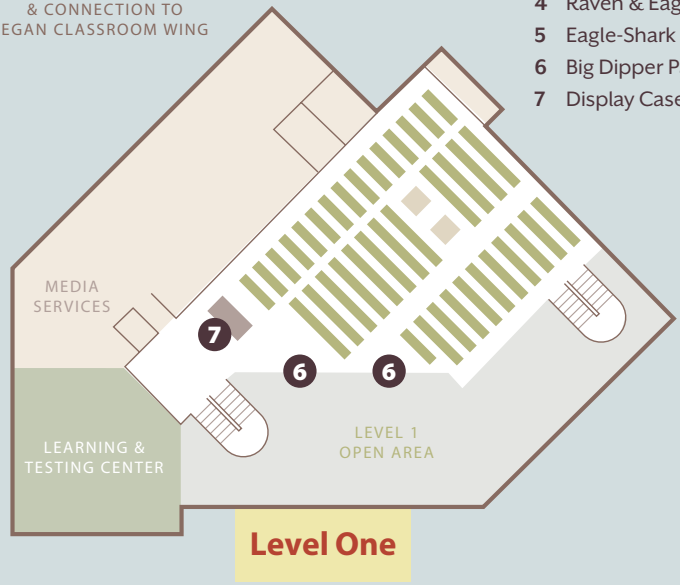
The Art: Two Carvers [VHS]. A Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Production, 1982. **E99.T6A77 Videos and DVDs**

Carved From the Heart: a Portrait of Grief, Healing, and Community [DVD]. Harriman, N.Y.: New Day Films, 2000. **F912.P95C37 Videos and DVDs**

Ravens and Eagles [DVD]. Haida Art. Vancouver, BC: Ravens & Eagles Productions Ltd.: Urban Rez Productions: Moving Images Distribution [distributor], c2001-2003. [23 DVDs] **E99.H2R425 Videos and DVDs**

Sharing Our Knowledge: a Conference of Tlingit Tribes and Clans [DVD]. (2009: Juneau, Alaska) Wooshteen Kana*xtulaneegí Haa At Wuskóowu). Vol. 6. Northwest Coast Art; Vol. 8. Tlingit Basketry and Beadwork; Vol. 29. Chilkat Weaving Appreciation. **E78.A3S44 Videos and DVDs**

Spirit of the Mask [VHS]. Gryphon Productions & CKVU/U.TV, 1992. **E78.N78S75 Videos and DVDs**

WILLIAM A. EGAN LIBRARY

1 Four Masks
2 Aak'w House Posts
3 Head Canoe
4 Raven & Eagle Panels
5 Eagle-Shark Panel
6 Big Dipper Panels
7 Display Case