



Date:

1870

Identifier:

T0523

Description:

Raven masks are often used in the prestigious Hamat'sa, a complex series of dances involving an initiation ceremony. The raven is one of three cannibal bird attendants to the great Bakhwbakwalanooksiwey, a spirit described as a humanoid covered in mouths. The initiate is usually a young man. He becomes possessed by Bakhwbakwalanooksiwey but is gradually subdued and then finally reintegrated into society. The initiate is accompanied by three cannibal birds who make a dramatic appearance in dances by sharply snapping their powerful beaks. This is accomplished by the dancer who snaps the mask's lower beak up and down.

Physical dimensions:

height 9 in ; length 26.25 in

Format:

Mask

Coverage:

British Columbia ; Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl)

American Indian Art

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