Preston Singletary, Raven Steals the Sun

Glass
Today

Sign up for (Nov. 27) tour of Canadian Museum of History
Tlingit art
Tsimshian art
Tour of
Canadian Museum of History

• See Collection of Native Northwest Coast Art
• Tuesday, November 27 from 10 am – 12 noon
• Lunch is optional
• Please sign up on sheet
• Your questions?
Tlingit & Tsimshian Art

Class 4
Tlingit and Tsimshian Territories
Traditional Tlingit Art
Tlingit Chief’s Raven Rattle

Before 1869
32x10x13 cm
Tlingit Shaman’s mask c. 1825
32x21 cm
Wood, copper, paint, hide thong.
Louis Shotridge, Stoowukaa (1886-1937)

Tlingit from Klukwan, Chilkat, Alaska
Louis Shotridge’s lineage c. 1700-1900

Shotridge knew these 7 generations by heart
He belonged to the Long Dorsal Fin House & became Fin Master
Louis Shotridge, Stoowukaa
1886-1937

• Kaagwaantaan Clan of Klukwan AK*
• Tlingit ethnographer, collector & curator
• Writer and cultural intermediary of Tlingit art at the University of Pennsylvania Museum from 1905-1932

• *Klukwan is also called Chilkat
Louis Shotridge’s goals

• To illuminate Tlingit values for widest audience – “into the white man’s light”
• Compare Tlingit culture to Rome and Greece
• Employ archaic language ("Goddess of Fortune")
• Present only exemplary Tlingit men and women & their objects of enduring importance
• Chilkat blanket narratives & the evolution of NWC art & design
Chief Anotklosh (Taku) in Chilkat Blanket, 1913

Tlingit, Juneau AK
Chief’s rattle
Chilkat Robe

Ceremonial regalia, Chief’s family crests, always many eyes
Traditional colours: yellow, black, white
Material: mountain goat wool twinned with cedar bark; fringe an important element
Time needed to weave: 1 – 2 years
Chilkat Design origin story

“The House of Saanaxeit in Dream Land: from Whence Come(s) the Origin of (Chilkat) Design – Especially the eye Motif”

By Louis Shotridge
UPM Archives
This scene may be reminiscent of the one dreamed of by the young Tlingit girl in the Tlingit origin story.
Painting of Rain Screen and dance
Mary Ebbets (1823-1919) chilkat robe
Mary Ebbetts, Chilkat Blanket worn backwards for memorial ceremony
Lily Hope, Chilkat Weaver
Interwoven Radiance
Contemporary Tlingit Artists
Norman Tait
Norman Tait, Tlingit

Welcome figure holding an oolican grease spoon
Exhibition: Culture at the Centre, MOA 2018
Norman Tait (1941-2016)

Dzunukwa Mask
Dr. Dempsey Bob, Tlingit artist
Dempsey Bob, Tahlta/Tlingit artist

• B. 1948, Wolf Clan
• Began 1969, Freda Diesing (Haida) teacher
• Taught 2 generations of artists
• Collections at MOA, Smithsonian, Columbia University, CMH
Dempsey Bob, Old Woman Mask, 1974

Museum of Northern BC, Prince Rupert
nails hair wood leather
Note labret (noble woman)
Dempsey Bob, Frog Stories, 2017

alder, 12 3/4 X 9 1/4 X 7 1/2”
Reminiscent of shaman’s red frog mask
Dempsey Bob, Taken, 2016

Yellow Cedar 19" X 8.5 X 4.5
Dempsey Bob, Story of Fog Woman & Raven

Airport
Preston Singletary, Tlingit Artist

• B. 1963 California.
• Raised Seattle, great grandparents’ Tlingit stories
• High school with glass artist Dante Marioni
• Began to work as a guard at glass studio
• 1984 attended Pilchuck Glass School
• Tlingit themes, crests
Preston Singletary, Tlingit artist
Singletary and Marioni creating in studio
Preston Singletary, Raven Steals the Sun

Glass
Preston Singletary, (title unknown)

Glass
Preston Singletary, Lightning Snakes
Tlingit and Tsimshian lands
Tlingit and Tsimshian lands
Grizzly bears & Spirit bear & mountains
Sea lions
Traditional Tsimshian Art

• 9 tribes
• In 1800 - 9,000 pop. – largest on Coast
Tlingit and Tsimshian Territories
“Gitanyow: the totem poles carved in the 1800s and 1900s stood as documents of Tsimshian histories and migrations over thousands of years.”
Tsimshian House Front, 
Mythical Undersea Chief Nagunaks

Ft. Simpson/Lax Kw’Alaams – Transitions: 1. Tsimshian community, 2.1830 HBC Trading Post (one of finest on Coast), 3. Methodist Mission

Smithsonian Museum
Tsimshian Mask, 1820-40

Hardwood, paint hide  
Width 7 ¾” x height 7”

1863: Surrendered by Christian converts & taken to Scotland as part of Dundas Collection.  
Collection was auctioned in 2006 for $7 M. Thomson family purchased 23 works for Canada, including this piece ($1,700,000) now at the AGO.
Tsimshian Stone Mask, one of a nested pair, 
date unknown

Collected late 19C, may have been carved 100 years earlier. Possibly Tlingit. 
Eye sockets here are opaque while each eye of the inner mask are pierced with 
a hole. CMH collection
Frederick Alexcee, Tsimshian artist

(1853-1939)
Frederick Alexcee and his wife, Angelique

Note European-style paintings & clothing – portrait and totem pole scene
Frederick Alexcee, Tsimshian

• HBC Ft. Simpson, now Lax KwʼAlaams
• Father French-Canadian/Iroquois & HBC voyageur, died smallpox. Mother Tsimshian
• Trained as secret society carver
• 1874 converted to Methodist Church after devastating smallpox epidemic
• Engineer on mission ship, hop picking Seattle
Alexcee con’t

• First NWC Indian to create narrative historical paintings on paper & canvas
• Idiosyncratic style: self-taught, European and Indigenous subjects
• Kaitlin McCormick MA 2010 thesis: *Frederick Alexcee: Neither One Nor the Other* (Edinburgh invited)

Collections: CMH, Burke, NMAI (NY), Field (Chicago)
Frederick Alexcee

“An observant, confident, assertive and imaginative man with a flair for the dramatic”

John McNair, NWC ethnologist, RBCM
Frederick Alexcee, Angel Baptismal Font c. 1886

Tsimshian. Approx. 3’
Frederick Alexcee, Hauling in Nets

Glass lamp for tourist trade
Frederick Alexcee, Warriors Duelling with Spears

Glass lamp
Frederick Alexsee

Tsimshian women in button blankets, Chief’s wife in chilkat blanket?
Glass lamp
Frederick Alexcee, Warrior

Glass lamp
Museum of Vancouver
Frederick Alexcee, Port Simpson, 1890
Frederick Alexcee, Pt. Simpson, 1890

From memory
Frederick Alexsee, Fort Simpson c. 1895

National Gallery collection, often displayed
Frederick Alexcee, Pole Raising at Port Simpson, c. 1900

Oil on canvas 13 x 22 in.
One of series done from memory of childhood
Note number of people involved with ropes on pole & roof, witnesses
Contemporary Tsimshian Artists
‘Ksan Cultural Centre

Model village and art school Near Hazelton, BC
Between Prince George and Prince Rupert
Cory Moraes, Tsimshian jewelry maker
Starr, Tsimshian mask pendant
Starr, Tsimshian Mask Pendant
Nuxalt Chief Clellamin’s Housefront, CMH

Note the figure over the door pounding on maple plank to welcome guests. Probably inspired by mechanical figures the chief saw on a trip to Germany.
Chilkat Design, 1907