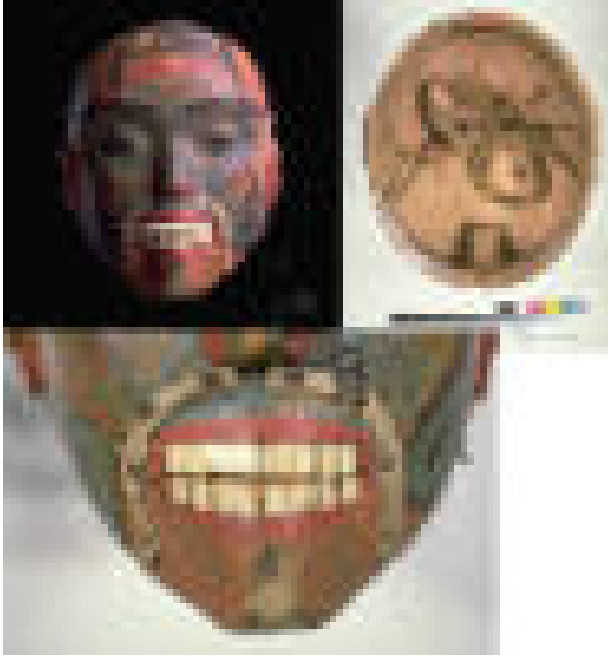


Basic Detail Report



Portrait Mask

Medium

wood, mammal skin, mammal ivory

Description

CMH VII-B-3 a collected 1879 This very fine mask made in the middle of the 19th century once had a moustache and goatee made of bear fur. Collected on Haida Gwaii (probably Skidegate) in 1879 by Israel W. Powell. Secular power in Haida society was wielded by the chiefs, who, unlike thier Kwakwaka'wakw neighbours to the southe, never yielded their power each winter to the heads of the secret societies. Nevertheless, by the mid-eighteenth century, the Haida began to practise much weaker forms

of secret society winter dances, which they learned from captives taken in wars. They performed the dances at all winter festivities, including those to mark the raising of a totem pole or the building of a house. Secret societies and their performances began to disappear with the arrival of the missionaries in the mid-19870's. Among the Haida, masks were used mostly by members of the secret societies. Secret society dances frequently used both masks and puppets to represent wild spirits of the woods, which the Haida called gagiid. The Haida also employed masks in potlatch performances to illustrate the spirit beings encountered by their ancestors.

Dimensions

Other: 26.5 × 21.5 cm (10 7/16 × 8 7/16 in.)