

# Basic Detail Report

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## Raven Rattle

### Date

c. 1879

### Medium

wood, textile, metal, brass, fibre

### Description

GSC Catalogue describes as '6 figure'. rattle made in 2 parts, handle wrapped at base with cotton and twisted bark. no rattlers inside. design; well carved and painted,

high polish main body and head of raven with a figure lying on his back, tongue protruded with a frog on his stomach and another raven head holding frog. underside - hawk holding frog in his beak. painted black, red and green. Boas writes 'primary idea underlying form of rattle is lost. Kwakiutl is copy of Haida and Tsimshian type.' these rattles are mainly used during ceremonies when titles are transmitted to chosen heirs; they symbolize the continuity of the ancestral powers. although some details may be from the actual raven crest - which often forms the main part of the rattle design - it is not from a crest but is a representation of the mythical bird that gave the first rattle to mankind. in use, these rattles are always inverted. the explanation for this varied from tribe to tribe; among the Tsimshian, for example, it is thought that if the rattle were held with the bird in an upright position the power it possessed would fly away. the rattles are hollowed from wood and contain small stones. excerpt from exhibition text; The Children of the Raven, 1975 to 1986.

### Dimensions

Other: 11.3 × 13 × 37.5 cm (4 7/16 × 5 1/8 × 14 3/4 in.)