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# The Dual Life of Northwest Coast First Nations Masks in Western Institutions: Alternative Methods of Display at the Museum at Campbell River, Nuyumbalees Cultural Center, and U'mista Cultural Center and Society

By Katherine Jemima Hamilton

**Abstract:** The museum frames our ideas about the livelihoods and person hoods of other people, as they are where the public encounters an *other*—a person different from who they identify as—often they have never met in their daily lives. Taking anthropologist James Clifford’s essay “On Collecting Art and Culture” as its departure, this paper argues that the traditional Western museum’s exhibition form cannot do justice to the histories and lives of non-Western objects, specifically masks from Northwest Coast Indigenous cultures, because the museum’s historical foundation was established by Enlightenment meta-narratives that counter the belief systems of many non-Western people, which reinforce stereotypes about the cultures the objects represent. The author presents three examples of exhibition forms that counter the Western model lifted from Clifford’s conclusion in 1988, demonstrating three distinct alternatives to forms that embrace Enlightenment principles, further oppressing the families and cultures to whom these items belong. The Nuyumbalees Cultural Center in Cape Mudge presents their sacred collection as alive and purposeful through programming and use of the big-house style building to provide a cultural and familial history of the objects and tradition of the potlatch. The Museum at Campbell River’s Treasures of Siwidi gallery activates a family’s contemporary collection of potlatch masks as keepers of history through an aural performance of the legendary narrative. The U’Mitsa Cultural Center’s virtual tour uses contemporary videos, 3D modeling, and language learning tools to animate the historical collection of masks from a variety of carvers and owners in a contemporary framework speaking to the interests of locals and global researchers. In order to create more inclusive, respectful, generative, and accurate display practices that honor the history of these items, museums must take steps to deconstruct the Enlightenment value systems upon which the Western Museum model was founded within their display practices.

**Keywords:** *First Nations, Display practices, museum studies, NorthWest Coast Masks, Alternative display practices*

James Clifford's celebrated essay "On Collecting Art and Culture," from his 1988 book *The Predicament of Culture: 20th Century Ethnography*, outlines how European Enlightenment values built into Western collecting institutions affect how an institution mediates objects from colonized First Nations cultures. The essay concludes by looking "towards" two institutions that appropriate Western modes of display to create exhibition models that serve as educational tools for non-First Nations visitors and create spaces of protection and cultural preservation for the First Nations communities whose items they house. Clifford lists the Quadra Island Kwakiutl Museum—now the Nuyumbalees Cultural Center—and the U'mista Cultural Centre as examples of institutions with progressive display practices divested from colonial and Enlightenment-based knowledge systems and values.<sup>1</sup> Refusing colonial forms of display that frame items as objects or commodities by placing them behind plexiglass is an essential step all museums with ethnographic collections must take to create spaces that value the people, cultures, and histories who formed the items the institutions are privileged to house. This paper will discuss the two aforementioned cultural institutions alongside the Museum at Campbell River as case studies of institutions practicing hybrid exhibition forms informed by Western and non-Western knowledge systems and values on the Canadian Pacific Northwest coast. Though the Museum at Campbell River was formed about thirty years before the conception of the Nuyumbalees and U'mista Cultural Centers, all three grew into themselves during a cultural moment in the 1970s marked by the Red Power activist movements in the United States and Canada. Together, these three case studies not only exemplify the kinds of reform Clifford deems necessary for collecting

Western-style institutions but demonstrate that such reform is possible, meaning such institutions *can* take steps to decolonize themselves.

### **Nuyumbalees Cultural Center**

In 1975, the Hereditary and Elected Chiefs of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples formed the Nuyumbalees Cultural Society. The Kwakwaka'wakw are a group of First Nations peoples who speak five dialects of Kwak'wala and reside on the Pacific North-East coast of Vancouver Island and the Northwest coast of British Columbia. The center's mission was to force the Canadian government to repatriate sacred items that the government had stolen during the Potlatch ban that lasted from 1885 to 1951. A potlatch is a “ceremony where families gather, names are given, births are announced, marriages are conducted, and where families mourn the loss of a loved one.”<sup>2</sup> The word “potlatch” comes from the North Salish language Chinook—a language entirely unrelated to Kwak'wala dialects—meaning “to give.” In the absence of a written language, the potlatch is a way of witnessing and recording history and passing it onto younger generations.<sup>3</sup> Those hosting the potlatch would give generously to the attendees: providing meals and giving away an abundance of personal possessions, including land. Canada's first Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, who held office from 1867-1873 and again 1878-1891, recognized that this practice of giving went against his government's Christian capitalist colonial project. Those Christian capitalist ideas the colonizers upheld included the idea that a person's social capital was directly tied to their ability to accumulate financial capital. In the Kwakwaka'wakw community, however, an individual's social status was based on their ability to give possessions away. Instead of hoarding wealth, leaders and community members gave away their wealth, property, food, treasures, and other possessions. The more one could give away, the more status

they had. There was also a clash in values regarding a colonial work ethic: John A. MacDonald and the other settler-colonial population prioritized jobs and production as civic duties. Especially during the Industrial Revolution, the working man was viewed as necessary for society to function. However, the Kwakwaka'wakw people prioritized acts of witnessing as the most important thing a person could do for their community. As a result, the First Nations populations in the area would leave work to attend potlatches as they were so much more important to their communities than staying at work. Of course, this upset MacDonald and the colonial business owners. They framed the First Nations peoples as lazy because they refused to adhere to the newly implemented colonial work week.<sup>4</sup> This clash in values and ways of life helped the colonizers form narratives that Indigenous peoples were “savage” because they refused capitalist attitudes on work and productivity and were therefore “unchristian,” and thus, needed “saving.” Such narratives helped the colonial government justify genocide, both cultural and literal.

Because of these ideological and political differences, MacDonald banned potlatches in 1885—a ban that lasted until 1951 and was mainly repealed because it was too complicated for the colonial government to continue enforcing.<sup>5</sup> In 1979, the Nuyumbalees Cultural Center gained back their communities’ objects, previously housed at the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa.<sup>6</sup> This collection of repatriated items formed the basis of the sacred potlatch collection the center is now known for. That year, the Canadian government repatriated one-hundred-and-four of the thousands of objects they had confiscated.<sup>7</sup> Nine years later, in 1988, Clifford published his essay mentioning the U’Mista and Nuyumbalees cultural centers in 1988. By that time, the potlatch ban had been no longer in effect for over 30 years, and the stigma surrounding the items’ uses was finally dissipating. Clifford wrote about the center while it was in its infancy,

but it has matured into an institution with a sustainable and replicable exhibition model in the years since then.

The synthesis model they use to display traditional ceremonial items I am discussing results from a dialectic between Western and non-Western understandings and appreciation of objects. The Western model of display frames objects as stagnant and valued on their aesthetic, historical, or scientific value. In this frame, they are *either* an art object valued for form and beauty *or* an anthropological object valued for its function and insight into a “past” way of life—never both.<sup>8</sup> The non-Western frame views the role of the objects as tools for narrative. The Western-knowledge-based display practice prioritizes protection, ensuring the works are never touched or handled by viewers. It creates a distance between the object and the viewer, providing the institution with a sense of superiority as *they* own the items—not the community there to see and interact with such items. Here, leaving the masks out on display when not in use indicates Western influence. Within Kwakwaka’wakw culture, potlatch masks are wrapped up in blankets and stored away until they are needed, as the masks are traditionally intended only to be tools to animate a story told through theatrical dance—not as art objects.<sup>9</sup> The non-Western influence in the display is manifested through the institution's decision to display its vast collection of masks according to the family who owns them.<sup>10</sup> Displaying the potlatch masks through familial ownership draws the viewer's attention to the customs of the culture and the lives these objects live outside of the institution. The cultural importance of these masks is not the masks themselves, but the rights to the stories that tell of a family's origin or creation story. Therefore, centering the family who owns the story allows viewers to have an entry point into potlatch culture, making it an educational tool, and does so in a way that has placed the needs of the Kwakwaka’wakw communities first. Centering the object as one understood through education

also honors the genealogy of such an item because it restores its narrative power that is lost when treated as a static, non-moving, or living item behind plexiglass. Balancing the pedagogy for non-First Nations viewers with the needs and wants of the community is a dance that takes time and vulnerability from the institution's staff. This vulnerability manifests as the ability to stop and understand why previous practices or ideas employed in museum displays were harmful, then fixing those mistakes for the future and paying reparations to those who have been harmed. Nevertheless, the Nuyumbalees Cultural Center demonstrates that this work is entirely achievable in a space under directorship from the Indigenous community, who intimately knows the items in an institution's collection. The Museum at Campbell River makes it clear that non-Indigenous-led institutions can create such spaces as well.

### **The Museum at Campbell River**

The Museum at Campbell River is perched on one of the town's steepest hills, looking eastward across Discovery Passage to the Cape Mudge Village. In 1958, Ed Meade, a local accountant, founded the Campbell River and District Historical Society. This society became a physical museum with a permanent collection. In 1959, just eight years after the Canadian government lifted the potlatch ban, Meade enrolled the museum's beginnings in the BC Museums Association. That year, he also began negotiating a loan with the National Museum of Canada for masks that government agents had seized during the potlatch ban.<sup>11</sup> As referenced above, the government later repatriated these objects to the Nuyumbalees Cultural Center (1979) and the U'mista Cultural Center (1980).<sup>12</sup> As Meade had a narrow focus on what objects the museum should house, he made his case to the Canadian government about why a small museum on northern Vancouver Island should house such culturally essential objects. The focused policy

was also a helpful tool in convincing families to place their objects into the museum's care: in the beginning, families were, rightly, hesitant to hand over their masks, clothing, and other objects to a museum's care, as museums often did not give such objects back.<sup>13</sup> The Museum at Campbell River tells the story of the North Island region through a loosely chronological perspective, from pre-colonial contact to the mass logging and fishing that eliminated much of the forested area and many native species. This case study shows how a traditionally styled Western museum model can achieve the same hybrid display tactic illustrated in the Nuyumbalees model.

After purchasing a ticket from the front desk, the visitor enters a dark passageway. A clap of thunder strikes, and Ryan Chickite's contemporary wood carving *Raven Transforming* confronts the viewer. The body is painted black with red and green patterns detailing the eyes, neck, and wings. The figure is squatting down, mid-transformation, his beak hanging over the viewer's head as the curators have placed him onto a black perch. After the initial shock from the clap of thunder, the visitor's attention turns from the raven sculpture to another transformation mask to their left. A song sung in Kwak'waka plays overhead, and a warm spotlight illuminates the mask. The mask then opens in two halves to reveal a face. When the song is over, the mask closes, and the spotlight dims. The show is over, and the viewer is free to explore at their leisure.

Following the museum's opening number, the viewer can walk through an "open concept" gallery filled with other Kwakwaka'wakw objects of all sorts and from all periods—historical and contemporary. At the back of the gallery is another dark room, concealed behind a set of black curtains: The Treasures of Siwidi. Not moments after the patron has taken their seat on a carpeted bench, the room darkens to almost pitch black, lit only by a blue light projected onto the ceiling, indicating to the viewer that this narrative takes place underwater. A booming



voice calls to their attention from above. Chief Robert Joseph's thunderous voice recounts the story of Siwidi in English and Kwak'wala.<sup>14</sup> The story itself is a creation story that tells of the many supernatural adventures of Chief Tom Willie's ancestor Siwidi. As mentioned earlier, people are given certain privileges to dancing and holding a story or being initiated into a society where they may dance a particular narrative. As a non-First Nations author of settler descent, I do not possess rights or privileges to this story and thus cannot retell it here in this paper. Currently, the rights to this story are held by Chief Tom Willie of Hopetown. A wall of masks carved by contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw carvers animates the story. A warm spotlight illuminates each mask when that character makes their entrance into the narrative. This synthesized model allows viewers to engage with the objects in a way that mirrors how such items would be seen and interpreted within their purposeful context and emphasizes that they are tied to a familial narrative and are not metonyms for an entire culture.<sup>15</sup> This kind of pedagogical process is an essential part of moving towards decolonized institutions and centering Native communities.

However, exhibitions as unique as Siwidi do not materialize on their own. The Treasures of Siwidi took a tremendous amount of labor, conversation, and money to realize. In 1987, while working on the *Chiefly Feasts* exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, Peter Macnair, the Royal British Columbia Museum curator, found that several masks from Hopetown were collected by "Native Anthropologist," George Hunt in 1901. These masks all belonged to the same dance cycle that narrates this creation story, meaning they had once been used at Hopetown potlatches to narrate Siwidi's story.<sup>16</sup> George Hunt, who was Tlingit but grew up among the Kwakwaka'wakw, had noted in Kwak'wala that these masks were part of the Siwidi dance cycle, but non-Native researchers and cultural workers had largely ignored those

notes. As I mentioned earlier, the dancing privilege for Siwidi belonged to Chief Tom Willie of Hopetown on Watson Island.<sup>17</sup> Macnair had already collaborated with Chief Tom Willie to create new masks for that dance back in Canada.<sup>18</sup> Chief Tom Willie's mother, Elsie Williams, widow of Chief Fred Williams, had been negotiating with the Museum at Campbell River on how to display the family's sacred dance with Macnair's help.<sup>19</sup> Macnair commissioned a different contemporary carver to create each of the masks between 1988-2003.<sup>20</sup> This practice served the museum as it grew their collection, bringing them several masks representing a large pool of contemporary carvers in the area. This practice also served the family as it gave them new masks to dance, considering those Macnair had found in New York were not in good enough shape to dance.<sup>21</sup> The museum was already reproducing objects such as masks and totem poles that were decaying. This way, a carver is employed with work, and the object is replaced for use in the community. However, this kind of reciprocity between communities was only possible because the Kwakwaka'wakw had taken the potlatch "underground" during the potlatch ban, allowing ancestors to pass down this observance and rituals to living communities. Many Haida and Tlingit communities never recovered from the ban.<sup>22</sup>

Though the Museum at Campbell River tells the story of local history from a somewhat Western stance (object, text, chronology), they did not come by their First Nations collection nor Treasures of Siwidi gallery through colonial hoarding, but through conversation, exchange, and listening. Museums founded in the image of the Protestant Missionaries may never be able to honor the lives of such objects. The Northwest Coast First Nations' ritualistic act of giving away one's possessions and, in some cases, land went against the values of the "Christian Capitalist Society" the colonizers were trying to build.<sup>23</sup> The museum that gives away their objects and connects with the community will naturally have better display practices for the objects they own

than the museum that attempts to collect objects without regard to the values and morals of the culture from which they are collecting. For these reasons, the Museum at Campbell River, though not founded through Indigenous leadership, has been successful in creating and maintaining generative and sensitive exhibition practices.

Because the viewer is so immersed in the spectacle of the narrative, they may not realize that this tactic of displaying the objects through narrative, song, and theater is catered to the non-First Nations visitor. When the families use these masks at a potlatch to dance their stories, the dances are not accompanied by aural narration, and they would not show the masks as an ensemble cast as they are in the gallery. Using narrative and theatrics to animate the objects is simply about doing the objects justice to their story when deciding to take them on. As Samuel J. M. Alberti writes in his essay “Object and the Museum,” “We can ask objects questions similar to those we raise when writing biographies of people. What are the key moments in the career of this thing? How has its status changed throughout its life? What makes it different from other, similar objects? How has the political and social climate impacted its trajectory?”<sup>24</sup> The evolving status of the object does not stop when it enters a museum. Separating and severing the item from the story that produced it kills its spirit. When an object, particularly the objects that come from Kwakwaka’wakw culture, is interpreted through the lens of their own culture, the object, though it may be housed in a Western institution, is reconnected to its life. In turn, its value, as a tool of education and understanding, is increased. How the display alone tells that story is something all curators must consider when bringing objects into their collection. This synthesis way of exhibiting the space between cultures is not a simple choice; it is a duty we take on as cultural workers. I will explore this duty further in the following case study: the extensive online exhibition of the U’mista Cultural Center’s collection.

## U'mista Cultural Center and Society

The U'mista Cultural Center<sup>25</sup> faces west into the waters of Alert Bay off the east coast of northern Vancouver Island. It is the most remotely located of the studies we have looked at, tucked into a community of only 1200 people. Nevertheless, their collection of older masks is one of the most extensive and complete collections of potlatch regalia in the world. U'mista is laid out much like Nuyumbalees and also takes the form of a Big House. As we have already discussed how a display practice that emphasizes familial ties to an object is essential to a generative display methodology, I will turn to an exhibition form that is far broader reaching and can create a more connected and understanding global society: the online exhibition.

The center's online exhibition is quite formidable: six panoramic scenes illustrated by 360-degree views of each of the 3D objects in the collection, accompanied by language learning tools and videos, and three or four short paragraphs of compact text. Upon navigating to the [U'mista Cultural Centre website](#), one navigates to the "Exhibits" section. The site prompts the user to click "Living Tradition," which shows contemporary images of First Nations people in potlatch regalia, rotating through a carousel of images titled in the first person: these are the required readings. The "Our People" page has two paragraphs of text about how Kwakwaka'wakw people prefer to be identified by their tribes, which are separated into Nations, and the general cultural practices of their people, including the importance of ancestral origin stories, which defines the tribes and families from one another. The five tribes of the Kwakwaka'wakw are: the Kwakiutl, the 'Namgis, the Quatsino, the Kwicksutaineuk, and the Tsawataineuk.<sup>26</sup> The "Our Land" page shows a carousel of landscape photographs and images of animals native to the region, as well as an origin story video of the Namgis people. Finally, the "Our Language" section features a grid of masks and images of other things that pertain to

Kwakwaka'wakw culture arranged from A-Z. At the top, the user can download a pdf of the Kwak'wala alphabet and listen to an array of Kwakwaka'wakw voices pronounce each of the names of the objects, people, and places listed in the grid.

The pedagogical tools used in those pages are also present alongside the galleries of the virtual tour. While one could argue that this pedagogical approach is similar to the textbook method I have argued against, the accessibility and obvious contemporaneity of these tools provides an animate and contemporary framework to the legends and objects Western textbook models or other traditional pedagogical models portray as being in the past or dead. These tools are of utmost importance because most of the collection is not contemporary, but from a historical period—some carved by the famed Kwakwaka'wakw chief Mungo Martin who lived from 1879-1962. Thus, the blend of mediums that narrate and vitalize the texts and images create a contemporary framework for objects that is not present in a Western display model.

The first gallery in the virtual tour shows an array of masks from various dances, while a video *within* said video plays in the upper left corner of the screen, showing videos of the Alert Bay landscape, native animals, and contemporary videos of ceremonial dances from potlatches, storytelling, and canoe paddling, all with sound. As the camera pans across the gallery, the visitor can click on a mask in the video or the grid on the left-hand side of the screen. For example, if the viewer clicks on the mask Gwaxgwakwalanuksiwe, the website takes visitors to a page where they can view high-resolution 360-degree views of the mask. On the left-hand panel, the user can hear a Kwak'wala voice pronounce the name of the mask, read a translation of the name (in this case, Raven at the North End of the World), watch a video that tells the viewer about the masks and shows Kwakwaka'wakw people dancing them in a Big House context and nature. This entry lists the creator, Dick Price, rather than the family, indicating perhaps that the

mask no longer belongs to a family or that that information was lost when it was confiscated. The combination of speech, video, text, and high-resolution images shows the viewer how one would encounter the mask in its culture of origin: in action, along with a brief allusion to the broader context of the Hamatsa dance, the dance for which this mask was made. These tools give non-First Nations visitors enough familiarity to engage with the object but not force-fit it into the Western art objects category.

To demonstrate the array of methodological entries in this enormous online exhibition, I will give one more example of a mask with a relatively different pedagogical panel. The Kawatsi entry shows a treasure box made in traditional bentwood-box style, painted yellow with a whale painted green, and anthropomorphic figures on the sides decorated with abalone inlay. The didactic panel names the family who owns the box, its creator, and a two-sentence recap of how the box came into the collection. The viewer can open the “catalog” section to view the provenance, materials, accession number, physical description, and creator of the box, Tom Patch Wamiss. The provenance details how Yekuthikalas, Sam Charlie, from Mamalilikala (Village Island), owned the box until its forced surrender to Indian Agent William Halliday on March 25, 1922, as part of the potlatch ban. By September, Halliday had created and shipped the box to the Canadian Museum of History. In 1995, Sam Charlie’s daughter requested that her father’s regalia be transferred from Nuyumbalees to U’mista for display.<sup>27</sup> These kinds of stories are the *true* biographies of the objects—not ownership provenance. The didactic text panel describes critical moments in the object’s life and how socio-political changes in culture have transformed the item's status.<sup>28</sup> Understanding an object’s biography leads to ethical and sensitive display practices. By contextualizing this box through its personal narrative, it no longer stands as a metonym for Kwakwaka’wakw culture. This narrative also reminds non-

Western viewers that colonialism impacted the lives of almost all the objects in the collection. The biographies of the items tell the biographies of the people who owned them: many of the owners are no longer with us to tell their story themselves, and many more cannot tell their stories because their ancestors were devastated by pandemics and imposed poverty or separated from their stories through the residential school system.

### **Conclusion**

Often, institutions that prioritize community over archaic Enlightenment values create thoughtful and provocative exhibition forms that honor the genealogy of the items on display. The Western museum's historical foundation is made up of meta-narratives driven by theories that are counterintuitive to the belief systems of many non-Western people and cultures. Such theories and narratives have been used to oppress and outlaw the people and cultures they now have on display. As such, it is not merely a question of respect to the culture and people whose cultural items are housed in the space to develop and employ non-colonial exhibition forms, but also a matter of historical accuracy: practicing alternative exhibition forms that challenge the colonial museum's authority on history and a pillar of colonial cultural values more accurately represents the items' status and lives as they can exist and be interpreted beyond a Western-knowledge-based frame. To justify housing such objects, the museum's curator, collections manager, and other senior staff must recognize and take steps to deconstruct the Enlightenment value system upon which settler-colonizers created the Western Museum model. The Nuyumbalees Cultural Center, the Museum at Campbell River, and the U'Mista Cultural Center all demonstrate how institutions play a huge role in community life, as they hold the materials of various cultural histories. Their hybrid display practices demonstrate that all collecting museums

with ethnographic collections *can* make changes to their collecting and display practices to include and value the input and direction of the communities who use the items in the institution's collection. In this case, "can" implies "ought." This deconstruction of Enlightenment-era values will create more inclusive, respectful, and holistic collecting and display practices—hopefully, changes in display practices will ripple beyond the institution's walls in the world the museum represents.



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Figures:

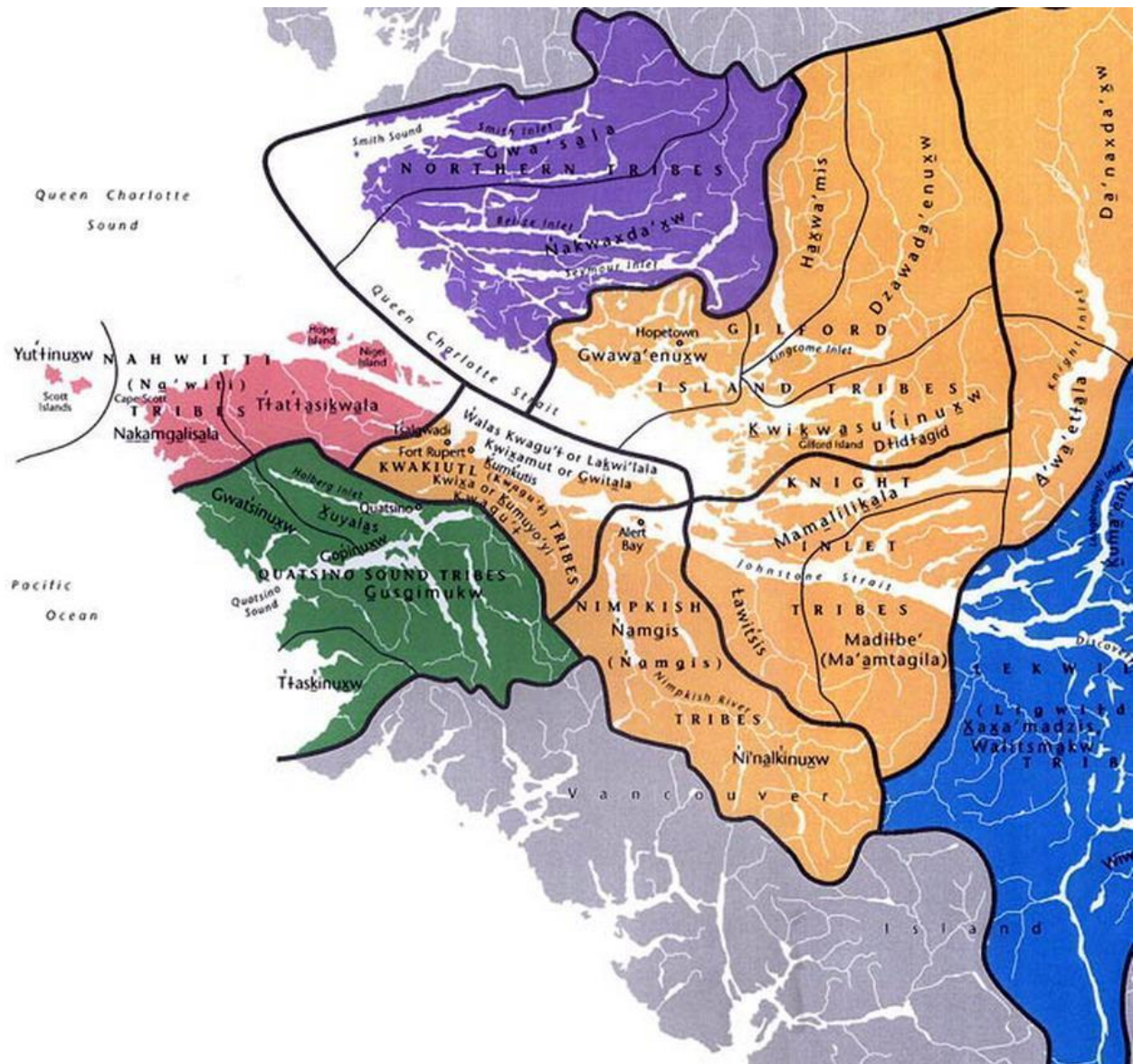


Fig. 1 Kwakwaka'wakw Territory. Eric Leinberger for U'mista Cultural Society.

## Endnotes

1. James Clifford, "On Curating Culture," *The Predicament of Culture*. Boston: Harvard University Press. 1988.
2. U'mista Cultural Center, "The Potlatch: On the Suppression of the Potlatch." *The Story of the Masks*. 2003. [http://archive.umista.ca/masks\\_story/en/ht/potlatch02.html](http://archive.umista.ca/masks_story/en/ht/potlatch02.html) accessed May 1, 2020.
3. John Frishholz (former Museum at Campbell River Curator), telephone interview with author, May 16 2020.
4. John Frishholz (former Museum at Campbell River Curator), telephone interview with author, May 16, 2020.
5. U'mista Cultural Center, "The Potlatch: On the Suppression of the Potlatch." *The Story of the Masks*. 2003. [http://archive.umista.ca/masks\\_story/en/ht/potlatch02.html](http://archive.umista.ca/masks_story/en/ht/potlatch02.html) accessed May 1, 2020.
6. Indigenous peoples did not give over their objects willingly. Officials of the Canadian government who were sent to police the indigenous communities would hold their Chiefs hostage if the communities did not give up their potlatch regalia and other objects used for non-Christian ceremonies. John Frishholz, telephone interview with author, May 16, 2020.
7. Nuyumbalees Cultural Center. "Nuyumbalees... In the Beginning" <https://www.museumatcapemudge.com/the-centre-1>
8. Susan Pearce. *Museums, Objects, and Collections: A Cultural Study*. Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993. 255
9. Interview with Campbell River Museum Curator Beth Boyce. Conducted over Zoom. May 1, 2020.
10. Clifford 1988, 164.
11. Beth Boyce. *60 Collected Stories from the Museum at Campbell River*. Museum at Campbell River, 2018. 5
12. Boyce 2018, 5.
13. John Frishholz (former Museum at Campbell River Curator), telephone interview with author, May 16, 2020.
14. It should be noted that Chief Dr. Robert Joseph O.B.C, O.C. is one of the most vocal and visible activists demanding reparation and reconciliation from the Canadian government for the violence the Kwakwaka'wakw communities faced due to colonization. You can read more about him here <https://reconciliationcanada.ca/about/team/chief-dr-robert-joseph/> accessed June 01, 2020
15. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. 162
16. Allen Wardwell, "Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch by Aldona Jonaitis." *Art Journal*, 1992. 92
17. While Allen Wardwell's review of Aldona Jonaitis's catalog for the exhibition praises this section of the book, K. Tsianina Lomawaima takes issue with how Jonaitis frames this particular passage in their review of the same catalog. Lomawaima points out that Jonaitis uses language such as "discovered" and "revived" when discussing white curator Macnair and her own role in the exhibition. So, while the exhibition and the catalog iterations of Chiefly Feasts offer some insight into the culture and how such exhibitions come into being, we must remember that there was, nevertheless, still a colonial white-savior complex framing this particular exhibition. K. Tsianina Lomawaima, "Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch by Aldona Jonaitis," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly*. 1993. 70-71
18. Lomawaima 1993, 92
19. Boyce 1992, 50.
20. Boyce 1992, 51.
21. This practice of commissioning new works from local First-Nations carvers was not a new practice for the Museum at Campbell River. Neither was the fact that the museum lent out their collection to Kwakwaka'wakw communities for them to use as regalia. Before this, in the 1970s, the Museum at Campbell River had been commissioning works from local carvers to have in their collection and be loaned out to communities, as First Nations communities were still recovering from the potlatch ban and had very little regalia made with and for their communities. *60 Collected Stories from the Museum at Campbell River*. 6
22. Allen Wardwell, "Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch by Aldona Jonaitis." *Art Journal*, 1992. 92
23. John Lutz. "After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-1890". *Canadian Historical Association*. 1992. 69-93
24. Samuel J. M. Alberti. "Objects and the Museum." *Isis*, 96, no. 4 (2005)
25. It should be noted that the U'Mista Cultural Center/Society uses both "society" and "center" in their communication materials. The society itself refers to a group of people incorporated under the British Columbia Societies Act in 1974 that seeks to preserve all aspects of Kwakwaka'wakw cultural heritage. The center refers to the physical space where items are stored, and the public can visit. Since this paper is focused on the presentation of cultural items in physical spaces, I have chosen to refer to this collection and space as the "U'Mista Cultural Center."

26. Fig. 1

27. U'mista Cultural Center, "Living Tradition." [https://umistapotlatch.ca/visite\\_virtuelle-virtual\\_tour-eng.php#6/0/95.03.009](https://umistapotlatch.ca/visite_virtuelle-virtual_tour-eng.php#6/0/95.03.009) accessed May 8th, 2020

28. Alberti 2005, 560.