Case 8-Can-Haida-Mask-Beaver



**Formal Label: Haida Miniature Beaver Mask**

**Accession Number:**

**LC Classification:** E78.N78

**Date or Time Horizon:** 20th century

**Geographical Area:** Northwest Coast

**Cultural Affiliation:** Inuit

**Medium:** Cedar wood, red, black, gray and white paint. Abalone eyes.

**Dimensions:   
Weight:**

**Provenance: Haida**

**Condition: New**

**Discussion:** A Beaver spirit brought light to the earth. The earth was originally dark because Snoqalm, the moon-god of the tribes of the North-West, kept the sun in a box for twelve months of the year. When the spider wove a rope that linked earth and sky, Beaver climbed up and stole the sun, which he placed in the heavens to light the earth for at least three months and in some places in the North-West for as many as six months. Thus, Beaver was a hero and bringer of light to the First Peoples.

In Haida legend it is the Beaver who is responsible for providing the Salmon, the basis of Haida subsistence, that Raven had stolen to give back to the people. In this myth Beaver was the hero who returned the salmon to the people.

**References:**

Anon. 1989. *Masks: an exhibition of northwest coast native masks.* Vancouver: Inuit Gallery of Vancouver

Anon.1994. *Spirit faces: an exhibition of contemporary masks of the Northwest Coast*. Vancouver: Inuit Gallery of Vancouver.