Miniaturisation: a study of a material culture practice among the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest

John William Davy

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Department of Anthropology, University College London (UCL), through a Collaborative Doctoral Award partnership with The British Museum.

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Corrected May, 2017

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Declaration

I, John William Davy, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where material has been derived from other sources I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

John William Davy, December 2016
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Thanks to the many museum staff around the world who provided information and advice on their collections – you are too many to name individually, but your institutions are credited in the following glossary. A special thank you also to the indigenous artists and communities who gave up their time to participate in this project, especially Mike Gobin; Joe Gobin; James Madison; Sa’bat’ahd (Steven Madison); Greg Colfax; Spencer McCarty; Melissa Peterson-Renault; Alex McCarty; Steve Bruce, Sr.; Gary Petersen; Trevor Isaac; Wayne Alfred; Corinne Hunt; :klattle-phi (Cloth-Bag); Gwaai Edenshaw and Nika Collison, as well as Dr. Janine Ledford. Your influence suffuses every page of this thesis. This is your knowledge, I just wrote it down. A particular note of consideration here for the Hart family, who endured a terrible loss during the course of the fieldwork and have been much in my thoughts ever since.

Finally, but in many ways most importantly, thank you to my parents and family, who provided unfailing support, and to my wife Nelle, without whom none of this would have been possible.
Native American nomenclature

Nomenclature in the study of Native American peoples has to be very carefully addressed as an emotive and historically loaded topic for which there is no formal standardisation (Smithsonian 2008:1; Phillips 1998:xv-xvii). Historic non-Native terms imposed externally can be highly offensive; this is true of personal names, tribal names and collective names for all indigenous peoples of the Americas.

The key to this problem is always respect and communication. Throughout the thesis, participants were consulted on how they would like their names to appear in text and discussions took place during each case study on how tribal names should be transcribed. However in circumstances where there is no solution which will be acceptable to all parties and where contentions might arise, nomenclature in this text follows as closely as possible standard British Museum practice (King, 1999:10-12). This prefers the neutral term of “Native North Americans”, shortened for convenience here to “Native Americans”, to describe the indigenous population of that continent as a whole, narrowed where possible to specific tribal names or geographic regional indicators. The Canadian term First Peoples has been deliberately avoided; as it has little traction in the United States, switching terminology between case studies may cause confusion. In addition, a number of Canadian fieldwork participants expressed unease with the term as being explicitly associated with “treaty peoples” and thus that it did not apply specifically to them. The exception of course is when quoting from a source, in which case the original text has not been altered.

Every effort has been made to be respectful of indigenous narratives in this work, which directly addresses historic disrespect in the collection, management and care of Native American material culture. Although it provides an academic critique of miniaturisation as a practice it does not seek to criticise those practices; no offense is intended and I would be happy to enter a dialogue with anyone who feels I have acted unfairly (see Appendix B for my ethical safeguards during research). I have the greatest respect for Native American artists and the societies from which they come, and I hope that this is reflected in the thesis.
Copyright

Copyright for images of objects from museum and private collections are retained by those institutions or persons (credited in the caption) and used here with permission or under fair use criteria. Permission for reproduction must be sought from those institutions.

Images taken during fieldwork which feature indigenous people, and excerpts from fieldwork interviews, should not be reproduced without the written permission of the author and the person featured, or their tribal authorities should that person be deceased.

Outside these caveats, copyright for the thesis rests with the author. However I wish to clearly state here that the product of this research is freely available for any non-commercial academic, educational, museum, tribal or artistic purpose, as long as it is used respectfully and that the work is appropriately credited.
Glossary of Museum Abbreviations

The following institutions participated in the research for this project. In the thesis reference will be made to specific miniature objects to illustrate particular points of discussion; the overwhelming majority of these will be from museum collections. They will consequently be referred to by their specific museum number preceded by an abbreviation referring to the museum that holds them. ¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Auction Catalogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMNH</td>
<td>American Museum of Natural History, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASM</td>
<td>Alaska State Museum, Juneau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>British Museum, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMNH</td>
<td>Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, University of Washington, Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrookM</td>
<td>Brooklyn Museum, New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Cranbrook Institute of Science, Michigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMH</td>
<td>Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMNH</td>
<td>Cleveland Museum of Natural History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CML</td>
<td>Cuming Museum, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAM</td>
<td>Denver Art Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>DMNS</td>
<td>Denver Museum of Nature and Science</td>
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<td>DYM</td>
<td>De Young Museum, San Francisco</td>
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<tr>
<td>EHM</td>
<td>Estonian History Museum, Tallinn</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMK</td>
<td>Ethnographic Museum, Kazan University</td>
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<tr>
<td>FM</td>
<td>Field Museum, Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMNH</td>
<td>Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, Gainseville</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMA</td>
<td>Haffenreffer Museum of Art, Brown University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMG</td>
<td>Horniman Museum, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KK</td>
<td>Kunstkamera, St. Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMA</td>
<td>Logan Museum of Anthropology, Wisconsin</td>
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¹ Note that although some of the abbreviations are the same as those presented in Wright, 1995, this is an alternative abbreviation system, as some of the institutions listed here did not appear in that publication or have since changed their name.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>MAA</td>
<td>Museum of Archaeology &amp; Anthropology, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCH</td>
<td>Museum of Cultural History, Oslo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Manchester Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMW</td>
<td>Maxey Museum, Whitman College</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMA</td>
<td>Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McC</td>
<td>McCord Museum, Montreal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCRC</td>
<td>Makah Cultural and Research Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MdA</td>
<td>Museo de America, Madrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoA</td>
<td>Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoV</td>
<td>Museum of Vancouver, British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MQB</td>
<td>Musée de Quai Branly, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVL</td>
<td>Museum Volkerkunde, Leiden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHLA</td>
<td>Natural History Museum, Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMAI</td>
<td>National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMF</td>
<td>National Museum of Finland, Helsinki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMI</td>
<td>National Museum of Ireland, Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMM</td>
<td>National Maritime Museum, London</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMNH</td>
<td>National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.</td>
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<td>NMNJ</td>
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<td>OMNZ</td>
<td>Otago Museum, New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Private Collection²</td>
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<td>PEM</td>
<td>Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHA</td>
<td>Phoebe A. Hurst Museum of Anthropology, San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology</td>
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² Private Collections have been researched through publication or direct communication. Since they do not have collection numbers, they have been listed by name.
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMAE</td>
<td>Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRM</td>
<td>Pitt-Rivers Museum, University of Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUAM</td>
<td>Princeton University Art Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBG</td>
<td>Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCBM</td>
<td>Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISA</td>
<td>Rhode Island School of Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAM</td>
<td>Seattle Art Museum, Washington</td>
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<td>SBM</td>
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<td>SFU</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University, Burnaby</td>
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<td>SMA</td>
<td>Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas</td>
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<td>SMAI</td>
<td>Southwest Museum of the American Indian, Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMB</td>
<td>Staatliche Museen zu Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StLM</td>
<td>St. Louis Art Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC</td>
<td>University of Colorado, Department of Anthropology</td>
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<td>UCC</td>
<td>U’mista Cultural Centre, Alert Bay</td>
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<td>VMS</td>
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<td>WML</td>
<td>World Museums, Liverpool</td>
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Maps

Map. 1. The Northwest Coast region © Google Maps.
Map. 2. The Northwest Coast region with fieldsites highlighted © Google Maps.
Map. 4. Cape Flattery & the Makah Reservation © Google Maps.
Map. 5. The Northern Northwest Coast © Google Maps.
Map. 6. Haida Gwaii © Google Maps.
Abstract

Museums house collections of miniature objects produced by the indigenous peoples of the American Pacific Northwest. Overlooked and subjected to academic seriation which categorised them as expressions of transcultural inauthenticity, they have never previously been the subject of systematic study.

This project develops a new methodology for the study of these miniatures, viewing miniaturisation as an imaginative agent of communication in human social relations, which uses combinations of affordances and semiotics to distribute ideological information to knowledgeable audiences.

Through a detailed affordance study in combination with fieldwork in four indigenous communities, miniaturisation becomes understood as an effective method of communicating threatened cultural information across long distances and time spans, incorporating diverse commercial, pedagogical, cultural and magical motivations.

By understanding miniaturisation in this way, this project can fundamentally change how museums approach imaginative material culture, generate substantial new insights into the ideological aspects of Native Northwest Coast material production and provide tantalising glimpses of emotion and motivation among historic carving traditions.
Introduction

This thesis seeks to explore miniaturised objects and the processes by which they are conceived, created and deployed among the indigenous societies of the North Pacific Coast of North America, with a particular focus on their development in the post-contact period, 1774 to the present day. The study developed from a period of employment in which I was engaged as a collection manager at the British Museum. In this role I facilitated Native American delegations, retrieving objects from the stores before the visits and returning them afterwards. In the course of several projects with the Haida people I became fascinated by the Museum’s collection of miniature Northwest Coast canoes. Unable to locate a clear answer from the literature as to their purpose, I developed this research project to investigate why such beautiful and complex objects, which lack any obvious practical functionality, should have been produced and dispatched half-way around the world.

I found that miniatures have been produced in the region since at least the sixteenth century, that they were a common material culture product in the post-contact period during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and that contemporary artists continue to carve miniatures today. Yet as a type they have never been subject to serious analysis, often dismissed in the ethnographic literature. This thesis re-examines these objects by presenting interwoven narratives of a museum-based study of the affordances of historic miniatures and documentary evidence with observational fieldwork and targeted interviews with contemporary artists, considering the ways in which miniature objects can reflect and inform intangible human ideologies.

To explore the practical components of miniature production, this thesis has developed an original tripartite elemental system theory, which operates in combination with existing methodological frameworks of human-object interactions. This re-examines the existing orthodoxy that the liminal point of miniaturisation at which functional and representational utility exchange dominance is the most crucial moment in the process, reconsidering whether this model is an effective method of approaching miniaturisation. In doing so this thesis will suggest an alternative methodology which will enable an understanding of how knowledgeable observers can accurately interpret the ideological messages attainable through the indexical relationships embodied by the miniature. It will determine how the decisions made during the process give agency to the miniature, to explore how miniature objects can embody meaning through the affordances and semiotics of the elements of scale, simplification and mimesis.
A series of case studies based in specific indigenous cultural traditions inform this theoretical approach to miniaturisation as a technical process of communication, of which the miniature object itself is the catalyst. This communication, operating as an integral part of semiotic networks of understanding, is capable of embodying, transmitting and preserving otherwise intangible and fragile knowledge between artists and audiences over large temporal and spatial distances. This reframes consideration of these objects from an evolutionary understanding as inauthentic, acculturated, tourist art, to an acknowledgement of the intangible dimensions they hold which permit them to operate as authentic agents of traditional knowledge and ideology.

**Research questions**

The following research questions will be addressed.

1. What is the nature of the mimetic relationship between miniature objects and their larger resemblants, here understood as their prototypes?³
2. How can the interaction between prototype and miniature during the technical process of miniaturisation change the conceptual and ideological basis of an object?
3. Can miniatures be considered as authentic expressions of indigenous ideology?
4. Does reflection of the peculiar properties embodied through miniaturisation recommend a consideration of miniature objects as a method of communication through portable semiosis?
5. How does study of miniaturisation reframe the problematic links between aesthetics and practical functionality?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to comprehend how the elements of miniaturisation are made interpretable as ideology. For this, it is necessary to resituate the objects within both the technical processes through which they appeared and were circulated and also the wider systems of social and technical inferences with which these processes occurred and were entwined.

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³ Prototype here and throughout the thesis refers to the Gellian understanding of “the entity which the index represents visually . . . or non-visually” (1998:26). Its use will be discussed in greater detail in chapter one.
This type of research requires a manageable case study against which these theoretical hypotheses and methodologies can be tested, and for this purpose the indigenous peoples of the North Pacific have been selected for four principle reasons.

- The people of the Northwest Coast live in a series of communities which exhibit comparable cultural practices and beliefs, but with significant localised differences, all within a well-defined geographic region. This allows for consideration of broad regional contiguities in the practice of miniaturisation as well as detailed study of local specific practices and consideration of the differences in temporal, social and spatial context which may have caused alterations in these practices between communities and over time.

- Pre-contact history in the region was relatively stable over several millennia, but has changed drastically at several points in the 245 years since contact. This permits a temporal study which can consider alterations and/or continuities in miniaturisation as a practice within specific communities in relation to temporal shifts in the societies living within those communities.

- The Northwest Coast peoples have historically produced a significant body of miniaturised material culture which has survived in museum collections and is accessible for study. This body of material has never previously been collectively considered as a research resource. It has historically fallen under categorisation as “tourist art”, a transcultural hybrid form of art production generally criticised as inauthentic and unrealistic (Poulter, 2011) and dismissed as “ethno-kitsch” (Graburn, 1976:6), resulting in its under-utilisation for study.

- The contemporary inhabitants of these communities exhibit strong poiesic and genetic contiguities in traditional material culture with their forebears, in particular those whose role is to maintain traditional practices, such as artists. Miniaturisation continues in the present day as transculturally-modified traditional material culture practices, a situation which renders contemporary anthropological fieldwork a productive avenue of investigation.

It is important to be clear that this thesis will not attempt to uncritically present a unified reductionist, holistic picture of all miniature use on the Northwest Coast as a whole: to do so would risk encountering “the dangers of eclipsing geographic and historical variation” by treating the diverse cultures of the Northwest Coast as an homogenous unit (Glass, 1999); even a cursory examination of the evidence suggests that no one answer could hope to achieve such a result in any case. Neither is this thesis intended to reveal a unified
theory of miniaturisation for which there are no exceptions whatsoever; given the inevitable reliance on localised context in understanding, there are bound to be considerable differences in the ways miniatures are conceived in different parts of the world and any such study will inevitably be at least partly “anecdotal and discursive” (Evans, 2012:370).

With these caveats in mind, this thesis will explore how, through creative material culture practices rooted in long-standing traditional environments but adapted to temporal shocks, the peoples of the Northwest Coast have made use of the technical strategy of miniaturisation. It will use this research to propose a new model for miniaturisation based in culturally-informed, individually-determined decision making in relation to specific audiences which will provide a new methodological framework for the study of miniaturisation as a material culture practice.

**Thesis structure**

The thesis will begin with an examination of existing theoretical approaches to miniaturisation, through the wider field of material culture art production, treating the phenomenon as one of a number of technical processes which create a semiotic relationship between artist and audience. It will then consider what features of this process specifically lend to it the particular efficacy necessary to operate successfully as a means of non-verbal communication. This will be followed by the establishment of the “elemental” understanding of miniaturisation as a tripartite process of mimesis, scaling and simplification which give miniature objects the affordances necessary for miniaturisation to work successfully as a relational technical process. Finally, the first chapter will explore the ways in which miniatures are problematised by questions of indigenous authenticity in hybridised art.

In the methodology chapter, potential research techniques will be evaluated, and the problems encountered in exploring this subject will be discussed based on the results of an initial pilot study. Significantly, this chapter will consider the problematic nature of contact zones in ethnographic research, exploring ways in which the imbalances that result from these conflicts can be mitigated in research for this thesis.

Chapter three fulfils a dual purpose; firstly as an overview of the history, sociology, ecology and material culture of the region, with specific focus on the techniques and object types most relevant to the research product of the case studies to follow. It will
simultaneously provide a review of the important literature on the region, including the limited coverage of miniaturisation. The information in this chapter, although of a generalised nature, will be crucial in interpreting the research which follows in the ensuing six chapters.

Following this chapter are four case studies, designed to show how miniaturisation has operated in different localised contexts and how it changed over time in relation to social upheavals in the post-contact period. The first chapter considers the Makah people of Washington State, pre-contact miniaturisation, and the development of the practice during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a focus on miniaturisation as a way of preserving cultural traditions and disseminating them to a wide audience.

The second case study is with the Northern tribes, mainly the Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian, and examines miniaturisation in the late nineteenth century as a form of conscious political identity, non-violent resistance and as a catalyst for the Northwest Coast “renaissance” movement of the late twentieth century. The third, with the Kwakwaka’wakw of British Columbia, focuses more strongly on the resistance narrative, considering how miniaturisation permits subtle resilience in cultural practice and contributes to cultural revival. The final case study chapter returns to Washington with the Tulalip Tribes, examining miniaturisation as a contemporary practice that participates in the development of modern indigenous identity and ownership.

The following chapter engages with the case studies through a thematic approach to the research gathered in both the museum-based object study and the fieldwork. The chapter considers the affordances of proportionality; the materiality of miniature objects; the relationship in miniatures between ceremonial and everyday material culture; the ability of miniatures to reflect society though the properties of dioramas and the role of the artist in Northwest societies and how miniatures have informed their art, touching on praxis and pedagogy.

The conclusion to the thesis condenses the thematic evidence of the preceding chapters into a theoretical discussion of miniaturisation as a culturally-informed technical process of communication, identity and knowledge preservation, with reference to the research questions listed in this introduction. These findings arrive at a new analytical framework for examining miniature objects focused on consideration of stages of production and distribution. This allows for consideration of a new understanding of how indigenous authenticity and ideological information can operate in material culture through miniaturisation understood as a method of preservation, resilience and communication.
Chapter 1: Theoretical frameworks

In studying the material culture of the peoples of the Northwest Coast, this thesis takes as a starting assumption Franz Boas’ assertion that while “many other people use carvings in the round which serve no practical ends, but are made for the sake of representing a figure . . . almost all the work of the Indian artists of the [Northwest Coast] region . . . serves at the same time a useful end” (1927:183). Leaving Boas’ assumptions about “other people” aside, his opinion that the material culture production of the Northwest Coast people serves a “useful end” is unchallengeable, and is formative in developing this project. By “useful end”, Boas is ostensibly subscribing here to a utilitarian view of Northwest Coast material culture, which holds that every object had a recognised function: i.e. that a fish-hook, no matter how beautifully carved, was still a hook for catching fish. Boas was not wrong in this statement, but it does not adequately recognise that the beautiful decoration of the fish-hook is not ancillary to the catching of fish, but instead is both a fundamental part of its recognised function and widens that function to a multiplicity of roles, many of which cannot be observed through a study of the object’s physical affordances alone.

In 1962, this problem was partially addressed by Claude Lévi-Strauss in The Science of the Concrete, when he noted that that the aesthetic properties of an object were not incorporated merely because, as contemporary Norman Feder put it, “man everywhere seems to enjoy having beautiful things around him” (1971:8), but because they were integral to the object.4 This was illustrated by a Tlingit fish club, similar to that in fig. 1.1, carved to resemble a “sea monster”.5 Lévi-Strauss concluded that:

   Everything about this implement – which is also a superb work of art – seems to be a matter of structure: its mythical symbolism as well as its practical function . . . seems to be inextricably bound up with each other (1966 [1962]:26).

Thus the incorporation of the design of the sea creature into the club, although having no scientifically discernible effect on the utilitarian principles of its production such as its weight, balance or size, was in Lévi-Strauss’s theory, a vital element of its construction which was required in order to make it effective.

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4 This is not of course to suggest that the aesthetic value of the work is irrelevant; it is highly important (Ames, 1992:70). The point is that it was not incorporated on a whim, but for practical and tangible reasons.
5 It is probably a formline depiction of a seal.
This club is an artwork: on the Northwest Coast prevailing contemporary understanding is that “everyday activities are artistic in the sense that they are part of the reflection and negotiation of meaning that occur within and between people”, a phenomenon referred to as “symbolic conversations” (Martindale, 2013:121). Art as term can consequently be understood as “social relations in the vicinity of objects mediating social agency”; under this frame, “anything whatsoever could, conceivably, be an art object” (Gell, 1998:7-8). Those who create things which act as “objects mediating social agency” are therefore artists, “to whom are ascribed, by abduction, causal responsibility for the existence and characteristics of the index” (Gell, 1998:27). This is the context in which the terms “art” and “artist” have been used throughout this thesis.  

These “social agents” possess knowledge because it is imparted through the process of creation, and because “to know a thing is to participate in the knowledge it turns towards itself” (Bracken, 2002:327), aesthetics, movement and mind can consequently be connected through a single object, which mediates social agency through its social relations. Artworks are consequently performative artefacts in which “art is arrested force, life held in suspension, and though ‘paralyzed’, it nevertheless trembles” (Bracken, 2002:343).

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6 Art as a term is highly contentious in the study of anthropology generally and Native American material culture in particular. A lengthier discussion on the subject can be found in the glossary to this thesis.
Lévi-Strauss developed his ideas on aesthetics and functionality in relation to miniatures, noting that “the intrinsic value of a small scale model is that it compensates for the renunciation of sensible dimensions by the acquisition of intelligible dimensions” (1966 [1962]:22-26). In talking about the “renunciation of sensible dimensions”, and thus the creation of “non-sensible” or nonsense dimensions, Lévi-Strauss refers to dimensions which cannot be easily observed by the human senses. In miniatures, as with the fish-club, “non-sensible”, intelligible dimensions appear through collaboration between physical dimensions, or affordances; the directly-perceived properties which give an object structure (Gibson, 1986:133-135; cf. Bateson, 1973), to which human agents can relate to achieve purpose (Costall, 2006), and systems of indirectly-perceived, intangible, non-sensical semiotic relations whose genesis is dependent on analogical causalities created by unobservable individually-determined, culturally and temporally influenced decisions (Knappett, 2012:87).

This project is therefore one in search of intangible, inapprehensible, dimensions, or affordances. Dimensions which are, in Lévi-Strauss’ parlance, “non-sensical”, which cannot be observed by the senses alone, and which are created through the elements of the material culture technique of miniaturisation. This word however has a useful secondary meaning as those dimensions which may appear ludicrous or abnormal; both of these potential meanings are referenced by its use in this thesis.

As with the club in fig. 1.1, we can, using our senses, make analytical observations about a miniature’s dimensions, weight and materials among much more. We can also draw conclusions from a subjective analysis of these observations in the context of the environments within which a miniature was created and the new environments in which it operates today. However, to understand these non-sensical dimensions, an analysis of its less observable affordances is required. A useful metaphor for the problems associated with this type of study is “Hawkes’ Ladder”, a theoretical construct which presents an ascending hierarchy of accessibility of knowledge in which the intangible, ideological rungs at the top become increasingly difficult to surmount (Hawkes, 1954). These dimensions cannot be observed with the senses alone, and require the application of additional contextual information to become “sensical” once more.
The imaginative nature of intangible dimensions means that they can often be interpreted as whimsical, or even facile. The bakery sign in fig. 1.2 touches on the intangible, subjective elements of baking: the effort, the experimentation, perhaps even the taste, in a flippant, humorous way. It does however have a more serious intent. By invoking nonsensical “imaginary” ingredients, its affordances transmit an impression of the bakery and its staff designed to amuse and consequently impress passing pedestrians into entering the store and purchasing baked goods. This sign is therefore making use of intangible dimensions in a tangible and quantifiable commercial capacity. This deployment of intangible dimensions will only be successful if the practitioner has sufficiently understood their audience’s ability to interpret these dimensions because

Objects are not merely identified and recognized by virtue of their physical ‘appearance’, but in relation to the effects of the interaction with an agent. In such a context, the object acquires a meaningful value by means of its dynamic relation with the agent of this relation. This dynamic relation is multiple, as multiple are the ways in which we can interact with the world by acting within it. The object-representation ceases to exist by itself. The object phenomenally exists to the extent it represents the target of an action [original emphasis] (Gallese, 2000:31).
For these actions to have purpose, the object must be sufficiently immersed in the
tangible and intangible social and environmental frames of their particular time and place
to exert subtle influence on the minds of their potential customers (Mitchell, 2005:38).
This position allows for the reconsideration of miniature objects as tools of action and,
onece used, as by-products of the technical process of miniaturisation, which is designed
to use the miniature’s intangible dimensions in a tangible capacity to influence an
audience, or interpretant, in much the same manner as the bakery sign.

The contextual information of the frames can enable an artist to bridge the gap between
our perception of an object’s physical affordances and its “nonsensical” socially-convened
qualities (Windsor, 2004). These dimensions are by their very nature difficult to define, let
alone identify. Any object is reliant on the “frame” or context that incorporates the
technical action within which the object is expected to operate (Miller, 2005:5), but
miniatures and their frames are harder to comprehend than other objects because the
aesthetic affordances of the small-scale miniature can be overwhelming, obscuring the
intangible dimensions and presenting an object which distorts reality (Davy, 2014; Davy,
2015).

**Theories of miniaturisation**

It is widely recognised that objects and images have agency with which they interact and
influence other agents, including people (e.g. Appadurai, 1986; Latour, 1988); that even
the most everyday items contain an “indivisible mix of ritual, myth and technical action”
which they can divulge to knowledgeable observers (Lemonnier, 2013:60). Despite these
understandings, miniature objects have often been relegated to facile interpretation. On
the Northwest Coast specifically they have been described simply as “toys for their
children and later as curios for white traders” (Roberts & Shackleton, 1984:121), or that
they “were originally intended as toys for children; it was only in the late 18th
century that the making of model boats turned into a souvenir craft activity aimed at Europeans”
(Berezkin, 2007:39). In general terms miniatures have been more strongly criticised;
furiously denounced because they “find their way to museums, just where they ought not
to be, as generally, with a few exceptions, they are devoid of all scientific value” (Porsild,
1915:233), such that “museums are cluttered with the great number of model[s]”
(Hawker, 2016:210). They became known as examples of “pedagogy or populization, but
hardly in the mainstream of the history of science” (de Chadavarian & Hopwood,
2004:3), and even when taken seriously, approaches to miniaturisation have often been strictly functionalist, relying on “standard archaeological interpretation of miniatures as toys, ritual items or burial offerings” (Knappett, 2012:87).

Despite this problematic history, there have been a number of attempts to disentangle the meaning within miniatures, seeking to expose the apparent paradox of functionality that they embody; Lévi-Strauss identified that miniatures “are 'man-made' and, what is more, made by hand. They are therefore not just projections or passive homologues of the object: they constitute a real experiment with it” (1966 [1962]:22). That these experiments are reliant on the relationship between the object and its observers has been identified by Susan Stewart who noted that “a miniaturization is effected through the viewer’s stance” (1984:134), and Alfred Gell, who was forced to “pay tribute to dexterity in objectified form” to a matchstick cathedral, even as he was ironically surrounded by the medieval building that the miniature resembled (1992:47).

This relationship between audience and object gives the object purpose because “in order to understand the intended goal of an observed action, and to eventually re-enact it, a link must be established between the observed agent and the observer. . . this link is constituted by the embodiment of the intended goal, shared by the agent and the observer” (Gallese, 2001:36). This link is formed primarily from visual stimulation, but “the act of looking, far from being passive, presupposes the establishment of a relation between a form of an external object and a formal, innate and unconscious model of the perception of space, which reflects a mental image of the body. Perception thus also, and always, involves projecting an image of oneself.” (Severi, 2015:31) Thus for Gell, Stewart and Lévi-Strauss it is the miniature, smaller, intimate and approachable, onto which they could project themselves and which therefore produced the more powerful effect and it is consequently its indexical relationships in the presence of an audience which give the miniature its power; “we are able to hold the miniature object in our hand, but our hand is no longer in proportion to the world; instead our hand becomes a form of undifferentiated landscape, the body a kind of background” (Stewart, 1984:70).

These authors identify that the relationship between miniatures and their audience is dominated by specific powers of fascination. Acknowledging fascination requires accepting that incorporated aesthetic affordances have psychological effects on audiences (Gell, 1992; Domínguez Rubio, 2016). Ruth Phillips recognises this in her study of miniaturisation in the American Northeast, identifying that “miniatures were a gift
beyond the ordinary” (1998:73). Phillips’ considers that miniatures have a “universality . . . understood and appreciated by the Native and non-Native participants in the gift exchanges” (1998:73), and that a cognitive effect is achieved by “the reduced scale of the miniature which reveals the attributes of the object it represents with special clarity” (1998:74), an affordance which hinges upon the “precise point on the continuum of miniaturization when its primary function becomes representational rather than utilitarian” (1998:91).

Prototype → Artist → Miniature

Utilitarian       →       Representational

In Phillips’ theory, depicted here in a very simple chaîne opératoire, when a miniature object crosses this barrier it has “facilitated its recontextualization within pre-existing or emergent frames of reference” for the audience, generating a visual dissonance which, through, for example, the medium of a dollhouse, can “create a functionless space, for which of us can sit down in a miniature library chair to read a book whose print is so tiny that it is unreadable?” (Mack, 2007:206). In this interpretation, miniaturisation as a process is dependent on the relationship between utility and representation (Foxhall, 2014). Miniatures here are therefore an example of “a symbolic 'commentary' on technical strategies in production, reproduction, and psychological manipulation”; a means of engaging with the world that is not dependant on bare functional utility as a “best possible compromise in the light of all the practical difficulties and restraints” (Gell, 1998:257) but is instead “an ideal standard, not to be approached in reality, towards which practical technical action can nonetheless be oriented” (Gell, 1988:8). Onto this standard, subtle messages may be projected dependant on the spatial and temporal context of their conception, but which may potentially be universally understood. These projections simultaneously incorporate and obscure the ideology embodied in miniatures, potentially allowing communication between persons separated by significant temporal and spatial distances, communications privileged by an ability to accurately interpret the miniature.

7 In describing a similar process, Pierre Lemonnier uses the term “nontechnical functions” (2013:58-60, 142) rather than representational functionality, but this thesis prefers Phillips’ terminology as it does not exclude the idea that intangible functions are technical in nature.
If miniaturisation has been practiced over a sustained period, as is the case on the Northwest Coast, then there may be significant differences in the practice over time. Indeed, as an imaginative non-sensical practice dependent on wider networks of social interaction for its creation, miniaturisation might be utterly different when practiced in different time frames. However, if miniaturisation is practiced consistently within the same semantic frame, each miniaturisation building on the ones which came before, then a miniature becomes “(in its totalized form) . . . an object which we are able to trace as a movement of thought, a movement of memory reaching down into the past and a movement of aspiration, probing towards an unrealized and perhaps unrealizable futurity” (Gell, 1998:258).

Recent efforts within the field of miniaturisation have attempted to create a theory of the process by combining the physical affordances of the miniature, its iconic qualities, with inter-artefactual understandings of miniature-human relations. Carl Knappett’s work on this subject identifies a methodology which encompasses four properties of miniature objects as a corpus within a cultural context by which he identifies their inter-artefactual quality. These properties are “frequency, fidelity, distance and directionality”, and they can be used to assess miniaturisation by considering the practice within a cultural frame; localised differences are eliminated as atypical (2012:103). In Knappett’s theory, analysis of these properties allows distinctions to be drawn between iconic miniatures and those with indexical intent, providing “a methodology for bridging the gap between the local and the global in the generation of material culture meaning” (2012:105). Although “miniatures have certain physical and semiotic properties (or, in other words, affordances and associations) that enable them to bear meaning in an intensified fashion, while paradoxically being physically remote from those forms of which they are iconic or indexical” (2012:103), Knappett is here still operating on a continuum of miniaturisation; “A change in scale may not affect their form, but it does affect their function . . . [there is a] loss of function with reduced scale” (Knappett, 2012:99).

Knappett’s work is reliant on an object under investigation having good quality provenance – reliable documentation on its archaeological context – to understand the inter-artefactual relationships; a resource usually denied to those studying Northwest Coast miniatures in museum collections. Such objects almost inevitably exist “text-free”, without context: the documentation and commentary from the original practitioners, “text-aided” objects in Hawkes’ parlance (1954:158), is usually entirely lacking, and thus analysis of these objects requires a bespoke methodology.
This thesis will question the implicit understanding in these theories that miniatures operate on a continuum of scale and that they hold a universality of understanding, as well as challenging the assumption which can underlie them that “the cultural world is partitioned between individual actions by active individuals and the passive reproduction of cultural traditions” (Robb & Michelaki, 2012:161). It will instead take the position that miniaturisation is the result of individual decisions made by artists which are directly informed by a range of factors including cultural, technological and economic considerations and interpreted by audiences dependent on the context of the observation interaction. There is no partition, and as a cultural tradition it is far from passive. Rather than Knappett’s proposed analytic properties, the thesis will contend that there is a set of affordances, termed here elements, by which the physical and contextual evidence of miniature objects can be assessed and through which the “system of codes that interposes an ideological veil between us and the real world” (Mitchell, 2002:91), may be decrypted.

**Semiotics of miniaturisation**

In common with other material culture practices, miniaturisation requires “not just the application of mechanical force to exterior objects, but . . . qualities of care, judgement and dexterity” (Ingold, 2001:21), and it is therefore enacted by a combination of “technical pursuits and from the expression of emotions and thought” (Boas, 1955 [1927]:349). Miniaturisation may therefore be thought of as a technical process during which significance is conferred and transmitted; it consequently becomes a method of production leading to an appreciable end. Miniaturisation is “an action which is effective and traditional” (Mauss, 1979 [1950]:104), and miniatures are a way of “bringing order to things and facilitat[ing] our encounter with the world” (King, 1996:17).

Since miniature objects are tools which facilitate human interactions, it logically follows that it is an understanding of the interaction which is essential to discovering the analogical “networks of meaning” embodied by the miniature, not solely an understanding of the object itself (Knappett, 2012:104). Miniature objects may be understood not as the final stage of this process, the end result of miniaturisation, but the by-products of a form of human communication; a method perhaps of “the carrying and reproduction of knowledge” (Evans, 2012:370); a method even of actually embodying that knowledge. If we can re-envision miniatures as a category of object which operate through the affordances of their elements as a form of communication, then we can approach miniatures as objects of imbued and embodied semiosis.
Interpreting the network of meanings incorporated in objects from a perspective etic to that in which it was created is highly complicated:

In the case of our own [European] art we think we know the code, and what we are interested in is mostly the message . . . On the other hand, when we look at the art of tribal people, we do not know the code and we should first of all try to decipher it. However, when we succeed, or believe we have succeeded, it is only to discover that the message is not addressed to us. How can we be aesthetically moved by a message we neither know nor understand or, if we do understand it, does not concern us?

... I would suggest that we are more or less in the situation of somebody receiving a coded cable. We do not know the code, so we cannot understand the message. However, when we look at the message we recognize some properties characteristic of the way this unknown communication was coded. We notice groups of words or groups of letters or some ciphers that appear more often, others less. If I may say so, these external properties of an unknown message can be put to use as a makeshift code to guide our own reading (Lévi-Strauss, 1985:5-6).

Comprehending Lévi-Strauss’s notion of the transmission of “coded” ideas through intangible dimensions requires engagement with semiotics, which holds that “all we can know is mediated by signs” (Parmentier, 1994); signs iconic, indexical and symbolic which operate within the relationship (semiosis) between sign (signum) and interpretant (signatum). Iconic signs are those which bear direct physical relation to their prototype, indexical through a system of observational inferences and symbolic solely through socially-convened understanding.

The three forms of sign are not distinct entities, but interconnected stages in a process of interpretation, each stage reliant on the one that came before (Watts, 2009). Objects participate in all three forms of sign simultaneously; “No painting is devoid of ideographic, symbolic elements. . . there is no question of three categorically separate types of signs, but only of a different hierarchy assigned to the interacting types of relation between the signums and signatum of the given signs” (Jakobsen, 1971:700). Moreover, the materiality of these signs renders them active agents; “not simply message carriers in some pre-ordered social universe [but] . . . the actual physical forces that shape the social and cognitive universe” (Malafouris, 2013:97).
In this thesis, I demonstrate that the process of miniaturisation, through deliberately incorporated affordances, uses mimesis to produce iconic signs and a combination of elements to reflect the indexical, which can co-operate with obscured codes not reliant on “factual proximity” to facilitate semiosis. This last is crucial; the process by which a sign is cognitively connected to a thing can only occur when an observer makes their own imaginative connection between a sign and a thing. When this semiosis is based on past experiences, it is known as abduction (Moriarty, 1996). This connection may be made by any observer, but the original intentionality might not be clearly understood unless the observer is operating within, or at least knowledgeable of, the same semiotic ideology as the artist.

Semiotic ideology dictates that a significative process, in this case miniaturisation, occurs within a series of “background assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world” (Keane, 2005:191-192; cf. Keane, 2003); “assumptions, either tacit or explicit, that guide how they do or do not perceive or seek out signs in the world around them” (Keane, 2014:314). For an observer to accurately interpret the indexical “codes” incorporated in miniature objects, the objects must therefore be adequately resituated within the semiotic ideology of their original producers because “recognition is mediated by what you assume about the world” (Keane, 2005:192). Consequently it is necessary to examine the elements the artist may have considered important to their audience and thus what elements were considered essential to the miniature’s construction, and ensure the miniature is figuratively resituated within the environment from which it emerged, as far as is possible. This requires that any interpretation of a miniature is “furnished with instructions” if it is to be an accurate interpretation.

Affordances interact with semiotic ideologies; a person’s sensual reactions to affordances, and their interpretations of what those affordances indicate, is “an attribution of qualities to objects in an external world, which can then be experienced and acted upon as qualia” (Chumley & Harkness, 2013:9). Qualia are the individual, often emotional, interpretations of affordances and qualities within specific semiotic ideologies, which form an essential component of the process of semiosis and the imputation of meaning to things.

This becomes particularly important when examining historic Northwest Coast objects which exist “text-free” in museum collections (Holm, 1986), or more problematically, exist with the application of text based seriation, a process which etically categorised objects based on a scientific assessment of their affordances such as materials, form, size or perceived functionality without reference to their emic categories (Webster, 2008). This
seriation process consequently bore far greater resemblance to Euro-American assumptions about indigenous life than to real ethnographic understanding of non-European societies (Pearce, 1992:1-3; McLoughlin, 1999:70), and caused the intangible powers of objects to be deliberately stripped to conform with a rigidly Enlightenment scientific approach to understanding culture (Hill, 2007:69). This has resulted in effect in the imposition of new semiotic ideologies onto indigenous miniatures which has problematised the study of these objects such that it is still necessary to assert that when leaving Western artistic contexts a “reduction in scale is not necessarily a reduction in significance” (Mack, 2007:71); and to caution that “reduction can have negative connotations if it is taken as the minimisation of some ideal maximum” (Townsend-Gault, 2011:39).

With material culture from the Northwest Coast in particular, this chasm in understanding has only been compounded by their deliberate and essential inherent unknowability, incorporated during their conception, which has inadvertently but consistently confounded curatorial efforts to neatly categorise indigenous material culture (Storrie, 2014). With this confusion in place, Knappett’s contextual criteria cannot be easily applied and without a new methodology neither the “psychological biases” (cf. Gell, 1988:8) that the object is operating in relation to nor the cognitive processes that are essential in its creation can be observed and thus its “codes” remain unbroken. For example:

I would like to tell you a story about a very noble American woman anthropologist, a princess among her people, who got her PhD and became curator in a Canadian museum. One of her white colleagues who was studying those marvellous chief’s rattles of the North Pacific Coast, beautifully carved and painted with elaborate designs, was puzzled by one specimen. He turned to her and asked: “How do you read this rattle?” and she answered “We don’t read them, we shake them” (Lévi-Strauss, 1985:5; the princess to whom he is referring is Gloria Cranmer Webster of the Kwakwaka’wakw, who recounts a less poetic version of this story (2013:165)).

An object such as a miniature, which has supposedly moved from a utilitarian to a representational functionality, cannot easily be resituated when we struggle to even approach the representational, indexical information obscured within the object, let alone understand it. They cannot be “shaken”; instead we must acknowledge that the implantation of codes as part of the process of miniaturisation does not happen by accident or by rote: each occurrence of miniaturisation can only have occurred within the specific environmental, cultural and temporal context within which it actually occurred.
This is because it is as:

all those technical strategies, especially art, music, dances, rhetoric, gifts, etc., which human beings employ in order to secure the acquiescence of other people in their intentions or projects. These technical strategies - which are, of course, practised reciprocally - exploit innate or derived psychological biases so as to enchant the other person and cause him/her to perceive social reality in a way favourable to the social interests of the enchanter (Gell, 1988:8).

Gell points out here that, just as with the bakery advertisement, efficient exploitation of qualia through psychological bias requires an understanding of a relationship within reality as it existed in the temporal and spatial circumstances in which the technical strategy, in this case miniaturisation, was conceived and enacted. In this situation, “a reality thus, does not exist for a person simply as a given setting, but can emerge and be experienced only through the work of actuality in a person’s vital relations with things” (Ishii, 2012:374). This is semiotic ideology in action.

What is being examined therefore is not just the miniature object or the technical processes which created it, for they are only part of a much wider environment in which the interactions of human and non-human influences contribute to create situational relationships (Latour, 2005:74). An imaginative object which incorporates intangible dimensions can only be successfully envisaged, created and deployed within these environmental relationships, and it is an experiential understanding of these relationships which allows an audience to accurately abduct the affordances of the miniature to obtain insight from the intangible dimensions (Knappett, 2012:88). In this process it is not just the message, but how the message is conveyed which gives it import (Malafouris, 2013:93).

**Elements of miniaturisation**

Having explored existing approaches to miniaturisation, I will now present an original methodological hypothesis which attempts to draw together study of the physical affordances and semiotic ideologies which are in operation during the miniaturisation process. This will be centred on a tripartite elemental approach, and assumes a sequence of artistic decisions. The element metaphor is deployed to illustrate that these are the foundational components of the miniaturisation process, and that when combined in
varied concentrations, they can form “compound” objects, such as miniatures, which achieve different effects.

Mimesis

Mimesis is the imaginative activity that allows for replication, the replica “drawing on the power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power” (Taussig, 1993:xiii). Mimesis allows for an object to “epitomize, echo and reverberate meaning captured in and associated with other objects, while creating new meanings of their own” (Foxhall, 2014:1).

Fig. 1.3. Athletic Awards. Republican Street, Seattle. Author’s photo, 2014.

Fig 1.3, a photograph taken near Lake Union in Seattle, illustrates mimesis in action. A shop which sells engraved trophies has on the roof a gigantic outsize piece of three-dimensional advertising in the form of a trophy, grandly proclaimed to be the “World’s

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Note that while agreeing with the thrust of this statement, this thesis will later take issue with Taussig’s use of “representation” as an automatic consequence of mimesis.
Largest Trophy Cup”. This is *prima facie* an inaccurate statement: it is neither a trophy nor a cup, in the sense that it was neither awarded as a marker of achievement, nor is it realistically capable of holding a beverage. Instead, it is a gigantic, iconic, mimetic device used to transmit an indexical message to potential customers in much the same fashion and for the same reasons as the bakery sign in fig. 1.2, drawing on a socially-convened notion of what a cup should look like for its prototype; it does not signify itself, but instead acts as an indexical sign for the trade conducted in the shop (Layton, 2006:32). Neither is it based on an individual “object”: a specific cup. In this circumstance, rather than its imaginative dimensions referring directly to the establishment to which it is attached, the giant “cup” transmits these imaginative dimensions via an iconic mimetic relationship with the entire corpus of sensible human-sized trophies. It is also worth noting that the giant cup is “text-aided”, which directs how it is intended to be interpreted, through abduction by the audience.

It may therefore be useful to think of the cup as a skeuomorph; an object in which a maker artificially replicates design elements from other objects for aesthetic reasons to provoke a semiotic reaction, a qualia, from an interpretant. This turns these objects into “indexical signs” in which they use “skilful imitation to bend reality” to allow them to both iconically resemble a larger object and simultaneously index intangible elements of the network of social relations it evokes, without necessarily being materially connected to either one (Knappett, 2002:108-111). The word skeuomorph has hitherto been used to describe a stage in making at which a technique has been used which replicates the aesthetic affect of another technique; the classic example are Mediterranean ceramic vessels made to look similar to more valuable metal vessels during the p production process (Knappett, 2012:99). In this thesis I have adapted the word to refer to the mimetic element of miniaturisation in which the miniature has been made to bear iconic resemblance to another thing without necessarily adopting the techniques, materials or affordances of that thing. This thing may be termed the prototype for the miniature.

Miniatures, like the gigantic “cup”, by taking on the form of another object without assuming its function, are skeuomorphically bending reality to create the impression of the prototype, and all its implied semiotic relations, without necessarily requiring the same size, labour, materials or utility, thereby acting as indexical signs of more complex systems (Hakim, 2013:24-27). This use of skeuomorphic mimesis, reproducing certain design elements to create symbolic inferences indirectly related to the prototype was famously

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9 The potential relationship between miniaturisation and gigantism will be discussed further in the conclusion to this thesis.
deployed in Magritte’s 1929 painting *La trahison des images*, in fig. 1.4. Just as that painting is not a pipe (Foucault, 1983), so a miniature is not the thing it resembles. Instead a miniature is adopting the iconic and indexical relations of the thing for a specific reason.

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 1.4. La trahison des images, René Magritte, 1929.**

The choice of prototype for a miniature reflects the requirements of the artist to embody particular mimetic powers of iconic representation which can only be interpreted by considering the semiosis between the image and its intended audience. Since an object’s “power resides in the *symbolic* processes they provoke in the beholder” [original emphasis] (Gell, 1992:48), and can only be activated in the manner intended by the creator when those processes are in place (Gell, 1996), the process of miniaturisation is consequently geared towards the beholder, or interpretant, and once used the miniature itself becomes a by-product. However, Gell also recognises that the artist has choice in the selection of prototype, noting of the Mona Lisa that the appearance of the painting is not due to the model, but to the artist; “Leonardo is seen as responsible for the Mona Lisa’s appearance, or at least what is fascinating and compelling about her appearance” (1998:53). Gell is discussing this from the point of view of an audience viewing and interpreting the artwork as being more or less under the control of the artist in relation to the prototype, with later comparison with Dalí’s work which he describes as “sadistic”, designed “to
dominate the spectator by subverting or deranging his or her petit bourgeois sensibilities.” (1998:56).

The distinction of “thing” as prototype is important. The term prototype here refers to the mimetic inspiration for the miniature, but miniatures do not have to have a physical prototype to be created: witness Lévi-Strauss’ example of the Sistine Chapel being a miniature for the end of the world (1966 [1962]:23), or the 50’ wide 1:24 scale model of Hogwarts Castle at Warner Bros. Studios (Bond, 2012). Miniatures are skeuomorphic embodiments not of objects specifically, but of “things” which “serve as targets for a mind eager to project itself onto mirrorlike surfaces” (Küchler, 2005:207). These “things” can be physical objects, imaginative constructions or a whole range of intangible, nebulous ideas, gestures and concepts; the full extent of human imagination (cf. Küchler, 2005; Connor, 2009), which are “the means or instruments by which humans can interpret the world, expand their ability or transmit their own agency” (Ishii, 2012:372). No miniature can be created, or even conceived, without a larger thing already being in existence; theoretically if not physically.

We can see therefore that a miniature object that iconically resembles a particular thing can simultaneously be an indexical representation of something less tangible, such as a factorally collective representation of something far larger (Knappett, 2012:91); “the social space of the miniature book might be seen as the social space, in miniature, of all books” (Stewart, 1984:41). This is because miniatures and things operate in a circulating system of prototypes, as described in Gell’s commentary on the “agent/patient relations” in the art nexus (1998). Adapted for this study, this dictates that in order to be created, any miniature must have a thing or things to resemble or it is meaningless; it demands a prototype from which the miniature can be drawn. This can include prosaic objects, but may also simultaneously be intangible representants. In turn, miniatures can act as prototypes themselves, providing an imaginative experimental format from which larger practical or artistic creations can be developed (Küchler, 2010; Schaffer, 2004, Reid, 2011). Over time miniaturisation, as a system of circulating prototypes, could become a “language that would change the world instead of describing it: the aim of such a language would not be to ‘name’ the experience of the past but, by uttering a ‘word’ that interrupts the progress of history, to actualize the present” (Bracken, 2002:341).

Although Taussig conflates mimesis with representation, it is important to recognise that this is not automatically accurate. Representation is an action in which something acts on behalf of or symbolises something else, and is a conflictingly liminal situation which
creates multiple realities; simultaneously “it stands in for the reality that is represented, and so evokes absence; on the other it makes that reality visible, and thus suggests presence” (Ginzburg, 2002:63). Mimesis however is only the formation of an iconic link which may or may not have symbolic representative purpose; the reality, the “emphasis”, does not necessarily correlate to the prototype. Representation also does not automatically confer meaning, which “is a product of a process of conceptual integration between material and conceptual domains” (Malafouris, 2013:18), requiring adequate conceptual engagement with the object for representation to occur.

It does not therefore automatically follow that something which is representative must look like the thing it represents, or that something that bears mimetic similarity must represent the thing it resembles; indeed, it is within the iconic deception of mimesis that nonsensical dimensions may be obscured and through indexical qualia that meaning may be developed. This raises the possibility of a mimetic object holding the potential to operate as a synecdoche; an object which is “a part of culture which recapitulates the whole” (Gell, 1998:161), and generating an holistic “understanding of particular human social phenomena [which] should be grasped in relation to the larger totality or whole in terms of which they are defined” (Kapferer, 2010:215).

If miniaturisation is a method of communication, and miniature objects the medium through which knowledge is communicated, then it is the knowledge, not the prototype which acts as inspiration for the miniature. It is this knowledge and its transmission, not fidelity to the prototype, which is most prevalent in the artist’s mind during the process of creation. One might be tempted to assert that it is this knowledge which actually is the Gellian prototype and the iconic resemblant for the miniature only a convenient subject, but it is more likely that they work in tandem within the creative process, one dependent on the other. To study this, the term “emphasis” will be used in the thesis when considering the motivation for the creation of the miniature and its operation in relation to the elemental choices outlined here, with prototype reserved for the iconic inspiration for mimesis.
Scaling

Anthropologists like to make big things out of small things. Small things can be details in a larger argument, or clues to follow. Small things reveal the scope of a problem. Anthropologists notice the small... The small tells a bigger story... As we move between these small things and the large things we know they are connected to, we make our texts both beautiful to read and difficult to follow. (Amrute, 2016)

The type of anthropological writing described by Amrute is known as Op-Art Anthropology, the use of small-scale “things” to illustrate and elucidate global phenomena. It is a valuable rhetorical method, which allows small-scale studies to generate broader implications while simultaneously reducing the distance between the audience and much larger, almost intractable, patterns (Amrute, 2016).

By its very nature, a miniature object must always be of a reduced scale than its prototype. This may be effected through mathematical proportionality or a more informal reduction “by eye”, but always the scale slides downwards. Knappett has considered this question as contingent on directionality: that larger objects might be scaled down to make miniatures, but that smaller ones not be “recapitulated at a larger scale” to create practical objects (2012:92). This thesis however will separate the question of scaling from a continuum of scale altogether and posit that beyond a downward trend the scale of a miniature object need not be even notionally relational to the prototype at all as long as the iconic relation between miniature and prototype is preserved for the interpretant.

As with the Sistine Chapel or young Gell and the matchstick cathedral, it is important to acknowledge that size alone is not is not the crucial characteristic: miniaturisation requires a reduction of scale in relation to the larger prototype, but there is no absolute barrier to size, as illustrated in figs. 1.5 & 1.6. A miniature therefore can be large indeed, providing that it is smaller still than the object it is intended to resemble.
Figs. 1.5 (left) & 1.6 (right). The author with BM Am,+.229 and BM Am1985,Q.266. Both are miniature canoes – their size relative to one another does not change their miniature status, only their size in relation to full-sized canoes. Author’s photos, (1.5 taken by Kate Jarvis), 2016.

Scaling operates in collaboration with functionality; in the terms adopted for this thesis, a miniature by its nature cannot be created or used for the same purpose as the prototype. Miniaturisation as a process is dependent not on the relationship between utility and representation, but on severing it; a practitioner does not set out to make a smaller version of something that should (or generally could) be used for the same function as the prototype and inadvertently produce a miniature. Instead, they create a miniature object with its own predetermined functionality, making use of the iconicity of the prototype. Therefore an artist could create an object perfectly capable of performing the function of the prototype but without ever intending it to be used in such a manner; such an object would still be a skeuomorph, but need not be a miniature. For example, the “cod-lure” presented to me during fieldwork by Tulalip carver Mike Gobin in fig. 1.7 is not actually a lure for catching cod, it is a mimetic sculpture of a cod-lure produced as a piece of modern Tulalip art.
This is not however a miniature, because its scale has not changed. A diminution in scale is necessary to convert mimesis to miniaturisation, and this encourages tactile engagement with the miniature and, like young Gell and the cathedral, through it the network of social relations for which it is an index. This encourages engagement with these networks, “stress[ing] the positive role of action in providing meaning to the overall world-model or the world as represented” [original emphasis] (Gallese, 2000:31); action is necessary because “Mirror neurons [which are activated by observation of action] require, in order to be activated by visual stimuli, an interaction between the action’s agent . . . and its object” (Gallese, 2001:35). Because “smallness as aggregating to bigness provides a framework in which the minutiae of everyday life can be classified, contained, and elevated in importance” (Amrute, 2016) through the action of observation, the first stages of the process of miniaturisation, in which objects resembling prototypes in reduced scale but without their functionality are created to generate a fascinating tactility for an intended audience, is not a continuum, but an intention.

Since a miniature exists with a functionality entirely independent of its prototype, different priorities emerge during production; Knappett’s concept of fidelity notes that “a change in scale may not affect their fundamental form, but it does affect their function: miniature [objects] clearly cannot function in the same way as the full-size versions” (2012:99), but this assumes that miniaturisation relies on the functionality of the prototype at any stage in the process. This thesis will contend that it does not: that it is reliant only
on the iconicity of the prototype and its network of indexical relations within a particular
semiotic ideology. It does not need to consider the functionality of the prototype unless
the particular process specifically demands it, such as architectural miniatures are created
to physically experiment with different phases of design (Yaneva 2005:869), or Frances
Glessner Lee’s *Nutsell Studies of Unexplained Death* dioramas designed to recreate crime
scenes to educate forensic scientists (Morrissey, 2014). Abandoning functionality allows
for the artist to conduct imaginative experiments with proportion, resulting in unusual
configurations by comparison with the prototypes.

One field of the study of miniaturisation in which scaling is particularly important is an
understanding of toys. There is a tendency to automatically seriate miniature objects as
toys, associated “not only with play and childhood, but also with the trivial and
ephemeral” (Phillips, 1998:88) Since toys are also explicitly associated with the child, who
is often obscured by the historical record, they can appear invisible or over-
sentimentalised (Soafer Derevenski, 1994; Sofaer Derevenski, 2000ii:4). This is not
automatically a misapprehension: some miniatures from the Northwest Coast certainly
played a pedagogical role in childhood games, such as those which imitated adult
ceremonial activities (Elmendorf, 1960:226; Ford, 1941:85-86; De Laguna, 1990:208), and
most miniatures have an inherent “playability” which emphasises their fascinating tactility
(Phillips, 1998:73). This however often over-simplifies this object type; toys are a medium
though which adults have sought to influence children into perceiving and interacting
with the world in a method which the adults deem socially useful (Sutton-Smith,
1986:119). Toys are not simple objects, and cannot be easily transferred between semiotic
ideologies with their meanings intact.

An example of miniatures operating as toys in an explicitly educational Native American
context was documented in the Eastern Arctic during the early twentieth century. There,
Inuit girls were given miniature versions of the heavy soapstone lamps and kettles their
mothers used at home. They would be encouraged to use these items, collecting oil to
burn in the tiny lamp and cooking scraps of meat in the kettle. This was a vital part of
their education, learning by observing their mothers’ behaviour and copying their actions
so that when they had families of their own they were equipped to feed and care for them
(Park, 1998:274; Jenness, 1922:170; Laugrand & Oosten, 2008). Although these toys
could be used in a utilitarian way, their indexical, representational function was paramount
– children in Inuit society were “treated simply as small adults” (Guemple, 1988:137), and
their toys reflect this attitude; they not only reproduce objects in miniature, but actions,
roles and realities. They support this position as the catalyst for a network of relations
with imbued magical qualities of strength and reliability (Laugrand & Oosten, 2008:73). These miniatures made for the entertainment and education of daughters come to “symbolise the activities they enable” (Weizenbaum, 1976:18) as “scientific toys” (Turner, 1987:386) designed to both represent and teach the roles that Inuit girls were expected to undertake once they came of age.

The effects that deliberate manipulation of “scientific toys” can have on a society can be profound: during the First World War all European nations produced toy soldiers which “were no mere luxury products; rather, they inculcated the progress of the war in children’s minds, instilling national feeling, honesty and patriotism”. (Hastings, 2014:421) and in the United States during the early twentieth century toy banks were made which were deliberately designed to reinforce racial segregation through play (Barton & Somerville, 2012:63). These toys reinforce normative social behaviours through active interaction with children, and can, in these examples, manipulate their audience into supporting violent or prejudicial social phenomena by making it appear mundane.

If we can recognise that toys have serious semiotic intentions then they are recast from facile playthings to semiotic influences on susceptible minds. The effects that these miniatures have on children is a “process of engendering an attachment and sentiment for particular ideals that they will take with them into adult life”, and which will re-emerge in markedly different contexts as childhood games become serious experimentation with cosmology and technology (Sillar, 1994:52-53).

**Simplification**

Miniatures are always less detailed, less complex, than the object they resemble as they are only “partial representations, which simplify the complex observations by the selective elimination of detail incidental to the[ir] purpose” (Clarke, 1972:2). The series of choices by which detail is reduced are ultimately some of the most important in miniaturisation (Kiernan, 2014:46), providing the affordances, and thus the qualia, without which even an interpretant versed in the correct semiotic ideology would be unable to understand them accurately.

It is simplification, even more so than mimesis or scaling, which provides insight into the ideology of the original artist because the range of decisions is wider, occurring on several levels. At the conceptual level, the miniature has already been simplified in its divorce from the context of the prototype; while a prototype is usually surrounded by the
environmental and mechanical contexts of its indexical relations, the miniature usually is not (Davy, 2015i:9). This will be explored in this thesis by considering case studies in which artists have made the choice to include some specific mechanical attributes and omitted others, to promote a particular regime of indexicality.

There is considerable physical simplification in the minutiae of the miniature’s appearance; I have already considered Knappett’s fidelity in terms of scale, but the notion applies to simplification too. If functionality of the prototype is severed during miniaturisation, then many of the mechanical requirements of that functionality can be safely omitted as well. An example, does a miniature watercraft float? (or at least, does it float upright?). If it does not, if it does not need to, then the material affordances which promote upright floatation can be abandoned entirely. If it does, then they must be incorporated or adapted for the miniature. In either case, this one choice provides crucial information about the semiotic relations promoted by the artist in the miniaturisation process.

Part of the confusion is terminological, stemming from a failure in museum practice to draw a distinction between the terms miniature and model. This is necessary in order to recognise those objects which feature “an illusionism that was essentially pictorial” (Phillips, 1998:92), and those with a more scientific practicality. For example, Martine Reid complained that “canoe miniatures, [were] often wrongly identified as canoe “models” in art catalogues”, and questioned:

How can we explain the significant number of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century [Northwest Coast] canoe miniatures . . . were they toys; as they seem to have been classified at time? Were they early tourist items?

Many of them are exquisitely executed and painted, fully equipped with realistically carved paddlers, dressed and with human hair; some are shown holding shaman rattles. Could they have been used by shamans during their visionary journeys to ensure successful fishing or sea-mammal hunting? The peoples of the Northwest Coast knew that whales and other sea mammals have the power to transform their bodies into canoes. Perhaps the canoe miniatures represent the outer forms of these powerful sea creatures. (1987:222).

Reid here is tentatively identifying the intangible, magical qualities of miniatures which the word model, a scientific term rooted in the European Enlightenment to refer specifically to a proportioned miniature, may implicitly exclude. James Roy King also identified this situation, noting that models and miniatures “have much in common but much that sets them apart; models are intended to be deliberate representations of
the full-sized object while miniatures are “folk” art, intent on preserving the resemblance to the prototype without the attendant requirement for detail” (King 1996:18-21). Since it is well-understood that Northwest Coast models are not generally accurately proportioned (Boas, 1975 [1909]:444; Holm 1983:92; Holm 1987:1), Reid’s distaste for the term “model” may be well-founded.10

Simplification also applies to the cognitive aspects of the construction process. Considerable effort in design and production – almost all of it totally divorced from the type of activity involved in the design and construction of the prototype – has gone into the mechanical processes of miniaturisation. Details considered extraneous to the miniature’s function and thus removed from the design are examples of the “distorted dimensionality” common to miniature objects (Foxhall, 2014), which is how miniaturisation obscures the fact that whatever its indexical relationships, the miniature is not and cannot be the prototype; a miniature car cannot be a functioning vehicle; Glessner Lee’s Nutshell Studies were not real crime scenes. It is instead a repurposing of the prototype’s iconicity for the miniature’s representative task. Thus the actual goal of the process of miniaturisation may be unrelated to the prototype itself, merely utilising the iconic qualities of the prototype for an entirely different reason.

Simplification here should not be misunderstood: it is the miniature itself which is a simplification not its construction process, which is entirely divorced from that of the prototype unless, again, such similarities are required by the artist for the miniature’s function. Indeed, the level of technical skill involved in producing a miniature may in some cases be equal to or greater than that required for producing the object it resembles (Porsild, 1915), and it is common for artists to express relish at the challenge miniaturisation can pose to the skilled practitioner (Phillips, 1998:75; Furst & Furst, 1982:87).

Miniatures become objects of desire to collectors (Evans, 2004:110-112), their simplicity granting powers of fascination, able to “produce sensations and impressions of the highest kind, far beyond the powers of description” (Mack, 2007:72). They consequently became a prominent and familiar part of museum collections; with entire rooms devoted to architectural models as objects of desire in of themselves (Knox, 2009:144), a way of controlling and displaying the whole world.

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10 A more extensive debate about the nature of the difference between “models” and “miniatures” can be found in the glossary to this thesis.
Simplification in design can therefore lead to simplification in interpretation of a wider and significantly more complex concept through an accessible medium. A miniature which forms an intimate link with its interpretant during semiosis can through its indexical links embody or exemplify ideological concepts, or “emphasis”, more strongly than its prototype and in a more accessible manner as it defies easy seriation on functionalist terms and encourages intimacy. This thesis will test the ways in which these concepts can be recognised and the codes of miniaturisation decrypted through an assessment of the elemental relationships combined within the “compound” objects produced by miniaturisation in relation to the semiotic ideologies of their creation.

Miniatures in Circulation

So far, this chapter has considered miniaturisation as a cognitive and technical process in which miniatures are created. It has not yet looked at the distributive component of the process; what happens when miniatures circulate among interpretants. This is important for two reasons: firstly, the decisions made by artists in the miniaturisation process are directly informed by their expected interpretants; if the intended interpretants are operating in the same semiotic ideology as the artist then the decisions taken will be substantially different than if the artist is aware that they are not. Secondly, miniatures have a habit of circulating far beyond their anticipated interpretants, unexpectedly reaching people from utterly different semiotic ideologies and being changed by the encounter; unpicking these changes, imposed on the miniatures by their life in museums is a major theme of this thesis. For this study, Native American miniatures may make ideal subjects because “an Amerindian pictogram seems more limited than a system of writing . . . [but] this system may on the contrary, be richer, since it ensures communication that spreads beyond the frontiers that separate different languages” (Severi, 2015:330).

To break this idea down, in localised settings it is relatively easy for an artist to be assured that the interpretants of their miniatures are operating within the same semiotic ideology within which the miniature was created, and that its codes are consequently being translated as intended. It is in this state, in which the artist can maintain control of the

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11 Domínguez Rubio (2016) notes that changes to the appearance of an object (which he considers a temporary state of being for a “thing”) will change how it is perceived. The interpretation presented in this chapter notes (following Gell, 1996) that the same effect occurs when an unchanged object circulates between diverse audiences.

12 And in this thesis, we can consider a miniature to be akin to a three-dimensional pictogram.
audience for the miniature, or at least can consider the audience in the miniaturisation process, that the miniature may act as an “index of agency”, an extension of an artist or even a community, mind (cf. Gell, 1998).

However, on the Northwest Coast in the post-contact period miniatures rarely remained within the communities for long; they tapped into regional and global trading networks and rapidly disseminated around the world (Townsend-Gault, 2011). As images circulate, “spread beyond frontiers”, and their biographies develop, so their powers inevitably shift without input from the original creator (cf. Kopytoff, 1986:67; Hoskins, 2006). When denuded of their original context, imaginative objects can have interpretations imposed upon them by new audiences, often formed through fundamentally different ways of interacting with the world. In some cases, this can lead to the application of etic assumptions which can lead to images being dismissed as “altogether unworthy of serious attention”; so-called “Rubbish Theory” (Thompson, 1979).

When objects circulate in their source communities, in particular objects which circulate in contexts related to social status, they can alter their state and thus their power (Guiart, 1985:225). An example related to this thesis’ subject is the coppers of the Northwest Coast. Coppers are large shield-shaped plaques of copper which acted as containers of great value and ostentatious displays of status. Held as family property, these coppers would be distributed to peers at potlatch ceremonies, their true worth measured not in their nominal value in blankets or slaves, but in the obligation they placed on the participants as part of a network of wealth and power distribution. As coppers circulated they gained names and life histories that added to their status and consequently the status of those who gifted, or in extreme circumstances, destroyed them (Lévi-Strauss, 1983; Jopling, 1989; Davy, 2015i).

Gradually many potlatch coppers, as with other indigenous material culture, fell out of Native circulation and into non-Native circulation. As objects move from their original contexts to new environments, they take on new interpretations ascribed by new audiences, particularly when traveling between distinct semiotic ideologies. The most pertinent example is when these objects enter the museum environment (Sturtevant, 1986; Berns, 2016). Lévi-Strauss’ fish club was originally created as a striking implement, but once it moved from the village in which it was made to Lévi-Strauss’s study wall, it’s functionality, as perceived by Lévi-Strauss, changed.

This process is sometimes considered to be quite violent; as material culture entered museums it was “torn out of context and exhibited, along with its kin, as simply the
trappings of an unfamiliar culture” (Holm 1986:133), “there to be dead and never enjoyed again” (Ivey, 1967:60). For miniatures, participation in this seriation process was especially disruptive, given prevailing understandings that “miniatures everywhere also serve needs that are quite separate from . . . practical considerations” (Phillips 1998:88). They thus did not fit within established hierarchies of evolutionary seriation, such as that developed by Augustus Pitt-Rivers (1906), and rapidly “acquired novel meanings that privileged Euro-North American categories and ways of knowing over their local significance” (Glass, 2010:181-182).

Once safely decontextualised in the museum, Native American material culture could then be repurposed for non-indigenous functionality, creating “false and reductionist spaces” and “closing off countless other stories and routes of understanding” (Yohe, 2016). For example, it was adopted by the surrealists in their artistic experimentation (Mauzé, 2013); played a significant role in the creation of Canadian national identity (Dawn, 2013), and was an active agent in the establishment of an artificial hierarchy of art (Bright, 1995:5; Myers, 2004; Auger, 2005:129-156; Myers, 2006). Safe from uncontrolled non-Enlightenment influences, museums could become secular sites of pedagogical devotion (Buggeln, 2012; Paine, 2013).

Ultimately, such objects joined the corpus of “natural or artificial objects, kept temporarily or permanently out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection in enclosed spaces adapted specifically for that purpose and put on display” (Pomian 1990:9), to operate with a specific semiotic ideology as “intermediaries between their admirers and the world they represented” (Pomian 1990:24), their interpretants and thus semiosis carefully controlled. In this environment, objects separate into “things, objects which were useful” and “objects which were of absolutely no use”. As museum objects are placed into their new sematic frames they become so charged with imposed meaning that they reach a condition of fundamental uselessness, a condition in which they are known as semiophores (Pomian, 1990:30), becoming a “functionless space” (Mack, 2007:206). At this point they cross a boundary between utilitarian and representative functionality (cf. Phillips, 1998). Miniatures which do so, having originally been conceived as representative, become doubly semiophoric, with the dislocation of reality that such a state implies.

In the late twentieth century museum collections became repositories of knowledge from which contemporary indigenous practitioners were able to not only draw ancestral

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13 I believe that the term “uselessness” in Pomian may be a mistranslation, and “functionless”, as described by Mack, appears more accurate in context.
inspiration, but learn direct technical lessons (Duffek, 2004:78; Reid, 2011:75; Evans, 2012:381) and to explore emotional encounters (Krmpotich & Peers, 2013:161). This transmission of knowledge across distant generations through material culture creates a new, modern semiotic ideology, which is recognised by the indigenous communities with whom it occurs. For example, it is known in Hawai’ian as “ānuenue”, the “arching rainbow linking the present and the past” (Kehanu, 2014), and among the Haida, a case study in this thesis, it is has been described as the “string” which connects modern Haida with their ancestors (Collison, 2016). This semiotic ideology stretches not only between the past and an ever moving present but also far into the future, a sustainable material connection that protects and preserves knowledge from systemic shocks and human destruction.

**Authenticity and Northwest Coast art**

The study of Native Northwest Coast miniatures, both historic and contemporary, is complicated by the circumstances of their conception, distribution and association. Part of the reason that Northwest Coast miniatures are an object type which defy easy explanation appears to be the assumption that they are a product of a synthesis of the relationship between “authentic” traditional indigenous culture and European or Euro-American settler society during the process of acculturation. Often a participant in intercultural trade, many miniatures circulated commercially prior to acquisition, and others were commissioned by anthropologists to specific instructions.

The work of these early anthropologists has frequently raised questions of how “authentically Native” miniatures were; Frank Cushing created replicas, effectively full-size models, as a way of examining, or “bringing order to” indigenous cultures on display (Isaac, 2010; Isaac, 2011), and James Mooney sought to replicate Kiowa material culture in miniature for ease of study (Ewers, 1978; Fagin, 1988; McCoy, 1995). Franz Boas commissioned miniatures as “ethnographically representative scientific artefacts”, drawing on existing traditions of miniature-making to create collections of “models” (Glass, 2010:181-182), including a substantial suite of miniature canoes from Quatsino, now in the AMNH. In these cases, the anthropologist was seeking to replicate tangible

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14 In the project described in the Krmpotich & Peers publication, in which I participated, the indigenous participants began their first session by seizing 200-year old clubs from the table and swinging them at one another, to the dismay of the collections staff. To the indigenous participants however all they were doing was “shaking” the clubs, connecting with them on an emotional level by using them as they were originally meant to be used, while simultaneously learning through praxis.
indigenous material culture in a format they could personally edit, control and display. The result was that the displays were consciously partial and inauthentic in the information they conveyed in order to conform to accepted Enlightenment understandings of human civilisation (Jacknis, 1985; Lohse & Sundt, 1990; Jonaitis, 1991; Ames, 1992; Phillips, 1998:92; Bennett, 2004; Shelton, 2006).

In portraying the inhabitants of societies deemed less advanced than those of Europe as “primitive”, museums were actively contributing to the attitude of superiority which theoretically entitled representatives of supposedly more advanced civilisations to conquer, appropriate and dismantle those civilisations they deemed inferior (Asad, 1991:314). In this context museums were “handmaidens of the hegemony of Western culture” (Geertz, 1991), conveniently ignoring that “the bulk of the art comprising the Western art tradition was not produced to be appreciated by an art public, but to fulfil instrumental purposes” (Gell, 1996:23), and to present them as semiophoric representatives of those cultures, a role for which they were never intended; Gell calls the distinct “cultures” which emerged from these processes “ethnographic isolates” (1998:155), because they preserved, in academic and popular imagination, a concept of what is traditional, or authentic, in Native American art at a particular time; “as a result, the most traumatic period in Native American history has provided the material basis for what is traditional and what is not” (King, 1986:70).

Collecting for museums was both unscientific and haphazard in nature; “not made according to a deliberate plan to tell a specific story. Instead the objects came from explorers, missionaries and traders, then circulated in a secondary market that deprived them of any provenance information obtained by their initial collectors” (King, 2012:57). As a result, the provenance of Northwest Coast miniatures in museum collections is often uncertain, particularly since for most of the twentieth century museum curators disdained miniatures for their “perceived cultural impurity” which was “offensive to prevailing understanding of Northwest Coast style” (Duncan, 2000:120-121).

This comes from an assumption that artworks made of non-traditional materials or with non-traditional techniques were inferior (McLennan, 2004); creating “biases against the abilities of contemporary artists” (Bunn-Marcuse, 2015:420); George Heye, founder of the National Museum of the American Indian, had the “Golden Rule” of “NO TOURIST ART” [his emphasis] (Lenz, 2004). Of miniature totem poles it has been said that “the stigma of their heritage as “tourist art” has diminished the desirability of
model[s] to be considered fine artworks . . . too portable to be truly valuable” (Glass & Jonaitis, 2011:18). Although modified, traces of this attitude can still be encountered in museums today: note in fig. 1.8 the separation of “modern/trade carvings”, including most miniatures, into distinct boxes at the British Museum.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Fig. 1.8.** Separate storage for “Modern/Trade Carvings” at the British Museum. Author's photo, 2013.

The role of the souvenir trade in the debate about authenticity is a polarising phenomenon: Phillips sees no distinction between a souvenir and an authentic Native material culture product provided they are accurately contextualised (Phillips, 1995; Phillips & Steiner, 1999), but others disagree: Nelson Graburn considered that souvenirs “give all commercial, contemporary arts a bad name” (1976:i:6). Due to this perceived inauthenticity or lack of quality, “souvenir art” consequently became “invisible to normal art-historical scholarship. Or for that matter, anthropological scholarship” (Errington, 1998:62), “walled off, untouchable according to orthodox curatorial and discursive practices. Rarely exhibited or published, excluded from the canon, they have been shrouded in silence” (Phillips, 1995:100).

Against this background the authenticity of modern indigenous imagery under both Native and non-Native influence remains an active area of academic discourse (e.g. Hoffman, 1986; Rushing, 1999; Newton, 2001; Graburn, 2004; Glass, 2004; Mantel & Lane, 2010; Cox, 2011; Oberholtzer, 2011). The decontextualisation of Northwest Coast art not only allowed it to be rededicated for etic purposes, but by extension did the same to indigenous identity, which in modern American or European societies has commonly been incorporated into mainstream milieu without attribution, acknowledgement or permission (Townsend-Gault, 2004i). Examples are numerous, but can include the
deliberate adoption of sacred indigenous Australian designs to sell souvenirs (Myers, 2005:91); the enduring controversy over the culturally insensitive and unauthorised names and mascots of many major sporting franchises in the United States (Bryson, 1994:338; King & Springwood, 2001; Wright, 2015ii); and the careless use of socially-restricted Plains war bonnets as fashion accessories (Lynskey, 2014). The contemporary debate about legal ownership of cultural practices is important, extensive and heated, and forms part of a deliberate post-colonial effort to consciously construct coherent indigenous identities (Geismar, 2013:208), but it should not stifle the creativity and hybridity in dynamic art practice reflecting “an indigenous refusal to be excluded from the projects of modernity and cultural critique” (Thomas, 1996:12), such as Michael Nicol Yahgulanaas’ development of Haida-Manga as a conspicuously authentic transcultural artform (Levell, 2013).

Hybridity has sometimes led to the assumption that an object produced in the context of the Euro-American market is somehow lacking in the qualities that define authentic Native art, causing such objects to be marginalised (Bright, 1995:10; Phillips & Steiner, 1999:9; Jonaitis, 2013; Bunn-Marcuse, 2015:433). Dena Klashinsky of Kwakwaka’wakw and Salish ancestry challenged this assumption:

I get frustrated with people sometimes thinking that cultural continuity can only be maintained through stagnancy, or even that everything has to fit a pre-determined mould. Some people actually believe that there are only certain tools or ways of making and preserving something that are truly “authentic”. Somehow if you go beyond these set restrictions, then it’s no longer traditional (Quoted in Clavir, 2002:180).

Tulalip artist James Madison put the same point as clearly if more succinctly: “We’re not petrified, y’know, and we’re still here” (Madison, 2014). Bill Reid, Haida master carver, recognised this aspect to his work, and consequently referred to himself as an “artifaker” (Duffek, 2004:77), although this terminology does not imply that he considered this a negative aspect of his work; many indigenous artists recognise the acculturative or transculturative aspects of indigenous art production as a positive influence (Blackman, 1976; Myers, 2006:277; Dowell, 2013). As contemporary Haida artist Gwaai Edenshaw explains:

Everything before was beautiful and decorated, but there wasn’t much that didn’t serve a purpose in the household. Whereas, when trade with Europeans really got rocking and rolling it turned into a sort of “objects for objects’ sake” . . . which in a European sense would be considered more true art. They would have been satisfied and happy to receive
that, and I think at a certain level it may have been freeing for the artists too. (Quoted in Augaitis & Wright, 2013:24-25)

Native artists producing for the commercial art market have and continue to routinely incorporate both traditional and innovative artistic forms into their work, freed by the imaginative, the representative, nature of their production from rigid application to practical necessity (Hoover, 1993; Brown, 1997; Jonaitis, 2006:252). Miniature objects, particularly in the late post-contact periods, are often exemplars of this hybridity, merging traditional material culture practices with modern art market commercial concerns in the process of miniaturisation to create new kinds of object (Phillips, 1998:85).

Given this creative artistic instinct and the post-contact history of the region, it is possible that much Northwest Coast material culture classified as souvenir art may also be autoethnographic devices; deliberately self-referential commentaries “which describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them”, distributed to both internal and external audiences (Pratt, 1991), which speak to the “active negotiation of colonization and colonial inequalities” (Mullins & Paynter, 2000). This is rooted in indigenous efforts to express identity and conflict through artistic imagination and influence and educate non-Native peoples through artistic media (Lips, 1937; Highwater, 1986; Kramer, 2004); a nineteenth century example of this development can be traced in the replacement of traditional Haida designs with satirical scenes of European life on the Northwest Coast in argillite carving, as European artistic and commercial influences reshaped the medium (Sheehan, 1980:80-95).

It seems clear that to indigenous producers transculturally diverse objects are no less authentic than any other indigenous material culture, even that they contain subtle registers of autoethnographic meaning. There is therefore no reason that a miniature cannot “blend extremely diverse thoughts and registers of actions” by simultaneously having intertwined properties as both an item of etic trade and an embodiment of intangible emic knowledge (Lemonnier, 2013:58-59). It can no longer be assumed to be “‘ethnographic’ art . . . produced for the metropolitan market”, but is identified as a participant in a technological processes as a “a by-product of the mediation of social life” (Gell 1998:8). When this is understood, those affordances which supposedly make miniatures “ethno-kitsch” to certain qualia, may instead reveal overlooked “non-verbal messages” from the original artists.
Summary

This chapter is intended to illustrate for what follows the framework within which miniaturisation as a technical process will be considered in this thesis, and highlight the major themes of this study.

The former comprises an understanding that miniaturisation is a multi-part technical process in which the miniature object is itself only a stage or tool, not the eventual goal. This process is achieved by a series of externally-informed individually-determined decisions made by a practitioner, herein termed an artist, who does so within a specific semiotic ideology and creates the affordances of the miniature objects in relation to that semiotic ideology. These affordances operate through a combination of three elements; mimesis, scaling and simplification in relation to a particular thing or “prototype” inspired by an “emphasis”, to create skeuomorphic iconic relations connecting to intangible, often non-sensical indexical relations which promote qualia in order to “encode” ideology within the miniature object, which then circulates as a signum within systems of semiotic relations. As temporal and spatial movement shifts the miniature from one semiotic ideology to another, these semiotic relations alter radically, often turning the miniatures into semiophores and adding a further layer of obscurity to the ideological qualia of the miniature.

This thematic approach attempts to unpick this process by considering the decisions taken by artists at the different stages of the process of miniaturisation, focusing particularly on the elements of the process, the part of miniaturisation over which the artist has most control and thus incorporates the ideology most strongly. To achieve this, the methodological approaches to the research must be careful to account for the semiophoric shifts in the miniature’s situation in the years since it was created by effectively resituating the miniature in its original semiotic ideology as far as is possible.

The thesis will then consider to what extent miniature objects from the Northwest Coast can operate as effective and authentic embodiments of ideology given their often transcultural nature, and what understanding this approach can provide for a more general study of miniaturisation as a material culture practice. With this being the case, the following chapter will assess the evidence available through which miniaturisation on the Northwest Coast, as hypothesised and problematised during this chapter, might be practically studied.
“I finally saw what was going on in my mind, but could I ever really explain it?”

- Greg Colfax, 2015

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter will illustrate how, by combining complementary research techniques, this thesis will be able to partially reconstruct the semiotic ideologies within which the process of miniaturisation has taken place in the Northwest Coast. Most specifically it will provide a methodological framework for understanding how the localised networks of historical, sociological and temporal influences within four case studies from the region have generated the conditions within which miniaturisation operates as a technical process towards appreciable intangible goals.

The research for this project will comprise several strands. All strands are mutually supportive: to intentionally separate these strands from one another would impede the quality of the evidence gathered.

The principle strands consist of:

- Museum based research with collections of historic miniatures from the case study area.
- Documentary research of historic conditions in the case study area.
- Ethnographic fieldwork with contemporary material culture practitioners from the subject area.

In assessing the methodological framework, this chapter will also discuss the factors which have problematised each of these research methods and consider how they can be counteracted with a combined cross-disciplinary approach which minimises the problems inherent to each research strand. The chapter will also make consideration of potential ethical ramifications of the project and the safeguards imposed to ensure that the participants are protected from any harm, and that their contributions are effectively acknowledged as their personal, authentic expressions of knowledge, in deliberate and considered opposition to historical and colonial narratives of dispossession.
Museum ethnography

Collections of miniature objects provide the largest body of direct evidence for the process of miniaturisation on the Northwest Coast region of North America, and may stand in as “documents appertaining to objects which time has obliterated” (Gell, 1998:258). As noted, these miniatures should not be considered the end product of the technical processes which made them but are instead non-human actors, tools in James Roy King’s parlance (1996:17), hypothesised to operate in the intangible technical processes of miniaturisation. Through these processes they gain the ability to act as indexical signs of more complex and diverse ideological “things” than the object itself, and to participate in intangible socio-technical systems, many of which no longer operate in the manner in which they were originally developed. Due to the impermanent nature of these processes, the miniature objects have survived as almost the only physical evidence that the process ever took place, largely without sufficient contextual information to enable them to be effectively studied in isolation.

Initial pilot studies attempting to examine this resource involved using Knappett’s concept of frequency (2012:103), to try to generate statistics regarding miniature usage from within the North American collections of the British Museum. Attempting to treat the composition of historic collections of Native American material culture in museum collections as if they were a scientifically selected representative sample however proved an inaccurate and self-defeating task, due to the chaotic collecting activities of the late nineteenth century and the resulting tendency towards depictions of Native American societies during periods of cultural damage as representative of “normal life” (Cole, 1985; King, 1986; King, 2012).

Allied to the issue of the authenticity of cultural depiction in the museum environment is the problem of museum documentation, a scarcely less chaotic phenomenon. Museum collections were not only formed in a haphazard way, but did so in the context of academic philosophies which favoured decontextualisation (Lee, 1999:281). In the seriated evolutionary analytical frame of nineteenth century museology, collections provided scientific type specimens of material culture which created an environment in which, for example, objects that looked similar to other objects were dismissed as “duplicates” and deaccessioned, with inevitable ramifications on the usefulness of frequency data. This approach to collecting did not favour any but the most basic collection context as important information, as to do so might confuse the application of established theories of evolutionary archaeology or Western art to non-Western material culture; such
contradictions were often quite deliberately repressed (e.g. Jacknis, 1985). As a result, collection histories for objects held in academic Euro-American museums are frequently extremely patchy, necessitating painstaking reconstruction through archival research. Initial research suggested that, due to their frequent designation as “tourist art” a term implying inauthentic expressions of acculturation rather than objects imbued with indigenous agency, this was especially true of miniature objects.

For example, of the Northwest Coast miniatures in the British Museum’s collection, only one object, the miniature house Am1898,1020.1, can be traced to an original producer or even an original community through source documentation alone, and this process took years of dedicated research (Wright, 1998; Wright, 2001:309). This is a pattern which, with a few exceptions, was repeated in all major museum collections of such material.

Initial analysis of the 2,842 objects in the Northwest Coast collections at the British Museum produced 61 objects which were classed as miniature for the purposes of this project, or some 2% of the collection, divided in fig 2.1 by mimetic relation.\(^\text{15}\)\(^\text{16}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>canoes</th>
<th>structures</th>
<th>tools</th>
<th>clothing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 2.1.** Table of British Museum Northwest Coast miniatures by mimetic frequency.

In this mimetic analysis, which separates vaguely provenanced historic material (produced prior to 1970) from better-documented contemporary Native Northwest Coast art production; miniature canoes proved to be the most common, followed by structures (primarily miniature totem poles). The tools referred specifically to miniature paddles and one small fish-hook (the paddles believed to have been historically disassociated from a miniature canoe ensemble) and the clothing referred to two woven miniature hats of

\(^{15}\) The figure of 2,842, drawn from the British Museum’s internal digital database, includes considerable bodies of two-dimensional art and archaeological material which were not relevant for this study, but which cannot be easily separated on the database from the ethnographic collections (see Appendix A).

\(^{16}\) Miniature figures were omitted from this pilot due to the practical difficulties of categorisation; issues of “figure” categorisation are complex. The BM database lists 112 figures, including several larger than life size, many objects which have other categories attached (such as rackets, smoking-pipes, amulets and masks) and others depicting supernatural beings which may not be reductions in size and thus not miniatures. Further discussion of this problematic issue is in Appendix C:3
highly dubious provenance and two miniature hats produced by Nuu-chah-nulth weavers operating in the 1980s.

The next stage in the pilot study was to conduct a simple culture-history analysis of the two most common mimetic categories from British Museum’s collection of Northwest Coast miniatures, in fig. 2.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canoes</th>
<th>Structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern style</td>
<td>Argillite pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westcoast style</td>
<td>Kwakwaka’wakw pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Canoe</td>
<td>Nuu-chah-nulth pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munka</td>
<td>Haida house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Salish</td>
<td>Haida tomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2.2. Tables of British Museum Northwest Coast miniatures by mimetic culture-history analysis.

These initial results highlighted a potential avenue of research. As these tables demonstrate, by mapping the imagery and design of miniature canoes and structures against established stylistic designations, it was possible to start to create a partial reconstruction of the likely points of origin of particular objects. It was at this point, allied to initial surveys and communication with other major museum collections, that the decision was taken to focus primarily (although not exclusively) on two miniature object typologies; canoes and structures. These typologies were the only ones which provided sufficient size and diversity to permit the collation of useful datasets which permitted the identification of similarities and anomalies.

The next stage of the pilot study entailed development of a database of particular physical characteristics of the objects which could be compared, mapped onto existing research into material culture production within the region and, in conjunction with available documentary materials, then placed within a spatial and temporal framework which provided enough contextual information about the miniature object to frame it more securely if tentatively within a particular semiotic ideology. By compiling this data about a sufficiently large sample of miniature objects from the sample area into a relational database, it became possible to contrast and compare the miniatures and develop an approximate spatial and temporal map of where and when each miniature was created. It also laid the groundwork by which the affordances of the miniatures could be collated, compared and ultimately analysed in relation to the elemental methodological hypothesis described in the introduction.
It was during the pilot project that serious consideration was given to establishing the bounds of materiality for the study; particularly in relation to weaving. Basketry is a ubiquitous practice among the peoples of the Northwest Coast, and small baskets, commonly referred to as trinket baskets, are common, particularly among the Nuu-Chah-Nulth peoples of Vancouver Island. These do not usually however change in functionality – the essential affordances of a basket remain, and they are still intended to hold items and consequently reliant on this functionality for their design.

In deciding whether these objects should be considered miniatures in the context of this project, it was necessary to consider whether the essential functionality of the baskets changed when they were produced at smaller scale. Although small baskets are common in museum collections, particularly from the Nuu-chah-nulth people, none were found that were so small they could no longer comfortably hold materials, or showed indications that they were made without the intention that they would hold something. There were none on the scale for example of the miniature Pomo baskets of California, woven at such tiny sizes they could no longer usefully hold anything, instead produced as a means of demonstrating skill in order to obtain commissions from traders (Furst & Furst, 1982:87).

As trinket baskets were reliant on practical functionality in their design, determining whether a small basket was intended explicitly as an ideological miniature of non-verbal communication, or was just a basket made for holding small things became a very complex process, in which they might be part of either or both of these categories. This was compounded by the terminological problems associated with museum-based fieldwork discussed in Appendix A. Ultimately I decided that since the aim of the thesis was to study miniaturisation as a communicative process, these ambiguities in relation to a relatively small number of objects in one specific category were not an effectively case study for this thesis. Instead, given that the body of miniaturised wooden material culture held in museum collections was both larger and more easily defined, this research project would focus on carved miniature objects rather than woven objects. This is not to preclude future examinations of scaling in Northwest Coast weaving, which may provide valuable comparative data with the results of this study.
Museum database

The database developed for the project accumulated data on miniature objects, particularly miniature canoes and houses, from the Northwest Coast region held in museum and private collections. The data metrics were designed to provide a body of information which could be used in a relational database to form experimental typologies within the body of material under study, which could then be used to consider patterns within the data which might suggest functionalities, intentions and “emphasis” within their processes of creation.

The initial stages of the data gathering process, described in Appendix A, resulted in two alterations in methodology. The first was the omission of “model” totem poles from the database. This was not because these objects were irrelevant, but because uniquely among Northwest Coast miniatures they have already been the subject of a significant subjective analysis, in Hall and Glascock’s 2011 publication *Carvings & Commerce: Model Totem Poles 1880-2010*. Rather than absorb time and resources which would replicate the work of this earlier publication, I instead decided to prioritise less studied forms of miniaturised material culture, with the data from Hall and Glascock incorporated into the study at the analysis stage.

The second was the discovery that museum databases could not be generally trusted to be accurate. So many errors were revealed by the research process, and so much information was subject to interpretation, that the research work load significantly increased as a consequence. To respond to this, I incorporated more subjective assessments based on comparative observations and experience to supplement the sometimes unreliable empirical data. This then allowed for consideration of less tangible affordances, such as quality and technique.

The point of obtaining and collating all of this data was to produce as comprehensive as possible a body of information regarding these objects to allow for the analysis of a large body of material across a wide array of museum collections in a relatively simple and accessible format. This allows for cross-comparison of examples and establishment of seriated typologies within the broad categories already described. These could then be mapped with provenance information to also allow for consideration of changes in design and technique over time. Appendix D contains a comprehensive typological serration for miniature canoes from the Northwest Coast.
Museum fieldwork

Although electronic databases and communication allowed for the acquisition of considerable quantities of information, it rapidly became clear that there were significant gaps in the availability of certain categories, particularly reliable measurements – many databases had the distressing habit of not listing the unit of measurement or which dimension the measurements they quoted signified. Some institutions provided measurements which, on comparison with photographs, cannot possibly have been correct. Assessments of quality and materials were also very hard to obtain from two-dimensional images, often of low quality or resolution. Finally, a number of museums could not supply one or more elements of this data gathering; photographs often proved particularly elusive.

Most museums in Europe and North America are suffering severe staff shortages at the present time, and it was unreasonable to request from museum staff that this data be supplied for this project unless it could be easily obtained from existing resources. Many museums were, following negotiation, willing to supply photographs as these images would augment their existing online collections databases, but often the detailed information required was simply not available. In addition, the thick description on which the subjective assessment of the miniature objects relied was rarely obtainable through photographs and patchy records alone: It was therefore imperative that this project visit as many museums as possible to obtain the required information first-hand, as permitted by time and resources.

Where visits were possible, it was arranged for a viewing of a selection of what were felt to be the most important objects for this study. Detailed photography and measurements were taken and recorded alongside subjective impressions of the details of the object using a thick description approach, recording all observable details and in the process often discovering information simply not available through digital photographs or online collection databases. This museum-based fieldwork programme also enabled double-checking of supplied data, acquisition of data missing from digital databases as well as deep-description note taking of specific design elements not always accessible in supplied data or depicted in photographs.

Inevitably practicalities result in a larger body of data being obtained for certain objects over others: some objects in the database do not have photographs and have not been seen first-hand, while others, particularly those situated in London museums, have been the subject of much more detailed and intense observation over a sustained period. While
acknowledging these uneven areas of data collection, the collation of data from a range of institutions was an effective research technique which allowed for the identification and elimination of gaps in the research which helped mitigate this imbalance.

Summary

By making the first ever detailed, large-scale quantitative analysis of miniature objects from the Northwest Coast, the project generated considerable insight into the range of miniatures produced and now held in museum collections and a relational database of the principal features of these miniatures, assessed in both strictly data-driven and subjective qualitative terms. This is a considerable resource with significant research value, but it does not alone provide insight into the research questions which are driving this project; at this stage we are no closer to understanding why these objects were created and how they were used in indigenous society from the collated information.

This is not because of the weaknesses in the object data; these acknowledged problems, counteracted by considerable effort in ensuring access and representational coverage as far as the medium allows, were largely mitigated in the research process. Instead it is because miniature objects in museums have, as discussed in the previous chapter, been consciously disassociated with the technical and social processes within which they were developed and entered a new, semiophoric environment in which their ability to convey meaning has been effectively and often deliberately subverted. Counteracting this major problem required the integration of the collated quantitative and subjective data with contextual information, in order to understand the semiotic ideologies within which these miniature objects were created.
Documentary research

A database of the physical features of miniature objects can only reveal limited information about the role of these objects within the process of miniaturisation and in the societies from which they emerged. However we are not yet in the position, as Alan Wardwell once commented, that since “these fine works are no longer in ritual use or the property of their once powerful masters, we must rely on the art itself to convey something of this totality to us” (1996:106). Rather, we can attempt to recontextualise the objects in order to make an effective study, by partially reconstructing the semiotic ideology within which they occurred.

In There is a Spirit in that Image, Birgit Meyer successfully deconstructed the historical and social processes by which certain Christians in Ghana had become afraid of images of Jesus. She achieved this by tracing the historical processes of the understanding of the power of images through Ghanaian history, and examining the effects of the colonial process through to contemporary debates in the country about the appropriateness of religious iconography. She then placed her own fieldwork in Ghana within this historical ideology, examining people’s behaviour within the localised semantic frame of the region and thus managed to interpret the complexities of this specific belief.

This project takes a similar methodological approach, although it attempts to consider a technical material culture practice rather than a specific belief, and it also incorporates a substantial body of physical research of the remains of this practice which can only be understood with effective contextualisation. This holds that imaginative objects such as miniatures are designed to have effects on an audience, to operate within complex “series of transformations” as non-human actors to which a person has chosen to delegate responsibility for a task (Latour 1988:299; Latour, 1999:15). This is actor-network theory, in which a series of actors, often quite dispersed, contribute to technical actions, employing social, political, economic and technological processes which in concert directly contribute to the creation and use of objects to achieve effects (Latour, 1990; Latour, 1996; Law, 2003 [1992]; Latour, 2005:70-74), and to study them we must recognise that “actors know what they do and we have to learn from them not only what they do, but how and why they do it” (Latour, 1999:19). Because the objects with which this thesis is concerned are imaginative and ideological, the actor-networks by which they operate are unusually dependent on the ability of the audience to understand the intangible semiotics of their environment. Accepting that miniatures were created in
semiotic ideologies understood by maker and emic audience but not always, as Claude Lévi-Strauss noted (1985), by etic audiences or indeed anthropologists, contemporary and modern, then miniatures are contributory actors simultaneously operating within semiotic ideologies and reflecting that ideology. Finding those reflections in the miniature necessitates attempting to partially reconstruct the semiotic ideology in which the miniature was created.

It is never possible to completely reconstruct an historic semiotic ideology. Such an effort will inevitably fail, as there are far too many variables with which to contend. A partial reconstruction can be achieved however by making use of documentary evidence which seeks to establish the circumstances under which each specific object was constructed. This formed the first intention in researching semiotic ideologies of miniature objects. To this end, it was necessary to attempt to explore archival material relating to relevant object collections. This material ranged from stored archives held by the museums to published accounts recorded in ethnographies and travelogues, but in most cases it proved to be substantially incomplete, and failed to provide a sufficient level of detail to adequately situate the objects in the semiotic ideologies from which they emerged.

Therefore a different tactic was attempted. That of using archival and published information, in particular ethnographies, early travelogues and published histories, to reconstruct as far as possible the semiotic ideologies surrounding each of the particular peoples under consideration, and thereby develop insight into the actor-networks within which miniatures acted. This was intended to create a simplified approximation of the semiotic ideology in operation at the time of the object’s construction within which the physical choices made by the maker of the object might be better understood.

This developed into a history of the region that illustrated the social, political and environmental conditions that prevailed on the Northwest Coast, presented in chapter three. Although archaeological sources were helpful in considering cultural movements in the pre-contact period, the weight of available evidence increases significantly post-European contact (1774), and this inevitably formed the bulk of data collected in this process. This research also sought particularly to identify evidence of miniatures in the historical record; examples of where and when miniatures have been observed in use in Northwest Coast communities. Initial investigations suggested that miniatures do not
appear in this record in significant numbers, a finding which appears to be at odds with the material culture record available in museum collections.

This record of contextual inferences complemented the object-based research by enabling the miniatures, assessed by culture-history typologies, to be placed into their correct historical timeframes. This allowed an exploration of the cultural contexts in which the practitioners and their audiences were operating to support the resituation of the objects within their original contextual frameworks. In addition, by overlaying the miniatures onto the wider timeline, it became possible during analysis to make correlations between temporal events and changes in the miniature record and by doing so begin to build understanding of the miniatures as indexical signs indicating specific intangible concepts related to environment and temporality.

Part of this process entailed testing the assumption that miniatures only existed as toys or as part of the souvenir art market which developed during the nineteenth century. This required examination of pedagogical and commercial priorities in historical indigenous societies to consider whether miniatures, operating in these circumstances explicitly as toys or souvenir art with clearly defined roles, were also deployed in less conventional processes. It also laid the groundwork for considering whether miniatures, even when operating in everyday technical processes, might have been performing additional, semiotic, functions not easily observable outside the semiotic ideology within which they were created and operated.

**Indigenous ethnography**

As a British anthropologist working out of two institutions which almost more than any others exemplify the British Enlightenment, this project will always run the risk of being a “white history about Indians and their procurable culture” (Cole 1985:xi). Interpreting the museum collections without context, or solely within those semiotic ideologies made available through Euro-American academic research would therefore be fruitless, as inevitably “when we look at an object made by another culture . . . we look at it through the lens of our own culture” (Fortney, 2008:178). The responsible approach to minimising this risk is to actively incorporate Native American points of view as an integral part of the project; indeed, given the paucity of research into this subject and the consequent lack of objective data, such targeted fieldwork is essential to accurate reconstructions of semiotic ideology. This process is particularly difficult
on the Northwest Coast, due to what Haida artist Bill Reid referred to as “the mistrust and suspicion which have always lurked, sometimes hidden, sometimes overt” between “the native people of the Northwest Coast and members of the strange tribe who inhabit the groves of Academe” (MacDonald, 1983:fw). To attempt this fieldwork and counterbalance the risks described means negotiating the contact zone that is created.

**Contact zones**

Whether or not the acquisition of Northwest Coast collections would be considered legal or ethical by the standards of contemporary museum collecting (or indeed, by historic standards), or whether the museum considers them to be authentic artwork or “tourist art”, their subsequent retention, interpretation and display generates an environment known as a “Contact Zone”.

First posited by Mary Louise Pratt, a contact zone occurs when there is a clash or collaboration between distinct cultures potentially struggling with “asymmetrical relations of power” (1991:34). The term was first applied in a museum setting in relation to a visit to the Portland Museum of Art by a delegation from the Tlingit people in 1987 (Clifford, 1999 [1997]:435), and has subsequently led to a paradigmatic shift in the ways in which museums collaborate with indigenous visitors (Boast, 2011:56). It has at times been referred to as a “site of conflict” (Brown 2009:145), although this does not always adequately describe the diverse interactions which occur.

The Tlingit delegation’s experience, as described by James Clifford, highlights an essential disconnect between the ways in which museums and indigenous visitors interact with collections. Museums in these instances are represented by their staff, usually bearing the legacy and responsibility endowed by the history of their specific institution and the museum movement in general, with an attitude best summarised as “collections . . . are for research or they are surely for nothing” (Keene, 2005:45; cf. MacGregor, 2009). This insists that empirical knowledge is sought, codified and archived to add to the museum’s resources and effectively increase its value.

For indigenous visitors however, the focus is different; “the collected objects are not primarily “art””, but rather “aide-mémoires, occasions for the telling of stories and the singing of songs” (Clifford, 1999 [1997]:435-437). During these encounters, the Native visitors typically “try to make non-Indians understand their contemporary reality in
historical perspective” (Clerici, 2002:3), but have found that “consultation is often structured to provide outside support for the maintenance of institutional practices, and source community members are wary of contributing to museum-led consultation exercises which do not lead to change within museums or benefits to their people” (Peers & Brown, 2003:2) – they are encouraged to “read” to others, not to “shake” the objects for themselves. There is also fear of being ridiculed; Haida master carver Robert Davidson once commented that “When I first came to Vancouver, I met an incredible barrage of anthropologists. I regarded them as people who held the knowledge, and so I was afraid to say anything in front of them for fear of saying the wrong thing. I was intimidated” (Harris, 1992 [1966]:XIII). This is all to say that the “relations of power” in the contact zone have historically been too heavily weighted towards the museum. In recent years however efforts have been made to mitigate the imbalances in these power relations.

Two recent encounters at the British Museum, in which I participated, illustrate this change. In 2009 a large delegation from Haida Gwaii spent several weeks at the British Museum and the Pitt-Rivers Museum viewing collections as part of a visual repatriation project. During this experience “the museum received a fraction of the information that the Haidas did, primarily that which the delegates felt was important for the museum to know about the identification or name or function of an object.” This was not a case of the museum benefiting from indigenous consultants whose primary task was to provide expertise and information for exhibitions or other museum purposes. For example, although “the Haida expected to generate knowledge for themselves, knowledge that would be put into practice in various ways in their community when they went home”, one of the most important goals of the visiting delegation was to negotiate the repatriation of human remains from the museums to Haida Gwaii (Krmpotich & Peers, 2013:35).

A separate project, run by the Northwest Territories Literary Council and named Sleeping Words, visited the British Museum in 2012 with a delegation of six Inuinnaqtun people from the villages of Iqaluktuuttiaq and Ulukhaktok. The project was explicitly intended to use the British Museum’s collections of historic Inuinnaqtun material as aide-mémoire, encouraging the visitors to recall the forgotten Innuinaqtun words for the objects and the actions in which they were once participants (Davy, 2012; Kitekudlak, 2013). In this project, entirely funded and organised by the Literacy Council, the museum was the junior participant in the asymmetric relationship: any knowledge
generated for the museum was as a by-product of the research process, not its main goal.

In both projects, indigenous ambitions were the driving force behind their conception and execution and the museum served as a facilitator between the preserved collections and Native visitors rather than as an equal partner sharing in the knowledge produced by the projects. In each case, it was left to the indigenous visitors to decide how to interact with the objects (within the bounds of safety for participants and objects), what information to share with the museum and how complete that information would be.

This diversion into discussion of contact zones is relevant to this project because the overwhelming majority of miniatures surviving from the earliest periods under examination are housed in museum collections. By engaging a British student in an attempt to explore and understand historic usage and manufacturing processes among indigenous North Americans, using historic material found almost exclusively in museums inspired by the Euro-American Enlightenment, this project is inevitably creating a contact zone.

Exploring contact zones

To explore the contact zone created by this project it is necessary to establish its most significant component parts:

Location: Where a contact zone arises significantly affects the contributions of its participants as it is intimately related to the power relations which govern the interaction. The reactions when indigenous peoples visit historic collections in museums have been well documented (e.g. Clifford, 1999; Fienup-Riordan, 2003; Krmpotich & Peers, 2013). When the site of this exchange is reversed and museum objects, or more realistically, images of museum objects are brought back to the source community, there is a subtle but important change in emphasis.

In a 1977 project in which early twentieth century photographs of a Māori village were shown to contemporary residents of that village, it was noted that “Bringing the photographs was as if we were bringing the ancestors, the tipuna, to visit . . .Our visits became a reunion between the living and the dead.” The anthropologists, though using a historic photograph archive collected and preserved for decidedly non-Native reasons as the catalyst for conversation, were emphatically the outsiders in this
intimate reunion and the balance of power in the contact zone lay squarely with the Māori participants (Binney & Chaplin, 2003:100-104).

With any project of this nature which takes place in a non-Native museum, no matter the effort to place the visitors at ease, “they remain sites where the Others come to perform for us, not with us” (Boast, 2011:63), trapped in a host-visitor dynamic of obligation that inevitably creates an asymmetrical power relationship. This is not to say that such projects which do take place in museums are fatally flawed: the examples described all achieved measurable lasting results. For this project however, objectively rooted in Enlightenment museum collecting and academic anthropology, indigenous viewpoints on miniaturisation should where possible not be sought in a museum or university setting, but in one in which the Native participants act, individually or collectively, as the host.

**Media:** This project does not use historic photographs as a catalyst, but photography still played a role in the fieldwork research. It is impractical in terms of expense, security and portability to transport miniature objects from museums to homes and workshops of Native participants in this project. Therefore it was intended to use photographs of miniature objects from each case study to prompt responses from the participants.

This approach is not novel: in 2002 photographs of objects from the Deane-Freeman Collections, an important body of well-provenanced material from the Kainai Blackfoot reservation in Alberta (Brownstone, 2002), were shown to descendants of the original owners of the material. This elicited detailed and otherwise unobtainable family histories behind the objects which were the centre of an ensuing exhibition at the Sir Alexander Galt Museum & Archives in Lethbridge entitled *Akaitapiwa / Ancestors* (King & Wood, 2002).

What is apparent from prior studies is that the responses of Native American participants in this type of fieldwork are not predictable. Showing high-resolution images of historic miniature objects to Native artists and asking how they were made is likely to produce reminiscences and stories which may seem only tangential to the question at hand. Such a result is a common feature of fieldwork among Native American groups; one indigenous participant in this project noted that this can at times be frustrating by, appropriately enough, recounting a story about it:
My first carvings I took them to my grandfather and grandmother . . . I would bring my carvings, whatever it was, show them to my grandparents and they would tell me this story that had absolutely nothing to do with what I was carving. And so I would go home, sit there. And I was so proud of this thing and there was this story that was way the hell over here. How do I put the two together? And so that intrigued me, so I took another carving over and again there was another story that was nothing whatsoever to do with what I carved. And it kept going for a couple of years that way and I found it interesting, I finally saw what was going on in my mind, but could I ever really explain it? No. It was just something that happened.

-Greg Colfax, Makah, interview 2015

To take the attitude that this is unhelpful or inappropriate would be a serious mistake. To understand how and ultimately why miniatures were produced it is vitally important that the responses elicited be respectfully considered as relevant commentary on the object, providing unique insight into the localised network of influences and inferences within which it participates.

Ultimately however the use of photographs in the interviews proved problematic; provision of photographs resulted in specific discussion of the minutiae of the specific objects in the photograph, to the detriment of the broader discussions on miniaturisation as a technical process that were being sought. In later interviews the use of specific photographs was restricted to the end of interviews in order to facilitate the broader discussions sought in this process.

Participation: Interactions in a contact zone are, due perhaps to the distribution of power relations, predicated on each side achieving specific goals. Clifford highlights this with his discussion of the New Guinea Sculpture Garden at Stanford University. This garden, constructed in 1992 by Whagi artists brought to California as part of an educational and cultural programme, is now a permanent establishment on the Stanford campus (Clifford, 1999 [1997]:440-441). Once the Whagi artists returned to New Guinea however their participation was over and the project became not a “contact zone of equal reciprocity and mutual benefit” but a space which demonstrates “two fundamentally different sets of assumptions about what the engagements were for” which ultimately leads to an “incommensurable context, [in which] dominance wins” (Boast, 2011:63).

It is important however to be careful in applying this observation uncritically. “Interpretations that reduce ethnography to an encounter between oppressor and
oppressed, interacting like automatons in a grim game of power, overlook the complex human motives that animate ethnographic encounters” (Brown, M., 1998:200), not least the question of ambition. No participant in this project, museum or indigenous, will be doing so from purely altruistic motives. As a researcher, it is impossible, not to mention unwise, to attempt to prejudge what these motives might be, or to assess beforehand how they might impact on the project. All that can be reliably focused on is the gathering of evidence relevant to the topic in an ethical and responsible manner. This does not however mean that the motives of the participants should be disdained – indeed, their motives in relation to the subject at hand are vital clues in attempting to understand how their responses have been formed.

In an effort to provide consistency of responses, the research with indigenous participants will focus on one particular sector of Native Northwest Coast society; contemporary artists. People have historically made miniature objects as tools of representation, employing traditional and efficacious techniques to create and deploy them, and modern indigenous artists are their spiritual, and usually actual, heirs. If one follows Alfred Gell (1998:254), and considers miniaturisation as a coherent practice “distributed in space and time, which . . . recapitulates, on the historical and collective scale, the processes of cognition and consciousness”, then these artists are active participants in a multi-generational traditional process. On a more practical level, through benefiting from the experience of years of apprenticeship and practice in the tangible and intangible networks of production, these participants are well placed to provide informed opinion on why their ancestors produced miniatures and the technical processes involved and why they continue to do so.

Contemporary artists are not naïve in their engagement in projects of this nature (Boast, 2011:63), and are often explicit in the commercial and cultural ambitions they bring to the collaboration. Modern Northwest Coast art is focused on “rebuilding cultural knowledge and disrupting its boundaries” (Davidson, 2004:9). It is transcultural, freely combining art forms from across the world with traditional art practices to create artwork efficacious in its communication with audiences. This combination of tradition and efficiency in art production has political as well as cultural and commercial aims, deliberately and extensively contributing to the promotion of Native American identity in the modern American Indian Movement (Peyer, 1991). Collaboration to further indigenous knowledge and art production is an integral part of the artistic environment of the Northwest Coast and it is anticipated that, as practising artists, the participants will desire the opportunity to benefit from the research.
Cultural Property: The question of whom, if anyone, can claim ownership of a particular behaviour, in this context a material culture practice, is fraught with misunderstanding. Ownership of such things, the “immaterial productions of minds”, is explicitly rooted in highly important contemporary legal and economic concerns (Geismar, 2013:1-21), and is consequently highly problematic, not least in “determining who is a native person and exactly what qualifies as indigenous knowledge” (Brown, M., 1998:204).

It was unclear at the start of the research whether an examination of miniature objects from the Northwest Coast would touch on potentially restricted subjects, such as religion, or materials embodying knowledge which were “obtained under circumstances so inherently coercive that [they] should either be sequestered or returned to its source community” (Brown, M., 1998:199). There was even a concern that this might not matter, because if “an ethnic nation – a people, in other words – can be said to have enduring, comprehensive rights in its own cultural productions and ideas” (Brown, M., 1998:194), then anything investigated in the course of the research may prove to be knowledge to which non-initiates, however defined, have no right to use, or even access.

If one “jettison[s] habitual assumptions about the relative powerlessness of native peoples, especially in the developed world” (Brown, M., 1998:214), and allows Native participants free expression over how they contribute to the project and what they hope to receive in return, it may be possible to mitigate the effects of this asymmetric power relationship. The growing importance of “indigenous self-representation” in the heritage field has prepared the ground for this type of collaboration (Brown, 2009:154).

It should not be forgotten that, as discussed in chapter one, miniatures seem likely to be transcultural products, even autoethnographies. “Cultures do not exist in a vacuum; they are constantly nurtured by contact with other cultures” (Granero in Brown, M., 1998:214) and when cultures merge, new cultures, as defined by art-forms or social constructs drawing from but separate to the cultures that created them, emerge with “visual cognates – motifs and images that have the potential of dually directed signification” (Phillips, 1991:22). This effect is exaggerated when the merger has occurred through an asymmetrical power relationship (Asad 1991:316). For miniature objects from the Northwest Coast, influenced by European trade, fashion and design, the transcultural elements are strong and provenance information often weak. Northwest Coast material culture is so heavily focused on representative merit and subject to constant change both throughout the historical period and in the contemporary art movement that it may not
always be possible to definitively assign cultural origin, and thus potential ownership, to any individual, tribe or polity.

This does not mean however that the project should be insensitive to the beliefs of Native stakeholders in material culture production and circulation. Just as the ambitions of indigenous participants in contributing to the project should not be prejudged, neither should their social, cultural or religious concerns, or those of their peers not participating in the project, be treated as irrelevant. It is not the place of this project to debate profoundly held understanding of proprietary knowledge with indigenous participants, but simply to acknowledge that these concerns are an inevitable result of the contact zone. To mitigate these potential problems with the data, it is essential to communicate clearly with indigenous participants about the project’s aims and to allow them to frame the terms of their contribution.

**Gender:** I realised during the fieldwork that the focus on wooden material culture risked presenting a gender imbalance in the thesis, implicitly promoting masculine views of the miniaturisation process by favouring a male-dominated artistic practice. To an extent this was inevitable given the material focus of the thesis and the predominance of male carvers, however in an effort to off-set the gender imbalance, I sought to contact female artists for their contributions to the subject. In this I was partially successful: Corinne Hunt of the Kwakwaka’wakw and Melissa Peterson-Renault of the Makah were available for a formal interviews, and a number of informal unrecorded conversations took place with several other female artists during the course of the fieldwork.

When questioned on gender imbalances, Hunt responded that “it never became a barrier. Maybe some women would not have been comfortable in that environment but I didn’t, I had a lot of mentors.” She considers that the advantage of being a female artist is that she is more connected to female taste and form, noting of her carved jewellery that “So men like to make these huge pieces for women, you know these big roaring pieces, and I came along and I started making some smaller pieces, and they fit many more women than the big hulking men’s pieces.” Peterson-Renault was also dismissive of the issue of gender imbalance, noting that “there were women carvers, women . . . But just like, everybody specialised in something, they got good at something and that was what they did. I don’t know if anybody’s ever told you that.”

Ultimately the thesis still presents a largely masculine view of miniaturisation and material culture, particularly in the historic period, from which women’s voices are more fragmentary and less clearly defined through wooden material culture. However, the bold
Fieldwork programme

In soliciting the views of Native Northwest Coast artists on the role of miniaturisation in both historic and contemporary society it is vital not to attempt to impose overly complex or onerous structure on their participation. As professional artists, their time is valuable and they will not give it up for a project which does not hold value for them or which attempts to enforce rigid structures of evidence-gathering. This observation, established early in the research, proved to be a considerable influence on both the methods of information gathering deployed and the information which was attained: it rapidly became clear that participant observation techniques would be ineffective in obtaining the data required.

Potential participants were justifiably reluctant to participate in long-term fieldwork projects, citing commercial deadlines, familial inconvenience and concerns about authenticity and quality-control in their output. Ultimately, the production and use of miniatures proved to be a highly personal, unpredictable and relatively infrequent occurrence among artists of the Northwest Coast, and the ability to observe an artist interact with a miniature was largely predicated in being coincidentally present at the right time, adding an element of chance to the research process. For these reasons, long-term participant observation fieldwork was rapidly realised to be an inefficient and often impossible approach for this project.

Instead, most effective responses were gained by conducting formal yet largely-unstructured recorded interviews and discussions with a number of selected artists, the interviews situated within their workplaces or within the defined indigenous-owned spaces of their local cultural centres, alongside periods of direct observation and less formal conversation as permitted under the terms of engagement. These were augmented by more informal unrecorded conversations with artists and, where permitted, with community members and other participants in the actor-networks within which miniatures are created and distributed. The methods by which the fieldwork was conducted varied depending on the permissions granted by tribal authorities. Ideally the formal interview would be preceded by a period of conversation and observation to allow the participant to prepare their thoughts and responses to the questions at interview, but
with a number of participants this proved impossible due to extenuating circumstances or the restrictions in place regarding the engagement.

To ensure that participants were not exposed by inadvertently revealing restricted or inappropriate information, the terms of the research were always discussed in advance, including clearly-phrased introductory information and consent forms supplied and signed. During the course of the research interviews, participants had free-reign to pursue their own degree of contribution, and invited to make clear what they hoped to obtain from their participation and to what degree the information they supply can be considered to be proprietary knowledge and therefore what prohibitions and degree of anonymity they wish to apply to it.

Anonymity is a controversial and yet vitally important issue for this fieldwork. Anonymous contributions are usual in anthropological fieldwork and UCL’s own ethical guidelines state that “generally all data will also be anonymous in the final report so that nothing can be attributed back to an individual participant” (UCL, 2006). This however is not the intention of this project: as demonstrated, Native American artists have historically been excised, either deliberately or through curatorial carelessness, from the provenance record. The project will not further this deplorable state of affairs by uniformly anonymising the skilled and sophisticated participants chosen specifically for their depth of experience and historical and cultural connections to the original artists; the participants were given control over the level of anonymity they wished to assert. To do otherwise would be to diminish and even insult their contribution. That said, outside the formal interviews, all informal conversations with artists and community members have been kept anonymous per the agreed terms of the fieldwork, and are here used only for background on the subject; they are not quoted directly in the thesis. Considerable efforts have been made in recent years to reattach the names of historic Northwest Coast artists to their dispersed artworks (Herem, 1990; Wright, 1998; Wright, 2001; Augaitis & Wright, 2013; Yohe, 2016), and this project will not run counter to this body of work.

Selection

Selection of participants was to an extent an opportunistic process: four fieldsites were chosen in part for the ready availability of fieldwork opportunity and the compatibility of their semiotic ideologies in constructing a broader narrative of miniature production and use within the region. Although lists of artists from each community whom it was felt would benefit the project were drawn up, it proved impossible to preselect the artists
within those sites with whom the project wished to conduct research. At three locations I was prohibited from communicating with artists without prior permission from the cultural authorities, which could only be obtained in person,\textsuperscript{17} with the result that potential interviews were limited to those present in the community at the point permission was granted. At the fourth field site extenuating circumstances precluded interviews with preferred participants.

Research was therefore limited by the availability of artists and their willingness to participate in the research programme. The advantage of this process was that once permission had been secured, the relevant cultural authorities were willing to provide introductions to important participants and to reassure the participants that the research was not controversial or likely to reflect poorly on either the participant personally or the society from which they came. They were also willing to provide a space within which the interviews could occur, one that explicitly placed the power relations within the contact zone on the side of the indigenous participant rather than the interviewer. Ultimately, circumstances dictated that not all interviews took place in these environments, but all efforts were made to ensure that participants retained as much control of their contributions as was feasible through the ethical safeguards discussed in more detail in Appendix B.

Ultimately some potential participants who had been desired for participation in the project were unavailable, but others who had not previously been considered provided a considerable body of information which mitigated concerns about whether the information obtained could be considered comprehensive.

**Assessment of fieldwork**

Having described the potential problems of the fieldwork required for this project, the following section assesses the outcomes of the fieldwork and how successful it was at mitigating issues which arose.

**Museum Data**

In Appendix A there is discussion to the effect that a simple definition of a “miniature” cannot be easily reconciled with museum database recording systems. Therefore initial

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\textsuperscript{17} The term cultural authorities refers to a number of different processes, some official others less so, which governed the suitability of communications and research within these particular indigenous communities. The nature of these authorities has deliberately been left vague here as coverage of them was not authorised within the accepted frame of my research requests, but they deserve mention for the positive influence they had over the project.
surveys of collections (online and when possible, in person) were required to identify object types that might fit this definition in preparation for more detailed study, in order to generate a narrower dataset from which those objects most relevant to the survey could be drawn. The collections at which this took place in person include the British Museum, the Burke Museum, the American Museum of Natural History and the Field Museum. Museums where it took place digitally included the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Royal British Columbia Museum, the Canadian Museum of History and the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. Other institutions, including those of smaller collections, provided corroborating evidence.

Typological inconsistencies presented a major problem; for example miniature canoes were sometimes stored under etic seriated definitions of functionality such as “transportation” or “trade carvings”, making them difficult to locate. More often, museum storage facilities stored objects by size convenience rather than by an organised object or presumed tribal typology, necessitating an extended hunt for objects of particular interest. Inconsistencies and discrepancies in online databases also contributed to the problem, making overall surveys less effective: for example a number of institutions had no function for searching by region, only permitting searches by assumed tribal origin, which cannot be relied upon with confidence.

From the survey it was determined that the most common forms of miniature object in the museum collections were, assessed mimetically in approximate order of frequency; miniature totem poles, miniature canoes, miniature houses, miniature tools (such as clubs, fish-hooks etc.) and miniature clothing. Other types of object which may be miniatures also appeared, although their appearance was problematic. After consideration, the decision was taken to focus the research on those miniature types produced most frequently as being the most likely to return usable results from a sufficiently wide sample.

This museum based study produced records on 944 miniature canoes, 69 miniature houses and 9 miniature tombs, comprising a substantial majority of the corpus of miniature objects from the region; clearly from the numbers observed miniaturisation was not an isolated or exceptional practice. Of this number all but 79 have photographs which allow for analysis of affordance. More than 200 examples were also viewed in person for more detailed observational analysis. From the data a seriated typology of miniature canoes was produced, providing each type with a code based on a subjective analysis of its affordances. This typology is reproduced in Appendix D.

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18 This is not to criticise this practice, which is often the safest and easiest form of storage for large ethnographic collections, but simply to highlight that it generated a problem for this particular study.
The initial assessment of the data produced statistics on the regional production of certain miniature types surveyed through a design analysis. This will not necessarily indicate the point of origin for the miniature, but since these designs were localised in particular parts of the Northwest Coast, it should give some idea of the importance of miniaturisation, and the importance of certain mimetic types to miniaturisation, across a geographic range.

**Miniature canoes**

Miniature canoes were the most common type of miniature object surveyed for this project. The table and charts in this section present a subjective analysis of the quantities of miniature canoes from the region in particular mimetic relationships with the canoe designs discussed in Appendix C. The discrepancy between the numbers presented in this table and the overall numbers of canoe miniatures is a reflection of the number of miniature canoes for which this project was unable to obtain images for analysis, or which were impossible to identify due to damage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westcoast style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakutat style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Salish style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munka style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salish Racing style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverine style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shovelnose style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice canoe style miniatures</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia River style canoe miniatures</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total seriated miniatures</strong></td>
<td><strong>785</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2.3. Table of Northwest Coast canoe miniature seriations.
The immediate conclusion from this data is there is an even spread in miniature canoe construction between Northern and Southern style designs, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, canoe designs with the widest geographical spread (Northern; Westcoast) appear in miniature most often. There are also indications however that certain historic canoe designs (Head; Munka) are significantly represented in the total despite having disappeared as full-size designs early in the post-contact period; that some regionally specific designs are disproportionately common (Yakutat); and that the most modern canoe designs (Salish Racing) and smaller, more common, more utilitarian designs (Coast Salish, Shovelnose, Riverine) are significantly under-represented in the total. Although there are a handful of European-style canoe miniatures from the Northwest Coast in museum collections, there is not one wooden miniaturised reproduction of a European ship or fishing boat produced by an indigenous carver.\footnote{There are some often satirical and never naturalistic reproductions in argillite, discussed further in chapter eight.} Given the significance of these vessels among indigenous communities in the region from the 1870s onwards, it is noticeable that they occur so infrequently.

**Miniature houses**

Houses on the Northwest Coast came in a number of different varieties, largely dependent on where on the coast they were erected; these include the Northern 2-beam longhouse, the larger 6-beam longhouse, the Wakashan 2-beam longhouse and three types of Salishan house: shed-roof, gambrel and Southern. Examination of the miniature
houses in the database threw up a quandary – many houses did not fit the specifics of this grouping, resulting in this typology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern 6-beam</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern 4-beam</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern 3-beam</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern 2-beam</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argillite</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakashan</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salishan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shed ^20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2.5. Table of House miniature seriations.

Fig. 2.6. Pie chart of Northwest Coast house miniature seriations.

Northern-style family longhouses are overwhelmingly the most common type to appear. Of these, at least eight of the 6-beam Northern houses and seven of the Wakashan

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20 All of these Shed-style Southern houses were made by non-Native people for museum displays in the mid-twentieth century. Their inclusion here highlights the differences in affordance between Native and non-Native miniaturisation practices. The “unknown” category are Northern style houses whose roof structure cannot be determined with the evidence available.
houses, some 23% of all miniature houses surveyed, come from a pair of commissions for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Amongst those that were not built for this event and which have provenance, none date outside the 1885-1925 date range. Miniature house building was therefore spatially and temporally focused at a particular cultural environment and amongst specific communities, with considerable external motivation, rather than having the more general temporal spread of the canoe miniatures. Also as with the miniature canoes, it may be significant that despite the adoption by Northwest Coast peoples of European-style clapboard houses from the 1880s onwards, none appear in miniature.

**Assessing materiality**

A significant problem encountered during the research was establishing the materiality of the miniatures under study. Scientific testing on the scale required by this data set was too expensive to be considered, and so the project relied on visual examination of the miniatures to determine the materials with which they had been made. Visual examinations were complicated by a number of factors; when examining photographs the angle, lighting and painted decoration can all obscure the identity of the wood, rendering identification suspect or even impossible. The age of the miniature, and thus the degree to which the wood has seasoned is also a complicating factor; all woods darken with age, and after 200 years it can be hard even for experienced carvers to make accurate identifications of woods. This is particularly true of the dark hardwoods from the Northwest Coast, such as alder or yew, which over time become almost indistinguishable to the naked eye.

Cedar is more easily identified on visual examination; yellow cedar has a light colouration, harder density and usually produces smoother, more contoured lines, while red cedar is a light brown colour with softer density and a more friable surface, particularly along cutmarks. Sample examinations rapidly revealed that museum documentation is frequently contradictory or obviously inaccurate when describing the wood used in miniature canoes and cannot be relied upon without further corroboration.

The quality of the wood for carving is dependent on the width of the grain – the tighter the grain the higher quality the carving it can permit. Grain width usually corresponds with the rate of the tree’s growth, with older trees likely to have better quality wood, determined by examining the width of the rings on the carving. This too however is not a straight-forward assumption – wide rings do not always mean secondary-growth wood,
they may also indicate cases where old-growth wood has been cut against the grain. This is particularly likely to be the case when wide-grain is observed in nineteenth century carvings as old-growth wood was plentiful at the time, perhaps indicating a lack of care in selection of materials on the part of the artist.

Indigenous fieldwork

Fieldwork took place at four sites during three periods; summer 2014, early spring 2015 and mid-autumn 2015. As discussed, the fieldwork was limited by permissions obtained from authorities within each community, and largely restricted to periods of observation and formal semi-structured interviews. Where permitted, conversations were also conducted with community members during these observation periods along with research at tribal centres and museums to provide background to the case studies. In accordance with the ethical considerations discussed in Appendix B however, direct quotations in the thesis are only drawn from the formal interviews conducted and recorded with named and approved artists. Each of these fieldwork experiences is here described individually, along with a justification for the selection of the site within the frame of the research.

First fieldwork period

Initial research at Tulalip, selected for their dedicated carving programme, took place in the summer of 2014, coinciding with a major carving conference on the Reservation. During this period contacts were established within the Tulalip Art Manufacturing Center and at the Hibulb Cultural Center, observing carvers at work, attending lectures by carvers and conducting informal discussions with tribal members. This was in effect a pilot study for subsequent fieldwork, learning the techniques required for the more focused fieldwork to follow.

During this time I was invited to attend the Tulalip summer festival at Spibida Beach and become acquainted with the history and organisation of the Tulalip Tribes cultural operations. Relationships were developed with a number of Tulalip, including Mike Gobin and James Madison at the Art Manufacturing Center and Metyl Hernandez at the Cultural Center, who all provided material support for the project. Outside Tulalip, a scheduled interview with the Nooksack tribe’s cultural director was cancelled at the last minute, although a tour of the Nooksack Reservation was provided.
The information gathered during this fieldwork was vitally important in informing subsequent research and is discussed in greater detail in chapter seven, where Tulalip miniature carving is addressed as a case study. This trip also included a period of museum-based research at the Burke Museum of Natural History.

**Second fieldwork period**

Although the second case study discusses the miniature output of the largest Northern tribes, the intended fieldsite was always Haida Gwaii, which has long been acknowledged as one of the most prolific and dedicated material culture production sites on the Northwest Coast, miniaturised or otherwise.

Initial arrangements were made to conduct fieldwork in Haida Gwaii in March and April 2015, but the tragic death of a young man early in the fieldwork rendered this impractical, and the decision was taken to depart the fieldsite early and redirect the remaining resources towards follow up work with the Tulalip. Thus extensive additional work took place at Tulalip, including formal interviews with carvers Mike Gobin, Joe Gobin, Sa’tha’tabd (Steven Madison) and James Madison as well as continued informal conversations with assistants, heritage workers and tribal members. An interview with Lummi carver Felix Solomon also took place, enabling a broader understanding of Salishan carving practices beyond the Tulalip.

The research on this fieldwork was later supported by an interview in February 2016 with Haida carver Gwaai Edenshaw at the British Museum and communication with Haida Museum curator Nika Collison, who provided additional materials. This trip also incorporated periods of museum-based research at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, the Royal British Columbia Museum and the Museum of Vancouver.

**Third fieldwork period**

This fieldwork principally consisted of two series of interviews organised by the cultural centres at Neah Bay and Alert Bay during October and November 2015. In both places, research required strict approval of methodology from tribal authorities – interviews were conducted at the cultural centres with carvers contacted through the centres; research beyond this context was restricted. This placed the contact zone comfortably with the indigenous participants, but limited the amount of observational fieldwork that was possible.
Neah Bay is home to the Makah, and was selected because the Makah have the richest archaeological resources of any tribe on the coast, thanks to the Ozette discovery. This collection includes a number of important miniatures, and interviews were arranged with carvers Greg Colfax and Spencer McCarty, weaver Melissa Petersen-Renault and, at a later date in his workshop at Evergreen State College, Alex McCarty.

Alert Bay is the home of the ‘Namgis band of the Kwakw’ak’wakw, hosting the U’mista Cultural Centre. It was also the epicentre of repression following the 1921 Cranmer potlatch and is the home of a number of prominent carvers. Through U’mista, interviews were arranged with Steven Bruce, Sr., Wayne Alfred, Trevor Isaac and Gary Petersen as well as an interview at a later date in her workshop in West Vancouver with Corrine Hunt. Corinne subsequently organised an interview with Squamish/Kwagiulth carver :klatle-pbi (Cloth-Bag), in his neighbouring workshop.

**Fieldwork Summary**

In total, fieldwork for this project included three distinct periods of observation and communication with four tribes which revealed distinct miniaturisation practices in individual tribal traditions, which will each be discussed in greater detail in the case studies to follow. This included extended semi-structured interviews with 16 prominent practitioners, who provided detailed information on their own practices and their opinion of those of their ancestors.

The data from this strand of research is essential in understanding and contextualising the museum based data, and makes a nuanced interpretation of miniaturisation as practiced on the Northwest Coast more possible.
Summary of methodology

Having thus presented the methodological framework selected to study the construction and conception of a miniature and examine the available bodies of evidence, as well as a brief assessment of the initial findings, it is necessary to summarise just how these research strands worked in concert.

- Study of the physical attributes of the miniatures from the datasets, exploring a wide range of comparative data for quantities and subjective analysis; including consideration of the reduction in size and detail and the specific resemblances of the miniatures highlighted significant recurring affordances of miniature production in each case study.

- Examination of the textual histories, technological and cultural data from the miniatures and ethnographic information allowed the development of an understanding of the miniatures within the semiotic ideologies from which they emerged.

- Obtaining ethnographic information directly from contemporary Native American artists generated original insight into the modern circumstances in which miniatures occur and allow comparison with the physical and contextual information collated about the historic miniatures. As these participants are the heirs of historical material culture producers, operating in an unbroken line of pedagogical apprenticeships, their insights on historical practices are therefore informed and highly relevant to the subject under examination.

Analysis of this assembled data provided insight into those specific elements of the miniatures which were designed to contain and transmit specific non-verbal information and the audiences which were targeted, as well as evidence as to how effective these messages might have been, as presented in the following chapters. This was then developed into a broader understanding of how miniaturisation operates as a technical process within the indigenous societies of the Northwest Coast to generate a methodological framework by which the phenomenon can be interpreted, as discussed in the conclusion.
“to draw the different animals from the ocean, from the land and from the air and our supernatural creatures.”

- Gary Petersen, 2015

Chapter 3: The Northwest Coast

This chapter will present a broad historical summary of the Northwest Coast, followed by consideration of the tribal and environmental circumstances of the region, with particular focus on the four case studies. There will then follow a more detailed analysis of material culture from the Northwest Coast, with a focus on miniature typologies their prototypes, with discussion of how each miniature type has been accommodated within the thesis.

History

The following section will provide a brief overview of the history of the Northwest Coast, describing the broad historical and social trajectory in the region. It will also act as an historical literature review of the subject. This section is inevitably reductionist in tone, and it will in consequence fail to give full justice to the diversity and complexity of the peoples of the Northwest Coast. Nevertheless, it provides an introduction to the region as a whole and highlights recognisable trends which will become relevant as the thesis progresses within a coherent narrative of the region’s post-contact history.

The early pre-history of the Northwest Coast has been the subject of a number of studies considering prehistoric cultural development and archaeology (Smith, 1956; Fladmark, 1982; MacDonald, 1983i; Carlson, 1990; Maschner, 1991; Ames, 1994; Ames & Maschner, 1999; Fedje & Christensen, 1999; Fedje & Josenhans, 2000; Fedje & Mathewes, 2005; Oliver, 2007). There are marked contentions between indigenous and scholarly approaches to archaeology, the former favouring ethnographic interpretation of evidence over scientific analysis, which has sometimes led to conflict (Roy, 2010; Yellowhorn, 2012).

The Northwest Coast was settled between 12,000 and 10,500 B.P. This earliest period, known as the Lithic Stage, was characterised by the use of biface and microblade stone tools. The later phase, beginning in 5,000 B.P. is known as the developmental phase and saw the growth of more complex material culture and aquaculture practices, reaching technological stability by 2,500 B.P. which provides the first evidence of settled populations and structured societies. By 1,500 B.P., communities had settled into groups recognisable as those in place at the time of European contact and remained broadly
stable until that time. (Fedje & Mathewes, 2005:154-157). Indigenous knowledge of these periods, as relayed by oral histories, is often quite different to that determined by archaeological analysis, and is usually tribally specific. It relies on an underlying assumption of the possibility of the supernatural, a state of mind not always readily accepted by non-Native scholars (Fedje & Mathewes, 2005:121-139).

First contact between Europeans and Native Northwest Coast peoples occurred in 1774 when Spanish explorer Juan Pérez encountered a flotilla of Haida canoes off Haida Gwaii (White, 2006). Four years later Captain James Cook’s third expedition landed at Yuquot on the west coast of Vancouver Island, home of the Mowachaht people. Cook and his men engaged in a number of commercial exchanges with the indigenous population, sailing north along the coast up to the Aleutian Islands (Cook, 1967 [1779]).

These expeditions discovered that otter furs were readily available on the Coast, and European and American traders began to arrive in the region in increasing numbers from the 1780s onwards (Wagner, 2002 [1933]; Anderson, 1939; Malaquais, 1990; King, 1994; Brown, 2000i; Malloy, 2000). Although there was Russian occupation in Alaska, leading to conflict with the Tlingit inhabitants of the region, most of the Coast remained uncolonised during this period, traders instead tapping into existing indigenous trading networks managed through clan networks. Initially these were organised on a haphazard basis, but by the early nineteenth century they had solidified around a handful of designated trading ports, such as Fort Victoria, Fort Rupert and Fort Simpson (Cole & Darling, 1990).

Those groups with ready access to trading ports made substantial wealth acting as middlemen between the European and American traders and the more distant tribes who could supply otter furs from their hunting territories. The furs were then bundled and sold in China, becoming a major commodity within global trading networks (Malloy, 1986; Macnair, 1986:508; Holm & Vaughn, 1990 [1983]; Fisher, 1992 [1977]:1-47; Zilberstein, 2007). Occasional conflicts occurred between Europeans and indigenous groups, such as the skirmishes between the Columbia and Kwakwaka’wakw canoe fleets in 1792, or the more serious Russian-Tlingit War of 1804. More common however were conflicts between indigenous groups over control of hunting territories or trading ports, extensions of traditional tribal warfare rendered more significant by the increase in wealth (Jacknis, 2013). During this period there were also occasional, usually accidental, arrivals by Asian ships (Brooks, 1876; Quimby, 1985; Callaghan, 2003).
These changes in economic structures caused the disruption of long-standing social and clan hierarchies among many Northwest Coast tribes. Wealth, traditionally measured in limited quantities of copper or slaves, had long been controlled by hereditary chiefly families. The advent of external large-scale trade allowed considerable wealth to be amassed by those outside these traditional power networks. That wealth was then used to compete with or depose rival traders and community leaders. It is thought that many of the traditions recorded by late nineteenth century anthropologists, such as the potlatch, changed considerably during this period to reflect tensions caused by the redistribution of wealth (Codere, 1966i).

A second major factor in social upheaval at this time was demographic change caused by the introduction of European diseases into a Native population which had no immunity. Small pox, measles and influenza were particularly virulent in the late eighteenth century, causing very high mortality rates among populations along the coast (Boyd, 1994). This contributed significantly to the movement of peoples and the weakening of traditional power structures during this period.

Examples include an increase in ostentatious displays of wealth, such as the rapid spread of totem pole carving from Haida Gwaii to the mainland tribes and then south; the adaptation of canoe designs to facilitate increased cargo haulage and the development of potlatches as a system of non-violent conflict resolution, particularly among the Kwakwaka’wakw. The wealth was however gathered on an unsustainable basis; the sea otters were rapidly being hunted to near-extinction, while the increasing numbers of European settlers brought with them foreign government intervention.

Missionary and political activity had a significant impact on traditional ritual practices, particularly with the Northern Tsimshian and among the Salish (Fisher, 1992 [1977]:119-130; Ellis, 2007). In the Northern Oregon Territory, later to become Washington State, Governor Isaac Stevens imposed one-sided treaties on the various peoples, limiting their economic activities and forcing seasonally-nomadic groups to settle on land which was not equipped to sustain them throughout the year (Marino, 1990). Internally divided and intimidated by US military strength, most tribes acquiesced without conflict. In British Columbia, aggressive missionary programmes targeted the tribes of Southern Vancouver Island, spreading northwards as the decade continued. These movements occurred against a continent-wide narrative of deliberate efforts to drive indigenous peoples to the margins of American society, couched as concern but often with ulterior motives at play (Leupp, 1910).
In 1862 a small pox epidemic swept north out of Victoria. Some indigenous historians have claimed that the disease was deliberately passed to the tribes by the British Columbian government seeking to free land for settlement (Jusquan, 2009; Swanky, 2013), although most scholars maintain that it spread through panic, confusion and official indifference rather than a deliberate campaign of biological warfare. Mortality rates among the indigenous population were severe, reaching an average of 53% across the coast and as high as 72% among the Haida in just over a year. In the aftermath of this demographic collapse, remaining populations gradually left their villages and congregated into new towns (Boyd, 1990; Boyd, 1999).

This devastating social, political and economic disaster forced the concentration of indigenous peoples in settled communities. In this environment artists worked in close proximity to develop new artistic styles in new media. Potlatching also increased in the aftermath as a new social order was established (Codere, 1950:97). This resulted in a significant increase in the quantity and variety of jewellery, argillite carving, souvenir artwork and funerary equipment followed the epidemic, as did, to a limited degree, a stronger sense of political unity within tribes (Jonaitis & Glass, 2010:27). The unity was necessary because European settlement and governmental interference also increased significantly in the immediate aftermath of the epidemic. Vacated village sites soon became colonised by European loggers and farmsteads and a permanent government presence, such as a policeman, government Indian Agent, schoolteacher or similar imposed authority figure, was established in many communities for the first time (Halliday, 1935; Hawthorne et al., 1958:48-55; Erikson, 2002).

New communities were set up at the behest of government, missionaries or commercial operators; examples include Masset, New Metlakatla and Alert Bay. In each case these were envisioned as a comprehensive break from their past for the indigenous inhabitants, to be reshaped in relation to the cultural, religious or commercial ambitions of the new authority (Fisher, 1992 [1977]:132). In the face of these imposed governments, traditional

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21 This is a continent wide narrative, which has been attributed to a habitual indigenous conflation of the specific vulnerability of Native Americans to European diseases to a presumed European control over those diseases (Jones, 2004:221).

22 Early drafts of this thesis used the term abandoned here. Feedback from indigenous readers suggested that it was inappropriate because although the villages were no longer inhabited, they were still and would always be, in a vital sense, home to their former residents. Since many Northwest Coast peoples lived seasonally nomadic lives, there was no sense that these communities were being permanently dissolved, merely vacated until the situation improved. They are still regularly visited by the descendants of the inhabitants and are still understood to be communities within the tribe, albeit temporarily empty.

23 It should be noted here that indigenous historians cite much higher mortality figures based on higher estimates of original population. These figures are usually in the range of 90-95% mortality and cover wider time frames than this single epidemic.
tribal authority did not disappear, but rather became an alternative and increasingly obscured parallel authority. This accelerated after laws were introduced in the 1880s which prohibited many traditional practices, most significantly the potlatch ban of 1885, which, as Haida curator Nika Collison put it, “effectively ma[de] our legal system, illegal” (Collison, 2016). Although only enforced at certain places and times (Cole & Chaikin, 1990:181), these laws enabled officials to punish those Native people they considered to be challenging their authority, and to impose further restrictions, most especially Indian Residential Schools (TRC I-III).

The Schools system sought to eliminate traditional indigenous structures by eradicating Native languages and customs. Punishments were brutal and many children died of disease or neglect (Ford, 1941:88-106). Parents living outside the government-controlled towns risked having their children forcibly removed, and so those communities without schools dwindled as families relocated. Economic restrictions were also introduced, ending indigenous fishing and hunting practices through laws introduced in the 1880s; in the name of conservation, seal-hunting, whaling and many fishing practices were outlawed, although in practice enforcement disproportionately targeted indigenous operators. Indigenous peoples were forced into work as manual labour in approved industries, such as salmon canning or farming – while some turned to industrial production of art, both of the high-quality and low-quality varieties, to survive (Worl, 1990).

In 1921 at Alert Bay, Indian Agent William Halliday took a stand against potlatching, which had continued despite the ban, prosecuting dozens of Kwakwa’kawakw people for participating in a potlatch (Halliday, 1935; Cole & Chaikin, 1990:119-124; Loo, 1992; Hawker, 2003:17-33). Their regalia was seized, deliberately desecrated and sold to museums. Museum collecting, both of items willingly sold and unethically obtained, had been increasing exponentially during the late nineteenth century, driven largely by fears that “authentic” indigenous culture was rapidly being destroyed (Cole, 1985).

The Halliday reprisals, combined with the long educational repression of traditional languages, caused the peoples of the Northwest Coast to enter a period known to some as “The Dark Ages” (Hawker, 2003:8); whether this terminology is appropriate has been heavily debated, with a lack of scholarship rather than a lack of practice sometimes considered more significant in this narrative (Bunn-Marcuse, 2015); Native sources have preferred “Dark Years” (Cranmer Webster, 2013) or “Silent Years” (Steedman & Collison, 2011). The loss of knowledge these terms imply was devastating; for more than
thirty years many traditional practices either ceased entirely, were practiced “underground” under threat of severe reprisal or became altered through a process of transculturation (Erikson, 2002:89): the conflation of potlatch giveaways with Christmas celebrations being a common example (Colson, 1953:17; Macnair, 1986:515).

Although there were sporadic attempts to preserve traditional oral culture and histories (e.g. Ford, 1941; Spradley, 1969; Senier, 2001:121-192; Goodman & Swan, 2003; Dover, 2013), almost the only safe method of continuing to practice traditional activities was in those ways the authorities considered facile and unthreatening, such as in the souvenir art workshops that developed from the curio trade of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Supported by a number of specific dealers, such as Ye Olde Curiosity Shop in Seattle, carvers such as Ellen Neel and her family were able to make a living by producing variations on traditional imagery and techniques for sale outside their communities (Duncan, 2000).

This period and the repression which dominated it caused profound social problems in many indigenous communities, of which alcohol abuse was probably the most visible and destructive (Hawthorne *et al.*, 1958:331-345; Wolcott, 1967:56-58; Spradley, 1969:180). The repeal of repressive laws in the 1950s, combined with the gradual closure of the Residential Schools over the following two decades allowed traditional activities, such as the potlatch, to re-emerge and a new generation of carvers and artists, led by the prodigious Haida master Bill Reid, to develop. This period, known in some sources as the “Northwest Coast Renaissance” saw the re-establishment of many traditional activities and the re-discovery, often transculturally altered, of technical practices and styles (Vastokas, 1977; Nuytten, 1982:8; Wade, 1986). The renaissance analogy is one which has been routinely critiqued in academic literature as a non-Native construction dismissed by indigenous commentators (Jonaitis, 2004; Glass, 2013); Bill Reid himself rejected the term (Summers, 2004:133), and yet it has endured in regular parlance both among scholars and on the Coast itself as a useful short-hand for the post-1950s alterations in indigenous art – Gwaai Edenshaw used it in the interview he gave for this project.

The so-called renaissance movement operated in collaboration with a resurgent indigenous political movement. In the United States the 1934 Indian Act passed control of reservations back to indigenous councils. In Canada these reforms came later, but by the 1960s tribal councils had taken control of their own affairs. Their immediate priorities were to regain control of the natural resources they had lost decades earlier, fighting lengthy legal and public relations campaigns to restore logging rights, fishing territories
and to repeal restrictions on traditional practices such as whaling. They also took control of new resources and industries, whether they be ephemeral constructs such as tourism, spatial-legal advantages such as organised gambling or natural resources such as renewable energy supply (Sullivan, 2001; Hawker, 2003:111-118; Gill, 2009). The reassertion of tribal authority over these resources has permitted tribes to establish educational, cultural and linguistic institutions and programmes to develop, preserve and continue the traditions placed at such risk in the early twentieth century.

Peoples

During my assessment for suitability to conduct research on the Makah Reservation, a panel member gently admonished me for not clearly stating that I understood the significant cultural differences between Northwest Coast communities, or indeed within them. Therefore here I acknowledge that the peoples of the Northwest Coast are far from homogenous; a diverse and independent array of disparate communities, with their own localised semiotic ideologies.

Culture-historians have attempted to delineate cultural boundaries between Native American peoples (Kroeber, 1923; Swanton, 1952; Jorgenson, 1980; Seguin, 1986i), using “a mixture of physical, cultural, and supposed intellectual and moral characteristics” (Suttles, 1990:5), and there have been a significant number of ethnographic, photographic and artistic studies of the region as a whole (Niblack, 1888; Curtis, 1974 [1916]; Hawthorn et. al. 1958; Woodcock, 1977; Bancroft-Hunt & Forman, 1979; Ruby & Brown, 1982; Gerber & Bruggman, 1989; Suttles, 1990; Suttles & Jonaitis, 1990; Laforet, 2013). While broadly in agreement, these efforts have failed to provide a consistently useful model by which the area can be definitively identified.

In answer to the question posed by the Makah Research Board, it was asserted that, without dismissing these ongoing debates, this project sought to define the Northwest Coast peoples, within the frame of this study only, as those peoples with strong, established traditions of wood-carving, particularly those with large-scale, highly-technical cedar carving practices such as canoe building. This distinction is not arbitrary, being rooted in the requirement of such peoples to have had sophisticated and co-ordinated systems of adaptive design, practical technique and pedagogical transference of technical knowledge in order to consistently develop and construct these watercraft. In short, it
takes as its criteria the understanding that among these people, a “carver” was a distinct and significant role, invested with skill, training and specialist, intangible knowledge.

This methodology inevitably presents some anomalies: in the South there are groups who carved small dug-outs but whose geographical location limits the size of these watercraft. In the North, some groups have limited access to cedar and often carve canoes from other woods. Whether these groups should be included or omitted from the study ultimately relied on a second characteristic: whether they could be demonstrated, during the data gathering process, to have a tradition of miniaturisation.

This project does not claim that all Northwest Coast peoples created miniatures, nor has it asserted that neighbouring peoples never created miniatures. This being the case, its definition of the Northwest Coast will focus on those peoples who produced miniatures within a cultural tradition of highly-skilled cedar carving, and it is from these peoples that all four case studies have been selected (see Map 2).

The Northern most peoples of the Northwest Coast cultural area are the Eyak, or Yakutat, who underwent a process of “Tlingitization” in the mid-nineteenth century and as a result adopted many Tlingit social and material culture practices (De Laguna, 1990). To the south are the rest of the Tlingit, a linguistic designation for a people spilt into dozens of smaller groupings who live among the archipelagos of the Southern extremity of the Alaskan panhandle (Map 5). This region is limited by the close proximity of the Coast Mountains, never more than 30 miles from the coast, restricting Tlingit settlement to the coastal forests. The first academic studies of the Tlingit were recorded in the late nineteenth century, and they have been the subject of a substantial body of ethnographic literature (Jones, 1914; De Laguna, 1954; Miller & Gordon, 1967; Avikeva, 1971; De Laguna, 1972; Jonaitis, 1986; Kan, 1989; De Laguna, 1990), of which the most important is George Emmons’ *The Tlingit Indians* (1991).

Some fifty miles southwest of the Tlingit territories is Haida Gwaii (Map 6), a large archipelago inhabited by the Haida people, once separated into hundreds of communities but now primarily residing in the villages of Masset and Skidegate. The Haida were historically a wealthy, powerful and influential tribe, whose highly developed material culture has often been represented as the epitome of Northwest Coast design. The Haida have been extensively ethnographically studied, with a particular focus on art production (Dawson, 1882; Van den Brink, 1974; Smith, 1979; Stearns, 1981, 1990; Blackman, 1990; Collison, 2014). The Haida, in combination with their near neighbours, are the second of this project’s case studies.
Crossing the Alaska-British Columbia border from the Tlingit territories are the Tsimshian peoples, who inhabit the coasts and river valleys of Northwestern British Columbia. Split into several linguistic sub-groupings and numerous communities, the Tsimshian have a distinct social and material culture which has been studied extensively, particularly given the early association between the Tlingit and European traders and missionaries (Garfield, 1939; Garfield et al., 1950; Garfield & Wingert, 1966; Seguin, 1984; Seguin, 1986ii; Halpin & Seguin, 1990; Inglis et al., 1990). To the south of the Tsimshian are a number of smaller groups, including the Nuxalk and Heitsuk peoples living on the coasts and inland waterways of Central British Columbia (McIlwraith, 1948).

At the northern end of Vancouver Island and on the equivalent mainland live the Kwakw̱a’wakw tribes (Map 7). This grouping was and remains a powerful and influential indigenous linguistic collective, organised into sub-groups with many communities across a large territory. One of the most significant communities of this group has, for more than a century, been the community of Alert Bay on Cormorant Island; the scene of a lengthy and bitter colonial struggle. The Kwakw̱a’wakw were the first group from the region to be described in detail in an ethnographic study, by Franz Boas in 1885, and his works on the Kwakw̱a’wakw are recognised as foundational texts of modern anthropology. As a result, the Kwakw̱a’wakw have subsequent been the subject of extensive study (Halliday, 1935; Ford, 1941; Codere, 1950; Codere, 1957; Codere, 1961; Boas, 1966; Wolcott, 1967; Spradley, 1969; Macnair, 1986; Codere, 1990; Neilsen, 2001), and have been selected as the third of this project’s case studies.

The western coast of Vancouver Island is inhabited by the Nuu-chah-nulth, historically spelled Nootkan, peoples, divided into many sub-groups living on the Pacific fjords of that coastline. The Nuu-chah-nulth social and material culture is noticeably different from that of the more northerly tribes, with a distinctive style and structure. The first tribe to be subject to extensive contact, there are a number of ethnographies studying the Nuu-chah-nulth (Drucker, 1951; Blackman & Hall, 1986; McMillan, 1996; Hoover, 2000).

Immediately to the south, across the Strait of Juan de Fuca, is the village of Neah Bay (Maps 3 & 4), inhabited by the Makah people. Recognised as linguistically connected to the Nuu-chah-nulth, Makah society reflects influences from a number of different groups meeting at the juncture of several trade routes (Swan, 1870; Curtis, 1974 [1916]; Miller, 1952; Colson, 1953; Riley, 1968; Gillis, 1974; Taylor, 1974; Arima, 1983; Arima & Dewhirst, 1990; Renker & Gunther, 1990; Collins, 1996; Erikson, 1999; 2002; Goodman & Swan, 2003; Reid, 2015), and are particularly well known for their history of whale-
The Makah are particularly distinctive in the study of Northwest Coast peoples for having the only large-scale, well-documented pre-contact archaeological collections, which were excavated at the Ozette village site. The Makah are the first of this project’s case studies.

The southern part of the coast, from the southern extremities of the Kwakwaka’wakw to the Columbia River at the modern border of Washington state and Oregon, is inhabited by the diverse Salishan peoples, who share linguistic, environmental and cultural similarities but have never been politically united. Salishan peoples have been the subject of extensive study, in particular due to the large-scale contact with Europeans in the early nineteenth century (Duff, 1952; Elmendorf, 1960; Jorgensen, 1969; Suttles, 1990:431-528). The fourth case study of this project is focused on modern miniature production with one Salishan group, the Tulalip Tribes (Dover, 2013; Maps 8 & 9).

Social structures

With caveats about remembering that separate Northwest Coast societies had diverse individual cultural practices firmly in mind, this section will summarise some of the more common thematic elements of the societies of the region, in order to provide a social context for the analysis to follow. More specific information on these themes in relation to the individual case studies will be discussed in those chapters.

Northwest Coast tribes were not traditionally formal political structures, instead comprising linguistic groupings of separately governed communities with strong familial, ceremonial and mercantile links. Villages were run by powerful men, sometimes termed “noblemen” or “chieftains” or groups of men from noble families, based in large family longhouses and passing authority through hereditary lines. Amongst some tribes, most notably the Haida, matriarchs formed an alternative political structure, operating as the heads of individual households and exerting considerable influence on tribal politics (Drucker, 1939; Garfield, 1939).

Chiefly families relied for their control on the support of tribesmen, often called freemen, who had their own households and whose loyalty to authority was largely dependent on financial and social incentives. Chiefly families and freemen often owned slaves, usually captives taken in raids on distant communities, who were the property of their captor and could be traded or even killed during potlatch negotiations. Among some tribes slaves are
recorded as acting as a nobleman’s enforcers against recalcitrant freemen, and they contributed significantly towards his wealth (Donald, 1999; Ames, 2001).

Family life across the Northwest Coast was bound by ritual, especially concerning where children should live, whom should raise them and to what family or clan they belonged. Marriages were arranged by family elders for political advantage and both boys and girls often had to pass through elaborate ceremonies to mark their coming of age. In addition to familial, tribal and class designations, most Northwest Coast tribes had complex clan lineages, passed in a variety of ways and represented by particular heraldic animals, such as the raven or the wolf (Olson, 1933; Berman, 2013). The clans operated as ceremonially-driven commercial collectives, and were subject to codes of participation.

Spiritual and medical support was provided by shamans. The role of a shaman varied between tribes, but among the Tlingit, where they were most distinctive, they wore long dreadlocks and extensive regalia, including collections of amulets with which they would summon spirits to assist with cures and curses (Furst, 1977; Jonaitis, 1983; Wardwell, 1996). Cosmology and mythology was passed down through songs and stories (Swanton, 1905; Swanton, 1909; Clark, 1953; Reid & Bringhurst: 1984; Bringhurst, 1999; Boas, 2002 [1895]). The rights to repeat those tales is treated as property, held in trust by the elders of a family or society and only repeated with the permission of those who own them. This remains the practice in the region, and all stories repeated in this thesis have written permission for their use.

Villages typically contained a few dozen to a few hundred inhabitants, living in cedar longhouses arranged along a beach or river front. Houses accommodated extended families and their supporters and populations were frequently semi-nomadic, moving between settled villages and seasonal encampments to maximise hunting and fishing efficiency. Communication and transportation was traditionally conducted almost exclusively by water, using a highly developed range of dug-out canoe watercraft. Warfare was usually confined to short raids on communities some distance from home with the primary intention of seizing slaves. The Northern tribes were noted for the frequency with which they conducted these operations, and the Tlingit in particular developed sophisticated weaponry and armour.

Life is marked by regular communal ceremonies. These often involve ritual masked dances, songs and feasts as an important aspect of the transmission of oral histories and traditional practices. The most important of these events, held at infrequent and highly anticipated occasions, were known on the Central and Northern Coasts as potlatches, and
southern tribes had similar practices, known today as giveaways. Potlatches combined the commemoration of a particular event, such as a marriage or succession, with several days of feasting, dances, political negotiations and the presentation of lavish gifts. Attended by all neighbouring families of note, a potlatch marked the power and wealth of the host and forced obligation on the attendees to match the generosity they received at potlatches of their own. Although potlatch traditions varied in the region from tribe to tribe, potlatches were fundamental events in Northwest Coast social, political, economic and tribal systems (Boas, 1897; Codere, 1950; Piddocke, 1965; Barnett, 1966; Drucker, 1966ii; Rosman & Reubel, 1972; Seguin, 1986ii; Kan, 1989; Roth, 2002).

Environment

The Northwest Coast is a region dominated by temperate rainforests, supported by Pacific atmospheric patterns which create a mild climate with very high rainfall. Average precipitation in the North of the region is as high as 128” a year and nowhere is it less than 32” a year. Winds are regular and predictable and storms are frequent but rarely of high intensity (Suttles, 1990:17-20). Geologically the Northwest Coast sits on the junction between the Juan de Fuca tectonic plate and the North American and Pacific plates. This leads to infrequent but violent geological activity in the region, including volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis (Suttles, 1990:29). The environment of the Northwest Coast is broadly stable and provides bountiful floral and faunal resources, but it can on occasion become alarmingly transformative.

The rainforests of the Northwest Coast provide a wide variety and quantity of food supplies. Five species of salmon spawn in the rivers and lakes of the region, and their vast numbers and migratory patterns made them the staple diet of the indigenous population. Trout, eulachon, halibut, herring, cod and many types of crustacean and shellfish are all commonly fished and historically other species were taken commercially, including dogfish and shark. Sea mammals, especially seal, were hunted for their meat, and otters for their fur, while certain Pacific Coast tribes, particularly the Makah and Nuu-Chah-Nulth, were known for whale-hunting. Other sea mammals, in particular the killer whale, or blackfish, were frequently encountered but far too dangerous to be hunted.

On land, deer and waterfowl were hunted. Wolves and bear, both black and grizzly, are common on the coast, although rarely hunted, and raven and several types of eagle are frequent visitors to indigenous communities (Gunther, 1936). It is notable that it is these
predators; wolves, bear, raven, eagle and killer whale, rather than the prey, which feature most prominently in clan crests and oral histories (Barbeau, 1912).

The forests of the Northwest Coast are primarily comprised of fir, spruce and hemlock, interspersed with groves of red cedar and yellow cedar. Other common trees include cottonwood, alder, yew, willow, maple, dogwood and cherry (Stewart, 1984; Suttles, 1990:21; Goble & Hirt, 1999; Deur & Turner, 2005; Turner, 2014). Coverage was almost total, comprising 3% of the world’s supply of softwoods (Marshak, 1995), and forming a continuous canopy broken by occasional small prairies and swamps stretching the entire length of the coastline.

Although carvers have used most types of native wood, it was cedar which was most common and prevalent, the softwood red cedar for houses, canoes, totem poles and other large objects and the hardwood yellow cedar for masks, boxes, bowls and other household items. Where dark hardwood was required, alder was most commonly carved. Cedar bark of both species was used to weave mats, hats, sails and clothing and cedar root could be split into cord, although nettle fibre was also common.

Historically, trees suitable for large carvings were relatively rare and had to be carefully harvested. The ideal carving wood has grown over at least 500 years in dense forest, forming a hard structure of tight growth rings which gave the wood stability and a smooth finish. Cedar naturally stores large quantities of water, and dries slowly over months and years. As it dries, the wood can shrink or crack, so careful management of the drying process and ensuring that only seasoned timber was used for carving was a crucial part of a carver’s skillset. Cedar also contains natural pesticides which preserve it far longer than other woods in the insect-rich environment of the Northwest Coast. Where other woods rapidly degrade, cedar can remain untouched by boring beetles for years, although it will still slowly rot if left to the elements (JHG Consulting, 2014).

From the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth, large scale logging decimated the forests of the Northwest Coast. The region was logged so heavily and repeatedly that ecological systems in many places broke down (Marchak, 1995). Today most of the forests, particularly those accessible by road, are secondary or tertiary generation forests, growing in radically different circumstances to the former old-growth forests. Clear cutting continues in the region: logging trucks are a common sight on I-5 and bald patches amid the mountainside forests are common.

This creates a major problem for carvers. Wood on the Northwest Coast comes in two ages, referred to as old-growth and secondary-growth. Old-growth is wood from trees
which grew in pre-contact times, rising slowly in the tangled rainforests over centuries. The rings are close together due to the slow growth of the tree, making the wood denser, stronger and consequently more effective as a carving medium, as illustrated in fig. 3.1. Secondary-growth refers to wood which has grown in the region after the advent of massed logging operations, which began in the nineteenth century which substantially reduced the density of the forests. Consequently, this wood has grown much faster and is much younger, with rings spaced further apart. This makes the wood spongy and punky; while suitable for building materials it is not an effective carving medium, particularly at small scale, as it is impossible to adequately render detail.

Fig. 3.1. Comparison of ring density between old-growth (l) and secondary-growth (r) pine joists. Author’s photo, Seattle, 2014.

In selecting wood for carving, it is not the age of the wood itself which is problematic, but the rate of growth. Industrial clear cutting in the region destroyed the old-growth forests and now locating and acquiring old-growth wood is a perennial problem for contemporary carvers, who are reliant on naturally-fallen trees among the few remaining old-growth groves or commercially cut trees from surviving forests in Alaska. During fieldwork the evidence of clear-cutting was constant; hiking through the forests of the Northwest Coast is akin to visiting the ruins of ancient Mediterranean cities or the shells of pre-reformation English cathedrals; new growth trees rising above and sometimes from the shattered, moss-covered stumps of fallen giants, such as those illustrated in figs. 3.2-3.4. Because cedar rots slowly, these century old stumps, often wider than I am tall, remain a testament to the grandeur of the old-growth forests and to the vast natural wealth lost during the period of intensive logging.
Fig. 3.2. Felled trees in Haida Gwaii, on the left is a recently cut secondary growth red cedar, on the right the shattered stump of an old-growth tree. Author’s photo, 2015.

Fig. 3.3. Overgrown, century-old stumps near Alert Bay, on Cormorant Island. Author’s photo, 2015.

Fig. 3.4. The author atop a cedar stump on Spibida Beach, Tulalip. Very old stumps like this are frequently washed out by rivers in the Cascades and become a navigation hazard on the Salish Sea. Author’s photo (taken by Liz Brown), 2014.
Material Culture

The Northwest Coast is the origin of a complex, varied and highly original series of related decorative practices, known collectively as formline. It is formline design, in its various iterations, which permits the modular constructions of distinctive art forms such as totem poles, using regulated systems of iconography to create an articulate system of interpretable pictogramatic signs.

The first distinct publications on Northwest Coast material culture appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including initial summaries of the whole coast (Boas, 1897; Haeberlin, 1918; Boas, 1955 [1927]; Douglas & d’Harnoncourt, 1941; Wingert, 1949; Drucker, 1950) and later studies that focused specifically on “art production”, beginning with the influential Art of the Northwest Coast Indians in 1950 (Inverarity, 1950) and considerably developed by Bill Holm’s seminal Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form (1965). Many others have followed (Gunther, 1966; Siebert & Forman, 1967; Holm, 1972; Holm & Reid, 1975; Stewart, 1973; Hill, 1974; Maurer, 1977; Stewart, 1979; Holm, 1983; Carlson, 1984; Jonaitis, 1988; Wardwell, 1993; Averil & Morris, 1995; Wright, 1995; MacDonald, 1996; Brown, S., 1998; Brown, 2000ii; Herle, 2002; Joseph, 2006; Jonaitis, 2006; Terasaki & Brown, 2006; Townsend-Gault et al, 2013), including publications specifically examining the cultural context within which Northwest Coast art has appeared (Duff, 1984; Holm, 1986; Reid, 1987; Suttles, 1990; Miller, 2013). Basketry too has a number of specialised studies (Lobb, 1978; Laforet, 1990; Weber, 1990).

In recent years, there has been a significant body of work on modern Northwest Coast art (Macnair et al., 1980; Duffek, 1983; Blackman, 1985; Wyatt, 1999), which provide considerable context in understanding the communication through material culture between historic and modern artists and art practices (Macnair, 1977; Blackman & Hall, 1981; Coe, 1986; Hoover, 1993; Brown, 1997; Herem, 1998; Davidson, 2004; 0ii).

Although historically practiced on stone, silver, textile and as petroglyphs and today reproduced on a wide array of new media, including glass, plastic, paper and in digital design, the principle and most significant medium for carving and painting in the region

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24 For a more developed discussion of the importance of this book to the study of Northwest Coast material culture, see Jonaitis & Glass, 2010:191
25 Gwaai Edenshaw is currently working on updating Holm’s work, and during fieldwork his thoughts on this subject were discussed extensively and informed this project significantly. However since his intended publication is not yet complete, the thesis has refrained from pre-empting it by summarising his conclusions.
was wood. It was the pliable nature of the available wood and its flexibility in composition which contributed most heavily to the development of formline design.

**Northwest Coast formline**

Holm’s book lays out the key principles of formline design, the first of which is that “the artist must be aware of the total space and the effect on that space of any element he introduces to it” (1965:67). Thus formline is predicated on the spatial relationships of figures across the surface as a whole rather than as individual compositions; that any artwork is a multi-faceted story, not a static portrait, and frequently uses horizontal symmetry to emphasise the figurative significance of the design (1965:85). The basic structures of the design, the “forms” were shaped from a series of ovoid, u-forms and curved shapes, supported by secondary and tertiary elements, all formed from flowing primary lines (Holm, 1965:35-56). These were then developed into templates (fig. 3.5) and reused compositionally.

![Fig. 3.5. Ovoid “salmon-head” template. Collection of Richard Bahnmann. Author’s photo, 2015.](image)

All Northwest Coast formline design is founded on these shapes, as Gary Peterson explains:

Doug Cranmer . . . taught me how to draw when I was a kid. He gave me this paper . . . and he draws an ovoid on it. “Go and draw that over and then come back and see me”. So I went and filled one side of the paper, drew a bunch of ovoids, all out of proportion, ugly
little things. He flipped the paper round and said “do it again on that side”. So I did that for a day. The next day I brought it back to him and he took the paper, looked at it, and he said “OK” . . . So I did this for months, drawing ovoid after ovoid after ovoid after ovoid. And then one day he says “OK, you’re ready for the next step” and I think “Right On, this is so cool!” And he puts another ovoid inside that ovoid and I say “Really? I could do that on all the other ones” and he goes “exactly”, so I’m drawing ovoids inside those other ovoids on all those pieces of paper. I had a big stack of them. And it became a trout head design. And then that trout head design became an eye design and then he started teaching me to draw the different animals from the ocean, from the land and from the air and our supernatural creatures.

-Gary Petersen, Kwakwa’wakw, interview 2015

The animals and supernatural creatures of Peterson’s education form the figures which live within formline art, and the interaction between them forms the liminal tension between positive and negative space that allows their embedded stories to come to life through subtle transitional devices. It also allows for a form of two-dimensional skeuomorphism, which Holm terms “double meaning”; the ability of one stylistic element to be a part of two or more figures “the claws of a foot or the curve of a flipper, becomes the beak of a bird” (1965:89). In this way, artists gave their works movement and trajectory; qualities which become more insistent when it is recalled that their use was social and ceremonial, intended to accentuate the movement of dances and voices in song; indeed it is generally believed that the fluidity of formline and the movement of Northwest Coast ritual dances are deliberately complimentary art forms in which “the body has its own form of knowledge and ways of learning the cultural messages encoded in the old forms” (Shadbolt, 2004:32). Native scholars go further; “[Haida formline] expresses and strengthens our connection to the supernatural and the spiritual. It affirms and honours our inseparable relationship to, and dependency upon, the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii” (Collison, 2016)

As a good and accessible example of formline design, consider the designs on the Haida chest of the mid-nineteenth century in fig. 3.6, in which a simple three-colour scheme with a black primary line makes use of symmetry, ovoids, “salmon-heads” and double meaning features to present at least nine figures in dialogue with one another.
Formline design is its own thing, and to evaluate it by the standards of European commercial art would be misleading, but its similarity to certain strands of modern art, particularly cubism and surrealism, led to it becoming a subject of fascination and inspiration to many Western artists during the twentieth century (Rubin, 1984; Sotheby's, 1988; Mauzé, 2013). Thus while there is much debate regarding the extent to which European influences acted on indigenous art (Mullins & Paynter, 2000; Kramer, 2004), the process was by no means unilateral.

Although the most common features of formline design have been discussed here, there was considerable variety in how these features were applied; Holm's work was based most strongly on the work of Northern artists, such as the Haida and Tlingit, and the further south one travels, the more varied and distinct the art becomes; Salishan art for example makes much greater use of the face form than the ovoid (fig. 3.7).
This very brief description of formline design is intended to provide an understanding of the basic principles of Northwest Coast art in order to be able to justify the subjective analyses of art quality which follow, and develop arguments regarding the “very versatile imagination . . . of the artists” who produced the objects under discussion (Holm, 1965:91). It also reiterates the observation that Northwest Coast formline has within it a deliberate unknowability or mystery designed to simultaneously fascinate and obscure (cf. Storrie, 2014). In this it is analogous with Edmund Leach’s observation that in much art that touches on the supernatural “the jumble is the message”; that the complicated scene is intended to be difficult to interpret as a challenge to the observer (1983:250). Having examined how Northwest Coast art was composed, this chapter will now give particular consideration to several object typologies which, as discussed in chapter two, are extensively represented in miniature.
Material culture typologies

Miniatures

Despite their customarily stated intention to provide comprehensive overviews, many publications examining Northwest Coast material culture make no mention of miniatures and give no explanation for their absence, (e.g. Dockstader, 1961; Feder, 1965; 1971; Holm, 1972; Stewart, 1973; Feest, 1980; Penney & Longfish, 1994). Given the existence of significant numbers of miniatures in museum collections from which these studies were invariably drawn, this omission may betray an unease with miniatures, unsure perhaps of their significance, or of their status as authentic examples of Native material culture. Some texts which do consider miniatures among Native American societies pass over them very quickly, without serious discussion of their significance (Coe, 1976; Furst & Furst, 1982; Wade, 1986; Glenbow Museum, 1987i; Glenbow Museum, 1987ii; King, 1999; Grimes et al, 2002; Hovens & Bernstein, 2015).

One text attempts an examination of miniature objects from across Native North America: Ralph Coe’s *The Responsive Eye*, in which a chapter is entitled “Models: Paradigms of culture in miniature”, suggesting conscious agency in the development of models as synecdoches of cultures. The analysis however is primarily commentary on full-scale objects, without discussion of the peculiar significance of miniatures (Coe, 2003:167-190). This approach is common, particularly in relation to larger and rarer examples of material culture, especially watercraft (e.g. Lantis, 1946:191; Blackman, 1990:245; Edmonds, 1966; Collins et al., 1973:54; Holm, 1983:91-92). In effect, these sources assume that the miniatures are confined to “iconic representations”, entirely dependent on their form to the prototype and nothing else, with the result that the iconic representational qualities of the miniatures are interpreted without the possibility that they may hold indexical value.

While there is a paucity of studies of miniaturisation on the Northwest Coast, there are works on miniatures from other Native American societies, which make valuable contributions to the study of the practice. These include works relating to the souvenir trade from the Northeast region (Whitehead, 1982; Malloy, 1986; Phillips, 1989; Phillips, 1998; Oberholtzer, 2011), the role of shamanistic and pedagogical miniatures among the Arctic Peoples (Ray, 1981; Park, 1998:274; Jenness, 1922:170; Laugrand & Oosten, 2008),
and on miniature figurines from the Southwest (Babcock, 1987; Ostler & Rodee, 1989; Anderson, 2002), and Californian miniature canoes (Rick et al, 2004).

Figures

Figure construction on the Northwest Coast was a common material culture practice, appearing throughout the temporal and spatial bounds of the region and depicting a range of humans and animals, the latter routinely appearing as zoomorphic depictions of ritual transformation. Human, or humanoid, figures are complex productions, which have often been interpreted as models of processes, both human and non-human (i.e. Ucko 1968; King, 2000), which do not represent actual human beings, but the “non-physical aspects of a person” (McLeod & Mack 1985:40); ideological models of human relationships. In this role they become agents in human relations, to which their affordances particularly suit them, especially in shamanistic societies; “it is thus their human form that gives [figures] the possibility of momentarily acquiring subjectivity through relationships with human beings” (Fortis, 2012:175). The Northwest Coast does not appear to be an exception to this understanding.

Some Northwest Coast figures are miniatures, either of scaled down people, or their “non-physical aspects”, or reduced versions of the larger colossal carvings of the community (see Appendix C4). Others present miniature dioramas. Some may not be miniatures at all; when spirits are depicted, the prototypes are so small, so insubstantial, that the figures might even be considered exaggeratedly large. Because terminologically figures are a complex object typology, they were not systematically recorded in the database which accompanied this thesis, but they will be incorporated into the analysis and case studies on an individual basis when their status as miniatures can be clearly established.

Canoes

Western art starts with the figure; West Coast Indian art starts with the canoe
–Bill Reid (Reid, 2011)

The indigenous societies of the Northwest Coast were completely reliant on their watercraft. Canoes enabled communication, trade, subsistence and warfare, played a central role in religious and ceremonial life and were both a source of income and a highly prominent status symbol among the most powerful elite families. Truly “beyond daily
utility, the canoe as an idea and a symbol pervaded their entire life” (Roberts & Shackleton 1984:123).

The canoe is to the northwest coast what the camel is to the desert. It is to the Indian of this region what the horse is to the Arab. It is the apple of his eye and the object of his solicitous affection. (Niblack, 1888:294)

Canoes were essential for life on the Northwest Coast, facilitating the regular movement of people between seasonal communities and permitting cultural expansion through a variety of social interactions (Olson, 1927; Longstaff, 1930; Neel, 1995; Arima, 2002; Brown, 2002:75). This thesis focuses heavily on canoes as they form one of the most numerous types of miniature object to be produced in the region which, in combination with their established importance to the societies of the Northwest Coast, may indicate that the imagery of a canoe held specific significance in this practice. Indeed, so significant is it as an icon that it has been readily appropriated, both as “a generic symbol of Indianess” (Phillips, 1998:81), and more widely;

The canoe is a symbol unique to Canada. It is one of the great gifts of the First Peoples to those who came after. It is the most powerful symbol joining the Native Peoples to the two founding cultures of Europe – French and English. It is a symbol of exploration and discovery, of individual courage and partnership, of heroic enterprise, and of a quiet harmony with Nature. It is a symbol of our history, and it can be a symbol of our future, a symbol of our confidence, of community, of paddling together towards a renewed Canada. (Jennings et al., 1999:1)

There has been great diversity in canoe designs from the Northwest Coast since at least the contact era; James Colnett noted “three or four kinds” in 1788, although it has been noted that types “cannot easily be linked to early descriptions” (Galois, 2004:225,385), and that “canoe cultures were capable of dynamic and inventive change, creating new vessels or redesigning older ones that they took their place in the traditional flotillas” (Brown, 2002:78). Canoe construction, as with much indigenous material culture, fell into decline in the early twentieth century; it has been suggested that the substantial amounts of money made by Native fishermen during the First World War led to a wholesale replacement of traditional canoes with decked fishing vessels (Longstaff, 1930), and by the 1940s they had disappeared almost entirely. Only in the 1980s, with Bill Reid’s work on rediscovering the Haida canoe, did they make a resurgence (Neel, 1995; Reid, 2011).
Bill Durham has cautioned that “No system of cataloguing the canoes of the Northwest Coast by form or size or use or by tribal distribution can be made to fit all cases . . . anthropologists’ preoccupation with the typical, rather than the rare or eccentric, has led to oversimplification of the variety of types. This may be scientifically desirable, but it robs the subject of much color and interest” (1960:43), despite this warning, classification has been repeatedly attempted as demonstrated in fig. 3.8 and has been used as part of the seriation analysis for this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Westcoast</th>
<th>Munka</th>
<th>Coast Salish</th>
<th>Shovel Nose</th>
<th>Spoon</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Spruce</th>
<th>Head</th>
<th>Yakutat</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nitack, 1888-92</td>
<td>“Family”</td>
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<td>“Hunting”</td>
<td>“War”</td>
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<td>Olson, 1927-19</td>
<td>“Nootka”</td>
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<td>Drucker, 1960-252-255</td>
<td>“Nootkan”</td>
<td>“Kkaqall”</td>
<td>“nootan”</td>
<td>“song”</td>
<td>“Northern”</td>
<td>“Cottonwood”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durham, 1960-43</td>
<td>“Nootkan”</td>
<td>“War”</td>
<td>“Salish”</td>
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<td>“Late &amp; Early Northern”</td>
<td>“Spruce”</td>
<td>“Haida”</td>
<td>“Columbia River”</td>
<td>“Ice” &amp; “Moon”</td>
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<td>Holm, 1987ii</td>
<td>“Nootkan”</td>
<td>“War”</td>
<td>“Salish”</td>
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<td>“Late &amp; Early Northern”</td>
<td>“Spruce”</td>
<td>“Haida”</td>
<td>“Columbia River”</td>
<td>“Ice” &amp; “Moon”</td>
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<td>Emmons, 1951-84-92</td>
<td>“Goose”</td>
<td>“Coast Salish”</td>
<td>“Shovelrose”</td>
<td>“Northern”</td>
<td>“Spruce”</td>
<td>“Haida”</td>
<td>“Columbia River”</td>
<td>“Ice” &amp; “Moon”</td>
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<td>Amea, 2002</td>
<td>“Nootkan” &amp; “Skeler”</td>
<td>“Coast Salish”</td>
<td>“Shovelrose”</td>
<td>“Northern” &amp; “Haida”</td>
<td>“Columbia River”</td>
<td>“Ice” &amp; “Moon”</td>
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<td>Reid, 2011-23</td>
<td>“Westcoast”</td>
<td>“Coast Salish”</td>
<td>“Freshwater”</td>
<td>“Northern”</td>
<td>“Sally”</td>
<td>“Columbia River”</td>
<td>“Ice” &amp; “Moon”</td>
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Fig. 3.8. Table of selected descriptions of Northwest Coast canoe designs.

Of these varied classifications, this thesis will use an adaptation of Suttles’ typology discussed in Appendix C and fig. 3.9, in analysing the database of miniature canoes from museum collections as discussed in Appendix B, to generate the typologies of miniaturised material canoes presented in Appendix D, all bearing in mind Durham’s admonition to recognise that not all canoes will easily fit into assigned categories.

Although common in material culture collections, miniature canoes appear infrequently in the ethnographic literature. Elmendorf mentions them as “play canoes” (1960:226); Ford’s work with Charlie Nowell brought discussion of miniature canoes used in Kwakwaka’wakw play potlatches (1941:85-86); and Boas mentioned them in passing (1975 [1909]:444), but they have not previously received serious scholarly attention other than passing note that they are generally out of proportion in relation to full-sized canoes (Boas, 1975 [1909]:444; Holm 1983:92; Holm 1987ii).
Fig. 3.9. Suttles’ canoe typology (1990:8). Note that he gives undue prominence to the Columbia River type based on a single miniature in the AMNH, and omits many variations of Northern and Westcoast types.
Houses

Traditional longhouses from the Northwest Coast were the centre of communal life. Arranged in rows along the waterfront, they formed settled communities of extended families. They were the scene of domestic relationships, commercial enterprise and ceremonial ritual activity (Waterman et al. 1921; Waterman & Greiner, 1921; Olson, 1927; Vastokas, 1966; Vastokas, 1969; Nabokov & Easton, 1989:226-285; Coupland et al, 2009). There are two distinct categories of traditional house design on the Northwest Coast, each type subsequently further divided into sub-categories based on roof construction. There was no firm geographic boundary between these house types and many houses, particularly in the central coast region, display elements of both styles (Vastokas, 1969:14), particularly as the Kwakwaka’wakw people moved from Salishan to a more Northern longhouse style in the mid-nineteenth century (Codere, 1990:365). Both types of houses began to give way in the late nineteenth century to European-style clapboard houses and by the 1930s they were all gone.

Northern style houses, common to the Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian and Kwakwaka’wakw, were usually longer than they were wide, with a cedar frame construction featuring heavy trunk pillars at the corners. Into these were slotted a network of crossbeams which supported the main roof beams, which were usually arranged in a parallel pairing, although larger longhouses had six beam configurations. Cedar planks were then laid over the framework, with a large smoke-hole in the roof, often covered against rain by an adjustable panel. The entrance, in the water-facing wall of the house, was often oval and small, situated such that an entrant had to stoop to pass through a totem pole, with the doorway often acting as the mouth of the lower-most figure. Many such houses had painted or relief-carved frontages, usually featuring the crest figures of the owner, and there was considerable variety in configuration and detail both within and between communities (Deans, 1887; MacDonald, 1983ii).

Salish style houses had a less regular, modular construction, formed from smaller pillars and beams into a range of quadrilateral configurations and again fitted with plank walls and ceilings, constructed by placing cedar planks onto a solid framework of beams and pillars (Waterman & Greiner, 1921). These houses could be easily dismantled, the planks transported between seasonal villages on canoes (Arima, 1983:61), and changed little from the Nuu-chah-nulth village illustrated in 1787 by
John Weber in fig. 3.10, to those photographed at Neah Bay in 1915 by Edward Curtis in fig. 3.11 (1974 [1916]:61).

![Image](image_url)

**Figs. 3.10 (left) & 3.11 (right).** *A View of the Habitations in Nootka Sound*, John Weber, 1787. State Library of New South Wales; *House at Neah Bay*, Edward Curtis, 1915.

Miniature houses are relatively infrequent objects, almost all dating to the period 1880-1920 and predominately from the Northern tribes in response to requests from non-Native collectors. The majority of all miniature houses from the region were collected by James Deans for two large displays at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago (Wright, 2015i).

**Totem Poles**

“Totem”, a mispronounced Ojibwe word for “spirit”, has become a catch-all term for the corpus of colossal cedar carving work practiced along the Northwest Coast, many of which are not overtly “spiritual”. Tall, imposing and finely carved, they have become globally iconic images not only of the region, but erroneously of Native Americans as a whole (Jonaitis, 1999). The term has come to encompass a broad corpus of monumental cedar sculpture with significant regional and functional variation (Jonaitis & Glass; 2010).

There is little evidence elucidating the origins of totem poles as an artistic media. Being made from wood in the rainforests of the Northwest, these poles collapse and decay; even the oldest still standing in situ are no more than 130 years old. The first confirmed accounts of totem poles therefore come from European visitors in the 1770s and following decades. These present a patchy image of pole usage. Cook, on his visit with the
Mowachaht, identified large carved cedar columns inside the longhouses, known as *klumma*. The inhabitants, usually talkative, seemed unwilling to discuss them with him (Cook, 1967 [1779]). In the early 1790s, Alexander Walker identified freestanding house poles of a type familiar today among the Haida, but visitors elsewhere on the coast did not record similar large sculptures.

Early scholarship, with its evolutionary approaches, drew equivalencies between totem poles and other monumental material culture, such as standing stones or Maori sculpture (Peet, 1893). Later anthropologists, notably Boas (1897), Barbeau (1929; 1930; 1950; 1984), Drucker (1950, 1955) and Duff (1969), engaged in heated debates regarding the genesis of totem poles and the impact of European visitors on monumental cedar carving as an art form, with attached concerns about the supposed conflict between hybridity and authenticity (Garfield & Forrest, 1948). The modern consensus is that at the time of contact monumental cedar sculpture was only practiced among a few tribes, and it was the sudden and dramatic impact of the fur trade and the corresponding wealth increases it brought with it that enabled pole carving to spread. By the early nineteenth century, possibly due to the influence of itinerant Haida carvers, pole carving had spread much of the length of the Northwest Coast (Gunn, 1965; 1966; 1967; Malin, 1986; Stewart, 1993).

For the Haida, poles were an essential part of material culture production; surveys suggest that in the region of 300 Haida poles were still standing in the early twentieth century, most of them on the southern islands of Haida Gwaii, the region that is now Gwaii Hanaas. Haida poles were the largest on the coast, both in height and width and were all carved in the Haida formline style, which saw numerous figures intermingling with one another. Haida poles retained the tree shape in their construction, the designs carved into the surface in relatively shallow relief, with few extensions or additions. So important are the poles as status symbols that disputes over the relative size of poles has on occasion led to murder (Barbeau, 1950:5).

Poles differ based on tribal origin: Haida poles contain a complex mixing of figures carved in low relief into the surface of the trunk. Additions and extensions are rare, the pole’s profile retaining that of the tree from which it comes. Tlingit and Tsimshian poles have a similar style but with more freedom to alter and explore dimension and depth, the figures more naturalistic within the restrictions of formline style and often containing extensions. Kwakwaka’wakw poles are simpler in composition, the figures clearly delineated and identifiable. There are also often larger attachments, including separate top pieces. Salish poles and posts are on the whole smaller, with figures carved in relief onto
the trunk, which provides a backdrop to the imagery of the pole (Halpin, 1981). Some tribes also, or instead, produce large humanoid figures, known as welcome figures, which greet visitors to the community on the beachfront (see fig C4.7).

**Miniature poles**

One of the most common miniaturised object types from the Northwest Coast are miniature totem poles, which appear to have been primarily produced for sale beyond the communities from which they come, despite one recorded instance of their use ceremonially among the Nuxalk (McIlwraith, 1948:469-471). Found in every major collection, miniature poles have not been the subject of specific study in the datasets assembled for this thesis as seriated analysis has already been attempted in a previous publication; Hall and Glascock’s 2011 *Carvings and Commerce*. This section will however provide a critical analysis of the previous assessment in order to highlight some of the more important features of miniature totem poles, as they will be discussed in some detail in the individual case studies.

The study seriates miniature totem poles by tribal and temporal origin, devising four distinct phases of miniature pole production rooted in a culture-history analysis of the Northwest Coast during each phase. This approach, which has been partially adapted in this wider study of miniature objects, allows for broad equation in changes of affordance with social changes in the region.

Hall and Glascock’s study does not critically consider any specific role for miniature poles outside their acknowledged status as tourist or souvenir art works, or draw links between miniature poles and other miniature types from the region. It does not attempt to decrypt or examine the information coded within the miniatures or to use the seriation to consider ideological questions about Northwest Coast societies throughout the post-contact period. Its strength lies in the body of data which can be utilised by this study, although one contributor points to deeper meaning, with relevance to the question of transcultural authenticity:

> Model poles themselves can be taken as symbolic of the destruction of a culture’s integrity by outside forces, of its collapse into commoditisation. But equally, they stand for the degree of control that indigenous people maintain over their own cultural production and the extent to which it enters the market. They stand for one way of circumventing the restrictions on large scale and harder-to-hide cultural events, for one way of recording the past and for the close implication Native and non-Native in the ways in which the idea of
Northwest Coast cultures have come to be constructed. In other words, model poles are actors with roles in social dramas, large and small. (Townsend-Gault, 2011:42).

This understanding also may have connections with argillite, a black shale found on Haida Gwaii, which was used extensively for carved souvenirs including a large number of miniature totem poles, which have been widely studied (Kaufmann, 1976; Drew & Wilson, 1980; Sheehan, 1980; Macnair & Hoover, 1984; Warrior, 1999), and which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter eight.

Summary

This chapter has provided a brief summary of a wide variety of subjects relevant to this study, although it can only be a cursory consideration of a network of societies over an extended time period. Therefore it is but a selective overview of the history, society, ecology and material culture from the Northwest Coast region necessary to inform the five chapters to follow.

A number of salient points for consideration emerge from this chapter; that the societies of the Northwest Coast enjoyed a vivid and intensely visual material culture, in which the aesthetic affordances of an object were as important to its function as its mechanical affordances; that certain kinds of very large material culture, which as will be demonstrated, appear most frequently in miniature, held specific significance in Northwest Coast societies; and that the peoples of the Northwest Coast endured a prolonged period of severe social dislocation, during which many traditional practices broke down or suffered damage as a direct or indirect result of contact with Europeans.

The contextual information provided here, and the trajectory of Northwest Coast societies in the post-contact period, will be crucial considerations when analysing miniaturisation as a material culture practice in this region. In the case studies which follow, these narratives will lie behind the localised circumstance under discussion, and in the broader analysis they are essential to understanding miniaturisation as an ideological practice.
Chapter 4: Pedagogy and process: Miniaturisation among the Makah

The Makah people, known in their own language as qidiča?atex; or People who live by the Rocks and Seagulls (Erikson, 2002:9), live on the north-western most tip of the continental United States, around the promontory known as Cape Flattery that juts into the Pacific from the Olympic Peninsula (see Maps 3 & 4). They are a people shaped by diverse influences, their linguistic origins to the north among the Nuu-chah-nulth, but living among the Salishan peoples of the Olympic Peninsula. They are a people forged by the coming together of an important junction of trade routes between the Western Coast of Washington, Vancouver Island and the interior waterways of the Salish Sea (Riley, 1968:63).

By considering the long heritage of miniaturisation among the Makah through examination of archaeological evidence, ethnographic histories and contemporary fieldwork in Neah Bay, this chapter will explore whether Makah miniaturisation can be understood as part of a deliberate process intended to reinforce cultural traditions that are essential to an understanding of what it means to be Makah, even when those traditions themselves are in abeyance. By considering the semiotic frameworks of Makah society, it will examine whether, through the particular affordances of the miniature, these objects have and continue to operate as pedagogical tools, intergenerational bearers of culture and ambassadors for the Makah people.

Ozette miniature canoes

Uniquely among tribes of the Northwest Coast, Makah miniaturisation can be studied in relation to pre-contact archaeological evidence. In approximately 1560, an avalanche of mud fell onto the Makah village of Ozette, burying at least six large longhouses completely. This disaster preserved more than 50,000 artefacts in stone, bone, wood and textile. When a storm exposed part of the site in 1970, it began more than a decade of archaeological excavation. Perhaps most significant of the discoveries at Ozette was the
realisation that although “the site offer[s] approximately 2,000 years of occupation, relatively little change in either artifacts or faunal remains is evident” (Wessen, 1990:420), which is to say that the Makah society found at Ozette, like that encountered by Europeans 228 years or so later, was not significantly altered from that of two millennia ago.

Among the Ozette collection is a body of material that is of great significance to this project, giving the lie to the assumption that miniatures are solely transcultural objects, by proving that “the making of models does not seem to have been solely for the White tourist trade, since miniature tools, figures and other objects have been recovered from the Ozette archaeological site” (Renker & Gunther, 1990:426). Among the collections at Ozette are fifteen miniature canoes or pieces thereof. These are so damaged by taphonomic processes that decoration and precise understandings of scale are hard to discern, but they do have a number of similarities which point to a consistency of design and function.

The miniatures in this collection, such as those in figs. 4.1 & 4.2, have roughly proportional dimensions which demonstrate that they are depictions of the Westcoast style of canoe, proving the antiquity of this watercraft design. They are finely made from carved wood and take a range of sizes, from more than 42cm long to just 10cm long. Finally and most importantly, with a single exception (NN Ozette 4), they have been made in two pieces, with the hull separate from a detachable stern piece. This is as modern full-sized canoes are made, but completely unlike any other Native-made miniature canoes observed in this project.

Figs. 4.1 (left) & 4.2 (right). Makah canoe miniature, 93.IV.39 & Makah canoe miniature bow section, 10.V.184 (Ozette Collection), MCRC.

These points indicate that the Ozette miniatures require certain features to be present while others are omitted, and that they had a regular and acknowledged function in Ozette society which called for a range of scales but consistency of simplification and
mimesis. Due to the lack of additional contextual information, this purpose is unknown, although informed suggestions based on the mimetic fidelity of these examples might point to a practical role as pedagogical training devices which could demonstrate the structure and process of canoe construction to aspiring apprentices, as well as replicate the hydrodynamics of a full-sized canoe.

The Ozette miniature canoes are part of a wider corpus of miniature objects, including hats, looms and clubs, among other objects, which together demonstrate an active and highly-diverse miniaturisation culture at work in the Ozette community. This evidence is unique in the region; not only are there no other so well preserved archaeological resources of the pre-contact period from which to draw, but ethnographic assemblages from the post-contact period demonstrate that at some undefined point after the Ozette landslide, miniaturisation as a practice changed substantially to focus almost exclusively on depictions of large-scale material culture.

The diverse Ozette miniatures are made with skill, and in proportionality, materials and techniques they bear close comparison to the larger prototypes they resemble. They point to a well-developed modelling practice within pre-contact Makah culture, one that relies on these affordances in both the praxis of their construction and their distributed usage. When Makah miniaturisation again appears in the object record however, decades after European contact, it reflects no trace of this practice. To try to understand why this may have occurred and what the less realistic mimetic practices which followed might indicate, it is necessary to consider how life for the Makah changed during this time period.

The Makah

The Makah people “maintain a strong sense of group identity, pride in being Makah, and a desire to perpetuate as many aspects of their culture as possible” (Goodman & Swan, 2003:41), taking inspiration from their historical tribal unity in which their communities acted in accordance and refrained from conflict or slave-taking from one another, an understanding known to the Makah as “Five Villages, One Heartbeart” (Tweedie, 2003:27). It is this solidarity and continuity, and the threats it endured in the post-contact period, which provide the semantic frame within which post-contact miniaturisation has occurred in Makah society.

Linguistic studies indicate that the Makah language is most closely related to the Nitinaht Nuu-chah-nulth language of Southern Vancouver Island (Renker & Gunther, 1990:422).
So similar are many aspects of their cultures that many surveys of Northwest Coast peoples conflate the Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth peoples (Durham, 1960; Arima, 1983; Black, 1999; Coté, 2010); Arima writes that “only the international boundary [between the United States and Canada] divides them into the separate entities” (2002:82). Makah ceremonial practices follow many of the same patterns as their northern neighbours; their social structure was closely related to that of the Nuu-chah-nulth and most of their material culture has strong connections with Nuu-chah-nulth practices, including the Westcoast canoe design.

First contact for the Makah came with the Meares expedition of 1788, followed by a brief Spanish occupation in 1790 (Taylor, 1974:45; Wagner, 2002 [1933]:57-66). As an existing focal point of indigenous trade, Neah Bay almost inevitably fulfilled the same role for European traders in the decades which followed, as the Makah “early became middlemen in the trade with Europeans” (Taylor, 1974:68). Already known for their high-quality canoe-building, the Makah economy adapted quickly to European contact, but suffered severely from disease, particularly small pox; after an epidemic in 1852 “the beach . . . was literally strewn with the dead bodies”. This broke the generational transmission of knowledge;

Many of these [dead] people were the bearers of the knowledge, the people whose position in the society was to pass down names, songs, and dances their families held and owned, as well as knowledge of ceremonies, rituals and traditions. Because many of these knowledge-bearers died during the early contact period, the chain of transmission was broken. If many people within one familial line died, then this family-owned knowledge was lost (Coté, 2010:49).

The epidemic was followed by official sanction. In 1855 a treaty formalised the Makah Reservation, establishing US government control over Makah affairs, and in 1863 a residential school catering to the children of the reservation was established, to forcibly acculturate Makah children (Renker & Gunther, 1990:422). Many were later sent to boarding schools further afield, including Tulalip and Tacoma, which accelerated the reduction in speakers of the Makah language:

We used to ask our parents, how come we never got to learn Makah? Their reply was that when they were growing up, they were not allowed to speak their own language. . . My father . . . he was speaking Makah to another one of the boys that were in the same barracks . . . and when he was caught, they took him outside and it was raining. The weather was very bad and they put him in a harness and they had to walk around just like
animals . . . So him and my mom decided they wouldn’t allow us to go through that kind of treatment and that we would learn the English.


During this time, the most lucrative trade on the reservation was seal hunting; by the 1880s American sealing schooners were regularly operating from Neah Bay, carrying small fleets of canoes which could be rapidly deployed on arrival at a promising hunting ground (Collins, 1996). Ten years later, Makah hunters had been so successful that many owned their own vessels and hired Americans to navigate them (Erikson, 2002:83). However hunting pressure had reduced seal numbers to critical levels and a treaty in 1894 outlawed the trade. Some continued illegally, under pursuit by the authorities; eventually their boats were seized and the sealing industry collapsed (Renker & Gunther, 1990:428). Many other Makah cultural practices were outlawed in the 1880s, the laws enforced by the Reservation agents and police but regularly flouted by the Makah (Coté, 2010:52-57), who were forced to either disguise their potlatches as Christmas parties (Colson, 1953:17), or move their activities away from Neah Bay, hosting their celebrations instead on Tatoosh Island off Cape Flattery (Erikson, 2002: 89). One historian notes of this time that, “basically, Makahs had a good life until Euro-Americans ruined everything” (Reid, 2015:276).

**Whaling**

No loss during this period was more significant to the Makah than the collapse of whale-hunting. One of the most significant cultural differentiations between the Makah and most other tribes was the extent to which whaling maintained a prominent position in society. Although scavenging whale carcasses is well known elsewhere on the coast, it was only the ocean-going west coast tribes, with their access to the seasonal whale migration routes, who actively hunted whales. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that whale-hunting practices were active as far back as 4,000 B.P. (Aradanas, 1998; Monks et. al., 2001; Losey & Yang, 2007); whale accounted for as much as 75% of the meat intake of the ancient inhabitants of Ozette (Huelsbeck, 1988); and ethnographically-collected material culture clearly indicates that pre-contact whaling held great significance; consider for example the woven hats collected by George Vancouver from the Clayoquot in 1795 in fig. 4.3.
The captaincy of a whaling canoe – “the noblest calling” – was the preserve of the elite (Arima & Dewhirst, 1990:395). Taking place between the spring and early autumn to match the migratory patterns of the California gray whale, whaling was a pursuit which required much spiritual and physical preparation (Waterman & Coffin, 1920:39; Arima, 1983:40-41): a whaling captain would engage in physical and mental prayer, practising abstinence, constructing whaling shrines and performing tests of endurance designed to demonstrate his fitness to lead the whale hunt as “a person was closest to the Creator when he was whaling. Whalers did serious preparation, months of preparation, in their personal, sacred places before they went out to hunt a whale” (Black, 1999:32). Preparation was not solely an individual responsibility: at potlatch the whole community engaged in ceremonies designed to attract whales to Makah waters, and while a whale hunt was in progress the entire village would talk in whispers in order not to scare the whales off (Renker & Gunther, 1990:423). This spiritual preparation was compounded by the physical requirements of hunting such a huge and dangerous creature: Greg Colfax recounts of his whaling great-uncle:

William Bennett, was a powerful man, his strength was unbelievable. Those big 50 pound anvils, with the bull nose on the back, the pointed nose? He could take that pointed nose,
tip it up and grip it so hard he could lift it straight up off the ground. But if you look at that picture [fig. 4.5], there’s the whale, there’s the rope and there’s his hand. And then his hand is holding on and he’s bracing the canoe. So all the weight of that canoe, all those men, what’s that 1,800 pounds? 2,000 pounds? A ton? It’s going through his hand you know.

-Greg Colfax, interview 2015

Fig. 4.5. Charles White (brother of William Bennett) harpooning a whale from a canoe. This was the last whale taken by the Makah in the traditional way, c.1920. University of Washington Libraries Digital Archive, 54519.

Northwest Coast whaling technology reached its apogee among the Makah. Canoes were specifically designed for whale hunts, built with bows which stretched forwards into the waves rather than attempting to bludgeon through them. Large harpoons and lances were deployed in killing the whales, the harpooner trained to strike exactly the right spot under the whale’s left fluke. With the harpoon attached, each member of the crew had a part to play in unspooling the line, deploying the floats in order to maintain contact but keep the vessel out of danger. When the whale was finally dead its mouth had to be sewn up to prevent the carcass sinking, before it was dragged back to shore and butchered on the beach (Kirk, 1974:44-50; Arima & Dewhirst: 1990:395). This level of co-ordination and skill was the product of generations of praxis and years of training and operation as a cohesive crew. Despite this massive investment, whaling was a relatively low-return activity; the best whalers in the early nineteenth century could take one whale a year in their prime, and that single whale might have required over fifty days at sea and many failed hunts (Drucker, 1966:i:23).
Whaling, as befitted such a high-status institution, became integrated into the ceremonial and spiritual life of the Makah and the Nuu-chah-nulth. Whale products were a vital component of Makah potlatch gifts and ceremonies while the symbolism of whaling spread to other events (Coté, 2010:67); in a metaphorical flourish, wedding ceremonies were designed to recreate the sequence of events in a whale hunt, extending to the throwing of harpoons (Koppert, 1930:50). Among the Makah, thunderbird is said to have held great influence over whalers as the originator of the practice and technology of harpooning, and whaling origin stories are central to much of the Makah identity (Coté, 2010:15-30), as Greg Colfax illustrates:

So there was this story about how the whale hunting stuff came to this particular village. And it started with two chiefs battling it out with one another with food. One chief, he put together a hair seal party with 50 hair seals and he invited his contest over and the guy says, the chief says, I can beat that, and he turned around and invited that chief over to him and he had 100 hair seals. The other chief says “I'll never be able to beat that, I can’t beat that” and so in typical Nuu-Chah-nulth fashion, he takes off for the woods and he goes to pray. And he found a place to pray in a cave under a lake. That’s where he prayed. And he was there for a long, long, long time. And then in one of his moments a tiny little whale swam by and he knew that it was for him and he grabbed it.

And from that moment of grabbing it, he began to learn, in his mind, through that action how to hunt whales. Over the next month, the months that happened, dreams came to him, and visions, of how to put all the equipment together. And so the end of the story is: yes he does hunt whales, he did beat the guy. But the guy was jealous, followed him to where he was praying. Saw what he was doing and as he came out, he killed him. But before he killed him he got how he did it, then he killed him, then he took over and then he started to capture whales. The man who died had a son, who got revenge on that guy, and found out from him the magic of that place. After he learned of that, he killed him and then the son rightfully took his place. So that’s how whaling got started.

-Greg Colfax, interview 2015 26

In the 1920s, with Makah traditional practices forced into secrecy and the gray whale population falling alarmingly due to commercial whaling, the Makah ceased whale hunting, a process which engendered considerable resentment towards “Whites” who were accurately “said to have swept the whale from the seas” (Colson, 1953:123).

26 This story bears considerable similarities with some of the whaling stories which appear in the Makah oral histories recorded by Edward Curtis in 1915, demonstrating the enduring nature of these tales and their importance to Makah identity (Curtis, 1974 [1916]).
Nineteenth-century miniaturisation

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Makah and their Nuu-chah-nulth neighbours began to produce high-quality miniature canoes with elaborate patterning in red, black and unpainted areas on the hull (Black, 1999:28, 114-115). Some, such as fig. 4.6, feature a waved line on the interior gunwale which has been interpreted as a lightning serpent, a mythical creature proficient in whale hunting. This, and a number of similar examples appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century, continuing the pre-contact traditions, but doing so in a demonstrative way which minimised practical affordances and emphasised imaginative, external effects, prioritising the qualia. No longer is the stern a detachable piece or the proportions even close to those of the prototype, and the exterior is painted in a series of geometric shapes which mark them as imaginative constructs; their patterning does not match any known full-sized Makah canoes recorded in drawings, photographs or descriptions from the period.

![Fig. 4.6. Makah canoe miniature, RCBM 6600.](image)

These were not solely Native inspired: some examples of these canoe miniatures were directly commissioned from artists and carvers in Neah Bay. One body of such material was acquired by James G. Swan, who wrote the first ethnography of the Makah and made substantial collections during his period living on the reservation, primarily for the Centennial Exposition of Philadelphia in 1884. Swan sought to procure representative collections of Makah material, and became one of the first anthropologists to commission miniature canoes from Makah carvers in the late nineteenth century (Cole, 1985:13-34).

The best examples are E23305-0 and E23306-0 at the NMAI and 1225-6 at the Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden (figs. 4.7, 4.8 & 4.9). On these examples the bow and stern are obviously exaggerated and extended, possibly to make the designs more eye catching; they
bear comparison with Nuu-chah-nulth formline, which emphasises simple, flowing geometric patterns rather than the more figurative formline of the Northern coast (Brown, 2000iii), and appear to show highly stylised whale hunts in progress.

Fig. 4.7. Makah canoe miniature, 1880s. NMNH E-23305-0 (Swan Collection).

Fig. 4.8. Makah canoe miniature, 1880s. NMNH E-23306-0 (Swan Collection).

Fig. 4.9. Makah canoe miniature, 1880s. MV 1225-6 (Swan Collection).

These canoes are not the blackened hulls of everyday Makah working vessels, they are artistic interpretations of Makah stories, prominently featuring whale designs; they stand not as the mimetic models Swan had intended, but as synecdoches; indigenous
expressions of collective identity, deliberately supplied as indexes of the Makah themselves.

The designs are not personal crests and do not resemble the masks and other ceremonial accoutrements of the Makah. Instead these designs are stories, recollections of events and ideas indexically associated with the canoes. Whaling scenes or depictions of whales recur in Makah art well into the twentieth century: on BMNH 2013-190/2 (fig. 4.10), the hull decoration features formline depictions of the flukes of a surfacing whale. The fact that it was produced in 1926, just after the Makah ceased whaling for the first time, suggest that this is a more poignant expression of loss than first appearances might suggest.

Fig. 4.10. Makah canoe miniature, 1926. BMNH 2013-190/2.

Makah preoccupation with whaling is thus imaginatively reflected in the miniature record. However there are also miniatures which show that where depictions of whaling were concerned the Makah also valued a form of realism with subtle iconic mimesis; AMNH E73740-0 and E72936-0 are good examples (figs. 4.11 & 4.12). Although produced “by eye” rather than through systematic measurement, they approach the proportions of a full-sized canoe, and feature articulated miniature crewmen performing the actions of the culmination of a whale hunt. They are examples of miniatures as dioramas, displays of a particular moment which was of scholarly interest to Swan, who collected them, but of great cultural importance to the carver(s) responsible; depicting the most important moment in a Makah man’s life, the day he took a whale. Greg Colfax notes the communal pride in this activity and the depth of significance such scenes imply:

Well you know I’m not sure that the man who carved [the miniature] was himself a whale hunter. The interest in hunting whales went to everybody. Everybody was interested in how these guys did it. No matter where that whaling canoe went with their equipment in it, there were always guys looking at it wishing they could go.

-Greg Colfax, interview 2015
These figures are archetypes of the whaling crews, men respected and venerated in Makah society; their dramatic poses and larger than life figures an indication of that respect. This can also be observed in BMNH 1989-98/7 (fig. 4.13), an example more crudely executed than the Swan canoes and bearing very simple triangular designs in red and green which do not correspond to any recorded Makah canoe colour scheme. Here the figures are correspondingly even larger, especially when compared to the whale figure next to them, which is proportionally puny. These tableaux, although ostensibly naturalistic, show whalers as heroic figures, proportionally larger-than-life in pursuit of their quarry.

Fig. 4.11. Makah canoe miniature, 1880s. NMNH E73740-0 (Swan Collection).

Fig. 4.12. Makah canoe miniature, 1880s. NMNH E72936-0 (Swan Collection).
Fig. 4.13. Makah canoe miniature, c.1920s. BNMH 1989-98/7 (Topping Collection).

Commercial imperatives

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a substantial number of miniatures emerged from the Makah as part of the burgeoning tourist market, including particularly strong links between a cadre of Makah carvers and Seattle’s Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, bringing a commercial incentive to the creation of miniatures. These miniature objects, predominately canoes, often featured consciously fantastical design elements, intended to make them stand out on a crowded shop floor. While some of these are of the quality of the pieces commissioned by Swan, others are much cruder, with proportions more grossly exaggerated and the decoration applied in non-traditional styles and designs. To make them must have required knowledge and skill of Makah canoe carving practices, but the work has been crudely completed, perhaps in haste. 204085 at the NMAI (fig. 4.14) gives a good demonstration of this type of workmanship, 91.24 at the SAM (fig. 4.15) a rather better quality example from roughly the same era.

Figs. 4.14 (left) & 4.15 (right). Makah canoe miniatures, c. 1910s-1920s. NMAI 204085 (Heye Collection); SAM 91.24.
Perhaps the most spectacular miniature canoe, and certainly the largest from the whole Northwest Coast, at 413 cm from bow to stern, was produced in Neah Bay around the turn of the twentieth century (fig. 4.16). Made by noted carver and healer Young Doctor, this miniature is exceptional in that it appears that Young Doctor made a concerted effort with this object to replicate accurate proportions and decoration. The bow and stern appear in proportion to the body of the vessel and to its crew, who are seated in the manner of those in a whaling crew, in three pairs of two. All of the figures wear bearskin clothing\(^{27}\) and the paddlers woven cedar rain-hats. Larger than their compatriots are the harpooner in the bow and the steersman in the stern, each holding their equipment at the ready. The naturalistic scene is to an extent an illusion; the crew have no lower half, instead their torsos finishing on woven cedar mats laid in the bottom of the vessel, but it is one of the most significant attempts to reproduce an accurately scaled model produced by any carver on the coast.

![Fig. 4.16. Makah canoe miniature, c.1905, Young Doctor, NMAI 068874.](image)

Young Doctor had a reputation for quality commercial artwork and a strong relationship with Joseph E. Standley of Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, who in turn sold a number of pieces by Young Doctor to the collector George Heye (Duncan, 2000:90-91). This canoe however was acquired by D. F. Tozier of the U.S. Revenue Service at some point before 1907 and subsequently sold to Heye, who seems to have either violated his own rules regarding the collection of “authentic” artefacts, or more likely, considered this piece to be of greater significance than the “tourist art” he otherwise so disdained (Lenz, 2004). In either case, this example entered Heye’s New York museum and now is part of the

\(^{27}\) Bear skin cloaks were common apparel for Nuu-chah-nulth and Makah whaling crews. Bear hunting was, unlike for many other Northwest Coast groups, a regular occurrence among the Makah (Gunther, 1936:114; see also Curtis, 1916).
Smithsonian’s NMAI collection. The work of Young Doctor and his contemporaries was commercial, but bore significance as autoethnographic indexes of Makah culture entering wider American society, especially that of important government officials; in this environment, its ability to influence became even more significant.

**Fig. 4.17.** Young Doctor with canoe miniature, Neah Bay, c. 1904, Washington State Historical Society.

**Modern miniatures**

After the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, government supervision was gradually withdrawn. Language and cultural programmes begun in the 1960s sought to preserve the Makah way of life and educate future generations, a movement which became associated with the Ozette excavations and was essential in the opening of the Makah Cultural and Research Center in 1979 (Renker & Gunther, 1990:429), which remains the focal point for the study and preservation of Makah history. Although it was said that “acculturation is making rapid inroads today and their language and culture are dying” (Taylor, 1974:78), this fate never came to pass; improved transport links enabled the Makah to establish a successful tourist industry.

In the late twentieth century, following a resurgence of whale numbers, the Makah applied for a permit to begin whale hunting once more, and in 1997 were granted a quota of 20 whales, to be taken over five years (Côté, 2010:135). For two years, the Makah prepared for the hunt, seeking the restoration of the traditional activity and the cultural self-determination it represented in the face of furious external opposition,
some openly racist in expression, while attempting to negotiate this process with due
deferece to both traditional practices and modern safety considerations (Miller, 2001;
Ginkel, 2004). Eventually a whale was taken, a seminal moment for the Makah,
commemorated by the whale skeleton hanging in the Cultural and Research Center
(Sullivan, 2001; Coté, 2010:129-143). Despite criticism, this has been understood as the
Makah “articulating a traditional future instead of grasping at a long-lost, static past”
(Reid, 2015:277)

Cultural expression and continuity are not however the only drivers of modern Makah art.
From Swan’s collecting activities to Young Doctor’s entrepreneurial initiative, Makah
carvers have made and sold artworks, including miniatures, throughout the post-contact
period. The commercial impulse, sometimes considered to be an inauthentic development
by non-Native curators, was endemic and uncontroversial to the Makah: asked about the
reasons behind historic carving, Greg Colfax was explicit: “Without a doubt, without a
doubt. Some of it very commercial, you know, some of it to pay bills”. Modern Makah
carvers and artists continue this tradition, taking pride in the importance of commercial
art to their livelihoods - Greg Colfax again: “I raised three children on my carving, was
able to provide my wife and I with a way to survive, that’s how I did it.”

The imperatives of the commercial marketplace are also held to be important to a carver’s
development:

    Actually as an artist, I raised my family on what I made, so I always had to make things to
sell to the museum quite a bit . . . you almost have to make money on your art to get really
good at it actually, to have the time to put into it in order to get good.

    -Melissa Peterson-Renault, interview 2015

Peterson-Renault here suggests less tangible purposes behind modern carving than solely
commercial imperatives; that by being forced to compete in competitive market places,
Makah artists, and the art they produce, develops and strengthens. Art Thompson, the
Nuu-chah-nulth carver, takes this idea further: he was taught at an early age that “If you
do not want to do anything else with your hands, do your art, because that’s what is going
to tell people that we haven’t died, and prove that they’re not going to be able to kill us.
As long as you are alive and doing your arts, people will know that we’re not going away”
(Coté, 2010:111). To Thompson, art production is not solely about making money or
developing skills, but about using these features of art production as a means of
indirectly-confrontational cultural resilience (Blackman & Hall, 1986).
Cultural continuity and the Makah

It was and remains essential for the Makah that skills, techniques and designs, whether mechanical or cosmological in nature, are transmitted to the younger generation. Although some have inaccurately asserted that “the Makah today, do not have access to their traditional culture or language; these disappeared during their acculturation” (Fleisher, 1984:412), the transmission of cultural knowledge is itself an essential Makah practice, as recorded in 1953:

Among the Makah there exists a body of traditional knowledge held by people who lived at a time when many of the customs were still current. Certain skills now long since passed into disuse for all practical purposes were acquired by older men and women when they were children and youths. They no longer practice these skills or carry out the activities learned, which still form part of their culture in the sense that they at least think of themselves as capable of carrying out the customs, and they are still interested in talking about them and in describing them to all who will listen (Colson, 1953:174).

In the 1990s, elder Helma Swan was so concerned about the risk of losing these traditions that she engaged on a major project to document the knowledge she had been granted for future generations, completing the process just before her death in 2002 (Goodman & Swan, 2003). The pedagogical transmission of knowledge is therefore a cultural priority for the Makah. Much of this traditional education was essentially practical in nature, with children learning through observation and practice. Part of this practice involved familiarising children with the roles expected of them in adulthood, a system strengthened by the designation of particular roles in whaling being treated as intangible hereditary
property. The right to participate in a whaling canoe was hereditary, conferred through the generations by birthright as much as merit.

Your position in the canoe was determined by your father, if your father was a harpooner, you were a harpooner, if you were behind him, you inherited your spot. It didn't change. So in any one whaling canoe, you had 10, 15, 20 generations of knowledge in each position and that was the only way to accomplish it, it was that dangerous.

-Greg Colfax, interview 2015

These “generations of knowledge” were not biologically conferred. The skills, expertise and bodily attributes (cf. Mauss, 1979 [1950]), required for each position had to be learned. They self-evidently could not all be learned directly – whaling for example was too dangerous an activity to carry untrained crew.

When you are preparing for it, there is nobody stronger than those guys who are getting ready. You have to be, when you are leaving the beach to go whaling you have to be ready to die that day because these are not small animals and it’s a sobering moment in your life.

-Greg Arnold, BBC interview, 2015

The body of miniature material from the Makah seems to corroborate the material culture deployment of this pedagogical impulse: training for whaling crew positions began at a young age; “each of the crewmen has been training since youth, when he raced around in a miniature canoe, and threw toy harpoons on the beach” (Sullivan, 2001:47). Playing imaginative games is a feature of traditional Makah childhoods; Helma Swan remembers making fishbone horses and kelp cars and playing hide and seek among the small canoes made for children (Goodman & Swan, 2003:64). These canoes are deliberate pedagogical tools, recognised as toys in the Sutton-Smith definition of socially useful forms of interaction (1986:119), and their significance to the development of Makah children is explicitly understood.

And in the beginning of whaling there was a story about a man that seen thunderbird, and he went to thunderbird’s house and thunderbird had a small canoe, maybe this big, and it had all the ropes and lines and harpoons and paddles in there that would need. And he gave it to that man and flew him home and set it on the beach in front of his house and in the morning it was big. So they would have a small little canoe to tell that story with. And then I have a canoe, it’s about this long, that was my toy when I was a baby and it has all
the harpoons and stuff in there because my grandfather wanted me to be a whale hunter, even though at the time we weren’t whale hunting, he still passed the teachings down.

- Spencer McCarty, interview 2015

Although it is understood that miniatures within Makah society held significance as toys, explicitly understood as objects of childhood learning, their physical composition and the manner in which they were distributed and interacted with indicates that these objects were developed for roles in the Makah education process – to teach particular skills and techniques over others, a prioritisation which can be elucidated from their particular affordances.

Miniature making and distribution within Makah society is, and was, a conscious part of an inter-generational educational culture; a program of action in which the miniature objects held agency as actors, passing ideological information from elder to youth and encouraging play which would teach the techniques and teamwork necessary for complex operations, such as whale-hunting, and encourage physical development oriented towards the same goal. This role of miniatures as agents in a pedagogical programme was not however solely oriented inwards.

**Analysing Makah miniatures**

**Makah canoe culture**

To understand how miniature canoes operated in Makah society, it is necessary to first explore what the canoe meant to the Makah as an icon. As an almost exclusively maritime people canoes were exceptionally important, generally following the standard Westcoast canoe design, with a high prominent bow and raised square sternpost (Waterman & Coffin, 1920). Canoes of this type varied considerably in design specifics dependant on purpose – local seal-hunting canoes were relatively small, manageable by just two crew; trading canoes were larger, commensurate with the longer distances and heavier loads they carried; whaling canoes were long, narrow and sharp, sometimes with lowered bows which gave them greater speed at the cost of stability (Arima, 2000). Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth whaling-canoe makers were noted for their skill; “The care and ceremony lavished on war and ceremonial canoes in the north was matched by Nootkan attention to whaling craft . . . superb canoe craftsmanship and skill at sea could be, for the Nootkans, worthy ends in themselves ” (Durham, 1960: 50).
Makah canoes were not extensively decorated: surviving and reproduced Makah canoes as well as historic photographs suggest most commonly a uniform black painted exterior, often with red stripes at the bow and a red interior. Although not as dramatic as the crest designs on Northern canoes, these stripes and simple painted designs are part of an identifying code accessible to knowledgeable observers:

That makes me think about this piece I found at the Burke. It was a model canoe and on each side of it, it said “Made by the Neah Bay Indians” Inside of the canoe. And I thought for a second and I was like: how can it have been made by the Makah Indians, the Neah Bay Indians? Did they all get together and make this little model canoe? No. It’s a particular canoe, it has a particular design from a particular family and so I have studied these pieces and I know just from the model canoes that are at the Burke, there are at least two different family styles that I have been able to follow. And so I hope that when people would see this, they would say “oh this is, you know, this particular style of canoe that you can trace through my Wyatch family.” Me and my cousin Aaron Parker and then my grandfather Jerry McCarty and then you could tell that our canoes are the same. We paint the same designs on the side of the piece.

-Alex McCarty, interview 2015

The availability of plank-built boats caused canoe production to drop off in the early twentieth century, and by the early 1950s abandoned canoes could been seen all along the beaches of the Makah Reservation. A fire in the Neah Bay fishing dock in 1955 consumed the last working canoes of the Makah, and for nearly 40 years only a handful of racing canoes survived. The 1989 Paddle to Seattle re-enthused Makah canoe builders, and by the 1993 event at Bella Bella the Makah had their own vessel, *Hummingbird*, and crew, paddling for 340 miles in a rite of passage that led directly to the 1999 whale hunt (Sullivan, 2001: 52-55).

Both the ethnographic literature and modern fieldwork suggest that canoes are powerful symbols of Makah identity, synecdochic markers not just of the highest form of Makah carving skill, but also of the most ready form of sustenance and status. McCarty’s interview also suggests that canoe decoration was not solely an indicator of Makah communal identity, but also an index of the continuity of individual familial lineages.

It is also possible to see the way in which canoes acted as indexes for the Makah by considering their depiction in other Makah media, in particular by examining Makah weaving designs and the ways in which canoes have been and still are depicted (*cf.* fig. 4.3). There is a standard pattern to these designs, patterns equally observable among the Nuu-chah-nulth to the north. In a significant departure from the depiction of crew in
carved canoes, the woven canoe design always takes the form of a thin silhouette, the figures unremarkable.

Petersen-Renault suggested that this standard depiction was due to a combination of material restrictions and that:

> When you are looking out you don’t see detail, you see dark when you are looking out at a canoe, somebody paddling, that is what you see. So yeah, I think silhouette

- Melissa Petersen-Renault, interview 2015

The basketry presents the canoe as a distant and tiny object, adrift in an ocean often populated by huge and dangerous animals; animals and watercraft which were pivotal in Makah understandings of their own society and identity.

**Scaling canoes**

The greatest significance of the body of miniature canoes lies in what they can reveal about Makah communication practices by examining what affordances have and have not been considered in the construction process. Consider scale: very few miniatures from the Northwest Coast make serious efforts to reproduce precise proportional scaling. Modern Makah carvers do not ignore scale: it is important that the dimension *look* right, but precise accuracy is not a priority: when questioned on scaling techniques, Alex McCarty acknowledged at interview that the process in his work has “been by eye. . . I hadn’t thought about scaling”. Comparing scales between miniatures, even allowing for the obvious understanding that historic canoes were all of different lengths illustrates this fact further: those in Young Doctor’s example at the NMNH are 77cm high in a canoe 413cm long, for a comparative ratio of 1:5.36 against the full-sized canoe of 1:4.78.²⁸

This demonstrates that the dimensions even of the more naturalistic Makah miniature canoes are out of proportion. The bow and stern are too large, the central body of the canoe truncated. Alex McCarty observed this in the study of a miniature canoe he had produced, stating that the “nose and the stern are definitely exaggerated”.

These miniatures therefore are certainly not technical models in the European sense. They preserve the broad shape of large scale Makah canoes without employing the boat-building techniques required for their large prototypes. They do not, in summary, ²⁸ Assumed height of crew 5’4” (162.5cm), the quoted height of crew members in the 1999 whale hunt (Sullivan, 2001). Makah readers of the thesis have disputed this quoted height, suggesting that it is too low. However increases in average height would not significantly alter the disparity in ratios.
preserve, represent or illustrate the skills and knowledge of Makah boat-building in practical translation. This is not to say however that they are unrepresentative or without practical application.

**Miniatures as praxis**

In his two decades studying and producing Makah art, Alex McCarty has noticed a feature of Makah miniature canoes that may speak to a different priority for these miniatures. It is clear that they were not blueprints for canoe construction; instead Makah carvers learnt, and still learn, by pedagogical praxis rather than theory. McCarty identifies miniature canoes as an essential component of the canoe-carving apprenticeship process. Northwest Coast wood carving consists of a system of standardised cuts made using a system of standard tools to which each carver, once technically proficient, is at liberty to make minor adjustments to create their personal style. McCarty believes, having spent more than a decade producing miniature canoes, that these actions are all represented in the carving process required to create a miniature canoe. He demonstrated this range of cuts, including straight slices to form the interior of the bow segment and curved grazes to give the hull it’s graceful, bird-like profile, as demonstrated in fig. 4.19.

![Fig. 4.19. Alex McCarty demonstrating carving techniques on a miniature canoe, Evergreen State College, 2015.](image-url)
Miniature Makah canoes therefore operate as learning devices: Spencer McCarty acknowledged that early in his career he “made miniatures for probably four years, little masks, little canoes, little totem poles” partly for commercial reasons, but also because “if I learn how to make it small then I’ll have learned how to make everything”. Makah miniatures therefore play an active role in the tactile praxis of artistic development, the objects operating as tools in a creative educational process which can also be sold, so that “in the meantime my name will get out there and my art will get out there and people will say “Hey, this guy is pretty good at carving””. If the carver is not skilled enough to complete the carving, the investment of time and effort will be less severe than on a larger object, the miniature “won’t take time if I wreck it and have to throw it away”.

This conclusion may imply that that shape of the miniature is irrelevant: the carver could just make practice cuts into a block without that block requiring a prototype at all, but this is not the case among the Makah. Whether a practice piece or not, Makah carvers learning their trade make miniature objects, especially canoes – their cuts are not random, but instead follow a systematised carving tradition. Thus the Makah miniature operates within the technical training pedagogical process; during which the affordance of process results in a by-product miniature which is a representation of a larger object not reliant on scaling for its importance, but on the technical practice required for its production.

Alex McCarty’s contribution to this field illustrates that the miniatures studied here exist in multiple realities; the process has an effect on the carver, training him in the cuts necessary for any traditional Makah carving medium; it has an abductive effect on the intended audience, providing practical pedagogical support for traditional Makah hunting methods; and it generates a third understanding, one reliant on its shape, its scale and its design – it contains an ideology; one which transmits an indexical understanding of what it means to be Makah.

**Canoes that float**

To understand how a miniature, particularly a miniature canoe, operates within multiple realities some of its peculiar affordances must be elucidated within the selective process, incorporating some elements of the prototype and dispensing others as required for the qualia. For the Makah there is one affordance in particular which is of specific importance, a feature identified by Alex McCarty, during his extensive study of Makah miniature canoes in museum collections: Makah miniature canoes float. Not only do they float, but “every one of my little models that I make, I make sure that they float proud,
that they have a nice presence in the water and then when you push them they take off and they float straight”, that is, every Makah miniature canoe is designed to float as part of the construction process: indeed when he was training he was taught “if you’re gonna make a model canoe, it has to float, otherwise carve something else”. McCarty believes this to also be true of the miniatures he has studied in museum collections, and has the ambition to try floating some museum canoes, although he acknowledges that “I don’t know if they would go for that”.

Floating seems to be so important to Makah miniature canoes that other features are secondary; for example, in keeping with many other miniature canoes produced on the coast, many Makah commercial miniatures have flat bottoms to facilitate their display in the home, but even these are designed to float true – indeed, the extra thickness provided by the base gives them ballast to remain upright. They are proudly acknowledged to have made significant journeys for their small size: Spencer McCarty recalled that “my son’s miniature canoe went down the creek and to the ocean and never come back” and Alex McCarty recounted that

[Aaron Parker] told me that he sold one of his model canoes to a family on the East Coast and he said they lived on a flood plain and so one season their house got flooded. They had to evacuate and the whole bottom floor of the two-story house was flooded almost all the way up to the ceiling. But not quite, you could see the water line. And so everything was destroyed in the house, except for his canoe. He said his canoe floated proud, he said all the hunting gear was still in it. It floated around the house and it landed in the centre of the kitchen. And it was completely intact. Perfect.

- Alex McCarty, interview 2015

The constancy of canoes in Makah iconography, ritual practice and everyday life grants them a status as an index for Makah identity. In creating and distributing miniatures of these canoes, Makah artists draw on this status to preserve knowledge and symbolically represent and present their culture to the wider world. The ability to float, to physically perform the metaphorical act for which their prototypes are famed, and to do so in alien environments before etic audiences as ambassadors of Makah culture is a unique affordance, and one which reveals the synecdochic qualities contained within these miniatures.
Miniatures as pedagogical and communicative actors

Makah miniaturisation is an historic material culture technique to which contemporary miniature production is linked through cultural continuity; indeed, the nature of Makah miniature making seems a textbook example of Alfred Gell’s consideration of the single, distributed object recapitulating processes of cognition.

The miniatures of Ozette, a common and sophisticated item excavated at the site, are the essential foundation of the study this material culture tradition, demonstrating it as a substantial pre-contact practice. The subsequent ethnographic record clearly demonstrates that although the nature of miniaturisation as a process has altered significantly since then, the production of miniatures has continued, transculturally modified, but intact. In the 1880s, Swan had no difficulty finding willing and skilled carvers to produce the miniatures he required for the Centennial Exposition. Makah miniature production subsequently formed a substantial body of work in the souvenir art period of the early twentieth century and remains a common carving activity into the twenty first century.

To place this continuing tradition of miniaturisation within the Makah semantic frame, it is necessary to trace those elements of Makah society, history and environment which have interplayed with this process. Contact history records trading successes followed by demographic collapse, governmental oppression and social dislocation, including the cessation of the socially-vital practice of whaling. This period has been followed by the slow reconstruction of traditional practices in the context of modern American society. In more recent years, the discovery of Ozette, the opening of the MCRC and the furore over the 1999 whale hunt have successively sharpened the appetite for cultural restitution and repatriation (Tweedie, 2003:80) In examining alterations over time and observing specific affordances of Makah miniatures, it becomes possible to chart the roles that miniatures have played within a synecdochic relationship concerning the “longer Makah strategy to craft a traditional future” (Reid, 2015:278).

The material culture evidence demonstrates an ability to both work with realistic portrayals of miniature canoes and to explore more adventurous, imaginative avenues. They also have a number of features that suggest that they have a deeper association with an understanding of what it means to be a Makah.

Firstly, they enact, through the process of making, all of the cuts required for traditional Makah carving. In this, the technical processes of miniaturisation become as significant if not more so than the final product, providing a subtle pedagogical vehicle for passing on
traditional knowledge with the acceptance, even the encouragement, of the oppressive authority. This is supported by acknowledging that miniatures are usually the first things that a young carver will make, and the making of miniatures is explicitly understood as crucial in the preparation process for making a larger vessel.

This pedagogical functionality operates despite the consciously exaggerated proportions of miniatures; in fact it may operate because of this feature. Consider the mimetic depictions of whaling vessels, which were once the highest status of canoe design to the Makah and conferred the greatest respect. Even as whaling became less and less practiced, carvers continued to make whaling canoe miniatures which featured dioramic depictions of the whaling process which exaggerate the size of the crew. In these cases it is the imagery, the intangible dimension, of the vessel and the qualia this provokes, which is of paramount importance, alongside the maintenance of miniaturisation practice.

Carvers consciously learn through practice the techniques of their forebears by performing the same actions, recapitulating the cognitive processes and simultaneously disseminating information on canoe usage and symbolism both within their community and to the wider world; in this they are truly “a movement of aspiration, probing towards an unrealized . . . futurity” (cf. Gell, 1998:258). Miniature canoes, even though they are designed out of proportion to their larger counterparts, are all intended to float, to make journeys. The miniatures travel, and wherever they go they act as ambassadors for a resurgent Makah identity, which had remained hidden, but not defeated, during the years of official repression and economic depression. These miniatures explicitly operate as physical agents of the continuity between the Makah of Ozette and those of the present, a single coherent distributed object sustained by the praxis of their construction and the qualia of their affordances, which operates as part of a process of miniaturisation for pedagogical purposes knowingly exported to diverse, sometimes alienated audiences.
“binding us to something that is so much more than art”
- Nika Collison (2016)

Chapter 5: The Haida string: Miniaturisation among the Northern peoples

In the previous chapter I discussed how miniaturisation can be an agent of continuity and cultural development among the Makah people, with the suggestion that miniatures can also operate as ambassadors to the wider world for the artists who made them and the communities from which they come. This chapter will expand on this idea by looking at miniaturisation as has been practiced in the Northern part of the Northwest Coast and its role in communicating across generations as an example of Alfred Gell’s movements of thought, memory and aspiration (Gell, 1998:258).

The Northern tribes, which include the Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian peoples, live on the islands and fjords which mark the coastal boundary between Alaska and British Columbia. The people of this region were the first on the Northwest Coast to make contact with Europeans, but for a long time remained remote from centres of European power. Partly as a result, they suffered disproportionately from mid-nineteenth century small pox epidemics which had significant and lasting effects on political, social and material culture. This chapter will consider how these effects were understood and depicted by the artists of the region, the role miniature objects played in this process, and the effect they continue to have as agents of knowledge on contemporary Northern Northwest Coast artists.

Pérez and first impressions

To understand the expressive visual culture of the Northern Northwest Coast, and the manner it responded to external events, it is useful to consider the first recorded encounter between Europeans and the indigenous people of the region, which took place off Haida Gwaii in 1774 between Spanish explorer Juan Pérez and an unknown Haida chieftain.29

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29 It is likely that this was actually not the first encounter between Native Northwest Coast peoples and European sailors. It is however the first for which substantive evidence survives (White, 2006).
Pérez’s first impressions are a particularly important reference point in demonstrating the understanding of visual communication inherent to the contact-era Haida.

At 3:00 in the afternoon we descried 3 canoes coming towards us . . . the men were of good stature of body, well-formed and smiling expressions, beautiful eyes, and good looking; the hair tied, and compared to fashion of a wig with a tail . . . The first action they did when they approached within a gunshot of the ship was to begin to sing their motet in unison and cast feathers in the water . . . Of the three canoes I referred to, the largest carried nine men, and would measure 24 codos of length [35’ 6”], and 4 of width [6’]. The others carried seven men; I did not note any weapons (Quoted in White, 2006:9).

In a painting based on Pérez’s account which features prominently on the official website for Haida Gwaii (fig 5.1), this scene is imagined. Pérez’s ship is greeted by the chieftain in his otter fur cloak, and woven hat, gesturing from his largest and most brightly painted head canoe. This is not a man effaced by the comparatively huge vessel which has appeared off his shore, but one determined to make an ostentatious display of his power and wealth, directly projected towards the strange arrivals. The behaviour is not hostile; fruitful trading followed, but it is an overt non-verbal statement of authority which reflects the long Haida tradition of using material culture to make intangible information tangible.

![Fig. 5.1. There came to us a canoe, Mark R. Myers.](image)

Pérez’s 1774 description of the Haida he met is one which can be readily recognised by modern ethnographers; the ornate dress, the large and elaborate canoe and the songs of
greeting are all traditional Haida practices; engaged in at any significant public event and most dramatically at potlatch, where ceremonies bear direct comparison with the greeting Pérez received. What is more, modern Haida oral histories describe this meeting in much the same way as Pérez does, testimony to the efficacy of Haida methods of generational communication through this medium (Gunther, 1972:6). Oral histories were the crucial bonding agents for social cohesion in the region, for “every Haida clan also had a professional Storyteller that kept our extensive oral histories in-tact, including those that pre-date human occupation on earth.” (Collison, 2016).

The canoe Pérez observed is particularly significant in this encounter, as “Of all cedar creations, the Haida canoe was perhaps the most important. Taught by the Supernaturals, our ancestors engineered canoes up to 24 metres long.” (Collison, 2016). The canoe with which the Spanish captain was so impressed was no doubt the finest canoe available, deployed deliberately to make a statement from one seafarer to another; this is my ship, this is my water, you are my guest.

**Cosmology and power in early miniatures**

In the two decades following the Pérez expedition, merchant ships were regular visitors to the region. It was from these voyages that the earliest physical evidence for miniaturisation on the Northern Northwest Coast emerged. Trading defined early Haida understanding of their European visitors, dubbed *Yaatsu NaaydaGa*, the “Iron People” in the Haida language, from the much-prized tools they traded for otter furs. There is no direct evidence that miniatures were used in these communities at this time other than as trade goods, although the pedagogical and ceremonial aspects of miniaturisation considered elsewhere in this thesis may well have been practiced:

> Haida art is super formalised and certain aspects of it, canoe-building for instance, are really formulaic. There is a geometry to it that you couldn’t get to without practice and so, I think more likely, those miniatures were part of the learning process. The other thing is that up and down the coast, us included, there is a lot of pageantry and so during potlatches its quite likely, or possible, that these miniatures – and I’m talking about a wide spread of miniatures right? – canoes, but there is also the puppets and masks, miniature masks and stuff. So, especially in the case of those masks, obviously they were part of the pageantry, but possibly the canoes and stuff too.

-Gwaai Edenshaw, interview 2016
For example, analysis of the miniatures collected by Alessandro Malaspina at Port Mulgrave (Yakutat Bay) in 1791 (figs. 5.2 & 5.3), shows deliberate imaginative experimentation with the head canoe form, with gracefully elongated and extended sterns, affording the vessels a sinuous character they did not possess so literally in full-size. This feature is accentuated by the painting, in sophisticated black formline, of killer whales. These are not toys or practice pieces, they are sophisticated artworks depicting high-status watercraft decorated with images of dangerous marine hunters who hold cosmological significance – precisely how Malaspina came to own them is unknown, but whether originally created for tribal “pageantry” or as sale items for important trading partners, the significance of these objects as indexes of temporal and supernatural power is unmistakeable.

Figs. 5.2 (above) & 5.3 (below). Miniature head canoes collected on Malaspina’s expedition, 1791. NM 21540 and MdA 13896.
These vessels are head canoes, a design common in the late eighteenth century but which disappeared within a few decades of contact; Holm estimates that they were all gone by the first decade of the nineteenth century (1987ii:153), rendered so obsolete by the Northern type of canoe that some contemporary Haida carvers believe that they could never have been a commonly produced design (Ramsey & Jones, 2010:13).

They were at one time however recorded on the Northern coast in large numbers, as at the 1792 skirmish in Beaver Harbour, when a fleet of 17 head canoes inconclusively battled with American whaler Columbia (Howay, 1990:405). They are found in graphic design from the period, as on the interior of bentwood box RBCM 16441 in fig. 5.4, and continued to be produced in miniature in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Such miniatures are particularly common in Russian collections (Berezkin, 2007), having emerged from the Tlingit communities of Russian Alaska, such as KK 2520-2.

Figs. 5.4 (left) & 5.5 (right). Head canoe design on bentwood bowl, RBCM 16441. Miniature head canoe with spirit figures, KK 2520-2.

It is notable that most head canoe miniatures of this time depict the crews not as mimetic humans, but as masked spirits (fig. 5.5), indicating a place for these vessels within the context of cosmological oral histories: traditional stories, unsurprisingly, feature canoes heavily (Pelton & DiGennaro, 1992:120,151); the Haida have songs telling of the Tluu XazydGaay, the “Canoe People”, spirits who travel in a supernatural vessel which journeys the coasts of Haida Gwaii, answering the summons of shamans (Bringhurst, 1999:341), and whose description matches these miniature vessels.
The books of knowledge

The next phase of miniaturisation in the region began several decades later, after the otter fur trade had risen and fallen and the encroachment of European influence had become ever more insistent. Epidemics had periodically swept the Northwest Coast ever since the first contact period, but the small pox of 1862 was an order of magnitude larger than anything which had preceded it. Originating in Victoria in March 1862, it spread rapidly to a community of transient indigenous traders in nearby Small Bay. The authorities responded by expelling the traders, who retreated to their home communities along the coast (Boyd, 1999; Jusquan, 2009). As the expelled traders, mainly Haida and Tsimshian, travelled northwards, they left a trail of abandoned canoes and dying colleagues in the communities they passed. One Haida party of 60 had lost 40 members by the time they reached Nanaimo, about half way up Vancouver Island (Boyd, 1999:187).

At each community where small pox struck, visitors scattered to their homes, carrying the disease with them, so that by late 1863, when the epidemic finally began to subside, an estimated 53% of all indigenous people then living on the Northwest Coast, some 15,000 people, were dead. With the exception of the Tsimshian, whose 37% mortality was restrained by missionaries providing vaccines at Metlakatla, losses were exceptionally high among the most northerly tribes. The Kwakwaka'wakw lost 53%, the Nuxalk 58%, the Tlingit 59%, the Heitsuk 69% and the Haida a catastrophic 72% in less than two years (Boyd, 1999:229). The effect of this disaster was profound, as illustrated in Bill Reid’s famous print in fig. 5.6 and the words of a Haida elder:

Smallpox running through our people can be likened to a fire burning a library of 30,000 books. Our elders are our books of knowledge.

-Kil'iljuss Barb Wilson (2009)

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30 See also commentary in chapter three regarding indigenous estimates of 90-95% mortality in this period.
Without the elders, the “books of knowledge”, the oral history, was threatened with extinction. Traditional culture was at fundamental risk of collapse, a crisis accentuated by the concentration of so many separate communities as their populations dropped below tenable levels, coupled with the increasingly frequent establishment of missions and government outposts among the surviving communities, with their ambition to eliminate traditional practices (“deviltry”) and replace it with “religious [Christian] instruction” (Henderson, 1974:305). Under such circumstances, acculturation was rapid. By 1890 it was noted that among “the southern Haida . . . to the satisfaction of their minister, these Indians had discarded the flashy garments and unusual combinations. They chose quiet colours and showed good taste” (Van den Brink, 1974:59)
As the population declined and European interference increased, Haida people moved from their familial communities into larger villages, principally Masset and Skidegate (Van den Brink, 1974:65). The 1882 Report of the Department of Indian Affairs noted:

The decrease of this once powerful tribe, formerly many thousand in number, now reduced to about 300. At the several deserted or partially occupied villages evidence of their former number and power is everywhere visible in the numerous old houses, crest poles and carved graves, while the population of the villages at present inhabited grows yearly less, the young men and women migrating to the towns and the older ones dying off. I was particularly struck, when visiting the several villages, by the small number of children (Powell, 1882:142).

In this environment, the survivors of numerous powerful Haida families were thrown together suddenly and a power struggle emerged which required an extended series of potlatches. Simultaneously, the dead had to be properly honoured and memorial poles sprang up throughout the communities (Jonaitis & Glass, 2010:27, 42).
One result was an explosion of material culture production, as artists sought to keep up with the demand for potlatch regalia and architectural material culture for the new houses and poles of the expanded community. A new generation of artists emerged from the catastrophe who, for the first time, found a worldwide art market open to them. Few of the names of these artists have survived, and despite heroic efforts in recent years fewer still can be connected with their work with confidence (Wright, 1998; Wright, 2001; Wright & Augaitis, 2013). The material culture evidence of this commercial opportunity can however be found in museums all over the world, as artists produced work for sale to the increasing numbers of ships which arrived off their concentrated communities and over time began to work regularly with dealers further afield, such as Seattle’s Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (Lee, 1999; Duncan, 2000).

A second result was the gradual imposition of European officials into everyday life, culminating in the 1885 potlatch ban (Harris, 1992 [1966]:167-171). It is this period of the late nineteenth century in which the great museums of Europe and North America were filled, and it was in this environment that their collections from the peoples of the Northwest Coast were assembled (Cole, 1985). As a result, and as noted earlier in this thesis, it was in this highly unusual and turbulent context that the idea of what is traditional and typical among the peoples of the Northwest Coast became fixed for the rest of the world (King, 1986). It should not be assumed however that the artists involved were unaware of this possibility. As repeatedly demonstrated, the cultures of the Northwest Coast marry rich oral histories with intensely visual material culture displays, using these methods to generate messages through form and design: such for example is the essence of formline.
Staking a claim: the Sandeman canoe miniature

In 1874, a series of unsolicited crates arrived at the British Museum, donated by a Fleetwood Sandeman. Much of this material today resides in the “Modern/trade carving” boxes illustrated in chapter one, but one piece (fig. 5.8) is currently on display:

Fig. 5.8. Miniature head canoe. BM Am,+.228 (Sandeman Coll.).

This object is a large miniature canoe, carved to exceptionally high quality from yellow cedar. It is painted in red, green and black, it features a number of crest animals in finely painted formline, of which the largest and most prominent is the killer whale on the bow. It is in excellent condition; the paint undimmed by exposure and the hull still smooth and polished, which suggests that it had only recently been made at the time of its acquisition.

An account of the acquisition of this collection, which also includes figures, masks and more canoe miniatures, was published by Sandeman’s friend William Borlase, which describes its discovery in a San Francisco saloon (Borlase, 1878). It does not however provide insight into their original owners. For that, other evidence was required, and in the course of this study, several very similar miniature canoes have been located, including another at the British Museum acquired a century later (fig. 5.9) and others at the AMNH and the FSM. So similar are these vessels that it can be stated with confidence that they were the work of the same hand, or at least from the same workshop.
The example in fig. 5.9, although more faded, is painted to a similar pattern, with the same set of paddles and scalloped thwarts, the same “salmon head” motifs on the midsection featuring human faces, and a killer whale formline design directly comparable with that of the Malaspina canoe miniatures. It was purchased in Philadelphia in 1973, and was once in the possession of Commander Louis Sartori, who commanded the Mare Island Naval Base in San Francisco until 1873 (Inverarity, 1976). Sartori’s command coincided with both this period of sudden material culture production growth and with the most significant political event in the region of the time; the transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States.

The ceremony for this event, about which none of the Native inhabitants were consulted, took place at Sitka, a prominent Russian trading town in the Tlingit territory of the Alaskan Panhandle, on 18 October 1867. American and Russian troops paraded, flags were hauled up and down and gun salutes from the fort and the USS Ossipee rang out across the bay. There were no official indigenous participants, although apparently there were “a handful of residents, including a few curious Indians” standing nearby (Jensen, 1975:101). To suggest, as Ronald Jensen implies, that these indigenous attendees were standing by in some state of childlike innocence however is to fundamentally misunderstand their position. Whoever these people were, the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian clans which operated in Sitka were experienced, skilled and sophisticated trading organisations who had cooperated with and often chafed under Russian rule for more than six decades. They would not have been unaware of the event or of the significance of it, and would not have been unaware (although perhaps unsurprised) of the snub their lack of invitation indicated.
Tellingly, Tlingit Chief Ebberts of Sitka hosted a potlatch in 1869 to recognise the event, the feast held in honour of the visiting Secretary of State William Seward, the man who had arranged for the sale; this was Ebberts’ chance to demonstrate his authority within a changing political situation over which he had had no control. He “spread luxurious furs for [Seward] to walk on. A handsomely carved and painted chest covered with furs was his seat of honour, and Ebbits [sic] presented him with an ornamented hat, the furs and chest, and other gifts” (Garfield & Forrest, 1948:56), although as we shall see, things did not go smoothly. It is possible that these miniatures might have been among these “other gifts”, continuing the traditional presentation of miniaturised material culture experienced by Malaspina decades earlier; certainly other US military officers stationed in Sitka at the time had no trouble assembling large collections of high-quality Tlingit material culture (Lee, 1999:267).

The mimetic affordances of the miniatures immediately indicate a temporal inconsistency with its mimetic prototype, which is to say that they depict head canoes. Although when the Malaspina miniatures were made head canoes were common, by 1869 they had long vanished entirely. When Canadian artist Paul Kane sought them out in 1844 he was unable to locate any, resorting to a miniature for his substantially inaccurate depictions (Kane, 1859; Harper, 1971:238; Holm, 1987ii:145). It is quite possible that no one living in 1869 had seen one afloat, let alone produced one. And yet here, emerging from these communities is a body of high-quality carved head canoe miniatures, in the hands of foreign dignitaries involved in the Alaskan transfer.

The question which is raised therefore is why carvers living in the 1860s in the aftermath of a devastating epidemic and an unconsented change of sovereignty, decades after the last head canoe disappeared, decided to revive it as a carving motif. They chose in this environment to produce head canoes similar to those exchanged with the Russians decades earlier, this time without crew, but still bearing the spirit figureheads (fig. 5.10) and crest art of the earlier examples.
Moreover they made them larger, of higher quality and with increasingly complex formline decoration. If, as discussed in chapter one, miniaturisation does not require a physical prototype (and these miniatures did not); if imaginative, intangible ideology, not physical reproduction is the “emphasis”, then these miniatures are objects of representation. Representation not, or at least not just, iconic of an archaic canoe design, but indexically, synecdochally, of an entire world. A world which to those survivors in the communities of the Northern Northwest Coast must have seemed ever shrinking, ever more in danger of disappearing.

These miniatures recall a time before widespread European settlement, before the worst ravages of small pox, before the social dislocation of the wealth the fur trade brought. These canoe miniatures are nostalgia, “memory” made real, maybe even grief given form. But they are also pride in ancestral designs and practices, and they are more than a wistful recollection of a lost world; they are hope, “aspiration” for its future, gifts to remind those strangers who held power that the Northern tribes were not dying, were not forgotten and could still, when required, produce things that spoke of beauty, supernatural power and significance.

**Charles Edenshaw and the modern Haida artist**

Among the carvers of this time, perhaps most prominent was Charles Edenshaw (c.1839-1920) of the Haida, known as Daxiigang in his own language, to whom considerable developments in carving are attributed (Hoover, 1983); “Idansun [Edenshaw] created a significant artistic legacy within a stunning story of survival that drew on Haida values, systems and beliefs, as well as the ability to adapt and innovate” (Augaitis & Wright, 2013:21). It has been said that “Edenshaw’s career started when
Haida culture was still intact and ended after it had come close to being destroyed” (Shadbolt, 2004:31), a trajectory that played a considerable part in his motivation and art production (Hoover, 1995; Wright, 2013). The art of Edenshaw, and his contemporaries in this period, and how they used miniaturisation in their work, helps to understand its position within Northwest Coast material culture as a means of embodying and transmitting ideology.

During his long career Edenshaw created a number of high-quality miniatures, including a several houses, many small totem poles and experimentation with a range of archaic canoe designs (illustrated in figs. 5.11, 12 & 13). He also was a proponent of a considerably expanded range of argillite production, developing from pipes into plates and figures, and was one of the first Northwest Coast artists to work in creating silver jewellery from hammered silver dollars, all made purposefully for the burgeoning souvenir trade (Augaitis & Wright, 2013; Bunn-Marcuse, 2015). As with the Makah, there is an irony here, given that “Victorian travellers and museum collectors endeavoured to obtain tokens of “authentic” aboriginality, even as missionaries and Indian Agents were concurrently trying to stamp out surviving signs of aboriginal identity” (Glass & Jonaitis, 2011:14). This body of work is also notable because it not only contributed high-quality goods to the tourist art market, but also allowed the Haida to continue to practice traditional activities away from the increasingly intrusive gaze of the colonial authorities, as Kwakw’aka’wakw artist Corinne Hunt explains:

I heard this story about the Haida women who used to have tattoos up their arm. And after the Christians came they weren’t allowed to have tattoos, so they started wearing the bracelets. And they would wear four or five large bracelets on their arm.

- Corinne Hunt, Kwakw’aka’wakw, interview, 2015

These bracelets, adorned with familial crests, replicated the forbidden scarification practices, operating as removable tattoos in much the same way that other tribes hid their potlatch activities as Christmas celebrations. It was a method of preserving traditional culture without incurring the enmity of the colonial officers on whose goodwill the weakened communities now depended.
Fig. 5.11. Miniature Munka style canoe, attributed to Charles Edenshaw, NMS L.304.109. Note that the Haida are never recorded as producing this kind of canoe, which is associated with the eighteenth century Kwakwak'wakw.

Figs. 5.12 (left) & 5.13 (right). Argillite plate with mythical canoe scene, SAM 91.1.127; Pair of silver bracelets with frog crests BM Am1985,03.1. All attributed to Charles Edenshaw.

Edenshaw was not the only prominent carver in the region of this period, operating as part of a network of artists producing material for both indigenous and commercial purposes (Wright, 2001). In many ways this group established the role of the modern Northwest Coast artist, who operates freely in both commercial art contexts and within traditional tribal material culture, finding a balance between these competing (although not mutually exclusive) interests while still furthering their own individual style.
The miniature village of Skidegate

One of the most prominent and important collective works by this group appeared at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, in which a team of carvers working together reproduced a series of miniature replicas of the traditional long houses and poles from the Haida village of Skidegate. This group of houses, with a number from the Heitsuk commissioned at the same time, represents 23% of the total of all miniature houses surveyed for this project. The houses presented a highly simplified external presentation of the traditional structures of Skidegate village for display behind a roped enclosure at the Exposition (fig. 5.14), equipped with the simplest signage. Unlike the Kwakwa’wakw displays, which were accompanied by a delegation instructed to “show whatever is asked of them in relation to their customs and mode of life particularly the ceremonies connected with their secret religious societies” (Cole, 1985:123), there were no Haida interpreters on hand to explain the display to the visitors (Wright, 2015i). Edenshaw was not one of the carvers commissioned for this work, but he did later go on to make miniature houses under commission, and in the aftermath of the Exposition a number of museums, including the British Museum, commissioned their own miniature houses from some of the carvers involved.

Fig. 5.14. The Skidegate miniature village on display at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition (Wright, 2015i; Original with Chicago Historical Society ICHI-30461).
There are many notable things about this particular miniature community created in one place for an alien audience in another, but there are two which are of particular importance. The first is that these houses, which are not to scale, show only the traditional historic community of Skidegate, as photographed in 1878 by George Dawson in fig. 5.15.

![Skidegate village. George Dawson, 1878. National Museums of Canada 225 (MacDonald, 1983ii).](image)

In reality however, the composition of the villages of the Northwest Coast was fundamentally changing under the influence of missionary and government activity; for example, in 1887 missionary William Duncan transplanted the entire Tsimshain community of Metlakatla (Seguin, 1986ii:482). The nature of the change can be illustrated by these near contemporary images of the Alaskan Haida community of Kinkwan (fig. 5.16), and the Tsimshian factory port of Port Essington (fig. 5.17), where Edenshaw lived for several years.
Fig. 5.16. Howkan, Kaigani Haida community, Alaska, 1897. Note that poles and canoes are much in evidence, and the houses retain the shape of traditional longhouses, but have shingled roofs and windows on the frontage. Alaska State Library, 87-0050 (Jonaitis & Glass, 2010: 66).

Fig. 5.17. Port Essington, purpose-built Tsimshian trading post, Skeena River, British Columbia, c.1900. While traditional working canoes are still in evidence, the houses here are all clapboard, retaining none of the traditional Northwest Coast features. RBCM PN 15102 (Brighurst, 1999:138).
During this period, the traditional long house villages gradually gave way to clapboard longhouses with picture windows and ultimately, particularly in those communities designed by mission or commercial interests, European style houses without ostensible indigenous identity at all. By 1934, the Haida had replaced all of the old long houses with “two-story frame houses which the built according to a new design and furnished in a modern style” in which it was apparently observed that “Haida women are model house keepers. It is gratifying to note the whiteness of their wash on the lines, fresh white curtains and the cleanliness of their floors” (Van den Brink, 1974:102). The artists of this miniature village would have lived amongst these changes, and yet nothing of this encroaching hybridisation appears in the Skidegate miniature village.

Ostensibly there is a straightforward reason for this: the commissioner of the miniature village, James Deans, was under instructions from Franz Boas in overall control of the display, to obtain a traditional display of material culture, which at the time was so plentiful and readily available that Deans was able to also purchase “three boxcar loads of Haida material” (Cole, 1985:123; Wright, 2015i:381). Deans had a long-standing interest in the interior construction of Haida longhouses (Deans, 1887), and this commission therefore ostensibly reflects his personal fascinations and ideology, not that of the carvers.

However, just as it would be naïve to presume that the indigenous spectators in 1867 were unaware of the significance of the events before them, so it would also be naïve to assume that just because Deans had commissioned the village in a particular way, the indigenous artists who made it had no agency in its construction. Producing artwork on commission is the traditional method of most ceremonial Northwest Coast art production, and it has never prevented indigenous artists from adapting their works to include personal style. In the case of some of these house miniatures, the proof of this individualism can be found inside.

As illustrated in fig. 5.14, these houses formed a static display, separated from the public; they were later installed in the Field Columbian Museum in the same configuration (Cole, 1985:124). They were not commissioned to be played with or closely-examined – they were intended by an American collector to cumulatively create a simplified, reduce-scale mimetic depiction of a traditional Haida community for consumption by an American public with minimal comprehension of the environment from which they came. The miniatures are solidly built, not easily disassembled or
adjusted, but on close examination two of these miniature houses are fitted with internal figures, invisible from the exterior. Figures can be seen in FM 17802 and FM 17822 as shown in figs. 5.18 & 5.19.31

In FM 17802, the surviving figures comprise a family scene, with two figures, possibly a woman and child dressed in button blankets, while a shaman in his regalia stands between them. In FM 17822 the scene features a series of small figures around a larger central figure, while in the corner a large ceremonial box drum hangs from the ceiling.

Figs. 5.18 (left) & 5.19 (right). Detail of figures on interior of FM 17802 & Detail of figures on interior of FM 17822. These details can only be observed using a modern torch.

These figures are not visible from the exterior of the houses. They certainly would not have been visible to the visitors to the World’s Columbia Exposition. There is no evidence to suggest they were a deliberate part of Deans’ commission; Deans makes no mention of them in his published notes on the display (1893), and that fact that only a few these houses were selected for this detail and others were not suggests a curious selectivity and individuality, particularly since Deans cannot have been unaware that the interior configuration of the longhouses only vaguely resembled those of the full-sized prototypes (Deans, 1887). Other miniature houses, from other contexts, such as BM Am1898,1020.1, have removable frontages, so as to expose the interiors to the audience, but the structural solidity of the Columbia Exposition houses

31 It is hard to be sure whether these were the only examples; 13 of the houses were lost after the Exposition and of others, such as FM17990, only the facades survive. Other miniature houses from the region, made and collected in different contexts but at approximately the same time and place also contain figures, including AMNH 16.1/1164 and the roofless NMAI 2188565, while inside NMAI 071120 and BM Am1898,1020.1 the interiors have no figures but feature carved and painted house posts and have realistic fire-pits.
and the importance of their central poles suggests that this was not part of the miniatures’ commissioned functionality.

What connects these examples is that the scenes are not of the everyday. They do not depict weaving or cooking or carving. They depict important moments in the Haida calendar and in the lifecycle of these houses. They show dances and potlatches; they show families and hierarchies, painstakingly rendered in miniature; they show detail of clothing and facial features – they show traditional Haida life at its most energetic and emotive, and they do so within non-proportional miniatures of traditional Haida architecture. All of this lifestyle was under continual threat in Haida Gwaii: the houses were disappearing, the dances forbidden and the clothing replaced by drab European garb. Yet here, invisible before the eyes of the world in the heart of a celebratory expression of how America desired itself to be seen, little Haidas danced in the dark.

**Satire: expressing ideology through art**

The case studies highlighted thus far are tied to notions of the expression of pathos, memory and nostalgia in material culture, the representation in miniature of a world slipping away. However these efforts should not be mistaken for token gestures and it should not be forgotten that Northwest Coast material culture is explicitly expressive and communicative. As an overtly communicative visual culture, Northwest Coast artists were well versed in the nuance of visual communication, particularly satire.

Intercultural satire in Northwest Coast art, including on totem poles, could sometimes act as “public means with which to express resentment and challenge”. The most famous example is the Tlingit pole erected at Tongass in c.1885 mocking William Seward (Jonaitis & Glass, 2010:68). As discussed earlier, Seward was hosted at a potlatch at Sitka by Chief Ebberts in 1869, but he is reported to have behaved ungraciously and worse, never reciprocated the honour (Garfield & Forrest, 1948:55-56). In disgust, Ebberts had a pole carved depicting Seward with a white face and red nose, a calculated insult which emphasised his diminished status before the Tlingit (fig. 5.20).
In another case, during the 1870s a man from Skidegate who was prosecuted for drunkenness in Victoria raised effigies of the Victorian officials who had convicted him which were then routinely subjected to public ridicule (MacDonald, 1983ii:45). There are also many examples of satirical material culture among the argillite souvenir art of the Haida from the 1850s onwards. Haida argillite artists delighted in portraying Europeans, particularly sailors, in nonsensical or absurd positions (Sheehan, 1980:83). Examples include panel pipes, such as fig. 5.21, where a sailor, tangled in rigging is chased by three formline bears, or figure groups, in one of which (fig. 5.22) a missionary is effaced by his giant wife and in another (fig. 5.23) a European man trains a gun on a woman, often interpreted as his Native common-law wife.
The key point of these examples is that carvers from the Northern Northwest coast were sufficiently well versed in the principles of visual communication to produce material culture, often explicitly for consumption by European people, which satirically mocked their sensibilities and behaviour. This has humorous implications, but satire is not solely a humorous exercise; it can also be used to critique authority safely, without presenting a direct challenge which would force reprisal. This practice is continued in the modern era; in 2011 Haida artist Michael Nicol Yahgulanaas was commissioned to produce a “Copper from the Hood”, a copper-plated car bonnet sculpture for the British Museum. In this commission he chose to depict the traditional Haida story of a ravenous woodworm, driven to consume all it encountered. Yahgulanaas deliberately intended this Haida representation of destruction to be prominently placed within a European museum collection which includes “thousands of wooden objects, ‘hidden’ treasures to be consumed”. Although humorous, this satirical “imagery can therefore be understood as an ongoing critique of museums as keepers and containers of cultural heritage” (Levell, 2016:114).

The evidence of satire establishes the presence of ideological meaning in the hybridised art of the late nineteenth century Northwest Coast, and returns us to the notion of “nonsensical” dimensions; satire is often absurd and humorous, but with serious and calculated intent. Miniaturisation is an intimate technique, one which through simplistic, reduced-scale tactility and the fascination of mimetic indexically allows for the transmission to
occur subtly, through intangible, even nonsensical means. In the last chapter this was explored by considering how the Makah use miniatures to project their identity far out into American society. Here the thesis will consider how the Northern tribes used miniaturisation to project across time.

The ostensible audience for this miniature production was the American souvenir hunters or the crowds at the Chicago Columbian Exposition, but there was another audience, a less obvious one, which may have been in mind, as Gwaai Edenshaw explains:

J: This may seem a little out there, but it’s something I am considering. Do you think that artists like Charles Edenshaw, who were working after the epidemics, do you think that this was part of their thinking in what they were doing? That they were preserving techniques and things for the future?

G: Yeah. Charles Edenshaw was a real artist, so I don’t think that he is the best example of this. I think that he would have been compelled to do that work just by the fire burning inside of him. There were other artists, in that time period and later, who weren’t natural artists, but for whatever reason carried forwards that huge body of slate work that kind of has that naïve aspect to it when you consider the formality of the art. I actually love it, there’s all this stuff from that time period that is a bit weak on the rules of the art, but which just has a nice feeling to it, but I believe that those people felt a pressure to maintain that art and I’m really grateful that they sort of kept that unbroken line of work from the height of our art to the new renaissance that we are in now.

-Gwaai Edenshaw, interview 2016

Edenshaw here is drawing direct links between the work of artists in the late nineteenth century and his own oeuvre. Moreover, he does so by suggesting that many of the artists from this period, particularly the lesser known and lesser skilled practitioners, undertook the work not because it was their natural inclination, nor solely motivated by financial or social necessity, but because they saw the impending decline in traditional Haida material culture practices and took it upon themselves to preserve what they could. It is not an imaginative leap to suggest therefore, as this thesis does, that such people employed multiple imaginative methods of persuasion in seeking to achieve this goal, of which miniaturisation was a common and effective component.
Louis Shotridge: Miniaturisation and the museum

Other artists of this period had concerns about the future of Northwest Coast art and sought to preserve it; Louis Shotridge (1882-1937) was a Tlingit pioneer in the relationship between Native Northwest Coast peoples and the world of museums, and his use of miniatures in this process was significant. Educated at the Haines mission school, Shotridge exhibited traditional material culture practices at the 1905 Portland Exposition and was invited in 1912 to join the Penn Museum in Philadelphia as a curatorial assistant, a position he retained for twenty years. Shotridge’s work entailed a wide variety of roles, one of which was the preparation of the new Native American displays following the withdrawal of the Heye Collection in 1915 (Berman, 2013; Preucel, 2015).

In this role, and again and more ambitiously when the gallery was refurbished in 1928, Shotridge sought to preserve clan distinctions, invisible to uninitiated non-Native curators, in the displays; an innovative, indigenous approach to curation which was abandoned after his dismissal in 1932. Part of this display methodology included the construction of elaborate miniature dioramas of indigenous villages, including the Tlingit community of Kluckwan (fig. 5.24) and the Haida settlement of Haina. These scenes, complete with tiny canoes, houses and totem poles, were among the first Native-made dioramas of their kind made specifically for the museum setting, and they represented a real effort not just to present an ideal of how indigenous communities were laid out to the Philadelphia public, but also to preserve the information they contained: by the time these dioramas were constructed, the villages depicted had either been left to return to the earth or completely replaced with European style housing (Preucel, 2015).

Fig. 5.24. Miniature village of Kluckwan, Louis Shotridge. © Robert Preucel (2015).
Shotridge himself wrote that “It is clear now that unless someone go[es] to work, [to] record our history in the English language and place these old things as evidence, the noble idea of our forefathers shall be entirely lost” (Williams, 2015:63), and accompanied his collecting and curation with extensive documentation of oral histories (Milburn, 1986). It has been said of him that he “felt the onrushing tide of modernity in Alaska and he devoted his life to recording the history of his Tlingit people” (Williams, 2015:75).

Bill Reid and the Haida string

The period known among the Haida as the “Silent Years” (Steedman & Collison, 2011), c. 1920-1960, saw a marked and significant decrease in art production among indigenous people along the coast, including among the Northern tribes. This has been attributed to the “period of colonization” in which “traditional art forms began to disappear with the disintegration of traditional patterns of culture and the production of “arts and crafts” for tourist consumption . . . By the early twentieth century, traditionally high standards of workmanship as well as traditional reasons for making art had almost entirely disappeared . . . [the] decline in general quality as well as quantity may be attributed in large part to the loss of cultural meaning attached to the art works” (Vastokas, 1977:158).

Certainly there was a dramatic alteration in art production in the region from approximately 1920. This was matched by a public “fight for control of over the meaning of Northwest Coast objects, which were increasingly being housed in American, European and Canadian museums.” (Hawker, 2003:171). The general debate about the effects this contest had on etic understandings of Northwest Coast peoples has been discussed elsewhere in this thesis; here I will consider what effect it had on indigenous artists, and the role miniaturisation specifically played in that relationship.

Although carving never disappeared completely from the Haida, by the late 1950s it had changed dramatically from the art form experienced by Edenshaw and his contemporaries. There were no longhouses, no canoes and no overt potlatches, which meant that there was no demand for regalia; Robert Davidson recounted that in “1965 or ’66 I knocked on every door in the village [Masset] looking for any evidence of the classical period. And I found one box. So the people were really removed from that classical period” (Hall & Glascock, 2011:31).
It was into this situation that Bill Reid (1920-1998) arrived. Reid was born in Victoria, the son of Sophie Gladstone, a Haida from the recently vacated village of T’aanu and a great-grandnephew of Charles Edenshaw. He trained in art production at Ryerson University in Toronto, the first Northwest Coast artist to receive formal higher art education, and had little contact with traditional Haida culture until he was 28, when he, as a semi-fictional biographical memoir put it “began to experience a strange compulsion to carve” (Harris, 1992 [1966]:187).

Reid voraciously consumed Haida art, from books, from standing poles and from museums. He was the first Northwest Coast artist to visit many European museums, and honed his skills, initially as a jeweller and then later expanding into other carving media and techniques, including argillite and cedar. His work on jewellery and the tiny, detailed work it entailed was prefaced by his youthful art, which included the tiny tea set in fig. 5.26, carved from chalk in 1932 as a gift for his sister (Reid, 2011:56).

![Fig. 5.26. Bill Reid’s tiny tea set, c.1932. Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art.](image)

Reid’s advances into Haida art were in a sense encouraged by its damaged continuity: although as a boy he was partially educated in Haida ways by his grandfather Charles Gladstone, he grew up away from Haida Gwaii and did not have a living master carver to whom he was apprenticed who would have enforced the strict rules of social obligation inherent in traditional Haida art (McLennan, 2004:38). Reid therefore had a certain

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32 Different sources suggest different relationships between Bill Reid and Charles Edenshaw, but his granddaughter Nika Collison states authoritatively that Reid was Edenshaw’s great-grandnephew (Collison, 2016), via Charles Gladstone. It should be noted that among the Haida, where hereditary bequests often travelled through avuncular descent, this relationship was particularly propitious.
freedom to experiment with form, material and structure, in which he “began to carve out a new aspirational chapter in Haida history, weaving the past into the present and designing our future, if you will” (Collison, 2016).

In this he understood himself to be connected to Edenshaw, sharing the latter’s passion for experimentation and development of traditional art forms to satisfy both financial necessities and simultaneously generate a body of work which would be displayed and valued beyond the Northwest Coast and fascinate, intrigue and educate an audience with its form, structure and meaning (Duffek, 1986; Hoover, 1993; Herem, 1998; McLennan, 2004:43; Duffek & Townsend-Gault, 2004i). Although Reid claimed that his art was intended “to isolate myself into a nice little world where I could merely play with the concepts of these beautiful designs and turn out finely made objects” (Reid, 2000:213), he was well aware of the ability his work had to convey significant messages, and used it to full effect as a leading campaigner against logging in Haida Gwaii (Dawn, 2004).

Reid’s relationship with miniatures reflects the notion of revolving prototypes mentioned in chapter one, through which he “was able to discover his own “Haidaness”” (Reid, 2016:23). Reid produced miniatures throughout his career, but was better known for learning from them, particularly in his attempts to build a Northern-style canoe in the 1980s. The book Bill Reid and the Haida Canoe (Reid, 2011:74-78) describes the process in detail, including Reid’s methodical study of miniature canoes in museum collections all over the world, alongside documentary evidence and full-sized survivors. When he carved his first canoe, in 1985, alongside his assistants Guujaaw, Simon Dick and William Robertson, a 250cm long miniature lay next to them, operating as an architectural model. This first canoe experienced many problems in construction through the process of trial and error it required; there were no surviving traditional canoe builders at that time and since miniature canoes are not to scale, much adjustment was needed before the finished canoe was ready for its maiden voyage (Ramsey & Jones, 2014:6).

From this project sprang more canoe carving projects on the coast, most notably Reid’s large canoe Loo Taas, which has travelled the world with its crew giving demonstrations of Haida watercraft. It, and the canoe journeys it inspired, are commonly cited as the genesis of the resurgence in canoe culture among Native Northwest Coast peoples (Neel, 1995; Reid, 2011). Miniatures have played a significant part in this process right from the beginning, used by modern carvers to practise form and shape: when Bill Reid was examining longhouse design at MoA in 1960, he mocked up a paper miniature to experiment with design and style (fig 5.27). When one of Reid’s younger colleagues,
Robert Davidson, was photographed in his studio in 1974, a smooth Northern style canoe miniature sat on the table to his left (Macnair, 1977:150).

Fig. 5.27. Bill Reid’s paper house model, c.1960. MoA A8251.

Contemporary carvers see themselves as a continuing part of this legacy; Gwaai Edenshaw was an apprentice to Reid, and talked of this connection:

J: Do you see yourself as part of the ongoing process of preserving and, I guess, developing Haida art?

G: Yeah absolutely. I mean I sort of see myself, on the one hand as just a working stiff that’s just plugging away doing you, know, what I gotta, but especially recently, with some of the revelations that have come to us through the work at the Pitt Rivers and the master of the great box and subsequent studies that have been in, I felt like we’ve really rediscovered some important little pieces of the story. Particularly around the box, but then there’s other little elements. And so yeah, I’m feeling lately more a part of it than ever.

-Gwaai Edenshaw, interview 2016
Miniatures as ideology and continuity

In the 1966 novelised history of the Haida nation Raven’s Cry, for which Bill Reid supplied the illustrations, a fictionalised composition is presented which purports to depict Charles Edenshaw’s thoughts in the 1890s:

The race was dying out. The social order was dying out even faster. Charles Edenshaw, Da·a·x·iigang, did what he could to let both die with dignity. He assumed the head chieftainship of the Sdast’a·aas Eagles with quiet ceremony. He continued to give feasts at intervals, and to distribute gifts to the people.

But his whole being was caught up in a strange compulsion. His race was dying out; and he could not stop the dying. His social order was dying out; and he could only see that it died with the dignity of the Haida. But one thing was too strong to die, Haida art!

It was as though this unique style of decoration, developed through thousands of years in an environment that was fabulously rich and yet chill and challenging, was too strong to die with the people and the social order that had nurtured it. Now, threatened with extinction, it worked like a compulsion through Da·a·x·iigang, like a disembodied spirit using the fingers of Charles Edenshaw. It would live on! This man was link between its past and its future. (Harris, 1992 [1966]:180)

It is of course impossible to know whether these thoughts ever really passed through Edenshaw’s head, or the heads of his contemporaries, but there is no doubt that to the Haida carvers this artistic connection between generations is very real. Haida museum curator Nika Collison expressed this clearly when she said:

There is a practice in our culture called “putting a string on” someone. For example, during the times of arranged marriages, a family of a very young girl might endow a great deal to the family of a young boy, effectively “putting a string” on that child, ensuring the two would one day marry, and move forward in life together.

I like to think Charles Edenshaw and Bill [Reid] put a string on their work, binding us to something that is so much more than art. Binding us so that we’d come together in the future, when the time was right. (Collison, 2016)

Understanding this string is key in understanding the role miniatures have played in the relationship between the Haida artists of the late nineteenth century and the Haida artists of today. The art produced forms a bridge of knowledge that spans generations and crosses uncertainty. As Gwaai Edenshaw explains:

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33 It might seem unusual to cite a novel written by a non-Native person as evidence for this subject, but Raven’s Cry is in many ways an important document for the Haida. Painstakingly researched, it was written in collaboration with Bill Reid, and in 1992 Robert Davidson referred to it as “good documentation . . . certainly a book I would keep on the shelf for reference” (Harris, 1992 [1966]:X).
J: When you go to museums and look at collections, is it for inspiration?

G: Yeah, to relearn parts of our culture. You know they say that the upper amount of Haidas that there were before the epidemics was 40,000, the lower would be 20,000 and then the whole population dropped down to about 500, I think about 600 actually. So you think about the amount, the amount of knowledge lost there.

-Gwaai Edenshaw, interview 2016

Miniaturisation was not an alien technique to the Haida – although unlike with the Makah there is no definitive proof that miniaturisation existed in the pre-contact period, Northern artists were enthusiastic practitioners in the immediate post-contact era, supplying high quality canoe miniatures to Spanish, British and Russian merchants and explorers. These objects display not only skilful application of carving technique, but also a rich and adventurous approach to imagination, as demonstrated by the disproportionality, the painted decoration and the figurative scenes they depict which make them mimetic devices not of the everyday working canoes of the communities, but of the highest status, most aspirational and most magical of Northwest Coast watercraft, qualities which accentuate the inherent fascination that miniaturisation provokes.

In the late nineteenth century, Northern cultures such as the Haida were under huge threat. Population collapse had been followed by official repression which sought to eradicate the traditional practices of the Haida People. Even the language was fast disappearing; as the Haida Gwaii Museum has it, “what our Ancestors must have experienced during this time is more than one can bear to imagine” (Steed & Collison, 2011:18). These losses were a cruel blow, as Nika Collison explains of the language:

Born from the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii, it is not just a language; it is a different way of thinking, a different way of seeing, a different way of knowing.

It is Haida knowledge, history and wisdom stored.

It defines our intrinsic relationship to the lands, waters, airways and Supernatural Beings of Haida Gwaii: that which makes us Haida. (Collison, 2016)

And yet despite the suffering, or perhaps because of it, Haida people took up carving in a safe medium and developed the art form in new, expressive ways. They knew that the only way to preserve these practices was to continue them. And that is what they did, protecting it until future generations could discover it once more, so that:
“Today, children grow up knowing the raising of poles and the paddling of canoes. They’ve slept in longhouses and they live off the land. They’re adorned with fine hats and regalia as we put our chiefs forward. They begin singing and dancing in the womb.” (Collison, 2016)

What those carvers chose to create is key to understanding the role miniaturisation has played in the developing the “string” that links Northern Northwest Coast art, that allows modern Haida society to regain lost history (Worl, 2008). It did not act alone, operating alongside other techniques, but the unique qualities of miniatures as semiophoric synecdoches gave them the ability to operate as both passive resistance to colonial oppression and a reservoir of knowledge for future generations. Northwest Coast material culture is explicitly visually expressive, incorporating figurative design elements not as attractive additions, but as fundamental and deliberate components of the objects’ functionality. Northwest Coast artists consciously understand the affordances required for display, and respond effectively when commissioned to produce artefacts for souvenir sales, museums or Columbian Expositions, creating objects which will provide an attractive and fascinating experience to the audience in much the same way as they would when carving a mask for a potlatch.

Smaller art, such as bowls, spoons and masks can travel to these destinations comfortably, but larger material culture, such as canoes, houses and totem poles are not so easy to convey, and much harder to provoke the intimate tactile qualia necessary for ideological transmission. In miniature however, these colossal symbols of personal and familial identity can travel further, in greater numbers and with greater semiotic effect; just as with the Makah, they can represent their makers in strange places among strange people; portability is one of their essential affordances. What differentiates the miniaturisation taking place among the Northern tribes at this time is the imaginative qualities of the miniatures. Even when taken from physical prototypes, almost none make any attempt at proportionality, particularly among the houses. Most portray designs of canoe or totem pole which disappeared generations ago or even never existed at all, and they often feature painted decoration reminiscent of only the crests of powerful families or of cosmological events. For these miniatures, their prototypes are not usually physical objects but imagined or learned designs, intangible things which would otherwise be lost in the crises of the nineteenth century but which remain preserved in miniature.

Thus they preserve not the specific techniques they depict, but the ideas, the ideology, which they embody, forming a synecdochic relationship between miniature and people: the canoe miniatures given to a foreign naval commander which speak to a lost time when head canoes controlled the coast of the Northeastern Pacific, decorated with the
personal crests of the men who had them made; the houses on display before the assembled American people, inside of which tiny figures perform dances forbidden by government edict; Louis Shotridge recreating mimetic replicas of empty villages in the museum of the University of Philadelphia. These could all be interpreted as last, nostalgic, glimmers of fading cultures; certainly that is how contemporary anthropologists saw them. And yet that is not the Haida way; that is not the way of the Northern Northwest Coast. It is a movement of aspiration; the art endures, it adapts and it survives, and when Bill Reid and his contemporaries returned to the art, it was waiting for them, including the miniatures with their ideological messages intact, and it helped shape them as carvers and shape the art they produced and continue to produce to this day.
Chapter 6: Idiot sticks and tiny dancers: Kwakwakawakw resilience through miniaturisation

The preceding case studies have demonstrated how miniaturisation has enabled the Makah to spread synecdochic messages to the wider world and how the Haida and their neighbours have used miniaturisation to communicate ideology across generations. This chapter will follow these studies by examining how the carvers of one tribe of the Central Coast have used miniaturisation to communicate in an indexical, non-verbal system, incomprehensible to outsiders, as a method of resilience.

Off the north-eastern coast of Vancouver Island lies a small archipelago of forested islands, one of which, known as Cormorant Island, is home to the village of Alert Bay, the primary settlement for the ‘Namgis Kwakwakawakw people and a scene of oppression, resistance and survival; a story within which miniaturisation has played a crucial, unacknowledged role in subverting colonial authority and preserving traditional practices.

Unlike their northern and southern neighbours, there is little physical evidence for a long history of miniaturisation in Kwakwakawakw culture. The earliest ethnographic accounts of the practice date only to the 1880s, when Franz Boas commissioned a set of miniature canoes at Quatsino, now in the AMNH. In the survey of miniatures assembled for this project, only 32 were positively identified as Kwakwakawakw, none of which date to earlier than the last decades of the nineteenth century. Like the Quatsino miniatures, these examples, such as the miniature house NMNH E129480, were largely commissioned by anthropologists. It would be naïve to presume that miniaturisation had played no part in Kwakwakawakw material culture prior to this point, but comparison with the much larger surviving miniature corpus of neighbouring groups such as the Haida or Salish indicates that it was not as common or regular a form of material culture production.

Studies made at this time testify to the richness of Kwakwakawakw visual culture and the exceptionally large social, political and economic significance afforded to the potlatch.

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34 A note on nomenclature. The name “Kwakiutl” was used to refer to this tribe in academic literature for more than a century. More recently, scholars have accurately recognised that Kwakiutl refers only to the Kwagu’l band of Kwakwakawakw people and so the latter term, which translates as “Kwakwala-speaking people” has been preferred (Macnair, 1986; Codere, 1990:376). It is used as such here, although direct quotes have not been altered.
(Boas, 1966; Codere, 1990). It was in opposition to this practice, and the other dances and ceremonies often conflated with it, that the government of British Columbia introduced the amendment to the 1885 Indian Act banning the potlatch, a law routinely ignored within Kwakwək’wakw communities. In 1921, Indian Agent, William M. Halliday responded to an unauthorised potlatch with the confiscation, deliberate desecration and ultimate sale of potlatch regalia and materials, large-scale arrests, and the establishment of a Residential School at Alert Bay, deliberately effacing and dominating the largest Kwakwək’wakw community. The result was the near-cessation of the potlatch as a formal event and the imposition of harsh restrictions on Kwakwək’wakw society which, in combination with economic stagnation led to a situation where, in the words of anthropologist Helen Codere, by “the forties, the potlatch system was broken” (1961:483). In this the Kwakwək’wakw are unique; indigenous traditions were trampled all along the coast, but it was only among the Kwakwək’wakw that they were deliberately, systematically, accurately and effectively targeted by law enforcement (Cole & Chaikin, 1990:181).

The damage this caused was profound: forty years after Halliday’s operation, Codere expressed concern was that “it might be possible to claim that this was the end of Kwakiutl culture and that the remainder of their history is simply that of rapid assimilation to White Canadian culture” (1961:513), but she was ultimately correct when she noted that “reports of the death of Kwakiutl culture have been greatly exaggerated” (1961:513; Ringel, 1979). With the Northwest Coast “renaissance”, Kwakwək’wakw culture is once again openly practiced in communities such as Alert Bay and modern Kwakwək’wakw material culture forms a popular part of the Northwest Coast art movement (Cranmer Webster, 1990).

This case study will examine the role that the process of miniaturisation played in the survival and revival of Kwakwək’wakw traditional culture in the twentieth century by considering important aspects of miniaturisation within material culture production and distribution, including commercial consideration, passive resistance and practical education.
The Kwakwaka’wakw

The Kwakwaka’wakw live in communities distributed across the central coast of British Columbia, organised in bands living primarily on the east and west coastlines of the Queen Charlotte and Johnstone Straits which separate Vancouver Island from the British Columbia mainland. There are a few groups on the north-western coast of Vancouver Island with direct access to the Pacific Ocean, and the traditional territories of all of these tribes extend far into the hinterland watersheds of the region, for a total territory encompassing some 12,000 square miles (see Map 7).

This land was exceptionally fertile, so much so that it has been noted that “their permanent villages, material wealth, and capacity to support an extensive ceremonial, potlatching and artistic life makes them much less comparable to the hunters and gathers with which they are often classified than to settled agriculturalists” (Codere, 1990:364). Famine could and did occur, particularly during prolonged periods of bad weather (Piddocke, 1965:247), but was rare enough that the abundance of food resources enabled the Kwakwaka’wakw to develop a ritual system which underpinned society and economy; the centre point of this system was the potlatch.

Although potlatching systems were common all along the Northwest Coast, it was among the Kwakwaka’wakw that it may have reached its apotheosis. It was “an institution that contributed to the integration and dynamic drive of Kwakiutl society by validating social status and giving material manifestation to an expanding and changing network of social exchanges and reciprocities” (Codere, 1990:368). The Kwakwaka’wakw potlatched for many reasons, including small, intra-village potlatches to cover the shame of falling out of a canoe; children’s potlatches with toy gifts (Ford, 1941:85-86) and play potlatches in which the social order was temporarily overturned (Codere, 1956). There were also much larger and more important events, MÁX’a in the Kwakiwala language, at which chiefly names would be assumed, gifts distributed and at the most important potlatches of all, marriages agreed, confirmed and annulled (Codere, 1990:368). Crucially, Kwakwaka’wakw potlatches were not always serious events, incorporating considerable humorous and satirical elements. These particularly involved jokes at the expense of Europeans and government officials (Codere, 1956:340); the ceremonial operating as satire in a similar vein to that found in the material culture of their northern neighbours.

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The primary economic function of a potlatch was the distribution of wealth. Hosts at potlatch would present their guests with large quantities of trade goods, most commonly blankets but covering all markers of value in Kwakwaka’wakw society. The most valuable of these gifts included the large ceremonial “coppers”, and a host might prepare for years, storing wealth and taking out loans in order to be able to afford to host a potlatch. The gifts were not without conditions. Receipt of a gift at potlatch imposed an obligation on the recipient that they must repay and exceed the gift at a potlatch of their own – the successful hosting of a potlatch left ones enemies and allies with substantial obligations to the host. It is for this reason that potlatching was termed “fighting with property” among the Kwakwaka’wakw, since the imposition of obligation demonstrated social, economic and political supremacy without the necessity of resorting to violence (Codere, 1966).

The proliferation of employment in logging, fishing and canning industries in Kwakwaka’wakw territory in the mid-nineteenth century led to a profound breakdown in traditional social stratigraphy among Kwakwaka’wakw bands. Since any person could gain access to enough wealth to hold potlatches, the hegemony of traditional chiefly families was disrupted (Piddocke, 1965), a systemic problem exacerbated by the very high mortality during the period, with some estimates suggesting as many as 75% of the Kwakwaka’wakw population dying from epidemics between 1830 and 1870 (Cole & Chaikin, 1990:68).

Halliday and the Cranmer potlatch

Alert Bay was founded in 1881, when the ‘Namgis band of Kwakwaka’wakw were persuaded to relocate from the mouth of the Gwa’ni River to Cormorant Island, where a fish-processing plant had been constructed. It was intended that the indigenous arrivals would work at the plant and their children would attend the mission school, where education was focused on agriculture (Cranmer Webster, 2013:266).

It was from Alert Bay that the most aggressive attempts against the potlatch were made. In 1921 Indian Agent William Halliday learned that a potlatch had been held on Village Island to recognise the divorce of Chief Dan Cramer and his wife Emma. At the potlatch, Cramer received repayment of the goods presented at their wedding and then distributed potlatch goods of greater value to the attendees; Codere records that these goods were worth at least $30,000, making it the largest potlatch recorded to that date (Codere, 1961:467). Delegations from many Kwakwaka’wakw bands attended, although few from Alert Bay itself, who were particularly concerned that Halliday was planning a major
operation. Halliday had become increasingly aggressive in his prosecutions of potlatch participants in recent years, issuing fines and prison sentences to several prominent persons (Cole, 1985:250).

Notified of events at Village Island by an indigenous informant, Halliday made a sweeping series of arrests of the participants at the potlatch. Most of those arrested pled guilty, although Kwakwaka’wakw accounts of the trial suggest that their claims were deliberately mistranslated by interpreters. Halliday authorised the remission of prison sentences for those that agreed to surrender their potlatch regalia, including masks, clothing and coppers (Sewid-Smith, 1979:47). Most did so, although there was resistance; a number of those who refused were sent to Oakalla Prison and forced to perform menial tasks, such as feeding pigs, as deliberate acts of humiliation. Others hid or destroyed their regalia rather than have it confiscated by Halliday’s police agents (Cole & Chaikin, 1990:119-124).

Halliday placed much of the seized regalia on display in the parish hall. This act, exposing reserved chiefly regalia and wealth in public, was a deliberate attempt to desecrate it as well as a conscious expression of his victory. The seized regalia was then catalogued, boxed and sent to the National Museum in Ottawa, where it was dispersed. Small ex-gratia payments were made to the owners of the material, although some did not receive these cheques and others refused them as insultingly low compensation for what they had given up (Sewid-Smith, 1979; Cranmer Webster, 2013).

The loss of the regalia and coppers and enforcement of the ban on potlatching was devastating to the Kwakwaka’wakw; the ensuing period became known in Alert Bay as the “Dark Time” and was a major catalyst in the narrative of the “Dark Ages” of Northwest Coast culture (Hawker: 2003:17-33). Despite Halliday’s confidence, potlatching did not cease entirely – instead it withdrew to the fringes of Kwakwaka’wakw society, taking place in distant villages during the worst weather to obscure its appearance (Cole & Chaikin, 1990:165; Cranmer Webster, 2013:267), a practice known as a “bootleg potlatch” (Macnair, 1986:515). As Kwakwaka’wakw historian Daisy Sewid-Smith (My-yah-nelth) wrote, “[Halliday] was sure the “evil” Potlatch had at long last died, but the truth of the matter is that it had gone “underground”” (1979:1).

Despite this resistance traditional potlatching became less and less regular in the ensuing decades, and by the time of the repeal of the ban in 1951, “a lack of community feeling and leadership” had led to an almost total cessation in organised ceremonial activity (Codere, 1961:501). Dan Cranmer himself lamented in his later years that “So I am a big
man in those days. Nothing now. In the old days this was my weapon and I could call
down anyone” (Codere, 1966ii:117)

Halliday then obtained funds for the construction of St. Michael's Indian Residential
School, the largest such institution in British Columbia, “one of the most
modern and up-to-date buildings in the whole of Canada, with a capacity of 240 pupils.”
In 1935 he proudly wrote that “the change in the attitude of the Indians toward education
can be seen, for instead of encountering a difficulty in obtaining pupils, the school is
almost full and next year will have a capacity enrolment” (Halliday, 1935:235). Despite
Halliday’s confidence, the school had been replaced in part because students had
repeatedly attempted to burn down the former building (TRC I:484; Halliday, 1935:233),
and the new one was no improvement. By 1931 flood damage had gone unrepai red (TRC
I:457) and within ten years the building was already crumbling dangerously (TRC II:175);
conditions were squalid – a 1947 inspection revealed that “everywhere was found
evidence of very bad housekeeping and maintenance. On the boys’ wing only one toilet
was found in order, most of the others being in a filthy condition and running over into
the dormitories.” (TRC II:179), another report the same year concluded that the “quality
of food given to the children and staff of this institution is one of the dark pages in the
history of this school” (TRC II:247).

At the school, Kwakwaka’wakw culture was banned; the school was a consciously
conceived contest of “school versus potlatch” (TRC I:130). Students were stripped of
their Kwak’wala names and arbitrarily assigned given English names instead (TRC I:599),
or later stripped of names entirely and only referred to by number (TRC III:67). Pupils
were forbidden from speaking Kwak’wala or other indigenous languages; “the idea was to
get them comfortable with English, because that was the language of the dominant
society” (TRC II:542), and beaten or humiliated if caught (TRC III:49-50, 141).
Throughout the school’s existence, pupils recounted stories of savage beatings for minor
disciplinary infractions, administered arbitrarily (TRC II:375, 389; TRC III:141), and of
rampant sexual abuse ignored by school authorities (TRC II:424). It is unsurprising that in
this brutally repressive environment traditional culture suffered among the generations
who endured it. St. Michael’s physically dominated Alert Bay; an ostentatiously brutalist
structure imposed in the midst of the indigenous community, a constant reminder of
Halliday’s authority and the desire of the Canadian government to destroy
Kwakwaka’wakw culture and assimilate Kwakwaka’wakw people.
Although Halliday sought to irreparably damage traditional Kwak'wala culture with his assault on the potlatch, he ultimately failed; “it must be remembered that Indians were not supine victims of white legislation. That the [potlatch] law went largely unenforced [after 1927] as in great measure a result of native resistance, even defiance” (Cole & Chaikin, 1990:183). Indeed, the immediate response to Halliday’s operation was a sudden increase in material culture production as those whose possessions had been confiscated commissioned replacements – it was through this process that a new generation of carvers, among them Mungo Martin and Charlie James, became proficient (Cranmer Webster, 2013:268). In the longer run however the slow erosion in potlatching, and in particular the inability to publically perform, meant that the regalia required to successfully potlatch was no longer in regular demand and production gradually reduced. Aggressive Christianisation and modernisation during this period led many to willingly renounce the potlatch, and to destroy longhouses and regalia, while the financial crash of the 1930s threw the economic system on which the potlatch depended into chaos (Cole & Chaikin, 1990:161-164). During the 1940s and 1950s there was little traditional carved material culture available, and much of that which had survived was acquired by collectors and dealers (Cole, 1985:254)

**Charlie James’s idiot sticks**

There were a few Kwak’wala carvers who refused to abandon their traditions entirely during this era; “carvers who played an important role in ensuring that Kwakiutl art did not die out”. Perhaps the most significant of this group was Charlie James (Yakudla) (c.1867-1938), who continued to quietly carve in Alert Bay (Nuytten, 1982:8). He subsidised his artwork by carving small objects, and in particular miniature totem poles, for sale to tourists; Alert Bay had become a regular stop on the Alaskan cruise circuit and these regular influxes of tourists seeking souvenirs gave James an income with which he could sustain his carving practice.

James was an enthusiastic practitioner of mimesis – he carved totem poles and then reproduced them in miniature for sale. These poles were usually variations on standing poles at Alert Bay, with the same composition of crests, although their order and position could vary considerably. The destination of these carvings did not diminish their quality; while others churned out “speedily made and cheaply priced imitations of full-scale totem poles” (Kramer, 2012:45), “James showed the same care and attention to detail in his larger and smaller works”, but was derided by some contemporaries for his miniature
totem poles, which became mockingly known as “idiot sticks” (Cranmer Webster, 2013:268), because “any idiot could carve [them]” (Kramer, 2012:45; Hawker, 2016:5). Although he worked to a range of designs, his most commonly reproduced pole was one he himself carved, which now stands in the U’mista Cultural Centre (figs. 6.1 & 6.2). This was an important image for James, and may have been produced so frequently as a way of affirming the crests and lineage he was forbidden to display through potlatch.

A lot of times I know that for Charlie James in particular, he carved the pole repeatedly because that was their crests and the history of his own personal family. So if you look on the top it is a Qulos [Sea Eagle]. The Qulos is the first ancestor of his people and then underneath it tells of a legend, a separate story, of going into the undersea world, so that’s why it’s got the bear from the sea, or a sea bear and there’s a killer whale and a frog and a bullhead and the man. So this is a story that he felt very strongly about that he always depicted and most of his totem poles are the same crest figures but sometimes arranged differently, but still telling the same story.

-Trevor Isaac, interview 2015

James did not stick rigidly to this imagery however, especially when he worked in miniature. Freed from the restrictions of traditional art practice his miniatures play with reality:

They interact. They break free of their compression onto the columnar form of the pole. They come alive. Of all James’ carvings, this genre is perhaps the most captivating to the outside world. At their best, James’ miniature poles are playful, beautifully carved and painted, evocative, and creatively ambitious (Hawker, 2016:153)

In a way that would be recognisable to the later Pop Art movement, his miniatures frequently manipulate form, theme and structure with an eye to diverse audiences; in a miniature pole produced in c.1930 he replaced the central figure with the Hollywood icon Pepito the Clown, playfully dedicating the work to the celebrity (Hall & Glascock, 2011:111) – such works are sometimes described as his “oddities” (Hawker, 2016:161). So prolific was James as a pole carver, that his works have sometimes been credited with fundamentally changing what is expected of a totem pole: he may for example have been the first pole carver to incorporate outstretched wings (Glass & Jonaitis, 2011:15); his work “strengthening a multilevel narrative through how he superimposes the figures” on his poles (Hawker, 2016:71).
It is no coincidence that James “is fondly remembered by his own people as a traditional artist but the impression most others have of him is the he was a maker of curio items” (Macnair et al. 1980:72-73); his work spanned this division, his dual reputation exemplifying the separation in emic and etic understandings of indigenous authenticity in the early twentieth century. He is now considered among the finest artists of the Northwest Coast and his work has subsequently informed broad contemporary understandings of Northwest Coast art (Nuytten, 1982).

Figs. 6.1 (left) & 6.2 (right). Full-sized & miniature totem pole, both made by Charlie James, c.1930s. U’mista Cultural Centre.

After his death in 1938, James’ granddaughter Ellen Neel (1916-1966) assumed his position as the most prominent miniature pole carver among the Kwak’wa’wa’kwa, adopting many of his designs (Nuytten, 1982:16). Neel recruited her family into the miniature totem carving industry, supplying curio stands and souvenir shops along the British Columbia coastline with large numbers of hand-carved and painted poles. As has been seen with the Makah and Haida, Neel responded to commercial imperatives as she refined James’ designs, creating sharper lines and more defined imagery to cater to the higher end of the expanding and increasingly competitive souvenir market (Nyutten, 1982:54; Hall & Glascock, 2011:130). Neel and her family were prodigious and highly skilled carvers and painters, often playing with the medium for commercial fascination; as with the 1954 “world’s smallest totem” in fig. 6.3, presented as a gift to the entertainer Bob Hope (Nyutten, 1982:58). In this way imaginative experimentation through miniaturisation and distribution beyond her own community defined Neel’s work;
although she had produced thousands of miniature totem poles in her career, the last piece Ellen Neel ever made was a miniature canoe (Nuytten, 1982:72).

Fig. 6.3. “World’s smallest totem pole” with Dave Neel, 1954 (Nuytten, 1982).

At the same time as Neel was running her pole workshop, her uncle, Chief Mungo Martin (c.1880-1962), James’s stepson and another of his protégés, was advancing Kwakwàka’wakw material culture in a different way; a way described as being “almost singularly responsible for the revival of Northwest Coast art” (Macnair et. al., 1980:73). In 1950, Martin assumed a position at the museum of the University of British Columbia, the first indigenous Northwest Coast artist since Louis Shotridge to be heavily involved in museum collecting and curation. Like Shotridge, Martin saw his position in the museum as an opportunity to preserve and display his traditional culture, arranging several acquisitions of Kwakwàka’wakw regalia in the 1950s (Cole, 1985:254), and constructing a traditional longhouse which was to not only act as an education artefact for the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, but also to host newly-legalised potlatches (Nuytten, 1982:87). Martin also carved prolifically for the museum, producing not only the long house, named Wawadi’la, but also a canoe and a substantial body of carved artworks, including a number of miniature canoes demonstrating Kwakwàka’wakw hunting practices (figs. 6.4 & 6.5); one example, which illustrates two Kwakwàka’wakw men on a seal-hunt, is held at the U’mista Cultural Centre and another, illustrating a highly fanciful killer whale hunt, is in the collection at the MoA.
Figs. 6.4 (left) & 6.5 (right). Canoe miniature dioramas, made by Mungo Martin, c.1950s. MOA A4259 & U’mista Cultural Centre.

These miniatures present insight into Martin’s “emphasis”. Both are made from close-grained yellow cedar and depict small hunting canoes, painted in simple naturalistic Kwakw̱a’wakw block colours. As is usual, the proportions of the canoes are distorted, but the vessels are broadly in proportion to their crew, who feature simple but naturalistic clothing and design, including woven hats (lost on the U’mista miniature). The U’mista canoe crew have lost their paddles and harpoon, but the MoA example demonstrates clearly that these were rendered in a naturalistic fashion. The key to “reading” these miniatures lies in understanding what is depicted in the scenes they illustrate.

If we recall that a miniature is not the end result of miniaturisation but a process within it, then acknowledging Martin’s audience is essential to interpreting these miniatures. The U’mista canoe miniature was a gift from Martin to a community member and it illustrates the canoe hunting realistically sized seals, poised to leap from a shore, a traditional Kwakw̱a’wakw hunting practice pursued through traditional Kwakw̱a’wakw technological means in a naturalistic manner; MoA A4259 was presented by Martin to the Museum of Anthropology and it shows a scene in which ostensibly the same Kwakw̱a’wakw hunters target an unusually small, formline painted killer whale. The killer whale is the only part of either of these objects which has formline decoration; Martin’s other work demonstrates clearly that he was highly-proficient in the art form; skilled in its application and knowledgeable about its significance. There is a dissonance here; the Kwakw̱a’wakw have never hunted whale, killer whale hunting is not a traditional practice anywhere on the Northwest Coast, and no one would ever consider hunting a whale in a canoe of such small size. Thus one miniature is a possibly pedagogical reproduction of a common Kwakw̱a’wakw practice, the other an autoethnographic, imaginative diorama of an event that could not have occurred. As
Wayne Alfred described such Kwakw’ala’kwakw carvings at interview; “it’s a Kodak moment, you’ve captured that moment in time inside that legend, do you know what I mean? Because every legend’s got truths in it; places, times and names and actions that happen in there.”

Alfred also noted the aesthetic qualities of the piece in interview:

W: There’s some pretty good miniatures in here, you see that seal and that in here, the seal and that, why did they make that? What was that all about?

J: The Mungo Martin piece?

W: Yeah, the bunch of seals diving off. Nice little miniatures yeah. And the same thing is plaques – what are they for? Same thing, people like them because it looks good on your wall rather than a mask you know, looks good over a fireplace, it it’s just stained, so people like them in the corner of their frameworks on their house, you know put it along there, like a thunderbird or something straight up.

-Wayne Alfred, interview 2015

The piece has undeniable aesthetic qualities, and would not look out of place as a decorative piece in someone’s home. However it is intriguing to note that there is a clear separation in his work between miniatures for indigenous Kwakw’ala’kwakw consumption and miniatures for consumption by non-Native museum audiences. This hints at the miniatures as intended to operate in different ways in different contexts, and that this divergent operation is a fundamental part of Martin’s “emphasis”. The potlatch ban had been repealed in September 1951, and certain ceremonials had begun again the following year (Spradley, 159-162; Cole & Chaikin, 1990:168-169), of which, although many Kwakw’ala’kwakw were initially reluctant to participate, Martin was an active proponent. However, the Canadian government presence was still emphatic in Alert Bay and in previous decades Kwakw’ala’kwakw people had faced reprisals for keeping traditional ceremonial artefacts in the home. Recalling this, it becomes possible to interpret the U’mista miniature as a “safe” object, one which would not attract attention from the authorities, while the museum piece would face no such restriction.

Martin’s liminal position between competing environments which were in some ways mutually exclusive makes this dichotomy more plausible; for example, Trevor Isaac explains the complexities of marrying traditional restrictions with modern display, of which Martin would have been well aware:
In earlier times none of the artefacts would be on display in the home of a chief or even allowed on display in a museums. So that’s what I’m trying to think of. There is the traditional historic role and then there is today’s terms. So there is a tricky way to balance our life in western society and the traditional. The culture has changed so rapidly in such a short period. There is a lot that we cannot control I guess any longer.

-Trevor Isaac, interview 2015

Martin’s work here presents a contrast between art for display in the museum environment, in which Kwakwaka’wakw material culture is “safe”, and art for the Kwakwaka’wakw home, where it was ostensibly not. Martin may be creating an object which speaks to and educates about traditional culture without putting its owners at potential risk.

Martin used his position to further scholarly understanding of Kwakwaka’wakw culture, improve links between museums and the Kwakwaka’wakw and to advance his commercial carving business (Saunders, 1995). Wilson Duff wrote of him that “he has assigned himself the task of preserving all he knows about Kwakiutl culture. Whether it is by book or adze, paintbrush, on the tape recorder, or in the notebooks of his anthropologist friends, he is determined that this knowledge will be recorded for posterity. In my view, this objective appraisal of the situation and this conscious decision to preserve the culture are Martin’s clearest claims to true greatness.” (Nuytten, 1982:108). Thus James, Neel and Martin had, with others, deliberately and systematically preserved Kwakwaka’wakw practices and techniques during the years when the open, communal potlatch was in abeyance, and they had left trained apprentices ready and enthusiastic to continue the process.

**Commerce and pedagogy**

As in the other case studies, resilience through art could not be achieved without engagement with the commercial market, and small objects, with their fascinating tactility, were an effective way to attain this by increasing the portability of the objects:

I started painting them on clam shells and selling them to tourists, so here’s this 7-8 year old boy sitting in front of the council hall in downtown waterfront Alert Bay as all these big ships would come in and hundreds of people would be walking by and I would sell all my painted clam shells to these tourists. The smaller ones were a dollar, a little bit bigger were
$2 and the real big ones were 5 bucks. So after I sold the first 10, I went and grabbed 20 shells, the next day sold them, went and grabbed 40 shells. I doubled it every time. Eventually I said I’m going to fill this box right up. So I filled the box up and I painted all of them and went and sold them down the beach. In one day I sold them all, 450 bucks I made in one day when I had that full box.

-Gary Petersen, interview 2015

[Russell Smith] came by and he was starting to make his miniatures and he was selling them for $15, sometimes $25. We're talking about the early sixties, late sixties, was a lot of money back then. What's $25 today? When you are only paying 10 cents a pop and 50 cents for a pack of cigarettes, 30 cents to get in the movies. See what I mean?

-Wayne Alfred, interview 2015

It is not an easy career; some artists found the returns on miniature objects too small; Wayne Alfred commented that “I have a hard time with them to sell them. Unless someone orders them and wants them. People in white society like to see big for their money”, while “making a miniature’s no easier than making a big mask. You learnt to make a big mask first, because on the little ones you have to do exactly the same cuts, it’s just smaller and smaller knife cuts and if you make one mistake you have to throw it all away”. Gary Petersen was likewise concerned that customers did not understand the amount of work required to produce a small object:

...to make a miniature, there is just as much work in that miniature as there is to make one that is ten inches, a face mask. The same number of swipes comes off of it, but a smaller ratio. So if it takes 150,000, or say half a million swipes for this face mask, it’s going to take half a million swipes for this small one, but smaller pieces, tiny little cuts. And on a small piece, if you make a mistake it shows, on a big piece you can be off just a little bit and you don’t even notice it, but on a small one, if you make one mistake after two weeks work you’ve just ruined it. You’ve got to take that whole thing and take it down a little bit more here, do it replicate on the other side, so a lot of people have to realise, those small ones, they’re worth just as much as buying a big mask, some of them.

-Gary Petersen, interview 2015

Despite the troublesome economies of small scale carving, the ready market for portable souvenirs encouraged an increase in the carvers operating in Alert Bay and other Kwakwaka’wakw communities. Those with the skills to carve found that it provided a sufficient income when other careers were closed; Steven Bruce, Sr. recounted that when
he started carving, the booming fishing industry discriminated against inexperience, and that carving staved off unemployment: “I was trying to get a job on a fishing boat and back then, in the 80s, the early 80s, the fishing industry was booming and the last thing they wanted was a greenhorn on a boat.”

Learning to carve was not an informal process, but one which required an apprenticeship with an experienced carver and learning to carve more often than not, meant starting small, and starting small allows young carvers to learnt though experimentation:

If you can do lots of small ones you get your basics and then you switch them round on the piece and change the nose, change the eyes, the nose and create these different characters in your culture and you can learn a lot from doing these small ones. And it keeps you . . . for me it kept me excited and wanting to learn more.

- Steven Bruce, Sr., interview 2015

Thus the pedagogical praxis of miniature production at this early stage of a carver’s career enabled a rapid grasp of the principles of carving, a regular income, an opportunity to experiment and the income necessary to persevere with the lengthy and arduous training process. This way miniaturisation formed an essential part of the development of young carvers in Alert Bay at the very point in which Northwest Coast material culture production began to increase once more, during the “renaissance” period.

Gordon Scow and the tiny Hamat’sa

Beneath the acculturated surface of Kwakw̱a’wakw life in the 1950s, the period which Helen Codere researched with such concern for the future of traditional practices in places like Alert Bay, miniaturisation had continued to operate in a subtle method of non-violent cultural resistance. As observed, potlatching and ceremonial life did not cease completely after Halliday’s campaign of 1921 – instead it continued “underground” in more subtle and less visible ways, one of which was through the continuation of the practice of gift-giving, disguised and to an extent conflated with Christian holidays, but still retaining its reciprocal, symbol-laden operation within the particular semiotic frame of the Kwakw̱a’wakw.

One of the most significant events of the Kwakw̱a’wakw calendar was the Hamat’sa ceremony. Held in the winter, it was reserved for scions of the most powerful noble families, those with the right to join the Hamat’sa society, sometimes called the Cannibal society. The events of the dance, which lasted several days and for which preparation
could take several months, involved bodily suffering and deprivation, communal celebration and restrictions on the distribution of knowledge (Spradley, 1969:81-93; Macnair, 1986:511; Holm, 1990:381). It was only through this ritual that young noble men could “be installed in a role as an adult person” (Nielsen, 2001:154), with induction sometimes incurring as young as ten (Cranmer Webster, 1990:388). The dancers in this ceremony wore distinctive masks depicting Baxbakwakualannuxwi, Man Eater from the North End of the World, (fig. 6.6) who took possession of the aspirants during the preparatory period and was tamed by the dancers during the ceremony.

_Hamat’sa_ masks and regalia were restricted; traditionally you could only dance a mask made by someone within the society, due to the spiritual power inherent in the event, as Trevor Isaac explains:

> There are certain things, like the _hamsal_ masks from the _Hamat’sa_ series, like the model poles, you know the larger masks, they are so powerful and the spirituality around those artefacts from the different dance societies, at one time only a _Hamat’sa_ could carve – that’s what I was told – only a _Hamat’sa_ could carve one of those cannibal bird masks. _Hamsal_ masks . . . so it wasn’t public knowledge how something would appear or disappear.

-Trevor Isaac, interview, 2015

_Fig. 6.6. Hamat’sa mask, made by Willie Seaweed, c.1920. MoA A7992._
An account by James Sewid describing one of the last such events, which took place in 1931, begins with a frank admission that he was unwilling to violate the potlatch ban and place his young family at risk of his imprisonment:

My grandfather came to me and told me once again that he was going to put on a big do and it was going to be the last one. And he told me “I want you to be my top dancer” . . . Well I just figured I shouldn’t do it because I already had a couple children and I guess I was afraid of the law at that time. It was against the law to have potlatches and put on those dances I didn’t want to break the law.


Sewid was nevertheless prevailed upon to participate in the Hamat’sa ceremony which, after suitable preparation, gathered representatives from dozens of Kwakwà̱k̓a’wakw communities at the isolated community of Village Island, the place where Dan Cranmer had hosted his potlatch in 1921 and where there was no permanent government presence. The event passed successfully, the assembled Kwakwà̱k̓a’wakw together performing traditional dances and songs alongside those designed specifically for the event. The celebration continued for several days, until Sewid had been inducted into the Hamat’sa society. As it concluded however:

We heard that a sergeant of the mounted police was coming up to Village Island to investigate what was going on. They had heard about our dance there and that a young man had been put through it, which was against the law. . . He told us “I have been sent from the government to investigate what was going on in this village and I’d like to see what it is that you were doing”. He demanded to see it that night so we put on a good show for him. The dances we did were all mixed together and not in the right way we had been doing them. I was dancing with a fool’s mask on . . . one of our people was interpreting to him [the policeman] what it was all about. And he asked him “What is that dance there?” referring to me. “Well” he said . . . “We call it the fool dance because he is supposed to be a man who doesn’t know anything.

The policeman clearly wasn’t completelyfooled, as he then insisted on seeing a second dance closer to the original Hamat’sa.
At the end he got up and thanked the people and said “It was a wonderful dance. I really enjoyed it. I can’t see anything wrong with it”. After that he went back to Ottawa.

- James Sewid, 1967 (Spradley, 1969:93)

What this anecdote neatly illustrates is that though their traditional culture was under threat, Kwakwaka’wakw people were well practiced and experienced in continuing to pursue ceremonial and material practices despite government observation and repression, and had developed subtle mechanisms to preserve these practices should they be caught. Sewid’s description is a good example of ethnodrama, an occasion when invented dances for non-Native audiences helped to bypass restrictive laws against traditional ritual practices (Hawker, 2003:120). In this situation, not only do they attempt to preserve the restricted dances from uninitiated eyes, and to protect themselves from a repeat of the 1921 repressions, they do so in a manner which subtly mocks the official, rendering him ignorant and foolish to the Kwakwaka’wakw in attendance; a satirical practice not dissimilar from that of the Tlingit and Haida; in this context, it becomes possible to see much of the oeuvre of James, Neel and Martin as material examples of ethnodrama in action; Neel and Martin were once recorded laughing during a discussion of miniature totem poles because “a white person wouldn’t know the difference anyway” between a traditional and non-traditional totem pole (Jonaitis & Glass, 2010:158).

Following the repeal of the ban in 1951, potlatching and ceremonials remained mostly hidden for some time; Codere notes that even ten years later these activities were still not obviously performed (1961), and many Kwakwaka’wakw were more concerned with obtaining economic and legal rights than restoring lost traditions (Cole & Chaikin, 1990:170). The memory of the reprisals for potlatching, including prison, fines and confiscation of precious regalia remained, and it was not until the 1960s that ceremonial life began once again to become open. The hated residential school finally closed in 1974. By this time it had been more than thirty years since the proper Hamatsa ceremonies had taken place, and there was a risk of the correct dances and songs becoming lost if they could not be taught to younger generations.

It was during this period that a carver at Alert Bay began to make little figures and distribute them as gifts to the attendant Kwakwaka’wakw boys during Christmas giveaways and other occasions. This carver’s name was Gordon Scow, whose family had been prominent in the protests against the potlatch ban in the 1920s (Sewid-Smith, 1979:82). Scow’s figures provide a unique insight into the ways in which miniatures can
be used to consciously preserve and transmit culture through the essential affordances of the medium.

Scow’s figures depict tiny human figures, carved from a local hardwood, probably alder, stained brown and varnished. They stand approximately 24cm tall, each on its own wooden block and their well-proportioned limbs are positioned in dancing poses, with the adjustable arms articulated with brass pins. They wear red cotton cloth garters, arm bands and breechcloths, the fabric unravelled at the edges to create long tassels. Their heads are covered by articulated Hamat’sa masks, with adjustable jaws, and fabric fringes, painted in the traditional red, white and black designs of the full-sized masks (figs. 6.7 and 6.8).

Perhaps most significantly, there are no two the same; all of the figures depict different styles of Hamat’sa mask, each an individual dancer performing a different stage of the complex dance, the importance of which James Sewid makes clear:

It was at this time that all the retired hamatsas would come and teach me how to dance and the new songs. They kept all of this a secret and nobody else could watch except the retired hamatsas. It was awful hard for me to take because they just sat there watching me dance and if I had made any mistakes they told me to do it all over again . . . It was very important to do that dance right and not trip and fall while you were doing it.

- James Sewid, 1967 (Spradley, 1969:85)
Fig. 6.7. Hamat'sa dance figurines, made by Gordon Scow, c.1960. U’mista Cultural Centre.

Fig. 6.8. Hamat'sa dance figurines, made by Gordon Scow, c.1960. U’mista Cultural Centre.
These figures are not decorative curios or autoethnographies; none were ever made for sale. Neither are they casual experimentation with form and structure; unlike the simplifications of Martin’s canoe miniatures or the playful experimentation of James’ pole oeuvre, these are faithful, well-scaled mimetic reproductions of Hamat’sa dancers. This fact becomes even more pronounced when the figures are deconstructed. The U’mista Cultural Centre at Alert Bay has a number of pieces from an unfinished Scow figurine (fig. 6.10), which clearly illustrates that there was a hidden personification within the miniatures, one which was concealed behind the mask.

The masks are irremovable; they have been firmly attached and cannot be replaced, exchanged or swapped: each figure has a mask suited particularly to that dance and that dancer. However the mask is not attached to the body directly. There is a small piece of wood interceding between the mask and the body, a piece of wood which connects the two sections but which is completely invisible once the figure is completed. And these pieces of wood are shaped like human faces, with human features drawn onto them (fig 6.9).

![Fig. 6.9. Unfinished head from Hamat’sa dance figurine, Gordon Scow, c.1960. U’mista Cultural Centre.](image)

36 Some have been sold in recent years by their owners, currently (2016) retailing at auction at approximately CAN$160, but there is no record or suggestion that Scow sold any himself.
Although this particular unfinished face has no discernible identity, this evidence clearly indicates that these figures depict individual people participating in the ceremony. There is no evidence that the faces were painted to depict individual living people from the community, but that there are faces under the mask at all indicates that these are depictions of particular roles in which people act, analogous to the whale hunters in Makah miniatures of the late nineteenth century. In this way, they are able to “momentarily acquire subjectivity through [their] relationships with human beings” (cf. Fortis, 2012:175), as agents of knowledge. The distribution of these figurines, presented as gifts by a significant figure from a chiefly family to Kwakwaka’wakw boys in the years following the reprieve of the potlatch ban but before regular ceremonial activity began once more, combined with the nature of their identity suggests a deliberate role within Kwakwaka’wakw society as it undergoes transcultural alteration as a movement of aspiration.

These can be understood as direct pedagogical tools, which can be manipulated and played with so as to recreate the Hamats’a dances in miniature over and over again, small enough to be practiced away from prying official eyes and innocuous enough to appear nothing more than a doll or curio to the uninitiated. They allow for the tactile inhabitation of the miniature by its owner, assuming its status as the dancer and practicing for the day when the boy might be allowed to dance in the old ways and to join the Hamats’a society as his ancestors did. Moreover, their distribution suggests that they were not intended to be danced alone. Their variety and their individuality, coupled with their distribution
among the community indicate that they are for communal as well as individual practice. *Hamat’sa* dances required numbers of dancers in the ceremony; Sewid recalls that “there were about twelve or fifteen boys with me that had been hired by my grandfather” (Spradley, 1969:89), and so the boys of Alert Bay could gather in their houses or deep in the woods of Cormorant Island and practice the *Hamat’sa* together under instruction from Scow or another elder. Years later, anthropologist Bill Holm wrote that “this dance, called the *bənsməmala* ‘wearing the cannibal mask’, was one of the more dramatic of the [winter ceremonies] and, as of the 1980s, one of the least altered by the passage of time” (1990:381).

**Miniaturisation as cultural resilience**

This thesis discusses at some length the role of the carver within Northwest Coast society as a bearer of culture; among the Haida for example it was noted that at times of crisis carvers took up the art form as a means of cultural continuity. Such was also true of the Kwakw’ak’wakw:

> The ongoing tradition of carving was another symbol of the determination of our people to carry on, despite increasing pressure from outside to abandon the old ways. While some of the best examples of our “art” from the period may now be in faraway museums, our creative output never died.

-Gloria Cranmer Webster, (2013:269)

It was not carving alone however that maintained Kwakw’ak’wakw material culture, it was the form so much of that carving took as an ethnodramatic subversive means of passive resistance; a “movement of memory reaching into the past” (Gell, 1998:258). Just as Charlie James preserved his family crests by producing them over and over again in miniature, using his imagination to vary and experiment with the miniature form before him, but always from the same template; just as Mungo Martin reproduced two versions of Kwakw’ak’wakw hunters, one realistic and safe for Alert Bay and one traditional and imaginative for the Museum of Anthropology, so Gordon Scow used miniaturisation to preserve his culture, educate new generations and simultaneously protect his people from reprisal. This behaviour is recognised by contemporary carvers; commenting on the Haida miniatures referenced in the previous chapter, Wayne Alfred noted that they were made “So they probably wanted to leave it for memory”.

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The Kwakwa’wakw of the early twentieth century had lived through disease and economic crisis and in 1921 faced the possibility of the wholesale destruction of their traditional cultural systems through Halliday’s vindictive enforcement of the Potlatch Ban coupled with the establishment of the Alert Bay residential school, which threatened to eliminate Kwakwa’wakw traditions and the Kwak’wala language for future generations. Over time traditional practices were driven further and further from their communities and traditional material culture became less and less common. Ostensibly it was just as Halliday would have wished, but Kwakwa’wakw artists and elders learned means of non-violent resistance, which would protect those practices which could be protected and preserve them for a future in which the repression had been relieved. It has even been suggested that it was the potlatch law itself which generated resistance; it is a curious observation that the potlatch survived most strongly among those people for whom it was most strongly prohibited (Cole & Chaikin, 1990:175). Either way, by the middle of the 1960s this process had gone into reverse; at a potlatch in 1966, a visitor recalled “[Kwakwa’wakw] children from the nearby residential school were herded into the dance house to witness events that were almost as unfamiliar to them as they were to their non-Indian teachers” (Macnair, 1986:516). Indigenous artists were subsequently invited to St. Michael’s school to teach classes on Kwakwa’wakw art (TRC III:194), and dances and ceremonies once again became common (Wolcott, 1967:54), including the Hamat’sa, rebuilt using the knowledge, evidence and example left by the elders.

Miniatures were one technique which allowed the Kwakwa’wakw to achieve this ambition, by placing ritual material culture into the facile and mundane. By turning totems of huge familial significance into “idiot sticks”, it distracted the government officials away from these expressions of indigenous identity, and allowed artists to experiment with and develop their work, to export it and distribute it and to pass it to their children and grandchildren. By conflating play with tradition through miniatures, these children could learn the dances and symbols which defined their place in the world safe from reprisal or arrest. When the law had been changed and Kwakwa’wakw control over their own affairs restored, it was miniatures which, in combination with other recorded evidence and survival strategies, allowed the Kwakwa’wakw to rebuild their ceremonial and material culture traditions.
Chapter 7: Small foundations: ownership of space with the Tulalip Tribes

In the Lushootseed language, Tulalip means “purse”, and the Tulalip Reservation of Northwestern Washington was so named because at its heart lies a sheltered natural harbour shaped like a clutch-purse (figs. 7.1 & 7.2; Maps 8 & 9). The Reservation is the home of the Tulalip Tribes, an artificially assembled indigenous group comprised of elements of seven Salishan tribes from the surrounding territories, who surrendered their lands and moved to the reservation by the terms of the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott.

In recent years, the Tulalip have changed dramatically as part of the Northwest Coast “renaissance”, from historic disenfranchisement and cultural dislocation through a major alteration in both social and material culture, supported by new revenue streams. Miniaturisation forms an important step in the practical process by which this has come about, and this chapter will explore how this has occurred by first examining the history of the Tulalip Tribes and the traditional material culture practices of the Salishan people of Washington State, before subsequently contextualising the roles of miniaturisation in modern Tulalip cultural assertion through ethnographic fieldwork.

There have been no academic ethnographies of the Tulalip published to date. The only extensive account of Tulalip life is the 2013 posthumous semi-autobiographical book *Tulalip: From my Heart*, compiled from interviews with elder and “culture-bearer”, daughter of Chief William Shelton, Harriette Shelton Dover (1904-1991). There are however ethnographies and studies from research with other Salish groups which are directly relevant, including Reagan (1921), Smith (1940), Suttles (1954), Barnett (1955), Elmendorf (1960), Suttles & Lane (1990), Harmon (2007), Miller (2007) and Brotherton (2008).
Fig. 7.1. Tulalip Bay, Postcard, 1912.

Fig. 7.2. Tulalip Bay, Author's photo, 2014.
Tulalip: Maximising resources

The Tulalip Tribes live on the Tulalip Reservation, which is situated in a pocket of land between Puget Sound on the west and Interstate Highway I-5 to the east. The Reservation lies some 35 miles north of Seattle city centre and approximately 70 miles south of the Canadian border. The city and naval base of Everett lies immediately to the south across the Snohomish River and the town of Marysville is situated immediately on the eastern side of the highway – in practical terms, Tulalip marks the northernmost point of the Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia conurbation which stretches along the eastern shoreline of Puget Sound. The reservation itself covers some 35 square miles of secondary growth forest with a few hills and small lakes to break the treeline. It has, indeed was probably originally selected because it has, no significant natural resources beyond its limited lumber capacity.

The Tulalip are not an ancient indigenous tribe; instead they are composed of parts of seven ancient tribes: the Duwamish, Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Skagit, Suiattle, Samish, and Stillaguamish peoples who lived semi-nomadic lives of seasonal migration along the shores of northeastern Puget Sound. All of these peoples are from the Salish culture area and spoke dialects of the Lushootseed language, but in 1855 the Treaty of Point Elliot drew an arbitrary circle over the bays and islands of this part of Northwestern Washington, sweeping those indigenous people within onto the Tulalip Reservation without regard for ancestral and familial ties. As no tribe had paramount authority on the Reservation the families formed an informal council, and when the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act handed control back to the inhabitants they formalised the council into an elected Board of Directors to oversee Reservation life rather than a traditional chief or elected senate, the lack of cultural homogeneity causing them to consider themselves more a business organisation than a cultural or political government; Shelton Dover wrote that “the younger people came up with the [name] Tulalip Board of Directors, since if we are going to handle or take care of tribal land, then we are in business; so let’s call it a board of directors to take care of the business of the tribes” (2013:202). Although, as elsewhere on the Northwest Coast, ancestral lines are minutely tracked and ancestors venerated, over generations of intermarriage and co-operation the

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37 A note on nomenclature. Puget Sound is the official name of the large body of water which reaches southwards from the Straits of Juan de Fuca into Western Washington, separating the Olympic Peninsula from the mainland. As will become apparent in this chapter, this name is controversial and has, in some respects, been superseded by the term Salish Sea – the Tulalip generally used the term Salish Sea in conversations relating to the body of water. Technically however the term Salish Sea actually refers to a much wider collection of bodies of water, and therefore here the term Puget Sound is used in a strict geographical sense.
divisions between these separate tribal groupings have largely broken down, and during fieldwork one resident confidently explained that she was now, explicitly, a “Tulalip woman” rather than a member of one of the original tribal groups.

For decades Tulalip was a quiet rural community, subsisting on fishing, logging and the sale of long-term leases to beachfront properties to Seattleites. In recent years however the Reservation has transformed in a remarkable example of the Tulalip effectively maximising their natural resources by operating as a business concern rather than a government. In the 1990s the Tulalip Board of Directors voted to legalise gambling on the reservation within a restricted area close to exit 200 on the I-5 at a traditional village site known as Quil Ceda. The Quil Ceda casino was opened and proved successful with the through traffic between Vancouver and Seattle. I-5 is the main US west coast highway, and well placed advertising and fortuitous location meant that within a few years the tribe had made significant amounts of money from their investment. The decision was then taken to significantly develop the Reservation’s gambling infrastructure.

Fig. 7.3. Tulalip Resort & Casino, Author’s photo, 2014.
The Tulalip Resort and Casino (fig. 7.3), opened in 2008, is the largest such institution in the Pacific Northwest, designed to Las Vegas Strip proportions, it sprawls along the western side of the I-5, featuring a high-end designer outlet mall, food court, several large warehouse stores and acres of parking all centred on the casino and hotel itself. The hotel includes a spa, conference centre, large pool and several gourmet restaurants all surrounding a very large gaming floor populated by ringing fruit machines and gaming tables for craps, roulette and blackjack, with special VIP lounges for high end games.

The casino is not however a popular gaming venue for Reservation residents. One informant explained that the casino floor was for “Porucs”, a lightly derogatory term among indigenous Salish for white people.38 Where Tulalip tribal members are much in evidence however is among the visible casino and hotel staff; pit bosses, croupiers, cashiers, receptionists and concierge. Many of these employees emphasise their origins with jewellery, badges and beaded accessories such as hairbands and bolo ties in the Tulalip colours of white, black and red.

These visual statements of identity extend to the building fabric: what especially separates the Tulalip casino from its Vegas compatriots is that the whole building has a Tulalip theme. Not a pseudo-pan-Indian pastiche, nor even the generic “totem” theme common to the smaller and less lucrative casinos found elsewhere in the Northwest, but an explicitly Tulalip theme; huge steel drum designs featuring Tulalip crests and animals stud the external and internal walls; canoe motifs are ever present, both carved wooden canoes and artistic interpretations in glass and metal; shoals of steel salmon shimmer in the lights near the ceiling; huge installation pieces in the shapes of paddles and combs mark hallways and lobbies and even the carpets have been designed by tribal artists. Behind the main reception desk, a wide stained glass window depicting a skeuomorphically basket-like ovoid eye staring onto Tulalip Bay replete with formline orcas, throws artificial light on the guests as they arrive, and in the main lobby stand three full-sized totem poles.

What consciously makes this decoration Tulalip is that from start to finish the casino decoration is designed and produced by tribal members, largely on the reservation at the Tulalip Tribes Art Manufacturing Center. To employ this facility and ensure a steady stream of work, the Tulalip contractually retain a monopoly on decorating the casino and many of the outlet stores which surround it. What they choose to create for this purpose, and the methods by which they create this art work provide considerable semiotic insight into how the Tulalip wish to be seen by the visitors to their Reservation.

38 Apparently derived from Padraig, reflecting the heavy Irish settlement of the region in the late nineteenth century
The Tulalip Tribes Art Manufacturing Center

One use to which the casino revenue has been put is to provide at least six and sometimes more Tulalip carvers with reliable full-time employment. This is facilitated via the Tulalip Tribes Art Manufacturing Center, more commonly known as the carving shed or carving workshop, an installation situated close to exit 202 on I-5, just a few yards from the outlet mall, although sheltered from view by a grove of tertiary-growth Douglas fir. This institution is managed by Mike Gobin, whose position comes not from his (high-quality) carving ability, but through his experience of management at the Quil Ceda casino. Working with Mike are the tribe’s master carvers, elders Steven Madison and Joe Gobin and the younger James Madison, as well as a number of apprentices and graphic artists, some of whom work on a casual short-term or part-time basis.

Work in the carving shed is officially solely that authorised by the tribe’s Board of Directors and is run as a branch of government; there is a set working week, and hours can be extended to accommodate larger projects or major deadlines: Mike is proud that despite the heavy workload the workshop has never delivered late on a project. Although visitors, including itinerant drop-in anthropologists and organised school parties and casino visitors, are common and welcome, it is an active workshop, not an educational establishment and no non-tribal member is permitted to work within the facility; in part this is due to the importance of preserving Tulalip authenticity and exclusivity over what goes on there.

Fig. 7.4. Tulalip Tribes Art Manufacturing Center, Author’s photo, 2014.
The building itself is a white warehouse situated amid a collection of similar warehouses, one of which contains a collection of old totem poles awaiting conservation work. On the ground floor is a wide carving floor, with stacked wood and a number of half-finished projects at various stages of development (fig. 7.4). Racks of personal traditional carving tools and shelves of more expensive electric tools are ranged along the walls along with hoists, pallet trucks and other lifting and stability equipment. On the north side is a partition, behind which is a smaller workshop with band saws, pillar drills and other larger and more expensive pieces of woodworking machinery, behind which is a storage room where finished or near-finished carvings are kept for polishing and painting until they are ready for installation. The larger equipment is purchased through the Board of Directors by special application, the handheld tools the private possessions of the individual carvers – handmade to the individual specifications of the carver. Use of modern tools does not in any way distract from the authenticity of the art; Mike Gobin commented that they used modern tools “because we’re not stupid. If they’d had these tools back in the day they would’ve used them too.”

Upstairs is a long attic room which features a bank of high-quality graphics computers attached to a large architectural printer. The workshop is among the best appointed of any Northwest Coast carving facility. Although carving collectives are relatively common, carving on such a large, organised scale, with carvers operating as salaried employees does not occur elsewhere on the coast, where individual carvers or carving families usually establish their own workshops, tailored to their particular tastes and requirements and reliant on income from art sales.

What the Tulalip tribes achieved using the financial security of the casino development is to establish an organised and well-appointed formal carving setting to employ the tribe’s best-known artists in producing artwork specifically for the Reservation. Although the carving workshop does not run educational programmes – their workload is too heavy for outreach or large apprenticeship schemes, this initiative attempts by example and praxis to generate an organised and systematic future for Tulalip carving, operating alongside and to an extent replacing the ad hoc familial carving lineages of the past with a unifying Tulalip artistic identity. Within this programme individual artists are given considerable scope to express themselves artistically. This however is only one component of the work at the Tulalip carving workshop; its primary function is to ensure a regular supply of high-quality commercial Tulalip art, which is then placed strategically at specific sites on the Reservation, making expressive and explicit statements of ownership of the land and the revenue it generates.
Salish contact history

The Salish people were among the last of the peoples of the Northwest Coast to be contacted by Europeans, and unlike the Haida or Makah or other oceanic tribes they do not have legends about the arrival of the “great canoes” (Anderson, 1939), experiencing contact gradually and often via other indigenous intermediaries. The division of the region, and the Salish, between Canada and the United States in 1846 prompted an extensive period of settlement which, for the first time, began to seriously encroach on Salish territory. The US response was to establish reservations in an arbitrary fashion over the next half century, with no thought given to conforming these reservations to existing linguistic, kinship or settlement patterns.

It was through this mechanism that the Tulalip Reservation was established, agreed by Stevens and a number of chiefs who, it is believed, were not given accurate translations of the document they were signing. Administration of the Tulalip Reservation was handed to the Catholic Church, who established a school and for the following eighty years the Tulalip Tribes, like the rest of the Puget Sound Salishan communities, came under the control of American political and religious authorities. In 1902 a government boarding school was established on the reservation under the control of Dr. Charles Buchanan. The school, as in other residential schools along the Northwest Coast (cf. chapters four and six) was a brutal environment – in some texts, Buchanan is portrayed as a vaguely benevolent figure; the University of Washington describes him as “a sympathetic defender of the Indians in his charge”, but Dover recalls his behaviour as superintendent of the Residential School:

> When some boys couldn’t take the strict regimentation anymore, and the hunger that we lived through, they ran away from school and tried to go home . . . Dr. Buchanan shaved their heads and made them wear girls’ dresses . . . they were fed bread and water for two weeks, in an isolation room . . . Dr. Buchanan took the runaways to another room. They took off all their clothes and were made to lie over a stool, and then he would strap them. He was a big strong man. You could hear them calling and crying because they would roll off the stool. The strap burns – it hurts. He strapped them all over their bodies, and he followed them all over the floor because they rolled over, and he hit them on their heads or

39 See the introduction to the Buchanan papers held in the University of Washington papers, accessible at http://digital.lib.washington.edu/findingaids/view?docId=BuchananCharlesMilton3907.xml (last accessed, 18/2/2016)
wherever he could hit them. . . They were almost dead, really. That’s a long, long road to being civilized. (Dover, 2013:121)”

Buchanan died in 1920 and the school closed shortly before the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934, which passed control of the reservation to its indigenous inhabitants. This long history of violent cultural and linguistic suppression left an indelible mark on the indigenous people who experienced it and their descendants as being in opposition to white power structures. In her memoirs, the normally equable Harriette Shelton Dover commented that “I have said I hated the white people with an undying hatred” (2013:133) and Lamalchi elder Rocky Wilson, whose parents were sent to the Tulalip school, wrote that since contact “the whites have deemed us to be savages and murderers” and called white governance “the iron fist” (2007:134).

It was around this time that totem poles began to appear in Salish communities when master carvers, concerned that their work was not being taken seriously in comparison with the more dramatic constructs of the Northern tribes, began to produce their own poles in response. The pioneer of this work was William Shelton of the Tulalip Reservation, whose works are now among the most common poles still standing on the Northwest Coast. In carving these poles, Shelton and his contemporaries did not simply copy Northern styles, but adapted the traditional Salish house-post style for the new medium. As a result, Salish poles do not depict family lineages in the Northern formline style, the designs instead portraying traditional Salish stories with distinct figures and motifs running along the pole. Although the Salish mostly held intangible intellectual property in a similar manner to other tribes, this was less likely to be proscribed in material culture terms, with artists more free to express individuality in their art production without the more onerous restrictions imposed on imagery to the north (Barnett, 1955:57).

In the 1960s and 1970s the Tulalip were engaged, with other Puget Sound tribes, in actively regaining access and rights to their traditional fishing grounds, which had been eroded by piecemeal environmental legislation, over-fishing by American trawlers and a suspiciously zealous Coast Guard operation targeting Native fishing vessels (Dover, 2013:174). This ambition was achieved in 1974 with the federal Boldt decision which awarded indigenous fishing concerns 50% of the salmon catch, a decision upheld by the US Supreme Court in 1979 (Brown, 1994; Boxberger, 2007). This lengthy legal struggle, in

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40 Dover does later qualify this account with the summation that Buchanan “was mean; in some ways, he was too mean. But, in other ways, he was a nice man to know”. This was probably influenced by her father, William Shelton, who as chief had a positive working relationship with Buchanan (2013:145).
combination with other political and legal challenges to the unlawful restrictions of the past, took place against the backdrop of the Northwest Coast “renaissance”, and in particular the pioneering work of Haida artist Bill Reid, who provided expert advice to Tulalip carvers in the 1980s as they sought to emulate his resurgence of traditional carving practices. These recognitions of historic legal rights are continuing, and form an essential part of modern Salish identity – to be recognised as independent, indigenous authorities in their own right (Wilson, 2007).

**Tulalip totem poles**

Once William Shelton had begun carving totem poles, his work spread to other Salish carvers, and within a few years poles had sprung up all along the Washington coastline. These poles were regularly maintained with thick coats of paint, giving them a distinctive, blocky, almost post-impressionist appearance which accentuated the separate figures on the poles. They were placed in positions of prominent political or legal conflict; a Lummi pole by Joseph Hillaire, a schoolmate of Harriette Shelton Dover, erected in 1952, stands outside the Whatcom County Courthouse in Bellingham, depicting the arrival of European settlers to the region in 1852. Shelton himself erected a 70-foot pole outside the Washington State Legislature in Olympia in 1940, depicting *skelalitut* figures demonstrating how to live a moral life.

The positioning of these poles and their stories at sites of white American authority, accessible to the Salish community but with a deliberate satirical irony largely lost on the non-Native inhabitants, was no accident. By situating their works in these places of law and government, the carvers were staking a clear claim to be part of the process rather than relegated to the marginalised position imposed upon the Salish. Nowhere is this more notable however than the raising of totem poles at schools. Perhaps in reaction to the long-gone residential school, all of the schools on the Tulalip Reservation have large, prominent totem poles standing outside them, made by local carvers and often maintained by the children. This placement is quite deliberate in reinforcing the ownership, the ethos, of the schools in response to the history of residential school imposition at Tulalip. This is a tactic still employed by Salishan peoples in the region: in 2014, concerned by high drop-out rates among Native children, Nooksack carver George Swanaset Sr. raised a pole at Nooksack Valley Middle School. The Nooksack have long been noted as a tribe with exceptionally severe cultural dislocation (Smith, 1950:330), and Swanaset commented of the Nooksack children that “They’re going to come to school
and it’s going to be able to relate to them”, helping indigenous students feel less alienated by the school environment and encouraging pride in their origins (Criscione, 2014).  

Fig. 7.6. Nooksack motivational poster, Author’s photo, 2014.

Although a relatively modern tradition, the Salishan peoples have established totem poles and other monumental art as markers not explicitly of individual or familial authority as elsewhere, but of a broader communal, tribal or racial identity, often cited specifically at sites of Native/non-Native conflict. In this way, they operate as a very visible, dramatic and yet still subtle means of pronouncing ownership. However these poles do not last long, even by the standards of the wet environment of the region; the thick paint applied to the poles, intended to keep water out, instead sealed the water already in the trunk deep inside the tree’s heartwood, which began to rot. In consequence the poles rotted faster than expected and many fell, including, recently, Shelton’s pole at Olympia.

41 This connects with a growing body of recent research on the burgeoning role of traditional knowledge within formal Native American modern education systems (Thornton, 2015)

42 In the light of this acknowledgement, it is worth looking once more at the cod-lure sculpture presented to me during research by Mike Gobin which appeared in fig. 1.7. Although given, I firmly believe, as a genuine gesture of friendship and welcome, it also explicitly situates Tulalip identity into the contact zone of the research as an attractive agent, and successfully compels its use in the thesis.
When casinos became a popular means of bringing revenue to indigenous communities, totem poles were rapidly placed there too. By doing so, tribes were proclaiming authority over their revenue stream, independence from the state authorities and associating themselves with the “Indian Casino” brand. Some of these poles are of poor quality; dismissively referred to as “chainsaw jobs”. None of the participants in this project made the link specifically, but the poles standing outside the Nooksack River Casino could be classed in this category (fig. 7.7); where a cursory examination can understand them as curiously generic poles, with the toothmarks of chainsaw slashes still visible, especially on the back.

![Fig. 7.7. Pole at the Nooksack River Casino, Author’s photo, 2014.](image)

When the Tulalip resort was in the planning stages, the Directors committed to filling it with Tulalip art, valued at more than US$1 million (Thompson, 2007), the centrepiece of which was to commission three large poles from the Art Manufacturing Center to stand in the lobby. These poles, carved to very high quality, are a clear and unambiguous statement from Tulalip about who owns the casino and the land on which it was built (fig. 7.8). The central pole is a tall welcome figure, and the poles which flank it are highly individual designs consciously chosen to represent the past and future of the Tulalip
Tribes. To the proper left of the welcome figure is a tall pole designed in traditional Salish style by Joe Gobin. It depicts a shaman atop a bear figure above six drummers and although the composition owes much to northern pole formline style, particularly the bear, the figures are recognisably Salish in design. The second pole is by the artist James Madison and features a more modern composition which combines Northern formline and Salish design, reflecting the artist’s dual Tulalip-Tlingit heritage and elements of his modern art training. On the pole, which features a bear, killer whale, eagle and wolf, these northern crest animals are studded with faces, both traditional Salish faces and more northerly formline visages in blue and white glass, giving the pole a translucent quality which contrasts effectively with the dark red-brown of the cedar.

Fig. 7.8. Tulalip Casino poles, © Tulalip Tribes.

That these three artworks stand in the reception hall of the hotel establishes the ownership of the land and casino and the wealth it brings – it leaves a visitor in no doubt, like a guest at a giveaway potlatch, who is the host and therefore who holds authority and power in this environment and it does so in a way that is both direct and colossal, but also subtle in the personal relationship between the poles and two of the most successful living Tulalip artists.
Additional poles and colossal welcome figures have subsequently been commissioned for the large modern tribal administration centre, the Hibulb Museum and Cultural Center and the Reservation hospital, among other places. Tulalip artists take pride in all of their work, but these were special commissions from the Board of Directors, and their planning and development was a lengthy process.

Creating a Tulalip pole

Traditionally, Salish carvers followed the Northwest Coast tradition of carving commissions. Although the carvings on Salish poles and posts are stories rather than the reserved iconography of the Northern tribes, they are still subject to the concept of ownership, and only those endowed with the inherited rights to the stories depicted may give permission for them to be carved. For modern Tulalip carvers, these prohibitions remain in place, although in keeping with most modern practitioners of Northwest Coast art, Tulalip artists are known for their experimental designs when producing pieces for the commercial art market.

A commission for a new pole, or any large scale commercial artwork, comes initially from the Board of Directors for the Tulalip Tribes. When a new building is commissioned or major project started these large installations will be incorporated into the original plans, with the understanding that they are subject to the availability of labour and materials. An open call to members of the tribe will go out, requesting the submission of designs. These designs are collated, assessed and then the winning designs are purchased. Once the designs are secured, the director of the tribal carving programme, Mike Gobin, will then agree to a work programme, deadline and budget with the Board of Directors, taking into account existing commitments.
To an extent the scope of the commission is decided by materials. There are very few old-growth cedar trees on the reservation, and those that stand are protected by the tribal forestry department. More trees of the necessary age and size can be found in the Cascade Mountains, but they too are rarely cut. When one falls naturally it is sometimes allocated to Tulalip, although it is up to the carvers to secure and retrieve the tree which will, by its very survival, be located in an inaccessible environment. Although the wood itself is free, the recovery operation can be lengthy and expensive, but the alternative is to secure suitable wood from one of the major logging companies who operate in less-touched forests further north, such as Sealaska, which brings expenses of its own. A full-sized old-growth cedar trunk can however provide enough wood for several large poles – those erected in the Casino are all carved from the same tree.
With a schedule arranged and wood secured, the next stage is planning. This process can take as long as eighteen months, during which time the carvers will discuss options, consult on designs, prepare hand-sketches and vector drawings and, in a unique innovation for the region, produce 3-D digital graphical representations of the pole, using these models to test proportions and possibilities with the wood available. The digital design stage is unusual; few other carvers of the coast produce such a varied range of experimental designs through graphic software before starting to carve. It is a form of miniaturisation, allowing for experimentation in a dimensionless space without consequence, permitting the carvers to manipulate their designs endlessly in a safe medium. It is not however the only form of experimentation which occurs; in the last part of the process before submission, a maquette or miniature of the pole or figure is carved.

This maquette is made from a small cedar block, shaped to an approximate scale model of the larger artwork. The carving is precise but simple, with close relief details usually omitted in favour of generating an impression of the artwork’s proportion and design. The maquette is painted in the same colours as the planned artwork and then presented alongside sketches, digital designs and an oral presentation by the director or artist to the Board of Directors. The Directors will discuss the design, may suggest alterations and then ultimately vote on whether to approve the sculpture and set final deadlines and budgets for its completion.

There is no formal spiritual or ritual process involved in the creation these carvings yet the spiritual-cultural aspect of the work is ever present and discernible in other ways – for example Joe Gobin will always carve the eyes of the figures on the poles at the very last possible moment as the “eyes bring the piece to life”, but these practices apply only to the large public art pieces, not to the maquettes or drawings that contribute to them. Once the carving is complete, the tribe’s “spiritual doctors” will purify the workshop in preparation for the pole’s departure and a public ritual ceremony will take place as the pole is raised.
Fig. 7.10. Maquettes for colossal carvings at the Tulalip day-care centre, Tulalip Tribes Art Manufacturing Center, Author's photo, 2015.

Fig. 7.11. Sʔaʔaləhd (Steven Madison) carving a figure based on the maquette in fig. 7.10, Author's photo, 2015.
Hibulb Welcome figures

The making of the miniature is more than a presentational step. By shaping and constructing the maquette, the artist acquires knowledge which cannot be gleaned from blueprints, sketches or even from digital animations of the artwork; James Madison notes that miniatures provide “so many avenues for purpose. They are part of learning how to carve” and that the maquettes “get you to the finish line faster”.

A good example of this process in action can be found with the welcome figures at the Hibulb Cultural Center. Designed as the first examples of Tulalip art that visitors to the Center encounter, these figures are rooted in the Salish tradition of Welcome figures, huge human figures in cedar, positioned on a beachfront to welcome arrivals by canoe to the community. These figures are usually substantially larger than life size with painted features and arms either occupied or spread wide in greeting.

The pair at the entrance to Hibulb were commissioned from the carving workshop by the Directors and responsibility for carving them given to Joe Gobin and James Madison. They were to be male and female figures, standing approximately twelve feet high inside the entrance to the Cultural Center. Unlike the interior house post which decorate the Center’s longhouse, these figures stand prominently and alone within the wood and stone entrance hall.

![Image of Welcome figures, Hibulb Cultural Center](image_url)

Fig. 7.12. Welcome figures, Hibulb Cultural Center, © Tulalip Tribes.
James Madison’s figure is the woman, executed in Madison’s recognisable modernist Salish style which he describes as “empowering and memorable”. She wears a calico headscarf and a long dress reminiscent of Salish women in photographs from the early twentieth century, she is an elder and in her arms is a basket of freshly gathered clams. Red and white painted designs pick out basketry designs on her dress and headscarf, and the scene appears totally naturalistic until you notice that her bare feet are standing on an opening clam from which a human face peers out, in a commentary on the foundation and continuation of the Tulalip. Madison is explicit about his role in the development of Tulalip culture:

Listen to the wood. The wood is gonna tell you what it wants to be.

We are keeping our culture alive. Art is an active part of marketing our people and tribe. These monumental pieces, letting everybody know who Tulalips are, who the Coast Salish are. Creating a larger identity for the Northwest Coast.

I breathe this, I bleed this.

-James Madison, interview 2015

The other figure, by Joe Gobin, addresses continuity in a different way. A male figure, it depicts a young man with the smooth rounded facial features of traditional Salish design, the wide eyes, broad nose and open lips which feature so heavily on traditional artworks from this part of the coast. The figure wears a loose smock with a red and black sash and a cedarbark rainhat, and carried in its hands a paddle. This is a depiction of a pre-contact canoe captain.

Fig. 7.13. Maquette for Gobin’s welcome figure, Tulalip Tribes Art Manufacturing Center, Author’s photo, 2014.
There was no miniature made for the female figure, but Gobin’s maquette has a prominent place in the workshop – it sits on a table close to the door next to the radio. What is immediately striking in comparing the two is how much more detailed the larger figure is; the maquette appears as an experiment in proportion, an attempt to play with the ideas behind the figure and explore what works best. The toolmarks however, such a prominent and important part of the texture of the large carving, are absent and the proportions of the sash and hat have changed noticeably between the small maquette and its larger relative.

Note that the paddle on the maquette has snapped – it is positioned at a less acute angle on the maquette and has broken on the shoulder and been repaired. The lesson here is that the paddle was incorrectly balanced on the maquette and the weight of the blade and its position made the paddle too fragile so adjustments were made in the final artwork. Gobin is learning and developing technique as part of the process and praxis of creating the miniature so that the final design is stronger and better, the miniature both an imaginative and physical experiment within a thoroughly traditional design.

The Tulalip canoe

Gobin, with his late friend and mentor Jerry Jones, was at the forefront of the Tulalip canoe renaissance in the 1980s. Like many Salish communities, the Tulalip ceased the production and use of traditional dug-out canoes in the early twentieth century. Although the Tulalip probably originally used the Coast Salish design of canoe, by the late nineteenth century they had adopted the Westcoast style canoe, apparently under influence from the Quileute with whom they have long have familial and commercial links. Tulalip canoe culture was very active in the early twentieth century, the Tulalip participating in the Salishan tradition of canoe racing.

Salish canoe racing is a sport specific to the Salishan tribes of the southern coast. Although more northerly tribes could and did have demonstration races and feats of seamanship in their canoes, these were not organised or structured in a recognisable way. For the Salish tribes, canoe racing was a regular and popular pastime, each community preparing a skilled and effective crew who would race at well attended regattas. The canoes used for these events were highly adapted Westcoast style vessels, with exceptionally narrow beam to improve speed and minimise weight. As these regattas were
held in good weather, the sea-handling qualities of the canoes were less important than on other designs and so they became single-purpose vessels whose success and failure became tied to communal pride and representation.

Salish canoe racing never died out in the way other elements of canoe culture faded during the mid-twentieth century, and it continues to this day. In the late 1980s, with canoe building becoming more and more important as a marker of cultural identity on the Northwest Coast, Joe Gobin and Jerry Jones set themselves the task of creating the tribes’ first dug-out canoe for fifty years, a mission to “bring our ocean-going canoes back”. Haida carver Bill Reid had been at the forefront of modern canoe design and Gobin and Jones learned much under his guidance; Gobin recounts making miniature canoes to practice the steaming process before attempting it on the larger vessel. Both had learned to carve as children and came from carving families; miniature canoes were a staple of Gobin’s carving education, but neither had seen a canoe under construction. The process was one of trial and error; despite the experimentation, the steaming proved a particularly complex process – long cracks opened in the canoe’s hull and had to be patched with metal plates that can still be seen under the paint.

The canoe was a success, and attended a number of Canoe Journeys in the 1990s and early 2000s. Gobin and Jones went to make several more canoes, both as working vessels for the tribe’s canoe crew and as display pieces: one hangs from the ceiling in the entrance hall of the Tulalip Tribes council chambers and another stands in the midst of a water feature at the main entrance to the casino. Both of these display pieces, although made and intended as sculptural installations rather than operational vessels, are made with the same techniques and to the same specifications as the working canoes and can be taken down from their positions and out onto the water at short notice.43

Gobin has also experimented with the canoe form; cedar trunks are a rare commodity in Tulalip and to compensate Gobin has also made a canoe from cedar strips, narrow planks of cedar wood placed ajar to one another over a framework in the shape of the canoe and held in place by dowelled joists. This not only creates a canoe which does not require an expensive whole cedar trunk, but also one which has apparently proven faster in the water than the more solid dug-outs. Gobin’s work on canoes illustrates both the imagination and willingness to adapt traditional designs for practical and symbolic requirements as

43 Both these vessels have holes bored into their hulls to prevent them filling with water (the council chambers have an emergency sprinkler system), but these holes are designed to be easily patched with pre-prepared plugs.
well as a clear understanding of the symbolic importance and significance of the canoe to Tulalip identity.

The Tulalip miniature canoe

In July 2010, a major ceremony and giveaway was held at Songhees, near Victoria on Vancouver Island. At this ceremony, a collaboration of indigenous peoples, including representatives of many Salish tribes from both Canada and the United States, came together to celebrate the official renaming of the Salish Sea. The Salish Sea campaign had been a pressure issue in indigenous relations in British Columbia and Washington State for some years, tied to the increasing legal and nominal reclamation of former tribal lands by indigenous groups. The campaign sought to eliminate the colonial names for the bodies of water on and around which the Salishan peoples live: Puget Sound, named for Lieutenant Peter Puget of Vancouver’s expedition in 1792; the Strait of Georgia, named for King George III on the same expedition; and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, named in 1787 by British sailor Charles Barkley after a quasi-legendary Greek-Spanish sailor said to have explored this coastline in 1592 (Wagner, 2002 [1933]:2-3).

After much debate a compromise was reached, whereby these bodies of water would retain their colonial names, but be officially and formally be known collectively as ”The Salish Sea”, both in Canada and the United States. The celebration at Songhees was to commemorate this renaming, with the highlight of the event to be the dedication of a canoe carved by indigenous Lieutenant Governor Steven Point and artist Tony Hunt, with the name Salish Sea, which was presented to the Canadian Navy. Point said "Coast Salish peoples have traversed these waters for thousands of years, and this name pays homage to our collective history. Today's celebration reflects the growing understanding and appreciation of our cultures. It is another step in the bridge of reconciliation” (CBC News, 2010). Three other indigenous artists were also commissioned, without pay, to produce art works commemorating this event, which would reportedly be subsequently presented to the national governments of the peoples concerned. This process was consciously intended to be an exercise in symbolic reclamation, these artworks, all canoes or canoe miniatures, to act as a statement of ownership over the newly named body of water.

One of the artists approached for this honour was Joe Gobin. Gobin decided to make a perfect miniature replica of a traditional Tulalip Westcoast canoe, deliberately reproducing the proportions and decoration of a canoe just like those large vessels he had made and
explicitly unlike the exaggerated profile and colouration of the tourist trade items or toys that are commonly associated with miniature canoes in Western Washington (Tulalip is after all only 40 miles from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop). In Gobin’s words, he intended that “a hundred years from now someone can look at this and see what a [Tulalip] canoe looks like”. As a prototype, Gobin selected the large historic canoe on display at the Hibulb Cultural Center, which had also been an inspiration for his full-sized canoes. This vessel was the last surviving intact Tulalip canoe made before the cessation of regular canoe construction in the mid-twentieth century. Produced by William Shelton, it had been stored for decades (alongside a stack of totem poles) beneath undergrowth in a garden on the Reservation and required considerable conservation work after it had been moved to Hibulb. It is now situated in the main entrance hall and is probably the second piece of Tulalip material culture (after the welcome figures) that visitors will encounter in the building.

This worn and far-from-watertight canoe therefore stands for more than the sum of its parts. It is an example of the enduring skill and presence of one of the great Tulalip master carvers of the turn of the twentieth century and acts as a symbol for the endurance of the Tulalip people themselves. These therefore were the proportions he reproduced in the miniature. To ensure accuracy, Gobin created paddles, masts and a tiny woven cedar-bark sail. Although the proportions were determined “by eye”, Gobin judged them to be
the exact proportions of the canoe at Hibulb. Finally the canoe was painted in the same colours as his full-sized canoes.

Although the product was intended to be a precise replica, the praxis and materiality was not. Gobin did not make separate stern and bow pieces for the canoe, to be attached independently as they would be on a full-sized canoe, and nor was the miniature steamed, instead more simply carved out by hand. Rather than the brass strips attached to the keel of a canoe to protected it on a stony beach, he instead used highly polished hardwood to “represent” the brass. When asked why the original practices had not been followed, Gobin simply stated that there had been no need for them; essentially in this case that the praxis was less important in this case than producing a representative miniature which would have a skeuomorphic, semiotic effect on a viewer.

The canoe was presented to Steven Point at the Songhees ceremony, although Gobin did not attend. Subsequent attempts as part of this project to discover its present whereabouts have met without response. The eventual fate of the miniature is however less important to this study than Gobin’s understanding of its intended destination and its effect on the cognitive and technical elements of his work. Gobin described it as being

Fig. 7.15. Joe Gobin working on his miniature canoe, 2010. Photo courtesy of Joe Gobin.
“given to Obama”, although it was not clear whether this was a figurative or literal understanding of its destination. In Tulalip understanding therefore, a canoe miniature operating indexically as a statement of Tulalip identity and resource ownership was travelling to the seat of American power; tracing a journey not dissimilar to those of the Makah canoe miniatures.

![Fig. 7.16. Songhees ceremony, 2010. Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, British Columbia. Joe Gobin’s miniature canoe is on the far left.](image)

**Miniaturisation and Tulalip identity**

This chapter presents an ethnographic study of the methods by which a confederated atraditional Coast Salish tribe have instituted a modern, quasi-industrialised indigenous art programme through which they are conspicuously staking claim to resources in opposition to historic repression. The provision of readily available equipment and training, coupled with the imaginative stimuli of the communal carving environment, are essential in furthering and developing contemporary Tulalip art as a recognisably distinct school of the established Salish art form, and thereby deliberately generating synecdochic statements of identity and authority.

Miniatures are a vital component of this process. By producing miniatures, Tulalip artists have the ability to learn through practice and develop their art style before working on the
larger statement pieces. In traditional Salish fashion, these decorate those parts of the Reservation which are of greatest cultural, political or economic importance as statements of ownership of these sites not by individual families or lineages, but, through the display of owned stories, of the entire community. By submitting miniatures to the Board of Directors for approval, the artists are allowing the political authority on the reservation to exercise dominance over the creation process and, by selectively approving submitted designs, to influence the direction of Tulalip art as a defined art form within these sites of contact. That this centralised process has not resulted in homogenous art can be attributed to a combination of the skill of the particular practitioners involved, the freedom the Board permit their designers and the thriving private art market which effectively complements the public art of the Reservation. By ensuring that the hotel and outlet mall require a constant stream of art production, the Tulalip Tribes have solidified the future of Tulalip material culture in a systematic way that few tribes can match, and use miniaturisation as an essential stage in the imaginative creative process.

There is however another side to miniaturisation on the Tulalip Reservation, exemplified by Joe Gobin’s canoe made for the Songheees ceremony. Miniaturisation allowed Gobin to create a powerful index of Tulalip (and by extension, Salish) ownership of their tribal waters. By achieving the renaming of this body of water from the names of obscure European sailors to a collective term which encompasses thousands of indigenous users of the sea, the Salish achieved a semiotic victory in the long-running battle marked by the Boldt decision in 1974 and the Canoe Journeys twenty years later. Gobin’s miniature, designed with the hope (if not the expectation) that it might find a home in the White House, the political centre of the United States, explicitly establishes these claims in indigenous terms. By its considerable semiotic meaning, in the old tradition of Salish totem poles, it is a smaller, skilfully designed and created replica of the symbolic embodiment of Salish control of the seas and their wealth.

Unlike the Makah, Haida or Kwakwaka’wakw, Tulalip miniaturisation is not about movements of memory so much as it is about the future. Tulalip artists willingly adopt new technologies, imagery and ideology in their creative process; less hidebound by history and more focused on the movement of aspiration. Using art to publically state ownership and identity is a traditional Northwest Coast practice, but the systematised, commercial manner in which the Tulalip have pursued this programme speak to a determination to build on the past and explore new realities, and ambition within which miniaturisation is a vital component.
Chapter 8: Analysis of technique and status

In the case studies I have illustrated how miniaturisation has and continues to operate within four indigenous communities. Each is distinguished by localised differences created by the individual circumstances of the practice in those communities, such as the Tulalip search for a communal identity at sites of conflict or the historically dangerous nature of traditional material culture in Alert Bay. However there are themes which recur again and again in the case studies. Examples include resilience, pedagogy, communication and synecdochality.

The following chapter will seek to examine how some of these themes recur across the Northwest Coast as a whole by analysing five common issues raised by the data which have repeatedly been observed across the temporal and spatial scope of the Northwest Coast and which are of particular importance in interpreting how miniaturisation has operated within the material culture traditions of the region.

These five issues are:

- Fidelity and proportionality
- Materiality
- Ceremony
- Miniature as diorama
- Praxis and pedagogy

Each will be considered in relation to the museum and indigenous ethnography assembled for this thesis, with discussion of how they relate to and illuminate the major thematic questions, such as knowledge transfer, resilience through miniaturisation and synecdochic indexicality, which were raised in the case studies. This will then provide a body of evidence to support a wider ranging theoretical debate in the conclusion which follows.

It should be noted at the start that this section does not presume that all Northwest Coast communities practiced one homogenous type of material culture, or that material culture practices in those communities have not changed substantially over time. Participants gave considerable thought to explaining what miniatures meant to them and their communities as part of their participation in this project and it was repeatedly emphasised
during the fieldwork that tribal differences were crucial in this study; Alex McCarty went further, to point out that even within a tribe there were different practices reflected in the museum record:

It hurts me when I see a canoe that says that it was made by the Neah Bay Indians. The Neah Bay Indians didn’t make that canoe, it was made by a particular artist and it needs to be recognised that it was truly a family design and it should be recognised that there is some ownership involved there.

-Alex McCarty, Makah, interview 2015

This section therefore will not make generalisations about “Northwest Coast culture”, but will instead highlight recurring themes in the data, drawing on the case studies, which appear to cross cultural boundaries and which may be reflective of the wider similarities in material culture production across the region but still subject to local variation and innovation.
Fidelity and proportionality

In the case studies there has been repeated assertion that miniatures on the Northwest Coast appear to be out of proportion; this has developed from a study of museological considerations as to whether miniatures from the Northwest Coast can be considered models, defined as scientific devices from an explicitly European Enlightenment context, or whether they belong to another, indigenous, category of object entirely. In this section the evidence of proportionality in miniaturisation from across the coast will be considered, with a focus on how the affordance of disproportionality can contribute to the efficacy of miniaturisation.

Strict proportionality has never been a regular part of Northwest Coast artistic consideration: as Bill Holm noted in relation to formline design, “We can be reasonably sure, however, that the native artist used no such system of ratios and proportions in his approach to composition, even though the results of his efforts invite one to analyze them in geometric terms” (1965:69). In his study of the head canoe, he noted that

Models, the only three-dimensional evidence we have for the form of the archaic canoes, are notoriously distorted in proportion. . . it is abundantly clear that native models were habitually made much shorter in relation to their width and height than full-size canoes. Knowing this, we can infer that the hulls of actual canoes were probably longer in proportion by perhaps half than they appear in models, and that many models probably exaggerate the size of the fins and height of the sheerline break. . . Other than in those predictable distortions the forms of the old head canoe must have been much like the models. Most of the models were probably made after the full-size canoes ceased to exist, but knowledge of the traditional form persisted (1987ii:147-150).

For an example of this, see the comparison between figs 8.1 & 8.2.

Figs. 8.1 (left) & 8.2 (right). Graphic comparison of disproportionality between miniature (16/8773) and full-sized (16.1/2633) Northern style canoes in the AMNH.
Here, data will be provided to explore this acknowledged lack of proportionality within a case study examining a single dimension, to determine to what degree miniature canoes are out of proportion, and whether this lack of proportionality in the miniatures is uniform throughout the region, or whether localised differences are reflected in the miniature record.

For comparative purposes, there are few surviving full-scale canoes and some types are missing entirely from the contemporary record, including the ancient Head and Munka designs. The proportions deployed here have been taken from Eugene Arima’s 2002 article, which provides detailed architectural plans for specific canoe type specimens. These reveal proportional measurements for length of the selected designs in fig. 8.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Bow</th>
<th>Mid-section</th>
<th>Stern</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
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</thead>
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<td>822.96</td>
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<td>85</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1402.1</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>6:91:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Salish</td>
<td>111.8</td>
<td>619.8</td>
<td>106.7</td>
<td>13:74:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakutat</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>426.7</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6:82:12</td>
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Fig. 8.3. Table of Northwest Coast canoe dimensions (Arima, 2002).

These are obviously only guides to the proportions of full sized canoe types: the paucity in numbers and inaccessibility to examples renders an effort to make a comprehensive survey impossible: as a result, and as with so much in this project, observations will be indicative rather than conclusive, with margin for error. When compared with selected type specimens from the database however, comparisons can be made immediately between the proportionality of the full-sized canoes and their mimetic depictions in miniature. A sample of miniatures is therefore given in figs. 8.4 & 8.5 as indicative of the proportional relationship.

44 The first Northern design is a large Kwakwaka’wakw canoe. The second is a small Haida coastal Northern canoe CMH VII-B-1126
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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>35.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>22:60:18</td>
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<td>Head H1</td>
<td>PMAE 69-2010/1244</td>
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<td>110.8</td>
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**Fig. 8.4.** Table of selected Northwest Coast style canoe miniature dimensions

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<th>Stern</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
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<tr>
<td>Munka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salish Racing</td>
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<td>Coast Salish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yakutat</td>
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**Fig. 8.5.** Comparison chart of selected Northwest Coast style canoe dimensions with those of their miniature counterparts: Red (left) is the bow, blue is the midsection and red (right) is the stern.
From this simple qualitative sampling, it can be identified that there are significant alterations in proportionality throughout the coast, but that these are significantly more pronounced among canoes designs from the Northern region; sampled Westcoast canoe miniatures show more variation and the Salish Racing canoe miniatures are roughly proportional. – this suggests that there are localised and temporal differences in the importance of proportionality – that the indexical networks of some miniature canoe designs in some places are more or less reliant on proportionality to convey their information. To further explore whether this random sampling is an adequate interpretation, and begin to understand why the observed variations have occurred, a selective sampling of the miniatures collected in different contexts was also compiled in fig. 8.6

<table>
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<th>Bow</th>
<th>Mid-section</th>
<th>Stern</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern large</td>
<td>SBM NA-NW-HA-10E-1</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>19:63:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern souvenir</td>
<td>CMH VII-B-735</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19:59:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern small</td>
<td>PMAE 10-47-10/7687</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>11:73:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern commissioned</td>
<td>NMNH E72688-0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19:61:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern canoe bowl</td>
<td>AMNH 19/964</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>13:74:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774 Head</td>
<td>MdA 13896</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>23:53:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head H1 type</td>
<td>BM Am,+ .228</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>24:54:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head H2 type</td>
<td>AMNH 16/8907</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27:44:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westcoast W2</td>
<td>NMNH E72936-0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>17:72:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westcoast W3</td>
<td>MoA A1530</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>22:73:5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

45 In some cases, these canoes do not have full measurements as they could not be obtained – instead, in these cases, ratios have been obtained from photographs.
<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Westcoast W4</td>
<td>BM Am1961,04.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westcoast W6</td>
<td>BMNH 1-2040</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munka M1</td>
<td>PM 11157</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munka M2</td>
<td>NMS L.304.109</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 8.6.** Additional table of sample Northwest Coast style canoe miniature dimensions.

Fig. 8.6 illustrates even more clearly the discrepancies in proportionality between miniature canoes and their full-sized prototypes; the bow and sterns of these miniatures are drastically, significantly out of proportion. Even those commissioned as models by anthropologists have exaggerated features. This evidence conclusively determines that miniature canoes were not and cannot have been architectural models in a European sense, nor can they have been preparatory models for full-sized canoe construction except in the most abstract way – it would have been impossible to take a miniature and scale it up, or learn how a full-sized vessel was made by making a miniature in isolation from other production strategies.

Miniature houses likewise, although predominately made under the direct influence of scientifically minded American and European purchasers, give little sense that they too are generally intended to be scaled-replicas. Measurements taken of Haida longhouses in 1887 gave them approximate average dimensions of 25-50ft wide and “30 or 40”-80ft long (Deans, 1887). Obviously variation between individual villages and long houses would have been considerable, but the ratios these measurements provide are clearly illustrated in figs. 8.7 & 8.8.

It was not possible to find useful representational measurements for Salish houses. They were so idiosyncratic in construction that there are no representative measurements; in one article, an author lists ranges of between 520ft (158m) and 1,500ft (457m) long and between 60-90ft (18-27m) wide – the latter a contiguous “fort” created by attaching several houses together (Waterman & Coffin, 1920:17).
### Table of sample Northern Northwest Coast style house dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House size</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haida longhouse (minimum)</td>
<td>25ft (762cm)</td>
<td>30ft (914cm)</td>
<td>45:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deans, 1887)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haida longhouse (average)</td>
<td>37ft (1128cm)</td>
<td>55ft (1676cm)</td>
<td>40:60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deans, 1887)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haida longhouse (maximum)</td>
<td>50ft (1524cm)</td>
<td>80ft (2438cm)</td>
<td>38:62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deans, 1887)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 8.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miniature house size</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FM 17864 Haida World’s Fair house miniature</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>53:47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM 17822 Haida World’s Fair house miniature</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>52:48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM 18664 Heitsuk World’s Fair house miniature</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>55:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoV AA 696 Northern house miniature</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>49:51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoV AA 695 Kwakwakawak’w house miniature</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46:54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoV AA 698 Tsimshian house miniature (c.1920)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51:49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MQB 71.1885.78.11 Haida house miniature</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53:47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMAI 071120 Haida house miniature</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48:52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By comparison with a selection of full-size and miniature houses, a stark disparity in ratios becomes apparent. Most miniature houses are square or rectangular with the façade, the painted, carved decorated statement of ownership of the house given undue prominence from an architectural stand point, with the precise mechanics of house construction abandoned as unnecessary to the functionality of the miniature.

Among house miniatures, there are a few non-Native made examples, produced in the late-twentieth century for museum displays, which provide an interesting point of comparison. Indigenous house miniatures are generally almost square in shape, and usually slightly wider than they are tall, to an approximate ratio of 9:10, such as with the example of MQB 71.1885.78.11 (fig 8.9). These non-Native carved miniature houses show very different, much more realistic proportions, as illustrated by RCBM Eth.36, in which the ratio is reversed (fig. 8.10). This indicates that it was figurative rather than architectural fidelity which was important to the indigenous makers of miniature houses on the Northwest Coast.

A second notable feature of this comparison is the manner of construction. On the non-indigenous miniatures, the planks are accurately scaled to look realistic. On the Native-made miniatures, small planks are cut to fit, without consideration of their comparison with the planks used in full-scale houses; one is an attempt to create a model, the other only to draw on the iconic properties of the house for other, less obvious, purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NMAI 218865</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>50:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haida house miniature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMC VII-C-92</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43:57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsimshian house miniature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c.1879)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM Am1898,1020.1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52:48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haida house miniature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBCM Eth36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36:64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Native Northern house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miniature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 8.8. Table of sample Northwest Coast style house miniature dimensions.
The data demonstrates that the degree of disproportionality is greater in some typologies than others and thus indicates that accurate proportions are more important to the creators of specific types of miniature than others. This determines that miniaturisation is not a natural or unconscious choice, but a deliberate strategy in which different affordances are key to different functionalities. Thus there are times when features are significantly exaggerated, such as the autoethnographic canoe miniatures from Sitka or the Skidegate houses. There are times when approximate proportionality is all that is required, such as Martin’s miniature canoes or the work of Young Doctor. And then there are times when accurate proportionality is crucial to the effective operation of the miniature, such as Scow’s dancing figures or Tulalip maquettes.

This variety in proportionality is not accidental or the product of carelessness. Nor is it an indication that miniaturisation is uncaring of the affordances of the prototype. Instead these affordances are selectively dependent on their qualia with defined audiences; a lack of or adherence to proportional scaling is directly linked to the carver’s understanding of their audience and the imaginative effect they wished to provoke. These imaginative elements of miniaturisation freed carvers right along the Coast from practical physical restriction and allowed them to simplify the designs of the prototypes in the process of miniaturisation, emphasising some characteristics and diminishing others, identifying a correlation between mimetic exaggeration and indexical significance.

The interviews raised discussions on what a lack of proportion might imply, for example Alex McCarty cautioned against mistaking the miniature canoe for a metaphor, noting that it is “its own being” and that the bow and stern allow it to be identified as such:
J: So you are saying that the bow and stern are exaggerated to give the object more presence?

A: Yeah.

J: What’s the significance to those particular parts of the canoe in giving it the presence?

A: Yeah well, the canoe, the Makah canoe is a *chiputz* is what it is called. And the canoe is its own being. Because people say “oh, the canoes are wolves” or “the canoes are sea serpents”, but the canoes are “*chiputz*” and that’s what the head and the tail or the back represent.

-Alex McCarty, Makah, interview 2015

McCarty also described how the modern miniatures he made were intended to be broadly proportional, although without the necessity for careful measurement, the scale reliant on his judgement as a carver:

J: So what scale is this [miniature] canoe here?

A: I don’t know. It’s the same scale of all these other model canoes.

J: What I’m saying, is, do you . . . have you tried to accurately scale it to a full-size canoe, or is it by eye?

A: It’s been by eye.

-Alex McCarty, Makah, interview 2015

This opinion was echoed by a number of other carvers; Joe Gobin also used the “by eye” description to explain his approach to proportionality in miniature production; Spencer McCarty of the Makah noted when discussing measurement that “you know if it’s a miniature you can’t really do that, they’re just small and you have to guess the size and stuff”; while Steven Bruce, Sr. of the Kwakwaka’wakw explained that approximate proportionality becomes important because the miniatures themselves are inherently imaginative:

J: But it’s important that they are proportionate?

S: Yes, it’s very important, yeah
J: And with the poles, when you make little poles, are you making little versions of poles you know, poles that are standing, or are they, if you like, poles you have invented for the miniature? Do you see what I am saying?

S: Yeah. The poles I made were, all the model ones, were distinct characters that I had chosen for that pole. I didn’t necessarily copy any pole.

-Steven Bruce, Sr., Kwakwa’kawakw, interview 2015

As Bruce suggests, key to this question is the degree to which miniatures are imaginative objects, as Spencer McCarty describes:

J: Are the miniatures you make based on a particular object? For example, when you make a full-sized canoe, is it based on a canoe that you know, or on the idea of a canoe?

S: No, it’s just the idea.

J: And the same is true of totem poles and that kind of thing?

S: Yeah. When I look at my work for sale to the public, I call that examples of possibilities within the rules of our people. It’s what’s possible.

-Spencer McCarty, Makah, interview 2015

When artists from the Northwest Coast make a miniature, they are not usually deliberately recreating a larger object for the scientific purposes of European modelling, which requires accurate measurements. They are instead creating a miniature, for whatever purpose, which is reliant on an imaginative interpretation of the idea of a thing as determined by cultural context. The disproportionality illustrated in this section suggests that this has been the case throughout most of the history of miniature production, and is as true of miniatures made from physical prototypes, such as the miniature houses of Skidegate, as imaginative “possibilities within the rules of our people”.

If miniatures are unbound by physical restraint beyond that needed for simple mimetic value, and if miniatures therefore only need the basic features that allow them to be “their own being”, then other rules, such as those of materiality or social convention need not apply either. This allows for the miniatures to operate independently of the scale or complexity of their prototype and take on new, less tangible or visible, functionalities than the prototype and thereby operate in different realities.
Materiality

To further explore how the objects created by miniaturisation are detached from their prototypes during the process, and how the continuum between them is severed, this section will explore the materiality of the surveyed miniatures because “the materials from which they are made . . . are inseparable from wider histories of material, their properties and circulation, as determining the shape and scale of cultural expression” (Townsend-Gault, 2011:42). It is most notable in the corpus of miniature canoes; full-sized Northwest Coast canoes were usually carved from red or yellow cedar. The most important difference between these woods is that red cedar is a soft wood and yellow cedar is hard. There are no statistics on the proportion of red to yellow cedar in the construction of full-sized canoes, but Arima is clear that “yellow was rarely used” (2002:101), and almost all of the full-sized canoes observed in this project, both historic and contemporary, were carved of red cedar.

Moreover, an additional layer of information is added in recalling that wood can be loose or tight-grained depending largely on whether it is of old-growth or secondary growth. If it is possible to chart when different species of wood have been used and to examine when low-quality, loose-grain wood has been used as opposed to high-quality tight-grained wood and to match these occurrences with other affordances, it might be possible to determine whether there are correlations in quality of materials and quality of production and where and when changes occurred.

Acknowledging Christopher Evans’s observation that examination of miniatures will inevitably be partial and anecdotal and thereby subjective (2012), this section will consider a number of subjective similarities identified during the survey of materials, the most important of which was that the overwhelming majority of miniature canoes of any typology for which the wood could be identified were made of yellow cedar; random sampling suggests that yellow cedar is six times more likely to be used than red cedar in the construction process.

The reasons for this discrepancy are readily apparent to carvers, as Spencer McCarty and Gary Peterson explain:

The wood is a lot more delicate when its cut small. And then sometimes we could use different kinds of wood. For a mask we’d use red cedar, but when you get it small like that,
red cedar's hard to carve on. So you’d want a little bit harder of a wood and you might use yellow cedar because it’s more stable for miniatures.

- Spencer McCarty, Makah, interview 2015

J: Is there a particular reason that you are using the hardwoods for the miniatures?

G: Because they are brittle. If you make it of softwood, and you make one little mistake with the tip of your blade – Pink! This chunk busts off the nose, gone . . . it’s going to show you know, anything that breaks off. So you use, for face masks, you use red cedar and we use alder sometimes . . . For bowls we’ll use yellow cedar, yew wood, alder, harder woods for conventional things . . . if you are making poles and canoes you know, then it’s red cedar. And you can have tight grain for red cedar, the cracks will open and close, but if it’s wide grain red cedar, it doesn’t close. But yellow cedar is opposite, if you are going to carve a yellow cedar pole you have to use wide grain otherwise it won’t close again because it’s classified as a hardwood.

- Gary Peterson, Kwakwaka'wakw, interview 2015

This commentary on wood density and the question of the width of wood grain was echoed by other carvers – softwoods and wide grain made detail harder to carve effectively and the wood more prone to stretching, cracking or splitting during carving – on a large carving, such as a canoe or totem pole this weakness can be mitigated: among the Tulalip strategies include butterfly joints and metal patches (fig. 8.11), but on a small carving such as a miniature these defects will be painfully obvious.

Fig. 8.11. Butterfly joint in Tulalip canoe. Author's photo, Tulalip, 2014.

Where red cedar does appear in the object record, it is concentrated in a handful of specific typologies as described in Appendix D. Examples include MoA 2791/8, of the N6 type and MoA A157 of the H6 type. These are predominately lower quality early twentieth century pieces from the Northern coast. From the Southern coast, there are a
small number of red cedar canoes of CS1 type, such as SFU 2006.001.001, which shares probable temporal origins with the other red cedar examples. Red cedar therefore is much more common in the so-called “Dark Years”, in which traditional material culture practices became obscured and artwork of generally lower quality.

Observations regarding wood of tight or loose grain within yellow cedar are more intriguing. This is best illustrated by examples of how this difference is distributed within collections: A7098 and A7097 (figs. 8.12 & 8.13) are, as their numbers suggest, from a similar provenance; late nineteenth century Northern style canoe miniatures in the MoA collection. They both have similar design and bear similarly conceived formline design on their sides, although with substantial difference in the quality of execution; A7908 has well connected formline with no negative space and clearly defined crest figures. A7907 however has much looser, free-floating figures with crudely executed and atraditional crests. The carving quality is generally high in both examples, although compromised in the latter by the wood quality, which has much wider grain in A7097 than in A7098.

Figs. 8.12 (left) & 8.13 (right). Northern canoe miniature of tight-grained yellow cedar, MoA A7098; Northern canoe miniature of loose-grained yellow cedar, MoA A7097.

The second example also involves Northern canoe miniatures of yellow cedar, this time BM Am,+229 and Am,+230 (figs. 8.15 & 8.16). These were collected together in 1874 as part of the Sandeman Collection and depict similar styles and designs with a similar difference in quality of painting to the examples in figs 8.13 and 8.14.
Figs. 8.14 (left) & 8.15 (right). Northern canoe miniature of tight-grained yellow cedar, BM Am,+.229; Northern canoe miniature of loose-grained yellow cedar, BM Am,+.230.

Once again, the yellow cedar of these canoe miniatures demonstrate differences in quality of materials, Am,+.230 featuring substantially wider rings than Am,+.229; measurements indicate that the rings on Am,+.230 are on average 3mm wide, whereas those on Am,+.229 are just 0.8mm (figs. 8.16 & 8.17). Other canoe miniatures from the same collection, such as Am,+.231, which is of comparable painting quality to Am,+.230 corroborate this discrepancy, with rings 4mm wide, while the miniature Am1564, from a different collection origin but of similar vintage and of very high quality carving and painting, has rings of only 1.7mm.

Figs. 8.16 (left) & 8.17 (right). Detail of cutwaters of Northern canoe miniatures, from which ring density measurements were taken BM Am,+.229 & Am,+.230.

What these case studies illustrate is that there is a correlation between the quality of the wood for small scale carving and the quality of the execution of carving and painting. There are direct connections between decisions made by the carvers during the production process as regards the quality of the overall piece and the quality of the
materials from which the piece was made. The implications of this conclusion are that when a miniature is being constructed decisions are being made on its scale and complexity and quality – both of materials and design – are factors in that process.

The temporal and spatial proximity of these examples demonstrate that this decision was not always dictated by necessity, but that miniature makers could choose to make miniatures of differing quality for different audiences and that the level of quality those miniatures contained was an ideological choice dependent on the intended audience of the miniature, the qualia the artist hoped to provoke, and consequently of the abductive semiosis it was intended to produce and thus the ideology it contained.

Modern carvers are quite familiar with this practice, and can express frustration that these choices and the physical implications of them are not always appreciated. When Wayne Alfred used miniaturisation to experiment with material, he found his efforts unappreciated:

> Just now and then I make them [miniatures]. I prefer alder, but I made 4 or 5 just recently out of red cedar, just to show that I could make those little ones out of red cedar. Yellow cedar’s another one. Another thing is that I made a miniature out of yew wood. Nobody gave a shit, but it’s the hardest wood on this side of the world. Nobody really cared that I made it, so I would never make it out of that again. You do these amazing things and people don’t understand it. Yew wood. And that one person that got that one piece will be the only one ever to get it, so they should appreciate it.

- Wayne Alfred, Kwakw’alaκw, interview 2015

A similar effect was noticed among nineteenth century weavers from the region, who realised that non-Natives were unable to tell the difference between a stong and a weak basket, or between one made to a high-standard and one hastily thrown together (Weber, 1990:313).

The relationship between imagination and materiality in miniaturisation becomes clearer when it is recalled that not all miniatures from the Northwest Coast are made of wood. Argillite miniature totem poles formed one of the most common items of commercial material culture production in the late nineteenth century, and the rise of these poles has been directly attributed to the artistic aftermath of the epidemics of the 1860s and the concentration of the Haida population in the villages of Skidegate and Masset under the
increasing supervision of government authorities and their laws against traditional cultural practices. In this environment, argillite poles permitted the carvers a safe outlet through which they could “render images of the familiar past in an acceptable form” (Macnair & Hoover, 1984:113).

These poles are sometimes, particularly in the earlier period, depictions of full-size standing poles, but are often instead imaginative constructs which play with traditional figures and designs to create new formulations. That they are works of imagination, is important and quite poignant: most of the small number of argillite miniature canoes are “usually filled with singing and dancing figures paddling to an unknown destination” (Macnair & Hoover, 1984:191; see Sheehan, 1980:167). This does not mean however that these designs are whimsical; as Sheehan notes, they display “an intensity of feeling and perhaps and equally intense commitment to presenting a no-nonsense view of structures fundamental to Haida thought and society [which] was matched by the artists’ demonstration of high technical proficiency” (1980:97). Most noticeably, these poles incorporate skeuomorphic design elements important for full-sized cedar poles but mechanically irrelevant on argillite miniatures, such as the concave back (Sheehan, 1980:113).

Argillite, precisely because it was not a traditional carving medium and was not used extensively in Haida ritual practices, became a safe and simple medium in which to experiment in miniature and to create, over a short span of time, a very large and highly accomplished corpus of artwork which has travelled further and may be more readily recognised than any other material culture from the region. As Gwaai Edenshaw explains, argillite is a material with very particular properties which allow carvers to experiment with form and design beyond the bounds of the traditional carving art form:

Yeah well, there’s a couple of things about argillite. One is that it is a slate, so it behaves differently how you act with it. You have to be cognisant of the fact that it has a real grain and it’s a very brittle material, so you’ll find a lot of argillite carvers carve a very flat form, but obviously that is not universal, right? If you look at Christian [White]’s stuff and if you look in the historical record there is a lot of depth and stuff like that, but it’s all done wily, so they are creating all that depth, but it’s done in such a way that they are not creating a

64 Although Peter Macnair implies here that these canoe miniatures are uninterpretable as Haida legends, modern works such as Bill Holm’s The Spirit of Haida Gwaii refute this very strongly (Steltzer, 1997). Although the cultural dislocation of the nineteenth century was severe, modern Haida are sufficiently versed in traditional oral culture to provide articulate interpretations for such artworks (e.g. Krmpotich & Peers, 2013).
big fragile bits and stuff like that, so the pieces, the best pieces have a sort of a sense that they are compact as well as free.

-Gwaai Edenshaw, Haida, interview 2016

Argillite, by its flexibility and a traditional nature, allowed for greater experimentation in Haida carving and has consequently allowed for the rapid creation and distribution of ideological messages to new audiences in a manner previously unavailable to the carvers of the Northwest Coast, doing so without raising the suspicions of the colonial authorities.

What this study of materiality makes clear is that the decision on materials is an essential component of the miniaturisation process which bears no direct relationship to the prototype at all. Instead it is the “emphasis” of the miniature which drives its materiality, combined with an understanding of the audience who will receive it. Thus a carver creating a miniature for sale to outsiders in which he is investing less effort and skill than another which may be a gift, will deliberately select inferior materials for that miniature; in this it is the entire object which sends a message, not solely the shape or the design. Argillite too, as a non-traditional carving medium, permits experimentation within the “possibilities of [the] people” unbound by tradition or restriction. Thus it plays with the form in wildly imaginative ways, creating new realities in which to experiment.

Ceremony and inspiration

The preceding sections on proportionality and materiality demonstrate that miniaturisation is an imaginative process dependent on intangible, often non-sensical processes, and the case studies have demonstrated that miniaturisation can operate in multiple realities. In this it bears comparison with the wider corpus of carving on the Northwest Coast, which entails essential techniques which leave no tangible physical mark on the finished works but which are nonetheless crucial stages of production due to the intervention of supernatural agents. Ethnographies of canoe building alone illustrate the array of intangible steps necessary to build a canoe from different parts of the region; these range from songs and rituals practised throughout the process (Holm, 1991:243), to physical activities. Boas recorded that during canoe construction the Kwakwągwigwakw carvers would not comb their hair as this would cause the wood to split, nor are their wives allowed to boil with hot stones for fear of dampening the wood. He also wrote that the carver “must be continent, lest he find rotten places in the wood” (Boas, 1966:32),
which may be connected to the Haida belief in the celibacy of carvers during construction as “a canoe is like a woman, it demands your undivided attention. If you fool around it gets jealous” (Collison, 2014:59).

Contemporary carvers are no less concerned with intangible yet essential ritual and mental preparation as a crucial stage in the carving process, particularly for objects with ceremonial importance. For example, Cloth-Bag recounts that:

I'll tend to – sometimes I put paint on my face, close out all the windows and put paint on my face, black out your face. Because when you are carving those things the spirits are always around. They come and watch, they come and watch and you have to paint your face to protect yourself and keep your identity anonymous I guess, so that energy, whatever it is doesn’t latch on to you, doesn’t latch on to you, doesn’t latch on to you. . . this is about serving a purpose for the spirit of whatever my family sees fit and how to use it, in the ceremony or in the potlatch. So there are some traditions. I do approach it a little more carefully, I am more culturally aware and will go a step farther spiritually in terms of preparation. When I walk away from the mask at the end of the day, the things I say, the things I do: walking softly, gently, always kind and loving never coming back to them with anger and hate, anything like that, because those things are going to show up in your work. So you really have to conduct your life in a really good way.

::klatle-pbi (Cloth-Bag), Squamish / Kwagiulth, interview 2015

Makah carver Spencer McCarty also has intangible techniques to express gratitude, emphasising that these are a personal choice, not one necessarily universal across the Northwest Coast or even the Makah:

S: It’s different nowadays than it used to be . . . there’s prayer for when you are going to gather bushes or leaves or animals or whatever. You call up your friend [the tree] and when I do it and the way my family does - whatever I say concerns only for my family, it doesn’t really consider other tribes, other parts of this tribe.

J: Of course. I understand.

S: My family, because everybody’s got their little quirks . . . You say to it, my friend, I need some of your body, some of your fingers, whatever you are cutting. I need this to feed my family and I’m sorry, I know it’s going to hurt, but there it goes, I’m going to do it. And the bigger, the bigger the object, the more prayers you are going to need. Like if you were making a whole house, you are going to need way more prayers because you are taking the
whole tree. But same thing for like a whaling canoe or something, it would be prayerful right from the start to the end. But I still impart prayers to the . . . not to the wood exactly, it’s hard, for the wood. Because when it was cut down the tree wasn’t talked to. The tree was just taken, so when I get the wood I tell it the same thing. Tell him I’m sorry you got cut down, the people might not have told you they were going to cut you down, but know that I’m going to use you and you’ll live forever as a beautiful art piece and maybe you’ll be dancing, you’ll lie in this family forever, for generations. You’ll be a great treasure for the family, so that it understands you better.

- Spencer McCarty, Makah, interview 2015

Some feel the spirits as a present force as they carve, driving and influencing their work: James Madison reported that he has “seen things inside the wood – ghosts or spirits” that tell him what to make; carver Felix Solomon commented of his work that “There’s nobody doing this kind of work here in Lummi . . . something’s driving me to do it” (Relyea, 2009:24).

Although not all carvers described the intangible, spiritual, steps and motivations of production in such detail, all recognised that spiritual techniques were as important a part of the carving process as physical ones. None of these artists described the same techniques or activities: on the contemporary Northwest Coast there is no formalised ritual activity within carving; the form and contents of these rituals are the personal choice of the individual carvers or carving families.

**Miniature analysis**

Given the dearth of useful examinations of historic miniature production, it is necessary to be creative in analysis of the data compiled for this project to consider whether miniatures had a ceremonial aspect. This is not only to consider whether miniatures were used ceremonially, but whether miniatures from the Northwest Coast have ceremonial elements among their affordances and whether this analysis can provide insights into any ritual components to their construction.

One method of attempting to investigate this question is to make a comparison between the miniatures and the full-sized objects and consider whether their prototypes depict ceremonial or exceptional objects or events, or whether their prototypes are every-day. In the opinion of Haida canoe maker Guujaaw, ceremonial canoes would have been more
elaborate and employed more ornamentation and experimentation in their construction (Ramsey & Jones, 2010:13). They would also have been closely associated with specific families or events and borne correspondingly greater personal and ritual significance than everyday canoes. Photographs of canoe fleets from the nineteenth century demonstrate clearly that most working canoes had no elaborate painted decoration; those which were used for everyday transport and subsistence are stained black or painted with simple identifiers (e.g. MacDonald, 1983ii:90-91).

Determining whether the miniature canoes use ceremonial vessels or everyday vessels for their prototypes is far from simple, but can be best achieved by observing the nature of the decoration on the miniature: those which have been elaborately painted may be considered “ceremonial” for these purposes. This is not the case with many modern Northwest Coast canoes made in recent decades, most of which do carry crest designs, although a good case could be made that all such canoes could be considered ceremonial as none are used for everyday purposes – their construction and use are deliberate acts of cultural and pedagogical intent.

Ignoring analysis of quality, which does not affect the prototype, and eliminating outliers that bring over-complexity to the statistics, the seriated typology of miniature canoes in Appendix D can be used to make an estimate of numbers in this case, although since these categorisations are indicative rather than authoritative there are a number of miniatures which could fit either category and some which cannot be accurately said to fit at all. Nonetheless, fig. 8.19 gives a useful overview of the miniature canoes divided by this characteristic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miniature canoe design</th>
<th>Ceremonially decorated</th>
<th>Total no.</th>
<th>Realistic decoration</th>
<th>Total no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>N1, N2, N3, N6, N7, N8</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>N4, N10, N9</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>H1, H2, H3, H5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westcoast</td>
<td>W6, W7</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>W1, W2, W3, W4, W5</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakutat</td>
<td>Y4, Y5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Y1, Y2, Y3</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salish Racing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR1, SR2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spruce</td>
<td>Sp2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sp1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munka</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>384</strong></td>
<td><strong>343</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(52.8%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(47.2%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 8.19.** Table of ceremonial aspect to Northwest Coast style canoe miniatures.

The first and most noticeable result of this table is that despite the relatively small number of dedicated ceremonial canoes which operated on the Northwest Coast (or, more accurately, the relatively small number of canoes which were decorated some of the time for ceremonial purposes), miniature versions of ceremonial canoes form a 5% majority of the total sampled. More significantly, there is considerable regional variation in where these ceremonial canoe miniatures appeared: among the Northern style canoe miniatures 72% bore ceremonial decoration, while among the Westcoast variety only 26% did so. Moreover, among the miniaturised versions of canoe types which disappeared early in the post-contact period, all were highly decorated.
What this analysis indicates therefore is that miniature canoes are not depicting watercraft, so much as a specific ideal of what a canoe signifies in a very particular and specific role, and that the significance of this role changes depending on where on the coast you are. In the Northern regions, where a large canoe symbolised a chieftain’s status, it is the vessel itself which bore most significance. In the south it is the activities indexically linked with the vessel which were considered the more important. This distinction illustrates that the relationship between the decoration of a miniature and its prototype and its ability to convey information is culturally dependant on the indexical links that the mimetic device forms, and that these indexical links are created by different affordances producing different qualia among different audiences, all depending on localised semiotic ideology.

Frequency of design

Determining the ratio of everyday vessels to ceremonial canoes in their mimetic appearance in miniature as a methodological process requires consideration of the shovelnose and riverine canoe designs. It was highlighted in chapter two that certain designs appeared with more frequency that others and that transcultural designs hardly appear at all. This section will consider the implications of this finding.

Shovelnose canoes appear in coastal and estuarine contexts throughout the Northwest Coast – they are commonly remarked upon as ubiquitous vessels for short fishing, gathering and communication journeys in sheltered waters; few have survived in collections, but the documentary record makes clear that they are probably among the most common vessels created and used on the coast. And yet only three examples in miniature were located. Spoon canoes, another simple, common design do not appear at all, and riverine canoes, also endemic throughout the coast for use on inland waterways, appear only nine times. The conclusion is therefore that three of the most common canoe designs produced on the Northwest Coast only appear as 0.31%, 0% and 0.95% of the total miniature canoes surveyed; the quality of these miniatures is also on average subjectively lower than the majority of the other designs. Other, more localised inshore canoe types, such as the cottonwood or the Northwest Coast birchbark appear not at all, while the specialist Tlingit ice canoe can be found only very small numbers with explicit association with ethnographically commissioned contexts. The result is that mundane everyday canoes, whether decorated or not, hardly ever appear in miniature. Instead it is the larger, more dramatic canoes used as prototypes for miniatures, often, as seen, decorated ceremonially. The implications therefore are that choice of prototype is focused
on those designs which bore greatest registers of ceremonial, and thus presumably synecdochical meaning for the artists who made the miniatures.

In addition, aside from a small number of abstract, often satirical, portrayals in argillite (fig. 8.20), there are no miniature representations of European ships produced by the indigenous people of the Northwest Coast. Ships; sailing vessels, paddle steamers and then steamships were common on the Coast from the 1780s onwards and commercial fishing vessels were enthusiastically adopted from at least 1870, and yet argillite aside, they do not appear at all in the miniature record from the region. European style wooden boats were produced from the mid-nineteenth century onwards on the Coast; Lake Union in Seattle was noted for the large numbers of boat workshops and skilled boat-builders, and yet the survey only discovered two European-style Native-made miniature canoes, 0.2% of the total (MoA AA2463; RBCM 11181, fig. 8.21). This demonstrates that on the Northwest Coast miniaturisation could be transcultural, but not acculturated; that the intangible elements so essential to miniaturisation had no resonance with non-Native technologies and design within the semiotic ideologies in which the miniatures were intended to operate.

Fig. 8.20. Haida argillite pipe featuring steamship. BM Am1954,05.999 (Wellcome Coll.).
Amulets

If miniatures may draw on ceremonial prototypes, or those most indexically linked to authority and identity, the next consideration is whether they held power in their own right. Miniatures from the Northwest Coast, unlike those from other Native American groups (e.g. Fenton, 1987:60-63; Krech III, 1989:131-132), are not generally held to have the power to intercede with spirits or other supernatural beings, with the exception of amulets. Amulets on the Northwest Coast have affordances which allow them to hold magical qualities which, when held by a “functionless” object, are “efficacious technology” (cf. Warnier, 2009). Used sparsely in the region, they are predominately the preserve of shamans, which “did not so much act as receptacles [of magical qualities] as provide a catalyst through which they could be called upon” (Wardwell, 1996:71). Shamanistic practices on the Northwest Coast encourage engagement with multiple realities; the ability of things to be in more than one state simultaneously is common among Native American groups, who, like other non-European societies, “do not make the same distinctions between “real magic” and artifice” as European people (Turner, 1994:87-91).

One of the smallest of the canoe miniatures, 82.V.135 from the Makah site of Ozette (fig. 8.18), raises questions about the possibilities of amuletic qualities in miniatures. It is a compact piece, only 10cm long and 1.5cm wide, with clearly defined and preserved features. Unlike the others it has not been hollowed out, would not have floated true and seems, in the structure of its bow and stern sections designed to be worn around the neck. Miniatures among the Makah historically pertained to the ceremonial preparation
Amulets held secret properties which were not widely understood or shared, and discussing the efficacy of an amulet would negate its power (Coté, 2010: 29). This power however was very real and not to be lightly discussed:

G: It wouldn’t surprise me that there was far more extensive use of miniatures found within females of different species and used in a ritualistic way to provide the person doing the ritual with more power and more access to advice, advice to avoid starvation. Advice to avoid being killed.

J: So it sounds almost like you are talking about amulets.

G: Amulets are power.

J: Is that what you are saying? That they have an amuletic power?

G: Yes, but you wouldn’t display it as an amulet, you would hide it, you wouldn't show it.

***

J: Do Makah people use miniatures in potlatches and ceremonies today? Or is that not a common feature?

G: [long pause] I think if they did you wouldn’t know it, you wouldn’t see it. It would be something in the background that would be used to control what is in the foreground, and
you wouldn’t see it. Just something you wouldn’t . . . It’s really not safe, it’s not. It causes so many troubles, so many differences of opinion.

-Greg Colfax, Makah, interview 2015

As objects of power, these are magical creations, dangerous intermediaries through which successful supernatural activity could be mediated by intangible means; “not as objects of cognition, mere sets of referents, but as powers” (Turner, 1994:90). Here, in this one distinct category, miniature objects operate as potential vessels of or catalysts for intangible ideological efficacy as communicators, creating a semiotic ideology within which a miniature object, even one not explicitly imbued with magical authority, is acknowledged as a powerful agent mediating in human/superhuman social relations.

Miniature canoes at potlatch

If some miniature may have held powers, others might have been used in ways which saw the exchange of powers. Thus it is necessary to consider to what extent miniatures may have been used ceremonially. T. F. McIlwraith describes one such ceremony among the Nuxalk in which miniature totem poles operated as indexes for the transference of hereditary privileges, although he acknowledges that this ritual was a twentieth century adoption (1948:469-471), and chapter six identified a group of miniature figurines which re-enacted forbidden Kwakwaka’wakw ceremonial dances.

Other examples are more obscure; historically, full-sized canoes were a high-value unit used in the gift exchange process element of the potlatch, identified as sā’k•a in Kwakwaka’wakw (Boas, 1966:81), and formed one of the most prominent status symbols: Jonaitis writes that “Although some may associate canoes simply with means of transportation, the natives of the Northwest Coast ascribed to them a deep spiritual significance . . . the canoe symbolized wealth” (1986:104) This ceremonial value has survived into the modern era, in which canoes have been used in potlatch dances (Armia & Dewhirst, 1990:405).

This is not surprising; Bill Durham noted for example that “Canoes were so important to the material culture of the Northwest Coast that it was inevitable that they should figure in much of [its] intellectual life” (1960: 41), and the potlatch was just the place where consciously anomalous objects such as miniatures could exert power through
nonsensical qualia: Fleisher compares it to a place where the “real isn’t and the unreal is and anything in between can happen” (1981:223).

It has been noted that many feast bowls took on the canoe form (Brown, 2008:251; fig. 8.22), including one bowl which was collected on the Cook expedition of 1778 (Cabello Caro, 2000:54). The similarities between the two types of artefact have been tentatively linked in the literature: “small canoes made impressive serving dishes for feeding the multitude at a potlatch” (Durham, 1960:42). This use of canoes as ritual food containers (Hunt, 1906:108), has led to speculation that miniature canoes might have held a similar position (King, 1999:157) and the close stylistic relationship between miniature canoes and feast bowls has been widely noted (Boas, 1975 [1909]:422; Holm & Reid, 1975:76, Brown, 2008:251, Reid, 2011:62).

![Canoe-bowl. Northern Northwest Coast. Collection of Eugene & Martha Nestor.](image)

Trevor Isaac repeated this suggestion during an interview:

> A lot of the smaller canoes that we have, that I have seen, from the Kwakwaka’wakw culture is mainly used for feast dishes. And the reasoning is to emphasise the canoe-fulls of food at your feasts, when you are inviting people to feast with them and to feed them. So a lot of times you’ll see smaller canoes carvings and that’s what that represents.

- Trevor Isaac, Kwakwaka’wakw, interview 2015

Wayne Alfred too, sees miniature canoes as having a role within feasting:

> But some of these aren’t just miniatures, there not just models are they? They’re used for feast dishes. . . So these, these are also grease dishes, they’re also for fish, for herring eggs, for berries.

- Wayne Alfred, Kwakwaka’wakw, interview 2015
These artists are describing contemporary practice, and analysis of this point suggests that if miniature canoes historically operated as feast bowls at potlatch then there should be physical evidence of the fact. Evidence for the usage of feast bowls is plentiful: most surviving Northwest Coast feast dishes bear considerable traces of their use. Examples such as BM Am1861,0312.36 in fig. 8.23, collected by the Russell commission in 1861, are still sticky to the touch 170 years later. Even dishes which were not used specifically for grease, such as BM Am1898,1020.3 in fig. 8.24, show the staining of earlier contents.

Figs. 8.23 (left) & 8.24 (right). Haida feast bowls. BM Am1861,0312.36 & Am1898,1020.3.

Very few canoe miniatures by contrast give any indication that they were ever used in this way. Only one miniature canoe of the 941 surveyed has clear indications that food was held inside. This is the naturalistic Westcoast canoe miniature in fig. 8.25, in which caked cooking residues are firmly attached to the interior bottom of the miniature.

Fig. 8.25. Westcoast canoe miniature with food residue. Collection of Richard Bahnmann. Author's photo, 2015.

While miniature canoes are occasionally therefore used as ceremonial food containers in modern Northwest Coast societies, there is no evidence that it was a widespread or
common historical practice. When a mimetic device resembling a canoe was desired for a feast, a canoe-shaped bowl, such as in fig. 8.23, or AMNH 19/964 or PMAE 14-27-10/85698 was made and used instead. This analysis demonstrates conclusively that there was a clear distinction in Northwest Coast material culture between a bowl with a mimetic relationship to canoes and a miniature canoe.

What this section indicates therefore is that if miniature canoes held a ceremonial role as feast dishes, it was not one practiced uniformly or commonly, despite the similarities in their affordances. Given the substantial body of ethnographic writing on Northwest Coast ritual practices, it is striking given their ubiquity that miniature canoes appear nowhere as accessories to these events. This thesis has always held that miniatures had diverse functions and origins in the region, but here it can be illustrated with some confidence that miniature canoes (as opposed to other objects, such as bowls, which use canoe imagery), were not usually or routinely deployed on ceremonial occasions, nor held specific powers in their own right (with a few exceptions). This is not of course to suggest that they were not symbolically and ideologically significant, only that they were not publically and explicitly deployed as such in the feast setting.

I have demonstrated that miniature canoes iconically resemble ceremonial canoes far more frequently than their full-sized counterparts; that there is a lack of numerical proportionality in this depiction of canoe decoration and that throughout the Coast the indigenous origin of the miniature’s prototype was important to the indexical relationships of the miniature. However, it has also been determined that miniature canoes were not feast dishes, which form a separate (if mimetically connected) object type, and that miniatures did not habitually operate as amulets, although when they did they did so with considerable power. Together these affordances suggest that as a corpus, miniatures, especially canoes, are a distinct category of objects which are indexes of ritual practice – they reflect it and may facilitate it in certain circumstances, but that it is rare that they are acknowledged as capable of powers of magical intervention in their own right. These powers, whether iconic or indexical, are incorporated into their praxis of production, their relational indexes and their usage, but are usually subtle and obscured for non-Native audiences.
Miniature as diorama

The case studies and analysis thus far suggest that miniatures are imaginative devices unbound by physical requirements beyond those needed for simple mimetic association. As such, they allow for imaginative affordances to be incorporated, dependent on the intended functionality of the miniature based on the artist’s assessment of its audience and the qualia the miniature is intended to provoke. What has not been fully considered is the notion of miniatures as dioramas; frozen time, embodiments not only of “emphasis” and prototypes, but of events; things of movement and memory preserved as mimetic moments, real or imagined.

In chapter one I mentioned Frances Glessner Lee’s Nutshell Studies of notorious crime scenes, used to train forensic investigators but also often displayed as semiophoric objects of fascination (Zmietowicz, 2015; Engelhaupt, 2016). These dioramas had pedagogical “emphasis” as preserved moments, educating informed audiences while promoting an intimate, tactile engagement between the audience and their fixed alternative reality (Morrissey, 2014). Comparable dioramas appeared repeatedly in the case studies, such as the Makah whaling scenes, the Tlingit spirit canoes or Martin’s seal hunters. These miniatures appear ostensibly synecdochical of the societies from which they come, but should be treated with caution: as Alex McCarty noted earlier in this chapter, canoes are their own thing, not a metaphor for something else. Here the thesis will question whether the same may be true of dioramas.

Dioramas are a mimetic device commonly understood to be a static reproduction of a typical or particular scene, usually used for display purposes. In this regard they are a form of scientific or pedagogical model, although strictly there is no requirement for dioramas to be in miniature, and if they are in miniature, to appear to scale. In this study, miniature canoes were examined to determine whether they may be considered as dioramas and what they consequently might contain.

If a diorama is a scene, then it requires action, and action requires population; such is the distinction between the overlapping categories of miniature and diorama for this study. Figures are a common Northwest Coast typology (see Appendix C3) and figures have been frequently illustrated in this thesis as regular design feature of miniature canoes from the region. It is therefore valuable to consider the frequency with which miniatures appear within the more popular individual canoe types, presented here in fig. 8.26.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canoe type</th>
<th>With figures</th>
<th>Without figures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>11.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westcoast</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>33.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Salish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakutat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munka</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salish Racing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td><strong>574</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.16%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 8.26. Table of Northwest Coast style canoe miniatures with attached figures.

As is evident, there is a greater proportion of miniature canoes featuring figures among the Westcoast style miniature canoe making peoples than among the Northern style canoe making peoples, which corroborates the observation already made that Northern canoe miniatures rely mostly on the imaginative, almost supernatural, indexical relationships they maintain, while southern canoe miniatures are more focused on the iconic connections to events and actions.

This blunt statistical approach to determining whether some miniature canoes operated as dioramas is however overlooking specifics. It can be refined by a subjective analysis of what is actually happening in the scenes portrayed by the canoes; for example, in some miniature canoes there are a range of figures performing actions, whether these are simple paddling, (RBCM 12010), or more complex hunting (NMNH E73740-0) or racing scenes (RBCM 16668)

Figs. 8.27, 8.28 & 8.29 (left to right). Northern-style canoe miniature with paddlers. RBCM 12010; Westcoast-style canoe miniature with whalers. NMNH E73740-0; Salish Racing-style canoe miniature with crew. RBCM 16668.
Others illustrate less typical scenes, such as two naturalistic men drinking in a canoe in fig. 8.30 or formline spirit figures paddling in fig. 8.31, in each case likely illustrations of specific stories or legends. There is also a considerable variation in the appearance of the figures: those in BrookM 07.468.9366 or RBCM 16668 are almost naturalistic, those in EMK 154-7 or RBCM 12010 highly stylised with clearly depicted ceremonial attire, including masked faces.

Figs. 8.30 (left) & 8.31 (right). Westcoast-style canoe miniature with drinkers. BrookM 07.468.9366; Salish Racing-style canoe miniature with crew. EMK 154-7.

Understanding when a figure is naturalistic and when it is mythical is not a simple determination: in many examples the identity of the figure is unclear. For example BMNH 4659 in fig.8.32, in which exaggerated figures are clearly having an exchange, but the design makes is difficult to determine whether the figures are supernatural creatures or exaggerated humans.

Fig. 8.32. Westcoast-style canoe miniature with crew. BMNH 4259.
This question is further complicated by the propensity among many tribes for decorated canoes to feature prominently in ceremonial activities, as captured by Edward Curtis in fig. 8.33.

![Fig. 8.33. Kwakwaka’wakw canoe dancers, *In the Land of the War Canoes*, Edward Curtis, 1911.](image)

While almost 20% of Northwest Coast miniature canoes have the attributes of a diorama, the number which can produce a naturalistically representative display of the activity they resemble is considerably smaller. This raises the question of the extent to which the mimetic qualities of the canoe miniatures in these scenes are crucial to the indexical qualities of the diorama as a whole – if the people can be so dramatically exaggerated, then there is no reason for the dimensions of the canoe miniature itself to be any more realistic or relevant; the whole scene is an exaggerated miniaturised image of a moment, real or imagined, stretched in reality as it stretched in time and thought. These dioramas may have multiple realities as both reflections of memory or imagination of one specific scene as well as synecdochal qualities attained indexically from the scene. They thus move even further from the conception of European “models” and closer to the intangible dimensions of imagination.

The prevalence of dioramatic miniatures therefore enhances the argument that miniatures are imaginative constructs, in which internal ideologies of the carvers responsible have been allowed to influence the construction processes for personal purposes reliant on semiotic understanding. A good illustration of this point is to return to the Haida miniature house FM 17822 from the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition and the ceremonial scene tucked inside in fig. 8.34.
Fig. 8.34. Detail of interior, FM 17822.
This diorama, in which a large figure dressed in regalia stands before a semi-circular crowd of smaller, similarly dressed figures with a box drum hanging in the corner, is a diorama of a Haida ritual in progress. As discussed in chapter five, these dioramas were inaccessible without dismantling the house, just as Glessner Lee’s Nutshells had “entire rooms [that] were constructed that couldn’t even be seen without taking the diorama apart” (Engelhaupt, 2016). They are secret, concealed worlds which demand tactile engagement to be discovered and engaged with.

Unlike Glessner Lee’s dioramas however, here there is a sense of movement, of music, of life. This object and its hidden figures illustrate that miniatures can be more than static functional tools, but objects of “memory [which] is no longer recollection, which still preserves a sense of distance, but [of] reactualization” (Ginzburg, 2002:141), not a metaphor or stand in, but the literal reliving of the past as a movement of the present into the future. Miniatures, as dioramas, can therefore be the physical embodiments of events, of frozen moments outside time and thus recognised as op-art indexes of whole systems dependent on those moments, from Makah whalers to Haida potlatches to Kwakwaka’wakw Hamatsa dancers. All these examples operate as potential synecdoches of ideology, even emotion, and as powerful agents for the transmission of information in unexpected and imaginative ways through semiosis with knowledgeable observers. These effects are achieved through the artists themselves, and cannot operate without their original engagement with the semiotic processes involved.

**Praxis and pedagogy**

So far, this chapter has explored broad surveys of affordances and functionality in miniatures. The final section will develop these studies by focusing on the actual stages of miniature production as practiced on the Northwest Coast, with particular consideration of praxis, the actual physical and cognitive processes of production, and the pedagogical role of miniaturisation within which these processes occur. This in turn allows for wider consideration of the effects of miniaturisation on the development of artists and art production in the region.

**Miniatures as maquettes**

A use ubiquitous to all carvers who participated in this project was the role miniatures have played in the carving process as maquettes (sometimes termed “minuettes” in the
interviews); practice pieces examining form and design in preparation for larger pieces of work. Even those carvers who denied making miniatures as defined by this project often produced maquettes which would be later discarded, revealing a miniaturisation process in which a miniature object is created and destroyed as part of that process, in which the audience for the miniature is the carver themselves and no one else. To approach this form of miniaturisation, it is necessary to explore the praxis of miniaturisation on the Northwest Coast and to do that, it is necessary to explore the role of the carver.

The process varies; for some the creation of the miniature is an imperative, even a supernatural demand: the Lummi carver Felix Solomon described in detail how he created a miniature diorama developed from a dream he had in which he was approached by a snake while tending a fire in his garden. The dream, interpreted as a vision, encouraged him to create the miniature of the scene (dual purposed as a fishing gaff), which he subsequently developed into a plan for a totem pole – in this way the miniature has acted as an intermediary between the carver’s dream and the large pole in an unplanned way; the miniature was created by the carver and has in turn acted on him as its audience – the miniature (and through it the dream) thus has had direct agency in the creation of the totem pole, a scenario which can be rendered as this simplistic chaîne opératoire:

**Vision → Carver → Miniature → Carver → Totem Pole**

![Fig. 8.35. Felix Solomon in his workshop. To his left is the gaff miniature resting on the unfinished totem pole it inspired. Author’s photo, 2015.](image)
James Madison of the Tulalip also commented on the ex-human imperatives of carving, the ways in which images in his head, which he referred to as “hieroglyphics”, speak to him as a carver and direct his work; it is this that allows him to “draw with a chainsaw”. His colleague Mike Gobin referred to carving as “Bringing my thoughts to life”. For other carvers, this process is more systematic; Kwakwaka’wakw carver Steven Bruce, Sr. recalled that when he made his first totem pole, to stand in Alert Bay cemetery, he was initially intimidated by the cedar log, and responded thusly:

I was walking around and around this log for days and days and I was looking at it and looking at it so I said “OK, I know what I’ll do” so I went home, grabbed my picture again, my drawing, and I downscaled it and I grabbed a small piece of wood, about 12 inches roughly, and I would do one cut on my small piece and then I come down here to the woods and do my big cut. And I worked my way through the pole that way

- Steven Bruce, Sr., Kwakwaka’wakw, interview 2015

Kwakwaka’wakw carver Wayne Alfred described a similar process:

When I made a totem pole, I started making a miniature first. And then each time I made a cut I’d go the pole and do the same thing to the pole and make my next cut. I’d get about four or five cuts further and then go to the pole, do the same thing, back and forth, measuring it all the way. Doesn’t turn out exactly the same, but it’s pretty close, yeah, pretty close.

-Wayne Alfred, Kwakwaka’wakw, interview 2015

Bruce saw his miniature pole through to completion and under persuasion eventually sold it to a dealer, a similar experience to that described by Squamish carver $klatle$-$phi$ (Cloth-Bag), who noted of them that: “I really like the way they look, the little stuff looks really wonderful, it really has its own spirit, it really moves people, it moves me”. Cloth-Bag does not always follow the miniature through to completion however:
Sometimes the maquettes will only get so far. I’ll make a few crucial cuts on the maquettes and then I’ll make the same on the log for the totem pole and at that point I already know what I’m doing. I’ve got half a dozen unfinished maquettes, just got little cuts on them like that and they’ll just sit on the side. And I’ll use them for future reference, for future reference I have used them. And then the pole itself takes you over, you know what do, where it’s gonna go and you just kinda go with it.

- *klatle-phi* (Cloth-Bag), Squamish / Kwagiulth, interview 2015

Haida carver Gwaai Edenshaw describes a similar technique in a less permanent medium:

What I’ll do is all the way through the pole, obviously not a traditional thing, but I’ll keep a slab of plasticine around and I’ll rough out a miniature of a certain figure. See, we do a blueprint and we generally stick to that blueprint when we are carving, but everything changes as you start carving, and you know as you start to move the material . . . it all changes, and there is a window that you have to get and after a certain point the kind of law that governs the art, those principles . . . they take over.

- Gwaai Edenshaw, Haida, interview 2016

Although Edenshaw is of the opinion that this technique is not traditional, and while his materials certainly are not, it is a technique which is widespread among carvers on the Northwest Coast, a technique which and be rendered in the following way:

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Commission → Carver → Maquette → Carver → Totem Pole
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What this technique demonstrates is that maquettes, through miniaturisation and its intangible dimensions, act on their creators directly as their interpretant both through their affordances and the qualia they inspire and the specific, imaginative qualities of the technique itself, sometimes supplemented by the material qualities of alteration. These are the qualities of a miniature which are identified by Stewart as making them “a device for fantasy” (1984:56) and are also key qualities within modular miniature toys such as Lego (Davy, 2015:9). That Edenshaw’s plasticine miniatures do not

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47 Recall that for Solomon and Madison this commission may have come from non-human, potentially supernatural, sources.
survive the process does not make them any less significant to that process than those of Solomon, Bruce or Cloth-Bag; indeed as a jeweller who practices the lost-wax technique, Edenshaw is familiar with the concept that cycles of creation and destruction can often form an active part of a material culture creation process.

Evidence that historic miniature objects formed part of a similar creative, imaginative process is unfortunately rare – there are no accounts of maquette production among ethnographies or early accounts and there are also few unfinished miniatures in museum collections, although this is an unsurprising revelation perhaps, given the nature of museum collecting and its desire for readily displayed representants. What is more common is the idea, already discussed at some length in chapter four, that miniaturisation can develop carvers over a lifetime.

**Miniatures and the development of carvers**

In *Smoke from their Fires*, Charley Nowell describes how young Kwakw’akawakw boys made miniature canoes to exchange in games which mimicked potlatch gifting (Ford, 1941:85). Nowell bought his miniatures with tobacco rather than made them himself, but the practice in which he was engaging was a pedagogical process in which he developed an understanding of ritual behaviour through praxis.

As discussed, the Makah carver Alex McCarty noted that through creating miniatures, young and developing carvers could become proficient in the physical techniques required to carve anything else in the Northwest Coast material culture corpus. Other carvers described how making miniatures as apprentices taught them the skills essential to their professional development:

> When I first started, I carved little masks, 5½ inches like I said earlier, like my first one and I kept them at that size, but throughout the time of carving those, it helped me to get my knife skills down, how to draw, and design the mask after it was carved, the cedar bark. And I also learned how to do a number of masks in a short period of time, which helped me when I jumped into bigger pieces.

- Steven Bruce, Sr., Kwakw’akawakw, interview 2015
As a 16-year old apprentice to Bill Reid, Gwaai Edenshaw recalls that “I had a practice of trying to finish a carving a day for a few years . . . carving toothpicks and avocado seeds and stuff, and I’d finish one of those every day”, honing his skills as a carver through practising the production of the tiny, the small, even in non-traditional media.

James Madison also highlights the role of miniaturisation in carver-development. From a carving family, he claims that carving “is like walking for us”, that “it is knowledge”; knowledge gained carving miniatures and little pieces around the kitchen table with his grandfather and other relatives. He noted that miniatures were important to this process because they provided “so many avenues for purpose” that they were an essential component in learning how to carve. Sa?ba?ahd (Steven Madison) recalls a similar situation, learning to carve from his father and making a tiny totem pole at 12 years old. Even among those artists who did not specifically make miniatures as defined by this project, their careers started with the small: Gary Peterson’s first carvings were berry spoons cut from driftwood.

There is therefore a common practice among artists of the Northwest Coast to learn their trade through the production of miniature objects. This has a number of advantages: they are minor investments in time and materials and so can be discarded if of insufficient quality or broken; they enable an artist to develop the range of cuts required in the school of Northwest Coast carved material culture; they encourage experimentation in style, technique and material and they are appropriately scaled to the artist at a young age, particularly when the artist begins their career, usually in their pre-teen years.

Thus although not ubiquitous, many Northwest Coast artists from diverse backgrounds learned their trade on miniatures and were in turn partially developed into artists by practising the process of miniaturisation. Miniaturisation therefore is more than just an imaginative artistic method of conveying ideological information, it is also a technique which shapes Northwest Coast carvers, physically, artistically and culturally. It provides them with a safe environment to experiment and create as young carvers, learning the designs and technical skills necessary to pursue their craft through praxis and consequently operating as tools in a traditional pedagogical system.
Role of the carver

Examining the position in Northwest Coast societies occupied by carvers and in particular how carvers position themselves within their communities is an important question in understanding the creation of miniature objects. It follows recent work (Glass & Jonaitis, 2011; Townsend-Gault, 2011), in directly challenging the notion that by being sold as souvenirs miniatures became somehow less significant as objects of cultural importance.

The carvers interviewed for this project phrased their opinion on their status in different ways: James Madison described his role as one of “keeping our culture alive”, with an awareness of the cultural significance of his work and the long traditions behind it ever present, both in an esoteric “continuity of culture” sense as well as providing a practical support to ritual practices, such as potlatch through art production. Gwaai Edenshaw’s thoughts on the same subject were discussed in chapter five. Cultural imperatives are important, but all the carvers involved in the project are, or were, also commercial artists operating within an international commercial modern art marketplace. None saw a contradiction between these roles, as Trevor Isaac explains:

There’s two kinds of aspects of carving, there’s the professional side, like for a sale to tourists or galleries or collectors, and then there is the cultural aspect. Depending on the family’s potlatch, upcoming potlatch, lots of the carvers they all associate with each other and work together to assist the family’s upcoming potlatches. So that family’s rights and privileges would determine what the carvers were to make. Even me not being a full-carver, I’ve made pieces out of wood, you know cutting them out, painting them and designing them for ceremonial purposes. So that kind of is your guide to . . . the family’s privileges is your guide to what you are going to create. And then there is the other side of it for the commercial aspect, so you kinda have a bit more free will to carve more things that you want to experiment with, or maybe other language group’s art form. You know, a piece you have always admired in a museum or private collection, replicating those gives you a bit more freedom.

-Trevor Isaac, Kwakwaka’wakw, interview 2015

In fact, the nature of Northwest Coast art is such that there can be no contradiction. The power lies not in the carved object, but in the rights and privileges of which the carved object is an index. If a person with the rights to the object decides to dispose of it outside the community, then they effectively withdraw the power from that object, which can now be sold without danger and another made to assume its place, with the rights and privileges transferred between them. (Hawker, 2016:212). To non-Native observers this
appears to be an occurrence of iconoclash, in which uncertainty is generated by the act of disposal (if not destruction), but to indigenous artists this is simply part of the lifecycle of the object. Thus commercially produced carvings, such as souvenirs or modern artworks, which are not designed for use within the community, are effectively indivisible from the willing sale of traditional, cultural artefacts, and they are consequently of no less significance or authenticity.49

Indeed, all the participants expressed pride in the commercial viability of their work or emphasised its necessity: Kwakwaka’wakw artist Gary Peterson recounted of his childhood artworks:

So here’s this 8 year old kid taking 4 days to paint these things and one day to sell them, made 450 bucks. That’s 90 bucks a day. In the 80s, as this little boy. My Dad made me put 10% of everything I made into an account and I got to spend the rest. When I was 17 years old I had $45,000 saved up. That’s 10% of everything I made from the age of 7 to 17. In 10 years I made $450,000!

-Gary Peterson, Kwakwaka’wakw, interview 2015

Among some groups, such as the Salish, while they reaped the reputational benefits of extensive experience, carvers were not a proscribed class; carving was open to anyone and most men had knowledge of carving techniques, although canoe-making was a particular and reserved skill, limited to those with familial rights to do so (Barnett, 1955:107-110). Canoe carvers come from families with long carving traditions and learned to carve at a young age; carving was and remains a distinct profession; Makah carver Greg Colfax noted that he had “raised three children on my carving, was able to provide my wife and I with a way to survive. That’s how I did it”, while Makah weaver Melissa Petersen-Renault went further, by identifying the commercial imperative as essential in the development of an artist;

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48 Iconoclash here is understood as “what happens when there is uncertainty about the exact role of the hand at work in the production of a mediator.” [original emphasis] (Latour, 2002:8). In the cases described it relates to when we, as non-Native observers, cannot be sure what effect the subsequent intervention of a mediator, in this case the artist, has on the image and its relations of power, authority and authenticity.

49 Of course when an indigenous person is forced to dispose of a powerful object against their will, such as in the aftermath of the Cranmer potlatch in 1921, and has not been able or willing to withdraw the rights from the objects, then these objects consequently remain restricted and powerful.
Actually as an artist, I raised my family on what I made, so I always had to make things to sell to the museum quite a bit and all over the place, teach classes that kind of thing to make money to . . . you almost have to make money on your art to get really good at it actually, to have the time to put into it in order to get good.

-Melissa Petersen-Renault, Makah, interview 2015

Makah carver Spencer McCarty continues this commercial narrative, returning to the subject of miniatures and their elevated importance in the economies of commercial art production, sale and transportation:

When I first started to become a commercial carver to make my living, to become an artist, I had a hard time selling big items because nobody knew who I was. They didn’t know my name, nobody seen my stuff before. And though I’d learned how to make masks and canoes and totem poles, sales were difficult because the higher price of the full-size object and I had a friend who used to run the museum and he run the craft store too and he gave me the idea to carve everything I can and make it small. And learn how to carve everything and make it small and it won’t take time if I wreck it and have to throw it away. But if I learn how to make it small then I’ll have learned how to make everything. And then in the meantime my name will get out there and my art will get out there and people will say “Hey, this guy is pretty good at carving”. And it worked. I made miniatures for probably four years, little masks, little canoes, little totem poles. Just anything we had that was small.

- Spencer McCarty, Makah, interview 2015

This section has established that to carvers and artists from the Northwest Coast commercial art production is not only a source of pride and sustenance, but also an activity connected in a vital and direct way with art production for cultural ritual practice, and moreover an important part of the development of an artist. Since miniaturisation is also an important part of a carver’s training and that the corpus of souvenir art includes substantial numbers of miniature objects, these two factors of Northwest Coast carving are intrinsically linked. Indeed, Spencer McCarty’s interview made it clear that work in miniatures can directly further the commercial appeal of a carver’s work. Separation of miniaturised objects, including those hybridised pieces made for commercial sale, as inauthentic or acculturated is therefore a false assumption. Such artworks are instead a fundamental part of the development and continuation of traditional Northwest Coast material culture practice.
Understanding the process of miniaturisation

This chapter has developed themes from the case studies and has focused them onto the narrative of the artist as an active imaginative agent in the process of miniaturisation. Artists have made a series of culturally informed individual choices intended to communicate a particular message to a defined audience, through the medium of miniaturisation. The chapter has explored the similarities in this process from across the Northwest Coast region, identifying it as a cultural practice which unites the tribes of the Northwest Coast, although it will obviously be pursued in different ways by different tribes and even by different individuals depending on the cultural, temporal and spatial circumstances in which the process takes place.

The first key component of this argument is that miniature objects produced on the Northwest Coast do not require a rigorous or even approximate spatial relationship with their prototype as long as the necessary mimetic quality is preserved. This dissonance between miniature and prototype is not an accidental product, but rather a deliberate choice made in the process to enhance some dimensions at the expense of others. A similar process attaches to the materiality of miniature objects; that while the choice of material is partially determined by the availability and quality of resources, individual decisions of materiality based on intended functionality are far more important to the miniature, while the materiality of the prototype appears almost irrelevant. Moreover, by utilising non-traditional materials, the artist can become free of culturally-imposed artistic restrictions and can allow their imagination to develop the artwork. This is best illustrated by understanding that as quality of carving diminishes, so does quality of materials, even when better quality materials are readily available. The artist is making an imaginative choice about the quality of the miniature they are creating based primarily on audience, not on skill or resources.

The chapter then critiques the notion that most miniatures were explicitly utilised as ritual objects. While it is inevitable that this occurred in some contexts, the evidence for direct use of miniatures in ceremonial activity is not strong, although there are hints that a small number may be supernatural objects of power. Miniatures do however often incorporate ceremonial qualities and affordances which show that the semiotic abilities of many miniatures draw on their indexical relations with ceremony. The practice of miniaturisation too has supernatural aspects; interviews clearly demonstrate that carving is itself a ritual activity in which cosmology is an essential component, and so miniaturisation is indelibly linked with the ritual aspects of life in the region.
then examined how miniature objects can operate as dioramas, imaginative objects rooted in specific moments and actions, which may act in multiple realities simultaneously as temporally detached reproductions of events and as synecdochic reflections of Northwest Coast peoples more generally, generating powerful qualia operating in both realities through abduction by a knowledgeable audience.

These conclusions demonstrate that miniaturisation is unbound by the physical affordances of the prototype, owing far more to intangible, imaginative, qualia to embody information. By examining how miniaturisation operates within carving culture and how carving as a professional artform operates within with the wider social and material culture structures of the region, it can be determined that not only is miniaturisation a crucial part of a carver’s technique, but that it also operates subtly within the processes by which other, larger and more prominent objects are produced.

It acts to shape carvers, both on a personal level, helping to develop an individual carver’s skills and production, but also on a broader pedagogical level, educating carvers through praxis, the repetitive exercise of miniature art production. Carvers are central to Northwest Coast societies, without carvers producing art works for ceremonial events, the culture starts to fail. Carvers can only pursue their craft full-time, and only attain the skill levels necessary to achieve the required quality, if they can make carving commercially viable. Interconnected with these imperatives is an understanding that it is carvers, among others but of particular importance, who ensure that traditions are passed from generation to generation through their art and the ritual cultural life that it makes possible. This role is one keenly felt by Northwest Coast carvers and one which they take seriously. For each of these issues, miniaturisation, whether as training method, commercial product or pedagogical tool of cultural transmission, operates subtly but crucially in the background.

Together these arguments present an overall picture of miniaturisation in the region as an essential and yet little understood process not only within Northwest Coast carving practice, but also within the wider process of developing, reflecting, reproducing and continuing traditional Northwest Coast cultural practice over an extended and highly disruptive temporal period. In combination with the four case study chapters which consider the practice within the localised contexts of four tribes from different parts of the region focused on different stages of the post-contact period, the similarities which unite them and the differences which separate them become visible and significant in
efforts to reach an appreciation of the major thematic underpinnings of miniaturisation as a material culture process on the Northwest Coast.
Chapter 9: Miniature realities

The peoples described in the preceding case studies have all experienced similar post-contact narratives of demographic and economic collapse followed by aggressive colonial government, and have all responded through the medium of miniaturisation. The nature of these responses has been different in each society, as befits the essentially localised nature of miniaturisation as a practice operating within specific semiotic ideologies. The case studies have demonstrated miniaturisation as a communicative process, which uses the intangible dimensions of imagination and skeuomorphic indexicality to transmit ideology through the semiophoric affordances of the miniature object by creating qualia within specific audiences. As communicative actors, miniatures from the American Pacific Northwest can preserve and protect intangible information in a subtle and fascinating manner, unapproachable without an understanding of the semiotic ideologies within which the miniatures were conceived and remain embedded. The first stage of the miniaturisation process is to provide these objects with the diminutive tactility, simplicity and mimetic indexicality necessary to achieve these ambitions, and the second is to distribute them to their intended audiences.

In this chapter the ways in which miniaturisation has occurred on the Northwest Coast have been summarised, producing an examination of its roles within Northwest Coast societies and the methodology through which it is able to operate. Consideration is given to the relationship between affordances, the physical features of the object; qualia, the emotional, sensual feelings aroused in an observer by an object; and semiotics, the study of the relationships between signs and observers within which qualia can arise from affordances. All three are understood to operate within the miniaturisation process, challenging the notion that the process is a continuum, and instead positing that it is reliant on an imaginative combination of elements to become a medium of non-verbal, ideological communication. Once this has been understood, it becomes possible to present a new approach to interpreting miniature objects.

Using this study, miniatures from the Northwest Coast are reconsidered in terms of their authenticity, their changing abilities as they circulate outside the communities in which they originated and ultimately what they reveal about the ideological intentions of their original artists. Finally, the chapter considers how this theory can be used in
anthropological contexts beyond the confines of the Northwest Coast, and what a broad application of the theory, both within the fields of museology and material culture studies and other disciplines, might reveal about miniaturisation and related imaginative and manipulative material culture techniques.

**Studying affordances**

The first step in this study was to consider the affordances of the miniatures from the Northwest Coast in the museum record. There is a striking dissonance in the prototypes chosen for mimetic reproduction throughout the post-colonial period. While the range of miniatures at Ozette is broad, the data survey demonstrated that in the post-contact period it was only the larger, more significative forms of colossal material culture; canoes, houses and totem poles, which were routinely used as prototypes for miniaturisation. Moreover, the proportion of these examples, particularly canoes, which demonstrated ceremonial or religious significance was far higher in miniature than in the full-sized examples, and the prototypes for miniaturisation pertained almost exclusively to traditional, if often hybrid, forms of material culture. Rather than the European designs of houses and boats which began to replace the longhouse and canoe in the late nineteenth century artists produced, with a few exceptions, mimetic miniatures of prototypes they recognised from their own traditions, not from the alien other. On the rare occasions that artists did miniaturise the other, they usually did so satirically, as with argillite carvings, and often within a traditional medium; such as Charlie James and the “Pepito pole”.

This dissonance is accentuated by the loose proportionality in miniature objects. As seen in chapters five and eight, miniature houses, even when made under commission as ostensibly proportional models, are designed to exaggerate their highly-decorated frontages and door poles, discarding accurately scaled depths in the process. There is also no effort to reproduce the schemata of a full-sized house or to use the same materials. Canoes likewise enjoy imaginative freedom in materials and proportions, for example altering the scales of the miniature to emphasise the bow and stern, so often decorated with formline crests, or to exaggerate the scale of the crew to emphasise their status. Regional differences mean that these disproportionalities are deployed in different ways in different communities, but dimensional exaggeration is a unifying feature, implying that the iconic relationship between miniature and prototype, the supposed continuum, is not rooted in linear scale but in imaginative qualia.
This is corroborated in the fieldwork, where it is made clear that most miniatures are not intended to accurately reproduce the scales, materials or functionality of the prototypes, but only that they “look right”; that they can adequately present an iconic relation to the prototype through their mimetic affordances. In a similar vein, they do not necessarily at any stage require engagement with the same techniques as their prototypes; they are not miniaturisations or reproductions of those processes, but a separate process entirely. This means that the notion that miniatures are technical drawings or scaled architectural models in the Enlightenment scientific sense can be confidently rejected. It also demonstrates that miniatures from the Northwest Coast are overtly imaginative objects, subject to decision making by the artists who produce them which is unconnected to the mechanical requirements of their prototypes.

As imaginative constructs of this decision making process, miniatures need only engage with the affordances necessary for their purpose, which is rarely obvious or single-faceted. This means that extraneous details can be eliminated or altered on the judgement of the artist, and by considering what details have been retained an observer can begin to engage with the miniature. Detail is not simplified in a uniform or mathematical way; some details are eliminated entirely, others remain unchanged. Sometimes details are included which have no mechanical purpose, but can be understood as imaginative representations of specific details, incorporated for a specific purpose. The case studies present numerous examples, such as the hidden faces on Gordon Scow’s Hamat’sa dancers which give them identity and personality, or the ability of Makah canoe miniatures to float, even though this afforance is ostensibly unnecessary given their provenance. Although they are not uniform, comparisons of these simplifications and contextualisation within indigenous semiotic ideologies can also lead to a seriated analysis of miniatures which provides clues for intention of message and audience; for example the differences in the manner of the depiction of traditional hunting practices in Martin’s dioramas or the choices of wood quality among the makers of miniature canoes in the late nineteenth century.

Intimately tied to this consideration is the notion of scaling; proportionally-accurate scales are disregarded, but there is a wide diversity of sizes within miniatures, which must only be smaller than the prototype, not themselves a pre-defined size. Young Doctor’s four-metre long Makah miniature is a case in point; he chose at that place and at that time to produce a miniature substantially larger than any other ever produced, and he did so in part in order to engage with a glutted tourist market that prized innovation. Ellen Neel took the opposite extreme in the same direction with the “world’s smallest totem pole”, creating an object which fascinated through its diminutive intricacies. That both of these
objects were subsequently presented to prominent outsiders is not a coincidence – they were indexical ambassadors of the skill of their artist and the cultures from which they emerged, made to be observed in this context.

In miniaturisation affordances are, as represented in the elemental system discussed in chapter one, based around three categories; mimesis, scaling and simplification, which operate in relation to one another under observation by an audience in order to provoke specific qualia. These affordances are not incidental, but have been carefully selected by the artist during the developmental stages of the miniaturisation process.

Reconsidering prototypes

Throughout this thesis, the word prototype has been used to refer to the larger thing from which the miniature has drawn its iconic affordances. As noted, this does not have to be a physical object in its own right, it can be imagined or a broad mimetic category. This becomes the foundation of miniaturisation; selection of the prototype is essential because the miniature cannot exist without the iconic qualities of its prototype. These qualities are then imaginatively manipulated through simplification and scaling to create a miniature object possessed of the affordances necessary to achieve the intentions of its maker. When these imaginative objects are taken into a new environment beyond that for which they were made, they can torque unexpectedly.\(^5\)

It would be incorrect to assume that the prototype is the inspiration for the miniature or its origin; that miniaturisation is a process that takes the prototype along a continuum from large to small. Assuming that a continuum operates places the prototype as the central focus of the process, rather than just one of a number of contributory factors. This becomes problematic because to assume that the prototype is the start of the process obscures the “emphasis”, the intangible ideology which miniatures contain. As an example, to assume that the head canoes made by the Northern tribes in the late nineteenth century are dependent on the earlier canoe design for anything more than basic iconic resemblance fails to account for the conditions under which they were made and therefore to their metonymical qualities which provoke the qualia which contain the nostalgic ideology for which they were created.

\(^5\) Torque here follows Pinney (2005:268-270), in which an image’s “time is never necessarily that of the audience”, a “device . . . characterized by jolts and disjunctions”. 
It is important to recognise therefore that the mimesis is not dictated by the prototype but by the artist; since the artist only takes those parts of the prototype they need, then there is no continuum, no direct trajectory of scale, only a refracted scattering of affordances, among which scale is but one. Instead the trajectory is provided by the intention which demands the miniature, the motivation which was termed “emphasis” in chapter one.

Thus we can now see the first stage of miniaturisation as a chaîne opératoire:

**Artist → Emphasis → Prototype → Scaling & Simplification → Miniature**

In this formula it should be identified that the actual physical creation of the miniature need not start until the final stage, although in practice is often begun earlier, the initial tentative stages of shaping the miniature coinciding with the decisions taken regarding scaling and simplification.

**Decoding miniatures**

Although individually determined by artists, the decisions integral to miniaturisation are informed by the cultural context of the process, which determines the semiotic ideology the artist expects the miniature to circulate within and thus the qualia it will provoke. This is an understanding that among Northwest Coast miniatures “the nuances of form defining a style are heavily coded with the life experience of a carver working in a specific time and place” (Hall & Glascock, 2011:55). The term code, as used here and earlier by Claude Lévi-Strauss, should be clarified; it is not suggested that miniatures on the Northwest Coast provide a system of interpretable symbolic symbols which can be transliterated and read. Indeed, as an earlier quote by Lévi-Strauss illustrated, one cannot “read” an object as one would a book.

Miniatures, like the rattles Lévi-Strauss described, respond not to passive “reading”, but to interaction through physical tactility and cognitive fascination. This allows for an analogic interpretation of their physical affordances within a partially resituated semiotic
ideology to draw out the intangible, indexical affordances that make them nonsensical objects, capable through qualia of simultaneously revealing and obscuring sensitive and deeply personal knowledge. The elements of mimesis, scale and simplification work in combination to expose information among knowledgeable observers and conceal it from the uninitiated. It is this unique ability of the miniature to simultaneously reveal and obscure dependent on the semiotic ideology of the observer which makes the code metaphor apt. This understanding of code becomes even more significant in the Northwest Coast context when it is recalled that so many post-contact occurrences of miniaturisation take place within the context of external repression of traditional practices, the traditionality of these forbidden practices defined not within communities, but by the colonialisit other.

This thread can be traced through the miniature works of artists such as Young Doctor, Edenshaw, Neel, Scow and Reid in which miniatures have operated as an indigenous tradition permissible or overlooked by authorities, and were therefore packed with information impermissible or dangerous in other contexts. This was possible because the authorities viewed miniatures as a hybridised, or creolised, art form; European-inspired and therefore, and crucially, inauthentic and harmless. Even sympathetic anthropologists, such as Boas or Heye, seem to have fallen for this assumption, relegating miniatures as inaccurate tourist art and consequently beneath the study of serious academics or collectors. Museums have borne considerable responsibility for this problem, eliminating tactility or imagination in display in favour of a “read” seriation within European Enlightenment categories which has deliberately dismissed indigenous imagination and recreated the miniatures as semiophores, useful objects made useless.

Once the notion that miniatures are inauthentic expressions of indigenous ideology has broken down, it becomes possible to tentatively start to “decode” them; to rediscover the obscured ideologies within as metaphors and synecdoches; their operations in etic environments as ethnodramatic satire, and even perhaps understand them as consciously op-art autoethnographies. Thus a Makah whaling canoe diorama becomes not just a scientifically commissioned model of canoe-building, but an expression of threatened Makah identity; a head canoe miniature given to a Russian trader is not just a depiction of a Tlingit watercraft, but of the spirit canoes which protect the coast, acting as a warning understood by the Tlingit but not by the Russians; Martin’s comparative hunting dioramas illustrate how miniatures can negotiate emic and etic spaces safely; and Tulalip miniaturisation, although ostensibly mechanical in character, is ultimately an imaginative process of developing a distinct and unifying communal identity.
Identifying audience

What ties all of the miniatures discussed here together is that they are inherently visual and tactile semiophoric creations; without physical “use”. They were made to be observed, to be engaged with mentally and sometimes physically, and they were created with this intention paramount by artists who lived and worked within cultures that are explicitly visual in practice, with a strong grasp of subtle, satirical commentary. Throughout this thesis, consideration of audience has lain behind every example of miniaturisation; if the audience can be determined, then the qualia can be analysed. This is to incorporate semiotic ideology into the framework of miniaturisation study; if the semiotic ideology within which the miniature was created can be understood, then the concealed information it contains may be interpreted.

In the course of the thesis a simplistic interpretation of miniatures as holding one defined function has been deliberately avoided as unsupportable. Miniatures were not only, or simply, souvenirs, toys or curios, artworks or architectural experiments. Although some miniatures have fitted some of these categories, or at various times may have fitted all of these categories, this simple, seriated functional terminology consistently fails to account for the intangible, the non-sensical, information that miniatures contain.

It is by this process that the large miniature canoes obtained by Malaspina or Sartori can be understood as portable statements of identity and ownership; extensions of the Haida mind. The work of Neel is a method of disseminating Kwakw̱aḵa’wakw imagery to non-Native society and Gobin’s canoe miniature is revealed as a political demonstration. It also provides an explanation of the miniatures produced for internal tribal audiences, such as Scow’s figurines or the Tulalip maquettes, which are tailored to the specific semiotic ideology of the communities in which they are made. This is a straightforward interpretation of miniaturisation as a process of communication, which could be rendered as the following *chaîne opératoire*.

\[
\text{Ideology} \rightarrow \text{Artist} \rightarrow \text{Miniature} \rightarrow \text{Audience}
\]

Here the ideology informs the artist’s work on the miniature to convey information to the audience. However, this equation is an oversimplification of the process because it does not consider differences between emic and etic audiences, or account for the ways in which miniaturisation can torque to create unexpected effects as miniature objects move in society.
Consider the Makah miniature canoes, both those of Young Doctor and his contemporaries and those of the modern carvers interviewed for this project. These miniatures are routinely described as operating as commercial products made for an artistic marketplace. They are also understood explicitly as ambassadors for the Makah, and specifically for particular Makah families. They also operate however as a method of unifying a number of significative processes into one material culture practice.

One facet is their role as pedagogical tools in Makah society, used to teach young Makah about traditions which are historically important to preserving Makah identity in the face of aggressive transculturation. They also, through the technical process of creation, through the cuts needed to make a miniature canoe, educate Makah carvers in the techniques necessary to preserve and communicate these physical practices and knowledge through art. This creates an intriguing loop within the process, whereby miniaturisation helps create artists who can then distribute cultural knowledge more widely among their own community, which may collectively be considered as one multigenerational material culture process, a “movement of thought” which exhibits temporal differences in process and affordance but physical, and thereby cultural, consistency in technique. This practice is unique to miniaturisation both because its small and inexpensive affordances allow it to be completed quickly and with minimal risk and because they encourage a child-friendly pedagogical tactility, and imaginative inhabitation, which stimulates play, generates qualia and consequently forms a familiar relationship with the iconic prototype and an indexical relationship with the artist’s emphasis.

Simultaneously, some miniatures created through this process are disseminated away from the community, literally travelling long distances and simultaneously travelling metaphorical distances as miniature artistic devices of communication; a canoe cannot successfully travel unless it floats, so a miniature canoe cannot successfully travel to its intended destination or communicate knowledge and identity unless it too is able to float. These metaphorical affordances are deliberately embedded in the process of miniaturisation and explicitly understood by the artists. What makes them possible is the inherently imaginative nature of the miniature and its semiotic relations.

In this particular technical act, the artist draws on and manipulates the semiotic ideology of the process to generate a self-sustaining pedagogical loop within the community and loosely direct the dissemination of cultural information beyond its boundaries. These effects can only be achieved if the decisions made during the miniaturisation process have been correctly judged. This is why the post-contact Makah have predominately
miniaturised whaling canoes; they are using the most significant example of historic material culture available as an iconic prototype to make use of the prototype’s indexical significance through an acceptable medium. In this interpretation the miniature is not representing whaling canoes specifically, but the Makah, as a synecdoche. It does so through adopting the indexicality of the most directly and powerful image in Makah society and giving it only those physical affordances necessary for the miniature, as opposed to the prototype, to succeed. A formula for this process might be as illustrated here, in which the artist is practicing the same miniaturisation process for three different audiences; the wider global audience who buys the miniatures as artworks, the Makah community in which they are used pedagogically, and the artist themselves, the latter two operating as a feedback loop which reinforces mechanical and cultural knowledge within both the person of the artist and his emic semiotic ideology, as in this chaîne opératoire.

\[
\text{Emphasis} \rightarrow \text{Artist} \rightarrow \text{Miniature} \rightarrow \text{External Audience}
\]

\[
( \text{emic semiotic ideologies} ) ( \text{etic semiotic ideologies} )
\]

**Emic audiences**

Consideration of the range of audiences accommodated in the miniaturisation process is illustrated in all of the case studies, with localised temporal and spatial alterations; Neel carved predominately for the external art market of predominately unknowledgeable observers, but her work also had significant observable effects both on her personally and on the Kwakwaka’wakw more widely, who are knowledgeable observers. Scow, conversely, was disinterested in the external market, instead focusing strongly on (potentially) knowledgeable observers in his own community. The Tulalip do not display their miniatures publically, and yet the effect of miniaturisation on themselves as carvers and on the Tulalip as a community is profound.

There is therefore a significant role for miniaturisation in the development of carvers; James Madison, Gary Peterson, Cloth-Bag, Wayne Alfred and Gwaai Edenshaw have all recalled how their earliest carving experiences were with miniatures, and how miniatures shaped them. By allowing apprentice carvers to practice cheaply, and without any noted religious or ceremonial expectation or danger, miniaturisation has a practical pedagogical
role in the making of an artist. Miniatures also affect the cognitive development of a carver, reinforcing engagement with traditional media, design and material while also permitting innovation and experimentation due to the low cost/low risk nature of the art form.

The role of miniaturisation within technical carving processes has also been considered, with clear demonstration that miniaturisation can act as a bridge between the imagination - or indeed spiritual inspiration - of the artist and the finished large scale artwork. These miniatures, explicitly maquettes, allow carvers to experiment with form and design, developing the physical affordances of the miniature in relation to the imaginative dimensions they wished to create in the larger artwork. Quite explicitly in this process, the miniature has worked on the artist as the artist has worked on the miniature; miniaturisation here has clear agency as a sub-process within longer-term carving projects. Interestingly, none of the carvers who recounted this practice intended to make a miniature for sale (i.e. for etic audiences) as part of this process - the miniature was a tool of the process and often a short-lived tool at that. Gwaai Edenshaw destroys his plasticine maquettes during construction; Cloth-Bag never finished them, only making the few practice cuts he needed before moving on to the larger object, but keeping the miniatures for future reference. Steven Bruce, Sr., later decided to finish and sell his maquettes, but only through persuasion from a non-Native dealer.

This demonstrates that miniaturisation within a longer creative process and miniaturisation in which the creative process is focused on the creation and distribution of a miniature object are, on the Northwest Coast, different processes which operate in similar ways. The miniaturisation process which created Joe Gobin's canoe miniature and that which created Steven Bruce, Sr.'s miniature totem pole are oriented towards different audiences and are consequently created and considered very differently; the former as a deliberate vehicle of knowledge and ideology, the latter as a tool designed to work symbiotically with the artist themselves, but which has no recognised value once its purpose has been completed. However, the intangible effects of the elements of miniaturisation to influence human behaviour are present in both processes.

Bridging the gap is the miniaturisation practiced by the Tulalip carvers. Here the miniatures serve dual purposes within the formalised environment of a commercial art production facility. They hold technical significance for the artists, allowing for the same experimentation as other maquettes; consider Gobin's welcome figure and its broken paddle. However, they also hold a wider communal significance as agents within the
cultural development of the Tulalip. These miniatures are, in combination with digital
designs and sketches, presented to the Board of Directors, who in turn will make
suggestions and alterations which will affect the finished full-sized pole. Since the Tulalip,
like other Salish peoples, have historically placed large scale artworks at points of cultural
dissonance such as courthouses, government buildings and schools as deliberate markers
of identity and the political ideology of non-violent resistance, these large artworks can be
seen as overtly political cultural statements. The miniatures therefore become important
agents within the negotiation of overt displays of Tulalip identity, a liminal point of
consideration at which the Directors and the artists decide on the most effective direction
for the imagery with which they decorate tribal institutions of authority.

Other communities have also experienced this action of miniatures as a safe medium for
simultaneously negotiating and altering historical cultural trajectories. Kwakwakawakw
boys play-potlatching with miniature canoes in the nineteenth century and their
descendants recreating the Hamatsa with Scow's figurines were fulfilling a similar, if less
official, role as were the Makah children playing with miniatures on the beach. There is a
well-understood pedagogical role for miniaturisation within Northwest Coast societies, in
which miniatures participate in processes of play to stimulate the imagination of children
through the tactile fascination of the miniature and in doing so transmit cultural
information between generations. As Bill Reid and those that have followed him have
demonstrated, this process continues over long stretches of time; even when the "text-
aided" support of knowledgeable elders; the "books of knowledge" their oral histories
provide, have been nearly severed by cultural or demographic collapse and repression.
The physical affordances of the miniatures can, because the semiotic ideology within
which they are observed and the qualia which are produced has not changed too
draastically, still be interpreted and acknowledged by subsequent generations of indigenous
people, and the information contained within can be understood.

Etic audiences

This chapter has so far considered how miniaturisation can act as a communicative
practice on the artists themselves and on the communities from which the artists come.
However a third audience is equally important. Like the carvers of the Sandeman canoe
miniature, or Joe Gobin’s contemporary example, Northwest Coast artists have often
created high-quality miniatures of high status material culture as ambassadors to etic audiences; significant examples of material culture deliberately intended to convey ideological information to audiences who are known to operate in substantially different semiotic ideologies from the carvers who made them.

The artists were not ignorant of the ideologies within which their miniatures would be observed; as bearers of an intensely visual culture, the carvers of the Skidegate houses at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition would have had sufficient experience of Americans at the time of commission to be able to recognise that this was an opportunity to impress - to create a small but lasting attachment to the Haida among a very large number of people. They also knew, as Louis Shotridge and Mungo Martin also later understood, that how Native Northwest Coast peoples are presented to the wider North American public matters. If positive and accurate information is produced and disseminated, if the traditions they spring from are preserved in the object record and if the practices and ideologies by which they were created are continued then the culture can survive. Artists, as prominent and explicit bearers of culture, automatically took on this role and still pursue it. As Gwaai Edenshaw noted, there are carvers who have pursued their art not because it was their intention to be artists but because the role is so crucial, and the information that would be lost if it was not fulfilled is so irreplaceable, that they had no choice but to take up the craft.

That artists producing material for etic audiences understood the limited extent to which those interacting with the objects would understand them is well illustrated by the prevalence of satire in Northwest Coast souvenir art. Edenshaw and his contemporaries were comfortable inserting parodies of Europeans into their argillite artworks, just as they were experimenting with autoethnography, because they recognised that Europeans would only abduce, understand and appreciate those affordances which were comprehensible within their own semiotic ideology; indigenous satire, and the caricatures it featured, was not such an affordance. Miniatures, encoded with “life experience”, were not (generally) intended to be satirical, but they retain the subtlety of that artistic device, obscuring ideological information within misleading affordances. Thus is was that miniature devices of communication were obtained by Europeans, misunderstood as simple iconic models, and ultimately deposited in museums.

Over time and space the relationships between miniatures and audiences can torque; Krzysztof Pomian’s descriptions of previously useful objects becoming semiophorically useless once they enter the museum is a highly-relevant example (cf. Pomian, 1990). They
circulate and the ways in which they are interpreted change as the observers become less knowledgeable and the semiotic ideologies around them shift. This explains why miniatures in museum settings become representative proxies for their prototypes rather than imaginative communicative constructs; they shift from solid objects to more nebulous things, their mimetic affordances obscuring their indexical relationships to intangible ideologies.

Unless great care is taken by curators, when a miniature enters a museum its ideological information can become lost (or at least remain unobserved) as it becomes a semiophore. The long history of museums decontextualising or radically recontextualising ethnographic objects results in the curators effectively remaking the miniature, the dramatic alteration in context forcing new and unfamiliar interpretations onto the object and generating new, uninformed qualia. It is this that Bill Holm described as the violence of the curatorial process (cf. Holm, 1986), the squeezing of imaginative, representative objects into etic functionalist seriation; a phenomenon against which Shotridge struggled during his residency at the Penn Museum. To pursue the metaphor further, when this pressure is placed on the object, it can torque unexpectedly; such as the history of unknowledgeable curators confusing the bow and stern of head canoes when studying text-free miniatures (King, 1976; Harper, 1971:238). It can also have ramifications across wider society; Charlie James’ “idiot sticks” and the prevalence of Ellen Neel’s miniatures inadvertently contributed in transforming totem poles from a Kwakwaka’wakw Northwest Coast specific object type into a pastiche of etic Pan-Indian identity once they entered the unknowledgeable semiotic ideologies of wider American society.

When new generations of carvers began to turn to museum collections to rediscover lost art forms and techniques, led by Bill Reid, the miniatures were again problematic. Text-free or unreliably etic text-aided, the contact zone of the museum hindered their restitution within indigenous semiotic ideology. It took time and experimentation to realise that they were not scaled models but metaphorical ideological devices and it is only recently that carvers have acknowledged their more unusual affordances which speak to obscured ideological information; such as Alex McCarty’s work on the buoyancy of the Makah miniature canoes. In this respect, it is the contemporary artists who are now the etic audience, the miniatures having become so embedded within the semiotic ideologies of the museums that their new contexts can effectively obscure the original intentions of their carvers.
This project has demonstrated that this recontextualisation is not a permanent feature of the miniature; that when they are figuratively isolated from the institution which holds them and studied not as iconic models within a continuum of scaling but as objects of imaginative communication composed of the elements of miniaturisation, their original qualia can then be partially understood within the context of the semiotic ideologies in operation when they were made. From this, it becomes possible to discern insight into the higher rungs of Hawke’s Ladder. Not just the imagination or the ideology of the carvers, but even to their emotions and ambitions. Miniaturisation on the Northwest Coast can be understood as a technical process oriented towards the preservation and communication of traditional culture and practice through both emic and etic audiences; a material culture practice formidable in its ability to cross generations and through contact zones with the intangible, nonsensical information inherent in its operation intact and waiting to be acknowledged.

**A model of miniaturisation**

This chapter has identified three stages which comprise miniaturisation as a process. The first two are the conception and construction of the miniature. The third is the deployment of that miniature to a specific audience. At this point the original process ends, but the miniature object itself can survive, being remade in new contexts and torquing as it passes through contact zones. The process can be explained with a *chaîne opératoire*, in which an artist determines an emphasis, informed by the semantic frame within which they work and knowledge of the semiotic ideology within which they know their audience will interpret the object. They select a prototype capable of transmitting the emphasis and make a series of decisions regarding scale and simplification. The result is the miniature. In some cases, where the audience is the artist themselves, the miniature goes no further, squashed like Gwaai Edenshaw’s plasticine. In most cases however the miniature continues, deployed to an emic or etic audience as required and then continuing unaided to new audiences unsuspected.

The miniature object likely fits one or more definition within seriated terminology; toys, souvenirs, models etc. but it also, through the processes of its construction, possesses affordances which convey the emphasis by inspiring qualia which evoke indexical relationships and thereby enact semiosis. When audiences, knowledgeable or not, interact with the miniature, they impose their own understandings onto it. Such is true of all
objects, but miniatures are unique in that their diminutive tactility and imaginative fascination actively encourage the imposition of interpretation. Claude Lévi-Strauss’s fish club is and will always be “read” as a fish-club (1966 [1962]:26), even if its decorative features are poorly understood, but miniatures withstand such functionalist analysis, their affordances fascinating and obfuscating so that in etic semiotic ideologies a miniature canoe becomes an icon for all canoes without consideration of its indexicality, or it becomes a “modern/trade carving” “just where it should not be”, a “cluttering” object of derision and worse, inauthenticity.

Thus a formula of miniaturisation is presented in fig. 9.1; the process by which miniaturisation operates in society and therefore a guide to how miniature objects can be analysed and better understood.

![A Chaîne Opératoire of Miniaturisation](image)

Fig. 9.1. Methodological model for the study of miniaturisation (design by Steven Boden).
Research answers

With this model of miniaturisation established it becomes possible to consider answers to the research questions posed at the start of the thesis; they were:

1. What is the nature of the mimetic relationship between miniature objects and their larger resemblants, here interpreted as their prototypes?
2. How can the interaction between prototype and miniature during the technical process of miniaturisation change the conceptual and ideological basis of an object?
3. Can miniatures be considered as authentic expressions of indigenous ideology?
4. Does reflection of the peculiar properties embodied through miniaturisation recommend a consideration of miniature objects as a method of communication through portable semiosis?
5. How does study of miniaturisation reframe the problematic links between aesthetics and practical functionality?

In this thesis, the study of the nature of miniaturisation as a process inspired by a combination of emphasis and prototype through the calculated qualia of the artist has demonstrated that the mimetic relationship between a miniature and its prototype is not one of a continuum of scale. It instead relies on a selective incorporation of simplified affordances to emphasise certain indexical features of the prototype which are most efficacious in communicating the emphasis behind the miniature. The prototype is therefore selected for the miniature, the miniature does not spring from the prototype. Although, as with the carvers’ maquettes, this relationship can be symbiotic, it is usually the case that miniaturisation draws on the indexicality of the prototype for quite another purpose than that of the prototype. Thus is it not the interaction between miniature and prototype which changes the conceptual and ideological basis of the object; the miniature and prototype are two separate things, operating in different technical systems and sharing only those iconic affordances necessary for the miniature. The conceptual and ideological changes which have occurred take place before the prototype is even selected, decided by the artist and prompted by the emphasis.

The thesis has repeatedly proven that miniatures should be considered as authentic expressions of indigenous ideology. However this is not a blanket affirmation; authenticity is not an absolute. Unlike miniaturisation itself, authenticity on the Northwest Coast is a continuum. Decisions made during miniaturisation bear this out; the lack of
European prototypes produced in miniature on the Northwest Coast was a choice made by artists concerned with ensuring authenticity of production. However this does not mean that miniatures produced with non-traditional materials or techniques are not authentic; Bill Reid’s tiny tea set is inescapably a Western art subject and medium, and yet Reid’s own Native identity renders it authentic; Halliday’s sale of the Cranmer potlatch regalia was inauthentic because there was no indigenous agency over the transaction and no safe transfer of privileges; James Madison’s insertion of Tlingit motifs onto a Tulalip pole were not inauthentic because Madison has the right and authority to make use of those designs; and the Boma company’s mass-produced resin totem poles and formline plates, sold worldwide as souvenirs, are authentic because, as Corinne Hunt explains,

"Boma is a family run business and they really wanted me to have free reign. So making the plates they allowed me to choose everything, that shapes and the designs, and I really appreciate that. And this is a really huge tourist market right, and to have things made in China all the time is really difficult to see. And the products made with Boma are made here, right there just up the street from me. So we have a lot of control over what we do and I think people do appreciate that.

-Corinne Hunt, Kwakwaka’wakw, interview 2015

This extends beyond tribal specifics: in fig. 9.2, a carver of undefined indigenous identity named Raymond carves generic totem poles outside The Olde Curiosity Shop in Seattle from cheap balsa wood, and yet his work is authentic in that carvers of his ability have carved poles of similar quality in exactly the same spot for more than 140 years. Their knowledge of this tradition grants them a legitimacy (by no means universally acknowledged) that their lack of knowledge of traditional pole designs does not eradicate.
There were however two moments during fieldwork where the continuum of authenticity in miniaturisation crossed into inauthenticity. The first, illustrated in fig. 9.3, was the sale in Seattle Aquarium, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Washington, of generic Northwest Coast-style miniature canoes mass-produced cheaply in Indonesia and priced at the astonishing sum of US$179.99, displaying a breath-taking ignorance and disregard of authentic local art traditions in favour of explicitly inauthentic works.

Fig. 9.3. Faux-Northwest Coast canoe miniature, on sale Seattle Aquarium, Author's photo, 2014. Permission not granted for this photograph to be taken.

The second is more subtle, and came in an interview with Steven Bruce, Sr., who discussed his unease with mass-produced resin miniatures reproducing a set of totem poles he carved in the Netherlands (fig. 9.4):

I don’t like mass-produced myself, it’s not original. But you know from, I guess if you look at it . . . How am I going to word this? . . . It’s just a money maker, that’s all it is. And for some people it works, but from my point of view, if you look, the, like how they did the paint and all, it looks like it was made in China. You know what I mean? They’re not. . . what it does for me, in a way, you know, I did the originals and looking at this it’s not putting a good name to myself from it. I don’t like it at all, mass-producing, unless you are going to . . . See I haven’t done it myself, and I would not accept it if that was for me, I would not put my name on that.

-Steven Bruce, Sr., Kwakwaka’wakw, interview 2015
Authenticity is therefore an individual consideration, operating along a continuum. For Bruce, the resin miniatures have breached the liminal point at which Northwest Coast-style art slips from authentic to inauthentic, while for Corinne Hunt the mass-production element is less problematic as she has retained sufficient control over quality and means of production. Miniaturisation does not render an object inauthentic, so long as the artist is satisfied that the affordances which promote their emphasis are retained.

Miniature objects have been created with affordances which allow them to act as non-verbal communicative actors. They do so precisely because they lack an easily defined practical functionality, which allows them to operate imaginatively. That the portability of miniatures is important to this operation can be demonstrated by their distribution; on the Northwest Coast it was houses, canoes and totem poles that were miniaturised most often and as a result these highly-important indexes of Northwest Coast authority and wealth can be found across a substantially larger geographic range than their prototypes. As the Makah demonstrated, miniature objects are designed to make long journeys through their diminutive dimensions which make them not just fascinatingly tactile, but also easily transportable. Thus miniatures encompass multiple realities of distance; their generally small size allows them to cross much longer distances than their prototypes and act as synecdoches of not just or even an object category, but of the societies from which they came. At the same time the small size encourages close bodily engagement; tactility and stimulation of mirror neurons to allow the extension of mind necessary to engage with their affordances and generate qualia within a wider network of indexical relations.
If miniaturisation is a communicative process, it is in part therefore the inherent portability of miniature objects which enable that communication to travel to distant audiences and retain, as far as is possible given the semiophoric torqueing which occurs, their ability to communicate in their new environment. This is one of the decisions encompassed by the element of scaling, which not only requires consideration of the intangible effect of scale on an audience, but also the very tangible assessment of weight and dimension in accurately judging portability.

The final research question requires the consideration of miniaturisation alongside other material culture techniques which appeal to the imagination. The case studies have demonstrated, in accordance with Lévi-Strauss, that on the Northwest Coast aesthetic design is integral to the functionality of an object and thus when an object has representational rather than practical functionality it is the aesthetics which provide the functionality above other material concerns.

The thesis has taken for its definition of art Alfred Gell’s notion of art as “social relations in the vicinity of objects mediating social agency” (1998:7), which in the case of miniatures means that miniaturisation is an artistic process which provoke social relations between carver and audience, between artist and signatum, and mediates the social agency of these relationships. As an intangible, imaginative process reliant on nonsensical, skeuomorphic dimensions this relationship can only take place through a process of aesthetic decisions regarding mimesis, simplification and scaling to communicate ideological messages. It recognises, as others have done, that indigenous Northwest Coast art has deliberately encoded information in its aesthetic qualities which actively contributed to practical functionality. Where it goes further is to demonstrate that on the Northwest Coast an object need not have any practical functionality in order to be an effective tool; that in miniaturisation it is the aesthetic qualities of the object which are capable of provoking potentially-magical fascination, which give it the power to intervene in human social relations over long distances, despite systemic shocks and temporal divisions.
Gigantures

Miniatures are a specific category of object because there are certain aesthetic rules embedded within the process which creates them. They must bear mimetic association to and be smaller and simpler than their prototypes, even if these qualities have no absolute value – a miniature can be any size or complexity as long as both are diminished from the prototype. In the first chapter of this thesis, the complexities of mimesis were discussed in relation to a giant “trophy cup”, and it is this that suggests a counterpoint to miniatures – objects which are substantially larger than their prototypes. There is no word in English which can collectively describe these objects, but the neologism “gigantures” is suggested as both convenient and, thanks to its Latin root, etymologically appropriate.

There are few examples of gigantures on the Northwest Coast; objects such as totem poles do not meet the requirements, as being large is part of their intended functionality, but there is one category of objects which does match the criteria. The giant spoons of the Central Coast can be found in many museum collections, such as fig. 9.5 from the British Museum. Carved from red cedar, these spoons have been exaggerated in scale beyond all utility. They cannot be conveniently held, let alone supped from, and they do not show the traces of food staining usual in wooden cutlery from the region. Instead they were likely associated with the end of a potlatch ceremony, at which the host would dress as the D’zoonookwa to distribute gifts to the departing visitors. The spoons, often decorated with D’zoonookwa figures, would have been visible nearby as indexes of the wealth and generosity of the host by associating him with the great treasures and gift obligations of the D’zoonookwa. Here the scale increases from the prototype, although it could be argued that the complexity still reduces, the object requiring none of the mechanical practicality of an actual spoon, only the mimetic indexicality of the spoon-giganture relationship.

The effect on an audience is also altered. The intimate tactility or portability of the miniature is replaced with an ostentatious semiophoric presence, visible to many but with a shallower impact. As Susan Stewart notes, “we find the miniature at the origin of private, individual history, but we find the gigantic at the origin of public and natural history” (1984:71) Thus it is with the Seattle “trophy cup”, a text-aided advertisement visible to the public but unapproachable; less able to relate or communicate on deeper ideological or emotional terms than is possible with a miniature.
The –ure suffix comes into English from the Latin –ūra, where it “primarily denoted action or process” (OED). It has since been adapted to refer, variously, to the results of a process, or the bodies or offices through which processes are enacted. In this thesis I am proposing that in certain cases terms with a –ure suffix may be more effectively understood if the construct was returned to its original significance. With miniatures, gigantures and other etymologically related categories of imaginative image-creation, such as caricature or literature, a series of decisions made in creating a semiophoric object capable only of representational functionality provide insights into the semiotic ideologies operating when they were created. This reveals information about both the signs and makers of the signs, the audiences (or signatum) of those signs, those intended by the artist and those unintended with whom the signum torques. Most significantly, it provides insight into how these processes form relationships between artists, signs and audiences through a conspicuously non-sensical medium, generating the semiosis which occurs during the process and which is responsible for the qualia, and thus the effect.

Studying these creative, imaginative “urae”, or perhaps “tures”, is a form of op-art anthropology, granting insights into much broader and more significant networks of cultural, social and magical relationships, depicted synecdochially through the affordances of the “tures”. Although each process is enacted in a different way, and
achieves different affects on an audience, all require a systematic process of imaginative, non-sensical decision making by the artist who creates them. This establishes the ideological codes situated within them, which must be “shaken” out by knowledgeable audiences, and can be torqued over time in ways the original creator may never have intended.

Global miniaturisation

Having thus established miniaturisation as a significative, communicative process on the Northwest Coast, this model can be applied in other cultural milieux. The imaginative simplifications and exaggerations of the 30,000 year old Willendorf woman (Cook, 2013:61); the “purely magical” allegorical devices in Egyptian funerary miniaturisation (Jones, 1990:3; Landström, 1970; Winlock, 1955; Merriman, 2011); the votive ship models of Ancient Greece (Johnston, 1985), and Bronze Age Ireland (Farrell et al., 1975; Greenhill, 1976); or the lead miniatures of biological anomalies with prophetic powers found at Ur (Finkel, 2014:60), may all respond to this approach.

More recent miniaturisation traditions can also reveal semiotic information when examined though this methodology; West African gold weights, where traders carried weights which did not correspond so much with precise measurements as with the reputation of the trader, and which were shaped into diverse miniature designs which could in the correct circumstances hold amuletic powers (Sheales, 2014); the Inuit miniatures described in chapter one, which are possessed of magical affordances which facilitated their status as fulcrums of networks of pedagogical relations (Park, 1998:274; Laugrand & Oosten, 2008); European nefs, elaborate ship miniatures in silver gilt which spoke not of maritime architecture but the status and history of their owners and whose popularity rose and fell with the naval strength of nations (Oman, 1963; Fritsch, 2001); and the Japanese netsuke, bankei or bonsai traditions, displaying one’s personality through restrained miniature decoration and curation (Jonas, 1928). Even Lego, the ubiquitous children’s building blocks, can take on new, manipulative interpretations when re-examined through this methodological frame (Davy, 2015i)

By evaluating these objects and the processes which created them against the theory of miniaturisation outlined in this thesis can reveal obscured registered meanings within their mimetic affordances and ultimately allow insight into the ideological semiotic networks of their artists and the owners who followed them. Although these are all
simple examples of complex traditions, “anecdotal and subjective” in composition, it becomes possible to recognise global patterns in miniaturisation practice, informed by local ideologies which inform the precise process of decision making which contributes to the development of miniaturisation practices all over the world and has done so since the earliest emergence of artistic imagination. Indeed in many of these cases it is important to recognise that often the audience may be gods, spirits or other supernatural entities. The artists in such cases are attempting to create objects which will resonate within semiotic ideologies far outside human experience, general supernatural qualia beyond human conception, and yet still be relatable to the networks of understanding of the artist, forming a communicative bridge of even greater length than that required for human etic audiences.

In studying miniaturisation from the Northwest Coast, this thesis has developed both a theoretical model and a methodology which provide insight into the higher rungs of Hawke’s Ladder in the region; miniatures are categorically not the facile, inauthentic inaccuracies which Eurocentric anthropologists and curators have considered them, but indigenous objects capable of imagination, communication and resistance. When operating within sympathetic semiotic ideologies they become communicative actors in human social relations, with the ability to impart information over long distances and time spans.

Miniatures surround us – they are so often part of the everyday background to human lives. They appear in many guises and forms and fill many roles. They operate as toys, souvenirs or models and in doing so they teach us by allowing us to imprint our own interpretations on their semiophoric forms. But they do not do so passively; they fascinate us through the skeuomorphic relationships they hold with their prototypes, and allow us to inhabit their affordances with our own semiotic ideologies. We do not see them for what they are, but for what we wish to see in them, and it is only by systematically considering the elements of their affordances and the semantic frames of their origin that we can begin to approach a reconstruction of the ideologies and emphasis for which they were created. Because these are ideological constructs, made as tools without practical use, this reconstruction can expose layered and subtle information carefully encoded within them by the original artists, designed to speak to specific audiences and subsequently torqued into new semiotic ideologies, where they operate independently in often unexpected ways. Even when subject to this oft-violent process however, miniatures never lose their essential abilities to fascinate and communicate and the knowledge within them is never truly lost.
Appendices, Glossary and Bibliography
Appendix A: Museum fieldwork database parameters

In this appendix I present an evaluation of the major problems associated with the development of the object database compiled for this project and the methods by which they were overcome.

Gathering information on objects in museum collections has been made significantly easier in recent years through the introduction of digital collection records and collections online systems. Following the pilot study, initial contact was established with museum collection managers to gather information on how data was catalogued in their institutions and in particular the language used to classify miniatures, with the intention. Responses to this communication demonstrated significant inconsistencies in approach both between and within institutions. This excerpt from email communication with Alan Francisco of the Field Museum illustrates the main problems:

1. The same types of objects are often identified in slightly (or not so slightly) different terms and with varying degrees of specificity. The example terms you cited are all in use: “model”, “replica”, “toy”, as well as the term "miniature". There may be other applicable terms as well but these are the major ones. In addition, it is possible that a relatively small proportion of the records fail to indicate that the objects are miniaturized versions or models. "Model" is the most commonly used of the terms that have been listed.

2. Coming up with a reasonably accurate statistic for the proportion of miniatures in the collection would be challenging. In addition to the issues identified above, there is the fact that terms such as "replica" and "toy" do not necessarily refer to a miniaturized version of an object type. The search results on these terms will net more items, perhaps far more items, than are germane to your research. Culling these selections would not be easy. (Alan Francisco, pers. comm. 2013)

It had to be acknowledged therefore that a comprehensive database of all the miniatures produced in the region would be impossible. Such a database would require too much time and resources, while overlooking many relevant miniatures in inaccessible collections, both private and public. Artists are also still producing miniatures in the region, and so any such study, even if possible, would rapidly become obsolete. The project would instead focus on the attainable goal of a large representative sample of the “model” objects described by Alan Francisco, compiled from accessible museum databases, incorporating other categories of object as and when it was feasible, but without attempting to exhaustively unpick the tangled knot of museum typology as it pertains to miniature objects.
In this ambition the project was assisted by the 1995 Laserdisc catalogue “Pacific Northwest Native American Art in Museums and Private Collections”, edited by Robin K. Wright. This publication of nearly 25,000 research slides of Northwest Coast objects in museum collections remains the most comprehensive survey of this type ever attempted. The slides are ordered by typology, with miniature canoes, houses etc. granted their own distinct sections. Although the slides are not generally of sufficient quality for research analysis, following the leads presented in this publication led to contact with several dozen institutions who provided information from their own databases. In doing so hundreds of additional examples not featured in the 1996 publication were discovered, many of which have never been the subject of detailed study.

It was at this stage that one particular category of miniature object: the “model” totem pole, was eliminated from the data gathering process. This was not because these objects were irrelevant, but because uniquely among Northwest Coast miniatures they have already been the subject of a significant subjective analysis, in Hall and Glascock’s 2011 publication *Carvings & Commerce: Model Totem Poles 1880-2010*. Initial survey analysis determined that miniature totem poles form one of the largest bodies of miniaturised material from the region, and as such full categorisation of these objects would absorb time and resources which would replicate the work of this earlier publication. The decision was therefore taken to prioritise less studied forms of miniaturised material culture from the region during data collection, with the data from Hall and Glascock incorporated into the study at the analysis stage.

A significant problem faced in this process was whether the data received from museum records could be trusted. Often museum database information was palpably wrong or at least highly suspect. A good example of this is E420045-0 from the NMAI (fig. A.1), which was recorded as being acquired at Port Townsend and at one time part of the collection of James Swan (1818-1900), but is listed in the museum record as a “Haida” canoe model. Port Townsend is at the Northern extremity of Puget Sound, a thousand miles from Haida Gwaii and the Swan identification dates it to the 1880s. Swan did form a collection on Haida Gwaii (Cole, 1985:13-34) and Haida travellers were not uncommon in the region during the nineteenth century, so the variations in individual style mean that one can never rule out Haida workmanship on an object of this type; the canoe miniature is an exaggerated depiction of the Northern style popular with the Haida, but the decoration on the hull, two opposing double-finned killer whales are executed in a style more subjectively reminiscent of Kwakw̓a̱ka̱’wakw painting than that of the Haida (although in such figures there is considerable crossover). Thus even an object with a
relatively secure provenance throws up complicated questions about tribal attribution which are not easily answerable. This problem, while never eliminated, was partially mitigated by the application of subjective assessments.

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. A.1.** E452045-0. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

**Database terminology**

In examining collections of objects, many at institutions which were beyond this project’s capacity to visit in person given budgetary restrictions, a range of specific physical and anecdotal evidence was sought and recorded.

1) Firstly and in some ways most importantly, was the acquisition of a photograph of the object. Attempting to place an object within a temporal and spatial context partly through assessment against other similar objects is virtually impossible without a clear image. Descriptions of miniatures, indeed detailed descriptions of any physical object, are highly subjective and do not contain the very precise detail required in comparing such objects; often this problem is compounded by the use of non-specialists as object cataloguers who, given their general level of expertise, cannot be safely relied upon to have recorded the specific details relevant to the study effectively or accurately.

2) Attached to the description were measurements. For the most part these were kept simple to allow for analysis, with height, width (or beam) and length taken along the section of the object with the largest values, measured in centimetres. As assessing this information from photographs is unreliable, this information was taken directly from the object records obtained through the museums, often in imperial measurements which were converted to metric to permit comparison.

3) The next stage was the seriation of objects into a series of simple typologies. This was accomplished by comparing the miniature objects to their prototypes.
and adopting the typologies established in Suttles, 1990i (with some adjustments – establishment of these typologies is discussed in Appendices C and D). These allow for immediate assessment against similar examples from the same typology and, eventually, comparison between typologies. This process is assisted by simple Yes/No questions on particular decorative features, specifically whether the object has been painted (and if so, in what colours), and whether the object comes with figures attached, allowing these particular categories to be rapidly examined in a relational database. Materials examines the types of materials employed in construction, as best as can be determined.

4) Provenance examines all recorded data regarding the object’s history from, if available, point of collection, through intermediate owners up to its inclusion in the museum’s collection. This stage does not include subjective impressions, but does include tribal attributions recorded on the records, including the name of the person who made the attribution where recorded. Also documented were any attached labels and references in published materials to this specific object and a hyperlink to the object’s online database page where applicable.

Subjective assessments

From the images, it was possible to compile a description of the object specifically tailored to this project, focusing on a subjective analysis of the elements of each object’s composition which was felt to be most relevant to the topic at hand. This included not only a basic description of the object’s physical characteristics, but also the impressions of the author, as an experienced observer, of the quality of the object. Subjective questions may include: was the carving and the painting of high quality? How did it compare with the rules of Northwest Coast formline art (as established in Holm, 1965 and subsequently critiqued)? Was the wood of high quality? What techniques had been employed in its construction?

Comparative, subjective judgements are of course always open to argument, but it is possible to demonstrate, through comparative examples from the pilot study, the manner in which these assessments were made. As an example, in figs. A.2 and A.3 are two miniature canoes from the British Museum’s collection which will highlight the method involved in this subjective judgement:
Am,.229 and Am,.230 are very similar objects, collected with minimal context at the same time and place (Borlase, 1878). Both are hand-carved and hand-painted miniature examples of the northern canoe style, which was in use among the Northern tribes at what is believed to have been the time of construction, certainly at the time of collection. They are not the same size, Am,.230 is some 21.5% larger (109cm to 72cm long), although in this example there is no obvious correlation between size and quality.

A direct comparison shows considerable differences in their composition: Although both are carved with an exaggerated bow and stern, Am,+.229 has a much broader beam, in proportion to the length, giving it a less stream-lined silhouette and a wider, more-rounded keel that prevents it from standing upright unaided. Secondly, Am,+.229 has clearly-observable tool marks on both the interior and exterior while Am,+.230 does not; its exterior surface has been polished smooth. The wood of Am,+.230 shows close grain, indicating that it is high quality old-growth yellow cedar specifically selected for this project, while Am,+.229 has much wider grain indicating either cheaper secondary-growth wood or, given the time frame within this was made, an inefficient cutting process against the grain.
Finally, and most immediately, Am,+230 has been painted in a style which conforms more closely with the recognised tenets of formline design, described in Chapter three: there is no negative space in the crests, the main line (in black) flows continuously though each figure, the use of ovoids, “salmon heads” and recognised figurative designs flow into one another smoothly and are crisply executed in red, green and black; there are no occlusions in the painting, no blurred lines and no uncorrected mistakes. It is, in summary, a high-quality example of a miniature canoe, which would have taken a master carver and painter (or both in combination) a considerable amount of time and effort to produce. Am,+229, although by no means a crude piece, has been executed with considerably less care and attention to detail: the formline has substantial negative space, many of its features are free-floating, the lines are occluded, the paint poorly applied and at least one of the crest figures is unfinished: the subjective analysis indicates that this was either executed quickly, or with little care, or both.

A straightforward data analysis alone would not be able to reach a subjective judgement such as the one presented here through quantitative data; only through expertise gained by working with objects such as this over a sustained period can judgements on quality such as this one be made. These assessments were incorporated into both the description field and a subsequent notes field, differentiated by whether the observation pertained to that specific object or made a comparative note pertinent to the wider database. Note that at this stage of the research these subjective judgements do not probe why these choices may have been made, only that they were made.

An example of the data fields in operation (here in Microsoft Excel for ease of presentation) is fig. A.4. The database was begun on Excel, before being translated and expanded in the more sophisticated relational database software programme Filemaker Pro.
Appendix B: Ethics

This appendix summarises the ethical safeguards in place throughout the research for the thesis, with reference to navigating the contact zones identified in chapter two.

Concerns were raised by examiners during the early-assessment stages of this project that due to the historic disenfranchisement of Native Americans and due to low levels of socio-economic and educational achievement the indigenous participants in the project might be unable to comprehend the ramifications of their involvement. Having long experience of working with Native American artists, academics and heritage professionals I believed this concern to be unfounded, and so it proved. However to ensure that no one was placed at risk, safeguards were introduced to mitigate any potentiality of offense. The results of the fieldwork determined conclusively that the participants were not only fully able to comprehend the purpose of the project and to contribute to it effectively, but also to actively engage with the permission and consent process, insisting on amendments where they felt concern that they might not be accurately or fairly represented.

The ethical considerations of this project revolve primarily about consent. The indigenous participants in this project are all adults, in sound mind at the time of the research and judged capable of making informed decisions based on their performance at interview. All are sophisticated professional artists operating professionally within local, national or international art markets. Some are university educated, others are not, but all have trained through apprenticeships and as such are steeped in understandings not just of art production, but also art appreciation, commercialisation and study – many have also been participants in research of this nature in the past and are familiar (and wary) of academic researchers: most insisted on individual safeguards to ensure they were not misquoted or made it clear that they reserved the right to withdraw potentially sensitive information at a subsequent time if they regretted providing it.

Since they deserve credit for their expertise and opinion, and as such will not be anonymised in the final document, they have been provided with considerable opportunity to alter or redact their words prior to submission; all participants were sent copies of their interview transcripts, and redacted copies of the chapters in which their words appear prior to submission. All were also provided with the means to communicate any ancillary information or redactions.51

51 Two participants took advantage of this opportunity, one to remove a section of text deemed “taboo” and the other to alter an answer to ensure full respect was paid to the people mentioned. Both amendments were incorporated into the interview transcripts and neither substantially changed the information provided.
With each interaction the following safeguards were put in place, without exception.

1) The purpose of the project and the participant’s involvement in it were verbally explained in detail, in person, and they were given the opportunity to ask any questions.

2) Each participant signed a non-legally binding consent form (fig. B.1) which explained their rights in relation to the material provided for the project. This included specific additional permission for recording interviews and for submitting copies of the data gathered to British Museum and tribal archives.

3) All participants were offered copies of this form (some declined to take them on the grounds that a verbal agreement was sufficient).

4) Whenever something potentially contentious arose during the interview, or when the participant seemed hesitant, they were verbally reminded that they were under no compulsion to answer a question. Participants were invited to redact information if they regretted providing it during the interview.

5) After 20 minutes, all participants were asked whether they wished to continue – a similar stricture was in place for the 45 minute mark, but ultimately no interview ran to that length.

6) All participants were provided with a digital PDF copy of a transcript of the interview within three months of the interview date. Printed transcripts were provided on request to those without email access. Transcripts were simultaneously sent to tribal archives, unless the participant had not given permission for this to take place. Redacted information was blacked out in the copies distributed to archives.

7) At the draft stage of the thesis, all participants were sent digital copies of chapters which made use, either through direct quote or indirect inference, of information provided at interview. Participants were given two calendar months to respond with any redactions or corrections at this time. Information provided by other participants was redacted in these drafts until permission to use the information as written had been received, or the deadline had passed.

8) Final digital drafts of the thesis were provided to all participants following submission, with the invitation to continue to contribute amendments or attached comments should they feel at this stage that they have not been fairly represented.
**Participation Consent Form**

By signing this form, I confirm that I have given permission for my views given during interview(s) or activities which took place with Jack Davy on __________ to be used as documentary evidence for the joint British Museum and University College London project entitled *Miniaturisation and material culture*. This includes permission for these views to be used verbatim or in summary in the final thesis and in presentation of associated conference papers and publications.

- I confirm that these views will be formally attributed to me and credited as such in any written work with the date of interview unless I request that the interview, either whole or in part, be treated anonymously.
- I confirm that I have the right to subsequently submit amendments, additions or alterations to information supplied during the interview.
- I confirm that on request the reviewer will supply me with copies of any notes or recordings associated with the interview.
- I confirm that I understand the interviewer will supply a digital copy of any written work incorporating information from the interview for me to comment on before final submission, and that if I do not respond within a month he may use the information without further conversation.
- I confirm that following completion of the project I will be supplied with a digital copy of the completed thesis and that I can request additional copies for cultural or educational purposes.
- I confirm that the interviewer has discussed these terms with me in person prior to the interview commencing.

Print ______________________

Signature ____________________ Date __________________

**Please confirm whether you agree or disagree with the following conditions (delete as appropriate).**

I give/do not give permission for video recordings to be made of the interview

________________________________________________________________________

I give/do not give permission for sound recordings to be made during the interview

________________________________________________________________________

I give/do not give permission for notes and/or recordings of the interview to be placed on record at the British Museum Anthropology Library and Archive (and any other library of my choice) following completion of the project for the benefit of future scholars.

________________________________________________________________________

**Fig. B:1.** Sample Participation Consent Form. Note that although video recordings were considered in the planning stage of the project, none were ultimately attempted.
Appendix C1: Categorisation of canoe designs

In this appendix is a broad typological discussion of the canoe types from the Northwest Coast that were summarised and presented in Suttles’ typology in chapter three (1990:8). This is both a useful guide for comparative purposes and a tool for deeper contextual investigation into each of the typologies.

Northern

The Northern canoe is characterised as the primary working vessel of the Northern coast in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They are identifiable by their rounded hull, projecting bow and stern and most especially by the vertical cutwater (Olson, 1927:19), which reportedly possessed “primitive and savage picturesqueness” in the eyes of late nineteenth century European observers (De Laguna, 1972:341).

Canoes of this type varied considerably in size, from small fishing vessels of around 10 feet to large chiefly canoes of 50 feet (Codere, 1990:365), while exceptionally large examples may have been as much as 80 feet long (Collison, 2014:57). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries these canoes were painted with the “elaborate totemic patterns” of formline design, although this practice was in decline by 1888 (Niblack, 1888:295). The Northern tribes often accompanied this paintwork with carved figureheads attached to the bow (Niblack, 1888:295), although the Yakutat at least are recorded as leaving their canoes undecorated (De Laguna, 1972:340). Among the Kwakw̱a’wakw these canoes were known as wē’dEk (Boas, 1975 [1909]:444), and to the Tlingit as yah’ (De Laguna, 1972:340).

Northern canoes were sometimes used for military purposes; apparently war canoes were deliberately separated from those constructed for everyday use despite little outward difference in appearance, except in times of conflict, when bark and feather attachments served as identifying markers (Boas, 1966:105). By 1888 however no dedicated war canoes were known to be in existence on the coast (Niblack, 1888:295). A significant proportion of Northern style canoes in use during the nineteenth century were Haida-made. The Haida were considered the finest canoe makers of the Northern coast, their vessels “swifter, handier and more buoyant” than any other watercraft produced in the region, although not as durable or spacious as the Westcoast canoes of the Makah (Niblack, 1888:295).

Haida canoes were traded in considerable numbers to the Tlingit, Tsimshian and Northern Kwakw̱a’wakw: Emmons records a trade in 1900 at Killisnoo in which a
canoe changed hands for $250 (1991:85), and the summer gatherings at the Naas River were a popular canoe-trading opportunity (Drucker, 1955:63). Haida carver James Hart recounts that his ancestors would head over to the mainland towing six or seven finished canoes to trade and sell. Then they’d head up to Sitka, Alaska, to do the same thing. I’m told that the old Haida used to look around and buy the raggiest canoe to get back home in. Then they would start all over again, making different canoes for the next trip (Collison, 2014:58).

By the late nineteenth century this had replaced otter-hunting as the principal economic activity of the Haida, and canoes made for sale tended to be smaller than earlier vessels as the seas became less dangerous and consequently fewer crew were required to fight off attack (Niblack, 1888:296). Although sale of canoes was widespread, mainland tribes also produced their own canoes of this design, often adapted for local requirements (Drucker, 1950:252).

**Head**

The head canoe is characterised by a high square bow and jutting raked stern which each narrowed as they progressed, with the ends only an inch or so wide, “but a fin” in the words of Durham (1960:56). They are known to have been in use among the Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian and Kwakwaka’wakw, called ґʷa’lə among the latter (Boas, 1909:444), and Ɂidikw layáat’, or Long Tail, among the Tlingit (Brown, 2002:92).

These may have been the types of vessels which met with Juan Perez in 1774: a Haida legend records that the *Santiago* was interpreted as a great bird and was greeted by the chieftain with a canoe dance (Gunther, 1972:6); as depicted in Gordon Miller’s 1997 painting.

![Perez in Santiago of Langara Island, Gordon Miller, 1997.](image)
For such a visitor, only the best canoes would have been used, which fits with Guujaaw’s assessment that Head canoes were far too unwieldy in any kind of wind to have made practical ocean-going vessels and that their use was consequently perhaps limited only to ceremonial activity (Ramsey & Jones, 2010:13). There is evidence however that they were in more general use in the late eighteenth century: on 9th June 1792 the American ship Columbia was attacked by a small fleet of war canoes near Beaver Harbour; a sketch by George Davidson shows seventeen canoes in the vicinity of Columbia, of varying sizes but all clearly of the Head design (Howay, 1990:405). Other sketches on this journey seem to depict similarly designed vessels in less warlike situations (Holm, 1987ii:150).

It is not certain when Head canoes stopped being produced; Bill Holm suggests a date of approximately 1800, but they do continue to appear in depictions of Northwest Coast life into the mid-nineteenth century. Two 1847 paintings by artist Paul Kane depict them clearly: one is an abstract series of studies of two canoes, one a Head canoe, painted in detailed formline in an unusual black, white and red colour scheme. This oddly shows the stern as considerably larger and more prominent than the bow, with the central section truncated in a manner which strongly suggests he was working from a miniature (Harper, 1971:238). The second is a landscape scene, featuring the same canoes from the study, reportedly illustrating Vancouver harbour. The scene is clearly imagined: other considerations aside, the Head canoe is paddling backwards, the stern and bow reversed (Roberts & Shackleton, 1983:115). This is a common error in depicting canoes of this type: the British Museum did so in a publication in 1976 (King, 1976). The reasons that Head canoes ceased to be produced have never been clearly determined; Brown suggests that the long tail fin made them unwieldy during naval combat, unable to turn rapidly or keep pace with the emerging Northern variety. He also notes that the design of canoe would have made them ship considerable amounts of water in high seas, a common feature of the waters in the Dixon Entrance (2002:92).

Yakutat

The Yakutat canoe is the most northerly of Northwest Coast dug-out designs, produced by the Eyak people, whose lands mark the northern limit of the region, bordering the Chugach Aluttiq territories which fall into the Arctic regional designation. Known as téAyís, the stern of these canoes is undercut with a narrow keel above the flared hull while the bow has a V-shaped appearance the tips marked by the prow and a prominent sharp keel. This type of vessel was notoriously fast and smooth as the keel gave it the stability to
cut through slushy ice with ease. Unlike other vessels, this design was shaped from a single trunk, approximately 16-18 feet long and 3 feet wide and usually seated two crew. Known as the “sea otter hunting canoe”, it was predominately used for mammal hunting, although in the early twentieth century some examples were made for competitive racing, the speed contingent on the shape of the hull. Yakutat canoes were generally smaller than other northern craft (Niblack, 1888:296).

**Spruce**

The Spruce canoe typology comes from Emmons’ work with the Yakutat. Found only in the northern part of the Northwest Coast among the Eyak and Tlingit, these canoes are as the name suggests, made from spruce, which grew in abundance north of Frederick Sound. They have been sometimes reported as “Sitka” canoes, or si•t in the Tlingit language. An example Emmons saw was 22 feet long, 3 feet 3 ½ inches beam and 2 ft. 7 ½ in. high at the bow, and he reported that these canoes were always painted black with a red stripe at the gunwale (Emmons, 1991:84). These canoes were reported as significantly smaller than the Northern canoes of the Haida to the south (Niblack, 1888:296), but could still carry substantial quantities of goods and people – in the nineteenth century this type was designated the “family canoe” to distinguish it from the hunting and war canoes also in use (De Laguna, 1972:337).

A variant of the spruce was the Moon canoe, which was used by the Stikine for fishing and otter hunting, named dise york. The bow and stern of the Moon canoe curved upwards in a crescent shape, rather than with a horizontal gunwale.

**Coast Salish**

Coast Salish style canoes, sometimes called the “Puget Sound canoe” and known generally in Lushootseed as sλθ̣̣θ̣̣, (see Holm, 1991:243 for discussion of the indigenous names for these types of canoe) are relatively small vessels which narrow in the bow and stern, the former stretching ahead into a notched, mouth-like prow above a near-vertical cutwater, which can be rounded or squared (Waterman & Coffin, 1920:17). The usual size range was approximately 26-24 feet, with a maximum size of 30-40 feet for extreme examples. The stern rises from the hull at a gentle angle, extended over the water. The hull is flared, creating a vessel with streamlined stability even in rough coastal waters (Brown, 2008:253), although it was not considered safe to use a canoe of this design in a
storm (Waterman & Coffin, 1920:17). Drucker considers this design to be a smaller version of the Westcoat canoe design for use inshore (1955:64).

These canoes were designed for coastal fishing and hunting and produced extensively by the mainland Salish tribes in the Vancouver region, often adapted to conform with local conditions (Suttles, 1990ii:462). Their low profiles made them excellent inshore hunting vessels, often augmented by streamlined keels that minimised noise and a notched groove at the bow to steady a harpoon (Holm, 1991:240).

**Westcoat**

Westcoat canoes, often called “Nootkan”, “Chinook” or among the Kwakẉałkʷ ʷakẉ̓ ku’mtsala (Boas, 1909:444), so called from their origins among the Nuu-chah-nulth of the West Coast of Vancouver Island, were the most common canoe design of the ocean-going tribes of the southern and central coast and could sometimes be found as far north as Alaska. They varied in length depending on purpose, with six standard sizes, from the smallest at 16 feet to the largest at 75-80 feet long, although the latter has been demonstrated to be completely unmanageable in any wind.

The canoe has many variants, but certain consistent features. A high square sternpost and a protruding bow raising up above the canoe and over the water ahead. The bow narrows into three points, which is frequently interpreted as a zoomorphic design. Bow and stern are both carved separately from the hull of the canoe and attached during the late construction phase. The bow design is engineered to split the water without shipping any, and has been demonstrated to be effective even in very rough seas (Waterman & Coffin, 1920:15).

This is the only canoe design for which there is direct pre-contact evidence, as models to exactly this design have been discovered in the Ozette archaeological site (Brown, 2002:77). The canoe gained its name “Chinook” as it was the predominant trading vessel of the Southern coast, and became synonymous with the Chinook jargon used by nomadic traders in the nineteenth century.

The most accomplished makers of this type of canoe was reported to be the Makah, whose vessels were “heavier, roomier, stronger, less cranky and more durable” than other canoe designs on the coast, but not as manoeuvrable or fast as the Northern style canoes of the Haida (Niblack, 1888:295). Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth canoe makers traded their vessels extensively in the southern regions of the coast and as far south as the Columbia
River and Central Oregon (Drucker, 1955:63); this was so common that in some places the design was known as the “Makah” canoe (Renker & Gunther, 1990:426). Accounts from 1890 suggest that some of these vessels had been bartered as far north as the Yakutat, who called them “goose canoes” after their avian resemblance (De Laguna, 1972:341).

**Munka**

The Munka, or məŋə, was a canoe particular to the Kwakw’ak’wakw during the eighteenth century. It resembled the West Coast design, with narrow hull and high sternpost, but with a high bow flared widely (Codere, 1990:365), possibly in imitation of a bird (Boas, 1909:444). Some extreme depictions show this bow at an almost vertical angle, and such an appendage must have been a separate attachment rather than shaped from the main trunk (Drucker, 1955:65). This canoe may be related stylistically to the Westcoast canoe design, although the stern appears at a less vertical angle (Boas, 1909:444). There is some suggestion that these may have been produced in the early nineteenth century by the Laich-kwil-tach Southern Kwakw’ak’wakw group and traded among the Salish (Suttles, 1990:463).

There is a painting by Paul Kane which depicts these vessels in action, at I-en-nus in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, although it was not painted from life (Harper, 1971:250-251,304): Kane describes the battle as taking place in late 1846 (1859:230), by which time no Munkas are thought to have still been in use on the coast. In the scene the canoes have been driven up on the foreshore and warriors leap out of them among the fleeing defenders. In this scene and other Kane studies of this canoe type the bows have perforations, which Drucker interprets as loopholes for use in combat (1955:65), although Boas notes that they were a normal feature of these canoes outside conflict (1975 [1909]:444).

**Shovelnose & Spoon**

Shovelnose canoes were produced by the Salishan peoples of the region now known as the Salish Sea. They had rounded bow and stern and straight horizontal gunwales, made from a single log with no attachments (Drucker, 1955:64), the ends closely resembling shovels (Waterman & Coffin, 1920:19). An old design, canoes of this type were identified by Vancouver in 1792 at Bainbridge Island (Holm, 1991:238).
Shovelnose canoes are a predominantly riverine craft, otherwise used only in sheltered coastal waters. They were common with the upriver Stalo and Nooksack (Suttles, 1990ii:462), but have also been identified far inland in use with plateau groups and as far south as Trinidad Bay in California (Olson, 1927:20). They were used in many pursuits, but their design was tailored specifically to spear-hunting for salmon in rivers and estuaries. This was the only type of canoe used by upriver Salish, who called them tl’lai. This lack of diversity in design was a source of hilarity among the Coastal Salish, who used a variety of riverine canoes, each with a separate name (Waterman & Coffin, 1920:19).

Spoon canoes were specially designed watercraft exclusively constructed for riverine use. Common among the Salishan groups of Southern British Columbia, they had thick hulls for improved balance and rounded bow and stern rising in a curve which Drucker compares to a “goat-horn spoon” (1950:253) Canoes of this design were also known among the Yakutat, where they were called “village canoes” or 'andeyagu. Noted for simple construction and multi-functional use, these canoes developed in the post-contact era from earlier designs (De Laguna, 1972:336)

**Other canoe designs**

There are several canoe designs which saw limited use on the Northwest Coast which do not easily fit into Suttles’ typology. These are summarised below.

- Bark canoes are recorded as used for short freshwater journeys on calm watercourse, particularly lakes or creeks. Unlike the bark canoes found inland, these vessels, made from cedar or spruce bark were simple temporary structures, not designed to last (De Laguna, 1972:341).

  They were constructed by stripping a tube of bark from a tree and pleating or clamping the ends to form a seal. These vessels were rare, only commonly found among some Kwakwaka’wakw groups, although there is a legend that a canoe of this type was fashioned by group of Nuu-chah-nulth slaves escaping from Haida Gwaii (Drucker, 1950:254; Durham, 1960:46).

- In the northernmost parts of the Northwest Coast Aleut and Chugach kayaks, umiaks and baidarkas were often traded with the Yakutat and Tlingit groups, who
employed them for hunting – the earliest record of a skin boat with such a group dates to 1786 (De Laguna, 1972:332).

- The children’s canoe was a large and heavy vessel constructed with identical bow and stern, both similar to the stern of the Westcoast canoe design. This type of vessel, as the name suggests, was produced by Salishan peoples to educate children about watercraft and seamanship (Waterman & Coffin, 1920:22).

- The Ice canoe was a small design of canoe, roughly 12-15 feet long, which were produced by the Yakutat people of Alaska and named gudiyi. The canoes were made from spruce, with a tough rounded bow and fender on the stern, the vessel designed to seat two crew. These canoes were used for seal-hunting on Yakutat Bay and George Emmons notes that none were still in existence when he visited Yakutat in 1883 but there were still several models (Emmons, 1991:85).

- Small canoes produced at Dry Bay and on the Chilkat River from cottonwood, named duq in the Yakutat language, which resembled the Spoon variety, with rounded bow and stern and horizontal gunwales (De Laguna, 1972:336). Emmons calls these vessels “inferior”. They were primarily designed for riverine use and could warp in sunlight. They were not recorded as being decorated (Emmons, 1991:84-85), and were noted for their pointed but not projecting bow and stern (Drucker, 1950:254).
Appendix C2: Categorisation of house designs

Houses from the Northwest Coast were the centre of communal life. Arranged in rows along the waterfront, they formed long-term settled communities of extended families. They were the scene of domestic life, commercial enterprise and ceremonial ritual activity (Waterman et al. 1921; Waterman & Greiner, 1921; Olson, 1927; Vastokas, 1969; Coupland et al., 2009). There are two distinct categories of traditional house design on the Northwest Coast, each time subsequently further divided into sub-categories based on roof construction. Suttles, 1990i has a breakdown of these categories listed here. It is worth recalling that there was no firm boundary between these house types and many houses, particularly in the central coast region, display elements of both house styles (Vastokas, 1969:14), particularly as the Kwakw̱a’wakw people moved from Salishan to a more Northern longhouse style in the mid-nineteenth century (Codere, 1990:365).

Northern style houses, common to the Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian and Kwakw̱a’wakw were usually longer than they were wide, with a cedar frame construction featuring heavy trunk pillars at the corners and an interior that could descend several levels deep. Into the pillars were slotted a network of crossbeams which supported the roof beams, which were usually arranged in a parallel pairing, although larger longhouses had six beam configurations. Cedar planks were then laid over the framework, with a large smoke-hole in the roof, often covered against rain by an adjustable panel. The entrance, in the water-facing wall of the house, was often oval and small, situated such that an entrant had to pass through a totem pole, with the doorway often acting as the mouth of the lower-most figure. Many such houses had painted or even relief carved frontages, usually featuring the crest figures of the owner, and there was considerable variety in configuration and detail both within and between communities (Deans, 1887; MacDonald, 1983).

Salish style houses were more common among the southern groups and had a less regular, modular construction, formed from smaller pillars and beams into a range of quadrilateral configurations and again fitted with plank walls and ceilings, constructed by placing cedar planks onto a solid framework of beams and pillars (Waterman & Greiner, 1921). These houses could be easily dismantled, the planks transported between seasonal villages on canoes (Arima, 1983:61) and changed little from the Nuu-chah-nulth village illustrated in 1787 by John Weber, to those photographed at Neah Bay in 1915 by Edward Curtis (1916:61).
In, based on Shortridge and Shortridge 1913:63; b, based on Duff and Kneel 1930:49 and on drawing by Gordon Miller, U. of B.C., Mus of Arch., Vancouver, B.C.; c, after Ames, Mus. of Nat. Hist., New York, N.Y., 1253); a, based on photograph of Coast house at Gold River, B.C., by Wayne Sekulic; b, based on description, N.A.A. 47320; 1, based on Bruce 1991:figs. 1-1-4, based on Watersman and Guccione 1951:pl. III, 16, based on Swan 1873:110-111, 312, 329 and on oil painting by Paul Kane, Stark Mus. of Art, Orange, Tex. WOP 15; c, based on Frenkel-Curtis's Illustrated News, April 24, 1895; 5c, based on Olson 1936:b.

Fig. 2. House types.
Fig. C2:1. Suttles’ house typology (1990:6-7).
Appendix C3: Categorisation of totem poles

By the early nineteenth century, possibly due to the influence of itinerant Haida carvers, pole carving had spread the length of the Northwest Coast (Gunn, 1965; 1966; 1967; Halpin, 1981; Malin, 1986; Stewart, 1993; Jonaitis, 1999; Jonaitis & Glass, 2010). These poles had distinct functions:

Memorial poles may be the oldest pole type on the coast. Originally formed from a single thin red cedar trunk, they would be largely undecorated, apart from some simple linear incisions and a painted crest figure at the summit. These were raised in memory of a deceased person, either directly as a grave marker or in front of the family long house. They also may have informally acted as landmarks for navigation as they could be seen a considerable distance from the village.

House poles, or posts, are similar to the klumma of Cook’s journal (Cook, 1967 [1779]). These may sometimes have been freestanding, but were more frequently carved directly onto the supporting columns for the major roof beams. Frequently they took the form of a single crouching figure, or two figures above one another, although on the northern coast they could be considerably more complex. Due to their position in doors they were longer living sculptures and featured the enduring crests of the family residing in the longhouse.

Mortuary poles were freestanding poles specifically designed to incorporate and memorialise the physical remains of the deceased. Bodies wrapped in cedar blankets would be laid in cervices at the top of the pole or a box situated at the summit, often accompanied by collections of grave goods. Crematory remains were also often laid in mortuary poles. These poles were then situated either in front of a house or in designated cemeteries. As Christianisation took hold, these poles became less common, with burials either in grave houses to the rear of the longhouse or in European style cemeteries. The poles were carved with

Story poles were free-standing poles of the style now considered the classic totem pole. These poles provided the carvers with considerable freedom to depict crests, myths and stories. Their most common purpose was for the prominent display of hereditary crest figures, particularly as part of a wider pole-raising culture associated with the potlatch. Frontal poles are a combination of house posts and free-standing poles, with the exception that they contained a portal through which one must pass to enter the house.
Appendix C4: Categorisation of figures

Many figures produced on the Northwest Coast appear to display crest animals. Some of these are very large and would have made prominent display in the communities from which they came, such as Am1939,09.1 at the British Museum. Most however were smaller, individually portable objects. It’s likely that some of these would have held a role in ceremonial activity, others are more clearly items made for sale.

Fig. C4:1 & C4:2. Colossal Kwakwaka’wakw thunderbird anvil figure. BM Am1939,09.3 & Eagle figure, (poss. Tlingit). BM Am,+215 (Sandeman Coll.)

Spirit figures are small humanoid figures with blue mask-like faces and red bodies. These are depictions from the Northern coast, particularly the Tlingit and Tsimshian, of the spirits who assist shamans in their healing or witch-finding rituals. Some of these figures may have operated as shamanic amulets, as discussed below, although others were clearly carved for sale. They are usually quite hastily carved and can be found in grave contexts, ethnographic assemblages and collections carved for commercial purposes. A small number of these figures have been found acting as figureheads for large miniature head canoes, or as crew in head and northern style canoes (A401) especially among the Tlingit miniature canoes from the early nineteenth century which have found their way into Russian museum collections.
Whether spirit figures are miniatures or not is a question which arose during fieldwork, for, as discussed in chapter three, who can confidently state the true size of a mythical being:

Look at a Dzunuk'wa mask – how big is a Dzunuk’wa? Is it the size of a human head? But when we make a Dzunuk’wa coming in the front door those are those big ones you see down there.

- Wayne Alfred, Kwakwaka’wakw, interview 2015

There is a body of figurines from the Northwest Coast, predominately originating with the Northern tribes which depict human transformation or possession events. The transformative nature of Northwest Coast ritual has been discussed in the literature review, and its reflection in artworks is to be expected. These figures take a number of formats, some show the act of possession by presenting two figures in a relational position, such as in figure A4:4 in which a bear is taking possession of a human. These most frequently appear to be of high-quality and have usually been collected directly from the communities in which they were made.
Others show the aftermath of transformation, simultaneously depicting a masked figure and the transformed figure that is embodied by the dances performed by those who wear the mask. These do appear in high quality carvings, but are also found in less skilled carving works made available for commercial sale.

**Figs. C4:4** (left) & **C4:5** (right). Thunderbird transformation figure, (poss. Tlingit). BM Am,+.212 (Sandeman Coll.) & Bear transformation figure, (poss. Tlingit). BM Am,+.204 (Sandeman Coll.)
Portrait figures, gigantic, life-sized and miniature, are known from the Northwest Coast. Some depict indigenous figures, others are depictions of European visitors or settlers. Portraiture reached its most dramatic level with the welcome figurines of the Kwakw'ak'wakw of Vancouver Island, who would construct large figures to stand on the beach and welcome visitors arriving by canoe. Smaller standing figures were created as grave markers, particularly in the southern coast.

Figs. C4.7 – C4.10 (left to right). Colossal Kwakw'ak'wakw welcome figure. BM Am1949,22.238 (Oldman Coll.); Life-size cedar figure (poss. Native chief). BM Am1954,05.1177 (Wellcome Coll.); XX. Miniature Kwakw'akw wooden figure. BM Am2290 (Christy Coll.) & Haida argillite shaman figure. BM Am1976,03.31 (Inverarity Coll.)

The portable figures, in both wood and argillite, mostly have collection histories which suggest prominent display and sale outside of the community, such as the argillite shaman figures which appeared from the 1880s, or the cedar or ivory busts of indigenous leaders or foreign visitors. They do not appear to have had any documented ceremonial role within Northwest Coast society, although this does not mean that they were without ideological motive.

Some figures in these examples are miniatures, either of scaled down people, or their “non-physical aspects” (McLeod & Mack 1985:40), or reduced versions of the larger colossal carvings of the community. Others present miniature dioramas. Some, such as the spirit figures, may not be miniatures at all; since the spirits depicted are often understood to be very small they might even be considered as exaggeratedly large figures. Because terminologically they were a complex object typology, they were not systematically recorded in the database which accompanied this thesis, but they will be incorporated into the analysis and case studies on an individual basis when their status as miniatures can be clearly established.
Appendix D: Mimetic miniature canoe typology

During the study of miniature canoes, a number of subordinate mimetic typologies emerged, which may point to correlations in points of origin, purpose or both. These have been subjected to a process of seriation based on a subjective analysis of the affordances of each canoe which has enabled them to be assembled into groupings. The groupings have been provided with codes by which they can be traced in the database. As discussed in appendix A, these assessments are subjective, with the risks of such an approach apparent, and as a result there is considerable overlap in presentation of each of the groupings. As cautioned in chapter two, this is not, and could never be, a totally comprehensive analysis of all miniature canoes from the region, but it is a large and broad enough sample that it can confidently be considered both the large majority of such objects in circulation and as representative as possible given the haphazard nature of preservation of material culture from the region.

Over the following pages the results of this seriation, accompanied by the data assembled in the course of the research for this project, have been compiled and assessed. There will not, at this stage, be an attempt to analyse the data in relation to either the documentation stage of research or the fieldwork with contemporary carvers, here I simply seek to illustrate the range of data captured for these objects.

Research discovered 944 examples of miniature canoes from the Northwest Coast in museum collections worldwide, of which more than 200 were viewed in person and the remainder accessed digitally. Of this number, it was not possible to obtain photographs of 79 objects, which have therefore been excluded from the study on practical grounds. Of the remaining 865 miniature canoes, basic typological seriation determined that there were eleven different broad Northwest Coast canoe typologies reflected in the miniatures, based on the typological assessments presented in the literature review. The objects were initially sorted into these base typologies, totalling 785 objects. The remaining 54 miniature canoes not covered by this seriation, were either so damaged or so unusual that they could not be fitted into any of the more common established typologies.

This data is presented on the following page, after which there will be a breakdown of each of these types into narrower subjective datasets for analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style of Canoe Miniatures</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<td>Northern style</td>
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<td>Westcoast style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yakutat style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head style</td>
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<td>Shovelnose style</td>
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<td>Columbia River style</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total seriated miniatures</strong></td>
<td><strong>785</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. D.1. Table of Northern style canoe miniature seriations

Fig. D.2. Bar graph of Northern style canoe miniature seriations
Northern style seriation

Northern style miniatures are the most common form of miniature canoe from the Northwest Coast found in museum collections, with broadly similar numbers to the Westcoast style. They are found in a range of collections and temporal and spatial contexts, mainly clustered among the Northern tribes and from the period of 1860-1950, although there are considerable differences in context based on the seriated typology illustrated below.

The typology is numerically divided as listed below, with the remained either highly unusual variations on the Northern style, to be discussed at the end of the section, or examples for which the photography was absent or of insufficient quality for an assessment to be made.

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<td>N10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. D:3. Pie chart of Northwest Coast canoe miniature seriations

Fig. D:4. Graph of Northern style canoe miniature seriations
There is one significant division in Northern style canoes, which reaches across most of the seriated groupings below and is worth highlighting at the start of this assessment. The Northern style of canoe appears, in miniature at least, in two forms, one significantly heavier than the other. The first, the heavier version, here exemplified by 1-3004 from the Burke Museum, has a thick hull with broad gunwales that reach out over the sides of the hull. These are usually painted black or red, and culminated both the bow and stern in grooved runnels. Examples include CMH VII-B-128; 93.1 from the John Muir Elementary School collection or 1902.0807.079092 from the Field Museum.

Fig. D.5. Pie chart of Northern style canoe miniature seriations

Gunwale design

Fig. D.6. N1 style Northern canoe miniature with heavy gunwales, BMNH, 1-3004
The second version has lighter lower bow and stern, which is sometimes tweaked upwards to give the miniature an exaggerated curve, here exemplified by E-6872-0 from the NMNH. These canoe styles have gunwales no wider than the hull they come from, although they often have scalloped interiors, sometimes painted red. These are much more common, examples including

![Fig. D.7 N1 style Northern canoe miniature with light gunwales, E-6872-0, NMNH](image)

There does not appear to be significant differences in temporal or spatial origins for canoes of these different designs, although the heavier version appears less frequently than the lighter hull shape, and is less often given the exaggerated structure of the lighter design. Both designs are found in all of the more populous groupings identified.
**N1:** These miniatures were grouped together due to a combination of well-executed carving in yellow cedar and simple yet high-quality formline painted designs in black and red. Like all miniature canoes from the region, these examples have truncated midsections and exaggerated bows and sterns, the degree of exaggeration varied among the group. The group varies in size between 50sm and 170cm, although there are very few small canoe miniatures among its number. The type specimen selected for this group is 2714/1 from MoA, which presents the designs in an accessible fashion.

![Fig. D.8. N1 style Northern canoe miniature, MoA, UBC 2714/1](image)

What unites these miniature canoes most strongly is their simple but graceful red and black formline design, which usually appears in the form of an animal crest, usually a killer whale with secondary crests incorporated within it. This is illustrated in fig D.9 with E-639-0 from the NMNH, which is possibly the oldest Northern-style canoe model located in any collection, having been collected in 1862 from Haida Gwaii. This canoe miniature demonstrates the depiction of the whale’s head at the bow (1.), the fins and tail at the stern (2.) and a small bear head crest at the point of the bow (3.). The midsection of the hull is either a solid black as here, or it is comprised of rectangular designs of black and unpainted sections (e.g. PMA 69-30-10/1700), although there are a few examples where the formline runs right through the midsection (e.g. SAM 91.1.121).
Fig. D.9. N1 style Northern canoe miniature with crest designs, NMNH, E-639-0

Many other N1 canoes have similar designs, including examples where the whale has prominent teeth (AMNH 16/8773; 16.1/1230), where bear crests are incorporated into the tail (CMH VII-X-1322), where the designs are more abstract than that presented above (MoA, UBC 2714/1; BurM 1972) and some examples where the bear at the bow is carved in relief rather than only painted (McC ACC4257; FM 1902.0807.079092; MoA, UBC A401).

Fig. D:10 – D:13. Detail of bow from Northern canoe miniature, detail of bow, AMNH 16.1/1230; Northern canoe miniature, CMH VII-X-1322; Northern canoe miniature, KK 2520-3; Detail of bow from N1 style Northern canoe miniature, MoA, UBC, A401

There are a few other examples, similar in carving to these styles, in which the black and red designs take another style entirely, such as 16,704 at the AMNH or NA-NW-HA-10E-1 at the SBM, which feature Tsimshian style bear crest heads, and some examples, such as 91.1.87 at the SAM, which have both the killer whale and the Tsimshian head designs.
Figs. D:14 (left) & D:15 (right) N1 style Northern canoe miniature with Tsimshian style crests, AMNH, 16/704; N1 style Northern canoe miniature with Tsimshian style crests, SAM, 97.1.87

The formline usually has a unifying black or red line (PEM E12225), but occasionally (MoA, UBC 2714/1) seems more abstract in execution, with negative space and floating forms. To merit inclusion in this grouping, this formline has to have been skilfully applied, but it need not be consistent in line as such requirements varied from tribe to tribe.
**N2:** This grouping comprises Northern style canoe miniatures carved to a high-standard, predominately from yellow cedar, which have exaggerated features, particularly in the bow and stern and high-quality painted designs using a range of colours – they differ from the N1 grouping by their diversity of style and texture, less-adherent to formalised design and containing more imaginative elements. The type specimen for this category is A7098 at the MoA.

![Fig. D.16 N2 style Northern canoe miniature, MoA, A7098](image)

Averaging approximately 80cm in length, this type of canoe miniature usually has a bare midsection, although painted midsections and interiors do can occasionally be discovered (MoA A1545; SMA 2007.6146). These canoes usually have thwarts, often decorated with red roundels in similar style to N1, H2 and H3 categories.

![Fig. B.17 N2 style Northern canoe miniature with interior and mid-section painting, MoA, A1545](image)

The painting on these miniatures is complex, flowing formline design, executed by a skilled painter and, as with N1, featuring a clan crest. This is commonly a killer whale, although wolf or bear crests in black, red and natural blue or green are more common than in the N1 category.
Fig. B.18 N2 style Northern canoe miniature with killer whale crest, MoA, A7098.

Fig. B.19 N2 style Northern canoe miniature with bear crests, NMNH, E55821-0.

Attributions suggest many of these, in particular the higher quality examples, emerged from Charles Edenshaw and his contemporaries; certainly the majority seem to have been created in the late nineteenth century, during the period when many other high quality Northern style and Head style canoe miniatures are recorded as having been produced. Some are even earlier, such as 593-53 at the Kunstkamera which dates to the first decades of the nineteenth century. The use of green, not a typical Haida colour, and in the increased usage of natural blue pigments may suggest that proportionally more of these canoe miniatures are Tlingit or Tsimshain in origin rather than the more common Haida attribution.
**N3:** Northern style canoe miniatures, similar to N1 and N2 categories, but often produced with lower quality carving, painting or both. The type specimen for these canoe miniatures is A7097 at the MoA. 52 miniatures of this type have been identified.

These canoe miniatures are most readily identifiable by their painting, which demonstrates either a serious attempt to present formline design painted crests which has failed due to lack of skill, such as 15847 at the RCBM, or an effort to create a formline crest design which has failed due to a lack of understanding of such crest designs, such as E274424-0 at the NMNH, or indeed, both deficiencies. The animals portrayed are often rarely featured on higher quality canoe miniatures such as N1 or N2 categories, such as fish, dogs or snakes (NMNH E361803-0). Some are so unusual that their painting only tangentially resembles formline at all, such as VII-X-1337 at the CMH with its Solomon Islandsesque wolf figurehead or AA1024 at the MoV, covered in monstrous faces unsimilar to anything else from the Northwest Coast.
In addition to low quality painting, the wood used for these canoe miniatures is often of inferior quality. Although most are made from yellow cedar, it frequently has loose grain, characteristic of either cheap secondary growth cedar, which is too punky for fine carving, or of wood cut hastily and without care across the grain. In either case, the quality of the wood directly affects the quality of the carving, resulting in a rough, marked, often knotholed surface unable to hold significant detail.

The provenance of most of these pieces lies with the souvenir trade of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some even carry this identity explicitly, such as VII-B-735 at the CMH.

Forming judgements about this body of canoe miniatures is difficult as their provenance is particularly scant. It seems that many are the product of hasty carving and painting for sale to souvenir dealers outside the communities, while others may be genuine attempts to recreate the fine work of miniatures in the N1 and N2 categories without success.
N4: The 70 canoe miniatures categorised as N4 are all Northern style miniatures which share one characteristic – they have no decorative painting at all. Some are unpainted, like the type specimen below, A6469 at the MoA, others have an array of painting styles either solid in a single colour or in blocks of black or brown paint. The carving quality diverges from average to high quality, and there are differences, discussed below, in their appearance.

![Image](image1.png)

These canoe miniatures take a naturalistic or realistic approach to decoration. Everyday northern canoes, those not used for ceremonial activities and by far the most common such vessels, were painted or stained in simple, unobtrusive colour schemes such as the canoes in this category (Arima, 2002:118). What this category realises therefore is that “normal” Northern style canoe miniatures actually only comprise 70 from 264 Northern canoes surveyed, or 26% of the total.

Of this number, there are a number of divergent types. Some, like the type specimen, are unpainted but finely carved, with scalloped sides, shaped gunwales and smooth lines (NMNH E88955-0). Others are similar but painted black (MoV AA1034; RBCM 1040), monochrome block designs (NMNH E20895-0) or blockier and heavier carvings (AMNH: 16/4711) or have thwarts and flat bottoms, sometimes with attached paddles, perhaps suggesting that their display was a factor in their construction (MoV AA2107; RBCM 10659; NMAI 193592). A few are painted in more than one colour, arranged in simple block designs (RBCM 13288) and some have naturalistic human figures seated inside (RBCM 19222).

They are for the most part made from tight-grain yellow cedar and carved to a high-standard with polishing, particularly on the exterior. A few are of cruder manufacture.
with unsmoothed toolmarks (BMNH 2012-100/9; SMB IV A 2067), but most indicate a high-degree of craftsmanship in their construction.

They come from the full extent of the coast, but have proportionally many more documented examples from the central tribes, the southern extent of this canoe type’s range, particularly the Kwakwaka’wakw and the Heitsuk tribes.

**N5:** The N5 category originally contained N1 type canoe miniatures which carried crew, but was on analysis dissolved as an uninformative grouping.

**N6:** Commercially produced mid-twentieth century Northern style canoe miniatures for sale or gift. These were produced during or immediately after the “Dark Ages” of Northwest Coast material culture production, when there was only a handful of scattered artists still practicing traditional designs and styles. The type specimen selected for this category is 2791/8 at the MoA, which was made in the 1920s by Tsimshian artist Frederick Alexcee, who is noted for his early transcultural artwork (McCormick, 2010).

![Fig. B:26 N5 style Northern canoe miniature, MoA, 2791/8, Frederick Alexcee (McCormick, 2010)](image)

The miniature Northern style canoes of this category made to a range of standards, but often from loose grain red or yellow cedar – perhaps reflecting the dramatic demise in availability of tight-grain old growth cedar during the early twentieth century. Most significant are the manner in which the crests have been painted. Most are created with
commercial paints and have been dramatically altered, perhaps simplified for a non-Native audience.

Examples include Alexcee’s wolf above, the otter (or sea lion?) crest on 57-242 at the HMA, the naturalistic eagle and whale on 11732 at the RBCM and the bizarre, possibly whale, crest on 16.1/1870 at the AMNH.

There are two miniature canoes in this category which provide a useful segue into category N7, produced by Kwakwaka‘wakw chief Mungo Martin in the early 1950s, they depict fanciful scenes of Kwakwaka‘wakw hunters in simple but effective formline – Martin was one of the forerunners of the “renaissance” period and a descendent of Charlie James and Ellen Neel, the Kwakwaka‘wakw family who kept miniature carving going during the “Dark Ages”
N7: Is a development of the N6 category, which groups modern artistic examples of Northern style canoe miniatures, carved almost exclusively from high-quality yellow cedar with clean lines and simple paint styles. These sometimes shows signs of stylistic experimentation, such as the type specimen 2010-37/14 at the BMNH.

![N7 Style Northern Canoe Miniature](image1)

**Fig. B:32** N7 style Northern canoe miniature, Stephen K. Hunt, Kwak'wak'wakw, BMNH

Only 5 of this type were identified in museum collections, probably a result of a paucity of miniature Northern style canoes on the market in comparison with historical periods, combined with the presence of most examples in private collections and thus inaccessible to this study.

**N8:** The N8 Northern style canoe miniatures were branched off from the N2 category when it became clear that they formed a distinct subset of 27 objects, illustrated by the type specimen 16.1/2226 from the AMNH.

![N8 Style Northern Canoe Miniature](image2)

**Fig. B:33** N8 style Northern canoe miniature, AMNH 16.1/2226
These miniatures have red, black and blue formline decoration, usually illustrating a killer whale on the bow and a bird, probably a hawk on the stern. The mid-section is decorated with either a large ovoid, crosshatching or geometric patterns. They are all made from yellow cedar, although the quality of both carving and painting varies considerably. Some are very capably executed (CMH VII-B-1526), others are poor-quality imitations (BMNH 2.5E1021).

The designs broadly conform to the following pattern:

![Image of canoe miniature with numbered sections]

**Fig. B:34** N8 style Northern canoe miniature, PHA 13-27-10/85218

In this image, 1. is the hawk’s head crest, 2. is the killer whale head crest, similar to those on N1 canoe miniatures, 3. is the central ovoid and 4. is a secondary bear crest. It should be noted that in keeping with the transformational nature of high-quality formline that the hawk and killer whale crests form tails for each other, allowing the canoe crests to merge successfully.

None are large, with most being between 40 and 50cm in length, and all present considerably foreshortened mid-sections, exaggerating the effect of the crests at bow and stern. Their origin seems to be Tlingit, appearing in the early twentieth century in notable numbers – the assumption is that they were primarily the work of one skilled carver, possibly with imitators operating for sale.

**Fig. B:35 & B:36** N8 style Northern canoe miniature, BMNH 2.5E1021; N8 style Northern canoe miniature, CMH VII-B-1526
N9: A small subset of N4 canoe miniatures in which the block designs have been rendered in a naturalistic fashion, sometimes, as in the type specimen E24698 at the PEM, with non-formline decoration. These canoe miniatures generally have high quality carving in yellow cedar and often have thwarts attached and accessories such as paddles.

![N9 style Northern canoe miniature, PEM E24698](image)

A number of miniatures in this category are known to have been collected on commission by ethnographical collectors, especially James Swan, and the majority that have clear provenance appear to originate with the Haida, such as the series of black and white miniatures at the NMNH. It is likely that most if not all of these miniatures are explicitly models commissioned by anthropologists.

![N9 style Northern canoe miniature, collected James Swan, NMNH E56487B](image)

N10: The final seriated category is a particular group of four miniature canoes, closely resembling the W8 category of Westcoast style canoes. These are all from early contact provenance and appear as diorama scenes featuring a crew man or men, the sternmost paddling and the foremost aiming a rifle or musket. The type specimen here is 1966.1.1141 at the IM.
Fig. B:39 N10 style Northern canoe miniature, IM 1966.1.1141

These miniatures are carved from dark hardwoods (sometimes listed as red cedar in collection records), and are much faded with age – most examples are broken. The figures are unusually naturalistic for Northwest Coast carving and do not resemble any of the figure types listed in the data chapter. They undoubtedly show the act of hunting large or medium game, probably otter or seal, which provided the livelihoods of the Northern tribes during the early nineteenth century.

Head

There are 66 Head style canoe miniatures identified in the database, 65 of which have photographs and can be categorised. The categorisation breaks down as follows:

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
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<tr>
<td>H3</td>
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<td>13.8%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. B:40 Graph of Head style canoe miniature seriation
H1: By far the most common Head canoe miniatures are of the H1 of this type, numbering 38/65, or 58%. These miniatures are generally large, often more than a metre in length and sometimes nearly two metres. With the exception of the extraordinary Young Doctor Westcoast style canoe miniature, these are consistently the largest canoe miniatures from the Northwest Coast. They feature the classic design of the Head canoe style, with a heavy square bow and a tapering stern piece, painted in formline designs. These are always in red and black, sometimes with blue or green infill, and routinely depict killer whales. The mid-section of the hull, which is always truncated in comparison to the bow and stern, varies: on some specimens it is black or unpainted, on others the formline runs straight through or there are inset ovoids. The type specimen is the BM's Am,+.228.
The formline is relatively simple in some examples, although uniformly well executed, with flowing main lines and well-executed secondary crests. This example illustrates how the killer whale crest is created, with the head (1.) on the bow and the tail fins (2.) on the stern. Notice also a secondary bear crest at the tip of the bow and inset ovoids in the tail.

![Image of a canoe with crests highlighted] Fig. B:43. H1 style Head canoe miniature with crests highlighted, PMAE 16-20-10/1246

There are variations, such as the dramatic bird crest on 69-20-10/1243, the eagle on UC 10382 or the large moon on BM Am.2222, but all are executed in the familiar high-quality Northern formline design. There are two examples which provide exceptions, 16/1 and 16/8256 at the AMNH, both of which are carved of the same materials and proportions as the others in this category, but neither of which have formline painting. The latter is completely bare, but the former is highly unusual, having brown block painting similar to the N9 category and a large circular hole in the bow – no other canoe in this survey has anything similar, although FMNH P1267 and BM Am,+.231 (an H4) have smaller bow holes, thought to reduce wind resistance (Holm, 1987ii).

![Image of a canoe with a small bow hole] Fig. B44. H1 style Head canoe miniature, AMNH 16/1

Where dating is possible, they appear to mostly date to the late nineteenth century, although there are a number of earlier examples: two are dated to the first European
contacts in the 1770s, both displaying black proto-formline and highly exaggerated profiles in a manner very different from anything that came later.

Figs. B.45 & B.46. H1 style 1770s Head canoe miniature, MdA 13896; H1 style 1770s Head canoe miniature, NMP 21 540

There are two small examples in the BM from the 1790s (Am,VAN.149; Am,VAN.151), and one at the CML from approximately the 1820s (CO3113), but these five are the only head canoe miniatures with provenances which place them within the period in which full-sized head canoes are known to have existed.

Most of the rest of this grouping appears to date between the 1840s and 1870s, after the end of the head canoe period. Miniatures from this period are made to a very high standard, demonstrating strong understandings of proportionality (exaggerated, but with smooth lines) and formline design. Quite a number from this group have figureheads, some integral such as on PRM 1911.79.1, and some detachable as on BM Am1976,03.3 (also EHM K-1876). These are either crest animals such as bears or spirit figures similar to those discussed in the data chapter.

Figs. B.46 & B.47. H1 style Head canoe miniature with integral bear figurehead, PRM 1911.79.1; H1 style Head canoe miniature with detachable spirit figurehead, BM Am1976,03.3
**H2:** The nine Head style canoe miniatures in the H2 category are ostensibly similar to the H1 type, but for a significant carving difference – they have been carved with extremely truncated midsections, resulting in a flared beam. This is likely the result of their flat bases, making them more stable than the H1 canoe miniatures.

Their shape operates as a bowl would, although none of the miniatures in the category show any indication of having been used as a bowl and most have thwarts, some with paddles and mast holes. All have similar formline design as H1 miniatures, except that it is also truncated to accommodate the shape differential. In addition, the quality seems lower on average. The type specimen is AMNH 16/8907.

![Fig. B.48 H2 style Head canoe miniature, AMNH 16/8907](image)

**H3:** The H3 design is, as with H2, the result of changes to the carving process rather than the specific result of decorative alterations. While the miniatures in H1 and H2 categories have high, raised bow sections, the eight miniatures in H3 have a much lower, triangular shape, as illustrated in the type specimen MoA A7096.
On all of these examples, the decoration indicates that the canoe was designed in this way, and that there are no parts missing, so this lower bow is not the result of a missing section; full-sized head canoes would have created the large bow by the addition of cedar boards sewn in place, but these do not indicate that any such attachments were made.

Beyond this alteration, they bear resemblance to a number of features of H1, H2 and N1 and N2 canoe miniatures A7096 above has the scalloped seats noted earlier and most have formline decoration, although as with H2, the quality is lower than on H1, with some, such as NMNH 028526 presenting poorly painted imitation design and another, possibly much older, example PMNH 67-10-10/278, having unusual black proto-formline decoration.

**H4:** A defunct category, its two original members transferred on analysis to H3. It was intended to show case possible transitional Head style canoe miniatures, giving an indication of the design experimentation which may have led to the Northern canoe style. An example of this potential progression is outlined below, but the dates of the miniatures render this hypothesis unlikely.
There appears to be continuity in these designs, whereby the bow is undercut to reduce wind resistance and improve handling, the stern narrows and extends and the beam broadens slightly to improve stability. However these are miniatures; as already established, they are not dependent on realistic proportionality for their shape and so whether a design trajectory can be observed in the composition of these miniatures rests on external factors rather than the design trajectory of the prototype. Their estimated acquisition dates from the 1840s to the 1880s are sequential and they are all from the Northern Northwest Coast, but the transition from Head to Northern style occurred several decades before the first in this sequence was collected, rendering their reliability as historical evidence for evolution in design under question.
**H5:** This is a small, particular category branched from the H1 canoe miniatures. These are high-quality miniature head style canoes which have crew – the only head canoe miniatures to have crew – who are red-bodied with blue masked faces. The figures are spirit figures, like the figureheads on some of the H1 canoe miniatures and they are only found in Russian collections assembled in the early nineteenth century. These are the first properly documented and coherent collection of miniature canoes from the Northern coast to be assembled, and their similarities to later head canoe designs indicates a traditional practice of miniature canoe production which has endured. Given however that two of the three canoes in this category have the crew facing backwards, it is possible that museum curatorship may have had a hand in their arrangement.

![Fig. B:54 H5 style Head canoe miniature, NMF VK80](image)

**H6:** H6 provides a final category for three Head canoe miniatures which do not fit any of the other categories. MoA A157 is a small, crude carving in loose-grain red cedar with a single integral crew member; BMNH 563 is a rough relief carved miniature with two crew which on closer inspection were revealed to be from a sawn up miniature totem pole nailed in place, while BMNH 1-1462 is a badly damaged tiny miniature head canoe from a headdress.
**Westcoast Style**

There are many miniatures of the Westcoast style canoe, which was probably historically the most common canoe type on the Northwest Coast, endemic from the northern part of Vancouver Island south to the Columbia River and occasionally found as far north as Yakutat Bay. As a miniature design, they compete only with the Northern style for most commonly found. As with the Northern, they have been divided into ten seriated categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>W2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
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<td>W10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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*Fig. B:55* Graph of Westcoast style canoe miniature seriations

*Fig. B:56. Pie chart of Westcoast style canoe miniature seriations*
**W1:** Sealing canoes form an important subset of westcoast style canoe designs, closely related to whaling designs (W2). Operating as dioramas, what differentiates them from other Westcoast miniature types is that the sealing designs always have two figures, one in the stern steering with an oar and the other in the bow holding a split end harpoon ready to strike. These often come accompanied with paddles, bailers, masts, sails and most especially, dead seal figures.

Although they retain for the most part the disproportionate dimensions of almost all miniature canoes from the Northwest Coast when compared with full sized canoes (cf. Arima, 2002:107), this lack of proportion is less pronounced than in Northern or Head style miniatures, and almost all of these canoe miniatures are painted in naturalistic colours and styles.

The type specimen is CMH VII-F-311, which features all of the elements described above. It is one of a group of four almost identical miniatures (RBCM 16806; HM 467; Christie’s Auction 37:8558), which have circumstantial associations with the Ditidaht community of Southern Vancouver Island in the 1890s.

![W1 style Westcoast sealing canoe miniature, CHM VII-F-311](image)

**Fig. B:57** W1 style Westcoast sealing canoe miniature, CHM VII-F-311

In addition to the grouping listed above, there are a number of different variants on this style, pointing to a range of makers and origin sites. Some, like the above, are carved to a high, naturalistic standard, even depicting the musculature of the crew, while others are simpler, often with thicker paint, such as CMH VII-F-637 or DMNS AC.2744. There are also a pair of miniatures in this category with stylised Salishan figures seated in naturalistic canoe miniatures, HMA 98-41-4; 98-41-3.
W2: The W2 type of Westcoast canoe miniatures is similar in many ways to the W1 type, in that it features dioramas of canoe hunting activities, in this case that of whaling canoes. Whaling is discussed in greater detail in the Makah case study, but in summary was a highly ceremonial activity only practiced by a handful of ocean-facing Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth tribes. That 12 such canoe miniatures are identifiable, or just 4.6% of the total Westcoast canoe miniatures studied, belies their importance as icons to the communities which produced them.

The type specimen selected for this grouping is NMNH E72936-0, which was produced at Neah Bay in 1883 on commission by ethnographic collector James Swan.

Although swan’s miniatures, out of proportion as they are, form part of this body, there are also whaling canoes, identifiable by their low streamlined bows and use of whale hunting equipment, which have no crew at all, such as AMNH 16.1/1787 or PMA 72-18-10/6138, and those which present stylised dioramas of whale hunters, including the blue formline of BMNH 96 and the geometric commercial patterning of BMNH 1989/98-7. Most importantly, and discussed at greater length in the Makah case study, is the spectacular four metre long Young Doctor miniature, NMNH 068874.
Figs. B:61 & B:62. Makah canoe miniature, AMNH 16.1/1787; Makah canoe miniature, Young Doctor, NMAI 068874, Smithsonian

W3: The most common of all types of Northwest Coast miniature canoes, the W3 category covers average to well-carved Westcoast miniature canoes which are either unpainted, or have been painted in simple, naturalistic colour schemes. Comprising 94 of 259, or 36.3% of the total Westcoast canoe miniatures, this is a wide group, broken into subdivisions below.

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<tr>
<td>W3.2</td>
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<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3.5</td>
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<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>94</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. B:63 Graph of W3 Westcoast style canoe miniature seriations

Fig. B:64 Pie chart of W3 Westcoast style canoe miniature seriations
W3.1 reflects unpainted, high-quality carved canoe miniatures, usually without thwarts or realistic accoutrements. They are typically between 40 and 100cm long (although outliers in both directions are known) and have been carved of tight-grain yellow cedar and smoothly polished. They predominately date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although a few have an appearance which suggests that they may be older, and there are several in the British Museum which can be dated to the 1790s. The type specimen here is MoA A1530.

These are not realistic miniatures; canoes would have been painted or stained to help with the preservation of the wood, but they are also the simplest of Westcoast styles, omitting the imaginative detail of most of the decorated types, replacing it with highly polished finishes – also an unrealistic feature as full-sized canoes had evident external toolmarks which have been hypothesised to work in breaking the surface tension of the water as the canoe moves.

It is this polishing which suggests that it is unlikely they are unfinished miniatures, sold before the paint could be applied. Their frequency, at 13.6% of all Westcoast canoe miniatures, also indicates that they are a recognised type within the genre.

W3.2 The 34 canoe miniatures in this category include those high-quality tight-grain carved yellow cedar Westcoast miniature canoes which have been painted in a naturalistic fashion, often accompanied by thwarts and accoutrements. These are the miniatures which bear the closest mimetic resemblance to the Westcoast canoes recorded in nineteenth and early twentieth century photography and artistic depictions of the Northwest Coast. They vary considerably in length, with the longest being nearly a metre and a half, but most are between 40 and 70cm. The type specimen for this type is PMAE 05-8-10/65657
W3.3 encompasses more simply carved, naturalistically painted miniature Westcoast canoes with flat bases and other concessions to household display. These canoes are unlikely to have floated true in water and are clearly designed to be realistic carved and painted mimetic reproductions of canoes in water for public display. Most are of noticeably lower quality than W3.1 and W3.2, perhaps suggesting that less attention is paid to their aesthetic qualities than their mimetic qualities. The type specimen is MoV AA 2462.

W3.4: This category incorporates 5 unpainted miniature Westcoast canoes which show figures engaged in activities not covered by the W1 and W2 categories. These figures are mostly naturalistic, and the type specimen is SAM 93.80.
W3.5: The four canoe miniatures of his type includes large miniature Westcoast canoes, carved to a very high-standard from yellow cedar which have inlaid shell patterning. These patterns either appear on the gunwales, or depict whales and lightning serpents on the exterior hull. They are usually unpainted, although a few specimens are given naturalistic paint schemes.

These are all from particularly old provenance contexts, primarily dating to the early nineteenth century and were collected by merchant and military visitors to the West Coast of Vancouver Island. They are mostly found in those collections, such as the PEM and the BM whose collections include material from pre-1850 and are the only miniature canoes in the survey to feature occlusions which are not directly related to canoe functionality (i.e. paddles, sail etc.). The type specimen is BM 1842,1210.47.
**W4:** This group of 24 miniature Westcoast style canoes are noted for their simplicity and low-quality of carving, painting and materials as assessed subjectively. These miniatures are carved primarily from yellow cedar, often loose-grained secondary growth, and their paint is often commercial paint carelessly applied in patterns not recorded as having been common on full-sized canoes. There are generally proportional mistakes or accidental damage during carving, indicating either a measure of haste or lack of skill (or both) on the part of the carver. All of the canoes in this type which have provenances were made for sale in the early or mid twentieth century. The type specimen is MoA

![Fig. B:70 W4 style Westcoast canoe miniature, McC M4933](image)

**W5:** This category contains commercially made Westcoast canoe miniatures which show indications of the high-skilled experimental practices of the late twentieth century, during the “renaissance” period. They show indications of responses to commercial art imperatives, including high-quality painting and carving from yellow cedar, stylised and dynamic poses for the figures and exaggerated beam. The type specimen is MoA 1354/3

![Fig. B:71 W5 style Westcoast canoe miniature, MoA 1354/3](image)
**W6:** 60 Westcoast style canoe miniatures fall into the W6 category, which features high-quality yellow cedar miniatures which show painting in the style of Nuu-chah-nulth formline. They are usually between 40 and 80cm, although some smaller and a few much larger are known and they date to the late nineteenth century. They have been divided as follows.

W6.1 Highly complex early formline designs with a range of colours, most usually blue, black and a faded orange-red. These are often dated to the first half of the nineteenth century, with a second substantial number emerging from James Swan’s collecting activities in Neah Bay in 1884. They are carved and painted to a very high standard, commonly with the low narrow bow associated with whaling canoes (W2).

![Fig. B:72 W6.1 style Westcoast canoe miniature, MVL 1225-6](image)

**W6.2** Features a complex formline design in black, often extending under the canoe’s hull and forming a wing formation reminiscent of bird designs with early to mid-nineteenth century provenances.

![Fig. B:73 W6.2 style Westcoast canoe miniature, BMNH 861](image)
**W6.3** Simple formline designs in black or black and orange, usually only featuring a few distinct shapes, well carved and with later nineteenth century provenances.

![W6.3 style Westcoast canoe miniature, SAM 91.24](image)

**Fig. B:74.** W6.3 style Westcoast canoe miniature, SAM 91.24

**W6.4** Poor quality formline design, applied carelessly or loosely formed. Provenances to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

![W6.4 style Westcoast canoe miniature, HMA 1999-31-6](image)

**Fig. B:75.** W6.4 style Westcoast canoe miniature, HMA 1999-31-6

**W7:** This category contains just three Westcoast style canoe miniatures, all of which have highly unusual figureheads integrally carved into the bow. None of these are alike, MoV AA1741 takes the appearance of a wolf, RBCM 17021 has a human face and NMNH E1871-0 has the appearance of a raven.

**Salish Racing**

There are 21 miniature examples of Salish Racing canoes in the survey, all bearing superficial resemblance to the Westcoast style, but with extremely elongated mid-sections, narrower beam and a much closer proportional relationship between miniature and full-sized vessel.
**SR1**: Expertly finished and finely painted miniature Salish Racing canoes, usually to scale. Often painted in team colours and accompanied by paddles but without figures. This covers all but two of this category. Type specimen is SMAI 702.G.5

![SR1 style Salish Racing canoe miniature, SMAI 702.G.5](image)

**SR2**: High quality painted and carved miniature, similar to SR1 with crew seated on thwarts. Type specimen is RBCM 16668.

![SR2 style Salish Racing canoe miniature, RBCM 16668](image)

**Yakutat**

The Yakutat style, which comes from only one Tlingit community at the northernmost reach of the Northwest Coast region, has a distinctively prominent bow designed to break though slushy ice. There are 68 miniatures of Yakutat style canoes in the survey, totalling 7.2% of the entire corpus of miniature canoes, a remarkably high figure given the limited geographic and cultural range of this canoe type. The examples survey ranged primarily between 40-60cm, although a few smaller specimens were located.
The Yakutat canoe miniatures have been broken into five categories, based primarily on decoration.

**Y1**: Almost half the Yakutat style canoe miniatures, 33 examples, fall into this category. They are mostly well-executed carvings with smooth flowing lines and highly polished. Most are carved from yellow cedar, although a few appear to have been made from darker hardwoods. There are no examples of Yakutat miniatures from red cedar. None of the miniatures in this category are painted, with a few exceptions with a single black line around the gunwale. The type specimen is SMAI 1819.G.81

![Fig. B:78. Y1.1 style Yakutat canoe miniature, SMAI 1819.G.81](image)

Most of this type, like the specimen above have smooth flowing lines with an extremely thin hull and no thwarts – most do not sit true on a flat surface and appear designed (although not necessarily intended) to float. Others are bulkier with a flatter base and one or more thwarts, more closely resembling the everyday Yakutat canoes of historic photographs and possibly intended for display rather than aquatic interaction.

![Fig. B:79. Y1.2 style Yakutat canoe miniature, RBCM 18520](image)

**Y2**: Seven Yakutat-style canoe miniatures were painted black on the exterior. These most closely resemble historic Yakutat canoes and are all of Y1.2 variety, with thick sides, thwarts and flat bases for display. They were collected between 1894 and 1912 and are
largely associated with collecting expeditions – several are known to have been collected originally by George T. Emmons.

Fig. B:80. Y2 style Yakutat canoe miniature, AMNH E/1110

Y3: There are eight Yakutat style canoe miniatures are in this category. They are predominantly well-executed Y1.1 style miniatures with flowing lines and wide beams. What unites them is the presence of patches of indigenous red paint to the interior. The paint has been carelessly applied either in lines across the interior beam or in loose geometric patterns. This is common enough that it is not the result of accident or error and yet it does not conform with any known Tlingit design. The type specimen is NMNH 068702.

Fig. B:81. Y3 style Yakutat canoe miniature, NMNH 068702

Y4: A small category of four Yakutat style canoe miniatures which display simplistic or crude carving and poor quality painting either coated in white commercial paint or painted in non-Native designs crudely executed. The type specimen is RBCM 19762.
Y5: Ten Yakutat style canoe miniatures which have been carved to a high-standard and then painted with formline designs in a similar manner to the N3 and H1 types. These include both high-quality formline painting, such as the type specimen, AC 8558:31, which closely resembles the N8 type, and more commercial specimens which demonstrate less skilled looser formline designs.

Munkas

The Munka style canoe of the Central Coast, like the Head style to the North, fell out of use early in the post-contact period and has probably not existed in full-size for two centuries. It does however appear in miniature 32 times during the survey, or as 3.4% of
the total. These canoes form a coherent collection, all carved to a high-standard in the late nineteenth century.

Munkas come in a range of shapes and decorations which, given the relatively small size of the grouping, will be discussed here without division into sub-categories. Munka miniatures are carved to two distinct designs. The first, illustrated by NMNH 168473 is closer to the West Coast design, with a bird-like prow and tapering square bow. These are distinguished from the Westcoast design by an open bow interior.

![Fig. B:85. Munka style canoe miniature, NMNH 168473](image)

The second, illustrated here by HM nn11318 has a more elevated bow and stern, shorter midsection and wider beam – they are often considered to be canoe-bowls rather than true miniature canoes, although the thin hull does differentiate them from bowls and none have any evidence of usage as food containers.

![Fig. B:86. Munka style canoe miniature, HMG nn11318](image)

Decoration for the Munka style canoe miniatures largely consists of variations of formline, some with full Northern style formline decoration, such as NMS L.304.109, which is purported to have been the work of Charles Edenshaw, to less rigid formline probably from the central Coast, such as VMS 1900.32.17. there are also a small number of Munka style miniature canoes which are unpainted.
Figs. B:87-B:88. Munka style canoe miniature, NMS L.304.109; Munka style canoe miniature, VMS 1900.32.17

Other types

**CRI**: There are two canoe miniatures in the survey which are identified as being from the Columbia River. This was identified as a specific type in Suttles:1990 from one of these miniatures in the AMNH 16.1/1786, although this is the only miniature canoe of this design located in any collection.

Fig. B:89. Columbia River style canoe miniature, AMNH 16.1/1786
The Spruce style canoe, so called because it was only found in the northernmost parts of the region beyond the regular growing range of the cedar and thus was carved from spruce trunks, appears 12 times in the survey. The wood used for the miniatures mostly appears to have been yellow cedar, which is easier to carve in small scale. The small number of these miniatures obscures considerable diversity in appearance, from the realistic black with red strips paint scheme, to unusual variations on formline design to crude approximations of formline likely to be the product of souvenir art production.

Fig. B:90 – B:92. Spruce style canoe miniature, MQB 71.1894.99.25; Spruce style canoe miniature, WHS 50.764; Spruce style canoe miniature, NMNH 168294

Ice canoes make up four of the survey’s numbers, all coming from the NMNH collection, possibly the result of a deliberately targeted collecting expedition. Proportionally they are relatively large compared with the other miniatures in that museum’s collection given that the full-sized Ice canoes were much smaller than most other Northwest Coast designs.

Fig. B:93 Ice style canoe miniature, NMNH E16274-0
Anomalies

There are eight wooden canoe miniatures from the Northwest Coast which have been omitted from this survey as anomalies – they are either too damaged to clearly determine which typology they are from or they are of a design so unusual that it does not correspond to any known full-size or miniature canoes from the region. There are also three miniatures from the Northwest Coast of European/Eastern Native style boats, discussed in the chapter two.

A final category of outliers are the argillite canoes. These all date to the late nineteenth century and are always northern in design – three were located for this survey, two of which contain many figures and resemble Bill Reid’s colossal sculpture *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*. They are discussed briefly in chapter five.
Glossary

Establishing an exacting understanding of the terminology required for anthropological analysis necessitates careful consideration of exactly what is meant when certain words are deployed, with the awareness that these definitions may or may not be comparable with their uses in other disciplines or even by other writers in the same discipline.

Our advice, then, is that writers should explicitly define how they are using all terms, even when they feel the meaning is obvious. This may initially make matters worse, as we will see how much incongruity is actually beneath our discipline’s façade of mutual intelligibility. But through this confusion lies the only road to terminological consistency and the real goal of valid comparison (Donovan, 2003:69)

This appendix acts as glossary for some of the more contentious terms deployed in this thesis and an opportunity to clearly define those terms specifically given their importance in the presentation of the research. Two specific areas deemed most problematic, miniatures and models and the concept of art, are given broader coverage, followed by a more general alphabetical glossary.

Miniatures & Models

Although it should be simple to define the word “miniature” as something which has been subject to the process of miniaturisation, the term is problematised by a lack of terminological exactitude, in particular between the words miniature and model.

Historic use of selected indigenous material culture as Euro-American-determined representatives of entire indigenous societies within the museum setting is an endemic problem. It is likely that the conflation of model and miniature as interchangeable synonymous terms, at least in the contexts concerning this thesis, stems from the uncritical, historical deployment of miniatures in this role. It is particularly notable that in both museum documentation and academic literature the term model is frequently uncritically used as a synonym for miniature, resulting in an assumed but incorrect identification of all miniatures as “models”. Looking at the terminology applied to miniatures, and particularly the use of the word “model”, may also begin to explain why certain assumptions have arisen about the functionality of miniatures.
Although casual equation of the terms model and miniature may be understandable, it is important in this thesis to acknowledge that there is no agreement on terminology: some sources hold that “models are not selective, but keep all detail. The latter on the other hand, i.e. miniatures, do involve a process of abstraction, such that some details are deliberately excluded” (Knappett, 2012:100). Others maintain that although a model is a representation or depiction which explicitly exemplifies an idea or theory in a physical format (Morgan & Morrison 1999:3); a process of intelligibly realising a structured concept (de Chadavarian & Hopwood 2004:1), in this capacity they are only “partial representations” reliant on the selective elimination of detail (Clarke, 1972:2). Yaneva goes further, stating that “models cannot be treated as inscription devices that visualize invisible substances. Instead, their purpose is to gather a number of things - human and non-human actors, and their concerns, requirements and disputes - and to 'accommodate' them into objects that can be subjected to design experiments” (2005:872).

In these interpretations, models are scientific devices developed as proportional scale representations, such as those commonly produced in the fields of structural or naval architecture as a way of controlling and examining processes in “manageable spaces where otherwise unruly phenomena could be directed at will by expert reason” (Schaffer, 2004:72; Baker, 2004). These models are objects under control, easily observed and manipulated, and they act as circulating prototypes; modelling becomes a technique for translating ideas into physical form to test their affordances in a simplified (and inexpensive) manner (Yaneva, 2005; Küchler, 2010:302). Modelling in this context does not automatically require a reduction in scale; such is often the case for practical reasons, but it is not an essential element of their development. This is however not to agree with Yaneva that models cannot be “inscription devices that visualize invisible substances”; such functionality still exists alongside more mechanical properties within any model, to a properly informed observer.

While it is likely that miniatures from the Northwest Coast embody emic representations of ideas and theories, conflation of the terms miniature and model have probably contributed to the unreflexive categorisation of miniatures as simple icons of the full-scale item they depict, without acknowledging their peculiar affordances of scale (e.g. Blackman 1990:245; Collins et al. 1973:54; Holm 1983:91-92). This implies a bias, probably unconscious, towards models as lacking functional value in of themselves; of being less valuable than the full-scale object due to their inevitable reduction in scale and complexity, a situation which separates them from the study of miniatures in this thesis.
Since while many models are also miniatures, miniatures are not automatically models, this thesis avoids use of the term “model” except very specifically in the European Enlightenment context, in order to clearly separate miniatures as an object type which may have been created within semiotic ideologies markedly different from those which created European scientific models. This will allow them to be observed as objects which, although possessing certain similar affordances to models, are recognisable as quite different, although not mutually exclusive, constructs.

**Art**

The way in which the term art is used in the thesis is discussed in chapter one, in relation to Alfred Gell’s definition of “social relations in the vicinity of objects mediating social agency” (Gell, 1998:7). In this glossary a short history of the term will be considered, in relation to its association with Native American material culture.

Art is an instinct inextricably tied to human agency, and academics have sought for generations to adequately define art in a way that explains its application to peoples existing outside the European artistic paradigm (Hooper & Burland, 1953; Stout, 1971; Price, 1989; Davies, 2000). Franz Boas’ work with the peoples of the Northwest Coast is pivotal in this study, recognising that “the decorative designs used by primitive man do not serve purely esthetic ends, but that they suggest to his mind certain definite concepts. They are not only decorations, but symbols of definite ideas” (Boas, 1940 [1916]:546), that in these contexts art is not a facile decorative choice but an essential, practical and functional one.

In the specific context of the peoples of the Northwest Coast, Steve Brown has noted the problematic nature of the word art within the historic trajectory of Northwest Coast material culture, conceding that “if art simply means “human-made objects of beauty” then there is no shortage of it among the First peoples” but that “in more recent years, First Nations visual symbolism has become more adapted and acculturated to Euro-American concepts of non-functional art” (Brown, 2000iii:273).

Historically, the study of art has often been divided into “Fine Art”, a European phenomenon which explicitly prioritises the aesthetic qualities of an object over any additional functionality it may hold (Davies, 2000:200-205), and “Primitive Art”, art of supposedly less civilised peoples, dismissively described as “too figurative, too colourful, too folksy, too primitive” (Bright, 1995:2) and deliberately dehumanised when circulating
in the multi-national commercial art market (Price, 1989:100). These categories were also frequently described as “High Art” and “Low Art”, with traditional Native American material culture repeatedly bracketed into the latter category (Auger, 2005:129-156). This position allowed museum collections of Native American art to be frequently deployed in ways which reinforced etic evolutionary archaeological ideas of cultural sophistication at the expense of indigenous intentionality (Errington, 1998:61-63), or simply fetishised the art within an explicitly European context. In some areas this conception endures; as recently as 2017 an art-industry magazine wrote condescendingly that “tribal material is seen as modern art . . . finely crafted material with aesthetically pleasing shapes can, when mounted in one’s home, become conversation pieces at least the equal of contemporary sculptural pieces” (Ryle, 2017:16).

Of course, “objects do not exist as ‘primitive art’. This is a category created for their circulation, exhibition and consumption outside their original habitats” (Myers, 2006:267), and in academia this division has long been recognised as highly troublesome, artificial and based on obsolete evolutionary theories of human civilisation (Anderson, 1979:4-5). As a result, the ethnocentric term “primitive” in this context, with its dismissive, colonialist connotations, has gradually fallen into disuse.

Attempts to redefine these categories in the twentieth century raised the consideration that art could be separated into “art and artistic performances bracketed off from ordinary life”, such as religious or political works and “mundane artistic objects”, everyday practical tools which feature aesthetic design elements (Dutton, 2000:235), also defined as “works of art reflecting an objective reality . . . [and] magical or religious actions of objects” (Bodrogi, 1985:7), and that these categories could be easily identified by their aesthetic differences (Boas, 1940 [1916]:547-554). This idea makes a serious effort to engage with the intangible technological relationships between ritual and material, proposed by Lévi-Strauss and discussed in the introduction, but struggles because it still prioritises presumed aesthetic value over function in a localised context. Such etic categories of art do not always allow for Boas’ consideration of aesthetic value as an integral part of the designed functionality of an object, a fundamental component of Northwest Coast material culture which this thesis has sought to respect and explore. Indeed, among the peoples of the Northwest Coast it is understood that “everyday activities are artistic in the sense that they are part of the reflection and negotiation of meaning that occur within and between people”, a phenomenon referred to as “symbolic conversations” (Martindale, 2013:121).
• **Acculturation**

A much-disputed understanding of how European technology and social structure came to displace or replace traditional indigenous practices during the colonisation process. See also transculturation and hybridisation. Not used in this thesis without contextualisation.

• **Affordances**

The directly-perceived properties which give an object structure (after Gibson, 1986:133-135).

• **Artist**

Any producer of art, as defined in this glossary. Those “to whom are ascribed, by abduction, causal responsibility for the existence and characteristics of the index” (Gell, 1998:27).

• **Audience**

Here used to indicate any person or persons (including supernatural persons) who were the interpretants (signatum) of miniaturisation. This includes both audiences intended by the original artists and unintended audiences.

• **Communication**

Any process in which information is transferred between things.

• **Copper** *(noun)*

A copper is a large shield-shaped plaque traditionally cold forged from raw copper nuggets and later made from ship copper on the Northern and Central Northwest Coast. They formed the basis of elite economic exchange through the potlatch system, representing the wealth and status of their owner. Consequently they could be given away or shattered at potlatch to graphically illustrate the power of the host and impose obligations on his guests (Jopling, 1989)

• **Element**

In chemistry, the essential basic building blocks of matter. Here used as a metaphor for the essential components of the miniaturisation process.
Emic
In opposition to etic, describing a study undertaken from within a particular cultural context. In this thesis it has been used in reference to local, knowledgeable, audiences of miniaturisation.

Emphasis
The “special importance, value or prominence given to something” (OED, 2006). Here neologically adapted to refer specifically to the ideological ambitions which drive the process of miniaturisation.

Ethnodrama
A variation on a traditional performance practice enacted, with modifications, for commercial or security reasons, for an external audience (Hawker, 2003:120). Here extended, in certain cases, to art production and miniaturisation.

Etic
In opposition to emic, describing a study undertaken from outside a particular cultural context. In this thesis it has been used in reference to external, unknowledgeable, audiences of miniaturisation.

European
In this text, “European” has been used throughout to refer to peoples from Europe who reached the Northwest Coast, and American or Canadian people of European descent who settled there, as well as the wider social and technological influence they had upon the indigenous population. In some cases the term “Euro-American” has been used to refer explicitly to the latter group. It has not been used in an art context, where the term “Western” has been used instead.

Giganture
Neologism developed for this project in chapter nine to refer to semiophoric objects which assume an iconic relationship with a prototype, but whose affordances have been scaled up rather than down. From the Latin-Italian suffix “-tura” (also the root of miniature) and gigantic, from the Latin gigas.
• **Hybridity**

In material culture studies, this term which reflects a collaboration between diverse cultural influences (Thomas, 1996). Similar to creolisation (Mullins & Paynter, 2000).

• **Iconoclash**

“What happens when there is *uncertainty* about the exact role of the hand at work in the production of a mediator.” [original emphasis] (Latour, 2002:8), here understood as uncertainty about the status of miniatures caused by intervention from an artist or external actor.

• **Indigenous**

An adjective describing a thing that has originated in a particular place. Used throughout this text as a synonym for Native American.

• **Knowledge**

In this thesis knowledge refers to information that is understood within culturally specific semantic frame.

• **Magic**

Magic is mentioned in the thesis as a form of “efficacious technology” (Warnier, 2009). Where used, it broadly draws on Malinowski’s interpretation that “Magic, based on man’s confidence that he can dominate nature directly, if only he knows the laws which govern it magically, is in this akin to science” (1948:3).

• **Mimesis**

The process by which an object takes on iconic qualities of resemblance from a prototype (after Taussig, 1993). One of the three “elements” of miniaturisation.

• **Miniature**

An object with mimetic resemblance to a prototype which is physically diminutive and whose function is primarily representative.

• **Miniaturisation**

A process by which a miniature is conceived, created and distributed.
• **Model**

Although often used interchangeably with miniature in other sources, models are the products of European scientific processes which require accuracy of scaling (Schaffer, 2004), which miniatures do not. This is the only context within which this word has been used throughout the thesis.

• **Native**

In this text Native is an adjectival short hand relating to the proper noun Native American (as discussed in the forward), and has been used interchangeably with indigenous.

• **Nef**

Nef are miniature ships made from gold or silver gilt since the late middle ages in Central Europe. Usually operating as drink vessels or cruets, they declined in popularity in the European Renaissance period (Oman, 1963; Fritch, 2001).

• **Nonsense (Non-sensical)**

A subjective expression adapted here to refer to intangible, and consequently obscured, action or technique that may appear illogical or irrational to an observer at first encounter. Literally, one which cannot be understood through the application of the senses alone (after Lévi-Strauss, 1966 [1962]:22-26; the “renunciation of sensible dimensions”).

• **Op-Art**

A rhetorical methodology in anthropology through which the study of small-scale, approachable phenomena can generate insight into larger and more intractable things (Amrute, 2016).

• **Pedagogy**

The profession, science and theory of teaching (OED, 2006).

• **Praxis**

The physical practice of an action as opposed to the theoretical understanding of said action (OED, 2006). Here used to indicate an occasion on which it was the technical process of making a miniature which was the critical emphasis, rather than the prototype or distribution.
• **Primitive**

Anachronistic term used extensively in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to describe “peoples who had been overrun by the colonial powers” and their material culture production. Now considered “prejudicial or patronising slurs upon the arts and the artists who made them” (Graburn, 1976:3-4). Here avoided except in contextual discussion or direct quote.

• **Provenance**

The recorded history of an object in a museum collection. This includes its biography at creation, subsequent distribution and use within the museum. Provenance specifically refers only to that history which has been documented, not that which might be assumed or inferred.

• **Qualia**

A term describing “experiences of sensuous qualities (such as colors, textures, sounds, and smells) and feelings (such as satiety, anxiety, proximity, and otherness)” (Chumley & Harkness, 2013). Here used as the sensory bridge between affordance and semiosis.

• **Reality**

In the course of the thesis I have posited that miniatures can operate in multiple realities based on qualia, affordance, temporality and semiotic ideology. This is based on an understanding that “what we call “reality” is merely a dominant reality, and that there are always minor realities in which we are equally enmeshed (Hage, 2011:7)

• **Representation**

An action in which something acts on behalf of or symbolises something else, often confused with mimesis.

• **Rubbish Theory**

A model for approaching the process by which an object’s perceived value increases or decreases as it moves between semiotic ideologies (after Thompson, 1979). Related as a term to semiophore and torque.
Satire

The “use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people’s stupidity or vices” (OED, 2006). Here used to draw comparisons between the exaggerated affordances of satirical devices on the Northwest Coast and those of miniaturisation.

Scaling

A method of measuring the degree to which a mimetic object has changed size in relation to the prototype. One of the three “elements” of miniaturisation.

Semiophore

Semiophore is a descriptive term developed by Pomian (1990), which refers to an object which has no use, or whose use has changed over time to become ostensibly useless. Pomian used it in relation to museum objects losing their use as they entered the museum display, and it has been adapted in this text in relation to the affordances of miniatures.

Shaman

Indigenous practitioner of magical/religious ritual geared towards intercession with supernatural beings on the behalf of a petitioner.

Semiosis

In semiotics, the relationship which occurs between a sign (signum) and its audience (signatum) (Jakobsen, 1971).

Signatum

In semiotics, the audience who interact with a sign (signum) (Jakobsen, 1971).

Signum

In semiotics, the sign to which an audience (signatum) interact through semiosis (Jakobsen, 1971).

Simplification

The selective reduction or elimination of detail in a mimetic object in relation to the prototype (after Clarke, 1972). One of the three “elements” of miniaturisation.
• **Skeuomorph**

An object which incorporates design elements from other objects without incorporating the functionality or materiality of the original design element (Knappett, 2002). It was first developed in the field of Mediterranean archaeology in reference to pottery designed to resemble more valuable metal vessels, and has since been applied to a range of design fields. Here the word has been substantially adapted in relation to miniatures, as discussed in chapter one.

• **Synecdoche**

A relationship between an object and the culture from which it comes, which in some way enables the object to act as representative of the entire culture. (cf. Gell, 1998:161).

• **Thing**

Any object, person, concept, idea or construction, which “serve as targets for a mind eager to project itself onto mirrorlike surfaces” (Küchler, 2005:207).

• **Tribe**

Description of a group of people who share a cultural frame, language or similar defining feature (after Suttles, 1990i). Although sometimes a controversial term, it is not usually problematic in Native American contexts.

• **Torque**

The manner by which an object’s interpretation can unexpectedly alter over time as it moves between audiences (Pinney, 2005).

• **Toy**

A pedagogical tool oriented towards children which emphasises “socially useful forms of interaction” (Sutton-Smith, 1986:119).

• **Tradition**

Ostensibly an action stemming from past actions within a semantic frame. Discussed in the thesis in the context of authenticity, temporality and technical processes.
• Transculturation

The process by which Native and European technology and social structure influenced and altered one another during colonisation, creating new hybridised processes. See also acculturation (Poulter, 2011).
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