



War Helmet

Date

c. 1780-1840

Primary Maker

Tlingit

Medium

Wood (possibly spruce), human hair, pigment

Description

Tlingit war helmets featured carved figures of spirits, ancestors or clan crests that spiritually protected and empowered the wearer for battle. This helmet may represent a mouse, marmot, or other rodent, small creatures that sometimes figure in Tlingit myths. The helmet is constructed with the wood grain running from ear to ear in a traditional fashion to make it stronger and less susceptible to splitting from the force of a downward blow. Such helmets were part of a Tlingit warrior’s armor, effective in intertribal warfare until the advent of firearms.

Dimensions

Overall: 9 3/4 × 8 7/8 × 11 3/4 in. (24.8 × 22.5 × 29.8 cm)