



Oystercatcher Rattle

Date

c. 1830-1860

Primary Maker

Tlingit

Medium

Wood, ermine skins, fiber cordage, paint

Description

Worldwide, people use percussion instruments at times of transition, including during contact with the spirit world. On the Northwest Coast, rattles sounded during shamans' efforts to cure disease or spirit possession. While the basic overall forms of such rattles are similar, their backs, displaying shamanic themes, display diverse style and imagery. Here the raven and frog combination common to

Northwest Coast rattles has been altered with the frog supporting a bound witch whose hair is being twisted by the raven to extract a confession. Such dramatic shamanic imagery added to the intensity and power of the shaman's rituals.

Dimensions

Overall: 5 1/2 × 4 1/2 × 13 1/4 in. (14 × 11.4 × 33.7 cm)