Basic Detail Report



Speaker's Figure

Date
1880-1895

Primary Maker
Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl)

Medium
Wood (spruce?), red, white, green and black pigments

Description
The Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl) welcomed their guests to their great feasts, or potlatches, by placing a speaker’s figure out on the beach where the canoes would arrive or inside or in front of a house. An orator would stand behind the speaker’s figure and announce ceremonial words of welcome to the visitors. The figure’s rounded belly symbolizes the abundance of food and wealth the hosting chiefs possessed and would share with his visitors.

Dimensions
Overall: 88 1/2 × 20 × 13 in. (224.8 × 50.8 × 33 cm)