

# *Imagi/Nations: Native North American Photographs from the Royal Anthropological Institute*

## Introduction

Established in 1843, the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (RAI) is the oldest anthropological organisation in the world. It is home to hundreds of photographs from different societies that were collected throughout a history of donations from anthropologists, fellows, and patrons. Spanning over five continents, and representing dozens of human groups and cultural activities from as early as the mid 19<sup>th</sup> c., the RAI's photographic collections are a precious resource and an invaluable archive of human creativity and ingenuity in visual form.

Indigenous peoples of North America are well represented in RAI's photographic collections, which include, among others, the Hayden album of Native American portraits (second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.), Richard Townshend's photographs of Southwestern Pueblos (early 20<sup>th</sup> c.), ethnographers' fieldwork images (mid 20<sup>th</sup> c.), and numerous unrecorded commercial and anthropological photographs and glass negatives from a variety of sources and periods. Whilst collections such as RAI's Hayden album have gained immense popularity due to the publication of several of its photographs in numerous books (including the latest *Warriors of the Plains*; Carocci, 2012), RAI photo collections also include rare and unpublished material that will be exhibited in *Imagi/Nations* for the first time with the intent of showing the diversity of photographs produced by anthropologists, surveyors, and government officials of Native North American cultures and societies between mid 19<sup>th</sup> c. and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.

Images of Native North Americans part of little known collections such as the ones of the RAI offer a rare glimpse in the visual history of indigenous North American nations (Canadian First Nations, Native Americans, Inuit). The thirty-five photographs selected here are snapshots of the lives and material cultures of Native peoples of North America during times of profound change. Whilst for the specialist these images can be a useful tool for research, for the layman they can illustrate the variety and richness of indigenous social worlds, and for Native peoples they are record of past lifestyles frozen at the time of contact with Anglo-Americans, Canadians and Europeans.

European visual records of indigenous Americans began as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century and continued throughout the colonial period in a variety of mediums and guises (Berkhofer 1979; Chiappelli 1976). Often constructed upon pre-existing knowledge about the rest of the world, images of American peoples have been described as being as much the result of first-hand experience, as of imaginative processes rooted in old Europe's iconography (Mason 1990). A recurring element that characterises the huge corpus of pictures representing Americas' indigenous peoples is indeed imagination, in this context taken to describe a mental faculty that enables knowledge by inferring meaning that is mediated by previous experience. The title of this exhibition acknowledges the imaginative factor that underpins iconography and the history of image making of Native North American nations, and uses it as a framework from which to interrogate how photography can be understood as a cultural artifact contingently located at the crossroad between the practice of anthropology, the production of pictures, and the consumption of visual cultures.

Colonial representations of American peoples are replete with references to images, iconographies, and ideas that project fragments of worlds familiar to Europeans onto indigenous societies. Whilst in some cases, common tropes and rhetorical strategies can be immediately detected in the photographs' candid allusions and recognisable visual citations, like other types of images such as etchings, paintings, or statues, photographs can often encrypt more subtle messages that are not quite so clearly evident. These are the implicit references that guide the very process of knowing other cultures and societies that anthropology consciously reflects on, and that this exhibition renders explicit through tailored interpretations of the individual pictures. Each photograph is here described and contextualized in its cultural and historical milieu so that viewers can not only make sense of what it represents, but understand the conditions under which the photograph was taken, evaluate the intentions of the photographer, and decipher the meanings embedded in the picture. Such interpretation can be useful to appreciate both explicit and implicit messages that converge in the production of photographs.

Although parts of these processes have long been acknowledged by anthropologists (both indigenous and non), and Native North American photographers alike (Edwards 1992, Ortiz 2004, Lippard 1992, Ringlero 2003; Thomas and Hudson 2002), what can be learned from the juxtaposition of previously un-exhibited photographs may engender new arguments about the multifaceted identity of photography at once educational medium, anthropological record, leisure activity, or channel for creative expression (Lidchi and Tsinhnahjinnie 1990).

One of the main points that *Imagi/Nations* tries to highlight is, indeed, the inherent link that the selected photographs have to the existing diverse corpus of images of Native North American peoples produced over more than 500 years. Now publicly acknowledged through this exhibition, RAI photographs of indigenous North Americans can legitimately take part in the ongoing discussions that frame indigenous peoples and anthropologists' concerns about visual media in general, and photography in particular. Like old images and visual representations, it is argued here, the photographs in *Imagi/Nations*, though as different from one another in content and purpose as they are in their respective ages, can be understood through the notion of imagination. Implicit cultural links encoded in these photographs are predicated upon inventive re-combinations of visual references that live in the viewers' minds. Indeed for many people these photographs may evoke familiar tropes whose communicative power rests on their capacity to elicit direct responses in the onlookers. The circuit established between the observer and the author is based on shared allusions and literal citations that render images effective. If, like Clifford Geertz pronounced already more than thirty years ago, art is a system in which the capacity to perceive meaning in pictures depends on the simultaneous participation of audience and makers in symbolic forms we call culture, these images are definitively a proof of the intrinsic cultural foundations that the photographs presented here have in common (Geertz 1976). Image makers and audiences, following Geertz, are joined in an imaginary cultural conversation in which they share the same visual idiom based on particular set of iconographies and grammar punctuated as it were by the use of portraits, landscapes, long shots, and close ups. As products of European cultural notions and visual conventions most of these photographs encode aesthetic principles that can be read by discerning audiences whose familiarity with specific iconographic languages offer the rules for thinking with and through them. If when looking at the Inuit mother and child one is tempted to see a Virgin with the infant Christ (photograph 17), or landscape painting is evoked in the perfectly balanced framing of a Haida village (photograph 9), it means that audiences acquainted with European iconographic principles activate a process of recognition that allows images to become immediately intelligible, acceptable, and perhaps even beautiful. In a similar vein, half-bust shots of both Native North American women and men are articulated upon the notion of portrait, a visual convention commonly used in artistic idioms from various parts of the world, which presupposes that a torso and face can appropriately capture an individual's character irrespective of voice, movement, or countenance (photographs 4; 16; 22; 27; 29; 34). These are, by contrast, characteristics that in Native North American oral cultures are usually considered germane for gaining information about a person. Accurate information about an individual depends on experiential knowledge un-mediated by the use of recording technologies. As demonstrated by Sol Worth and John Adair in their 1972 milestone study of visual anthropology, Native North American image makers use experience to guide representations. As a result, when encouraged to use recording technologies they expect to see different things captured by means of photography or film because their visual perception is ordered by different principles, for example the notion of movement so integral to Navajo philosophy, which in the footage made by Navajo research participants was communicated through long sequences of people walking (Worth and Adair 1972).

Similarly to the ideal conversation between Navajo film makers and audiences, the photographs selected for *Imagi/Nations* encourage viewers formed in the European artistic tradition to look for familiar allusions, visual citations, principles, and analogies that are as much a product of perceptions as they are constitutive of them. Images are not just complements of written records, as Native American art historian Stephanie Pratt reminds us, but they are part and parcel of a much larger process of knowledge production that is predicated as much upon texts as it is on visual depictions and their complex grammars, lexicons, and syntax (Pratt 2005).

The exhibition covers areas as different as early physical anthropology, visual records of material culture, as well as social and cultural life of Native North Americans between the 19<sup>th</sup> c. and the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. Selected to represent cultures from a variety of areas, the photographs in *Imagi/Nations* are but a fraction of much bigger collections that include images of peoples from virtually all areas of North America, from Greenland and the Pacific Northwest coast, to the Southwest USA and the Canadian Great Lakes, including the Great Plains, California, the Plateau, the Great Basin, and the Eastern woodlands.

In addition to identifying specific cultural areas and historical periods (mid 19<sup>th</sup> c.-mid 20<sup>th</sup> c.) the photographs were also chosen to represent different typologies of visual record such as: diplomatic portraits, physical anthropology shots, ethnographic photos, documentation of manufacturing processes, and informal fieldwork photographs, among others. Whilst each typology had a different purpose, in some images it is often possible to discern a discreet aesthetic aspiration, for example in the positioning and framing of particular subjects in the visual field, or the careful balance of light and volumes in the composition.

Captions provided for each photograph highlight both aesthetic intentions and scientific rigor, subtly woven into the production of these photographs, with the purpose of stimulating comparisons between the often incompatible visual languages of science and art. Making visitors aware of the convergence and/or divergence of intents and purposes that originally guided the very act of photographing particular subjects will hopefully encourage the public to interrogate the place of this medium in anthropological archives and its potential uses, elicited by the juxtaposition of diverse photographic typologies gathered under one rationale. The great heterogeneity of material presented in *Imagi/Nations* also illustrates the extreme variety of styles adopted by various photographers.

The majority of authors collected here are men, but three women feature among them: Adela Breton, Vera Broughton, and Marian Smith. Between the three only Marian Smith was a trained anthropologist (photographs 24; 30; 31). Frank Russell collected myths among the Apache Jicarilla he photographed (photographs 1-2), while Walter Fewkes (photograph 11), and David Bushnell (photograph 32) were de facto anthropologists working and writing reports for the Bureau of American Ethnology at a time when professional boundaries were less strict and regulated as they are today. Some of the photographs have not been assigned a definite author as no information associated with them was available (e.g. photographs 3-5; 8; 22; 28; 34). In all the other known cases, the photographers either worked for commercial enterprises such as C.C. Pierce & Co. (photographs 16; 29), or were amateur photographers such as Adela Breton and Richard Baxter Townshend (photographs 7; 15; 20-21; 25). Some of the authors exhibited here were employed to take visual records of the places they visited, for example George Dawson and W. Jackson (photographs 6; 9; 23). In other cases it was the subjects that visited the photographers, such as in the case of the portraits of Native American delegates taken in Washington by Zeno Shindler, and Alexander Gardner (photographs 13; 14; 19). Although none of the authors was indigenous, each in their own distinctive way helped document cultures and individuals from many Native nations of North America through the creative impulses of their imagination.

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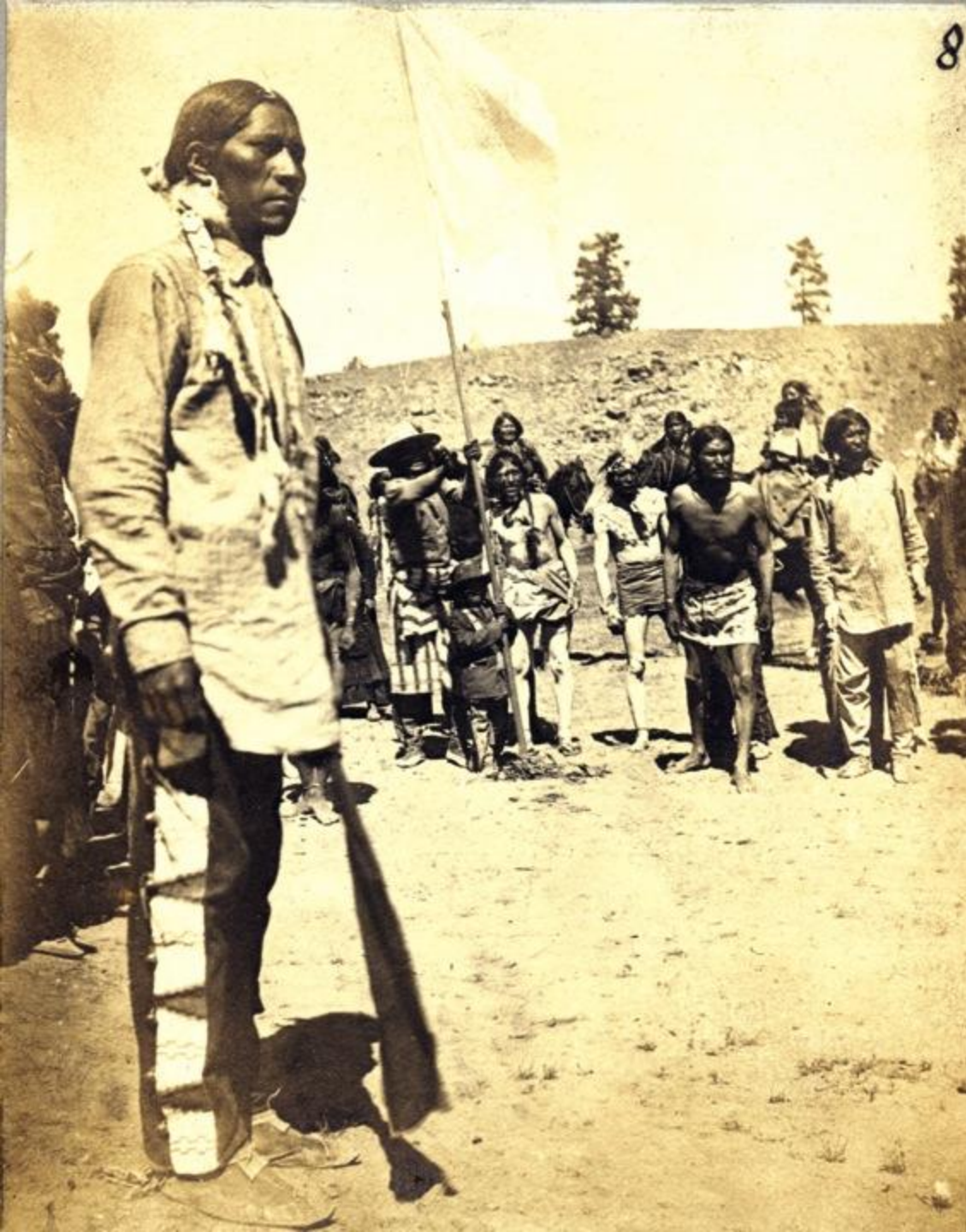
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**1) Jicarilla Apache relay race - RAI 36964 (9.5 x 12cm, original print pasted on card) 1898, New Mexico, USA. Photographer Frank Russell.**

This shot of Jicarilla racers seems to belong to the set of pictures taken in 1898 by Frank Russell of the yearly relay race called *Go-jii-ya* (Tiller 1983: 448-449). Today this three-day celebration is considered a traditional festival that involves two clans, and it is somewhat different from older versions. In the past two teams symbolising the sun and moon competed for the success of animal hunts and plant harvests. Team members were distinctly painted and properly marked with designs of sun and moon symbols on the chest. The photograph's perspective unfortunately does not allow the viewer to properly see the differences between racers, but offers a panoramic shot of the line of runners in preparation for the competition. The figure on the left side of the picture is likely to be an onlooker rather than a participant because he is fully dressed. Or possibly, he may be the man who signals the start of the race. Participants regularly competed stripped to a short kilt and barefoot. Judging from the shadow of this standing figure, it appears that the photograph shows the runners running west-to-east. This orientation corresponds to the cosmic tracks yearly reproduced for running during this event. The running area was orientated along this axis to represent the first ever primordial race in which birds competed for what later became a celebration for the renewal of life. Today the winning team receives gifts of food (Pesata 2005).

#### References cited

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- Tiller, Veronica E. 1983 'Jicarilla Apache' pp. 440-461 in *Handbook of North American Indians* Vol. 10, Southwest. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution





(2) Jicarilla Apache Runners - RAI 36962 (9 x 11.5cm, original print pasted on card) 1898, New Mexico, USA. Photographer Frank Russell.

Jicarilla's relay race, depicted in this photograph, happened every September to ensure good plant harvest and successful hunts (Opler 1944). Racers were divided into two teams, the 'Sand People' (Ollero) and the 'Plains People' (Llanero), which symbolically represented sun and moon, respectively associated with animals and plants. Predictions on the abundance or lack of resources depended on the success of one of the two teams. Should the Sun team win hunting would yield plenty, in case the Moon side won, harvesting and gathering of plants and roots would be abundant. The race was regularly staged in the same spot every year because it was associated with Jicarilla's original place of emergence and the Milky Way, where the first race occurred between the sun and the moon. The race had deep cosmological references in addition to social meanings. The gathering and hunting Jicarilla were among the many South-western peoples that staged races of different kinds and for different purposes. Hopi, Tohono O'odham, Maricopa, and Tarahumara, among others, each had racing traditions, some of which had ritual purposes, for example helping the sun move in its yearly trajectory (Nabokov 1991). The photograph complements a series of images of this important ceremonial event, currently housed in the National Anthropological Archives in Washington (Ms 2847; see Tiller 1983).

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(3) Interior of Salish long house - RAI 4154 (10 x 13cm, original print). Early 20<sup>th</sup> c., Washington State, USA. Photographer Marian W. Smith (?).

Non-indigenous explorers left numerous accounts, drawings, sketches, paintings, and photographs of this type of Native architecture (Nabokov and Easton 1989). Regional differences in size, roof type, orientation, function, identified tribal and clan identity, whereas internal spatial arrangements were associated with specific social groups, for example leaders, women, children, or slaves (Smith 1947). Permanent villages could be abandoned due to incursions, epidemics, or natural disasters such as in the case of the Makah village of Ozette in Washington State, which was covered by a mudslide in the early 18<sup>th</sup> c. At the time anthropologist Marian Smith visited long houses-building Coast Salish tribes in Washington and Oregon, a process of conversion to Christianity had been under way since the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. The arrival of missionaries in the area, and the subsequent policies restricting religious freedom, feasting, and potlaches (ritual display, redistribution of valuables, and symbolic competition over wealth) increasingly led to the neglect of communal dance houses where ceremonies, and winter performances were held. This is a picture of one of these communal houses. With the end to the suppression of potlaching some tribes restored past traditions, but many Coast Salish by the 1930s followed Christian denominations that strongly opposed customary beliefs and practices. In the picture carved posts with figures of animals can be seen supporting the horizontal posts (see also photograph 9). It is possible that this building might have been occasionally used for purposes other than potlaches because all the architectural components are still there, including benches. Had the building been abandoned, the structure would have been entirely stripped of the side and roof planks that could be used in other buildings. This was commonly done in the seasonal resettlements of coastal towns from winter to summer villages.

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 Smith, Marian 1947 'House types of the middle Fraser River' *American Antiquity* 12(4): 2550-267





**(4) Innu girl profile - RAI 2064 (12 x 9cm, albumen print). Late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> c., Quebec or Labrador, Canada. Photographer unknown.**

This profile portrait of a young woman in her late teens or early twenties is part of a set taken among Innu people in what appears to be a systematic anthropometric study of a close-knit group across the generations. Women of all ages are represented in the series. From elderly women to young girls, these Innu women appear to typify ages of the female sex in this rural community. This young woman appears carrying a baby like one of her older counterparts in another set of pictures from the same community. We do not have any additional information about her relationship to the baby she is carrying. She looks like she belongs to a fairly traditional village, judging from the cap she is wearing. Such caps became commonly worn in that part of Canada throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. They became fashionable with the introduction of European-made cloth. Innu women usually made berets of this type out of triangular wedges in two alternating colours: red and blue (Paterek 1994). Some of the more elaborate specimens of these hats had bands decorated with beadwork, occasionally displaying the typical double curved motif common among most Eastern Algonquian-speaking groups (Speck 1914). The combination of a much simpler cap and hair 'spools' hanging above the ears worn by the subject, however identify this woman as Innu (Webber 1990).

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**(5) Inuit Man with Drum - RAI 36859 (10 x 10cm, original print) 1930s Kap Dan, Greenland. Photographer Vera Broughton .**

The man, identified as Solomon from Kap Dan, Greenland, is impersonating a character for attentive onlookers, seen in the background. His face appears deformed because he is biting onto a piece of wood that deforms his face to make it appear out of the ordinary. A string is tightly wrapped around his forehead to further enhance the character's identity: perhaps a woman, an animal or an other-than-human being. The practice of holding something in the mouth, or deforming one's face while storytelling, is common among Greenland Inuit. Solomon here is accompanied by the typical flat, circular drum that he is beating from below. This type of drum is found in a variety of permutations and sizes across the Canadian Arctic to accompany story-telling, divination, and shamanic séances (Obomsawin 1974). Inuit's use of drums is similar to that of other Arctic and Subarctic peoples of North America, Asian, and European traditions (see also photograph 24). In shamanic contexts drums are considered powerful instruments that connect humans to invisible realities, which can be accessed through proper training and apprenticeship. Pictures from Greenland in the RAI collections show other individuals engaged in this activity, among some of them a child, who looks like is entertaining amused onlookers. Although occasional revelry may have included episodes of mockery of this kind, drums and drumming were universally considered a very serious business when properly activated via the power of the shaman. Drumming helps shamans reach an altered state of consciousness through repetitive beating and sensory deprivation. These activities are generally held indoors. This is further indication that the person in this picture is awake and alert and the activity he is engaged in is not associated with diagnosis and cure of ailments or diseases under shamans' supervision. By the 1950s virtually no shamans were recorded in East Greenland (Petersen 1984).

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Pawnee Pappoos  
1285

**(6) Pawnee children -RAI 1285 (14.5 x 10cm, albumen print) 1871, Nebraska, USA. Photographer W.H. Jackson.**

The photograph was taken in one of the settlements of semi-nomadic peoples that occupied vast regions west of the Mississippi river. Pawnee were among the many Plains Indian tribes that lived in these types of dwellings, which accommodated several families of the same clan. This scene of horticultural villagers' daily life shows children of various ages wearing distinctive hairstyles, each appropriate for their age. The common shaved head visible on the squatting figure on the left shows that he had reached maturity and could participate in hunts and simple warrior activities, perhaps as a water fetcher, or horse carer. This picture is one in a set of two owned by the Royal Anthropological Institute that show the same group of children in front of the same lodge, yet in different poses. Though some of the children look straight into the camera, the sitting child gives the scene a relaxed feeling of domesticity that transforms the photographer into an intrusive element disturbing children's games or competition indicated by the small bows and arrows held by one of them. The picture was almost surely intended as ethnographic documentation. Native American children could be the subject of 19<sup>th</sup> c. anthropological photographs as either infants with their mothers, part of a family unit, or may also appear in stereotypical portraits aimed at a burgeoning tourist market hungry for 'exotic' themes. Occasionally, children were part of or travelling shows such as in the case of the ones portrayed in the series by Prince Roland Bonaparte (1858-1924) of Indians brought to Paris in 1883 (Alison 1998: 134-135; Rothfels 2002). The Royal Anthropological Institute owns Bonaparte's portraits of Saami people from Norway taken in 1886.

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- Rothfels, Nigel 2002 *Savages and Beasts: the Birth of the Modern Zoo* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press



**(7) Acoma pots - RAI 10133 ( 10 x 12cm, original print) 1900, New Mexico, USA. Photographer Adela Breton.**

Anthropological interest in material culture has generated a repertoire of images whose intents and purposes are very different. Since the early years of photography, visual technologies offered the possibility of documenting indigenous peoples' cultural production. While, at first, photographing material culture may have seemed a fairly straightforward task, anthropologists soon realised that the problematic nature of taking pictures of objects, which could be no less fraught with ethical implications than portraying people. Among Puebloan peoples this would prove to be highly challenging after the mid 19<sup>th</sup> c., when anthropologists such as Frank Hamilton Cushing (1857-1900), Mennonite reverend Heinrich R. Voth (1855-1931), and Matilda Coxe Stevenson's (1849-1915) aggressive and insensitive methods in the field caused resentment among local people. The intrusive nature of photography (Sontag 1977) was, and still is, problematic for many indigenous peoples who see in this medium the potential for disseminating sacred, hidden, or private material not deemed appropriate for public consumption. In today's Pueblo villages there are strict regulations in place as to what can be photographed and when, or even if, image taking (in all its permutations: video, sketching or photographing) is allowed at all. Led by a quest for artistic inspiration Adela's pictures were not taken to document Acoma people's material culture. The image may have had the purpose of illustrating the variety of local pottery's designs and shapes, neatly arranged in two rows. The regular placement of the items may have been possibly requested by the photographer, or she may have recorded as faithfully as she found it, with or without local people's permission. Adela Breton left dozen of photographs of Pueblo villages, panoramic views of canyons and landscapes of the Southwest, which alongside her watercolours reveal the Victorian era's romantic flair (McVicker 2005). Irrespective of Adela's aspirations the image shows Acoma potters' refined production whose distinctive designs are clearly identifiable among these old vases, for example, the parrot-like bird on the second item in the bottom row, still considered to be Acoma potters' trademark.

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- Sontag, Susan 1977 *On Photography* London: Penguin





**(8) Hopi girls on top of a dwelling- RAI 27422 (10 x 8cm, original print) 1903 (?) Arizona, USA. Photographer Richard Baxter Townshend (?).**

The evocative silhouette of two Hopi girls against a cloudy sky is likely to be an impromptu shot rather than a staged photograph. Its theatrical framing and the almost total absence of detail of the two figures' faces and clothing detract from the photograph's didactic potential. The picture's aesthetic power however is given by the darkened figures, which contribute to create a sense of mystery that appears to transcend ordinary life. The photographer may have intentionally capitalised on his audiences' lack of familiarity with the setting and context portrayed here. The image is replete with references to European culture and draws its force from them. Its appeal for European viewers lies in the dramatic tension between the known and the unknown, here cleverly produced by a judicious balancing of implicit and explicit allusions. While the picture is light enough to show masonry and building techniques, the girls' faces and dress are obscured by their own shadow. The contrast between what is discernible and what can never be known is what makes the picture compelling, while simultaneously adding to it an element of fantastic that captivates the viewer. The photograph's particular angle, its framing and composition, for example, do not give a true sense of the dwelling's size. This invites the viewer to speculate about its height, which engenders analogies with gothic churches' gargoyles, or with the popular trope of maidens trapped in inaccessible towers. The girls' distinctive hairstyle too may add to the uncanny nature of the picture, so foreign and yet strangely familiar. Some parallels with European references indeed can be drawn, for example between Hopi girls' hairstyle and European fashions; from the mysterious Spanish Lady of Elche (possibly Carthaginian) to medieval dames adopting the French style of 14<sup>th</sup> c. Jean de Bourbon. The conversation between author and audience that makes visual culture so engaging is often predicated upon shared references that resonate with a particular aesthetic sensibility, which is both historically located and culturally specific (Geertz 1976; Worth and Adair 1972).

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**(9) Cumshewa, Haida village - RAI 265 (10 x 8cm, albumen print) 1878, British Columbia, Canada. Photographer George M. Dawson.**

Large dwellings with imposing painted facades built by groups of the Pacific Northwest impressed early European travellers. Plank houses, partially visible in this picture behind the carved poles, were extensively painted with colourful crest designs that made their presence stand out against the dark background of the conifer forests. The photographer's judicious framing enhances the rhythmic alternation of the carved poles' different sizes producing a harmonious effect given by the black and white contrasts between shore, grass, buildings, vegetation, and sky. The horizontal bird's eye view of the village resonates with both European aesthetics of landscape painting and Northwest Coast peoples' concern with prestige and power, most spectacularly condensed in the masterful carvings of heraldic insignia welcoming outsiders. What we see in this picture is indeed the view that visitors to any Northwest coast village would have been confronted with if approaching the coast from the sea. Dwellings' orientation toward the ocean undoubtedly had a defensive purpose, but it also reflected a cosmological plan in which humans had a central place between the sea, the forest, and the mountains behind them (MacDonald 1981; Vastokas 1969). Carved poles were equally significant in this cosmological mapping. Most frequently embodying lineages through the representation of ancestral figures, carved poles, both metaphorically and literally, rooted families and clans onto the specific space inhabited by the group. The historical depth that tied families, lineages, and clans to a given place was thus produced by the simultaneous convergence of spatial and temporal meanings embedded in the visual and material renditions of territorial legitimacy. The powerful statement of sovereignty in this picture is made explicit by the arresting vision of this grandiose setting artfully captured by the photographer.

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- Vastokas, Joan M. 1969 'Architecture and environment: the importance of the forest to the Northwest Coast Indian' *The Forest History Society* 13(3): 12-21



**(10) Oregon Indians in Western clothing - RAI 4184 (18 x 10cm, original print), late 19<sup>th</sup> c., Oregon, USA. Photographer Isaac G. Davidson.**

This photograph, originally archived in Marian Smith's collection may have been part of her documentation about Indians living in the region she visited between 1936 and 1939 (see Bush and Mitchell 1994: 98). The photo is symptomatic of an era of deep transformation for Native North American peoples across the continent, one that she witnessed first-hand. With the arrival of missions, and formal education, the establishment of reservation, and the simultaneous tightening of governmental control over programmes of cultural assimilation, Native North Americans both in Canada and the United States were forced to abide to entirely new rules, in rapidly changing social predicaments (Fleming and Luskey 1986: 70-101). Often forcibly taken away from their families, children were obliged to conform to Anglo-American, French or Anglo-Canadian mainstream systems. Boarding schools, built for the purpose of Indian education and acculturation, frequently became place of extreme suffering and, not seldom, psychological trauma and physical mistreatment. Governments adopted the practice of recording acculturation processes by photographing children and young people before and after they arrived at the institute of destination. Photographs such as this one, in which young men and two boys are posing for the official shot, rarely show smiling individuals, possibly due to apprehension, or the duress experienced in boarding schools and other institutions aimed at Indian education. Forced mainstream education only partially succeeded in its aim, however. Many Native North American tribes resiliently managed to retain various degrees of continuity with their customs and traditional cultures, although a portion of them at least nominally embraced Christianity, and either adapted or entirely discarded their former beliefs.

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**(11) Hano Clowns - RAI 33877 (10 x 8cm, glass negative) 1891, Arizona, USA.**

**Photographer Jesse Walter Fewkes.**

Ritual buffoons and ceremonial clowns are found in numerous historical and contemporary Native North American cultures (Steward 1930). Clowns such as the Pai-A-Kya-Muh from the Hano village in Hopi portrayed here usually appear during ceremonies, dances or ceremonial occasions. They behave rudely or excessively, adopt an obscene countenance, do things that are not appropriate for normal people and, in general, act by contraries (Parsons 1929). Their speech can reverse common words' meanings, they frequently mock authority, and poke fun at ritual and ceremonial objects. This type of contrary conduct while establishing the rules of correct behaviour, releases social tensions and simultaneously offers a comic break during intense and long ceremonial cycles, for example during the Kachina dances that seasonally happen in Pueblo villages of the USA's Southwest such as those of the Hopi. This picture was almost certainly taken by or under the direction of Walter Fewkes during the Hemenway Southwestern Archaeological Expedition (1886-1894) (Hough 1931). It captures Pai-A-Kya-Muhs during a moment of rest by the side of the *mesa*, or high plateau, where Hopi towns are located. In the distance the Arizona desert's open space can be seen stretching behind the clowns almost underlining their presence in the perfectly framed tableau. Pai-A-Kya-Muh is one of the many names given to these ritual clowns among the Pueblos' different language speakers.

Their appearance too is distinctive for each town. The different use of stripes, horned headdress, and face decoration enables a clear identification of the clown's provenance and language. The negative plate belongs to a set of images stored at the Royal Anthropological Institute that were used in the early twentieth century in lectures held at the London School of Economics.



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**(12) Spokane Men - RAI 36721 (10.5 x 16.6cm, original print on pasted board) 1860-61, Idaho, USA (?). Photographer Joseph Smith Harris.**

Seemingly one of the first recorded pictures of individuals from this Salish-speaking Plateau tribe, this photograph shows men from the entourage of the prominent leader known as Chief Garry. Before this image, paintings and sketches constitute the earliest visual records made by non-indigenous North Americans and Europeans of the peoples living in this vast region. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Alfred Jacob Miller (1810-1974) painted portraits of individuals from the Plateau such as the Nez Perce (Tyler 1999), and drawings were made of the Colville tribe by amateur illustrator, the missionary Nicolas Point (1799-1868) (Donnelly 1967). Further on, paintings by Canadian artist Paul Kane (1810-1871) specifically illustrate Spokane's manner of fishing, and their scalp dances (Harper 1971). The three men are immortalised in front of a trading post, where Spokane and other Plateau Indian tribes had the opportunity to barter, sell and exchange furs and other goods in their possession, for example horses, shells and other items coming from the Pacific coast or from regions to the East of the Rocky Mountains. This party of men may have been photographed during a rest while on a war expedition because they are seen wearing protective items such as the stuffed bird swung across the shoulder in bandoleer fashion that is visible on the last man on the right. These items were considered essential part of the warrior's kit as they gave him power, much in the way of charms or amulets tied to shields and headdresses common in other parts of North America.

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**(13) A posed Yankton 'War Dance' - RAI 1086 (18.5 x 12.5cm, albumen print) 1867, Washington D.C., USA. Photographer Zeno Shindler.**

Images such as this one fixed Native Americans in the popular imagination by playing on widespread ideas circulating at the time about their presumed savagery and belligerence (Hill 1998). This photo, in fact, is a mock dance that did not exist in any of the Plains tribes' cultural repertoires. The only real references to warrior dances are the head ornament worn by the first figure on the left, and the feathered bustle visible on the back of the first person from the right. The left figure is wearing a so-called roach, a crown made of red-dyed deer hair that enhanced the scalp lock, believed to contain a person's vital force. The standing feather in the middle of the roach was reportedly said to represent a warrior in the midst of the flames of destruction. The person on the right is a leader called Struck-By-The-Ree. He is wearing a so-called 'Crow' dance bustle, which was used by several tribes in what became known as the 'Grass Dance' (see also photograph 19). This dance, still performed today in a mutated form, is rooted in Plains Indian warrior societies' ceremonialism (Carocci 2012). Crow bustles are imbued with martial references, for example to dead bodies on the battlefield symbolised by feathers hanging from the back panel, and arrows striking the enemy indicated by the two sticks projecting from the belt (Fletcher and La Flesche 1911). At the time of this photograph, dancers performing the Grass Dance did not wear any clothes except loincloths and moccasins. This performance was surely reproduced upon the photographer's request to meet Anglo-American audiences' expectations. It is difficult to ascertain the degree of choice the sitters might have had in this pageantry. Indigenous North American peoples' attitudes toward photography were and still are very diverse.

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Yankton Dakota

Jumping Thunder

1069

**(14) Psicha Wakinyan, Yankton - RAI 1069 (18.5 x 12.5cm, albumen print) 1858, Washington D.C., USA. Photographer Zeno Shindler.**

Native American delegates who went to Washington on diplomatic visits were regularly photographed (Alison 1998). In spite of their official character, visual records of these visits often offer a rare glimpse into the immediacy of the trans-cultural encounter, one that in this case can be appreciated in the confident countenance of this prominent warrior and diplomat who was also a healer. This is not the only existing picture of Psicha Wakinyan (Jumping Thunder). There are another three known single portraits, and he also appears in a collective photograph that was taken in Washington during an official trip taken in 1867 (Fleming 2003). The practice of wearing army uniforms or coats was popular among Plains Indian peoples who often received them as gifts during formal visits alongside medals, swords, baldrics, or hats. Such exotic items held a particular fascination for the wearers who attributed to them powers different from the ones found in familiar objects. Uniforms could be individually customised and worn idiosyncratically by warriors as in the case of Jumping Thunder. In this picture he also wears a feather tilted to his right side, and an arrow, a quintessential symbol of masculinity, that may have had some spiritual significance unique to him (Carocci 2012).

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**(15) Jemez man with two children on a mule -RAI 26770 (10 x 12cm, original print pasted on card) 1903, New Mexico, USA.**

**Photographer Richard Baxter Townshend.**

This image is one of the several that Richard Baxter Townshend took on one of his trips to Jemez in the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. (Townshend and Townshend 1926). Artistic pretences and aestheticising affectations frequently characterise 19<sup>th</sup> c. depictions of Native North Americans. In this case, the photographer has deliberately chosen to position the camera in such a way as to make the horizon match the back of the horse to highlight the three figures in sharp contrast against the sky. Pueblo Indians, such as the ones portrayed here, never rose to the universally recognisable iconic status associated with the mounted warriors of the Plains. This picture nevertheless depends on similar visual references to construct an image in which the stoic nobility of the familiar mounted warrior merges with the melancholic gaze of a representative of what once was perceived as a 'doomed race'. In this sense the picture functions as an index in which specific conventions suggests ideas without being explicit. The visual trope of the vanishing American, hinted at here, is found in many photographic renditions of Native North Americans throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. In spite of virulent attacks against stereotypical representations, the notion that Native North Americans would ultimately succumb to the encroachment of Euro-American culture was nevertheless still widespread in the 1970s. Its popularity has moulded the aesthetic judgement of numerous generations for which photography of Native North Americans became more a form of personal projection than a medium to reflect upon records of lived realities.

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**(16) Hopi maiden - RAI 27426 (15.75 x 20.25cm, original print pasted on card) 1901, Arizona, USA. Photographer C.C. Pierce & Co.**

C.C. Photographic studio, set up by Charles Chester Pierce in 1900 in Los Angeles printed and marketed this picture. Chester Pierce benefitted from the photographic production of numerous photographers active in the Southwest at the time. He however deliberately re-packaged images with his own brand erasing the names of the original authors, as a consequence we do not know the name of the actual photographer (Online Archive of California, 2012). This commercially available image of a young unmarried Hopi girl is one among the many portraits, both photographic and painted, made of this subject at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.

Hopi girls became a popular theme among Euro-American photographers and artists who moved to the Southwest for inspiration, or to start a new businesses. A substantial resettlement of artists and photographers in the area bloomed into a thriving artistic scene in Santa Fe partially stimulated by the opening of the Santa Fe railway in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Among the many artists who established themselves in the area there was the Amsterdam-born Henry Balink (1882-1963) who painted a portrait of a Hopi girl that strongly resembles this one (Hovens 2007). This photographic portrait follows the compositional conventions found in Balink's painting as well as in most of the visual production of this theme that followed a strong academic influence: flat solid background, simple pose, central positioning of the figure, direct intense gaze, half-bust crop, and balanced light contrasts. By the turn of the century Hopi, like most Southwestern indigenous nations, had established trading relations with other Native American tribes, Mexicans, and Anglo-Americans. Signs of this can be seen in her use of the printed commercial shawl that she is holding with the left thumb, a common fashion among young girls. Partially visible under it, is the *manta*, the typical dress secured on one shoulder worn by Hopi women.

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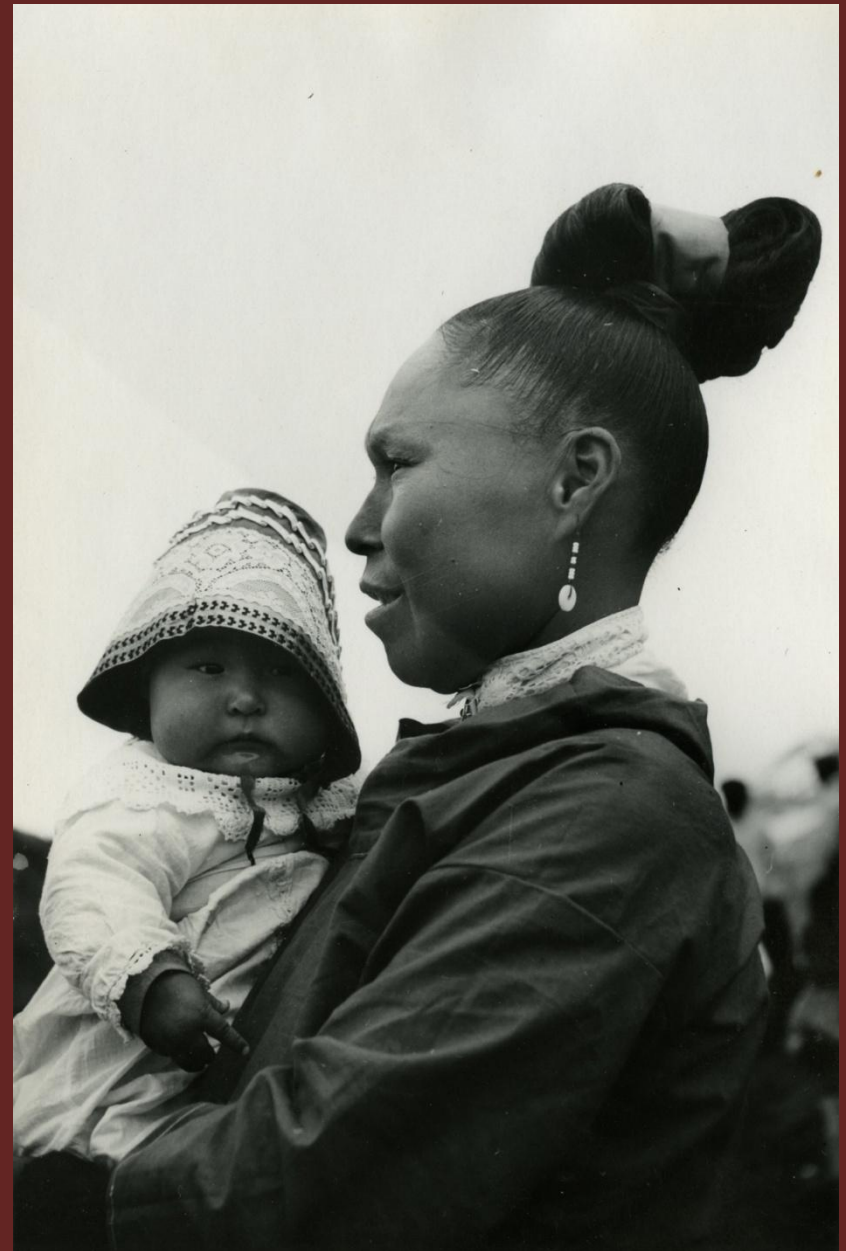


**(17) Inuit woman and baby - RAI 36937 (11 x 14.5cm, original print) no date, Greenland. Photographer unknown.**

This crisp profile portrait shows a woman with a baby from Eastern Greenland shot against a homogeneously coloured sky. Other images of these two individuals are part of the set held by RAI. It is possible the woman was the child's mother. Some European imports such as the toddler's hat and clothing are visible. Greenlanders were among North America's first peoples contacted by Europeans, so their knowledge of European goods is very old. Scandinavians tried to establish colonies in Greenland in the middle ages, so Inuit of this region have had intermittent contact with Europeans over the centuries, well before this photograph was taken. European imports have however not changed some of Inuit's most enduring customs, one of which is visible here. The mother is wearing the traditional top-knot worn by Greenland women. This distinctive hairstyle has been represented in Greenland Inuit's expressive culture in a variety of ways. Most notably, it appears in cut-out silhouettes stitched in appliqué work, wooden children's toys, carved effigies, ivory figurines whose origins date back millennia in the Dorset (500 BC-1550 AD), and later Thule (1000-1300 AD) archaeological and historical cultures (Møbjerg et al. 2001). This type of top-knot is the quintessential index of femininity. Indeed it is often the only marker that distinguishes human figure's gender when other gender signs are missing. Greenland Inuit's 19<sup>th</sup> c. depictions of the human form are generally very minimalistic. Changes in Greenland Inuit's art happened quickly and most dramatically when a market for tourist art boomed in mid 20<sup>th</sup> c. (Graburn 1976). The emergence of new outlets for Inuit creativity encouraged the production of portable art, often guided by European taste and sensibilities. This can be seen in an increase in more detailed and 'realistic' portraiture where poses, facial expressions, and other identity-defining features are stressed with incisive, recognisable style.

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**(18) Swa'ixwe mask, Salish - RAI MS 268-10-3-8 (15 x 12cm, original print) no date, place unknown. Photographer Marian W. Smith (?).**

The photograph is one in a set of two taken to illustrate the front and back of this typical mask found among Cowichan and other Salish tribes of the southern Northwest Coast from Canada and USA. The photograph is part of Marian Smith's manuscript collection at the RAI, although the mask does not seem to have been collected by her. Marian Smith supervised field trips in the areas adjacent to her fieldwork where this mask comes from. Consequently her interest in the cultures of the area resulted in a large collection of photographs of Salish ethnographic, prehistoric and proto-historic objects, of which this is one. The mask represents a supernatural being of the Salish-speaking peoples Smith wrote extensively about. This mask typology is highly identifiable among Northwest Coast ceremonial objects, for example, its bulging eyes, bird-shaped 'ears', and the flat panel in the lower part. Carving style and aesthetics differ from those of the northern Northwest Coast, yet some characteristics relate this typology of objects to pre- and proto-historic sculptures. More specifically these are the protruding circular lips, and the lines that join chin and eyebrows that recall old Fraser river stone mortars found in the archaeological record in northern territories (see also picture 26). The mask in the photograph is not complete, however. Swa' ixwe masks were usually encircled by feather ruffs, and stiff decorations projecting from the back of the wooden main body completing the figure that, so enhanced, had a more imposing visual impact. Swa' ixwe masks are culturally significant because their practical use and associated traditions bring together spirit guide quest of Salish speaking peoples and crest acquisition themes from Northwest Coast groups of other linguistic stocks (Codere 1948; Dufresne 1984).

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**(19) Si-ha-han-ska, Yankton- RAI 1102 (18.5 x 12.5cm, albumen print) 1903, Washington, D.C., USA. Photographer Zeno Shindler.**

Si-ha-han-ska (Light Foot) is here posing with a so-called 'Crow-belt' similar to that worn by Struck-By-The-Ree photographed by the same photographer a year earlier (see photograph 13). Photographic studios had a variety of items that were regularly used as props to render their sitters more 'authentic' in accordance to public expectations. Native American portraits taken by Frank Reinhart in his studio photographs in 1898 clearly show several individuals wearing the same leggings, blankets and moccasins, or holding the same objects to pose with (Ortiz 2004). It is therefore frequently difficult to know whether all the objects that appear in studio pictures are the models' own. This practice may however be an indication of their provenance, should no additional information be available. Conversely, the use of the same item on individuals, often from different tribes, makes it hard for the scholar of material culture to assign provenance to specific items of clothing or objects. Photographs can be useful in aiding scholars this kind of research, but visual evidence is not always proof of an object's origins. The outfit worn by Si-ha-han-ska in this photograph is the same he is wearing in another picture in which he appears seated with another man from the same nation holding an identical spontoon-style tomahawk. Interestingly, he is also holding the painted hide he seems to be wearing while seated in the other image. These robes were worn by leaders who distinguished themselves in battle. They displayed a circular motif, partially visible here, that could be interpreted equally as either a crown of feathers or a sun emanating rays from a central circle (Ewers 1939). In this instance, it is possible that all the items the subject is wearing are his own.

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**(20) Jemez man and woman - RAI 26756 (7.25 x 10cm, albumen print) 1903, New Mexico, USA. Photographer Richard Baxter Townshend.**

This photograph of a Jemez couple, casually sitting on an adobe ledge, can rightfully belong among the few known examples of candid snapshots that portrays with vibrant realness a moment in the daily life of Puebloan villagers from the Rio Grande region. Contrary to the average visual material found in anthropological collections, this image conveys at once a familiar, humane, and spontaneous side of Native American lives that only occasionally has been captured by photographers active around the turn of the century. Notable exceptions are images of Navajo and Mohave families by professional photographer Ben Wittick (1845-1903), or pictures of Hopi in natural poses taken by art historian Aby Warburg (1866-1929) (Janis Broder 1990; Warburg 1997). Although they were not the only two among Anglo-American, European, or Canadian photographers who occasionally managed to achieve such results, they are more the exception than the rule in the history of Native North American photography. Non-indigenous photographers frequently realised the difficulty of establishing trusting connections with their sitters. Whether because of incompatible cultural protocols, or as a result of strained historical relationships, achieving photographic results that conveyed subjects' relaxed and easy attitude in front of the camera was for many a difficult task. By contrast, although they constitute a minor portion of the total corpus of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c photography of Native North Americans, visual records made by indigenous photographers perhaps offer a more personal reportage of tribal peoples' daily lives. Differently positioned from their Anglo colleagues Native photographers became cultural brokers that managed to produced significant portfolios with intimate portraits of past indigenous communities. Among the most productive there are Richard Throssel (Cree, 1859-1923), Jennie Ross Cobb (Cherokee, 1882-1958), and Horace Poolaw (Kiowa, 1906-1984) whose work cumulatively testifies to the variety of motivations and purposes of photography beyond the aimed interests of purportedly 'objective' visual ethnography (Alison 1998).

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(21) Hopi man entering kiva - RAI 26743 (10 x 12cm, original print) 1903, Arizona, USA. Photographer Richard Baxter Townshend.

This photograph is part of a series of images of the Hopi Snake Dance by photographer Richard Baxter Townshend (1846-1923) housed in the Royal Anthropological Institute's photographic archives (Gidley 1987). It shows a man climbing down a ladder that leads into a subterranean ceremonial chamber called *kiva*. The scene is part of a ceremony in which ritual specialists named 'Antelope priests' handled rattlesnakes during public performances. In Hopi thought rattlesnakes are messengers that carry prayers for rain to the ancestors living in the sky. The ladder's two poles sticking outside the Antelope kiva's entrance are said to pierce the clouds. This is a visual metaphor aimed at summoning rain.

Fertility symbolism abounds in Hopi ceremonial and ritual life whose main concern is the blessing of crops. Tied to the ladder's posts is a ceremonial object called *awata-natci* a bow with appended red-dyed horse hair and feathers carried by Wikyatiwa, one of the priests that run the ceremonies. The bow was strung to the ladder to indicate that the altars had been erected inside the ceremonial rooms (Fewkes 1986: 985, 994, 998). The image resembles a photo titled 'Snake Priest Entering the Kiva' taken by renowned photographer Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952), which appears in his monumental series *The North American Indian* whose first volume was published in 1907 (Gidley 2003). This image may have had a particular appeal at the time when the so-called 'Snake Dance' attracted tourist for its exotic and sensational character. President Theodore Roosevelt attended one such dance in 1913 in the town of Walpi, the same location as this image. Whilst by this time no picture could be officially taken inside the ceremonial chambers, public spaces such as this one could be photographed and sold to tourists. Commercial images included snapshots of the dancers, and snake handling priests.

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**(22) Warm Springs Man - RAI 1381 (18.5 x 12.5cm, albumen print) late 19<sup>th</sup> c., Washington, D.C., USA. Photographer unknown.**

This man belongs to one of the so-called Cascade Indians, who to this day, live in a region straddling between Oregon and Washington State (French and French 1998). This Chinookan-speaking group belongs to a conglomerate of tribes comprising Wasco and Wishram. The photo is similar to a series of portraits in RAI's Hayden album that represent Indians of these nations. This image is instructive about male fashions of his tribe in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. when this photo was taken. He is wearing a visor trimmed with fur, and commercially available blanket and shirt, which is decorated with ermine (or weasel) tails generally associated with people of high social standing. Individuals such as the man in the picture were often successful traders, or good hunters who could accumulate surplus goods to exchange and barter with both local tribes and Anglo-American traders. The sitter in this photograph adopted a style that was widespread among men who could access exotic valuables. Chinookan-speaking peoples were strategically located at the crossroad of three major geographical areas whose inhabitants traded different goods: southern Northwest Coast, Plateau, and Plains (Ruby and Brown 1976). So prominent were they in commercial relations that a trade pidgin emerged on the basis of their language; the so-called Chinookan jargon, spoken for trade between Indians of different tribes from the region as well as among Indians, frontier and mountain men. Annual meetings at places such as the Dalles and Celilo falls fair enabled goods coming from the coast to reach the Plains, and vice versa, Plains goods found their way to Plateau and coastal peoples. Their function as middlemen in this long-distance trade led Chinookan-speaking peoples to adopt some of the Plains tribes' fashions, including beaded bandoliers and leggings, visible in photographs of other individuals from the same collection.

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*Warm Spring*

1381



(23) La-roo-chuck-a-la-shar, Pawnee - RAI 1232 (18.5 x 12.5cm, albumen print) 1871 (?), Nebraska, USA. Photographer W.H. Jackson.

Possibly taken during a naming ceremony among the Pawnee villagers in Nebraska, this photograph shows prominent leader La-roo-chuck-a-la-shar (Sun Chief) wrapped in a bison robe decorated with stars against the background of earth lodges such as the ones partially visible behind the children in photograph 6. Pawnee were acute star gazers with a detailed knowledge of the constellations. Milky Way, Pleiades, and other stars feature prominently in Pawnee's cosmology and expressive cultures, notably the Morning Star, which is associated with the planet Venus, warfare, and re-generation. Roots of Pawnee's belief system and rituals trace back to cultures of pre-colonial times, namely those comprised under the archaeological definition Mississippian complex (A.D. 900-1700) (O'Brien 1986). Pawnee managed to retain much of their customs and beliefs until the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. when ethnographers such as James Murie (1862-1921), a Pawnee himself, collected and transcribed numerous oral texts associated with ceremonies such as the one La-roo-chuck-a-la-shar was probably witnessing at the time of the photograph (Murie 1989). As in many other prominent personages in photographs of the period, he is wearing a medal that signalled good relations with the American government (see also the photograph of Sinte Gleska, 27). Men from this tribe were often employed by the American army as scouts and guides in their military campaigns against their neighbouring tribal enemies capitalising on old enmities to their advantage (Parks 2001: 519-523).

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534 Pawnee

Sun Chief



**(24) Mrs. Seymour with drum, Salish - RAI 4227 (2.4 x 4.0cm, original print) 1946, Washington State, USA. Photographer Marian W. Smith.**

This portrait of a Salish woman from the Fraser River area holding a drum may have been staged by Marian Smith to illustrate the use of the instrument. Among Salish peoples drums were used for ceremonial purposes. Both female and male shamans used them during their healing ceremonies to accompany singing sessions aimed at curing individuals. In her ethnography about the Puyallup-Nisqually Marian Smith gives a detailed description of Salish tribes' traditional religion and beliefs (Smith 1940). By the 1930s when she did her fieldwork among these tribes many individuals and communities had become Christian, or followed the Shaker Church. This was a syncretic form of worship in which Christian symbols and liturgies mixed with pre-existing shamanic beliefs (Smith 1954). Salish Shakers should not be confused with the New England sect, though they shared a name, their origins are quite different. Local informants reported that the Shaker movement in the Northwest Coast was started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. led by a woman (known as Mrs. Slocum) who was seeking a remedy to cure her ailing husband. Smith reveals that although shamanic practice was not officially followed, a significant substratum of pre-colonial ideas was evident in the belief of communication between humans and spirits. This most notably happened through the experience of shaking, a form of altered state that can be compared to shamanic trances in which the medium receives instructions about specific illnesses' diagnosis and cure. Christian imagery and metaphors used in the Shaker cult seem to have had replaced old Salish ideas about benevolent and destructive power: *squelaliut* (good) and *tudab* (bad). Christ's good power was interpreted as being stronger than the old *squelaliut* which was expected to be given up in embracing the new doctrine.

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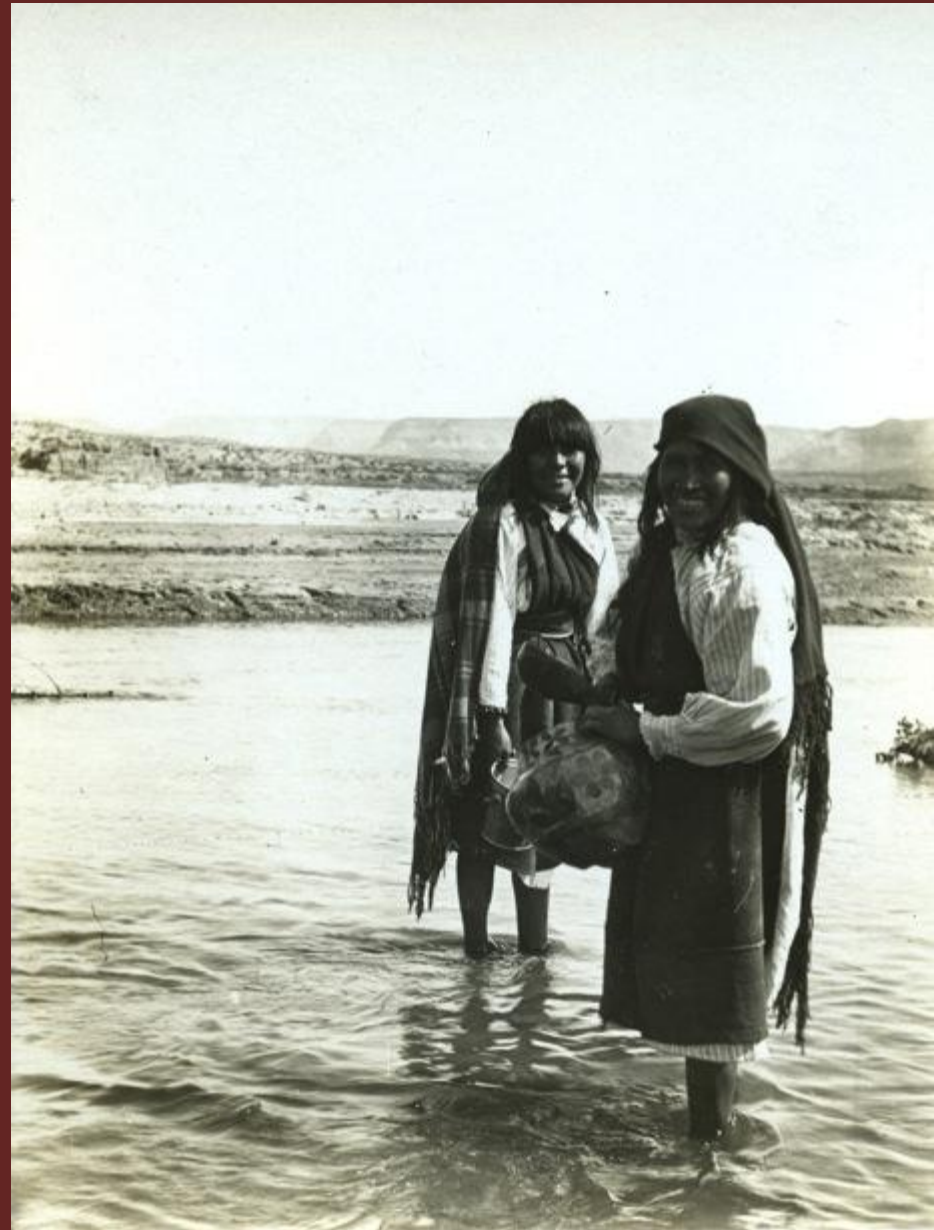


(No 25.) Jemez women fetching water - RAI 26762 (8 x 10cm, original print pasted on board) 1903, New Mexico, USA. Photographer Richard Baxter Townshend.

Routine activities such as basket making, corn grinding, or weaving frequently appear in 19<sup>th</sup> c. photograph collections about North America. Although not necessarily taken for ethnographic purposes, photographs made by surveyors or government officials could be used as anthropological documentation. Ferdinand Hayden who employed photographer William Henry Jackson in his exploratory survey of North America in the 1850s admitted that photography had ethnological value (Fleming 2003: 9). This is before anthropology appropriated this medium for ethnographic fieldwork. As past records of bygone lifestyles, even candid moments captured with the fresh exuberance of this picture offer precious documentation of the contextual use of objects, fashions, or the introduction of technological innovations. Apart from purely ethnographic documentation, however, these images significantly elicit emotive responses in the onlooker. Photography in this case turns the subjects in the image from object of scientific study to individual agents who directly engage with the person behind the camera, and indirectly, hidden viewers. Contrary to many other photographs from the same period, this snapshot of two women surreptitiously caught while filling their decorated vases with water does not turn them in icons, archetypes, or simulacra, it rather allows them to become active presences in an imagined encounter with invisible interlocutors. The two women's direct gaze and smiles seem to shorten the temporal and spatial distance that separates them from their observers. The immediacy of this elusive and intangible connection encourages the observer to wonder about what is outside the frame projecting him in the now of *then* (Ortiz 2004). This paradox renders the image a forceful reminder of the ambivalent nature of colonial photography, at once empathic and yet troubling agent of asymmetrical power relations.

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**(26) Pre-contact stone mortar, British Columbia, Canada - RAI MS 268-10-2-16 (10 x 12cm, original print) early 20<sup>th</sup> c., no place. Photographer Marian Smith (?).**

This photograph is part of a group of pictures collected by Marian Smith and now housed in the RAI's manuscript collections. Marian Smith talks about this and other stone objects in an article she published in 1956 for *Man* the journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (Smith 1956). The object belongs to the Sir Alfred Bossom collection housed in the National Museum in Ottawa, Canada, it was excavated in southern British Columbia, near Lytton (Smith 1956). The sculpture is seven inches high and shows typical features of the early phases of Fraser river archaeological cultures. Some of the most typical characteristics of later Northwest Coast art style can be detectable on the squatting figure holding a zoomorphic bowl. Top knot, distinctive eye shape, and the rounded mouth are attributes frequently found on other similar specimens (one of which is in the British Museum), as well as on Northwest Coast wooden masks produced in the historic period (see photograph 18). Marian Smith associates it with ceremonial life, an interpretation confirmed by later research, which suggest that such objects may have been used as mortars in which special plants were pounded for ritual use, or during girls' puberty ceremonies (Wilson 1975). Stone mortars and pestles are among the most common objects found in the archaeological record of the Northwest Coast region due to their durability. The diffusion of this typology of objects may indicate an important role in the symbolic life of the early inhabitants of this region. Stone objects may have been regarded as particularly precious due to the laborious procedures employed in producing them.

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336 Brulé Lakota

Sinte Gleska  
Spotted Tail

**(27) Sinte Gleska, Lakota - RAI 973 (18.5 x 12.5cm, original print) 1872, Washington, D.C., USA. Photographer Alexander Gardner.**

This image of Lakota Sioux leader Sinte Gleska (Spotted Tail) is one of the several in existence of this prominent historical figure. He was one of the first representatives among the men of his tribe to sign the second Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868 that was agreed with the American government after a series of US army's unsuccessful military campaigns against Sioux and Cheyenne nations. Here he is portrayed in a composed, dignified pose that conveys his authority and leadership. Native American delegates to Washington were generally portrayed sitting. Over the years, this became a convention that became a genre of portraiture in its own right (Fleming and Luskey 1988). Anglo-American viewers may have recognised the familiar signs of friendship between the Sioux and the United States indicated by the medal he is wearing at the neck. Such recognition was given to prominent tribal representatives by army generals and officials as a symbol of amicable relations between Native American tribes and the American government (see also Sun Chief in photograph 23). Native people looking at this picture, on the other hand, may have recognised Sinte Gleska's authority by the pipe that he is holding with his left hand. Peace negotiations were customarily blessed by the smoke of tobacco burned in pipes carried by leaders to seal pacts and entertain diplomatic relations (Ewers 1981). By the end of the nineteenth century the old-time lengthy pipe rituals that once marked international relations, intertribal alliances, adoptions, and agreements had turned in a simplified, yet no less ritualised, use of the object and its related ceremonialism (Blakeslee 1981).

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(28) Salish wooden figure - RAI MS 268-10-3-12 (15 x 12cm, original print) no date, place unknown. Photographer Marian W. Smith (?).

This photograph is part of Marian Smith's manuscript collection held at the Royal Anthropological Institute, which holds a set of images that she collected during her fieldwork seasons in the Northwest Coast of North America. Unfortunately, no information is given about the size or provenance of this wooden figure, which displays formal characteristics of Salish aesthetics and workmanship. Anthropomorphic figures holding smaller beings are common in all Northwest Coast visual expressions. Salish interpretation of this convention is visible in stone mortars, wooden figures, house posts, and carved poles. Differently interpreted as mother and child, a human being and his spiritual guide, or in some instances as copulating couple (Duff 1975), these paired figures bear similarities to the item represented here, which consequently falls within a widely spread motif that appears either carved, woven, or painted. Salish tribes have a long and established carving tradition most dramatically expressed in large wooden funerary figures placed in burial grounds, and poles that sustain the roof beams of large communal houses (see photograph 3). Smaller carved figures have been recovered too, in particular, 12-13<sup>th</sup> c A.D. bone figurines from Coast Salish tribes depicting female figures wearing fringed aprons (Brotherthon 2009). The figure represented here too appears to be wearing this type of garment reminiscent of the leather type used by shamans in northern regions of the Northwest Coast (Wardwell 1996). The garment's incised motif just above the large figure's exposed feet is reminiscent of one of Northwest Coast formline's basic elements. Generally used as filler in bidimensional expressions (Holm 1970), this element here takes prominent place as the central motif of the anthropomorphic figure's only piece of clothing.

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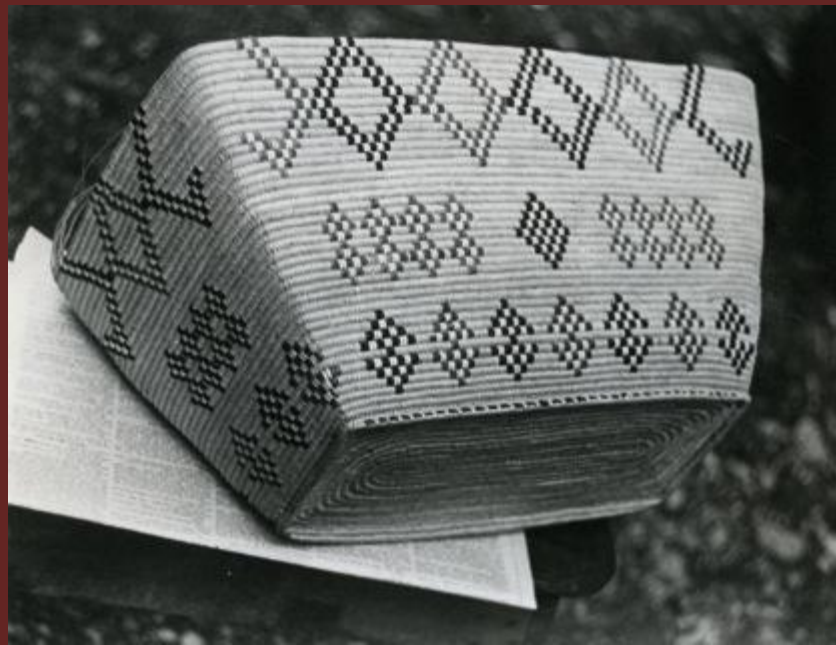


**(29) Unmarried Hopi girl - RAI 27424 (15 x 20.5cm, albumen print) 1901, Arizona, USA.  
Photographer C.C. Pierce & Co.**

This photograph of a Hopi girl portrays her in an unconventional three quarters position that transmits with genuine instantaneity her youthful face. Her figure fills the right section of the frame in an unusual take which suggests that the photograph may have been either part of a larger picture, or was made without any regard to the commercial value it might have had. Photographers of the time produced standard half-bust portraits of Hopi girls, for example Adam Clark Vroman (1856-1914) and Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952) (Gidley 2003; Mahood 1961). By contrast to other existing portraits, this photograph's angle unintentionally allows the viewer to see with exceptional detail the girl's distinctive hair spools. This hairstyle represent her marriageable status by making reference to squash blossoms, a gendered symbol of female fertility and plenty that stands in opposition to male turquoise (Whiteley 2012). Images of such vibrant intensity became popular among the North American public at the turn of the century when a railroad crossing these nations' territories exposed large numbers of tourists to the life of this region's inhabitants. The relative discretion with which news about this region reached Eastern states was soon exploited to market its inhabitants in sensationalistic tones. The new railway promoted through the language of advertisement the fiction of an unexplored frontier characterised by peoples with 'exotic' customs (Vickers 1998). The romantic language of discovery conveniently capitalised on the recurring themes of primitivism and the sublime (Dilworth 1996). It used, for example, 'bizarre' ancient dances, or quaint 'archaic' customs here epitomised by the distinctive hair style of un-married girls. This popular discourse placed Native Americans of the Southwest in primitive opposition to Western modernity, one largely based on technology such as trains that metaphorically allowed civilised man to go back in time, and that literally enabled any American to capture through the means of photography glimpses of an imagined past.

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**(30) Salish basket - RAI 4312 (12 x 9, original print) late 1930s, Washington State, USA. Photographer Marian W. Smith.**

Marian Smith recorded dozens of baskets from the Salish tribes she visited in the late 1930s (Smith and Leadbeater 1949). This is one of the many images, often of the same item, that she produced to illustrate different stages of preparation of these crafts. This photograph was clearly taken as record shot that only intended to show the bottom details of the finished product she documented with other pictures (see also photograph 31). The newspaper covering the surface on which the item is placed indicates a purely functional use of photography, which by this time, had become a convenient shortcut to lengthy written descriptions, or badly executed drawings. Photography had the advantage of revealing minute details, which if properly lit, could be clearly visible in the absence of the real object. It is interesting to compare this photograph of a Salish basket to the photograph of Acoma pots in this exhibition (see photograph 7). The striking divergence in their purpose can be appreciated by carefully examining lighting, position, and framing that convey diametrically opposite aesthetic messages. In this photograph, there is no additional detail telling the viewer where this item was photographed. Only within a broader contextualisation could this photograph make sense, for example aided by the ethnographic notes Marian Smith left us in the RAI manuscript collection. The Acoma pots by Adela Breton, by contrast, resonate with familiar artistic representations of objects to the extent that the image can almost exist in a vacuum. The visual impact sought with the photo of Acoma pots is notably absent from this ‘technical’ shot, which more humbly presents the item in its objective avoidance of unnecessary artistic mannerisms. The level of contextualisation (or lack thereof) deliberately offered by the photographers in the two pictures not only invite the viewer to consider the conditions under which photography was used in the field, but also to reflect about the agentive potential of photographs, which each in their own right, elicit different responses from the public in accordance to established visual canons circulating at the time of publication and subsequent consumption (Freedberg 1989).

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**(31) Production of Salish basket - RAI 4316 (4.5 x 3.5cm, original print) late 1930s, Washington State, USA. Photographer Marian W. Smith.**

Marian Smith took numerous pictures of baskets made by the people she wrote about: Puyallup and Nisqually. Her extensive collection is an invaluable record of the production of this very popular artefact among these tribes in the late 1930s. Thirty-eight of the baskets she collected are now part of the American Museum of Natural History collections.

Her visual records are richly complemented by very meticulous notes on the manufacturing processes, techniques, and designs employed by experienced Salish craftswomen. These documents are now housed in the Royal Anthropological Institute's manuscript collections. Collectively, photographs and notes have a deep ethnographic importance because they capture in minute detail motifs, basket shape, typology, and colours that may illuminate changes, differences and similarities between adjacent groups' vast production of this distinctive craft. Salish-speaking tribes, like their immediate neighbours, are skilled basket makers whose techniques are as recognisable as they are unique to tribe and individual artist. The woman in this picture is making a lid for the typical cornered baskets produced in the area. Baskets made by Salish Indians are usually produced with a coiling technique, which in this photograph is clearly illustrated. The maker is piercing the last coil with an awl to enable a new stitch to pass through thus securing an additional row to the body of the lid. Marian Smith also documented the technique of imbrication, uniquely used by Salish on coiled baskets. This is a type of regular overlay stitch in contrasting colours that covers the main woven structure (Turnbaugh and Turnbaugh 2004). Marian Smith also photographed the materials used in this style of basket decoration, and recorded the implements used to achieve the vibrant visual effect famous for its bold geometric motifs in alternating rows of crosses, zig-zags, and triangles. Salish basket designs did not appear to have any symbolic meaning (Smith and Leadbeater 1949).

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**(32) Baby in a basket, Choctaw - RAI 33876 (10 x 8cm, copy of glass negative) 1908-1909, Louisiana, USA. Photographer David I. Bushnell.**

This photograph of a young Choctaw in a large burden basket (Choctaw: *Kishe* ' ) was taken by David I. Bushnell (1875-1941) during one of his fieldwork sojourns in the community of Bayou Lacomb, in Louisiana between 1908 and 1909. It was originally published in the Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin number 48 (Bushnell 1909; plate 16). While unfortunately the baby's identity may remain unknown, the photograph has a certain ethnographic value in showing Choctaw's early twentieth century burden baskets' technology (Turnbaugh and Turnbaugh 1997). The item was made by a woman called Pisatuntema (Emma) whose picture also appears in plate 17 of the same publication, and an additional photo shows the basket in use by another woman in plate 15. Such large baskets were customarily produced throughout the southeastern area. A basket similar to the one in this picture can be seen in the famous 1847 painting by Alfred Boisseau *Louisiana Indians Walking along a Bayou* that represents a group of Choctaw Indians (possibly a family unit) moving with their goods across the southern swamps (Alcaine and Antée 2004). Louisiana Choctaws possibly integrates the Acolapissa tribe before other groups were removed from their lands to the Oklahoma territories in the 1830s. Today Louisiana Choctaw are still living in or near their traditional lands. Although not officially educated in anthropology, David I. Bushnell jr. contributed to the ethnology of indigenous North Americans east of the Mississippi and published numerous essays and studies on Native Americans. Bushnell was Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, wrote about the British Museum collections, and became a good friend of Italian anthropologist and zoologist Enrico Hillyer Giglioli (1845-1909) also associated with the Royal Anthropological Institute.

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**(33) Ceremonial boards, Salish - RAI 4150 (11.5 x 7cm, original print) early 20<sup>th</sup> c., Washington State, USA. Photographer unknown.**

Generally about seven feet high, each of the six ceremonial boards known as *stlalcop-schudoptch* was distinctly decorated with designs painted in red, white and black. Planks generally featured a cut out snout that was painted with black lines symbolising cetacean teeth. Designs were individually identified with beings such as ‘half-fish/half otter’, ‘dwelling house’, the mud puppy *wuwuhchudab*, and birds that inhabit lakes and streams called *swokut*. They were used in the ‘Soul Recovery’ ceremony staged by Coast Salish tribes such as Puyallup, Snoqualmie, and Dwamish in the winter months, when spirits are compelled to go wandering in the land of the spirits to reach its delightful regions. Boards placed facing east in the shape of a boat took a shaman and his helpers to the netherworld to capture souls escaped from people’s bodies causing illness. Anthropologist George Dorsey witnessed to one such ceremony in 1901. His notes, gathered by Marian Smith, and now housed in the Royal Anthropological Institute’s collections, urge ethnographers to assemble more information about this healing procedure as part of what was then known as ‘rescue-anthropology’ (Dorsey 1901). In spite of the anticipated disappearance of such ceremonies due to modernisation, Marian Smith nearly 40 years after Dorsey, wrote extensive notes on this ceremony in 1938 (Smith 1938). Her documents about the soul recovery ceremony describe Snoqualmie boards as having their tops rounded whereas those from Duwamish were shaped like the ones in the picture. As a consequence these are not the *stlalcop-schudoptch* boards she describes in the ethnographic notes. Her field observations give us a detailed description of the ceremony that she recorded from an informant in Snoqualmie (Washington State, USA); some of the details she mentions match with Dorsey’s, although they are more extensive than his. From her ethnographic description we learn about the ceremony’s various stages; she describes the ceremonial feast, the spatial orientation and choreography of the performers, as well as the accoutrements and face paint worn by both shaman and helpers.

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**(34) Innu woman – RAI 36706 (12 x 9cm, albumen print) late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> c., Quebec or Labrador, Canada. Photographer unknown.**

Women from the related tribes Innu and Montagnais-Naskapi have been the focus of ethnographic interest since the early stage of colonisation (Anderson 1988; Leacock 1981). This portrait is part of a series of photographs housed at the Royal Anthropological Institute's photographic archives which falls within the parameters of anthropometric studies of indigenous types popular at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The frontal views stored in the collection are almost all accompanied by profile portraits of the same person. Anthropometric shots were aimed at giving a complete picture of individual features, so photographers needed to record both the front and profile of each subject. In most cases anthropometric shots were conducted under strictly controlled conditions, most notably in studios and other makeshift environments equipped to measure body proportions and relative sizes (Edwards 1990). Anthropometric photography could occasionally be undertaken in situ, should the anthropologist have the necessary props available. For this purpose, individuals were generally put in front of a grid in standard positions. In the case of the set of photographs of which this is one, the individuals appear outside, against backgrounds found in their environment such as woods, log cabins, or open fields. Without any additional information we cannot be absolutely sure that these are indeed anthropometric shots, but the existence of side views that match the front shots in all the details (same individual, same clothing, and same background) suggests an almost impromptu scenario in which subjects were asked to pose for the camera with the implicit purpose of a possible anthropometric study. In this sense, these shots differ significantly from studio photographs taken for equally 'scientific' purposes. The subject of this picture wears the typical cap popular among Innu women of her generation. She also sports her hair in two side bobs that other women from Algonquian-speaking subdivisions used to wear in the region.

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**(35) Pre-contact Northwest coast stone effigies - RAI MS 268-10-2-27 (12 x 16cm, original print) no date, place unknown. Photographer Marian W. Smith (?).**

Northwest Coast stone sculptures have intrigued archaeologists and anthropologists for decades because their function still remains unknown. The lack of objects' provenance frustrates scholars in their attempt to place them in their proper cultural context. In historic times the use of stone in expressive culture was drastically reduced in favour of wood, so the possibility of making ethnographic parallels is severely limited. Comparisons and analogies with similarly looking objects are often the only means to interpreting their purpose and usage. These two examples display a composition similar to that of stone pestles found in the archaeological record from the Fraser River area (Duff 1975: 94). In particular, they display the vertical stacked positioning of anthropo- and zoo-morphic figures, which seem to follow a standard sequence that predates the carved wooden poles produced by historic Northwest Coast peoples (see photographs 3, 9). Pestles usually have human figures with either hats or hair-knots on top of the pile, they feature a zoomorphic face placed on the chest, underneath which there is either an unidentified formline or, alternatively, a split representation commonly found in bidimensional expressions. The present image shows this conventional stacking in bas-relief. Structurally these two columnar objects can also be compared with stone mortars from the same area (see photograph 26). Several stone mortars too have a three tiered composition, which is more clearly visible in better preserved specimens (Duff 1975: 69). Objects that show this composition are mostly associated with shamanic practice and can be seen on charms and other representations (Wardwell 1996). The figure of the chest may refer to some shaman's ponchos that usually display helpers or guardians. These two items are particularly significant because they indicate one stage in the development of three dimensional figures from bidimensional art. This is considered Northwest Coast's most distinctive visual idiom, one that is based on the notion of wrapping a flat design around a solid form to enable figures take shape from matter (cf. Holm 1970; 1975).

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