





REACH FOR THE SKY:
TRADITION + INSPIRATION

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2011
Herb Alpert
Bronze
Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.
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Multiple Raven mask (detail)
2016
Jason Henry Hunt
Cedar wood,
cedar bark, paint
Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.
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September 11, 2019, through June 7, 2020

Anne Rowe



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Totem pole (detail)

2017

Jason Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, paint, abalone shell

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

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Bukwus, Wild Man of the Woods mask (detail)

1980

Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, paint

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

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REACH FOR THE SKY

Foreword

Every year at the Center & Gardens, the Trust installs a new exhibition that relates to Walter and Leonore Annenberg and Sunnylands in some way. We have featured specific collections (Chinese cloisonné, English silver-gilt, Steuben crystal), told stories about the Annenbergs through objects (narratives about hospitality and gift giving), and most recently commissioned *National Geographic* photographer, Tim Laman, to document the more than 140 species of birds that reside at or migrate through Sunnylands. Two years ago, we presented the first exhibition in the United States featuring the work of the Chávez-Morado brothers, related to the Annenberg commission for a column based on the one the brothers designed and produced for the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.

This year's exhibition also expands the artistic interpretation of a major Annenberg commission. In 1976, the Annenbergs connected with First Nations carver Henry Hunt and requested a totem pole to be placed on the fifth fairway at Sunnylands. This "pole of distinction" is the basis for our 2019–2020 exhibition called *Reach for the Sky: Tradition + Inspiration*. The opportunity to exhibit the work of three generations of Hunt family carvers was supplemented by the surprising connection between Kwakiutl totems and musician/artist Herb Alpert who works in Southern California.

So, this is a story about the Annenbergs' interest in quality art, their decision to commission a totem pole for their estate, the restoration of that pole by the Trust, and the ways in which artists of different cultures find meaning and inspiration in each other's work. Sunnylands was engaged in cross-cultural exchanges during the Annenbergs' lifetimes and continues to address the mission of fostering international agreement—an effort that is often most successful in the cultural arena.

Our retreat program brings together individuals from all parts of the world and challenges them to find creative solutions to today's pressing concerns. As a part of every retreat, we arrange an opportunity for the participants to engage in a shared cultural experience with the belief that this experience can open new avenues for communication. The example of combining the art of Herb Alpert and the Hunt family represents one way that all cultures are enriched by the exchange of ideas.

Building on the commitment to cultural exchange that the Annenbergs embraced during their lives, Sunnylands is proud to offer this new exploration of tradition and inspiration across cultures.

David J. Lane

President, The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands



The Sunnylands totem pole was carved in 1976 by Henry Hunt for the fifth fairway at Sunnylands.

Photo by Mark Davidson, June 2019.

REACH FOR THE SKY: TRADITION + INSPIRATION

This exhibition connects three indigenous Canadian artists with American musician and artist Herb Alpert. Master Kwakiutl carvers Henry Eugene Hunt (deceased), son Stanley (Stan) C. Hunt, and grandson Jason Henry Hunt have a historical connection to Sunnylands. In 1976, Walter and Leonore Annenberg commissioned Henry Hunt to create a 30-foot-tall cedar wood totem pole for their grounds at Sunnylands. In 2010, Stan and Jason restored the Annenbergs' pole and in 2012 rededicated the pole in a public ceremony.

Meanwhile, Herb Alpert, inspired long ago by tall Northwest Coast totem poles to migrate his sculpture skyward, was creating his abstracted version of a traditional totem pole as part of his artistic journey.

Bringing the work of the Hunts together with Alpert's art creates an opportunity to explore a broader totem pole narrative—not only through contemporary iterations created by Alpert, but also by the Hunts themselves who continue to expand their vocabulary beyond their inherited motifs.

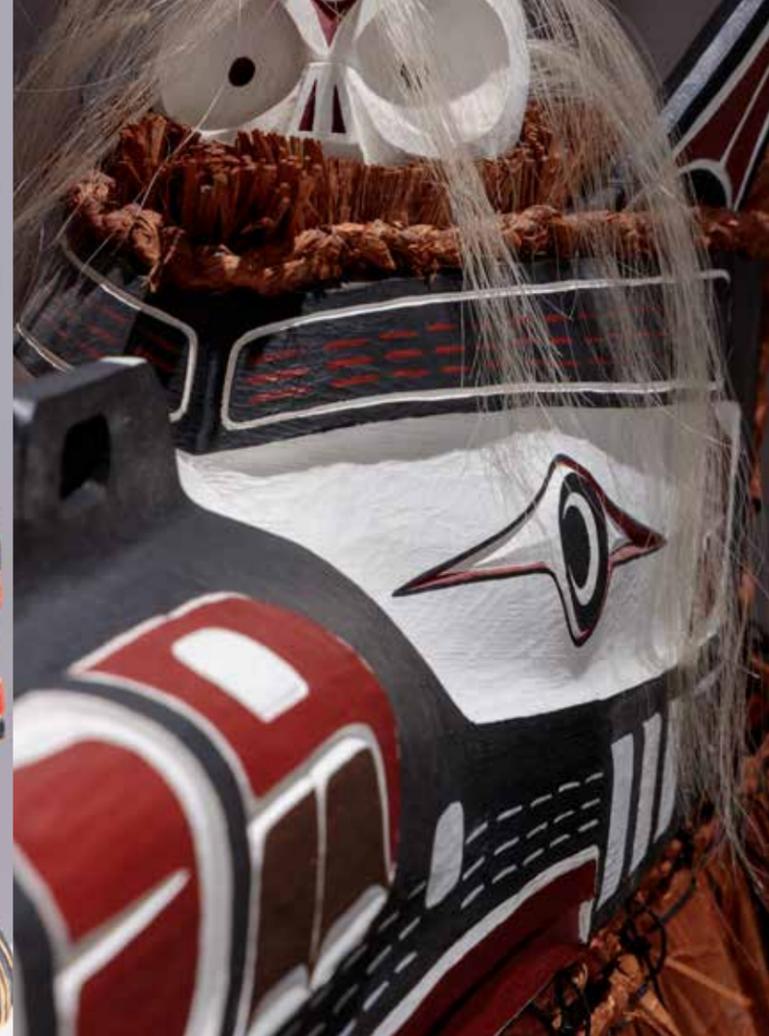
Top left
Killer whale (detail)
1979
Henry Hunt
Cedar wood, paint
See page 34

Top right
Hok-Hok mask (detail)
Circa 2015
Stanley C. Hunt
Cedar wood, cedar bark, string, paint
See page 45

Bottom left
Totem pole (detail)
2017
Jason Henry Hunt
Cedar wood, paint, abalone shell
See page 55

Bottom right
Self-Preservation (detail)
2013
Herb Alpert
Organic coffee and acrylic on canvas
See page 67

Photos by Mark Davidson, April 2019.





WHY BRING THE HUNT FAMILY AND HERB ALPERT'S WORK TOGETHER?

Exhibiting Hunt family carvings at Sunnylands in a new exhibition is a natural extension of the Annenbergs' 1976 acquisition of Henry Hunt's totem pole and furthers the lasting relationship between the family's artworks and Sunnylands.

Unknown to the Hunts until recently, the musician and artist, Herb Alpert, was deeply inspired by Hunt totem poles in the Pacific Northwest. He says: "We were in British Columbia in Stanley Park.

I saw the 14-to-17-foot totem poles and they inspired me. I started riffing on that idea."¹ Specifically, Alpert drew inspiration from the verticality of monumental Kwakiutl totems to "go vertical." He works in wax every day to express his own vision of a vertical commune, creating what he calls "totems."

The Hunt family's totem poles, masks, and decorative wall plaques are vastly different expressions both physically and historically from Alpert's totems and paintings. So, why bring these culturally and geographically disparate artists together? At the heart of this exhibition, the time-honored tradition of artistic inspiration that flows from one artist to another, from one culture to another, from one country to another—and in this case, from Fort Rupert, Canada, to Alpert's studio in California—is recognized. The Hunt family embraced the opportunity to bring together their artworks with Alpert's work to explore the surprising intersections. Artists often work in isolation. Learning that a spark had travelled 1,500 miles between artists' studios was a connection they wanted to explore. Jason Hunt remarked, "My dad and I really got a kick out of the fact that Herb Alpert had been inspired to go tall with his artwork based on our ancestral poles."²

Totem pole (detail)

Circa 2014

Stanley C. Hunt

Cedar wood

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

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ARTISTIC FLOW

Alpert is not the first artist to find initial inspiration from other cultures, of course. Musical and artistic expressions have crossed borders and oceans for millennia. Pablo Picasso's inspirational arc included a three-year "African" phase (1906–1909) during which his paintings reflected African sculpture, especially masks. A 2019 exhibition at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, explored the influence of the Inuit people and their culture on Henri Matisse's work.

Objects throughout museums show centuries of material proof that not only were goods transported across cultures along the ancient trade routes, but the aesthetics were shared and broadly assimilated from Asia to the Mediterranean.³ Material culture and musical scores provide the evidence that art inspiration travels—it always has, and always will—despite real or imagined borders, censorship, and political or sociological conflicts. These sparks ricochet ever faster today with increased globalization and the networking of art rendered borderless through technology.

Though Alpert's work is personal and could never be confused with traditional Kwakiutl house poles, or Maori house poles, or any other poles, the notion of verticality was a spark in his evolving sculptural process. Totems are highly personal works of art. While the indigenous tribes of the Pacific Northwest carved and continue to carve their narrative stories on felled wood logs, Alpert's wax-to-bronze totems use an entirely different delivery system of abstracted emotion and interpretive narrative fueled by the artist's internal and external processes.



Gratitude (detail)

2009

Herb Alpert

Bronze

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

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TOTEMS AND TOTEM POLES

The word “totem” is broadly used throughout the world to represent a variety of expressions including works of art. Often, a totem infers a symbolic relationship between one thing and another, such as animals and humans. Totems take many shapes and sizes, depending on the culture and the natural resources available. For instance, massive red cedar trees that appear to reach for the sky are a natural medium upon which to carve family stories in the Pacific Northwest, while totems in parts of continental Africa are carved on animal tusks—the natural “canvases” available in that geographic region.

Stacked carved figures on monumental cedar logs lining the shores of the Pacific Northwest are what first come to mind when one thinks of a totem pole. Totem poles from the indigenous First Nations people of Canada are iconic narrative works of art. To those who carve and steward them, they represent much more. According to an article by the Burke Museum, Seattle, Washington: “While it is sometimes possible to identify different animals, such as bears, ravens, and eagles, it is not possible to interpret what the pole really means without knowing the history of the pole and the family that owns it.”¹⁴



Above

A totem pole in Fort Rupert, British Columbia, circa 1948.

*Image courtesy of the Bill Reid Centre at Simon Fraser University.
Photo by C. M. Barbeau.*



Opposite

Memorial pole raising for Chief Mungo Martin.

*Courtesy of UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, Canada, A037961
Photo by Anthony Carter Fonds, date unknown.*

MONUMENTS AND FOLLIES: A TOTEM POLE FOR SUNNYLANDS

Sunnylands, the former winter home of Walter and Leonore Annenberg in the California desert, is known for many reasons, including extraordinary modernist architecture, an exquisitely curated interior design, a best-in-class golf course, and a site where history is made by world leaders. Given the exceptional physical and social history of Sunnylands, its place in the twentieth century makes it one of America's most important homes of the era. Many know that the Annenbergs were skilled art collectors; fewer know that they were their own curators. Walter and Leonore understood that the proper selection and placement of art was critical to its success within a space. They shared a keen eye for placing art and this pursuit did not stop at the front door.

Dotted throughout the verdant 200-acre estate are monuments and follies worthy of their setting. As is true for their art selections on display throughout the house, the outdoor monuments are thoughtfully sited and form an international rather than American collection. Two of the monuments inspired by their international travels were constructed on site: a pink marble Chinoiserie pavilion providing a place for mid-golf refreshments and respite from the sun, and a classical semicircular white marble structure based on a photograph of an ancient bench they saw while visiting the Greek island of Delos. While these two monuments were necessarily constructed on site, others were commissioned directly from foreign artists and imported for site-specific installations. Three of these include a 20-foot bronze columnar fountain from Mexico by the renowned Chávez Morado brothers; a sleek abstract modern sculpture of a flock of birds by Canadian artist Arthur (Art) Price; and a majestic 30-foot totem pole by First Nations artist Henry Hunt.

The Sunnylands totem pole resides on the western edge of the property at the 90-degree turn on the fifth hole of the golf course. The vertical structure is barely recognizable when golfers stare down the 250-yard fairway. As golfers or strollers on the grounds approach the pole, the carved beauty of this surprising art expression is revealed. The pole's placement against a backdrop of trees and mountains fronted by a pristine lake is awe inspiring, which might explain why so many dignitaries paused during their golf games to admire and pose with the pole over the years.

Below, top to bottom
Monuments throughout
the Sunnylands historic estate.

Chinese pavilion
Photo by Ken Hayden, May 2012.

Delos bench
Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

Mexican column
Photo by Ken Hayden, November 2014.

Birds of Welcome
Photo by Ken Hayden, November 2014.



Opposite, left to right
Donald J. Hall Sr., President George
H.W. Bush, Walter Annenberg,
Dr. Richard Rothman, and Nick Brady
stand in front of the Sunnylands totem
pole during a round of golf.

*Official White House Photograph,
Sunnylands Collection 2009.1.6440, March 1990.*



A "POLE OF DISTINCTION" FOR SUNNYLANDS

The Sunnylands totem was commissioned directly from Henry Hunt, the renowned indigenous carver from British Columbia, and was installed at Sunnylands in 1976. Walter and Leonore Annenberg were not impulsive collectors. They researched their artistic interests thoroughly and exhibited the patience required to identify best-in-class artworks. Evidence of their totem pursuit is found in correspondence and through oral history interviews housed in the Sunnylands archives. The archives reveal that their process lasted years. They had expressed an interest to visitors in having a tall monument on the dogleg turn of the fifth fairway to be a focal point for their tee shot. The notion that a totem would fit the bill was sparked by a 1972 magazine article. Walter wrote to friend, philanthropist, museum trustee, and publisher, Amon Carter Jr. on March 27, 1972, from his ambassadorial residence in London.⁵ (See inset on opposite page.)

Carter replied on April 4, 1972:

*"Dear Walter, Thanks for your nice note with regard to the totem pole. I have passed it along to our museum people who will be in touch with you. But from what I have found out, totem poles are very hard to obtain now since Canada has imposed some laws on their removal. I hope you and Mrs. Annenberg are feeling fine. Sincerely, Amon Carter Jr."*⁶

Walter and Leonore concluded, following a thorough investigation, that the carving of a new pole would provide the masterwork they sought rather than the acquisition of a vintage pole, which should not be moved from its auspicious original placement. Unsurprisingly, given their meticulous approach to acquisitions, their search for a pole led them to Henry Hunt, the senior member of the most significant family dynasty of Northwest Coast Kwakiutl carving. Today, 43 years later, the Sunnylands totem pole has become the historic "pole of distinction" they sought.

Opposite

View of the Sunnylands totem pole.

Photo by Mark Davidson, June 2019.

Inset

Letter from Walter Annenberg to Amon Carter Jr.

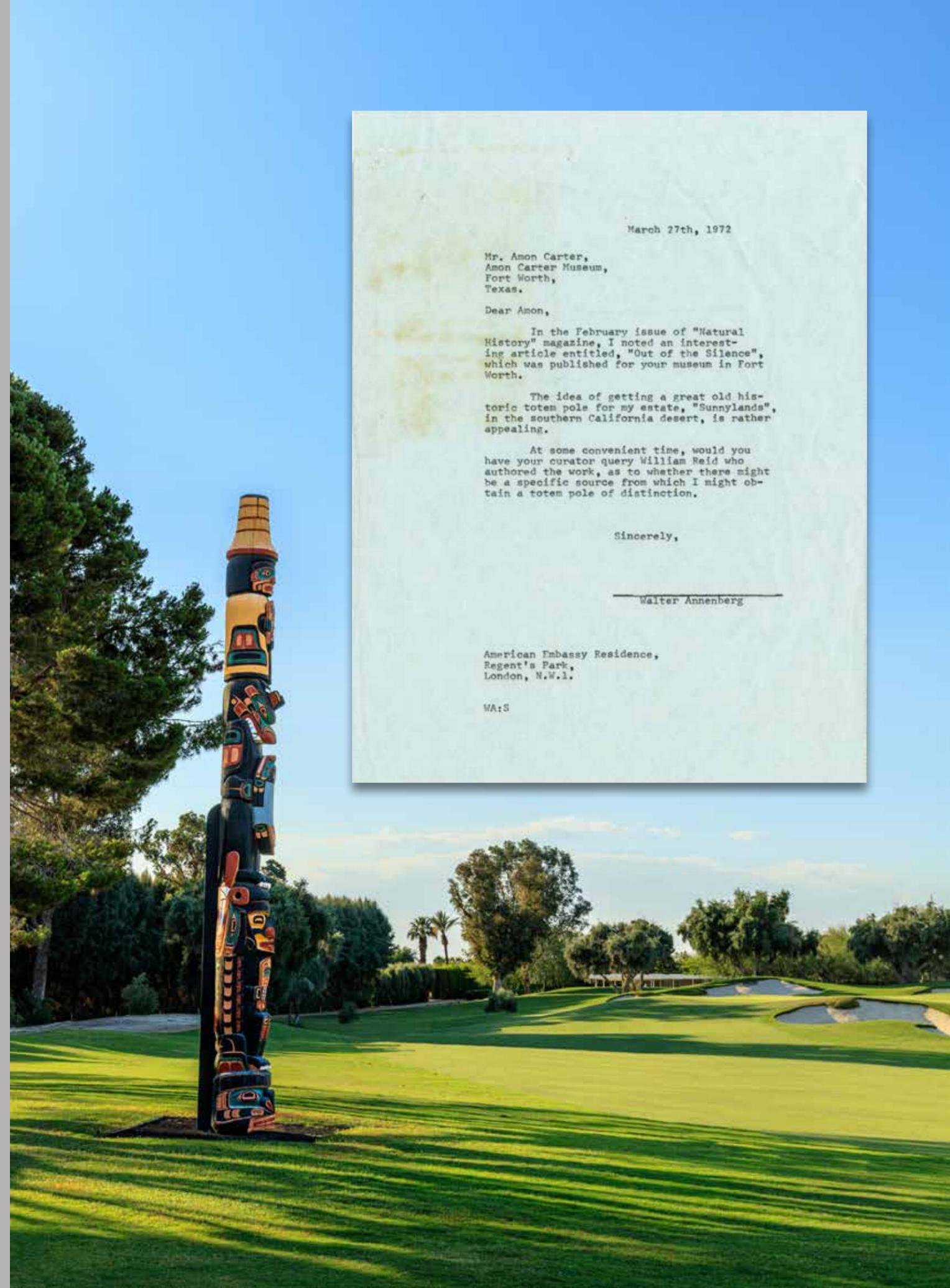
Sunnylands Collection 2009.1.187, March 27, 1972.



Above

Appropriately named The Totem Pole, hole five is the most challenging tee shot on the course.

Sunnylands Collection.



March 27th, 1972

Mr. Amon Carter,
Amon Carter Museum,
Fort Worth,
Texas.

Dear Amon,

In the February issue of "Natural History" magazine, I noted an interesting article entitled, "Out of the Silence", which was published for your museum in Fort Worth.

The idea of getting a great old historic totem pole for my estate, "Sunnylands", in the southern California desert, is rather appealing.

At some convenient time, would you have your curator query William Reid who authored the work, as to whether there might be a specific source from which I might obtain a totem pole of distinction.

Sincerely,

Walter Annenberg

American Embassy Residence,
Regent's Park,
London, N.W.1.

WA:S

SYMBOLS ON THE SUNNYLANDS TOTEM POLE

The Kwakiutl, one of more than 600 First Nations tribes in Canada, live along the waterways that separate Vancouver Island from the bulk of British Columbia on the mainland.⁷ The figures on Kwakiutl totem poles, including the Sunnylands totem pole, represent real or supernatural creatures, which are claimed as crests by the Hunt family of Fort Rupert, British Columbia. In other words, the Hunt family's unique history entitles them to use these figures in their carved stories. The prerogative to display such crests is traced back through clan genealogy to an ancestor who obtained the right to the crest.⁸

The Kwakiutl's sophisticated mythologies and iconographies are quite specific. Audrey Hawthorne (b. 1917 – d. 2000), former curator of ethnography at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, was a renowned expert on Kwakiutl arts and symbolism. She wrote:

The totem pole is a precise art form embodying a statement of beliefs about important social realities: descent, inheritance, power, privilege, and social worth.... This meaning had a threefold context. First, it was the chosen visible expression of family history—the descent from remembered ancestors and the possession of powers derived from them. Furthermore, the history had to be publicly recounted and witnessed.... An orator employed ceremonial language to trace the names of the family and give details of the generations and events embodied in the carved images. Finally, the erection of the pole was surrounded by appropriate rituals.... The threefold ceremonial association of carved form, spoken word, and social validation was inseparable.... Thus it is not possible for an outsider who is ignorant of the ceremonial context to "read" the pole as if it were a glyphic or pictographic presentation of myth or history.... Nevertheless...many of the crests can be identified, and the ways in which they are presented can be understood in the general context of Kwakiutl life and appreciated as aesthetic achievements.⁹

The explanation that the Annenbergs received about the figures on their totem pole describes the figures from top to bottom. They proudly displayed this description in printed form on a stand at the foot of the totem pole for visitors to read and enjoy.¹⁰



From left to right:

Leonore Annenberg, Bruce Foreman, Markley Foreman (Schlegel), Joanne Young, and Elizabeth Kabler stand in front of the Sunnylands totem pole in 1988.

Gift of Joanne W. Young, Sunnylands Collection 2017.8.1, December 1988.

Kwakiutl Chief: The chief indicates the noble lineage of the Hunt family. As marks of his wealth and position, he wears a chief's hat, a Chilkat blanket as obtained from the Tlingit in southeastern Alaska through marriage, and holds a shield-like plaque known as a copper to his chest. The copper was an object of wealth and functioned in much the same way as banknotes of large denominations. Each time a copper was displayed at a potlatch ceremony, its wealth increased to the amount of money and blankets distributed at the end of the potlatch.

In 2019, carver Stan Hunt, son of carver Henry Hunt, said, *"The three rings on the hat indicate that the chief is indeed a self portrait of Henry Hunt who was chief three times."*¹¹

Tsonoqua: The third figure from the top of the pole represents Tsonoqua, the wild woman of the woods. She is a cannibal giant and carries a basket on her back in which she places children she captures. She takes these children home to eat but in most versions of the myth, the children manage to escape. She is characterized by sleepy eyes, pendulous breasts, and a black, hairy body. Her lips are pursed forward, indicating her characteristic cry: "u, huu, u, u." In this case, the Tsonoqua holds a copper as an indication of wealth.

Stan Hunt explained his view of Tsonoqua in 2019: *"If you read ten different books, you'll read ten different versions. Her pursed lips might be making a wind sound to lull the kids into thinking they are safe. My take on the Tsonoqua, other than the fact that she takes kids, puts them in a basket, takes them to her cave, and eats them, is that she's basically like the bogeyman. I mean, it's a big open forest out there. It keeps the kids in the village to tell them a story like that."*¹⁶

The Sunnylands totem pole.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.



Bear holding seal to its chest: The myth related to this particular configuration remains obscure. The figures represented are a grizzly bear and a seal.

Though no detailed interpretation was provided for the grizzly bear holding a seal on the Sunnylands totem pole, authorities on Kwakiutl crests provide some information: Seals, halibut, and other sea life are often found in family crests given that the Kwakiutl were, and continue to be, people of the sea.¹² Seals, in particular, are a sign of wealth.¹³ Grizzly bears, though fierce in nature, were carved on house posts as a friendly and powerful guardian spirit for the household.¹⁴

"Both are family crests," Stan Hunt said in 2019.¹⁵

Sisiutl: The bottom figure on the pole is a Sisiutl, a double-headed serpent. This creature can change at will from mythical to human form. The central face at the base of the pole is somewhat humanoid in form and indicates the human dimension the creature can take. Yet note the recurved "horns" that rise above either eyebrow. From either side of this face stretch serpents, seen in profile. The scaly body, recurved horn and projecting tongue are all evident in the carving.

"Sisiutl, the mythological double-headed sea serpent, was a crest of my grandmother. So, this was probably Henry's reference to her," said Stan Hunt in 2019.¹⁷

THE HUNT FAMILY AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

As significant as Henry's artistic legacy is, his family's legendary efforts to preserve the narrative and material culture of the Kwakiutl people changed history. Henry's father-in-law, Mungo Martin, is credited with saving and preserving Kwakiutl arts and culture by secretly maintaining potlatch ceremonies (ceremonial distribution of property and gifts to affirm or reaffirm social status) during the Canadian ban on these activities, which were outlawed from 1885 to 1951.¹⁸

At that time, the Canadian government saw these ceremonies and their related traditions as an impediment to assimilation. This important activity encompasses a highly ritualized gift-giving feast, but also traditionally functioned as the primary economic system for the First Nations peoples. The ban was enforced for almost 70 years, putting the social and material culture of the tribes at great risk for permanent loss. Those who rebelled and disrupted the ban—and Hunt family members were among the disrupters—were jailed and the material culture associated with the ceremonies was confiscated. The first legal potlatch after the law was repealed in 1951 was overseen by Martin in Victoria.¹⁹



During the ban, Martin was asked to create an artwork for the Canadian government. He ignored a suggested classical arch design and instead carved two totem poles for the Canadian Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair. These were a sensation and contained gentle subversive symbolism protesting the potlatch ban; at the top of the poles, two thunderbirds proudly spread their wings standing on the heads of giant grizzly bears. These are all symbols of strength and are crests of his family. Crouched at the very bottom of the poles were emblems of Canada, two beavers.²⁰ In 1949, the University of British Columbia hired Martin to replicate the poles. While resident carver, he collected and preserved 400 songs and oral histories. In short, he is credited with the rebirth of an artistic heritage once pronounced dead.²¹

Henry and his wife, Helen (b. 1923 – d. 1972), recognized the important role they could play in cultural preservation as had their relatives before them. Henry was also a direct descendant of George Hunt (b. 1854 – d. 1933) whose birth had combined native and British bloodlines: Tlingit and English. George was not only a linguist but also an

Above

Kwakiutl dancers wear masks and costumes during a ceremony.

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Edward S. Curtis Collection, LC-USZ62-49042, 1914.

ethnologist, and became an expert on the languages and traditions of the coastal indigenous tribes of British Columbia. Through dissemination of his voluminous writings outside the region, he was instrumental in translating and, therefore, preserving the culture of the Kwakiutl. George also worked with American anthropologist Franz Boas to curate the important Kwakiutl exhibit at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, creating a lasting record of the culture through the hundreds of objects that are documented in the exhibition. His scholarship resulted in critical preservation. This work was especially important given that the potlatch ban and all associated material such as carvings and textiles were outlawed during George's lifetime.

Henry's son Stan recounted, "My mom and dad had an arranged marriage. My mom's dad was Alex Nelson who was one of the highest ranking Kwakiutl chiefs. Then our dad's dad was a huge chief in Fort Rupert. So when our parents were really young, they were promised to each other and they were married in the Big House, which is where our community events occur. The arranged marriages were to bring the dowries together. This marriage made our family bigger and more powerful, like a royal wedding."²²



Above

A potlatch ceremony in Alert Bay, British Columbia.

Image courtesy of the Royal BC Museum and Archives, H-03982. Photo by William May Halliday, circa 1897-1933.

Henry and Helen taught their 14 children not only the customs of the Kwakiutl people but also their responsibility as stewards to ensure that the distinct music, carvings, symbols, and heritage of their family be carried forward. Today, Henry's children and grandchildren, including Stan and Jason, whose work appears in the exhibition, shepherd their families' teachings into the contemporary world in various ways. Stan and Jason are actively carving new artworks in traditional and contemporary styles today and are intentionally handing these skills and knowledge down to the next Hunt generation.

HUNTS RESTORE AND REDEDICATE THE SUNNYLANDS TOTEM POLE 2010-2012

When Sunnylands transitioned from a private home and entered into a public trust in 2009, the art collections were evaluated for historic preservation purposes. The totem pole had, at that time, been in its arid desert site for 33 years. The paint colors and formline (the distinct continuous, flowing, curvilinear outline of the figures on the pole) had migrated through maintenance over time and the pole appeared to be at risk of toppling over through the natural decaying process. The Henry Hunt totem pole is one contiguous log of Pacific Northwest red cedar wood. Roughly three-quarters of the log (30 feet) is carved with figures for above-ground enjoyment and the remaining 10 feet was left as uncarved raw wood that made up the counter-balanced in-ground mount. The Trust sought guidance from Stan, son of the original artist, to avoid a physical or cultural misstep in managing the future of the pole. There were many questions. Should the pole return to the earth as a natural process? Should the pole be enclosed indoors? Stan not only provided guidance and his blessing for the pole's restoration but he also offered to restore "my dad's pole" alongside his wife, Lavina, and their son, Jason.

In 2010, the Hunts arrived at Sunnylands to restore their famous relative's totem pole.²³ The moment was captured as they saw for the first time this previously unknown-to-them work by their father and grandfather, Henry. Stan saw some carved humor in the pole given that two figures hold coppers which represent wealth, which he saw as a nod to Walter and Leonore. He also saw that the pole was topped by a chief, who he later identified as his father Henry Hunt. They restored the pole over several weeks and returned two years later, in 2012, to properly rededicate the pole in a ceremony involving dancing, drumming, and singing. By then the pole had been remounted with a robust external mount which met with their aesthetic approval and the estate was open to the public. They brought with them several relatives and examples of their exquisite carvings and textiles for the public to appreciate. The possibility of a future exhibition of Kwakiutl art at Sunnylands was imagined at that time.

Right, top

Jason Henry Hunt restoring the paint on the Sunnylands totem pole in 2010.

Right, bottom

Stanley C. Hunt, Lavina Hunt, and Jason Henry Hunt dressed in ceremonial clothing during the rededication ceremony of the Sunnylands totem pole in 2012.

Opposite

The Hunt family restoring the Sunnylands totem pole in 2010.

Photos by Anne Rowe, 2010-2012.





Portrait of Henry Hunt.

Courtesy of the Hunt family, circa 1970.

HENRY EUGENE HUNT

Artist Henry Eugene Hunt (b. 1923 – d. 1985), who carved the Sunnyslans pole, was born in Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Jonathan and Alice Hunt. Henry worked as a logger and fisherman and was the air raid warden for Fort Rupert during World War II. He mastered his carving skills in 1951 when he was asked to work and apprentice with his father-in-law, Mungo Martin, who was then Chief Carver at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, British Columbia. In 1962, Henry succeeded Martin as Chief Carver and remained at the museum until 1974. His works can be found around the world, including the 100-foot-tall pole carved with Martin in 1958 and presented to Queen Elizabeth II to commemorate the centenary of British Columbia—one foot marking each year. The pole resides in Windsor Great Park in the United Kingdom. In addition to the Sunnyslans pole, a second Henry Hunt pole is located in the Coachella Valley in Victoria Park in Palm Springs. The totem pole was a gift to the city from Victoria, British Columbia, in 1968 as part of a sister cities program.

Henry Hunt was awarded the Canadian Confederation Medal and the Medal of Excellence from the Canada Arts Council. He received an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia and his work appears in museum collections throughout the world.



Henry and Helen Hunt meet Queen Elizabeth II in Victoria, British Columbia.

Courtesy of the Hunt family, 1958.

Model pole

1971

Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, paint

19.8" x 6.7"

Courtesy Royal BC Museum, Victoria,
British Columbia. RBCM 15149

An eagle sits atop a beaver,
an emblem of Canada.



Model Poles

Proportion, size, and the interweaving of figures are elements in the creation of a massive totem pole. Totem carvers historically used small wooden models to work out these complex equations. Later, the models themselves became popular, and were created as stand-alone artworks.

Model pole

1967

Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, paint

18.5" x 5.9"

Courtesy Royal BC Museum, Victoria,
British Columbia. RBCM 12948

A kingfisher dives for a salmon.



Model pole

1971

Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, paint

20.3" x 6.5"

Courtesy Royal BC Museum, Victoria,
British Columbia. RBCM 14997-B

The legendary Raven is the creator in the Kwakiutl culture. Here, he sits above a chief wearing a yellow Chilkat blanket worn only by those with high rank. Three rings above the chief's brow likely symbolize a person's three terms as chief.



Model pole

Circa 1970

Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, pencil

18.3" x 3.7"

Courtesy Royal BC Museum, Victoria,
British Columbia. RBCM 16519

A raven sits atop a bear. This unfinished model provides a closer examination of Henry Hunt's carving technique.





Model pole
1971
Henry Hunt
Cedar wood, paint
21.25" x 22.4"

Courtesy Royal BC Museum, Victoria,
British Columbia. RBCM 14998

In this pole, a wingspread eagle sits atop a bear, cradling a frog in its mouth. All of these animal symbols are Hunt family crests. Crests are distributed to families during a ceremony called a potlatch and are earned through marriages and other exchanges of family lineage.



Model pole
Circa 1970
Henry Hunt
Cedar wood, paint
22.5" x 21.8"

Courtesy Royal BC Museum, Victoria,
British Columbia. RBCM 17192

The Raven sits atop a Hawk-Man Sun who wears a Chilkat blanket adorned with two whales and two hawks. Chilkat weaving is done by many indigenous groups in the Pacific Northwest.

Bukwus, Wild Man of the Woods mask

1979

Henry Hunt

Red cedar wood, paint, white horsehair

9.8" x 11.8" x 16.9"

Courtesy Royal BC Museum, Victoria, British Columbia. RBCM 17024

The forest-dwelling Bukwus is a significant supernatural character in Kwakiutl mythology. He is typically depicted as skeletal, with sunken eyes and cheeks, and a bird's beak. Legend holds that he eats ghost food and tries to tempt humans to eat it so that they will be forced to remain in his haunted world.



Bear mask

1983

Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, paint

8" x 6.8" x 10.2"

Courtesy Royal BC Museum, Victoria, British Columbia. RBCM 17936

The supernatural animals depicted by Kwakiutl carvers reflect the mammals and sea life present in the Pacific Northwest. Bears are symbols of strength.

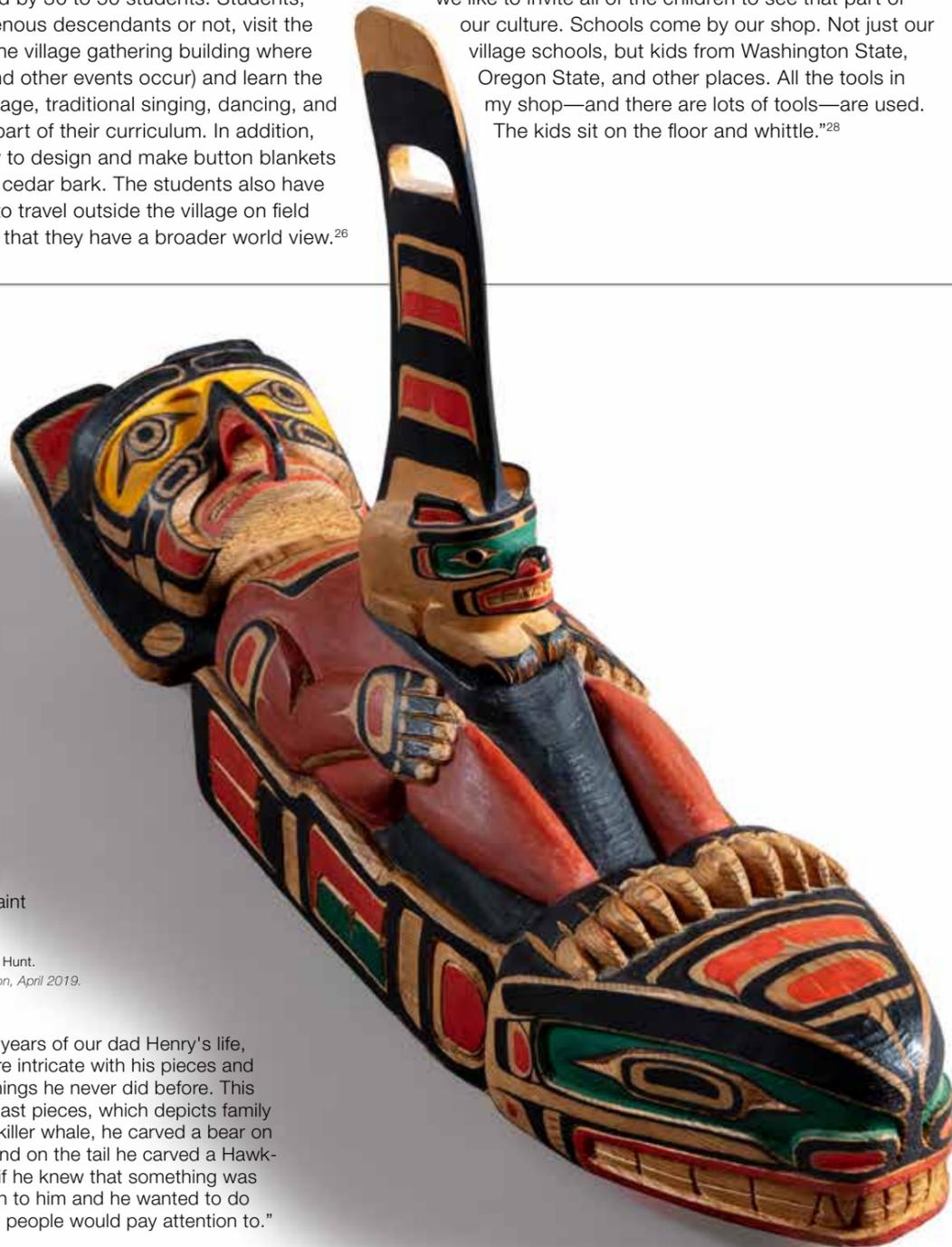
PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE TODAY

Fort Rupert, British Columbia, is a village of less than 500 people with a majority of its residents having Kwakiutl roots.²⁴ Within this community, four people have been carving for more than 30 years, about the same number have been carving for 20 to 25 years, and only a few have recently started to seriously practice this ancient tradition.²⁵ These numbers reveal how rare the craft of Kwakiutl carving is today.

As part of their everyday life, residents of Fort Rupert actively incorporate and pass down their traditions to the next generation. A new school opened recently and is attended by 30 to 50 students. Students, whether indigenous descendants or not, visit the "Big House" (the village gathering building where ceremonies and other events occur) and learn the Kwakiutl language, traditional singing, dancing, and drumming as part of their curriculum. In addition, they learn how to design and make button blankets and work with cedar bark. The students also have opportunities to travel outside the village on field trips, ensuring that they have a broader world view.²⁶

Teenagers are celebrated at coming-of-age ceremonies in which the entire village gathers to show their ongoing support of the young people. Formal mentorships are established for children, guaranteeing that each child has an assigned role model. "This ensures the passing down of the moral standards of the village,"²⁷ explained Jason Hunt, who participates as a role model and visits the schools to share his way of life as an artist.

Stan Hunt also shares his life as a carver with the youth of the village to inspire future Kwakiutl artists. "Life as a carver in the village is really looked up to," he noted, "so we like to invite all of the children to see that part of our culture. Schools come by our shop. Not just our village schools, but kids from Washington State, Oregon State, and other places. All the tools in my shop—and there are lots of tools—are used. The kids sit on the floor and whittle."²⁸



Killer whale
1979

Henry Hunt
Cedar wood, paint
12.5" x 19"

On loan from Dorothy Hunt.
Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"In the last two years of our dad Henry's life, he became more intricate with his pieces and started doing things he never did before. This was one of his last pieces, which depicts family crests. On this killer whale, he carved a bear on the dorsal fin, and on the tail he carved a Hawk-Man. It was as if he knew that something was going to happen to him and he wanted to do some work that people would pay attention to."
Stan Hunt



Bukwus, Wild Man of the Woods mask
1980

Henry Hunt
Cedar wood, paint
11.5" x 13.25"

On loan from private collector.
Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

Many cultures have stories featuring a mysterious forest-dwelling creature (Sasquatch, Bigfoot). In the Kwakiutl version, Bukwus is a skeletal, haggard man who inhabits the woods in ghostly form and tempts others to join him. Bukwus masks are still used for dances in Kwakiutl ceremonies today.



STANLEY CLIFFORD HUNT

Stanley (Stan) C. Hunt (b. 1954) is a Kwakiutl artist from northern Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Like his grandfather Mungo Martin and his father Henry Hunt and his brothers Richard Hunt (b. 1951) and Tony Hunt Sr. (b. 1942 – d. 2017), he is a celebrated artist of international stature. Stan was born in 1954, when his father and grandfather were carving at the Royal BC Museum, Victoria, British Columbia and reviving the art of his family. As a member of the Hamatsa society, the most prestigious of the Kwakiutl dancing societies, Stan dances in the potlatch ceremonies for the Hunt family.

In 1976, Stan apprenticed under his father who first required him to make his own carving tools. Over the next three years, Stan learned knife techniques, carved ornamental plaques, and assisted his father on six totem poles. In 1980, he and his brother Richard restored a 67-foot pole that had been created by their father for the Montreal Expo in 1967. In the fall of 1998, Stan returned to Montreal to continue restoration work on the pole.

Stan carved his first totem pole in 1982, a commission by author Jean M. Auel (author of *The Clan of the Cave Bear* and other books in the *Earth's Children* series). He is equally renowned for his miniature totems and masks, and has produced limited edition prints and bronzes. Most of Stan's interpretation of the Kwakiutl style is starkly traditional. Only traditional tools—the adze, straight knife, and curved knife—are utilized; no power tools or sandpaper are used. The images are original, but with traditional roots in the stories of the Kwakiutl people. His masks, totem poles, and graphic original paintings are collected for their craftsmanship and authenticity. Stan has also expanded his artistic vocabulary to include works in bronze, Forton™ (a plaster-like compound), and glass. Stan's work can be found in private and museum collections around the world.²⁹

Portrait of Stanley (Stan) C. Hunt.

Photo by Michaelleen Gallagher, June 2019.



Sea Bear totem

Circa 2012

Stanley C. Hunt

Bronze, 2 of 12

21" x 7.5"

On loan from private collector.
Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

Kwakiutl artists primarily carve characters that are family crests. "The Sea Bear is one of my dad's main crests. The double-headed sea serpent, Sisiutl, begins at the bottom of the pole and continues up the back. Sisiutl is a main crest of both my grandmothers. The Bear holds a halibut, which is one of my grandfather Mungo Martin's crests. I created this as a little yellow cedar wood model totem pole and then decided to cast it in bronze."
Stan Hunt



Frog Woman

Circa 2014

Stanley C. Hunt

Glass

15.25" x 11"

On loan from private collector.
Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

The distinct shape of this sculpture recurs in Kwakiutl art and is called a copper. It represents wealth or power and can be adorned with a variety of figures. Stan Hunt chose the legendary Frog Woman for this glass sculpture because it was a crest belonging to his mother.



Shark mask

Circa 2014

Stanley C. Hunt
Cedar wood, paint
12" x 10.5"

On loan from private collector.
Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

Not commonly depicted by Kwakiutl artists, the shark is one of Stan Hunt's favorite figures to carve.



**Pugwis,
Man from the Sea mask**

Circa 2010

Stanley C. Hunt
Cedar wood, cedar bark, paint
14" x 10"

On loan from private collector.
Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

This aquatic creature, Pugwis, was originally a human fisherman. Legend has it that he was fishing on his boat, but was not having any luck. The chief of the sea, Komokwa, sent a ratfish to see what Pugwis was doing. The ratfish circled the boat seven times and Pugwis tried to hit the ratfish with his oar. The ratfish told Komokwa, who then sent a killer whale to bring Pugwis under the ocean. Pugwis lived under the sea for seven days and nights, learning about the creatures of the ocean. When he returned to the earth, he had transformed. In the mask, Pugwis gently cradles a seal in his mouth because he now understands everything about the sea.

Right

Totem pole

Circa 2014

Stanley C. Hunt

Cedar wood

12.5'

On loan from private collector.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"I like to say I painted this with my knife. There's nowhere to hide when a piece is hand-carved.... You can see every stroke. At the top of the pole rests an eagle, which is a huge crest for our family, followed by a wolf who holds a Hawk-Man Sun who stands on a killer whale. Back in the old days, I carved killer whales to represent our family, but nowadays I carve them to represent my wife Lavina's family. Her dad's crest was a killer whale."
Stan Hunt

Far right

Moon mask

Circa 2013

Stanley C. Hunt

Cedar wood, rope, paint

37" diameter

On loan from private collector.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"The rim around the face of a moon mask is where you can really customize it. You can use creatures or ovoids or any design you choose. I was thinking about my wife Lavina's parents when I carved this. Around the face are two killer whales, her father's crest, touching noses. The whale tail is represented by a little critter."
Stan Hunt





The Hamatsa Dance

Masks are essential components in ceremonial Kwakiutl life. They are worn and danced with during special events called potlatches. The most prestigious of the Kwakiutl dancing societies is the Hamatsa of which Stan Hunt is a member. Central to the Hamatsa ritual, masked dancers depict an elaborate story involving three mythological bird guises: the Hok-Hok, Crooked Beak, and Raven. Legend holds that these bird-monsters inhabit the sky world and, working together, eat humans.

Hok-Hok mask

Circa 2015

Stanley C. Hunt

Cedar wood, cedar bark, string, paint

47" x 11' x 11"

On loan from private collector.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

The Hok-Hok bird dances first and crushes the skull of the victim.

CURRENT THREATS TO KWAKIUTL ART

Stan and Jason Hunt, son and grandson of the Sunnylands totem carver, shared that the exclusive use of family crests is not as protected as it once was inside and outside the culture:

"Family crest figures are the only figures you're allowed to carve. I can't carve a butterfly, for instance. This is actually one of the only crests our family doesn't own. When Henry carved the Annenbergs' pole, he utilized family crest figures. We are all limited to carving the family crests and we all know this. Every artist on the West Coast is limited to what their family owns. Some will bend the rules and use whatever they want, but the rest of us know that it's wrong. The people who have my pieces know the difference. This is a smaller problem than the bigger problem that we're dealing with in West Coast art right now, which is copies of our art arriving from places like Indonesia. They're not made locally at all. They're creating new works from photographs and creating multiples. You can go in a store and the shopkeeper will ask if you want a certain mask in small, medium, or large. This is the biggest issue in Northwest Coast art right now, the amount of fraud and copyright infringement. These carvings aren't authentic works of Kwakiutl art made from local materials."³⁰

Crooked Beak mask

Circa 2014

Stanley C. Hunt

Cedar wood, cedar bark, string, paint
49" x 38" x 11"

On loan from private collector.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

The Crooked Beak dances second
and eats the brains of the victim.



Raven mask

Circa 2014

Stanley C. Hunt

Cedar wood, cedar bark, string, paint
42" x 48" x 11"

On loan from private collector.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

The Raven is the last to dance and devours
what remains of the victim.

Sun mask

Circa 2015

Stanley C. Hunt

Cedar wood, paint

65" x 65"

On loan from private collector.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

Sky elements are traditional figures in the carved Kwakiutl culture. The sun is a popular motif of Kwakiutl carvers and is easy to recognize with its extending rays. The traditional Kwakiutl colors of yellow, red, white, and black are stark, bright, and bold.



Welcome Moon

Circa 1996

Stanley C. Hunt

Forton™

30" diameter

On loan from Tony Hardie.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

This mask was made using Forton™, a material similar to plaster, showcasing Stan Hunt's evolving approach to carving. This unpainted cast provides an opportunity to appreciate how Stan has been expanding his use of materials beyond traditional cedar wood and exploring his graphic vocabulary beyond his father's and other ancestral work.



Portrait of Jason Henry Hunt.

Photo by Michaeleen Gallagher, June 2019.

JASON HENRY HUNT

Jason Henry Hunt (b. 1973) was inspired to carve by his father, Stan Hunt. When he started to carve under Stan's tutelage, he found he had a natural connection to the craft that has been passed down through his prominent family. Born in Victoria, British Columbia, Jason continues to extend his family heritage of carving totems, plaques, masks, and other ceremonial and decorative items. Jason carves figures in the traditional style but diverges in color, medium, and imagery with his own iterations of the iconic visual vocabulary of his ancestry.

Furthering the Hunt family history with the British Royal Family, Jason carved an intricate round design (pictured below) that was used on the face of a wooden fishing reel handcrafted by Peetz Outdoors in Victoria as part of an artist series of reels. The design was so successful that the mahogany reel was selected by the Canadian government as a gift to be presented to the Royal Family during a visit to Canada in 2016.

Like his father and grandfather, Jason has maintained the traditional practice of carving by hand. On occasion he will use power tools but in a very limited way. "Some carvers use all power tools. We use the traditional methods."³¹ Jason protects the authenticity and integrity of his work by being well versed on the significance and legends of each figure he brings to life through his carvings.³²



Orca, Salmon & Moon

2016

Jason Henry Hunt
Mahogany, brass, abalone shell
5" diameter

On loan from Robert and Mary Dales.
Photo by Mark Davidson, July 2019.

Under a full moon, an orca whale is depicted hunting for salmon. The moon is represented by the abalone shell as a "symbol of transformation and a guiding light in the darkness."
Jason Hunt



Moon mask

2016

Jason Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, rope, paint

31" diameter

On loan from Eagle View Elementary School.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

Round panels with a face in the middle and no extending rays are known as moon masks. This mask hangs in the entry hall of Eagle View Elementary School in Port Hardy, Vancouver Island. Younger students wear the detachable center face while learning traditional Kwakiutl dances. They wear the entire panel, which is heavier, as they get older and more skilled.

The Protectors

2017

Jason Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, shell, rope, resin

37" diameter

On loan from Brad Cunnin.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

This panel is a personal expression of an extraordinary day Jason Hunt experienced near his home in Fort Rupert on Vancouver Island. While exploring the beach, a raven led him to a hidden ancestral memorial area. Returning to the beach, Jason saw a whale breach the waves. He gathered the shells on the island to represent the bones of his ancestors. In creating the panel, he used the shells and carved a raven with a whale's tail.



Multiple Raven mask

2016

Jason Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, cedar bark, paint
43" x 40" x 11"

On loan from Shaun Wedick.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"The most important of all creatures is the Raven. He bridges the real world and the spirit world together. In our stories, he is the creator and a trickster."

Jason Hunt



Totem pole

2017

Jason Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, paint, abalone shell
7'

On loan from Shaun Wedick.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.



This commissioned totem pole showcases Jason Hunt's contemporary approach to blending traditional carving techniques with modern colors and graphics. "We [the tribe] know what the traditional colors are supposed to be, but it doesn't mean we have to use them all the time. It depends on the situation. Using teal was aesthetically something I wanted to explore."
Jason Hunt

Moon mask

2014

Jason Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, cedar bark, paint

32" diameter

On loan from Shaun Wedick.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

Whales are prolific in Kwakiutl art. This mask of a killer whale is unique because it is carved from one piece of wood. The dorsal fin extensions seen on this mask are usually carved separately and then attached. "I technically challenged myself to carve the entire thing from one solid piece."

Jason Hunt



Sturgeon

2015

Jason Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, abalone shell

10" x 46"

On loan from Shaun Wedick.

(Seen here mounted as a table.)

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

For this commissioned sculpture, Jason Hunt carved a sturgeon, a fish that is not part of the Kwakiutl vocabulary of characters. Jason applied his traditional carving skills to fulfill an artistic request of a client who lives near the Fraser River in Vancouver where sturgeon reside in large numbers.



Owl mask

2016

Jason Henry Hunt

Cedar wood, cedar bark, paint

13.25" x 43"

On loan from Dorothy Hunt.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

Animals have supernatural symbolism in the Kwakiutl culture. Mice are believed to be messengers who gather information throughout the village. Owls eat mice. Therefore, owls ingest knowledge which makes them wise. "Owls know everything that is going on."

Jason Hunt

KWAKIUTL OR KWAKWAKA'WAKW?

These two words, both intended to describe a particular group of people, are commonly confused in academia and popular culture. Stan Hunt explained the difference in a recent interview.

"The longer word, Kwakwaka'wakw, is the greater Nation. To use it would be like saying, the United States or California; it's a broad term. To use Kwakiutl is like defining the city within the country, akin to using 'Palm Springs' in the United States. Every village of people has its own name. Back in the day they would say everything is Kwakiutl but they didn't really realize that it was not true. For our particular village, Kwakiutl is the correct term to describe the place and people there. In terms of pronunciation, many anthropologists say 'kwak-a-till' but the people in our village say 'kwag-iu-dl.' The former is the anglicized version. Our village is called Tsakis in the Kwakiutl language. 'Fort Rupert' is the English name because they built a fort there. It's the only Hudson Bay fort that hasn't been rebuilt. You might also see the word, Kwakulith on the back of masks or elsewhere. That's just another anglicized version of Kwakiutl. Our dad Henry Hunt used the spelling, 'Kwa-Guilth' and if you look at the back of Calvin Hunt's masks, it's probably 'Kwakiutl.' Some of Jason's masks have 'Kwagulth.' Our language has never been written, so there are a lot of different versions of the same word. Every anthropologist wrote things differently."³³



HERB ALPERT

Herb Alpert (b. 1935) is known as a famous trumpeter, composer, singer (“This Guy’s in Love with You”), and producer—Alpert is the “A” in A&M Records. His many accomplishments in the music world include nine Grammy awards, five number-one albums, 28 albums on the *Billboard* 200 chart, 14 platinum albums, 15 gold albums, and he has sold more than 72 million records.³⁴ He also received the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama in 2012.³⁵

A Los Angeles native, Alpert was a shy child, who chose the trumpet over the other instruments in music class at school. It provided him with a vehicle for expressing himself. “The trumpet is just plumbing, you’re the instrument,”³⁶ says Alpert.

In 1962, Alpert attended a bullfight in Tijuana, Mexico. A brass section including trumpets formed an integral part of the experience. In the jammed stadium, the songs and punctuations through the horns signaled and led the crowds to frenzy or calm throughout the pageantry of the battle. The introduction of a picador, the death of the bull, or the arrival of the matador were acts in the play introduced by the brass. Inspired by the remarkable scene, Alpert returned to Los Angeles and wrote his first hit, *The Lonely Bull*. America responded to this upbeat, fresh Latin vibe and his storied musical career was launched. Beginning in the 1970s, in parallel with Alpert’s musical life, he was creating paintings and, ten years later, sculptures.

Because he was initially famous for his music, there is a tendency for art essayists to contextualize and validate his art by connecting it to his music. There are indeed connections to be made, including a seemingly spontaneous buoyancy in both his music and art. Alpert appears to consciously avoid overthinking his straight-forward, organic process. Ask him why bird-like shapes suddenly appear in his work and he will simply tell you, “I want to come back as an eagle. I love birds.”³⁷ Both his music and art are never tortured or discordant. Every day in his paintings is a good day, every note of the horn is a bright

one, and every emotion emanating from his sculpture is heroic. Married in 1973, Alpert’s wife, singer Lani Hall says, “I hear music in his sculpture.”³⁸

According to Alpert: “You don’t see art with your eyes. You don’t hear music with your ears. You experience them in your soul.”³⁹ Creativity isn’t a choice for Alpert: “If you worry about what other people think about your work, you’re done. I would be making art every day whether people appreciated it or not.”⁴⁰ Though there are connections between his music and art, Alpert’s artworks stand firmly on their own. Alpert’s prolific body of work documents the arc of his evolution. For instance, his vertical “totem” works in bronze initially reflected indigenous cedar wood poles of the Pacific Northwest, which feature clearly delineated stacked narrative figures. But over time he favored a complete abstraction of the idea. Sometimes described as smoke, his totems swirl with dance-like energy.

At the heart of this joint exhibition with the Hunt family is Alpert’s multicultural viewpoint. Whether it is through his trumpet, a carving tool, or a paint brush, none of his work reveals a particular place or nationality: “The advantage I have is I wasn’t taught. I had no rules.”⁴¹ Alpert has been absorbing and integrating artistic inspiration from the rest of the world into his personal oeuvre for decades. “I make art every day. I think that what people don’t understand about me is, I’m not a Sunday painter. Making art is central to my life.”⁴²

Exhibitions of Alpert’s paintings and sculptures have been held in galleries and museums around the world, including the Pasadena Museum of California Art; Art Macau, Wynn Macau & Wynn Palace, Sé, Macau, China; and the National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole, Wyoming. His works appear in numerous private and museum collections, including the permanent collections of The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville, and the Field Museum in Chicago.

Opposite

Herb Alpert in his studio in Malibu, California.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

HERB ON HERB

I am an artist who believes in intuitive power and the unconscious. I started painting in 1970 with no formal training and it felt like an advantage not to adhere to the dos and don'ts of the painters' "rule book." My first works looked like I was channeling monkeys—just moving colors around the canvas with no particular objective other than to have fun. Little by little, I got a goosebump or two and I was hooked.

I was inspired by the great Mexican artist, Rufino Tamayo. I loved his use of color and the spontaneous look of his work. Over time my paintings have evolved into something that works for me, but I find it hard to describe. My passion comes from a desire to create from the depths of my authenticity. My need to be honest is the thread that, I believe, all good artists strive for.

Around 1980, adding sculpture to my palate gave me a chance to express my artistic nature in a different way, but with the same mindset. I started moving heated beeswax around until I found a shape that touched me. Things started morphing into various concepts. I always liked the tactile quality of Henry Moore's pieces. I like the idea of people being able to feel and touch my sculptures as living entities.



After visiting Stanley Park in Vancouver, British Columbia, I was struck by the indigenous totem pole display, and that got me thinking in that direction. At first, I started with more symbolic pieces, with human and animal references, and later with a more abstract approach or, as we say in jazz, riffing on a theme. As a musician, I gravitate toward the abstract, just like jazz. None of this would have happened if I hadn't witnessed the soulful work of the indigenous people from the Pacific Northwest. They have definitely been my inspiration. I look forward to the unknown moments that surprise me when I create.

—Herb Alpert, 2019

Opposite

Bolero

2013

Herb Alpert

Acrylic on canvas

72" x 48"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

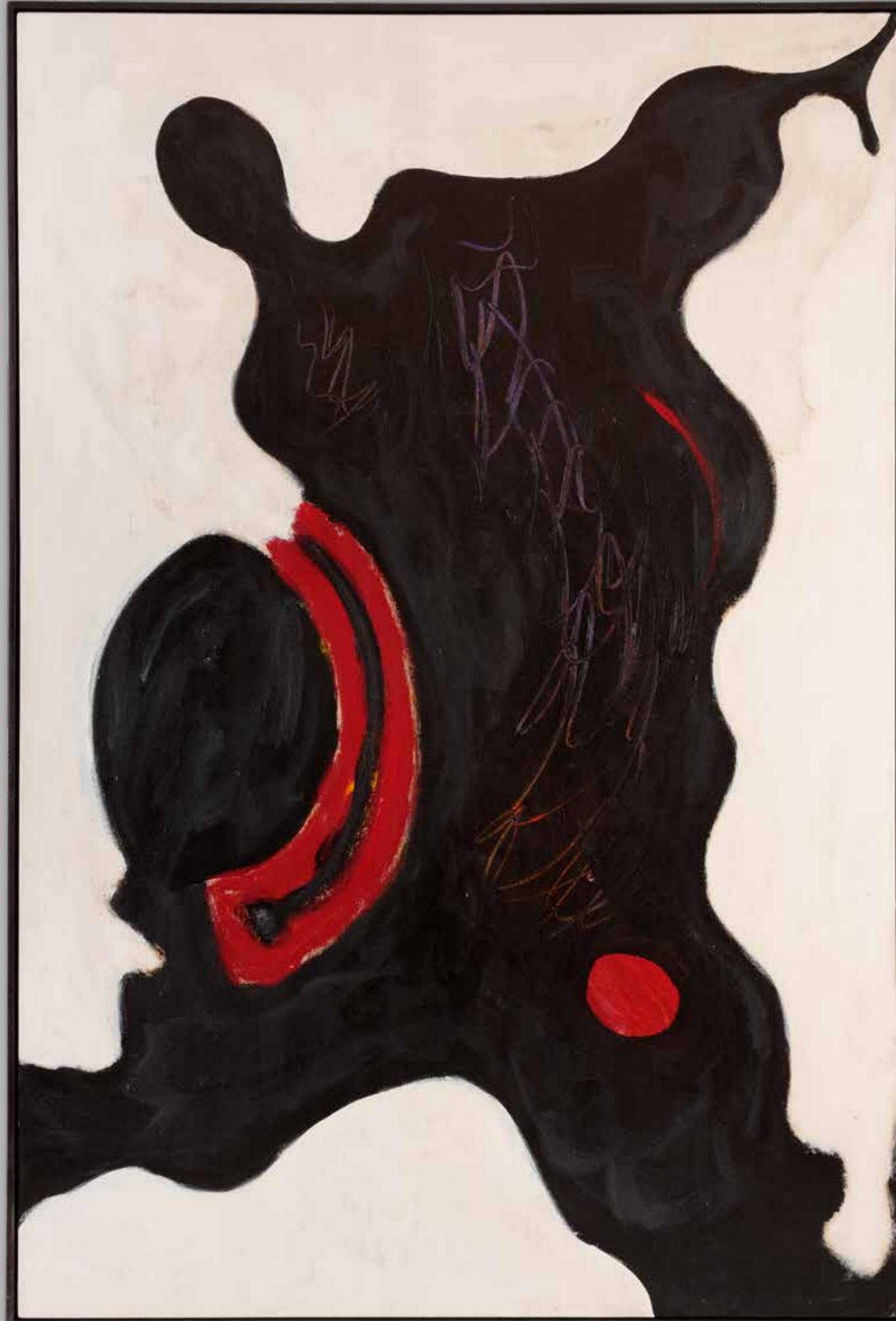
"I think it's the same with all the arts. You never quite get to that place where you're totally satisfied, but that's the beauty of it. That's what keeps you motivated and waking up in the morning really early trying to figure out what you want to do next."

Herb Alpert

Above

Herb Alpert working with clay in his studio in 2005.

Photo by Gerry Wersh, September 2005.



TOTEMS: FROM WAX TO BRONZE

Alpert's process is organic and messy and begins in the kitchen, sometimes to the amusement of his wife, singer Lani Hall of Sérgio Mendes and Brasil '66. Working with wax warmed with a small blowtorch, Alpert shapes the sculpture. Through trial and error, an artwork worthy of a larger view will emerge from the wax. The small waxwork is then carefully transported on a piece of wood to the sculpture studio where a larger edition, usually three feet tall, is created in clay on a metal armature. If this trial finds success, it may then soar to as tall as 20 feet. Or, it may be abandoned. Alpert's studio assistant, sculptor Kristan Marvell (who joined Alpert in 1991) says, "Making changes at 18 feet is a lot harder than making changes at three feet, so we start small."⁴³ That said, some pieces are so pleasing to Alpert's eye that they bypass intermediate stages and travel directly from wax to a monumental scale. A lot of clay is thrown onto metal frames to achieve the original vision that was discovered in the small waxwork. Mold making, casting, and applying the patina complete the process.

Alpert's studio features two walls of models that were considered successful over the years and were executed in various sizes and materials. This visual encyclopedia of Alpert's canon is a delight in itself.



Northern
1995
Herb Alpert
Bronze
36" x 9"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"I think my art has an honesty. You can feel it."
Herb Alpert



Genesis 1
2011
Herb Alpert
Bronze
39" x 12"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"I try to make art that appeals more to the soul than the eyes."
Herb Alpert



Warrior
2011
Herb Alpert
Cast architectural stone
34.5" x 11"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"When I'm recording, I don't try to sanitize it or make it perfect. There's no such thing."
Herb Alpert



Bird's Eye View
2013
Herb Alpert
Bronze
38" x 10"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"I hear music in the sculpture."
Lani Hall



Falcon
Circa 2005
Herb Alpert
Bronze
36" x 9"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"I started riffing on the vertical idea and began making what I would call improv jazz poles."
Herb Alpert

Below

Birdland

1986–2001

Herb Alpert

Acrylic on canvas

60" x 48"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"Traveling around the globe with my band and going to museums, I was always interested in the modern art section. So I bought some paints and started moving them around like a monkey, or an elephant with a brush in his trunk. It wasn't great, but I was having a lot of fun doing it. I just kept at it because it was something that was feeding me."

Herb Alpert



Opposite

Self-Preservation

2013

Herb Alpert

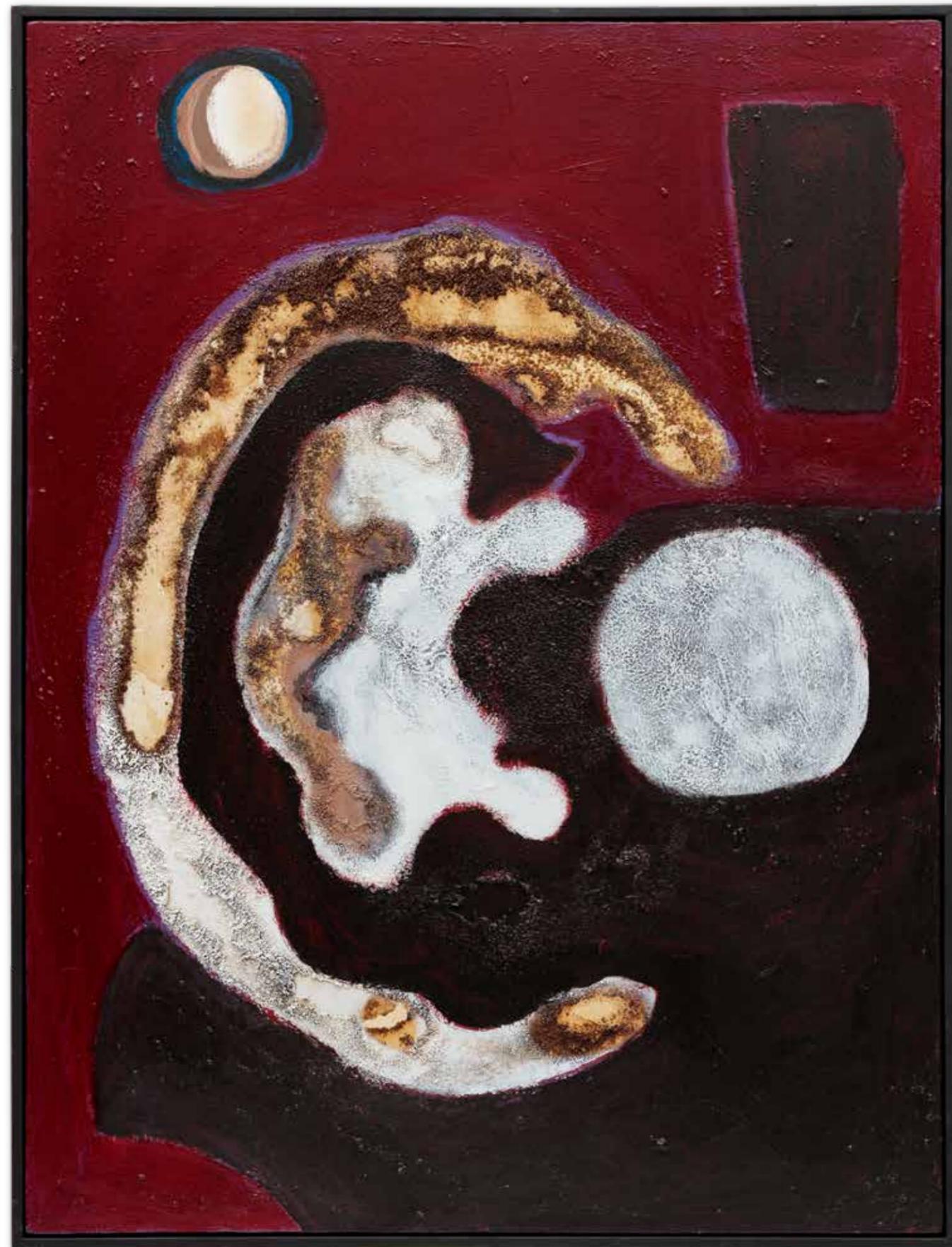
Organic coffee and acrylic on canvas

48" x 36"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"When I paint or sculpt, I don't have anything in mind. I don't have a goal in mind other than form. I'm looking for that form that touches me and when I find it, I stop."

Herb Alpert





Sculpture models

Circa 1990–2018

Herb Alpert

Bronze

Various sizes

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

A selection of models from Herb Alpert's sculpture studio.

Alpert begins his sculpture process with wax. If satisfied with the piece, it is then executed in clay and then in some cases, bronze. These figures represent working models, some of which were executed in larger sizes up to 20 feet tall.

From small to large

Alpert's studio models form a vocabulary of artworks. For example, the sixth model from the right is a sculpture of *Warrior*, which was made in a variety of sizes and media over the years. *Warrior* appears on page 65 at 34.5 inches in a white, pre-patina stage, in architectural stone; and on page 72, it soars to 13 feet in bronze.

Below

Midnight Moon

1988

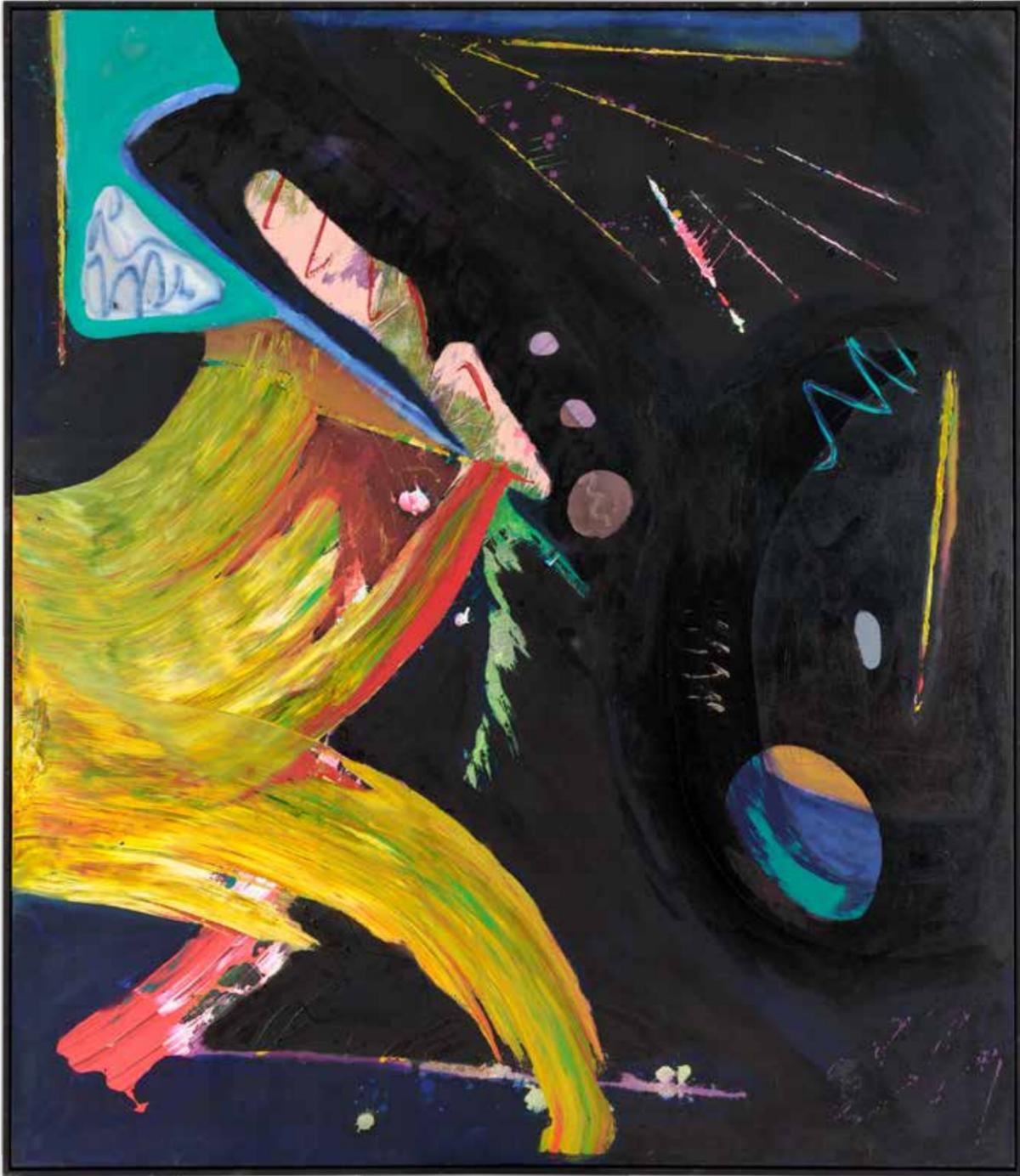
Herb Alpert

Acrylic on canvas

84" x 72"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"I think that all art is a mystery. If you like a piece of work—if you like a sculpture, or you like a painting, or you like an actor, or a dance, or anything else—you can't really put your finger on that element that touches you."
Herb Alpert



Opposite

Gratitude

2009

Herb Alpert

Bronze

17' x 25"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

A bird-like figure appears to confidently display its full wingspan atop this abstracted totem.





Opposite
Warrior

2011
Herb Alpert
Bronze
13' x 40"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

Herb Alpert's spontaneous, gestural style is evident in this monumental sculpture.

Above
Intersection

1993
Herb Alpert
Acrylic on canvas
72" x 72"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"I'm a right-brain guy. I paint, I sculpt, I play trumpet, and I have a good time doing all three."

Herb Alpert



Left
Magic Man
2002

Herb Alpert
Bronze
82" x 15"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"Long ago, I had this experience in Stanley Park in Vancouver. I saw these indigenous poles. I started doing my own version, my jazz version, of a totem pole."

Herb Alpert

Above
The Dancing Mountain
1988–2001

Herb Alpert
Acrylic on canvas
60" x 108"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"If a work doesn't buzz you, it's not for you. No one can make you react to a painting. People can get a little too intellectual about it."

Herb Alpert



Charity
2017
Herb Alpert
Bronze
12.5' x 32"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

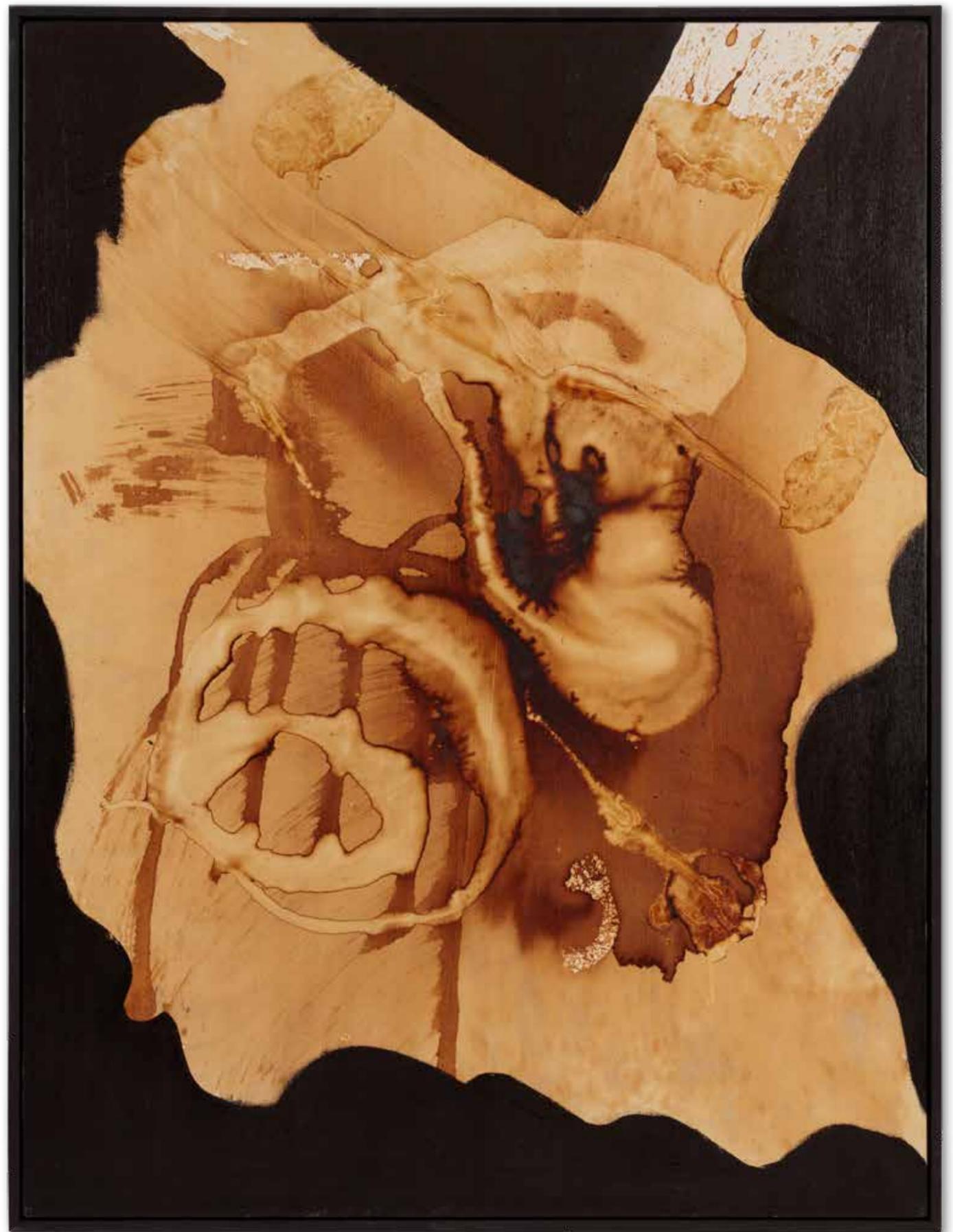
The visual experience of this sculpture, seemingly writhing and twisting its form, morphs wildly depending on the angle from which it is viewed.

Opposite
Floating Aura
2018

Herb Alpert
Organic coffee and acrylic
on canvas
48" x 36"

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

"I use concentrated organic coffee [as a medium] because of its intensity."
Herb Alpert



Endnotes

- 1 Alpert, Herb (musician, artist) in discussion with Chip Tom, April 12, 2018. Sunnylands Collection, Rancho Mirage, California, 2019.1.41.
- 2 Hunt, Jason Henry (Kwakiutl carver) in discussion with Anne Rowe, March 5, 2019. Sunnylands Collection, Rancho Mirage, California, 2019.4.2.
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- 6 Carter Jr., Amon letter to Walter Annenberg, April 4, 1972, Sunnylands Collection, Rancho Mirage, California, 2009.1.187.
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- 16 *ibid*
- 17 Hunt, Stanley (Kwakiutl carver) in discussion with Anne Rowe, July 2019.
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- 39 Alpert, Herb (musician, artist) in discussion with Chip Tom, April 12, 2018. Sunnylands Collection, Rancho Mirage, California, 2019.1.41.
- 40 *ibid*
- 41 *ibid*
- 42 *ibid*
- 43 Marvell, Kristan (Herb Alpert's art assistant) in discussion with Anne Rowe, April 16, 2019.

All quotes used in art captions were recorded by Anne Rowe, Sunnylands director of collections and exhibitions, during personal interviews that she conducted from 2018 to 2019.

Opposite

A Herb Alpert sculpture in its early stages of scaling up. Photographed at Alpert's studio in Malibu, California.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.





Acknowledgments

The inspiration for this exhibition occurred in spring 2010 when Stan, Lavina, and Jason Hunt arrived at Sunnylands to restore its 1976 Henry Hunt totem pole. A friendship emerged between the Hunts and Sunnylands—specifically, Anne Rowe, director of collections and exhibitions. Rowe aspired to bring additional Hunt family Kwakiutl art to Sunnylands and in the intervening years, she discovered that musician and artist Herb Alpert had been inspired by Northwest Coast indigenous totems to push his own abstract sculpture in a vertical direction. As an educational institution, Sunnylands seized the opportunity to tell a story of cultural connections and bring disparate artists together to create a lively visual interplay and conversation. We thank the following individuals for contributing to this exhibition.

We first thank the artists, Herb Alpert, Stan Hunt, and Jason Hunt, for their enthusiasm about the exhibition concept and their willingness to take a journey together to intermingle their work. Exhibitions often require support from within the heart of the artist's life: the family. And so we also thank Lavina Hunt (Stan's wife), Alexis Hunt (Jason's wife), Fara Hunt (Jason and Alexis' daughter), and Lani Hall (Herb Alpert's wife).

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