

Basic Detail Report



Basket

Date

early 20th Century

Primary Maker

Tlingit

Medium

Native grass to Alaska or British Columbia, possibly spruce

root, and seeds or berries

Description

Tlingit spruce root baskets are considered among the finest examples of a weaving technique called two-strand twining. Several varieties of weave are commonly used in Tlingit basketry, including: two-strand twining, between weave (plaiting with alternative rows of two-strand twining), three-strand twining, and cross warp twining. While each technique has its merits, two-strand twining was commonly used to produce a strong, tightly woven basket while allowing for the addition of designs using false embroidery ornamentation. Historically, baskets might have been used to collect berries, roots, and shellfish, or for food storage, preparation, and serving. This particular example has a small chamber in the knob of its lid that is filled with small pebbles, seeds, or berries, making a gentle rattling sound when moved. It was collected in the early 20th century, meaning it also could have been produced for sale to tourists.

Whichever may have been the case, their artistry is clearly evident. Abstract patterns are woven into the baskets, including motifs like butterfly wings, bear faces, whale teeth, path of the woodworm, tail of the raven, and flying goose. As they are passed down over generations, and through contact from Euro-Americans, Tlingit patterns have continually evolved over time.

Dimensions

Overall: 5 × 8 1/8 in. (12.7 × 20.6 cm) a: 4 3/4 × 8 in. (12.1 × 20.3 cm) b: 3/4 × 8 1/8 in. (1.9 × 20.6 cm)