CHRISTIAN MOTIFS IN PACIFIC NORTHWEST COAST NATIVE AMERICAN ART


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The purpose of this thesis is to examine Christian motifs in Pacific Northwest Coast Native American art from their first appearance in the 19th century and provide an analysis of these intercultural artworks. The works of art described in this thesis vary from art created for display, to ceremonial and religious, to art made to spread a message whether religious or political. Very little art historical research on Native art with Christian motifs and themes has been done to date. A study such as this is needed because these art pieces are important as documents of cultural interaction, and Native perspectives on the presence of Christianity in their communities. They reflect a blending of Native and Christian beliefs through combined symbols and cultural expressions. The blending of Christian motifs and ‘traditional’ Native art forms provide an example of hybridized innovative art. Each piece serves as a source of historical, social, and personal reflection on the presence of Christianity in the Pacific Northwest.