

Bill Reid Gallery: "a passage to square one"

A peculiar canoe that floats from the sky, some tapestries hanging on the walls, the striking design of clothing, the different anthropomorphic sculptures and a variety of coveted jewels. So the Bill Reid Gallery invites to the visitors to participate of the Northwest Coast aboriginal art, from reality to imagination or if you prefer, from the most remote beliefs to the current social practices.

The gallery is named "Bill Reid" in honor to the renowned artist of the native people Haida, who was a master goldsmith, sculptor, carver and spokesman of this culture. Precisely for this reason, the facility opened in 2008 to promote, to understand and to appreciate the native art of this zone.

Upon entering the Great Hall, the public is astonished finding a huge wooden totem, which zoomorphic figure is impressive for the size and the design. The author of this is Jim Hart, a descendant of the Haida culture and who

carved the totem in tribute to Reid.

Also in this section are present two important works of Bill. "Mythic Messengers" made out of bronze which represents the interlaced of wolves, whales and eagles with men; this interprets the transmission of customs and beliefs through generations. And, "The raven and the first man" is made of onyx and symbolizes the origin of man, because reflects a crow standing on a shell that is protecting some little naked guys.

The magic of contemporary textiles can be seen in the exhibition "Time Warp", which will be open until January 16th. These coats, tunics, dresses, shoes and bags are made from wool, leather, and with accessories of copper, cedar barks, colourful threads and spruce roots. While the tapestries have geometric images painted with red and black acrylics.

The gallery also has permanent shows. For example, there is an area dedicated to stunning gold and silver jewelry. Here the bracelets, medals, rings and necklaces

impress for the delicacy or the enigmatic shapes, and the inserts of pearl, shells and diamonds. And on the second floor of the building, there are some works made with mixed media, such as serigraphy, lithograph, photography, drawing and watercolor; also there is a set of small sculptures of human bodies built with wires.

Undoubtedly, Bill Reid Gallery helps us to remind the customs and the rituals of the past, to discover the meaning of life and to reconnect with nature. It is an ancestral world that should be admired. Not only because we approach to the history and the anthropology, but because it encourages us to value and protect our original peoples.