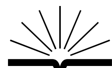
Solen Roth

Incorporating Culture

How Indigenous People Are Reshaping the Northwest Coast Art Industry



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Contents

Acknowledgments / ix

Introduction: (Giving) Back to "the way it should be" / 1

1 A Controversial Industry / 19

2 Expansion | Protection / 37

3 Globalization | Localization / 71

4 Property and Contracts | Stewardship and Relationality / 95

5 Accumulation | Redistribution / 133

Conclusion: Indigenous Sovereignty and the Sustainability of Culturally Modified Capitalism / 163

Notes / 175

Bibliography / 201

Index / 213

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INTRODUCTION

(Giving) Back to "the way it should be"

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June 20, 2017. I am at my desk editing this manuscript, poring over my own words and wondering, one last time before sending them off to the press, what I can do to make sure that they do justice to what was shared with me during my fieldwork. Knowing the importance that "witnessing" holds in Northwest Coast societies, I don't take this responsibility lightly. An email from an Indigenous-owned artware company, Eighth Generation, drops into my inbox. It concerns the "giving strategy" for its new Inspired Natives grant and links to a blog post that reads, in part:

> Eighth Generation believes that art is like any natural resource; if we want it to thrive, we need to nurture the ecosystems, communities, and the people that are creating the resource. This is why we've supported countless organizations, community events, and ceremonies over the last few years ... This high level of community engagement and support – combined with our innovative, artist-centric business practices – is setting the gold standard for companies that invoke Native themes and aesthetics in their products. In short, we are proving that companies can support Inspired Natives, not "Native-inspired" – and still be profitable. And in a nod to [the] Northwest tradition of the Potlach, we aspire to give even more as our company grows.[1]

While I was one among many others on the company's mailing list to have received the message, the post's contents were so timely and so topical that I almost felt as if it had been sent to me as a personal confirmation, neatly summarized in one paragraph, of what I had witnessed while in the field: Indigenous artists and entrepreneurs pushing the Northwest Coast artware industry to nurture, rather than exploit, their cultural resources by mirroring the local potlatching economy and becoming centred on the values of responsibility and reciprocity. This book tells the story of how this is indeed becoming a "gold standard": not yet the way things are but an aspirational norm or, as one Indigenous entrepreneur put it, "the way it should be." My retelling of this long – and as yet incomplete – process takes us back a century, when the market was headed in a much different – some might even say in the opposite – direction.

◀ OVER
Culturally modified tree. When stripping bark from a tree, Pacific Northwest peoples remove only strips roughly the width of a hand to ensure that the tree will easily recover from the harvest.

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In 1917, writing about "prehistoric Canadian motives," by which he meant the designs of the Indigenous peoples of Canada, anthropologist Harlan I. Smith suggested:

> These motives may be used as they are, or may be conventionalized, or dissected, or multiplied, or developed in several of these ways. Designers may use them as inspiration for designs which may be applied to fronts of buildings, gargoyles, fountains, terra cotta, pottery, china, ornamental work, cast-iron railings, stoves, carpets, rugs, linoleum, wall paper, stencils, dress fabrics, lace, embroidery, neckwear, umbrella, handles, belt-buckles, hat pins, book covers, tail pieces, toys, souvenirs, trademarks, and many other lines of work.[2]

Although Smith's advice was not followed by the Canadian industrialists of his time, close to a century later his vision for how and on what kinds of objects Indigenous designs could be used has become a reality – save for gargoyles, perhaps. In particular in the North American Pacific Northwest, one can find Indigenous motifs throughout urban and rural landscapes, adorning private spaces and public places, on clothing worn and objects owned by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike. Living in Vancouver, British Columbia, one comes across images and objects of Northwest Coast design on a daily basis. In continuity with the Indigenous practice of adorning objects of everyday life, Northwest Coast images are mechanically reproduced on countless decorative and utilitarian objects such as mugs, coasters, tote bags, T-shirts, scarves, jewellery, fridge magnets, chocolate wrappers, blankets, and pillow covers. The ever-increasing variety and sheer number of these Northwest Coast art-branded wares – which I call "Northwest Coast artware" – means that, in places like Vancouver, these are no longer reserved to aficionados who purposefully seek them out, but rather have become part of the fabric of life. At the neighbourhood coffee shop, the logo of the brewing company is a spirit bear. The person sitting next to you on the bus is wearing reading glasses bearing an eagle motif. At the bookstore with your children, you notice the Northwest Coast art storybook section. The earrings dangling from your physiotherapist's ears are cedar and abalone frogs. Coming back from a restaurant in Gastown, you pass the windows of several stores that sell Northwest Coast art. In the evening, your partner falls asleep in front of a movie while wrapped in a reproduction of a Salish blanket. Running along the Stanley Park seawall, you cross paths with a cyclist wearing a thunderbird-pattern hoodie.

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Depending on how accustomed they are to seeing such images and how much they appreciate Northwest Coast art, Vancouverites may notice or ignore, admire or dismiss, stay silent or remark on them – but they are bound to encounter them. What is less clear, especially to the casual observer, is how many of these items are actually designed by Indigenous artists, as opposed to those that are merely "inspired by" the graphic design of Northwest Coast peoples. While this book focuses on examples in which Indigenous artists were involved, the market continues to generate many products without any Indigenous involvement at all. Indeed, a great number of companies do not work with Indigenous artists, and instead lift images straight from books or rely on the "Native-style" work of non-Indigenous designers. Even the companies that do work with Indigenous artists are seldom Indigenous-staffed, let alone Indigenous-run. This relatively limited Indigenous involvement in the artware industry has not only raised doubts as to the authenticity of these objects, but also spurred debates concerning the merits of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working together in a field of business that some see as a risky form of cultural resource extraction.

Fragments of culture have long been transformed into commodities, local practices and identities placed at the centre of tourism ventures, and heritage work managed as a business. In the current era of what Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff call "Ethnicity, Inc.,"[3] culture is even more often regarded as a resource and discussed using the language of property.[4] However, there is a tendency to treat cultural commodification as primarily an issue of outside appropriation, with Indigenous peoples positioning themselves firmly against any and all commercial uses of their heritage. While such staunch opposition undoubtedly exists and is fuelled by past and current examples of misappropriation, cultural tourism and art markets have also long been considered as potential sources of income, pride, and cultural perpetuation for Indigenous communities.[5] As exemplified by the Northwest Coast artware industry, whether or not this potential is realized depends largely on how such markets are operated: by whom, for whom, under what conditions, and according to what values. Much as in the context of natural resource exploitation or bioprospecting,[6] the relationships and exchanges that come out of cultural commodification are varied and complex, and involve practices that are variably respectful of the integrity and renewability of the resources in question.[7] For instance, uses of Northwest Coast images without any form of Indigenous consent, compensation, or control are much more controversial and have different implications than previously negotiated, remunerated, and monitored uses of such images (although, to be sure, even these raise concerns).

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This book examines how and why Northwest Coast artware industry norms are slowly shifting towards more implication of Indigenous individuals and greater respect for Indigenous laws and economic principles, and what this shift could signal for the future of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations in the art market and beyond. The book's central thesis is that, as a result of the growing involvement of Indigenous artists, entrepreneurs, and employees in the artware industry, this market is progressively being infused with approaches to property, relationships, and economics that directly reflect the histories and cultures of the Northwest Coast's Indigenous peoples. As a result, the artware industry has been turning into an example of what I call "culturally modified capitalism": when the encounter between a capitalist market and the desire to protect culturally specific values and practices results in an economic system that remains recognizably capitalist and yet bears the marks of transformation by local worldviews. The concept of culturally modified capitalism highlights the reciprocal tension that exists between the use of capitalism as a means of perpetuating local cultures and, in turn, the perpetuation of capitalism by its integration of culturally specific values and practices. This conceptual framework is applicable to what has happened and continues to happen in a variety of other contexts, and thus provides a useful lens through which to further our understanding of cultural responses to and adaptations of capitalism around the world. However, it is undoubtedly an example of grounded theory.[8] It was generated through the study of a specific context, that of the North American Pacific Northwest, also known as the Northwest Coast, a region that has a particularly rich and fraught history of academic research, museum collecting, and interest from the art world, not to mention its deep entanglement in the politics and economics of resource extraction.

The Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific Northwest and the Idea of Northwest Coast Art

The region that anthropologists and others commonly refer to as the Northwest Coast corresponds to a segment of the Pacific coast of North America stretching from northern California to southern Alaska.[9] It is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and by the Coast Mountains to the east. Though imperfect, these delimitations are not entirely arbitrary, since they reflect cultural differences and physical geography. Still, the designation of this space as an "ethnographic area" is also the result of intellectual and social processes to which anthropological studies have contributed considerably over the course of a century and a half of academic research.[10]

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The Northwest Coast is arguably one of the most thoroughly studied regions of the world – from some of anthropology's founding figures such as Franz Boas and Claude Lévi-Strauss to twenty-first-century Indigenous scholars such as Mique'l Dangeli, Robin R. Gray, and Alexis Bunten.[11] Much of this scholarly work either focuses or touches on the institution of the potlatch and the material culture involved in these ceremonial exchanges, which are central to Northwest Coast spiritual life and social organization.[12] This book is no exception: it examines the relationship between the development of the artware industry and the age-old practice among Northwest Coast peoples of artistically adorning functional objects; it probes the link between the continued practice of potlatching and the development of an industry that enables the production, distribution, and consumption of large series of objects and images; and, last but not least, it shows how, in response to pressure to contribute to the well-being of Indigenous peoples, the artware industry is increasingly being infused with principles and practices that are typical of Northwest Coast potlatch economies.

This analysis is based on fieldwork conducted in the Greater Vancouver area, primarily in Vancouver itself and in North Vancouver, on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, the Squamish, and the Tsleil-Waututh. However, a good number of the Indigenous individuals I interviewed are affiliated to one or more other nations of the Coast Salish, Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw, Heiltsuk, Nuu-chah-nulth, Haisla, Tahltan, Haida, Tsimshian, and Tlingit.[13] More than a deliberate attempt on my part, this diversity reflects the urban Indigenous population. Since the 1950s, the city has attracted a great number of Indigenous individuals and families from across British Columbia and Canada, with a population of close to twelve thousand in Vancouver alone, and a little over forty thousand in the Greater Vancouver region.[14] In addition, Vancouver is one of the primary hubs of the Northwest Coast art market, giving artists who do not already live in Vancouver reasons to regularly visit and, in some cases, settle more permanently in the city.[15] Although faster modes of transportation, improved postal and other delivery services, and the development of electronic means of communication now make it easier for artists to remain based outside the city if that is their wish, many of the most prominent Northwest Coast art galleries and artware companies are based in Vancouver, which made it the ideal site for my fieldwork.

While I did not focus my attention on the artists of any particular Indigenous community, I did limit my enquiry to Northwest Coast art.

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This expression designates the works, both historical and contemporary, that reference or make use of the "objects and ... stylistic conventions known [by academics] from the analysis of [the] native antiquities"[16] of the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest. This includes, but is not limited to, what art historian Bill Holm famously called "formline design" and the use of shapes he identified as U-forms, V-forms, and ovoids.[17] However, the region encompasses the territories of nations that have distinct histories, languages, and forms of cultural expression. As such, even though "Northwest Coast art" remains the expression of reference in both scholarly and popular publications on the topic, this label can be criticized for glossing over the particularities of the different styles it encompasses and, with these, the particularities of the peoples who developed them. This has been especially detrimental to the recognition and appreciation of Coast Salish art and design, which does not conform to the formline canon and was initially unfavourably compared to northern Northwest Coast art.[18] In fact, I have heard some Salish artists question the inclusion of their work under the umbrella of "Northwest Coast art" for this reason, arguing that the stylistic differences from the art of their neighbours are too important for their art to be subsumed into the same category – especially since the category was initially developed largely without regard to Salish aesthetic standards. This objection is especially significant given that Vancouver, where much of the Northwest Coast art market's activities take place, sits on Coast Salish territory. With this stylistic diversity in mind, in this book I have used the expression "Northwest Coast art" when discussing the region in general terms, but do so self-consciously in reference to the ideas that have come to be associated with this category over decades of study, analysis, commentary, and practice.[19]

Pacific Northwest Indigenous material culture and artistic forms are among the world's most collected, exhibited, and studied Indigenous arts, in that regard rivalled by only a few other regions, such as the American Southwest and the Australian Western Desert. Due to the thorough documentation and intensive collection of Northwest Coast material culture by anthropologists, missionaries, and government agents, Northwest Coast art quickly garnered international attention from academics and artists alike.[20] Since the early twentieth century, Northwest Coast designs have been used to represent British Columbia as a whole,[21] and even Canada's national identity.[22] Today, Northwest Coast imagery has become an integral part of the graphic repertoire of companies that wish to promote their products as

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intrinsically "local" – at the level of this specific region or of the entire country, depending on the scale of reference. Pacific Northwest Indigenous people have met this use of their cultural heritage with a mix of pessimism and optimism. They have been very worried that these representational practices are yet another avenue of their peoples' dispossession in an ongoing "history of theft,"[23] and they have voiced these concerns very forcefully. Meanwhile, they have also seen a possible opportunity for cultural perpetuation and economic development in the face of assimilationist policies and extreme poverty. This book sheds light on this tension between cultural commodification as a threat and cultural commodification as a prospect, and the role Indigenous people have played in finding a balance between exploiting and protecting their own cultural resources in the context of an industry that is still currently dominated by non-Indigenous stakeholders. In that regard, the Northwest Coast artware industry exemplifies a struggle that many local populations around the world have faced and continue to face when it comes to the commodification of their resources, both natural and cultural.[24] For example, Cori Hayden notes that bioprospecting benefit-sharing agreements offer local peoples in Mexico "a double vision – prospecting as a promise/threat." B. Lynne Milgram argues that Philippine piña textile cooperatives rely on "capitalist relations of production to augment their livelihoods at the same time as they support extra-economic values, beliefs, and behavior." Jessica Cattelino explains that "Seminole crafts have been shaped by economic development initiatives and, simultaneously, have been a site for the production and consolidation of Seminole 'culture.'" And Jason Antrosio and Rudi Colloredo-Mansfield write that the work of artisans in Colombia and Ecuador "will not neatly measure itself in terms of a capitalist accounting of profit and returns on investment."[25] All these authors could have just as easily been writing about the experiences of Northwest Coast artists that are at the centre of this book. Even closer to the matter at hand, historian David Arnold's study of Tlingit fisheries showed that "a resilient cultural outlook allowed Tlingits to adapt collectively and as individuals to market capitalism while still maintaining important indigenous values [such as] social responsibility and reciprocity, allowing change and adaptation as well as cultural persistence."[26] However, one of the particularities of the specific example discussed in this book is that it concerns the production, distribution, and consumption of items that are a far cry from the food, medicinal plants, and handmade artisanal products that many typically associate with Indigenous peoples.

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This book discusses a wide array of objects that could be construed as souvenirs, knickknacks, kitschy giftware, or commercial art, and indeed, I have frequently heard these terms used, sometimes almost interchangeably. However, none of these expressions fully captures the range and nature of the items in question, and many have pejorative connotations. In order to avoid these inadequate terms and be as specific as possible, I use the word "artware."[27] The word "ware" is a common suffix for different ceramic types classified according to variations in clay and manufacturing (e.g., earthenware, stoneware), as well as surface modifications such as glaze and decorative motifs (e.g., printware, lustreware). Beyond this specific usage, "ware" is also used in reference to a wide range of products, from computer programs (software) to wine glasses (stemware). As a suffix, it identifies objects of the same type, grouped in relation to the word to which it is affixed (e.g., kitchenware, or items used in the kitchen). In line with these various uses of the term "ware," I define "artware" as products that could be left blank but instead are decorated with an artistic motif. Thus, I group all wares that are adorned with Northwest Coast art under the category of Northwest Coast artware.

There is no denying that art and artware are not one and the same. Artware tends to be more affordable, portable, standardized, serialized, and one-size-fits-all than art. However, the artware industry is by no means impermeably separate from the art market. Most renowned Northwest Coast artists – Ellen Neel, Doug Cranmer, Tony Hunt, Bill Reid, Robert Davidson, and Susan Point, to name a few – have participated in the artware industry, and often still do years after they were heralded as among the best in their field. Much Northwest Coast art is made using technologies that are also used in the artware industry, such as etching, laser cutting, printing, and casting. Many of the materials used in artware are also among those used in contemporary Northwest Coast art, such as cedar, abalone, copper, and other metals, as well as glass, paper, and even plastic.[28] Most Northwest Coast art galleries carry a selection of artware items, while stores that call themselves gift shops often carry a selection of one-of-a-kind artworks. Also, in Vancouver, there is no clearly marked spatial division between the sale of artworks and the sale of artware. For instance, the neighbourhoods of Gastown and Granville Island, two of Vancouver's main tourism sites, are home to at least a dozen gift shops, but also to several of the most reputable Northwest Coast art galleries. Some sell expensive artworks side by side with their less expensive reproductions.[29] Finally, contrary to common belief,

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the individuals who buy art and those who buy artware cannot be neatly divided into distinct categories: some art collectors routinely buy artware items, and tourists occasionally purchase artworks.[30] In sum, it would be a mistake to believe that there exist two parallel markets, one for Northwest Coast artware and one for Northwest Coast art, which is why this book inevitably concerns both, even if its primary focus is the world of artware. Arguably, excluding any mention of the art market from this book would have been as difficult as extracting a photographic subject from the setting in which it is being captured. However, by putting artware in focus rather than art *tout court,* this book brings attention to material culture that most authors usually only mention in passing, if at all.[31] And yet, not only do artware items play very significant roles in Northwest Coast societies – as sources of income, as potlatch gifts, as signifiers of identity – they also throw into relief the ways in which capitalism is usually neither adopted "as is" nor rejected in full by those on whom it is sprung by way of colonial encounters.

Capitalism(s) and Culturally Modified Capitalism

In general, it is difficult to say what exactly would constitute "pure" capitalism, and even more difficult to find a place in the world where such a model is actually being carried out.[32] Even in the most libertarian of nations, markets are affected by society and polity,[33] and everywhere the capitalist model is inflected by local beliefs, practices, and values.[34] As noted by anthropologist Daniel Miller, "the ideals of a totally free market, of a pure optimizing rationality choosing freely between utilities, etc., would seem quite bizarre to lay individuals reflecting on their own society."[35] Furthermore, a century after Max Weber discussed the relationship between the Protestant ethic and the rise of capitalism, the "spirit of capitalism" has found myriads of other "elective affinities," just as Weber himself imagined it could. Even what has recently been described as the "new" spirit of capitalism[36] is already being outpaced by still newer forms and practices. In fact, considering the variety of past and existing capitalisms, the unqualified and singular word "capitalism" may even seem empty of meaning altogether.[37] And yet, its prominent place in everyday vocabulary suggests that it does in fact carry meaning, if not as the attributes of one specific economic system, at least as a set of values and practices believed to be found across various iterations of the same model. Anthropologist Peter Luetchford has

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argued that the concept of capitalism has come to be equated with the belief that, in order for the economy to work properly, the only imperative should be self-interest, an idea encapsulated in the ethos that "in looking after ourselves and disregarding the needs of others we promote general economic growth and paradoxically, everyone benefits." This conception of economic behaviour has thoroughly infused the ways in which the economies of the so-called West have been run, in particular since the 1980s with the ascendance of the neoclassical paradigm. The ethos of this model, explains Luetchford, "is one of personal achievement and merit, and it has become synonymous with the profit motive."[38]

Neoclassical or not, what most capitalisms have in common is, simply put, that the means of production are privately owned and are operated for profit. However, even such a minimal definition is not enough to clearly distinguish capitalism from Indigenous Pacific Northwest economies. For instance, anthropologists Charles Menzies and Caroline Butler have shown that Tsimshian society operates within a noncapitalist economy, and yet its kin-ordered social organization governs "ownership of, access to, and rights of use of resource-gathering locations," and the circulation of these resources involves "trade for economic benefit." What makes the Tsimshian system noncapitalist, they argue, is neither the absence of privately owned means of production, nor the absence of activities geared towards economic benefit, but the fact that the wealth produced through such activities in excess of personal needs is not meant to be accumulated or stockpiled as a means to restrict access to a scarce resource but should instead be redistributed.[39] This difference may seem subtle, and yet identifying and acknowledging such differences is crucially important when trying to understand the tension that exists between the determination of capitalism and the agency of local peoples around the world.[40] Paying close attention to a variety of such departures from the capitalist model, as well as what they mean to and for Indigenous peoples, is what has enabled me to depict the Northwest Coast artware industry with more nuance and depth than simply seeing it as the steamrolling of Indigenous cultures by means of hypercommodification.

At its core, this book argues that the interplay between Indigenous and capitalist models of the economy can give rise to forms of "culturally modified capitalism," that is, an economic system that emerges from efforts to use capitalist systems of production, distribution, and consumption to sustain local cultures and ways of life. I coined this concept with reference to the designation of culturally modified tree,[41] which is a tree altered by

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Indigenous harvesting methods. For instance, Northwest Coast peoples harvest bark from cedar trees for weaving and other uses, taking only a narrow strip so that the tree is able to recover and can continue to grow. Trees with signs of such harvesting activities that occurred hundreds of years ago are still standing today, taller than they were then, demonstrating that the harvest was not a threat to their survival and growth. This care is what has allowed the practice to continue, as hundreds of cedar bark weavers today can attest it has. In other words, a culturally modified tree is a testament to the fact that something can be treated as a resource without disregarding its preservation and perpetuation. Similarly, culturally modified capitalism implies the adoption of business models that include provisions to protect and perpetuate the resources on which the market draws. Thus, culturally modified capitalism is not an alternative to capitalism per se, nor does it truly challenge the extraction of local resources for a global market; one could even argue that it merely amounts to a "culture-washing" of capitalism. However, it is nonetheless a manifestation of the belief that, in cases where participation in capitalism seems unavoidable, it may at least be possible to better harness it to sustain some aspects of Indigenous ways of life – but only on the crucially important condition that Indigenous stakeholders are able to bring their worldviews, values, and interests to bear on the market's configuration. The Northwest Coast artware industry has arguably started down this path, but it still has some distance to go before it can appease its detractors and shed its reputation of being rooted in unequivocal cultural appropriation and inequitable exploitation. Indeed, the Northwest Coast artware industry tends to be controversial to outsiders and conflicting for insiders. Given the breadth and depth of the damages caused by colonialism, the commodification of Indigenous heritage immediately raises questions of cultural appropriation and exploitation, even when it involves willing and active Indigenous participants. Chapter 1 sets the stage of this tense socio-political context, in which artists strive to increase their control over the market and Vancouver's artware companies attempt to (re)build trust with both artists and consumers. Each following chapter examines one of the specific points of friction that exist in the industry by way of the encounter of capitalism and Northwest Coast cultures.

In very broad strokes, the main features of capitalism are competitive markets, expansionism, private property, and capital accumulation. All these elements are present in today's Northwest Coast artware industry. However, it is also increasingly being shaped by pushbacks against each of these

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characteristics by its Indigenous stakeholders. This pushback manifests in protectionist measures against outside and unhindered competition, mechanisms of local control to limit the market's globalization, pressures to recognize culturally specific regimes of property, and incentives to redistribute rather than merely accumulate capital. Each chapter of this book thus examines the frictions of capitalistic processes against local histories and cultures, and discusses how these are gradually shaping the Northwest Coast artware industry into a form of culturally modified capitalism.

In Chapter 2, I examine the history of the artware industry. The last century of this market's development has been defined by attempts to balance two objectives: promoting worldwide interest in Indigenous art to expand the market, while protecting this art against non-Indigenous misappropriation and international competition. This historical chapter discusses how, due to Indigenous participants' efforts to realize the industry's potential for economic development and cultural perpetuation in their communities, priorities have been progressively changing from expansion to protection.

However, as discussed in Chapter 3, one of the legacies of the artware industry's expansionism is that it brands its products as "local" by using Northwest Coast images, but largely relies on outsourced production and the global market of plain wares, such as mugs and T-shirts produced abroad. Counterbalancing this, local players are keen to keep control and maintain the Pacific Northwest as the market's central hub. This priority has placed limitations on the globalization of this market and encouraged stronger ties with local Indigenous artists. In consequence, much artware from Vancouver-based companies, while often produced at least partially elsewhere, still passes through a centralized distribution system located in the specific region it references.

And yet, as discussed in Chapter 4, most companies are not Indigenous-owned, and few of them hire Indigenous individuals for wages. In many cases, the involvement of Indigenous people is limited to artists who receive one-time payments or royalties for their design work. Most of these arrangements follow Canadian intellectual property laws and are often within overall design industry standards. However, Indigenous stakeholders do not always assess these business transactions as actually representing fair and appropriate remuneration because they scrutinize them in relation to Northwest Coast peoples' ongoing experiences of colonial dispossession and inequity, as well as their culturally specific notions of property and exchange.

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Chapter 5 further discusses how the art market is considered an opportunity not only for individual livelihoods, but also for prosperity at the scale of communities. Beyond paying individual artists, Indigenous stakeholders have been urging artware companies to recognize the collective stakes of their business by "giving back" to Indigenous communities and organizations, monetarily or otherwise. This final chapter describes how such practices also help companies "make their name good,"[42] much as in Northwest Coast potlatch economies, where reputation and status is tied to wealth redistribution rather than accumulation.

The worldwide advance of capitalism tends to be seen as inevitably leading to the destruction of pre-existing local cultural, social, and economic systems. Most anthropologists, including myself, argue that many ethnographic examples show that this is not the case and instead demonstrate the ability of local cultures to bring their worldviews to bear on the capitalist system.[43] The extent of local peoples' agency in that regard is, in essence, what the concept of culturally modified capitalism aims to highlight. In this book's conclusion, I will use the example of the Northwest Coast artware industry to critically examine the implications of culturally modified capitalism, both as a concept – its aptness to describe how Indigenous peoples around the world are attempting to harness a system that is usually considered a threat to their ways of life in order to support their efforts of cultural perpetuation – and as a phenomenon – its potential to simultaneously threaten and reinforce these Indigenous peoples' economic and cultural sovereignty.

Producing a "Field" of Embodied and Discursive Practices

The methodology I employed was shaped significantly by the particularities of conducting research "at home,"[44] among people who do not really form a community but rather a tense, and not always trusting, network of business partners and competitors. Though initially challenging, collecting data in these conditions ultimately helped reveal the specificities of the world I was studying. For seven years, from 2006 to 2013, Vancouver was my home. During this entire period, I lived surrounded by Northwest Coast art and artware. However, my fieldwork more specifically spanned sixteen months, from January 2009 to August 2010, consisting primarily of archival research, participant observation, informal conversations, and ethnographic interviews.[45] As historian James Clifford has argued, any "field" must be "worked,

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turned into a discrete social space, by embodied practices of interactive travel."[46] In this case, my interactions with artware industry participants created the social space of my fieldwork. Although the various people I encountered were involved in the same market, they were not all connected to each other via direct and sustained social interaction.[47] The people working in the artware industry are dispersed among their homes, private studios, offices, and warehouses. Although Vancouver as a whole is a hub of activity for the Northwest Coast art and artware market, there is neither one continuous district or neighbourhood where its activities are condensed, nor any discrete site that serves as this market's centre. The site to which I did consistently return, day after day, was that of my home – the backstage of my research, from which I made phone calls, wrote emails, took notes, and transcribed interviews. Thus my so-called "tent" was not set up in the middle of a "village,"[48] since there simply was no such village in which I could pitch it (not even in the sense of an urban neighbourhood, an institution, or as Kath Weston put it, a "village-as-corporate-boardroom" or a "village-as-scientific-lab"[49]). I was, however, able to conduct participant observation during a great number of public events related to Northwest Coast art, which occur weekly in Vancouver: exhibit openings, lectures, artist talks, and public discussions, as well as community events and ceremonies, arts and crafts sales, and trade shows. Attending these events allowed me to build up a list of contacts in the industry, and many of these initial in-person encounters ultimately led to further informal conversations and in-depth interviews.

Through these contacts, I was able to visit various studios, warehouses, and manufacturing spaces, which provided me with invaluable insight into the everyday practices of artware production and distribution. As with most behind-the-scenes access, some of the activities that take place in these spaces were closed off to researchers such as myself. This meant I was not able to observe some of the things I had hoped to see, such as start-to-finish artware production processes and in-person contract negotiations. Manufacturing processes often involve trade secrets, and third parties are seldom welcome at meetings in which contracts are discussed. In addition, research participants knew that I was going to be speaking with their competitors, and eventually write publicly accessible documents. They feared I might inadvertently share information not intended for public consumption. Some of my interlocutors explicitly raised the issue of confidentiality, and wondered about the consequences my research could have for their

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livelihoods and relationships with partners and competitors alike.[50] Although it would have been interesting to be able to gain insight into certain practices from direct observation, the wide variety of first-hand perspectives I gathered through in-depth ethnographic interviews contained many important keys to understanding the industry's overall dynamics. In fact, the discourses I collected through interviews not only provide empirical data about certain practices, but are also practices in and of themselves. They are both a function of self-presentation, social differentiation, or political positioning, and also practices that produce the "world" in "worldview." Far from only being attempts at description or interpretation, what Michel Foucault called "discursive practices" also create the objects to which these descriptions and interpretations relate.[51] Thus, as well as interpreting the discourses I collected during my fieldwork within their context of reference, I also considered these discourses as directly constitutive of this context.[52]

In that respect, it is important to note that among the key characteristics of the industry at the centre of this book are the circulation of criticism and the constant making and unmaking of trust. For instance, my interlocutors repeatedly shared certain kinds of statements with me, including comparisons ("I do business in this way, whereas my competitor does it in this other way") and judgments ("This person is a terrible collaborator, whereas this other person is great to work with"). As well as potential indicators of differences in practices and values, these statements are also discursive practices that affect relationships between individuals and companies because of the reputational impact of these opinions and information. These discourses shape the reality of the artware industry and the climate of negotiated trust and distrust in which it operates, not only reflecting the industry's current "order" (who is who, who does what, who works with whom, and how), but also constituting a concrete way for industry participants to constantly shape and reshape this order by holding each other accountable for their values and behaviours.[53] For instance, an artist was contacted by an artware company owner about working on a collection of products, and in turn contacted a friend of his, another artist who had worked with this company for many years, to inquire about his experience and ask for advice. The friend discouraged the artist from taking on the project, saying that the company owner didn't always offer good rates and let too much time go by between payments. Interestingly, when I had previously interviewed this friend, he had assured me that this company was fair, supportive, and trustworthy. As far as I know, this company's practices had not significantly

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changed since we had spoken, but clearly this particular artist's satisfaction with them had. Ultimately, his comments on the company owner's practices led the new artist to decline the offer to begin working with the company.

As this example shows, in the artware industry, discursive practices can be as constitutive (or not) of business relationships as business practices themselves. This point is key to understanding how much the artware world is the result of what people say and hear, in addition to what people do and experience. It is not that the "truth" of this world is relative, nor that "good practices" are merely a matter of opinion, but rather that any attempt to change the industry's configuration would fail without taking into consideration that the relationships that make it up depend on what its various stakeholders say and think about one another, perhaps even more than on what each of them knows and believes about themselves. After examining the roots of the particular role trust plays in the Northwest Coast artware industry in the first chapter, the rest of the book will show that some of the shifts that have been occurring in this market are due to Indigenous stakeholders demanding that their interests and worldviews be heard and better taken into consideration, *combined* with the importance for non-Indigenous stakeholders that their efforts to do so be reflected in what is said and thought about them (i.e., their reputational capital). As those concerned with social justice have shown, seeking to "have a voice" is about more than being able to represent your own experience to others; it is also about finding ways to improve that experience by instigating changes in the practices of others.[54]

Thus, this book tells the story of the Northwest Coast artware industry's transformation from a capitalist market dominated by non-Indigenous interests to an Indigenous-led effort to harness capitalist means of production, distribution, and consumption for the purposes of cultural and economic sovereignty. While this trajectory has been far from linear, and is even further from complete, it provides an example in which the "subalterns" of a market are able to "speak,"[55] while the circulation of what they say has helped them move progressively away from the subaltern positions which had been ascribed to them. This example has important implications for how relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples will unfold in the future, in Canada and beyond. In a time when historical treaties are being closely re-examined, often revealing the Canadian government's failure to respect its own engagements, and when new treaties have been in negotiation in British Columbia for over two decades,[56] the stakes

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of understanding how relationships are negotiated at an interpersonal level are higher than they may appear. For if we wait on governments to establish true nation-to-nation relationships before we examine what creates trust and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals – as colleagues, business partners, neighbours, and citizens – we will have wasted precious time on the way to ensuring these relationships are centred on what Métis scholar Zoe Todd calls "loving accountability and reciprocity."[57] As this book will make clear, such is not yet the case in the artware industry, but many strive to have it recognized as "the way it should be."

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