



# The Spirit of Haida Gwaii: Bill Reid's Masterpiece

Ulli Steltzer

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Elegant and evocative, this is a classic that pays tribute to one of the great sculptural works of this century.

The artist Bill Reid, who is part Haida, is internationally renowned for his totem poles and other large pieces, as well as for his work on a small scale in silver and gold. His masterpiece, *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, is a bronze canoe six meters (20 feet) long, filled to overflowing with the creatures of Haida mythology. Its ten passengers include the Raven, the Eagle, the Bear and his human wife, the Mouse Woman and the Dogfish Woman. In the middle stands the Chief holding in his hand a smaller sculpture: a talking stick that depicts the story of creation in Haida terms.

Ulli Steltzer's superb black-and-white photographs record and reveal intimate insights into the creative process of this sculpture, as well as the parts and the whole of this monumental work. The story of the sculpture and of its creator, Bill Reid, is engagingly related by Robin Laurence. And Bill Reid's own descriptions of the creatures in the canoe provide glimpses into the mythic complexity and power of *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*.



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