

**The “Idiot Sticks”: Kwakwaka’wakw Carving and Cultural Resistance in  
Commercial Art Production on the Northwest Coast [ABSTRACT]**

**Jack Davy**

“Idiot sticks” was a derogatory term used to describe miniature totem poles made as souvenirs for white tourists by the artists of the Kwakwaka’wakw people of British Columbia in the early twentieth century. Tracking the post-contact history of the Kwakwaka’wakw using a combination of historical accounts and interviews with contemporary Kwakwaka’wakw artists, this article explores the obscured subversive and satirical nature of these objects as a form of resistance to settler colonialism, and in doing so reconsiders who really could be considered the “idiot” in this exchange.

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