

Loa Bilham'neex Ryan

Tsimshian

My name is Loa Bilham'neex Ryan. I was born and raised in the village of Metlakatla, BC, Canada. I am an enrolled member of the Tsimshian (Tsm'syen) tribe. I am of the Raven clan, Gitlan House of Xpe Hanax.

Having always been fascinated with basket making I quickly learned the basic skills of weaving, but finding a teacher who knew the traditional Tsm'syen style of weaving was impossible and I knew I would have to find a way to teach myself. To do this I began the months long process of researching this traditional weaving by examining historic baskets in museum collections. When I walked through the museum doors and saw tables lined with the baskets created by my ancestors, my eyes filled with tears. I held them in my hands, examining their shapes, weaving techniques and materials. It is from these baskets that I gained my knowledge of traditional Tsm'syen weaving.

I have woven and continue to weave traditional baskets for utilitarian and ceremonial purposes. I have also taught many young Tsimshian ladies including my daughter, Dr. Teresa Ryan, my grandchildren as well as tribal members from various tribes.

My work can be found in private collections and museums around the world including the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

Gaaydm Hatal (Hat of Cedar Bark), 2014

Plaited Red Cedar and twined Yellow Cedar

8.75 x 3.75 x 14.5 inches

Courtesy of the artist

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