



# DOUGLAS REYNOLDS GALLERY



## NULAMALA, FOOL MASK

Gene Brabant

\$5,000 CAD

---

Medium	Red Cedar, Acrylic & Horse hair
Height	18"
Width	16"
Depth	15"
Length	NULL
Ring Size	NULL

From the U'mista Cultural Society website ([click here to see](#)):

*The Nułamala "Fool Dancer" are messengers and assistants to the Hamatłsa and help enforce the laws of the Winter Ceremonies. Membership in the Nułamala Society is hereditary. The Nułamala along with the Grizzly Bear dancers cut and distribute food to make sure that the Hamatłsa are fed properly. Both societies are the "policemen of the Tłseka Winter Ceremonies". The Nułamala will attack people by throwing stones, hitting with sticks and even stabbing and killing with lances and war axes. During the Kikalnala "Return of the New Initiates" a part of the Tłseka, two veteran Nułamala dancers with their faces painted half black and half white separated by a central line down their faces, stand at both sides of the front door. They carry their own particular weapon and stand guard at the entrance of the ceremonial house. They enter first to ensure that everyone is quietly seated and showing the utmost respect to the Winter Ceremonies that are about to begin.*



# DOUGLAS REYNOLDS GALLERY

*Nułamala in this role are called Lawistolit "Angry in the House".*

According to the Kwagu't "Fort Rupert Tribe":

Nułamala dancers are initiated by a supernatural people who are called Atlasamx that live on an island floating on a lake inland from Dłaxsiwa'yi. They have enormous noses and their bodies are covered in snot. In ancient times, a man discovered these people and was taken in by them. He stayed with them for some time and when he finally returned home he was exhausted and "crazy". His nose was constantly running all the time and he ate mucus and smeared it all over his body. He urinated and defecated in the house and it took a long time for his people to bring him back to his senses. This man was said to be the first Nułamala amongst the Kwagu't. They are out of their minds and have long exaggerated noses. They are as filthy as the first Nułamala was said to have been. When a young man is initiated into this society, an old Nułamala will throw mucus from his nose onto him, thus "throwing the spirit of the Winter Ceremonial into him".

The Nułamala when he performs does not dance, but when excited, runs about like madman, throwing stones, knocking people down and making his cry, which is "Wi! Wi! Wi!". They turn right instead of left and make their circuit around the fire in the opposite direction of other Winter Ceremonies.

Adapted from "Secret Societies of the Kwagu't Indians" Recorded by George Hunt for Franz Boas

*The distinguishing feature of most Nułamala masks is an exaggerated nose from which mucus is said to constantly flow. They usually have long eyebrows that slant upwards towards the center and droop down to the sides. They have wide mouths that display a foolish grin. Nułamala dancers are very sensitive about their noses and if someone touches or plays with their nose in front of them, they will become very excited and might chase that person in anger for impersonating their habits. In Potlatch ceremonies today, the Nułamala wears a mask and may use a grey blanket that conceals a pocket that hides pieces of green seaweed or something to imitate snot, which is thrown at the guests and sometimes wiped on certain people. The Nułamala is an ancient dance and is one of the first Winter Ceremonies that the Kwakwaka'wakw had ever performed.*