



DOUGLAS REYNOLDS GALLERY



"KUGANN JAAD GIIDII" - CHILD OF MOUSE WOMAN

Robert Davidson

\$1,500 CAD

Height	25"
Width	19"
Medium	Serigraph Print

(Available framed \$2,100 measures 29" H x 2/3" W)

The original to the print "*kugaan jad giidii*" - *Child of Mouse Woman*, was an acrylic painting on canvas that was featured in Robert's exhibition, *Abstract Edge*, which opened at the Museum of Anthropology in 2004 and toured across Canada to various locations.

Mouse Woman is known throughout the Northwest Coast under different names, and is sometimes represented in the art of Bill Reid and Robert Davidson in a very abstracted manner, as so little is known about her. Mouse Woman appears rarely in historical Haida art, and when she is depicted, it is usually in combination with other figures, like on the handle of a goat horn spoon.

Mouse Woman is the mother of Raven in Haida mythology, and surfaces from time to time in stories. She is considered to be the advisor of those who have crossed, or are about to cross, the surface of the world, or travel into unknown terrain. For example, it was Mouse Woman who taught Bear Mother how to protect herself with copper when she went to



DOUGLAS REYNOLDS GALLERY

the village of the bears.

In the book *The Black Canoe*, Bill Reid relates the following story involving **Mouse Woman**: "The son of Nangldastlas, the submarine deity of Hecate Strait, once came to court a Haida girl, whose parents had refused all human suitors. When the young god's offer of marriage, like everyone else's, was refused the god kidnapped the girl. But by way of a bridal gift, he left his father's hat, which he had borrowed without permission. And it was no ordinary hat. Surf crashed on its brim. Sandpipers and turnstones flew out from it and returned. The one who wore it could raise a tidal wave by wrinkling his brow. To rescue a human taken in marriage by a god, potent help was required. The kidnapped girl's two brothers therefore went out to get superhuman wives. One of them chose (or was chosen by) the most powerful wife he could find, Xaalajaat, Copper Woman, and the other married the wisest, Qaganjaat, the Mouse Woman. Both went along, by canoe, on the rescue mission to the seafloor, where they returned Nangldastlas's hat and retrieved the girl. All three mixed marriages seem to end at this moment, but one of them has issue. Nangldastlas himself was reborn as his own grandson to the rescued girl, in her parents' house in Haida Gwaii. She and her family, following his strict instructions, placed the baby in a cradle painted with cumulus clouds, paddled it out to the middle of Hecate Strait and dropped it over the side. The cradle turned round and round to the right as it sank, and the rejuvenated god provided fish and good fishing weather in return for the gift of rebirth through the body of a woman."