

Publication preserves a part of mankind's artistic heritage

"What we see are the ghosts of villages, homes of ghost people. Even the great heraldic beasts, monsters and humans of the totem poles are now ghosts, as are the little figures I have drawn which greet you as you move from village to village in this book. But what lively, powerful ghosts these old demigods still are."

From the Foreword to *Haida Monumental Art* by Bill Reid.

Haida Monumental Art, the most comprehensive work ever compiled on the Haida monumental sculpture of the Queen Charlotte Islands, will be published in the spring of 1983 by the University of British Columbia Press. It records a period of history and a culture that produced a significant and original body of art no longer available for study in any other form.

The book, initiated as a research project by the National Museum of Man in 1966, has involved almost two decades of research for a team of experts from the Archaeological Survey of Canada under the leadership of renowned Canadian archaeologist George F. Macdonald. Contemporary Haida artist Bill Reid has written the foreword and designed ten original cartouches especially for the book.

The publication of this book coincides with the formal declaration of the Haida village of Ninistints in the Queen Charlotte Islands as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations.

Comprehensive volume

Encyclopaedic in scope, *Haida Monumental Art* is considered to be valuable



for both the specialist and general reader. In addition to the contributions by Bill Reid, the book contains a commentary by Richard J. Huyda, 274 duotone photographs, 12 pages of colour photographs, ten drawings and 15 maps.

The book begins with a description of the culture and society of the Haida at the time of first European contact. Each section of the book corresponds to one of 15 major Haida villages and includes a brief history of the people and the village — from its mythological or historical beginnings to its abandonment or decline. An archaeological plan shows the location of individual houses and poles, and detailed notes identify the owners of each house, their relatives and ancestors, and describe the mythical and natural animals carved on the major sculptures. Photographs which accompany the text portray the villages in their glory in the 1880s and 1890s and in decay.

Rapid decay

Geologist George Mercer Dawson, who took the first known plates of Haida villages in 1878, predicted that within a few years' time the "peculiar carvings and architectural devices of the Haida" would be "impossible to illustrate owing to the rapid progress of decay". Photographs taken over the next few decades reveal, as Mr. Dawson prophesied, the sudden and tragic deterioration of house fronts, totem poles, mortuary poles, and other monumental works as the Haidas came under the influence of missionaries and traders.

The Haida is perhaps the only native tribe in North America whose transition from a native pattern of architecture and

village organization to a Westernized model has been recorded photographically. The 12 pages of colour photographs depict the Haida villages and monument sites as they appear today — the once stately poles and massive house beams are now decayed fragments overgrown by the lush vegetation of the Islands.

Owing to the magnitude of this work and the high quality and skill required in its production, *Haida Monumental Art* will be published in a limited edition. It is available from the University of British Columbia Press, 303 — 6344 Memorial Road, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6T 1W5.

Author wins French prize

Quebec writer Anne Hébert has been awarded the Femina prize for her novel *Les fous de bassan*. She is the fourth Canadian to win a major French literary prize.

The novel is based on a true story about two young girl cousins from Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula who disappeared August 31, 1936, during a torrential storm, their cries heard only by seagulls swarming around them.

Hébert, 66, born in Rossamberg, Quebec, now shares her time between Quebec and Paris, where she currently lives. She has received various literary honours, including the French *Prix des librairies* in 1971 for her novel *Kamouraska*, which was also made into a movie starring Geneviève Bujold, the France-Canada prize, the Governor General's award, as well as prizes from Belgium and Monaco.

Arts briefs

The fifth annual National Book Festival will be held April 23-30 in several major Canadian cities. The Festival, supported by a Canadian Council grant of \$350 000, will be organized around literary themes including discussions on literary criticism and literary magazines, writing for children, dramatic writing and poetry. It is expected to attract booksellers, teachers, librarians and community groups interested in generating a greater interest in Canadian books and magazines.

Film director Robert Altman is returning to Montreal this month to shoot his latest film *Streamers*, an adaptation of David Rabe's play. It will be Altman's fifth film made in Canada.



Grizzly Bear house posts at Masset. (Maynard, 1884)