

## Masken – Zeugnisse geheimnisvoller Kulturen aus allen Kontinenten

Seit über 20 Jahren reist Chris Rainier, einer der wichtigsten Dokumentar Fotografen weltweit, in die entlegensten Teile der Erde, um indigene Gruppen und ihre Rituale zu fotografieren. Ob rätselhafte Masken aus Burkina Faso oder lange verborgene buddhistische Bön-Masken aus den Klöstern Bhutans – Masken sind überall Ausdruck einer tiefen Naturverbundenheit und einer spirituellen Verbindung zwischen dem Diesseits und einer jenseitigen Welt. Chris Rainier lichtet keine musealen Artefakte ab, sondern setzt faszinierende Masken und ihre Träger eindrucksvoll in Szene. Fotografien, die unter die Haut gehen – und ein unvergessliches Denkmal kultureller Traditionen, die es vielleicht bald nicht mehr geben wird.

Chris Rainier  
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GESICHTER UND MYTHEN  
VON DEN ENDEN DER WELT

# M A S K E N

CHRIS RAINIER



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## RAVEN, THE STORYTELLER, ALASKA

Among the Tlingit people who live on the rugged inlets and bays scattered along the northwestern coast of North America is the story of the raven. While researching the people of the First Nations, in both Canada and Alaska, I was introduced to an amazing man—a teacher, a mentor for youth, a storyteller. His name is Gene Tagaban. Through dance and performance while wearing his raven mask, Gene helps indigenous youth reconnect to their culture and their pride in it. He speaks not of “de-colonizing” modern indigenous culture but rather of “re-indigenizing” all people regardless of their color, ethnicity, or religion. He believes the way to healing “our broken planet” is for humanity to reconnect to our past and rebuild our original relationships with the earth, the sky, the water, the forest, and the animals. Gene’s grandmother spoke to him of the teachings of the raven in the Tlingit culture: “How the wise raven freed the stars, the moonlight, and the sun into the nighttime sky and opened the Box of Daylight. And how all the people saw daylight for the first time.” She told Gene as a young man: “You are the light of the world. Share your light and light the fire in the hearts of the people. You will see their spirits shine.” Now Gene travels the world teaching the ways of his people. He and I met on a cold fall day in the Northwest where the land meets the Pacific Ocean and, as the light faded in the late afternoon, he shared with me the powerful and moving story of the raven.





BUDDHIST MONK MASKS, MUSTANG REGION, NEPAL



## KATHAKALI MASK, KERALA, INDIA

India is a country rich with dance and theater drawing upon ancient mythical stories of good and bad and the cultural tension of being a good human. For over two thousand years, India has been the epicenter of some the world's best performance rituals and dances. Near Kerala, in the hot and humid south of India, where the jungles still pulse with ancient spirits, the Kathakali dance performers spend hours painting themselves with intricate layers of color and donning elaborate costumes and jewelry. Kathakali is considered one of the most important forms of classical Indian dance. Wearing their masks of paint, the dancers use classic Indian dance techniques with elaborate hand gestures in a performance whose roots lie in ancient Hindu and folk legends. The masks themselves evoke a sense of darkness, mystery, and sinister intention, often balancing the forces of good and evil.







LEAF MASKS, BWA REGION, BURKINA FASO



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MASKED TATANUA DANCERS FOR THE MALANGAN, NEW IRELAND