



Although all lands touched by the Pacific Ocean were proclaimed for the king of Spain during the 1500s, during the 1700's the Aleut natives (of the Aleutian Islands which stretch from Alaska almost to Siberia), were forced by Russians to use their master sea mammal hunting skills, to hunt otter from their swift murderous kayaks. With otter pelts fetching a fortune, they were hunted mercilessly. The hunters decimated them to near extinction, into Upper or *Alta* California as where we live now was called by Spain, and far south beyond San Diego, into their extreme southernmost habitat halfway down the peninsula of Lower or *Baja* California. Spain felt threatened by these poaching Russians who built forts and warehouses down the



Urban Tree  
Embarcadero  
San Diego  
Jonathan Louie, artist  
jonathan@sinuous.com

Otterwood is an epitaph to the sea otter. The kayak was the vessel of the hunters who decimated the otter population. Withdrawn from the sea, now pointed toward the sun, this urban tree is inspired by the historic origin of San Diego, both politically and naturally – a California ripe with kelp forests, otters, fish and peoples.

otterwood