

## PRESS RELEASE

## Alaska State Museum

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### Rie Muñoz Art Featured at State Museum This Summer

Rie Muñoz, one of Alaska's most recognized artists, is widely celebrated for her warm and whimsical interpretations of everyday life across this vast state. This summer, the Alaska State Museum will host a retrospective look at her more than 50-year career. The exhibition, featuring original paintings, tapestries, and memorabilia, will open May 13 and run through September 23, 2006.

An opening reception will be held from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 13, as part of Juneau Museum Day. Admission is free. The artist will meet the public and sign books from 12 until 3 p.m. The Friends of the Alaska State Museum will provide refreshments between 1 and 3 p.m.

Muñoz, a long-time Juneau resident who received a 2004 Governor's Award for the Arts, has been drawing and painting scenes of everyday life in Alaska since the early 1950s. Her stylized and colorful work is easily recognized. She is best known for her watercolor paintings, but she has also produced lithographic, stencil and silkscreen prints as well as murals and stained glass works. Several books have documented her art and her illustrations enliven children's books and many other publications nationwide.

Muñoz's prints adorn the walls of homes across the United States. Her work is carried by more than 150 galleries in the Pacific Northwest and Canada. In 1999 she received an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities degree from the University of Alaska.

Originally from Southern California, Muñoz first came to Alaska in 1950 on a tour ship. While visiting Juneau, she decided to see if she could find a job. She did, and has lived in Alaska ever since. She married, and in 1951-52 was a teacher on King Island in the Bering Sea, a formative experience for her. She later raised a son and held a number of arts-related jobs before deciding to devote herself full time to her art in 1972.

Muñoz's experiences on King Island attracted her to the traditional culture of Alaska's Native peoples, especially the Yup'ik Eskimos of Western Alaska. Her sketching trips to this area provided material for numerous paintings depicting every-day subsistence life. Muñoz has also sought to show the ordinary, everyday events that define life in Southeast Alaska, such as bathing in warm springs, riding ferries, fishing, picking berries, and walking dogs. She has an artist's eye and a cartoonist's wit that sees the defining details that enliven the characters of the people she depicts.

"Many Alaskans have unwittingly been subjects and inspiration for my paintings," Muñoz says. "For instance, if you were in Tenakee when the humpback whales were performing in front of town a few summers ago, it's likely you're in the painting 'Whales in the Inlet.'" The artist maintains a second residence in the town of Tenakee, on Chichagof Island, accessible from Juneau only by small plane or ferry.