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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARTIST DEMONSTRATOR PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR JUNE AT THE SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

The Sheldon Jackson Museum has released the schedule for its Native Artist Demonstrators program for June. Sessions are scheduled every weekday throughout the month. Four different artists will demonstrate their specialties beginning with Emily Johnston, a Cup'ik Eskimo grass basket weaver and skin sewer.

Johnston is originally from Nunivak Island, and now lives in Anchorage. She learned basket making from her mother and grandmother, and states that "The musk ox design is one that has been handed through my family ever since the musk ox were re-introduced to Nunivak Island. I like to work in both grass and skins, but I mainly I like to make things from grass." Johnston will be in the galleries June 1-5, from 9 a.m. to noon, and from 1 to 5 p.m.

Cass Pook is well-known in Sitka for her traditional Tlingit beadwork and basketry. Pook will show during the second week of the month, June 8-12, from 9 a.m. to noon, and from 1 to 4 p.m. Pook trained with her grandmother, Annie Jacobs, and with Esther Littlefield. She has taught beading to students at the Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall and has demonstrated at the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center. Pook also has demonstrated at the Museum in past summers. She is a member of the Eagle Clan and Killer Whale House.

From June 15-19, and June 22-26, Selina Alexander, an Athabascan artist, will show and explain the arts of caribou hair tufting and beading and skin-sewing. Alexander grew up along the Yukon River between Ruby and Galena. She now lives in North Pole during the winter, and at a fish camp, 30 miles below Ft. Yukon, during the summer. She learned beading and skin-sewing from her mother, grandmother, and other elders, as well as from books, museums, and workshops. She is also part of the faculty for the Sitka Fine Arts Camp this summer. Alexander will be demonstrating only during the mornings, from 8 a.m. to noon.

June Pardue of Sutton, originally from Old Harbor on Kodiak Island, will demonstrate June 29 and 30 from 8 a.m. to noon, and July 1 – 3 from 8:30 to noon and from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. She will also be at the museum the first two weeks of July. Pardue weaves grass baskets in the Aleut tradition. She also makes authentic Aleut regalia and other items, which will be available for visitors to see. She has previously demonstrated her basketry and beading skills at the Sheldon Jackson Museum as well as at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage and conducted workshops at numerous places around the State.

The Native Artists Demonstrators Program enables Native artists from throughout Alaska to come to Sitka and demonstrate their particular art or craft for visitors to see. Working in the museum also affords Native artists from all over Alaska the time to study the Sheldon Jackson Museum’s extraordinary collection, one of the world’s most comprehensive collections of Alaskan ethnographic art and technology as it was prior to 1930.

The program has been supported for many years by The Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum. This year, the Friends received a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for support of the program through 2010. Additional support comes from the Alaska State Museum, Alaska Airlines, Shee Atika Totem Square Inn, the Antique Tribal Arts Association and donations from many individuals.

Participating artists are chosen for their acknowledged skill in tradition-based Native arts and for their ability and willingness to discuss their work and their culture. The program helps visitors make a connection with Native art and culture and allows visitors to see that traditional art forms continue to be a part of Alaska Native life. Additional artist demonstrators are scheduled through September.

For more on the demonstrators program go to:
http://www.museums.state.ak.us/sheldon_jackson/sjnativedemos.html, or contact the museum at 747-8981 for a complete listing of the 2009 Native Artist Demonstrators Program.

Summer hours at the museum are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Summer admission is \$4. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge.



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