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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

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TRIO OF ARTISTS WITH SOLO EXHIBITS AT STATE MUSEUM

A trio of new art exhibitions promises to enliven the upcoming holiday season at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau. Friday, November 6, the museum will open separate solo shows by contemporary artists Dan Fruits of Juneau, Hall Anderson from Ketchikan, and Stephen Gray of Anchorage. A free opening for the shows, sponsored by the Friends of the Alaska State Museum, is scheduled from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. as part of Friday's Gallery Walk. Fruits and Anderson will be in attendance. The exhibits will remain on display until Jan. 15.

Fruits is a painter who works with Alaska landscapes and village scenes. His work draws out the moods and psychological overtones of his subjects. Fruits lives at Tee Harbor, and the paintings in this show will focus on scenes of Lynn Canal, with other images being inspired by the travel to Alaska villages he did in the past while working with the Artists in the Schools program.

He has had previous exhibitions in Juneau, most recently at the Juneau Arts & Culture Center in January. In 1996 he created a multi-media performance piece based on the wreck, in Lynn Canal, of the passenger steamer Princess Sophia. His current work is primarily in acrylic, although in the past he has also worked with oil, watercolor, and monoprints.

Fruits received a degree in arts and education from Ball State University in Indiana and has taught studio art at both Ball State and the University of Alaska Southeast. As a student he served apprenticeships in both London and Paris. He has several percent-for-art commissions in Alaska and his work has been included in the biennial All Alaska Juried Art Exhibition a number of times.

In a related event, the museum is sponsoring a family day activity on Saturday, November 7, from noon to 3:00 p.m. A variety of painting styles and techniques will be demonstrated and taught under the guidance of Plein Rein, painters Dan Fruits, Jane Stokes, Jim Heumann, Barbara Craver, and Christine Crooks.

Ketchikan photographer Anderson is a well-known photo journalist. He will present an overview of his work, depicting "news events that have happened in the region since 1983 through strong images that have artistic merit."

Hall Anderson has worked for more than 20 years as staff photographer at the Ketchikan Daily News. His Associated Press work has been picked up by newspapers across the country and his photographs have been published internationally. He is a regular Alaska Press Club award winner.

Anderson studied photography at the University of Oregon and his work has been influenced by the great photo-essayists such as Robert Frank and Danny Lyon. He credits Mary Ellen Mark with inspiring him to undertake one of his early photo essays on logging truck drivers in Alaska. He has had a number of gallery shows of his work, in Ketchikan; Emeryville, California; and Eugene, Oregon. He recently received a project grant from the Rasmuson Foundation to produce a book.

Stephen Gray manipulates photographic imagery on a computer, often combining it with imagery found on the Internet. He will show digital prints from a series called "The Billy Adventures," that explores "the dialectic between the 'good little boy' and the dark boundaries of the human psyche."

Gray's show will include 13 digitally altered images from a series he has been working on over the past five years. His character Billy represents "a semi-autobiographical exploration of childhood experiences through an adult perspective."

Gray was born in 1958 in Anchorage and graduated from Oregon State University in 1984. His first solo exhibitions were at the Visual Arts Center in Anchorage in 1991 and at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art in 1992. Since that time he has had solo shows in Portland, Oregon, at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and been a part of more than 30 group exhibitions including "New Photography" in Pomona, California, and "Alaska Positive" at the Alaska State Museum.

Every two years the Alaska State Museum solicits Alaskan artists to submit their portfolios for solo exhibitions. The current series will conclude in the spring.

Winter hours at the museum are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and under are admitted free of charge. An annual pass that allows unlimited visits to the Alaska State Museum and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka is available for \$15. Assistance is available for visitors with special needs. Please contact Visitor Services at 465-2901 before the visit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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