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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: **January 21, 2010**

BEST OF ALASKA CRAFTS AT THE STATE MUSEUM

The work of Alaska's top craft artists will be on display at the Alaska State Museum beginning Friday, Feb. 5. Earth, Fire and Fibre XXVII, a juried exhibition featuring works in clay, fabric, wood, metal and other materials, opens with a free First Friday reception from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. sponsored by The Friends of the Alaska State Museum.

Earth, Fire and Fibre is organized every two years by the Anchorage Museum at the Rasmusen Center as a competitive showcase for Alaska artists who work in traditional craft genres such as jewelry making, ceramics, quilting and wood carving. The exhibition is one of the state's longest running juried exhibitions. Selected artworks often challenge the usual preconceptions, blurring the lines between art and craft.

Fairbanks artist Margo Klass won the \$1,000 Juror's Choice Award for a series of hand-made books with porcelain covers and illustrations made using the "pochoir" process, a meticulous stenciling method that results in bright and dramatic prints.

This year's juror was Patricia Watkinson, the former executive director of the Pilchuck Glass School, near Seattle. She has served as a reviewer for many state and national art agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts.

"The intimacy and innate communication of the handmade object is something rare in our modern lives," Watkinson wrote. "It is why the crafts, however broadly they are defined and however keenly debated, continue to maintain their meaning for artist and viewer alike."

Other individual cash awards went to: Anne Lingener-Reece of Anchorage, for a body of work in silver; Diane Melms, Anchorage, for textiles; Rika Mouw, Homer, for work in jewelry; Paula Rasmus-Dede, of Chugiak, beadwork, Wendy Smith-Wood, Sutton, textiles; and Rebecca Starry of Anchorage, multi-media jewelry.

Ellen M. Anderson is the sole Juneau artist represented in the exhibit with her piece, “Minerality,” made of hand-painted silks, net, beads, and distressed felt.

Entries included 313 works of art from 113 Alaska artists. From these, Watkinson selected 82 works from 50 artists. For the Juneau venue, 52 artworks are being shown.

“Earth, Fire and Fibre” is funded in part by a grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

A separate press release describes two additional exhibitions that are opening that same evening: solos shows by artists Bill Brody of Fairbanks and Annette Bellamy from Halibut Cove.

Winter hours at the Alaska State Museum are 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Discounted winter 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. For assistance, or further information, please contact Visitor Services at 465-2901.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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