

Linda S. Thibodeau

Director

Division of Libraries, Archives,
& Museums

lam.alaska.gov

SEAL OF THE STATE
STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Robert C. Banghart

Chief Curator

Alaska State Museums

395 Whittier St.

Juneau, Alaska 99801-1718

907.465.2901

Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: January 20, 2012

February First Friday the Alaska State Museum Celebrates Opening of Historic Photo/Artifact and Solo Artist Painting Exhibits

JUNEAU – The Alaska State Museum will celebrate February First Friday with the opening of two new exhibits: “Sailing for Salmon: The Early Years of Commercial Fishing in Alaska’s Bristol Bay, 1884-1951,” curated by historian and conservationist Tim Troll; and “Open Book,” a collection of paintings, mixed media, handmade journals, and found art by Ester artist Sandy Gillespie. Admission for First Friday is free from 4 to 7 p.m. An opening reception will be provided by The Friends of the Alaska State Museum.

“Sailing for Salmon: The Early Years of Commercial Fishing in Alaska’s Bristol Bay, 1884-1951” The exhibit presents photographs and artifacts documenting 125 years of commercial fishing the world’s largest sockeye salmon run before the introduction of motorized boats. (See separate press release about this exhibition).

In “Open Book,” visual artist Sandy Gillespie blends abstract oils, mixed media, encaustic—or “hot wax”—painting, and bookmaking to explore the relationship between communication and art. A bookmaker and writer in addition to her work as a painter, Gillespie complements the large paintings with much smaller handmade journals and found art.

In her show, Gillespie explores both sides of the coin: large vs. small, words vs. art, process vs. outcome. The thought behind the show (in Gillespie’s words): “the idea of life as book, book as life, our ever-present communication with the world around us.”

Pieces range in size from five-foot by six-foot canvases to a four-inch by four-inch handmade journal, and all incorporate writing in some way. Gillespie is currently living in Homer, where she operates a studio, though she has been living in Alaska since 1990, when she came to Alaska from California to enter the Master of Fine Arts in creative writing program at University of Alaska Anchorage. She was once Director of Visual Arts and Literary Programs for the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

The following morning, Saturday, February 4, Sandy will be the featured artist and instructor during a free youth activity for 3rd through 5th grade students. The workshop titled “Art Journaling” will offer students the opportunity to look at Sandy’s work with her and create their own abstract multi-media piece using paint, fabric, words, and letterforms to tell a story. Pre-registration is required. Call the museum during normal business hours to register. The workshop is sponsored by the Friends of the Alaska State Museum and paid for in part by the citizens of the City and Borough of Juneau through sales tax revenue.

Both exhibits will be on display until March 10, 2012.

Winter hours at the 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. Please contact Visitor Services at 465-2901 before the visit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

395 Whittier, Juneau, AK

Phone (907) 465-2901 Fax (907) 465-2976

www.museums.state.ak.us