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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AN URBAN TWIST ON A NATIVE TRADITION
Alaska State Museum Presents Mask Carver
Drew Michael's Solo Artist Exhibit "Life Expressions"**

JUNEAU – To Anchorage mask carver Drew Michael, life is filled with dichotomies: growing up Alaska Native in a white family; exploring indigenous roots while living in the middle of a city; practicing an ancient art in modern times—he even has a twin brother.

No wonder dichotomy—"a world split in two" is how he puts it—features prominently in Drew Michael's new solo artist exhibit at the Alaska State Museum, which opens on First Friday, February 1, 2013.

With an urban twist on Alaska Native tradition, Michael incorporates aspects of traditional and contemporary design, combining natural elements such as wood, bone and feathers with more modern materials like plastic, metal and leather.

Born in Bethel, Alaska, Michael, who is Yup'ik and Inupiaq, grew up in Eagle River, adopted by parents of European descent. Now 28, he cut his teeth in mask carving at age 13 when his father enrolled him in a class with masters Bob Shaw and Joe Senungetuk. Since then, he has worked at the Alaska Native Heritage Center and studied with such esteemed traditional carvers as Kathleen Carlo. But Michael's work, deeply personal, sometimes crafted with power tools from found objects, also reflects his modern, urban environment.

"Life Expressions" appears as part of the Alaska State Museum's 2013 Solo Artist Series. Michael created some of the pieces under a 2012 Artist Project Award from the Rasmuson Foundation.

Drew Michael's "Life Expressions" runs February 1 through March 7, 2013 during regular Museum hours. February First Friday reception begins at 4:30 pm, sponsored by Friends of the Alaska State Museum. Drew Michael will lead a walk-through of his exhibit at 7 p.m.

Winter hours are 10 a.m. – 4 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 by contacting Visitor Services at 465-2901 before the visit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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