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Exhibition celebrates a decade of collecting contemporary art for Alaska museums

'Living Alaska' reception Thursday, July 7, 5:00-7:00pm at the Alaska State Museum

Opening remarks at 5:30pm

In 2003, Alaska's Rasmuson Foundation launched its Art Acquisition Fund to provide grants to museums that collect current work by Alaska artists. In its first ten years, the fund distributed nearly \$2 million and helped 33 museums purchase more than 1,000 works by 436 artists.

"Living Alaska: A Decade of Collecting Contemporary Art for Alaska Museums" presents a retrospective of these works. This exhibition of art from museum collections around Alaska hints at the breadth and depth of the contemporary art being collected in Alaska museums.

Thematically, the exhibition focuses on the natural environment, Alaska Native experience, and life in 21st century Alaska. Artwork explores Alaska's landscapes, animals, materials, and the issues that surround them. Another group of pieces reflects the perpetuation of Alaska Native traditions. Artists examine, reinterpret and celebrate cultural practices, fusing traditional and new media to express their 21st century identities. A third group of works documents the contemporary Alaska experience, using visual art to study subjects like politics, employment, and modern material culture.

The result is an exhibition with a broad, contemporary, Alaska feel. Portraits of glaciers and rubber boots, items made with fish skin, a ceramic mask and a moose hide cell phone case highlight the great natural and cultural diversity of Alaska and artists' efforts to tell the story of this place.

"Artists help us examine the human condition which is demonstrated through creative expression in the form of visual and performing arts, cultural traditions, literary arts, and media. Artists help interpret complex phenomena, or simply convey the great beauty that surrounds us in our natural world," said Diane Kaplan, President and CEO of Rasmuson Foundation. "We hope the Art Acquisition Fund has made a difference for artists and museums in the state, and that we

are further along in creating an important and invaluable permanent collection of contemporary artwork for Alaskans.”

“Living Alaska: A Decade of Collecting Contemporary Art for Alaska Museums” is on view through Sept. 5, 2016, at the Alaska State Museum in the Father Andrew P. Kashevaroff Building at 395 Whittier Street.

This traveling exhibition, curated by Sven Haakanson Jr., includes 25 works from 12 Alaska museums. The exhibition at the Alaska State Museum also includes 16 additional works from the Alaska State Museum’s contemporary art collection.

After the exhibit closes at the Alaska State Museum, it will travel to the University of Alaska Museum of the North (Fairbanks), the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository (Kodiak) and the Museum of the Aleutians (Unalaska).

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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