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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

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ARTIST DEMONSTRATOR PROGRAM WINDS UP AT THE SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

The Artist Demonstrators program at the Sheldon Jackson Museum concludes another summer with the appearances of two Alaska Native artists, Roy Levine and Robert Hoffman in September.

Levine is a wood carver of Aleut, Russian and Swedish descent. He grew up in Kodiak and came to Sitka while in his teens to attend Mt. Edgecumbe High School. His major interest is Aleut art, particularly open-crown bentwood hats, baidarkas, and masks.

“I use cedar, spruce, yellow cedar and alder, says Levine. “I love working with the soft woods. I find it relaxing and very spiritual. While carving I reflect on the artists who walked along a beach, picked up a piece of driftwood and created the beautiful art that is all over the world. I like to teach and share my experience with others.”

Robert (Davis) Hoffmann, whose Tlingit name is Xaashuch’et, is originally from Kake. Hoffmann is primarily a wood carver but has recently been experimenting with casting. He also does painting and multimedia sculpture. In his artist statement Hoffman says: “My ideas come from the ones who came before me; a culture that has been here thousands of years, an art form evolving for centuries, to which I connect when I create.”

He is an accomplished and published poet as well. “Soul Catcher” was published by Ravens Bones Press, Sitka, in 1986. In 2006 he designed the sets for Juneau’s Perseverance Theater production “Tlingit Macbeth.” In the spring of 2007 his cast masks were used in the same presentation done at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. His latest achievement comes with the publication of “Raven House Mouse,” written by Jan Steinbright and illustrated by Hoffmann.

The schedule for the demonstrators is:

- Roy Levine: Sept. 1 – 2, 9 – noon, 1 – 4 p.m.; Sept. 3 – 4, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.; Sept. 14 – 18, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.; Sept. 22 – 25, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Robert Hoffman: Sept. 8 – 10, 9-noon, 1 – 4 p.m.; Sept. 11, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

The museum is closed Sept. 7 for Labor Day.

The Native Artists Demonstrators Program enables Native artists from throughout Alaska to come to Sitka and demonstrate their particular art or craft for visitors to see. Working in the museum also affords these artists time to study the Sheldon Jackson Museum's extraordinary collection, one of the world's most comprehensive collections of Alaskan ethnographic art and technology as it was prior to 1930.

The program has been supported for many years by The Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum. This year the Friends received a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for support of the program through 2010. Additional support comes from the Alaska State Museum, Alaska Airlines, Shee Atika Totem Square Inn, the Antique Tribal Arts Association and donations from many individuals.

Participating artists are chosen for their acknowledged skill in tradition-based Native arts. The program helps visitors make a connection with Native art and culture and allows visitors to see that traditional art forms continue to be a part of Alaska Native life.

For more on the demonstrators program go to:

http://www.museums.state.ak.us/sheldon_jackson/sjnativedemos.html, or contact the museum at 747-8981 for a complete listing of the 2009 Native Artist Demonstrators Program.

Summer hours at the museum are daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Summer admission is \$4. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge.



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