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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Annual Native Artist Demonstrators Program Begins Again at Sheldon Jackson Museum

For the twenty-first year, the Sheldon Jackson Museum will present its Native Artists Demonstrators Program during the summer. The 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 Native artists from all over Alaska the time to study the Sheldon Jackson Museum's extraordinary collection, one of the state'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.

During the summer, artists present traditional arts as they are practiced by Alaska's indigenous cultures. These traditions, which are reflected in the museum exhibits and collections, include: woodworking, ivory and silver carving, drum making, beading, skin sewing, and basket and textile weaving. The artists may be Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Aleut, Alutiiq, Athabaskan, Yup'ik, or Inupiaq, and although not all cultures and all art forms are represented in any one year, over time, the program aims to be comprehensive.

Participating artists are chosen for their acknowledged skill in tradition-based Native arts and for their ability and willingness to discuss their work and their culture. 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.

The program will begin on May 6, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., when local artist David Galanin will demonstrate silver carving. Galanin, who combines Tlingit tradition with his own vision in his work, began carving in 1982 under an apprenticeship with Louis Minard at the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center in Sitka. This will be Galanin's only appearance this summer at the museum. Galanin is of the Kaagwaantaan clan, from Eagle Nest House. He creates both traditional and contemporary pieces in precious metals as well as in copper and brass.

The schedule gets busier the following week as the museum goes to summer hours. Unless otherwise noted, demonstrators will be in the galleries from 9 a.m. to noon, and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Longtime Sitka resident Sarah Williams, originally from Fort Yukon, will work in the museum May 12 -14, and again on May 26, 27, 28 and 31. On the 28th and 31st she will do only morning sessions.

Williams learned her beading craft at an early age by watching her grandparents. She creates a wide range of beaded objects including purses, scissors cases, and traditional baby carrying straps. Williams moved to Sitka some 30 years ago where she continues her traditional Athabascan artwork. “My people are known worldwide for their beadwork, especially for the style that comes from Fort Yukon,” Williams said. Brightly colored floral patterns on a white background is the Fort Yukon beading style.

Aleut/Alutiiq artist Patrick Lind, from Homer, will be on hand the week of May 18 through 22. He replicates traditional spears, headgear, masks and paddles, as well as kayak models and ivory sculptures. Lind works in acrylic paints, pen and ink, and carves in ivory, baleen, soapstone, and cedar, often incorporating artificial sinew and Russian trade beads into his work. He has taught the arts and crafts of his culture to groups of all ages around the state and lectured and demonstrated on cruise ships in southeast Alaska.

Additional artist demonstrators are scheduled through September. More details will be released throughout the summer. Support for the program comes from the Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum, the National Endowment for the Arts the Alaska State Museum, Alaska Airlines, Shee Atika Totem Square Inn, the Sitka Fine Arts Camp and donations from many individuals.

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.

Winter hours at the museum are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Summer hours begin May 12 and are daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Winter admission is \$3 and summer admission is \$4. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with annual passes are admitted free of charge. Annual passes are available for \$15.

