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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Native Artist Demonstrators program continues into fall at Sheldon Jackson Museum

Yup'ik artist Mary Beans is the first artist scheduled for August at the Sheldon Jackson Museum's Native Artist Demonstrators Program. Sponsored by the Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum and supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the program brings artists to Sitka to demonstrate their particular art or craft for museum visitors.

Beans is a Yup'ik skin sewer and beader who makes a variety of items from sealskin and decorates them with beadwork. Beans was born in Bethel, on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and currently lives in Sitka. She learned skin sewing from her mother and grandmother and has since learned beading from her daughter. She has a BA in education and has taught elementary school. Growing up in Bethel, Beans learned traditional stories and had many "bush" adventures which she often shares with visitors.

Beans will demonstrate on August 2 from 9 a.m. to noon, August 3-5 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., August 6 and August 20 from 1 to 5 p.m., August 16 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., August 17 from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m., August 18 from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m.

Cass Pook of Sitka will be in the galley every other weekend into September. Pook is known for her traditional Tlingit beadwork and basketry and has demonstrated at the museum in past summers. She will be sharing her skills from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on August 7 - 8, August 21 - 22, and September 4-5.

Pook is a member of the Eagle Clan and Killer Whale House. She trained with her grandmother, Annie Jacobs, and with Esther Littlefield. She has taught beading to students at the Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall and has demonstrated at the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center.

Longtime Sitka resident Sarah Williams, originally from Fort Yukon, will demonstrate Athabascan beading from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. on August 10, and from 9 a.m.- noon and 1- 4 p.m. on August 11 and 12.

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.

The schedule for the last week of August is TBA.

Roy Levine, a wood carver of Aleut, Russian and Swedish descent, will be the artist demonstrator the month of September. Levine 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. Levine studied with Sitka carvers Raymond Nielson and Louis Menard.

Levine will be in the gallery from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sept. 1-3, Sept. 7-8, Sept. 13-17, and on Sept. 21, 23 and 28. The museum will be closed Sept. 6 for Labor Day.

Levine says: "I use cedar, spruce, yellow cedar and alder. 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."

In addition to the grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, support for the demonstrators program comes from the Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum, the Alaska State Museum, Alaska Airlines, Shee Atika Totem Square Inn, and donations from many individuals.

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.

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.

Summer hours at the museum are daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with admission of \$4. The museum changes to winter hours on September 18th. Visitors 18 and younger and Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum are admitted free of charge. An annual pass, which also includes the Alaska State Museum in Juneau, is available for \$15.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Phone (907) 747-8981 Fax (907) 465-3004

www.museums.state.ak.us

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