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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: **May 25, 2011**

Native Artists at the Sheldon Jackson Museum



Donnie Varnell's 7' x 8' carving "t-shirt" commissioned by Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. In an interview, Donnie stated, "We all know the shape of a totem pole, straight up. In today's culture, the t-shirt has become a popular icon. The theme of this commissioned piece is "Healing Dream."

For the past two decades, a popular feature at the Sheldon Jackson Museum has been the Native Artist Demonstrators Program. Artists from around the state fill residencies at the museum, demonstrating their art while visitors observe and ask questions about Alaska Native cultures and art. This summer the museum is sharing three Native artists with the Sitka Fine Arts Camp – a five week camp for middle school and high school students studying the performing and visual arts on the former Sheldon Jackson College campus.

Aleut/Alutiiq artist Patrick Lind, from Homer, will demonstrate his art at the museum from June 13 through June 24, Monday through Friday, from 1 to 5 p.m. He replicates traditional spears, headgear, masks and paddles, as well as kayak models and ivory sculptures. Lind also 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. This will be Lind's second summer with the demonstrators program.

Athabascan artist Selina Alexander will demonstrate her art from June 27 through July 8, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to noon. She was raised along the Yukon River between Ruby and Galena, and now lives in Fairbanks during the winter. During the summer, she lives at fish camp, 30 miles below Fort Yukon. She learned beading and skin sewing from her mother, grandmother, and other elders, as well as from books, museums, and workshops. She has a special interest in studying and making the art of caribou hair tufting. Selina has demonstrated her art at the museum since the mid-1990s.



Donnie Varnell

Haida artist Donnie Varnell, a carver from Ketchikan, is known for his highly contemporary work which often breaks from tradition. He is the grandson of noted Haida weaver Dolores Churchill and apprenticed with carvers Nathan Jackson and Reggie Davidson. Varnell attended the University of Fairbanks and studied under Alutiiq artist Alvin Amason. He has completed a number of public art projects around Alaska. This will be Varnell's third summer at the museum. He will demonstrate his art from June 27 through July 8, Monday through Friday, from 1 to 5 p.m.

Support for the Native Artist Demonstrators Program comes from the Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum, donations from individuals, Alaska Airlines, Sitka Fine Arts Camp, and a Sitka Charitable Trust grant.

Summer hours at the museum are from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm daily except holidays. Summer admission is \$4. No admission is charged for those 18 and under. The Sheldon Jackson Museum is located at 104 College Drive.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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