

Linda S. Thibodeau

Director

Division of Libraries, Archives,
& Museums

lam.alaska.gov

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Robert C. Banghart

Deputy Director

395 Whittier St.
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1718
907.465.2901

Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: December 1, 2015

**HARPERS ART TOURING GRANT AWARD, "AGGRAVATED ORGANIZMS" EXHIBITION,
AND FRIENDS OF SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM ANNUAL MEETING**

SITKA – The Sheldon Jackson Museum & Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum are pleased to announce the award of the Harper Arts Touring Fund Grant, a grant from the Rasmuson Foundation administered by the Alaska State Council on the Arts. The grant award along with a gift from Mount Edgecumbe High School and SEARHC will make it possible for the museum to travel and exhibit a collection of masks entitled "Aggravated Organizms."

"Aggravated Organizms" is a group of ten three-feet by five-feet masks carved by Drew Michael and painted by Elizabeth Ellis. Inspired by magnified cells, the masks represent the top ten diseases affecting Alaska communities. While merging science and art they encourage thought and discourse about environmental influences, diet, cultural pressures, lifestyle choices, and many other factors that influence health and promote dialogue around creative effective ways to address health needs and challenges.

The opening reception for "Aggravated Organizms" for the general public will take place at the museum the night of the Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum Annual Meeting on **Saturday, February 6th**. At the Friends' Annual Meeting, Drew Michael will give a presentation and talk about his work and the exhibition. Light fare will be served and a silent auction to raise funds for the Friends will also take place.

This past summer, Drew Michael was an artist in residence in the Sheldon Jackson Museum's Alaska Native Artist Residency Program, underwritten by the National Endowment for the Arts. Of Inupiaq, Yup'ik, and Polish heritage, Michael was born in Bethel, AK in 1984, and raised by a non-native family and moved to Eagle River, AK.

In 1997, Michael created his first mask in an art class with renowned Inupiaq carver Joe Senungetuk. He continued to carve part-time, while at the same time working in the oil fields of Alaska. He also apprenticed with famed multi-media Alaskan mask carver Kathleen Carlo. Michael is now a full-time artist and his works have been collected by the Alaska State Museum, Anchorage Museum and Sheldon Jackson Museum and numerous private collectors. His "Aggravated Organizms" collection of masks has travelled all over the state including Anchorage, Bethel, and Fairbanks and was also shown in Seattle.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Jacqueline Fernandez

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

museums.alaska.gov