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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUMS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM DECEMBER ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH



The Sheldon Jackson Museum's December Artifact of the Month is a Yup'ik mask (SJ-II-B-16). The museum has little information on the mask, but it was collected by Sheldon Jackson in 1893 and is from Andreefsky. The mask was one of forty-three masks from the Sheldon Jackson Museum's permanent collection loaned for the groundbreaking exhibition *Agayuliyararput: Our Way of Making Prayer: The Living Tradition of Yup'ik Masks*.

The *Agayuliyararput* exhibition was organized by the Anchorage Museum of History and Art in collaboration with the Museum of the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, the Sheldon Jackson Museum, The Burke Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian in New York, the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., and the Museum for Volkerkunde in Berlin. All of the participating museums had significant collections of Yup'ik masks.

The December Artifact of the Month mask is made of wood and is in the form of a humanoid face with red ochre and blue green pigments. The face protrudes off of a background plaque and has an open, smiling mouth. Nine white swan feathers radiate off of its rim at the top and sides. There is a small hole in each quadrant of the mask above and below the face. The inside edge of each circle is painted red ochre. Another mask in the permanent collection (SJ-II-B-4) is very reminiscent of this one, though slightly larger.

The mask is in good condition, but its red ochre and blue-green pigments are worn and there is a small crack in the wood on the right side where the sinew is secured to the mask. There are also some small water stains on the top upper right side and along the edge.

The December Artifact of the Month will be exhibited until December 31st. The museum is home to one hundred and fourteen Yup'ik masks and many other Yup'ik artifacts. The December Artifact of the Month, can be seen Tuesday through Saturday between 10am and 4pm. The museum is closed for lunch from noon to 1pm. General admission is \$3 and free for those 18 and under or members of either the Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum or Friends of the Alaska State Museum.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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