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Museum to Host Beading Workshop

A group of thirteen Native Alaskan artists will convene in Kodiak next week to study and replicate a set of ancestral beaded regalia. The five-day workshop will focus on learning from a headdress, a belt, and a set of cuffs on loan to the Alutiiq Museum from the Musée Boulogne-Sur-Mer, Pinart Collection. The pieces were collected in the Kodiak region in 1872 and represent one of just a handful of matching sets preserved today. The workshop is part of the Pinguat—Beads project, a collaboration between the Alutiiq Museum and the Sun’aq Tribe of Kodiak, with funding from the US Bureau of Indian Affairs.

“Last spring we invited beaders to apply for the workshop,” said Education and Outreach Coordinator Djuna Davidson. “The response was strong and enthusiastic. Thirty artists applied. We are excited that there is so much interest in this art and will be working with the workshop participants to develop educational resources that will help many others learn.”

The workshop will be led by Alutiiq artist June Pardue, a master skin sewer and beader with family ties to the community of Old Harbor. Workshop participants include Melinda Abyo, Candace Branson, Kayla Christiansen, Chelsea Dallal, Ashley Dehart, Leona Haakanson-Crow, Cien Hoen, Cheryl Lacy, Mary Jane Longrich, Natalia Schneider, Hanna Sholl, and Diana Velez. These artists are from Anchorage, Kodiak, Seattle, Sutton, and Wasilla.

The workshop will be filmed by Anchorage videographer Josh Branstetter, to create a short project documentary. The museum also plans to create directions that will guide people through the process of making beaded garments. When complete, these resources will be available on the project website at, https://alutiiqmuseum.org/research/beading. Next year, the museum will travel to Kodiak’s villages to lead beading activities.

Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counceller said, “This is a rare chance to bring together a group of beaders to work as a team and learn from each other. We are not only replicating a set of regalia for the museum’s collection, but creating a cohort of beaders who can support each other in the future and teach others this beautiful art.”

There will be a public event to meet the beaders, see the ancestral pieces, learn about the replication project, and make a beaded bracelet. Beaders will assist visitors in creating a three-strand bracelet. There will also be a children’s activity. The community beading event will be held in the museum’s gallery on Saturday, November 9, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. All are welcome. This is a free event.

The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the Alutiiq, an Alaska Native tribal people. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales.