Advocating for Artists

Making a living as an artist is difficult. Carvers, painters, and jewelers put many hours and expensive materials into their creations, but it’s not enough to make beautiful work. To continue creating, artists must sell their works and recoup their investments. This means navigating the arts market. Every successful artist is also a business person, with business cards, a personal biography, professional photos, an online presence, knowledge of the many laws that govern sales, and connections with stores, galleries, and museums. For many it can be daunting to move from the studio to the marketplace.

For Native artists there are additional hurdles. Did you know that a large percentage of the Native-style artwork sold in the United States is made by non-Native people? Although this practice was outlawed by the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990, many fakes still make their way into the arts market. They compete for limited sales with genuine works, making it more difficult for Native artists to earn a living wage from their work.

To support Alaska Native artists, and promote economic development, the museum recently launched the Alutiiq Arts Advocacy project. Gallery Coordinator Marlise Lee is overseeing the daily work of the project with assistance from the museum’s Cultural Arts Committee. This volunteer group advises the museum on arts programming—from supporting artists in our store to teaching Alutiiq arts. A $18,589 grant from the Alaska Community Foundation’s Alaska Native Social Justice Fund is supporting the work.

According to Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counseller, the project takes an individualized approach to developing marketing materials for artists. “We will be working with ten artists to develop personalized materials. We may write a biography for one artist or help another with an application for a fellowship. Someone else may need photographs of their work. And we are inviting all interested Native artists to participate in training webinars and to be listed in an updated artist gallery on the museum’s website.”

In addition, the museum will make improvements to its store with new signage, rack cards introducing artists represented in the store’s inventory, and product labels that better identify genuine Alutiiq artwork. There will also be a media campaign. Radio, newspaper, and social media advertisements will promote the importance of purchasing authentic Native artwork.

The museum plans to expand the project in future years to include more artists. Counseller said, “This first year will help us learn more about how the museum can help the arts community. Ultimately, we would like this sort of support to be part of our regular services. When artists are successful at selling their work, they can focus on perpetuating and sharing traditions, which is the museum’s mission as well.”

Saturday, December 7th
11:00 am - 4:00pm

Shop directly from artists in our gallery
Free admission and door prizes
Early bird admission for museum members at 10:00 am
Buy your membership at the door!
Cama’i,

This summer we asked our friends, colleagues, and visitors to complete a survey about the museum. We wanted to know how you connect with our services, why the museum is important to you, and where we can improve. The response was fantastic. Over 500 people shared their thoughts and ideas. We learned a lot.

First, we were overwhelmed by the praise for our programs. The museum earned high marks for everything from research and collection care to language education. Thank you. Second, we found that digital resources, exhibits, and publications were particularly popular. People are drawn to opportunities that allow self-directed exploration.

When we ask about improvements, the word “more” came up often. You told us that you enjoy our exhibits, but you want to see more artifacts and learn more about Alutiiq history. You love to create, and you want more arts workshops and a bigger space to carve, paint, bead, and sew. You love online resources and asked us to share even more, particularly to connect with Alutiiq people who live far from Kodiak. You enjoy shopping in the museum store but find it small. Patrons want more merchandise and artists want more space to sell.

“More space to display more artifacts.”

“Stock more Alutiiq arts and crafts in the store.”

“You do amazin with what you have. You need more space!”

We hear you! All of your ideas have been carefully summarized and shared with our board of directors. We love our facility but understand that its size makes offering all of the services our patrons value a challenge. Over the coming year we will be working to identify solutions.

In the meantime, please keep supporting the museum with your participation and your gifts. More than 80% of our survey takers have given to the museum or indicated they would consider doing so. In this season of giving, please consider a membership or a donation. Like your ideas, your generosity matters.

With Warm Regards,
April Isiik Counceller
Executive Director
Finding Words

"How do you say, 'I love you' in Alutiiq?" "What is the Alutiiq term for porcupine?" "Can you suggest a name for our newsletter?" The Alutiiq Museum receives many requests like these. People interested in Alutiiq language reach out regularly for help with vocabulary and phrases. We are always happy to assist, but some requests are tricky. There aren’t always words to share! ‘I love you’ translates as ‘Qunukamken,’ but there is no accepted way to say porcupine! Although the Chugach Alutiiq use the word nununiq for these prickly animals, Kodiak speakers don’t recognize it. The Kodiak Alutiiq word has faded from memory. After all, there are no porcupines on Kodiak.

A major goal of the museum’s language program is documenting Alutiiq vocabulary. In recent years, we’ve worked with Elder speakers to record all sorts of words, from place names to slang. Elders have also helped us develop terms for things like computer (umiartusqaq) or Thanksgiving (Quyawik), new words that help Alutiiq speakers converse about modern subjects. Now, with $56,462 in grant funds from the National Science Foundation researchers are turning to an older source of Alutiiq vocabulary—historic documents. Alutiiq Museum Curatorial Specialist and language learner Dehrich Chya is leading the effort.

"During recent studies we learned of 19th century records with Alutiiq vocabulary," said Chya. These records have words and phrases written down by explorers and scholars. They contain information on places, tools, customs, beliefs, and more.”

The documents include the hand-written notes of French linguist Alphonse Pinart, archived at the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley; the papers of William Fisher stored at the Smithsonian Institution; and an Alaska Native Dictionary compiled in 1805 by Nikolai Rezanov.

To track down old words, Chya is traveling to archives around the United States to review and copy documents. The materials he brings home will be studied and translated by Elder Alutiiq speakers.

“This is important, time sensitive work,” said Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Counceller. “To understand the Alutiiq terms, we must work with first language Alutiiq speakers, the Elders who learned our language as children. This is old vocabulary, written phonetically, and our best chance to decode it is with their expertise. There was no widely used Alutiiq writing system at the time these words were recorded and the written versions can be hard to turn back into Alutiiq sounding words. We are very grateful to the National Science Foundation for the opportunity to do this work.”

The project will continue through July of 2020 and copies of the discovered resources will be added to the museum’s website http://languagearchive.alutiiqmuseum.org/home for sharing with the public.
Check Out Culture

There is a new way to check out Alutiiq culture. Borrow the museum’s plantlore box! This traveling educational kit brings Alutiiq traditions to classrooms, camps, gatherings, or anywhere youth are interested in learning about Kodiak’s Native heritage. We know that not everyone can come to the museum to see our new plantlore exhibit, but our educational boxes are one way to bring a piece of the museum to you.

Created this summer, the new plantlore box is filled with cultural knowledge and activities. Inside are publications on Alutiiq plant use, cookbooks with ideas for transforming wild plants into nutritional dishes, children’s stories, instructions for making plant-based medicinal salves, and activities matching plants to their traditional uses. The box also includes a sample of objects made from Kodiak plants and examples of plant harvesting tools.

The plantlore box is the ninth in the museum’s set, all designed for youth education. Visit our website to see descriptions of each box and find a link to the reservation form (https://alutiiqmuseum.org/teachers/educational-boxes).

Borrowers can pick up a box at the museum or have it shipped to a location anywhere in Alaska. For use beyond the City of Kodiak, the museum pays outgoing shipping and the borrower pays the return postage.

Generous support for the production of this resource was provided by the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the Munartet project—a partnership between the Kodiak Island Borough School District, Kodiak College, Kodiak Arts Council, and Alutiiq Museum to promote teaching in and through the arts and culture in Kodiak. Quyanaa—We thank you.

Shop Alutiiq for the holidays!

Unique, handcrafted gifts for everyone on your list.

Visit the Museum store or shop online.

alutiiqmuseum.org/store

Bird mask by Jerry Laktonen.
It takes great patience to work with glass beads—to slip each tiny, slippery orb onto a strand of thread and to tie delicate, discreet knots that will keep them in place. This painstaking work was the focus of a recent museum workshop, a weeklong effort designed to recreate a set of ancestral beaded regalia loaned to the Alutiiq Museum from the Musée Boulogne-Sur-Mer, France. A dozen Alutiiq beaders assembled in Kodiak to study the 19th century headdress, belt, and cuffs, and replicate them for the museum’s collection. Their work was part of the Pinguat—Beads project, a partnership between the museum and the Sun’aq Tribe, funded by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Participants were chosen through a competitive application process and represented a broad range of ages, skills, and abilities. Master Alutiiq artist June Pardue led the team. The other participants came from Kodiak, Anchorage, and even the lower 48. Chelsea Dallal traveled from Seattle to participate. Melinda Abyo, Ashley DeHart, Cheryl Lacy, and Diana Velez came from Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley. Kodiak artists included Candace Branson, Kayla Christiansen, Leona Haakanson-Crow, Cien Hoen, Mary Jane Longrich, Natalia Schneider, and Hanna Sholl. Schneider, a Kodiak High School student, was excused from a week of classes to attend.

Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Counceller welcomed the group and provided an orientation. She discussed how Alutiiq objects ended up in European museums, noting that the French linguist Alphonse Pinart collected the regalia set in 1872. Then, Collections Manager Amanda Lancaster and Curator of Archaeology Patrick Saltonstall led a museum tour sharing prehistoric beads and other items in the museum’s collection. Each artist received a packet of information on beading traditions to support their learning. Then, the beading began.

Throughout the intensive, daily sessions, beaders chatted about the project, about their own pathways as artists, about family and life. In the intimacy of working together on such a special project, they built strong bonds and helped each other learn. Each day beaders would take turns with different aspects of the project and every artist had the opportunity to work on each piece of the regalia. In addition to recreating the regalia, artists helped to design instructions for making similar pieces and had an interview with videographer Josh Branstetter who is creating a project documentary.

The weeklong workshop culminated in a public beading event open to all. Dozens of community members came to make their own beaded bracelet and meet the artists. Some of the beaders continued to work on the regalia while answering questions about the project as others assisted attendees in creating a three-strand bracelet. People of all ages crowded the gallery and worked on their bracelets surrounded by the powerful feeling of coming together to create.

Beaders at Work

Beaders gathered at the Alutiiq Museum.

Hanna Sholl studies an ancestral headdress from the Musée Boulogne-Sur-Mer. Photo by Lachelle Roberts, AM856:58.
**Assistance from Angels**

The Alutiiq Museum’s collections number in the thousands—around 250,000 pieces and growing all the time. With so many objects, storage areas can sometimes get cramped and messy. The 2019 Museums Alaska conference, held in Kodiak this fall, brought experienced volunteers to help.

Each year the conference includes volunteer opportunities. Attendees are invited to tackle special projects in the host community’s museums. Angels projects, as they are known, are a unique opportunity for museums to receive expert assistance. In September, six museum professionals spent a day at the Alutiiq Museum improving collections storage.

One team organized five large drawers of historic materials from an archaeological site in Karluk—rearranging ceramic fragments, beads, and historic iron tools to create a more logical and efficient order. The second team made custom, archival storage boxes for pieces from the museum’s contemporary art collection. A mask by Perry Eaton, a bronze sculpture by Darlene Lind, and a dance rattle by Hanna Sholl all received new, handmade containers.

“Creating custom storage boxes for individual artifacts is vital preservation work,” said Collections & Facilities Manager Amanda Lancaster. “Custom storage helps protect artifacts from earthquakes, changes in temperature and humidity, and pests. It’s one more barrier between the world and these beautiful pieces.”

**Quyanaasinaq**—Our greatest thanks to Angie Linn, Molly Conley, Kim Arthur, Angie Wade, Cindy Kirkpatrick, and Selena Ortega-Chiolero for completing these projects.

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**Artwork on Display**

Visitors to Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) facilities are noticing some colorful additions. In May, the Alutiiq Museum installed a selection of contemporary artwork from its collections at KANA Main and the Mill Bay Health Center. KANA had wall space and art-work friendly conditions, and the museum had pieces to share.

“Anytime we loan a piece of artwork, we evaluate the location where it will be displayed. We consider climate control, security, pest management, and light levels to be sure the piece will not be damaged.” said Collections Manager Amanda Lancaster. “The KANA facilities were a great match.”

Over the year, the museum’s contemporary art collection has grown. Annual purchases through the Rasmuson Art Acquisition program and donations from artists and collectors have assembled a substantial collection of works—over two hundred pieces by 48 artists. These collections include paintings, photographs, prints, drawings, and even beaded pictures. From these, we selected eleven pieces to display by Lena Amason Berns, Cheryl Lacy, Jerry Laktonen, Bruce Nelson, Sara Squartsoff, and Helen Simenoff.

Next time you visit a KANA take a few moments to enjoy the artwork in the hallways and watch for pieces by Danielle Larsen and Alf Pryor coming to the Carolyn Street building.

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*Currently on display at KANA, Amitatuk—Weasel, acrylic and oil paint on birch wood, with a frame of marine buoy, Lena Amason Berns, 2006, AM570. Purchased with support from the Rasmuson Art Acquisition Fund.*
Volunteer Spotlight—Brent Watkins

Brent Watkins moved to Kodiak 35 years ago, after a three-week vacation turned into the discovery of his new home. He had been completing historical restorations in New Orleans when he fell in love with Kodiak’s natural beauty. In his decades on the island, Brent has always been involved in the community. One of his long-term interests is public parks, so helping to build the Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial was a natural fit. He was motivated by the museum’s efforts to return ancestors to their homeland while creating a place to help others learn about Alutiiq heritage. Brent also has a personal tie to the park. It’s part of his neighborhood. He lives just down the street.

Initially, Brent volunteered to help install the memorial archway. He spent two wet, June days digging holes and hauling concrete. Then he helped to fasten 1243 silver salmon cutouts to the archway, one by one. It was a painstaking process! Whenever we thanked him, he would give an easy smile and say, “It’s nothing. Thank you for making the park.”

After building the archway, Brent continued his stewardship, voluntarily watering the plants during this summer’s unprecedented drought. After asking if he could help to water over a weekend, we saw Brent on multiple occasions, hose in hand, caring for the landscaping. Sometimes he would fill a barrel and water from the back of his van. Other days he would drag a very long hose from the spigot at his nearby house.

Why was he so willing to give his time? Brent said, “It is important to show how valuable the museum is for the community and how it elevates the community by giving people an opportunity to be involved.”

There are many ways to get involved with the museum’s work. If you have time to volunteer, please contact Djuna Davidson, djuna@alutiiqmuseum.org, 844-425-8844.

An Appreciation for Service—Margaret Roberts

In every organization there are people whose passion and commitment stand out. For the Alutiiq Museum, Margaret Roberts is one of those people. For over forty years Roberts has promoted cultural education and wellness for the Alutiiq people throughout the Kodiak community. She helped to establish the Kodiak Alutiiq dancers and has served on boards, committees, and the Woody Island Tribal Council. Throughout this work, supporting the Alutiiq Museum has been a special focus.

Roberts was a member of the culture committee that first envisioned a museum for the Alutiiq people and helped to shape the organization as it developed. Over the past two decades, she has promoted the mission and vision of the museum through active participation in events and programs, ardent advocacy for traditional culture and language preservation, and involvement on the museum’s governing board. She joined the Alutiiq Heritage Foundation board in 2004 and served as its chairperson for six years, from 2013 until this fall. Roberts is a phenomenal leader, and Alutiiq Museum board and staff deeply appreciate her many contributions to helping the museum grow and evolve. Quyanaasinaq Margaret for your passion, support, and leadership.
Events

Calendar

November 8, 6:30–8:00pm | An Evening of Short Films with Josh Branstetter. Meet Josh and enjoy his recent films on Alaskan archaeology and culture.

November 9, 10:00am–1:00pm | Beading Event
Make a beaded bracelet with help from expert beaders.

November 16, 1:00–3:00pm | Storytime and book signing with Stacy Studebaker. Featuring Stacy’s new book, Beaver’s Song

November 28–29 | Closed for Thanksgiving

November 30, Noon–4:00pm | Small Business Saturday
Shop Alutiiq, Shop Local!

December 7, 10:00am–4:00pm | Holiday Bazaar
Doors open for members at 10:00am, open to the public at 11:00am.
Shop directly from Alutiiq and local artists in our gallery.

December 16, 10:00am–4:00pm | Members Monday
Exclusive shopping day for museum members.

December 24–January 1, 2020 | Closed for the Holidays

January 7, evening | Russian Orthodox Starring
Join us for carols and refreshments celebrating Russian Christmas.

January 18, Noon–3:00pm | Craft Saturday–Paper flowers for starring

February 8, Noon–3:00pm | Craft Saturday–Alutiiq Valentines

Membership & Donation Form

Quyanaasinaq! • Thank you very much!

Name(s):

Mailing Address:

Email:

Phone #:

- Suk • Person $40
- Ilat • Family $75
- Angnertaq • Leader $150
- Kasainaq • Boss $500
- Pitnertusqaq • Highliner $1000
- Custom Donation $ ______

Member or Donor Level:

Donor Note:
- In honor/memory of ______
- Make donation anonymous.
- Contact me about volunteering.

Renewal? [ ] New Donor [ ] Renewal

Payment: [ ] Check [ ] Money Order

Make payable to: Alutiiq Heritage Foundation 215 Mission Rd. 1st Floor, Kodiak, AK 99615

Credit cards: join or renew securely online, with options & subscription memberships at: http://alutiiqmuseum.org/give
Or call our front desk at 1-844-425-8844

All memberships include a year of museum admission, store discounts, and invitations to members-only events. At the Ilat level and above, members receive a free copy of the Alutiiq Wild Foods Cookbook.

A culture illuminated is never lost.

Pick. Click. Give. for the Alutiiq Museum.

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Uksuarπak qayaryugtua. – I want to go kayaking this fall.
Looking for something to do with your friends and family this holiday season? If you're a current member, you already enjoy free admission to the Alutiiq Museum. Now, thanks to the generous support of KeyBank, everyone gets in for free between November 25 and December 23! Add a little local culture to your holidays with a visit to the Alutiiq Museum, a gift to our community from KeyBank.

**November 25 – December 23**
FREE ADMISSION

**Events**

- **November 8, 6:30–8:00pm** | An Evening of Short Films with Josh Branstetter
  Meet Josh and enjoy his recent films on Alaska's archaeology and culture.

- **November 9, 10:00am–1:00pm** | Beading Event
  Make a beaded bracelet with help from expert beadsters.

- **November 16, 1:00–3:00pm** | Storytime and book signing with Stacy Studebaker
  Featuring Stacy's new book, Beaver's Song

- **November 28–29** | Closed for Thanksgiving

- **November 30, Noon–4:00pm** | Small Business Saturday
  Shop Alutiiq, Shop Local!

- **December 7, 10:00am–4:00pm** | Holiday Bazaar
  Doors open for members at 10:00am, open to the public at 11:00am.
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  Exclusive shopping day for museum members.

- **December 24–January 1, 2020** | Closed for the Holidays

- **January 7, evening** | Russian Orthodox Starring
  Join us for carols and refreshments celebrating Russian Christmas.

- **January 8, 7:00pm** | Russian Orthodox Starring
  Evening service

- **January 18, Noon–3:00pm** | Craft Saturday–Paper flowers for starring
  Make a paper flower bouquet with help from expert crafters.

- **February 8, 8:00pm–10:00pm** | Craft Saturday–Alutiiq Valentines
  Create your own Alutiiq-themed Valentine's cards with help from expert crafters.

**CONNECT WITH US**

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**A culture illuminated is never lost.**

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