Design, Alutiiq Style

Why is the color blue painted on hunting hats? What types of rock art did Alutiiq people make? Why are there so many circles in Alutiiq designs? The answers to these and many other questions about Alutiiq art can be found in Igaruacirpet—Our Way of Making Designs. Released this month, the Alutiiq Museum’s latest publication is a lavishly illustrated volume that explores how ancestral artists shared their world with pictures.

The book begins with an overview of Alutiiq art history, discussing the seasonal rhythm of creative activity and the variety of traditional art forms. Following this introduction, scholars share studies of petroglyphs, pictures incised in slate, painted images, and body art—face paint, tattoos, and clothing. Each chapter examines the designs preserved in Alutiiq art, how the images were produced, and what they might mean. The book ends with a discussion of cultural symbolism and a glossary of art-related Alutiiq language terms. Alutiiq Elders helped to compile the traditional vocabulary.

“I’m very excited to share this book,” said Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counceller. “It is filled with information on our ancestral arts and culture. The images are stunning, and they are combined with Elder’s knowledge, traditional stories, and historical information to create a rich, meaningful presentation. Our team learned a lot while putting the publication together. I know readers will too.”

The carefully researched book has 344 images of Alutiiq objects, including many previously unpublished pieces from the museum’s collections. Alutiiq artists contributed extensively to the presentation. Hanna Sholl provided original drawings of Alutiiq clothing. Sven Haakanson shared hundreds of images of Cape Alitak petroglyphs. Lena Amason Berns, April Counceller, Alisha Drabek, Sven Haakanson, Jacquie Madsen, Susan Malutin, and Gloria Selby all wrote essays for the book. Their words help to interpret ancestral artwork and illustrate how today’s Native artists work and find inspiration.

Igaruacirpet was produced though the Munartet Project, a collaboration to support teaching in and through the arts and culture by the museum, the Kodiak Arts Council, Kodiak College, and the Kodiak Island Borough School District. Copies of Igaruacirpet will be distributed to teachers, schools, and libraries thanks to funding from the Alaska State Council on the Arts. It will be available February 27 in the museum store or online (https://alutiiqmuseum.org/shop/museum-store/books). The limited edition, 208-page paperback costs $25.
Cama’i Hello,

The oil lamp is a very ancient piece of Alutiiq technology. Archaeologists find the carefully shaped stone bowls in our oldest settlements. The size and shape of stone lamps changed over time, but for 7,500 years our ancestors used these objects to light their way. As long as there have been people on Kodiak, there have been oil lamps.

For this reason, the burning oil lamp is an important symbol to our people. Across the world, light signifies goodness, understanding, and the divine. Light illuminates the darkness. It brings heat. It supports life. For the Alutiiq people, the burning oil lamp carries all of these meanings plus one more. It symbolizes endurance.

The stone bowl reminds us of our ancestors—the gifts of life, culture, and ingenuity they passed down to us. The burning seal oil symbolizes our connections to the natural world and its sustaining resources. The lamp reflects both our past and our present. It shines a light on our heritage and illustrates that our people and culture persist.

In honor of these connections, the Alutiiq Museum choose a burning oil lamp as the symbol for our 2018 membership program. It shows what you can do for the museum. Become a lamp lighter. Help us keep the flame of Alutiiq culture burning bright by making a donation or becoming a museum member. Give before March 30th and we will send you a burning oil lamp sticker to carry the message with you.

Wont you join us? A culture illuminated is never lost.

April/Isiik Counceller, PhD
Executive Director
Pililuki—Check it Out!

The Alutiiq Museum’s popular Pililuki-Make Them! exhibit is now available as a traveling educational box. Pililuki explores Alutiiq graphic arts with drawing activities. Our new box has four activities inspired by the exhibit. Students can learn about ancient drawings of people, the conventions Alutiiq artists used to make these drawings, and how clothing and jewelry can share social information. Then, they can make their own drawings inspired by Alutiiq design. The box also includes materials for decorating hunting visors with illustrations based on personal stories, coloring headdresses, and making zentangle drawings tied to Alutiiq language vocabulary. The activities are suitable for classrooms, camps, home school use, after school programs, day care centers, and events and can be adapted for many ages.

Pililuki is one of eight educational boxes available from the Alutiiq Museum. Each box has hands on activities, lessons plans, resources, and instructions for exploring an aspect of Alutiiq culture. Choose from subsistence, petroglyphs, the Alutiiq language, and more. Anyone may check out a box by using our online reservation form (https://alutiiqmuseum.org/teachers/educational-boxes). Materials come in study plastic tubs suitable for shipping. Don’t live in Kodiak? The museum will mail a box to you at no charge. You are responsible for shipping it back to us.

Development of the Pililuki box was made possible by the Munartet Project, an effort to promote teaching in and through the arts and culture in Kodiak. Quyanaa to the Alaska State Council on the Arts for project funding and to our partners the Kodiak Arts Council, Kodiak College, and the Kodiak Island Borough School District. •

RUSSIAN TEA

For one 8oz jar:

- 1/3 cup Tang
- 1/3 cup Granulated Sugar
- 2 tbs Instant Lemon Tea
- 1/2 tsp Cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp Cloves

A Taste of Kodiak

On a cold afternoon in January, visitors to the Alutiiq Museum enjoyed a warm treat, a cup of Russian tea. People sipped the sweet, tangy beverage and then made a jar of powdered tea mix to take home. The event was part of Craft Saturday, a monthly program with hands on activities for youth.

Try Russian tea at home with our recipe and experiment with your own ingredients. Some people add a little allspice or powdered lemonade. When you are ready for a cup, add two or three tablespoons of your mix to a mug of hot water.
It was deeper than I expected,” said Alutiiq Museum archaeologist Patrick Saltonstall, “much deeper!”

Saltonstall is referring to his excavation into an ancestral settlement in Kiliuda Bay, where a team of museum researchers spent ten days last summer. Although Saltonstall is a veteran Kodiak archaeologist, it was his first trip to the Kiliuda area and the visit came with some surprises.

“We were completing a site assessment for the property owners, to help prepare the land for sale,” he explained. “We thought we would be excavating about 50 cm of deposit from an historic or late prehistoric village, but we found much more.”

The Malriik site, which lies on Kiliuda’s northern shore, proved more complex than expected. Just twenty years ago, large, grass-covered depressions lined the shore in this spot, the remains of sod houses that once formed a sizeable village. But when the crew arrived, much of the site had been washed away by tides and waves. In the remnants of the village researchers found a well-preserved midden, shells and animal bones discarded by residents about 500 years ago. Surprisingly, they included an unusual number of porpoise bones, a porpoise hunting harpoon, and a piece of crab shell. The tiny claw fragment is the first example of ancient crab remains Saltonstall has encountered.

“Crab shells are fragile and don’t preserve well.” he said. “But more significantly, there were once cultural taboos against eating crabs. Crabs are scavengers, that eat dead things from the sea floor. In the past, Alutiiq people didn’t eat them, except perhaps in emergencies. The ancient garbage from the site is being studied by students at Boston University. They will look carefully at what we collected to understand the seasons people lived here and what they were harvesting.”

“Crab remains from a prehistoric site in Kiliuda Bay

The five-hundred-year-old community was not the only one at the site. Beneath discarded clam shells and steambath rubble, archaeologists encountered evidence of two much older communities. Almost two meters of dirt, sod, and charcoal represented the remains of ancient smoke houses, one from about 1500 years ago, and another about 4,000 years old. Evidence suggests people were using heat and smoke to dry their food.

“It’s common to find deep sites with many ancient layers,” said Saltonstall. “And evidence of food smoking is widespread. We just weren’t expecting to find older material. The site reminds me how extensive Kodiak’s Alutiiq population once was and how much there is left to learn.”

Quyanaa to the United State Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Native Village of Old Harbor for supporting this research, and to land owners Ronald Shugak and Mike Katt for donating the site collection to the museum.

Alex Painter and Patrick Saltonstall documenting their excavation in Kiliuda Bay.
Paving the Way for an Ancestors' Memorial

Brick by brick the Alutiiq Museum is moving closer to building the Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial, a new public park in downtown Kodiak. Located on the corner of Upper Mill Bay Road and Kashevaroff Drive, the park will honor the Alutiiq people. Here, visitors of all heritages can contemplate Kodiak’s past, learn about historic preservation, and remember loved ones.

A central feature of the facilities will be a walkway, a path filled with engraved bricks sharing community messages. Everyone is invited to share a message. Some people are remembering a loved one—a grandparent, a fallen veteran, a friend. Others are adding their family, community, or business name to a brick to show support.

Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counceller sees the park as a way to build community. “We are all connected to the past in some way, and those connections shape who we are. If we can pause for a moment to learn about history, we can understand each other better. I think the path of names, remembrances, and blessings winding through the park will be a powerful reminder of the people and forces that have shaped Kodiak.”

You can help. Add your own message to the park walkway by buying an engraved brick. Brick orders can be placed online at http://ancestorsmemorial.org/. You can also order by contacting Jeff Garcie at the museum, 844-425-8844, x19.

Who will you remember?

History Buffs Needed

Are you a set netter, fisherman, pilot, guide, lodge owner, rural resident, hiker, hunter, or camper? Would you like to document archaeological sites as a museum volunteer?

Contact Patrick Saltonstall (patrick@alutiiq museum.org, 844-425-8844, x18) to be an archaeological site steward. A few minutes of your time can help to preserve hundreds of years of Kodiak history. This program is supported by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Learn more on the stewardship page of our website at https://alutiiq museum.org/research/archeology/site-stewardship.

STEWARDSHIP STATS

18 years of research  |  65 volunteers  |  587 sites studied  |  1387 archaeological site visits
Collections Additions 2017

The Alutiiq Museum cares for more than 250,000 objects reflecting Alutiiq heritage and the Kodiak environment. Each year we accept donations and loans of materials that advance our mission to preserve and share the heritage and culture of the Alutiiq people. We extend our sincere appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for their recent contributions. If you are interested in donating objects to the Alutiiq Museum, contact Amanda Lancaster, 844-425-8844, x22 (amanda@alutiiqmuseum.org).

Donations

Cheryl Lacy for the beaded image Lady in Red
Cheryl Lacy for the beaded image Aleut Fisherman
Jerry Laktonen for a print, Blue Rain #2
Jim Dillard for two composite dart replicas
Wendy Petera for aerial fish trap photos
Julia Fine for digital recordings of the Alutiiq language
Ronald Shugak and Mike Katt for an archeological collection from the Kiliuda Bay excavation

Purchases Supported by the Rasmuson Art Acquisition Fund

Past and Present, a beaded image by Cheryl Lacy
Nacaq Headdress by Kayla Christiansen
Cannery Walkway, a photographic piece by Alf Pryor
Akalura Window, a photographic piece by Alf Pryor
Fallen, a photographic piece by Alf Pryor
Ing’iq (Barometer Mountain), a painting by Genevieve Opheim
Alutiiq Cultural Value Pride Paddle, by Hanna and Jonathan Sholl
Reflections of the Seasons, a painting by Danielle Larsen
Aleut Bentwood Visor, a carving by Okalena Patricia Lekanoff Gregory

Long Term Loan

State of Alaska for split cobble scrappers provided by Jeffery Woods

Teaching Collection Addition

Clark Fair for a stone oil lamp

Reflections of the Season

Oil on canvas, by Danielle Larsen, 41.5” x 41”, 2017, AM832.
Gold-lidded Kerr canning jars fill Larsen’s canvas and remind people of the seasonal rhythm of life in coastal Alaska. Preserving fish is a favorite tradition. Every Alutiiq family has their own techniques and recipes, and memories of working together to fill their pantries.

Akalura Window

Enamel decal photograph on corrugated tin, by Alf Pryor, 24” x 10”, 2016, AM825:01. Pryor’s photo captures the Akalura Cannery in Olga Bay, a place where salmon were processed in the early twentieth century and where many Alutiiq people worked. He mounted the photo on a piece of the cannery’s siding, salvaged after it was torn down.
Chromebooks are the latest addition to Kodiak’s rural villages, where they are helping residents access the Internet. The computers are part of an effort by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) to improve Internet access across rural American. The Alutiiq Museum, who has been a part of the NDIA Corps project for the past year, set up ten laptops and delivered two each to five villages for public use. Two additional computers will be available in the Alutiiq Museum’s library.

Each of the Alutiiq Online laptops is preprogramed with free digital literacy training tools. People can use the machines to learn basic computer skills like typing, setting up an email account, browsing the Internet, or taking online classes. Links to Alutiiq organizations and cultural educational resources such as alutiiqmuseum.org, alutiiqeducation.org, and alutiiqlanguage.org are also preloaded.

Like most library computers, the Alutiiq Online laptops are public use machines designed to safeguard user information.

Although the new computers provide important hardware for rural communities, many villages still struggle to access high-speed broadband Internet. Establishing media centers in Kodiak’s villages may provide an opportunity to solve the connectivity problem.

Certified libraries and media centers are eligible to receive operating funds through state and federal programs. The new computers could help Kodiak villages gain this certification and access public funds to pay for broadband service.

### Alice Ryser—Volunteer of the Year 2017

Ryser has been a member of the museum’s Collections Advisory Committee since its inception in 1999. This nine-member committee meets four times a year to review all objects offered to our collections. The meetings are filled with lively discussions. Members consider how objects could help to tell the Alutiiq story, whether the items can be legally accepted, and if the museum can care for the pieces. It’s an important job that helps the museum make tough decisions and use its limited resources wisely. It’s also interesting.

Ryser enjoys the work, as it connects her to Alaska history, a subject she loves. Raised in Prince William Sound communities, Ryser grew up exploring abandoned buildings. Her step-father, an Aleut man who fished the waters of Kodiak, also fueled her interest in the past with lessons about traditional lifeways. Ryser began volunteering at the Baranov Museum in the mid-1970s and joined the staff in 1983 as an archivist, a position she held for almost thirty years. She had no formal training, but learned on-the-job and discovered a talent for working with photographic collections.

We thank Ryser for sharing her skills with the Alutiiq Museum and for her steadfast, dependable service over the past 18 years. Quyanaa Alice.
Events

Calendar

March 2, 5:00-7:00 pm | First Friday, Hanna Sholl, and release of Igarucirpet—Our Way of Making Designs Book

March 13, 10:00 am-2:00 pm | Spring Break Family Fair at the Alutiiq Museum | Cultural activities for all ages

March 24, Noon-4:00 pm | Craft Saturday

April TBD, 6:00-8:00 pm | Culture Night in Port Lions, hosted by the Alutiiq Museum

April 6, 5:00-7:00 pm | First Friday with Nannette Foster

April 21, Noon-4:00 pm | Craft Saturday

April 26, 7:00 pm | Archaeology Month Lecture by Patrick Saltonstall Drawing on Stone—Rock Art in the Alutiiq World

May 4, 5:00-7:00 pm | First Friday with Priscilla Russell | Book Signing and Presentation on Alutiiq Plantlore

May 19, Noon-4:00pm, 5-7pm | Craft Saturday

May 23-May 28 | Alutiiq Activities Crab Festival Booth

Memberships & Charity

MEMBERSHIP & DONATION FORM

Quyanaasinaq! • Thank you very much!

Name(s):

Mailing Address:

Email:

Phone #:

Sponsors

Tatartuq irluq.—The moon is full.
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

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- **May 23-May 28** | Alutiiq Activities Crab Festival Booth
- **May 3-22, Noon-4:00pm, 5-7pm** | Craft Activities for all ages at the Alutiiq Museum | Cultural Family Field Trip to the Alutiiq Museum | Cultural Break
- **March 2, 5:00-7:00 pm** | First Friday, Hanna Sholl
- **May 22-23, Noon-4:00pm, 5-7pm** | Craft Saturday