



For Immediate Release

Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository
215 Mission Road, Suite 101, Kodiak, AK 99615
Phone (844) 425-8844, Fax (866) 335-7767
Home page: <http://www.alutiiqmuseum.org>

DATE: January 29, 2024
CONTACT: Amanda Lancaster, 844-425-8844
amanda@alutiiqmuseum.org

Alutiiq/Sugpiaq Objects Gifted to Alutiiq Museum by the Coe Center

KODIAK—The Alutiiq Museum has received three cultural objects for its collections—a mid-19th-century wooden bowl collected on Kodiak Island and two skin bags created by Alutiiq artist Lalla Williams. The objects are from the collections of the Ralph T. Coe Center for the Arts, a non-profit organization in Santa Fe, New Mexico dedicated to exploring Indigenous arts. They were gifted to the Alutiiq Museum as part of a rehomeing initiative for the Coe Center's more than 2500-piece collection.

"We are grateful for the Coe Center's interest in returning cultural objects to descendant communities," said Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counciller. "There is a growing recognition among museums that Indigenous communities are the best caretakers of their own cultural objects, and that these objects are important in helping Native people live their culture. The Coe Center invited organizations to apply to become stewards of items in their collections, and the Alutiiq Museum was awarded the pieces from our region. The Coe Center paid for packing and shipping to Alaska and will even provide a small grant to help with the care of the pieces. We are grateful."

Carved from a single piece of wood, the bowl is likely a food-serving dish. It features a flat bottom, sloped sides, and a decorative rim with a shallow groove. The bowl is generally oval, although one end is gently pointed, like a boat or a mask.

The two contemporary bags reflect Lalla Williams's sewing expertise and use of natural materials. One is a purse made of pale grey sea bass skin. It has an ivory clasp and a lining of flowered cotton cloth. The other is a small pouch made of seal gut accented with marten fur, yarn, leather, and cotton. Williams, an Alutiiq Elder from a Karluk family, currently lives in Anchorage. Before this gift, the Alutiiq Museum owned just three examples of her skin sewing—a parka and two hats.

The objects will be integrated into the museum's collections and shared with the public through gallery and online displays.

"We have already found a place for the bowl in our new exhibits, in a display on household life," said Counciller, "and photos of all three items are available on our website."

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.