



For Immediate Release

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Museum Showcases Watercolor Paintings by Cheryl Lacy

KODIAK—On May 22, the Alutiiq Museum will debut Cuumillapet—Our Ancestors, an exhibit of watercolor paintings by Sugpiaq artist Cheryl Lacy. The show is part of the museum's Grand Reopening celebration. It features eleven portraits of Alutiiq ancestors, restyled from early 19th-century Russian paintings. Lacy captured the faces of Alutiiq people documented in the painting and then placed each in a Kodiak landscape. Cuumillapet—Our Ancestors is the first show in the museum's new Living Culture Gallery—a space created for short-term exhibits as part of the recent building renovation.

"We are thrilled to share Cheryl's paintings in our new gallery," said Executive Director April Counciller. "Her lovely watercolors bring our ancestors to life and remind us that Alutiiq culture persists thanks to their strength. This is the first of many shows that will grace this special space. In the coming years, we look forward to featuring displays of all kinds, from locally curated art exhibits to presentations from archaeological studies, and visiting displays produced by other organizations."

Cheryl Lacy is an avid illustrator, painter, and beader. She has been drawing for as long as she can remember, inspired by the beauty of Alaska and her Sugpiaq heritage. Cheryl is particularly known for her ability to capture faces. It took her just five months to reimagine the eleven portraits. She said, "I am so honored to be a part of this project. It allowed me to sit with our ancestors and try to imagine the life they led. I would turn on wave and seagull background sounds, and my surroundings would drop away."

Lacy helped to develop the show, advising on the layout of the paintings and contributing to the text. She will travel to Kodiak to attend the show's opening. Many organizations supported the development of Cuumillapet—Our Ancestors. Rasmuson Foundation supported the commission of Lacy's painting through the Alaska Art Fund administered by Museums Alaska. The Frame Shop provided a substantial discount on framing the eleven large watercolors, a Grant-in-Aid from the Alaska State Museum supported exhibit production and travel costs, and funding from The CIRI Foundation supported staff time and framing.

Access to the museum's Living Culture Gallery is always free. The public can visit Cuumillapet—Our Ancestors anytime during the museum's regular hours. The museum plans to share the watercolor display for a year. A digital version is also available on the exhibits page of the museum's website at <https://alutiiqmuseum.org/museum/exhibits/living-culture-gallery/>.

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.