

KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

NEWS FROM THE TONGASS HISTORICAL MUSEUM AND THE TOTEM HERITAGE CENTER

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2007

Shaping Desire

How do you put concept into form? If you could sculpt your deepest desires and dogmatic predispositions into permanence, would they appear as you would expect them to? Is it possible to learn more about yourself and society through putting these intimate ideas into a tangible form? Ketchikan's very own Carla Potter sought to answer these questions and



Fran Harper, right, discusses Carla Potter's hanging "octopus egg" assemblages, *Aurora's Hope, Strands I & II*, at the exhibit opening.

more in her latest solo exhibition, "Shaping Desire", on display at the Tongass Historical Museum through February 4, 2007.

The show exhibits the next stage of Carla's artistry after a long residency at the Archie Bray Foundation in Montana. In

this show she illustrates the recent developments and gained wisdom in her personal life through a masterful translation of concept into organic imagery and forms.

An observer will be transformed upon walking into this exhibit and viewing the evocative ceramic creations. She deals with many ideas in her work including purity, hope, cultural practices, and a glimpse of how society motivates our desires. About her work, Ms. Potter has said, "I am always interested in making sculpture that expresses nature's abundance as a thing of beauty and wealth. My ability as an artist to put that beauty into a different context is a form of currency and trade. It is my hope that these artistic seeds thrown into the wind of human culture will elicit dialogue, new ideas and

ultimately a better understanding of my place in the world." When viewing such works as "Sheepish Indulgence", "Skirt Your Desire", and "Layers of Seduction" one can see a complex palette of motivations through the conceptualizing and compulsive perfectionism of juxtaposing the ideal with the representation of organic references. In this exhibit one will see a variety tabletop of vessels, beautiful organic forms that hang from the ceiling, clusters of "social sea squirts" that are almost personified in their composition, and a large wedding cake that deals with sociological ideas of perfection, domesticity, and society. All of these pieces have references to local sea life. Because of their enticing tactility, Ms. Potter has included a "tactile tableau" piece that features many small forms that can be picked up and handled to further explore the artwork.

Carla's courageous efforts will ignite the senses and force us all to consider in ourselves what our own desires might look like if we put them into form.

Amos Hopkins



Chip Porter, Craig Koch, and Terry Robbins chat at Carla Potter's *Shaping Desire* opening on December 1st.

Kubley Family Curio Collection Donated to Museum

Recently, the Museum received an extensive collection of Alaska Native-made curios associated with Ketchikan's pioneer Kubley family store. Established in 1902 by Henry Kubley, the business operated in various locations on Front Street for more than fifty years.

The items were donated by Blossom Hewitt Williams, granddaughter of Henry Kubley and daughter of Ruth Kubley Hewitt. Ruth assembled the collection in the 1930s while working as a clerk in the family store.

Included in the donation are Haida, Tlingit, and Tsimshian baskets; carved halibut hooks; moccasins; leather and



The original Kubley store is at left in this April 1913 photo.

beadwork; Haida model argillite totem poles; and ivory and bone carvings. Most of the items were traded or sold to the Kubley store by Native artists in Metlakatla, Klawock, Hydaburg, Saxman, and Ketchikan. Together, they are exemplary of Ketchikan's vibrant curio trade nearly a century ago.

The Kubley store sold confectionaries, tobacco, and general merchandise, as well as curios and "views" (picture postcards) for the tourists. The whole family had a hand in running the store: Henry, his wife, Mina; daughters Alma and Ruth; and his son, Lawrence, who took over the business after his father's

death. (Lawrence was also well known for his love of baseball, and was the owner-operator of the Dream Theater.)

The original Kubley Store was in a small, stand-alone building on the water side of Front Street, in the middle of the 200 block. Early in the 1900s, it was moved to the Ryus Drug Co. building at 229 Front Street, and later to 301 Front Street. The business finally closed in 1956, when Lawrence Kubley sold the property to his son, Wally, who moved the Sourdough Bar to that location. The Sourdough, now owned by Wally's son, Larry, still operates there today.



This beaded, spruce root and leather bag is one of many Alaska Native-made curios from the Kubley collection.

Shaping Desire - Related Events

Carla Potter will be on hand for a number of educational events during the exhibit run:

Clay Workshop – Carla will introduce her unique style of handbuilt clay sculpture and pottery during this two day workshop conducted on consecutive Saturdays: January 13th, from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm and January 20th, from 1:00 - 4:00 pm. The workshop will be held at Bigfoot Studio, 325 Bawden Street, Lower. The registration fee is \$75. Participants must be age 13 or older. Phone 225-5900 to register.

Brown Bag Lunch - Join Carla at the Museum on Thursday, January 18th at 12:15 pm for a half-hour as she shares a retrospective of her work and artistic inspiration. Bring your lunch. Water and coffee provided. Open to all ages. No charge.

Funday - This popular children's event will explore the ocean from both an artistic and scientific viewpoint. Carla will be on hand to lead children in a clay activity. Other exciting activity stations will allow for exploration in a variety of formats. Saturday, January 20th, 10:00 am - Noon. No charge. All ages.

Native Artists Recognized

A number of Totem Heritage Center Native Art Studies instructors and students have recently been recognized for their artistic achievement and contribution to the preservation of traditional weaving.

Anna Brown Ehlers and Teri Rofkar each received a United States Artists Rasmuson Fellow Crafts and Traditional Arts grant. Brown Ehlers, a Chilkat Tlingit, produces both traditional and contemporary Chilkat weavings. She demonstrates and teaches weaving across the nation. Rofkar, Tlingit, has extensively researched traditional weaving

techniques and materials and produces both traditional and contemporary work in cedar bark, spruce root and textiles in both the Chilkat and Raven's Twail styles. She is an advocate for the preservation of traditional Northwest Coast Native art and frequently teaches and does public demonstrations. Fifty artists across the nation received the \$50,000 grants to support them as they pursue their various artistic endeavors. United States Artists was launched in September of 2005 with \$20 million in seed funding provided by a coalition of leading foundations—Ford, Rockefeller, Prudential, and Rasmuson—allowing the organization to award fifty \$50,000 grants to the nation's finest artists annually beginning in 2006.

On the heels of receiving a National

Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship, Delores Churchill, Haida, was named the 2006 Rasmuson Foundation Distinguished Artist. The \$25,000 award was presented in recognition of Churchill's lifelong achievement and contribution to the preservation of Northwest Coast Native weaving.



Dolly and Corrine Garza pose with their winning miniature baskets and twined cedar bark hat.

Ketchikan basket makers had an outstanding showing at the Celebration of Basketry & Native Foods event organized by the Tohono O'odham Community Action Committee and held at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

Vivian Benson, Tsimshian, took Best of Show honors with a pair of cedar bark woven dolls and an Honorable Mention for a cedar bark clam basket. Dolly Garza, Haida, took 1st Place in the miniature basket division and 2nd Place with her painted cedar bark hat in the twined basket division. Corrine Garza placed second in the miniature division. David McClavey, Haida, took 1st Place in the youth division for his cedar bark hat. Diane Douglas-Willard placed 3rd for her twined basket. Carol Douglas, Arapaho/Oklahoma Seminole, took 2nd Place in the miniature division with her coiled basket. Carol has taught previously at the Totem Heritage Center and will be teaching a coiled basket class again in February.

Congratulations to all of these artists.

Back to the Fifties

"Boomtown: Ketchikan in the 1950s," the exhibit of Paulu Saari's period images, was among the most popular shows the Museum has ever produced. In response to scores of requests for more of Paulu's photos, we are preparing an

entirely new exhibit of photographs of life in our town at mid-century.

Back to the Fifties will open at the Tongass Historical Museum on February 23rd and run through April 15th.

Preservation Points

- Ask before you act! If you have questions on how an object should be displayed, stored, or otherwise cared for, contact your local museum for assistance.
- Careless handling is one of the most frequent causes of damage. Always handle objects with clean, dry, lotion-free hands. The oils, acids and salts in your skin will tarnish and corrode metals and may damage porous materials such as ceramics.
- Avoid hanging sensitive objects such as masks, paintings and drums on exterior walls. Exterior walls are subject to more fluctuations in temperature than interior walls.
- Scott Carrlee of the Alaska State Museum suggests loosely stuffing 100% cotton batting in the back of hide drums to help buffer the fluctuations in humidity that often lead to cracking and splitting.
- Modern newsprint and most fax papers are inherently unstable. To preserve the information it is a good idea to photocopy them on acid free paper.
- Metal fasteners such as staples and paper clips are prone to rusting. Carefully remove them and replace them with plastic-coated or plastic paper clips. Also remove rubber bands; over time they can become hard and brittle, or sticky.
- Don't try to repair damaged or torn documents with tape. Tape adhesives yellow with time and are difficult to remove, leading to permanent damage.

Tongass Historical Museum

629 Dock Street
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
(907) 225-5600

Winter Hours

October through April
1:00 AM - 5:00 PM Wednesday - Friday
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Saturday
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM Sunday



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601 Deermount Avenue
Mailing Address: 629 Dock Street
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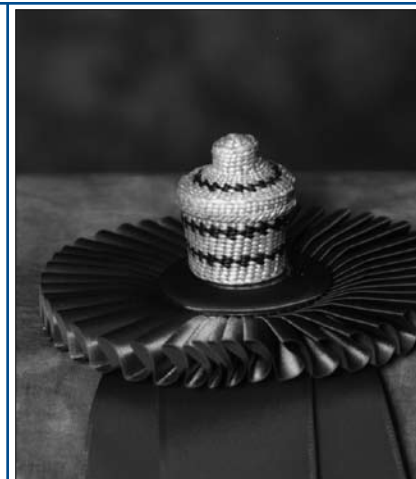
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Dolly Garza's miniature cedar bark basket took 1st place at the Celebration of Native Basketry and Foods event held at the Heard Museum in December.



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Ketchikan Museums Calendar

Tongass Historical Museum

Shaping Desire

Ceramics by Carla Potter

December 1 - February 4

Clay Workshop

With Carla Potter

January 13 & 20

Brown Bag Lunch

Gallery talk with Carla Potter

Thursday, January 18

12:15 - 12:45

FUNDAY

Ocean-themed art and science activities for kids of all ages

Saturday, January 20, 10:00 AM - Noon

Totem Heritage Center

Mixed Level Ravenstail Weaving

Evelyn Vanderhoop, Instructor

January 8 - 19, 2007

Intro to NW Coast Carving

Fred Trout, Instructor

January 8 - 19, 2007

Coiled Basketry

Carol Douglas, Instructor

February 12 - 23, 2007

Mold Making for Carvers

Stephen Jackson, Instructor

March 5 - 14, 2007

Cedar Bark Weaving

Intermediate & Advanced

Diane Douglas-Willard, Instructor

March 26 - April 6, 2007

Doll Making: Northwest Coast Form

Mary Ellen Frank, Instructor

April 26 - 27, 2007