Alutiiq Museum Brings New Exhibit To Town

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Mary Donaldson/KMXT{audio}/images/stories/mp3/alutiiq_mask_21_may_08_copy.mp3{/audio}

It’s taken years of preparation, but Alutiiq treasures have made their way back to Kodiak and will be on display at the Alutiiq Museum later this week. Mary Donaldson has more.

Over one-hundred years ago Alphonse Pinart, a French linguist, had a great interest in studying the people of the Americas. To study the Alutiiq people and their culture in the 1870’s, the best technology available was collecting ceremonial masks while documenting them. He collected over 80 Alutiiq masks and brought them home to France, and they have been there for the last 136 years. About half of them recently made their way back home to the island for a visit.

Sven Haakansen, executive director of the Alutiiq Museum says every mask has a story to tell.

(Mask 7 :40s “…or pouting.”)

Anne Claire Laronde, the director of the Chateau Musee in Boulogne-sur-mer, France, is here for the opening Friday and has been collaborating with Haakansen for six years to get this exhibit to Kodiak.

(Masks 4 :25s “…the island of Kodiak.”)

Laronde says that she understood early on that these masks were significant to the Alutiiq culture.

(Masks 5 :31s “…between two of us.”)

Both Haakansen and Laronde are excited about the exhibit opening this week.

(Masks 6 :10s “…so well exhibited here.)

(Masks 3 :15s “…when you do.”)

The public is invited to take in the traditional Alutiiq culture through the 34 masks on display and their stories beginning this Friday at the Alutiiq Museum with a special preview and opening reception. Tickets are 30-dollars for the event. A free public opening, with a ribbon cutting ceremony and the Alutiiq dancers, will be Saturday on the steps of the Alutiiq Center Building, with the gallery open for viewing from 9 – 5.

I’m Mary Donaldson.

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