



Southwind, Sean Denning-Barnes, Bethel, 2010 Art Bank Acquisition

## January 2011 ASCA Communique

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### Grant Deadlines

### A Note from Char

Greetings and happy 2011.

This is the time of year when I have mostly practical information (and some advice) for all of you because it's annual grant season. But first, I must share with you how the recent violent events in Arizona and in other parts of the world have once again emphasized the critical role that arts and culture play in our lives. Through the arts, we learn about and understand those who are not like us in a myriad of ways. Through storytelling, poetry, dance, theater and the visual arts we create worlds that transcend differences and illuminate how we are the same, not how we are different. Now, more than ever, we need the arts in our lives and in our children's lives. While I spend much time talking about the economic importance of the arts, that's how we use the appropriate language to justify our place in the sector. But YOU - you are artists - you are the people who can truly help the rest of us move one step closer toward understanding. I applaud all of you who create, and by doing so make our world just a little more humane, a little more sane.

And now for the practical stuff. Saunders and Andrea have been working on revamping the annual grant applications, which will provide a better process for the organizations applying and more information for the panel members. We will survey applicants after the deadline to get input on the revised application. Which reminds me! If you are a second year biennial grantee your **application is due March 1, 2011**. You know who you are because

**March 1 FY11 Grant Deadlines**  
Career Opportunity, Workshop, Community Arts Development, and Master Artist and Apprentice. Call ASCA staff before applying.

your grant number says OS2 on it.

Grant Panels: The Grant Panel meeting is April 14-15, 2011, in Anchorage at the ASCA offices. If you are an Operating Support applicant, you will be assigned a time to either attend in person - if possible - or listen in via teleconference. Each applicant has three minutes at the end of the grant review to answer specific questions from panelists. I advise you to be there, either in person or on the phone! And if you're interested in serving on the grant panel, please send me an email with your qualifications. While we usually have plenty of people interested, we are always looking for individuals willing to volunteer their time for this very worthy cause!

**March 1 FY12 Annual Operating Support Grants** Call ASCA staff before applying.

Community Arts Conversations: ASCA staff will be traveling around Alaska this spring listening to you and what we can do to provide more support and services for artists, arts and culture organizations. This is part of the strategic planning process we do every five years, and without your perspective, we can't do our work effectively. The scheduled public meetings are listed in this communiqué. Please send us a note and tell us you'll be there. Your thoughts are critical to this process!

**April 15 FY12 Artist in Schools Grants.** Call ASCA staff before applying.

Regulations Changes: As a state agency, we are governed by state statutes and regulations. This year we are proposing changes to the regulations which affect quite a few of our programs. You can view the regulations - and the proposed changes - on our website and I would encourage you to do so. Again, the goal is to make the programs better for everyone - which includes changing the biennial operating support grant to a triennial grant. Deadline for comment on these proposed changes is February 25, 2011.

To apply go to <http://alaska.cgweb.org/>

### Calls for Art on CaFE

Now the online application site for all ASCA Calls for Art: [www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org) (CaFE) From our main page click on Artist Opportunities for more information.

The Foraker Group is sponsoring the Catalyst for Nonprofit Excellence , an opportunity for nonprofit leaders that by all reports goes far beyond professional development and into a really personally transforming experience. The information is on their website and I highly encourage you to read everything carefully, then apply if you meet the qualifications. There are some scholarships available. Check it out here: [https://www.forakergroup.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=calendar.catalog\\_category&typeid=17](https://www.forakergroup.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=calendar.catalog_category&typeid=17)

### Looking for Work in the Arts?

Look no further - here is a great listing of available positions in all areas - museums, performing arts and galleries. <http://www.workinthearts.net/>

I hope that you will look at Community Conversation calendar, and choose to participate in your community as part of the big picture arts and culture planning we'll be doing over the next few months. It's an exciting process and we deeply appreciate your input!

- Charlotte

### Opportunities for Arts Organizations and Artist Opportunities.

The National

Endowment for the Arts has various deadlines for grants. Check the website our regularly!  
<http://www.arts.gov/grants/>

#### Quick Links

[ASCA Website](#)  
[CGO\(Culture Grants Online\)](#)

## Public Notice - Proposed Changes to ASCA Regulations

For more information on this public notice please visit our website at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca>.

### NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE REGULATIONS OF THE ALASKA STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

The Alaska State Council on the Arts proposes to adopt regulation changes in Title 20 of the Alaska Administrative Code, dealing with grant and other program requirements administered by the Alaska State Council on the Arts which affects artists and arts organization, including the following:

An omnibus revision of 20 AAC 30 to update grant and other program requirements generally and to ensure that existing regulations contained in 20 AAC 30 are consistent with current statutory authority of the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

You may comment on the proposed regulation changes, including the potential costs to private persons of complying with the proposed changes, by submitting written comments to Charlotte Fox, Executive Director, Alaska State Council on the Arts, 161 Klewin Street, Suite 102, Anchorage, AK 99508-1506. The comments must be received no later than **February 25, 2011, 4:30 pm**.

If you are a person with a disability who needs a special accommodation in order to participate in this process, please contact Charlotte Fox at **907.269.6610 or 1.888.278.7424** no later than **February 11, 2011** to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided.

For a copy of the proposed regulation changes, contact Charlotte Fox at above referenced mailing address or go to [www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca).

After the public comment period ends, the Alaska State Council on the Arts will either adopt these or other provisions dealing with the same subject, without further notice, or decide to take no action on them. The language of the final regulations may be different from that of the proposed regulations. **YOU SHOULD COMMENT DURING THE TIME ALLOWED IF YOUR INTERESTS COULD BE AFFECTED.**

**Statutory Authority:** AS 44.27.052

**Statutes Being Implemented, Interpreted, or Made Specific:** AS 44.27.050; AS 44.27.052; AS 44.27.060

**Fiscal Information:** The proposed regulation changes are not expected to require an increased

appropriation.

DATE: February 7, 2011

Charlotte Fox, Executive Director  
Alaska State Council on the Arts

## Alaska Contemporary Art Bank Call for Art

The State of Alaska Contemporary Art Bank call for Art will be open February 1, 2011.



Ikpikpuk, Deland Anderson, 2010 Art Bank Acquisition.

The Alaska State Council on the Arts announces a Call for Art for the State of Alaska Contemporary Arts Bank, a collection of artwork loaned to state offices and public spaces.

Alaska artists are invited to submit images for interior artwork to be selected for the Alaska Contemporary Art Bank. This call is open to Alaska artists only. **Submission Deadline: March 8, 2011 9:59pm.**

To view the prospectus and/or apply, applicants must register through [www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org) (CaFE).

There will be two CaFE teleconferences for artists interested in submitting artwork for this call on Friday, February 11, 2011 4-5pm or Thursday, February 24, 2011 noon-1pm.

The goal of the teleconference is to familiarize Alaska artists with the CaFE online application form and the application process for ASCA's Contemporary Art Bank Call and other % for Art Projects.

Please RSVP by phone to ASCA at 907-269-6610 or 1-888-278-7424 or email [andrea.noble@alaska.gov](mailto:andrea.noble@alaska.gov). You will receive the conference code when you RSVP. Check our website for more information about this and more opportunities for artists. <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca>

## Strategic Community Arts Conversations Schedule by Community

### ASCA Community Conversations, 2011

The Alaska State Council on the Arts staff will be holding conversations around the state this spring in conjunction with their strategic planning process. Below is the list of locations scheduled to date. If your community is NOT on the list and you would like to be included, please contact us. We are visiting as many communities as our budget will allow! We need your participation so that we will know how to better serve artists and arts and culture organizations. If you plan on attending, please rsvp to: [christa.rayl@alaska.gov](mailto:christa.rayl@alaska.gov) so that we can plan on numbers attending. Thank you so much - see you there!

#### **Anchorage:** (2 meetings)

Wednesday, Feb. 2, noon -1:30, Alaska State Council on the Arts Conference Room  
Tuesday, Feb. 8, 5:30-7:00, Alaska State Council on the Arts Conference Room

**Fairbanks:** March 17, 5:30-7 pm, Fairbanks Arts Association

**Homer:** March 23, 5:30-7 pm, Homer Council on the Arts

**Juneau:** Monday, Feb. 21, 5:30-7 pm JACC

**Ketchikan:** Feb. 23, 5:30-7 pm, Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities

**Kodiak:** March 31, 6-7:30 pm. Location to be announced

**Nome:** To be announced

**Mat-Su Valley:** Feb. 3, 7-8:30 pm, Turkey Red Restaurant, Palmer

**Sitka:** January 28, 3-4:30 pm, Sweetland Hall, SJ Campus

For more information and to view our proposed amendments to the Strategic Plan please visit our website at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca/>.

## Opportunities for Artists and Arts Organizations

### Percent for Art Calls:

(1.) The Kodiak Island Borough School District's Percent for Art Committee, in conjunction with the Kodiak Island Borough School District, is requesting proposals for artwork to be commissioned for three recently completed construction projects:

New Kodiak Schools Aquatic Training Facility: \$116,838.95  
Old Harbor School Career Tech Addition and Gym Renovation: \$13,485.00  
Ouzinkie School Gym Expansion and Renovation: \$13,829.75

Proposal Deadline:

**Monday, January 31, 2011**

(2.) The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is pleased to announce that its visual arts initiative, smARTpower is now accepting applications. smARTpower sends U.S. artists abroad to collaborate with youth and local artists in the creation of community-based projects.

**Deadline February 28, 2011**

For more information please visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/cultural/smartpower.html>.

(3.) The Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission works cooperatively with the National Endowment for the Arts to sponsor the U.S./Japan Creative Artists' Program. The program provides support for up to five outstanding contemporary and traditional artists from the United States to spend a three-month residency in Japan to pursue their individual artistic goals. The next **deadline** for this program is **February 1, 2011**.

For more information please visit <http://www.jusfc.gov/creativeartists.asp>.

(4.) The Rasmuson Foundation Individual Artist Award Application will be open January 17, 2011. To apply go to [www.rasmuson.org](http://www.rasmuson.org). Online applications must be filed by 11:59pm March 1, 2011. Paper applications will still be accepted, and the postmark **deadline is March 1, 2011**.

For more information about who is eligible to apply and help with the application process please go to [www.rasmuson.org](http://www.rasmuson.org).

(5.) Cordova Historical Museum Fish Follies 2011 is open to all artists over 18 years or age, in any medium, and fish- or ocean-related. All entries must be under 50lbs and less than 72 inches. Limit is two entries per artist. No entries may have been exhibited at the Cordova Historical Museum. All works must have been executed in 2009, 2010, 2011. All accepted works must be for sale. USPS or UPS First Class only. Fed Ex or Ground will not be accepted. For more information email [curator@cordovamuseum.org](mailto:curator@cordovamuseum.org) or call 907-424-6665. **All entries must be post- marked by April 15, 2011.**

(6.) The Princess Grace Foundation-USA announces the availability of applications for the 2011 Princess Grace Awards in Theater, Playwriting, Dance Performance, Choreography, and Film. Full guidelines and applications are available at [www.pgfusa.org](http://www.pgfusa.org).

Deadlines are as follows:

Theater & Playwriting Application Postmark Deadline: March 31, 2011

Dance/Choreography Application Postmark Deadline: April 30, 2011

Film Application Postmark Deadline: June 1, 2011

(7.) The Foraker Groups is accepting applications for its Catalyst for Nonprofit Excellence: Investing in Alaska's Nonprofit Future training. For more information please visit [www.forakergroup.org](http://www.forakergroup.org) or call 907-743-1200. The **deadline to apply is January 31, 2011**.

(8.) The NEA now has application guidelines for Grants for Arts Projects and Our Town are now available on the NEA website. For this information and application deadlines go to <http://www.arts.gov/grants/apply>.

(9.) As part of their commitment to showcasing the work of Alaskan playwrights, the Fairbanks Drama Association and The Looking Glass Group Theatre invite Alaskan residents to send in their best 10-minute plays to be considered for the 10th Annual 8X10 ***Festival of New Alaskan Plays***. Eight ten-minute plays will be given rehearsed staged readings at the Festival, which will be held April 15 & 16, 2011, at FDA's Riverfront Theater in Fairbanks.

Guidelines for entering scripts:

Alaskan residents only. One entry per playwright. One author per play. No musicals or children's plays. Submit 5 copies of each script, typed & bound, with pages numbered. Cover page with playwright's name and contact info, including phone and e-mail. (Playwright's name

& contact info should appear on cover page only.) "Cast of Characters" page with brief character descriptions following cover page, cast size should be no more than eight actors. Plays should be between 8 & 12 minutes long based on one minute of playing time per page of script, 12 pt. font size, standard playwriting format. If you don't know what that is, google it. (Cover and cast list pages will not be included in page count.) No electronic submission or Express mail. Scripts will not be returned.

Contact Peggy Ferguson at [pefgerguson@gci.net](mailto:pefgerguson@gci.net) or 907-456-PLAY for more information.

**Postmark deadline is March 15, 2011**

**Recent Grant Awards**

The Alaska State Council on the Arts awarded over \$95,000 in grants at its December meeting. The list below includes arts education grants through the Rasmuson Foundation Arts Initiative. The next grant deadline for Community Arts Development, Career Opportunity, Master Artist and Apprentice, Artists in Schools, FY12 Operating Support and Workshop grants is March 1, 2011. Grant deadlines for Arts Education Project, Excursion and Access Grants are ongoing. For more information, go to: [www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca).

Community	Program	Grantee	Grant Award
Anchorage	Community Arts Development Grant	Alaska Center for the Performing Arts	\$1,230
Anchorage	Community Arts Development Grant	Anchorage Park Foundation	\$2,000
Anchorage	Artists in Schools Grants	Chugach Optional Elementary School	\$770
Anchorage	Artists in Schools Grants	Airport Heights Elementary	\$2,500
Anchorage	Artists in Schools Grants	Mears Middle School	\$1,370
Anchorage	Artists in Schools Grants	College Gate Elementary	\$1,500
Anchorage	Artists in Schools Grants	Aquarian Charter School	\$1,000
Anchorage	Artists in Schools Grants	Kasuun Elementary PTA	\$1,500
Barrow	Artists in Schools Grants	North Slope Borough School District	\$8,000
Chignik Lagoon	Artists in Schools Grants	Chignik Lagoon Village Council	\$2,000
Cold Bay	Artists in Schools Grants	Cold Bay School	\$2,000
Fairbanks	Community Arts Development Grant	Tanana Chiefs Conference	\$3,000
Gustavus	Artists in Schools Grants	Gustavus School	\$3,000
Homer	Community Arts Development Grant	Kachemak Bay Writers Conference	\$3,500
Homer	Artists in Schools Grants	Bunnell Street Art Center	\$6,600
Juneau	Workshop Grant	Juneau Arts & Humanities Council	\$1,500

Kasilof	Artists in Schools Grants	Tustumena Elem.	\$1,800
Kodiak	Community Arts Development Grant	Kodiak Historical Society	\$2,000
Kodiak	Artists in Schools Grants	Peterson Elementary	\$1,500
Nome	Artists in Schools Grants	Anvil City Science Academy	\$2,000
Nondalton	Artists in Schools Grants	Lake & Peninsula School Dist.	\$2,000
Palmer	Community Arts Development Grant	Palmer Arts Council	\$2,500
Palmer	Community Arts Development Grant	Valley Arts Alliance	\$3,000
Petersburg	Community Arts Development Grant	Petersburg Public Library	\$1,949
Seward	Artists in Schools Grants	Seward PTSA	\$3,050
Sitka	Artists in Schools Grants	Alaska Arts Southeast, Inc.	\$7,000
Sitka	Career Opportunity Grant	Rebecca Poulson	\$650
Sitka	Career Opportunity Grant	Nicholas Galanin	\$1,500
Sitka	Workshop Grant	The Island Institute Inc.	\$1,500
St. Paul Island	Artists in Schools Grants	St. Paul and St. George PSD	\$3,500
Sterling	Artists in Schools Grants	Sterling Elementary School PTA	\$2,600
Talkeetna	Artists in Schools Grants	Denali Arts Council	\$3,300
Unalakleet	Artists in Schools Grants	Bering Strait School District	\$10,000
Whittier	Artists in Schools Grants	Whittier School	\$4,430

## Poetry Out Loud

Poetry Out Loud: Coming to a community near you! This year, because of additional travel funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, we have more participants than ever in our high school poetry recitation competition. There are regional and community finals, from which 10 finalists will be chosen to participate in Juneau on February 22 for the statewide finals. Communities include Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Sitka, Haines, Ketchikan, Thorne Bay, Yakutat, Nanwalek, Noatak, Kwethluk, Unalakleet, Ambler, Teller, Delta Junction, Glennallen, Tok, Unalaska, Perryville, Bethel, Scammon Bay, Chignik, Mountain Village, Port Alsworth, Nondalton, and the Mat-Su. The state winner goes to Washington DC for the national finals in April. If you want more information or a list of the participating schools and communities in Alaska, contact our office. This is a marvelous program that helps students gain confidence in public speaking and an opportunity to have poetry a part of their lives.

## Insightful Interviews with Alaska Visual Artists

This series of interviews is about four Alaska artists, their favorite local destinations and their connections to community.

## Insightful Interview with Othniel Art Oomittuk Jr. By Dawnell Smith



Othniel Art Oomittuk Jr.

Visual artist

Carver, multi-media work

*Where do you live and how does it influence your art?*

I was born in Pt. Hope or Tikigaq, but I grew up in different parts of Alaska. I lived Outside for 26 years, got my degree in graphic art and photography, and lived in Oregon for 23 years, Hawaii for three years, and then moved back home. When I first moved back, it was very difficult for me to carve. It feels like I need to be away to start something, but now I'm feeling more comfortable. I am an artist who creates to perpetuate my culture. I was a photographer, printmaker, painter and potter and I know how to do those things, but they were not a part of my culture. When I carved my first mask in 1997, I wanted to see if I could do it. It won first place at the Indian Art Northwest market, which was shocking because there were so many strong indigenous Northwest artists. I won again in the next two years. I don't know if carving came to me from ancestral instinct, but it came naturally to me. When I do it, it feels like a continuation of the art of my ancestors.

*Do you have a favorite neighborhood?*

I've been living out of a suitcase for a long time. Now I like to go to the old town site and walk to the Cape Thompson area. Before you get to the hills it's absolutely beautiful. It's close to where we go picking Murre eggs. We have to climb the cliffs. It's something our ancestors did. My dad did it, my cousins do it, and even though I hadn't done it before, it felt natural when I did. You're just dangling from a rope with nothing but rocks and cliffs and ocean below you.

*Explain what versatility means to you.*

I guess it's having the freedom to create with a different frame of mind. It's not about doing things only one way, it's about swaying away from what you were taught technically. It's about knowing that what you do doesn't have to fit someone else's framework. I had a college professor in a printmaking class who said that you should never mix the embossing and intaglio printing styles. So I did. I embossed an eagle and then made its head in ink intaglio style. It only seemed natural to blend them together. Sometimes you have to go against what people teach you. You have to learn from them, but you don't have to be them.

*Where do you like to go when you want to think?*

In Anchorage, I go to my ancestors by going to my sculpture at the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation building at 39<sup>th</sup> and C Street. In Pt. Hope, I go anywhere out of town, just to the beach or out on the ice during whaling season.

*What would an art itinerary look like if you designed it?*

I would send people to the Anchorage Museum, the Alaska Native Arts Foundation and Two Spirits gallery. Some day I would like to start an art market like the ones they have down in Arizona so that indigenous artists can sell work directly to collectors and the public.

*Describe a perfect day as an artist.*

I would wake up, drink a cup of coffee, eat a little breakfast, get my tools out and do a little bit of carving until about noon. Then I'd do some errands, other things outside of being an artist, and return to carving around 1 p.m. Then I'd relax. I used to carve between 9 p.m. and 3 or 4 a.m. and that's when some of my best carvings get done, so I guess it all depends on the time of year and how I feel. Right now, we're getting the boat and tools ready for whaling.

*Where would people run into your art in the course of their daily lives?*

They can probably find my masks at Two Spirits and the Alaska Native Arts Foundation, as well as the Alaska Native Heritage Center. In the Lower 48, they can find my work at the Portland Art Museum as well as at the Heard Museum in Phoenix and the Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts, and the Anchorage Museum, though you have to look really hard to find it.

*What might surprise visitors about your hometown?*

Well, maybe the price of plane tickets. It's going to cost almost \$1,000 round trip from Anchorage to Pt. Hope, and you can fly to Europe cheaper than that, so a lot of people don't come to Pt. Hope. I think those who do come here already know it's pretty much the edge of the earth and as far northwest as you can go on this continent. What might surprise people is that 2,000 years ago, this was a major hub, a large community of over 2,000 people. There were over 600 sod houses here, all within 15, 20 feet from each other. Also, in the summer, we get 24 hours sunlight. People who are not from Alaska kind of freak out and don't know when to sleep. And sometimes they get depressed in the winter when we've got 24 hours of darkness.

*Is there a local or state art venue that deserves more recognition?*

Well, we're setting up a foundation called Suliat that's still in its infancy. It will help support Native artists. It will promote North Slope artists and ensure that if you really want to buy Inupiaq art, this is the foundation to go through to know you're getting it. We have the Silver Hand Program that can ensure that you're buying Alaska Native art, but it doesn't ensure that you're buying North Slope artwork. I'm an indigenous artist and I work with many indigenous artists, so I notice when I see things that look indigenous but are not, or that copy something indigenous but are not made by an indigenous artist from that culture.

*Does the way you work as an artist change with the seasons?*

In the winter, normally I am inside more often because it's dark all the time. In the summertime, I'm outside gathering wood, driftwood, and ivory and stuff like that. Summertime for me is a time when I do less carving than winter.

*What do you do in your free time?*

I like to play pool. If I don't feel like doing artwork, I'll read or watch a DVD, but I won't watch TV to fill time. Another thing I wouldn't mind doing is to start drawing again and going out with a video camera to document the things happening around me. My main artwork is carving, but everything I do relates to art somehow.

*How does coming from Alaska, and Pt. Hope in particular, influence how others respond to you in other parts of the country or world?*

We have this word, "Eskimo," that does not come from our language. When I'm traveling and people look at me wondering where I come from, I say, "I'm Inupiat," and they have this puzzled look. So then I clarify by saying, "You probably know it as Eskimo." Often, people in Europe can relate to me as being "Inuit" as well. When I was in Amsterdam, they automatically start talking to me in Dutch because the city is so diverse everyone knows Dutch. People don't usually think I come from America when they see me. They know I'm indigenous from someplace, they just don't know where. When I lived in Hawaii, they thought I was Chinese-Hawaiian. Most people never thought they would meet someone from the Arctic Circle, let alone an Inupiaq, and they are usually just shocked and very welcoming. They're curious. They want to know if we live in igloos. They ask what we eat. They want to know what it's like. I get

really good reactions when people learn where I come from.

### Interview with Master Artist and Apprentice By Saunders McNeill



Apprentice Sondra L. Shaginoff-Stuart, Master Artist Sophia Anderson

### **Traditional Alaska Native Master and Apprentice Team in Athabascan Moosehide Dress Making - An Interview with Master Artist Sophia Anderson and Apprentice Sondra L. Shaginoff-Stuart**

Sondra L. Shaginoff-Stuart received an ASCA Master Artist and Apprentice grant in Traditional Alaska Native Arts to apprentice with Master Artist Sophia Anderson to design and create a traditional Athabascan moosehide dress with a beaded cape. Sondra and Sophia shared their experience in an interview with ASCA staff.

#### **SONDRA**

**Sondra, can you describe your apprenticeship?** I worked with Sophia to sew a traditional Athabascan dress and cape that included a special beaded pattern I designed. I've made a dress in the past but never one that included beadwork. It was an important goal for me to use traditional materials like fine quality beads and tanned moose hide and develop my own beading style.

**Why did you choose to work on a dress for your apprenticeship?** I perform with two traditional Athabascan dance troupes, one in Kenai and the other in Chickaloon. I hope when I wear my dress

during special occasions and when I dance it will inspire other Athabascan women to work on their own traditional projects. I want it to encourage our youth to make their own designs and create dresses, vests and other beaded pieces for themselves and others.



Sondra's Dress Sketch

**Did you experience unanticipated challenges and successes?**

Cost of materials was a financial crunch. I was stressed that I might not be able to afford it. The price of a moose hide has gone up by \$1.000 and the lower quality compared to ten years ago was surprising. I found a hide from my mother's people so when I was working on my dress I was thinking of my grandmother, mother, and my aunties.

The next big challenge was deciding what beading pattern to use. I had so many ideas and I just had to dive in and begin working. I chose a Pansy flower pattern because they remind me of my late Tsucde (grandmother) Mary Shaginoff who always used pansies. She said they reminded her of little faces.

Then I was rushing to finish and working really hard. It was an eye opener when my sister who is so encouraging said, "this is something you can't make in three months". I realized I needed to take my time, work in a good mind and in a good way. I am learning

in a whole different way by slowing down, there is an emotional side to it. My sister and I decided to design our own family pattern now that both our grandmothers are gone. I love doing this work.

**What was it like getting to work alongside Sophia?** It has been a great honor to work with Sophia. She has been a tremendous help with my technique and style. Sophia has done many pieces are just exceptional and incredible. For me to strive for that creativity is why I picked her. She is a perfectionist and she expresses herself perfectly. That was what I wanted to learn with my own technique. She really is an amazing teacher, does it effortlessly and she teaches in a different way. She asked questions to help me figure it out and made sure I took each step carefully. She never told me to tear out my work. But I tore some of the flowers out three times! It takes a really long time and a lot of care to make a dress. She kept me on track with my sewing and really encouraged me. I wanted to do it right for Sophia.

**Has being an apprentice changed you as an artist?** I have a clearer vision of my design and beading possibilities. I really learned how to slow down, step back, stop first and look to see if my work was right. Sophia taught me to not be haphazard, to take the skill I have and use it well. This grant encouraged me to be closer with elders and friends and keep pushing forward. Working on the dress got me through a really hard time. It was a very strong and healthy emotional and mental investment.

**What advice do you have for others pursuing an apprenticeship?** Think about and plan for the time it will take, decide what you really want to do. Do the research. Find an artist who fits your personality because it is a partnership. You learn technique but you also learn a mannerism. Sophia taught me that.

**SOPHIA**

**Sophia, what important lesson did you learn working as a master instructor?** I have been teaching for a long time but I was amazed by how thankful Sondra was and her gratefulness about what she was learning. Oh, gosh I don't know how to express it. Sometimes you feel when you are doing or have done something for a long time you don't realize your own talents. Her enthusiasm encouraged me to continue what I am doing. It was a give and receive relationship. We got closer and our relationship became stronger. We got to know each other better. When you bead together you get so close.

**Can you describe your teaching experience?** Sondra was so excited she started beading without me

on really light weight deer skin. She loved the color of the skin and had to use it. We had to put a muslin backing on it to stabilize it. She also started her flowers out of one color. I told her she had to use three colors per flower, no less and she had to outline her design to make the flowers "pop". That's where Sondra was amazing! She just tore it apart. I was beading with her and Sondra kept ripping it out. She'd finish it and then rip it out! THREE times! I was pleased to see her tear it apart without getting upset. Sondra worked SO hard while she was working on her dress, to get it done and to do it right. Her piece is beautiful. The photos just don't show how beautiful it is.



Sondra's work in progress.

**What recommendation would you have for a new**

**Master?** Be very patient and encouraging because some people really want to do the craft but just don't have it in them yet. You don't want to blow out a flame in someone. You learn a lot about yourself and your student.

**What advice would you give an apprentice before they worked with a Master?**

Work hard. Ask yourself, are you prepared to make a commitment to finish this project. This is a lot of work. This is not something you start and then throw to the side.

**In your opinion what are the most important issues traditional Athabascan artists need to address?**

I didn't realize how important it is, carrying on the culture. Beading was something my grandmother did. Beading for me is a healing thing, for myself and my family, it is

something to share and pass on. You grow stronger by learning your culture and passing on traditions - you move forward and grow. The more you share the better you get. You learn more through problem solving. We can't let our culture die. Art is a beautiful way of expressing yourself.

**Would you do it again?**

I would!

*The purpose of a Master Artist and Apprentice grant in Traditional Alaska Native Arts is to help apprentices expand their art skills and perpetuate traditional Alaska Native art by working one on one with a Master instructor. Many celebrated and accomplished Alaska Native traditional artists were apprentices.*

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*Duplicate Newsletter?*

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