

MUSEUM MUSINGS

FALL 2011

MUSEUM HOSTS CALIFORNIA INDIAN ART EXHIBITION



Artists at the opening reception. Photograph courtesy of Louise Miranda Ramirez.

The museum hosted a Native fine art installation for the 26th Annual California Indian Conference (CIC), which was held this year on the Chico State campus October 27-30. Beverly Ortiz, Lecturer in the Anthropology Department at CSU East Bay and Ethnographic Consultant, organized Native artists from around the state to display their paintings, prints, baskets, carvings, videos, jewelry, fabric art, and beadwork. Over 600 participants attended the conference.

SPRING EXHIBITION OPENS COMING HOME: ISHI'S LONG JOURNEY

By Adrienne Scott

A hundred years ago, on August 29, 1911, Ishi, the last living member of a small band of Yahi Indians, chose to walk into the Euro-American society of the early 20th century. He arrived during dangerous times for Native Americans. Ishi's appearance has been interpreted by some as a signal of the defeat and starvation of the Yahi people. Others believe it was possibly his way of committing suicide at the hands of white settlers. Still others tell the story of a brave man willing to protect the dignity and remnants of a culture by giving himself up to the modern world. Telling Ishi's story is also a lesson in the difficulty, in fact, the impossibility, of having one person's life represent the story of an entire population.

As the centennial of Ishi's arrival in Oroville closes in December, the Valene L. Smith Museum of Anthropology will open an exhibition to reflect on aspects of Ishi's story. As budding anthropologists and museum professionals, student exhibit designers will be mindful of the mistakes of the past and recognize that one exhibition, like one man, cannot represent the entire telling of a complex and still unfolding story. The exhibit will be open December 13 and run through July, 2012.

NEW TO THE COLLECTION

We would like to extend a heartfelt and sincerest thanks to our donors who have graciously gifted several items to the museum's permanent collection. This includes: Augusta Andrae (African prints), Dorothy Creely and Robert Scott (Native American Necklace), Patricia Edwards (Alaskan Dolls) Maggie Hill, Carol Grigg, and Kathryn Baker (Dorothy Hill Cradleboard Collection), Valene L. Smith (Pacific Islands and Masai Collection), Lucille Whiting (Print), Nancy Green (Pre-Columbian Pottery).

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Beginning Spring 2012 the museum will transition to an online format for our newsletter, and we need your help!

Please call or email us with your email address so that

we can continue to send you
our newsletter and other information.

(530) 898-5397
anthromuseum@csuchico.edu

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Exhibition Opening Reception
Coming Home: Ishi's Long Journey
Thursday, January 26, 2012
5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m.

Celebration of Valene's Birthday
Enjoy cake and refreshments at the museum.
Tuesday, February 14, 2012
12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.

Night at the Museum
This year's theme is archaeology!
Friday, March 30, 2012
6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

World Explorations Lecture Series
Sundays at 4:00 p.m. at the museum.
February 12, March 4, April 1, May 6
Check our Facebook page or museum website for topics.

NEWS FROM THE CO-DIRECTOR'S CONTINUED...

By Dr. Stacy Schaefer

Yes, museums can act as catalysts in their communities, reaching out to assist, helping polish, even showcasing the gems that arise from such partnerships. And that brings me to the Valene L. Smith Museum of Anthropology. Over the fall 2011 semester, the Museum has taken a leading role in our community through partnerships with North State Symphony Orchestra, the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, and the Turtle Bay Exploration Park in highlighting the talents of young blossoming photographers in our annual photo competition. The Day of the Dead altar display and events hosted at the museum drew extraordinary participation by the Mexican American student clubs and the larger community. This collaboration brought appreciation, respect and greater understanding of cultural diversity to an illustrious level at the university. In conjunction with the California Indian Conference hosted by the Anthropology Department, the

Museum took center stage with an exhibition of contemporary California Indian Art by artists attending the conference. During the conference the museum became a center for conference members to socialize and meet other participants. These are all exemplary community partnerships that I have brought to the attention of the students enrolled in the Graduate Museum Studies seminar that I am teaching this semester. The students in the seminar are all designing future collaborative museum projects with members of the community that will be coming to fruition in the future. It is an exciting time for the Museum as we continue to grow in our new location and take on a more central role on campus and in the community. I am happy to contribute to the various projects the Museum has established and, with the staff and our students, move the Museum forward as we create and implement new partnerships and take new directions to explore with the community.

By Dr. Georgia Fox

The museum now has a new Collections Policy that addresses policies and procedures in working with the collection, and helps provide guidelines for anyone working with the collection.

In the Anthropology 461, *Museum Collections Management* course, students are learning about rehousing artifacts; in some instances, under direct supervision and guidance, students are actually working with objects from the museum's own collection. Thanks to a generous Strategic Performance Funds Grant from the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, the course, which I have been teaching since the fall semester of 2002, has now expanded to include more hands-on practicums, where students can develop further skills and knowledge in the care of cultural heritage. In the course, students have had the opportunity to create protective storage mounts for textiles and objects, to learn about paper-based and photographic collections, as well as being informed on California legislation for curating archaeological collections. Students also are learning about all of the many concerns of the museum environment, such as proper control of light, temperature, and humidity, Integrated Pest Management, and how to recognize processes of deterioration by employing preventative care.

Ultimately, one important goal of the Museum Studies Program is to provide our students not only with the theoretical underpinnings of approaches in preventative conservation, but to also to imbue them with knowledge of current standards and practices in caring for cultural heritage, especially in working with indigenous peoples. This is particularly the case here in Northern California, as the museum collaborates and works with local tribes and other entities. It is our hope that students will be better prepared to meet the challenges in cultural heritage work in the twenty-first century as they seek internships and employment.

MUSEUM ALLIANCE
MEMBERSHIP FORM



Your contributions help us to continue providing a vital teaching resources for the CSU campus and Chico.

CONTRIBUTION CATEGORIES

- ◇ \$10.00 Student/Senior
- ◇ \$17.00 Senior Couple
- ◇ \$30.00 Family
- ◇ \$50.00 Supporting
- ◇ \$100.00 Sponsor
- ◇ \$365.00 Dollar-a Day Gift

**Make Checks payable to:

Valene L. Smith Museum of Anthropology

Mail to: Valene L. Smith Museum of
Anthropology, CSU, Chico
400 West First Street
Chico, CA 95929-0400

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____