Muybridge in Alaska / Legacy of NN Cannery / Forum Leadership Programs / Alaska Native Doll Traditions
Face to Face

Last night I hosted Culture Shift, the Forum’s monthly series held at Anchorage Brewing Company. Perched among the foudres (huge medieval-looking wooden vats that are used to ferment beer), we started by learning a little about the 40 or so people who had come out for the event. I asked if this was their first Culture Shift or if they’re regulars (our “shifters”); how long they’ve lived in Alaska; if they consider themselves risk-takers or peace-makers; if they had any idea what they had signed on to do over the next two hours (most did not).

I love this event. The informal and comfortable setting of the brewery, the radical ideas and personal stories that the presenters bravely share with the crowd. I expect the differences that show up in their remarks, but I’m always surprised by the similarities and moments of connection. I enjoy the camaraderie that develops between the audience members who work in groups to form questions to pose to the two speakers. The event is fun, inspiring, uncomfortable, and thought-provoking.

It’s gratifying to see the connections that happen between people who, for the most part, didn’t know each other at the start of the evening. In fact, we recently shared a blog post about three people who met at Culture Shift and went on to collaborate on a documentary film project funded by a prestigious grant from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Over the past ten months that we have been running this program, we have consistently received positive feedback about the experience and its impact. “I attended Culture Shift last night for the first time and thoroughly enjoyed it! I’m so grateful to have had that space to process, question, and share with such a curious and inviting group,” responded one participant.

“Great speakers! A lot of interesting information that motivated me to be more active in my community,” wrote another. “Second time for me - wow! The speakers were INCREDIBLE. Can’t wait for the next one.”

There is simplicity and power in bringing people together face to face for a conversation, to exchange opinions and ideas. To share in our humanity.

I’m reminded of a passage by author Margaret J. Wheatley in her book, Who Do We Choose To Be? “In a world preoccupied with meaningless tasks, people are ever more eager to engage in a chance to contribute, to remember how good it is to be a thinking, contributing colleague. These days, having one good conversation can reintroduce us to what it feels like to be in a satisfying human relationship.”

This belief in the power of conversation is at the heart of the Forum’s statewide work. It drives us to continue to expand and evolve our programs that have been around for several decades, while also looking for new opportunities to bridge difference and build community. I hope you will join us for the next Culture Shift (held the last Tuesday of each month) or one of our facilitation trainings, community conversations, or workshops. I look forward to seeing you.

Kameron Perez-Verdia, President and CEO
In 1868, the photographer Eadweard Muybridge—best known for his later studies of animal and human locomotion—came to Alaska and made some of the first photographs of the new U.S. territory. The doubled images were stereographs, intended to simulate depth when seen through a stereoviewer. Above is “Sitka, Russo Greek Church.” See page 28. 84.XC.902.6, THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES.

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When Katie Ringsmuth stalks the boardwalks of Bristol Bay’s historic NN Cannery, she sees stories etched in the weathered wood and weary bones of its time-worn buildings. She hears the blast of the steam whistle, the grumble of the boilers, the pop-pop-pop of cans sealing in the cooling shed, the melody of multiple languages spoken by workers from all parts of the world.

This old cannery on the south shore of the Naknek River—one of the major, pristine rivers behind Bristol Bay’s world-class sockeye salmon fishery—may be way past its prime, but it still has much to say about this fishery, this state, and Alaska’s place in the world. The mess hall, the bunkhouses, the company store, the abandoned boats swallowed by weeds, the grown-over graveyards with toppling crosses—all are conduits for the voices of those who labored behind the scenes at Alaska’s largest salmon cannery.

“This story goes far beyond putting fish in a can,” said Ringsmuth, University of Alaska Anchorage history professor, author, and director of a project to keep the cannery’s story alive. “Those buildings contain the history of the people.”

That history is one of an ethnically diverse cannery culture, a seasonal, international community that’s been relegated to the footnotes of Alaska’s fishing industry. They are the invisible ones, the seasonal workers from the states, Japan, China, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Italy and Croatia, to name a few. Their work put food on tables around the world for well over 100 years. With too many narratives to wrap into one, all are connected through the common language of work.

That gets to the heart of the NN Cannery History Project, a collaboration among historians, curators, filmmakers, archeologists, artists, former cannery workers, fishermen, elders, and local high school students to collect and share stories of a place former NN Cannery worker Oscar Peñaranda refers to as “the salmon goldmine of the world.”

RESCUING HISTORY

The NN Cannery started as a saltery in 1890, was soon absorbed by the Alaska Packers Association, then transformed into the cannery, expanding from four buildings to a compound
“No one knows about the processors. They’ve been completely overlooked in history—because sliming is not sexy.”
of more than 50. Due to changes in the market, from canned to fresh frozen, its current owner, Trident Seafoods, shut down the canning operation in 2001. But several of the buildings remained open for storage and as places for fishermen to stay and store their boats. Those buildings and docks, however, weren’t getting any younger. In 2015, Trident shuttered the cannery for good. After 125 years, the closure marked the end of an era.

Ringsmuth and fisheries expert Bob King were in Cordova for the Alaska Historical Society’s annual meeting when they heard the news. They weren’t surprised, King said, but it was sad nonetheless. They knew they had to do something.

For Ringsmuth, preserving the history of such a big player in Alaska’s fishing economy was clearly important, but it was also personal. Originally from a small town in western Washington, she was four years old when she first went to South Naknek, where her father, Gary Johnson, was a cannery bookkeeper who then worked his way up to superintendent, a position he held for 17 years. Growing up, that cannery was her neighborhood.

“Like the salmon, we arrived in the spring and left in late summer,” she said. “We migrated to Bristol Bay. So, when other kids my age were going to Disneyland in the summer, I went to South Naknek.”

Childhood memories include playing under the docks, roller skating around the rec hall’s wooden floors, and sneaking donuts from under the noses of the mess hall crew.

“It was kind of a big playground for me.”

As a teenager, she worked. She worked in the mess hall, the egg house, and the fish house, among other jobs, to earn money for college. She knows what it means to stand at a slime line for 18 hours until she was so exhausted dead fish started talking smack to her. She knows the work that few outside the industry do, or have given much thought.

“No one knows about the processors,” she said. “They’ve been completely overlooked in history—because sliming is not sexy.

“Most people when they think of fish canneries, think of yucky menial labor... I mean, that’s it, that’s where it stops. Why would I want to know anything beyond that?”

This project intends to answer that question.

In November 2016, Ringsmuth, King, Sharon Thompson, and Anjuli Grantham met with Trident officials to seek their blessing, got it, and the NN Cannery History Project was born. It’s actually several projects at once, but has four major components:

• The nomination of the NN Cannery as a maritime district to the National Register of Historic Places.
• The launching of a Project Jukebox oral history archive in collaboration with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the National Park Service.
• A digital storytelling project for Naknek youth that so far has produced 17 short films on everything from women’s roles in the industry to tales of resident ghosts.
• The creation of an exhibit titled Mug Up, as cannery coffee breaks are called, to debut at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau sometime in 2022. The exhibit will take visitors on a tour of an Alaska cannery through stories, films, sounds, objects, and images, with a scale-model of the NN compound by Alutiq artist Andrew Abyo as the centerpiece.

Included in the exhibit will be the short film, Cannery Caretakers, which is coming together with the help of a $10,000 Alaska Humanities Forum grant. Produced by Jensen Hall Creatives, the film will feature local residents who looked after the cannery in winter and prepared it for work crews in the spring. Most of these caretakers are descendants of the Suqpiat/Alutiq people who fled Savonoski in 1912 after the Novarupta volcano destroyed their village and created the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, burying some areas in what’s now Katmai National Park & Preserve in up to 700 feet of ash.

In addition to educational and historic preservation goals, Ringsmuth hopes the project will bring dignity to this workforce and an appreciation for the skills and expertise it took to do these jobs. The students’ digital storytelling project, for instance, not only encourages Naknek youth to become caretakers of their history, but to “appreciate a mother who canned fish as much as a father who caught fish.”

DEATH COMES TO BRISTOL BAY

Like all canneries of that era, the NN Cannery has its share of unpleasant chapters in its closet, including the days of segregated bunkhouses, mess halls and crews, sexism, and other discriminatory practices. Those injustices were fixable. But the arrival of the Spanish flu pandemic in Bristol Bay in the spring of 1919 was a tragic game changer that altered the human landscape of the region.

Tim Troll presented this piece of the cannery story through a small exhibit he curated called, Bristol Bay Remembers: The Great Flu of 1919, which went up this summer at the Bristol Bay Historical Society Museum in Naknek. The exhibit will be included in the NN Cannery History Project’s Mug Up show.
The Fish House crew, consisting of machinists, egg pullers, indexers, and slimers, maintained unique and collaborative skills for the job of cleaning salmon at South Naknek cannery in 1989. COURTESY OF KATHERINE RINGSMUTH

An unidentified Filipino cannery worker poses for a photo after a long day of sliming fish, 1989. COURTESY OF KATHERINE RINGSMUTH.
He got involved with the flu story rather by accident, he said. A number of years ago, a fisherman dropped off an antique wooden box, once used for surgical instruments, at the Dillingham city office. Knowing Troll’s interest in history, the city manager gave him a call.

“So, we opened it up,” said Troll, director of the Bristol Bay Heritage Land Trust, who lived in Dillingham at the time. “There were beautiful little artifacts in there for the museum and a note that basically said, ‘This box contains items that were given to our grandfather in gratitude for the medical services he provided…. We would like to return them as a gift from our family to the people of Dillingham. Our grandfather was a doctor there.’”

The note was signed by Charles Black.

Dr. Linus Hiram French was founder of the Kanakanak Hospital in Dillingham. Most people in Dillingham had never heard of him. Worldwide, the flu pandemic killed people by the millions, and once it hit Bristol Bay, French was at the center of it.

“Fortunately, Black left a phone number. I called him and said, ‘Hey, this is really cool. Did your grandfather take pictures or have any journals or anything?’

“And he said, ‘Oh ya.’ That led to finding well over 500 images and correspondences, and to piecing the story of Dr French and the flu together.”

Troll and John Branson, former long-time historian for Lake Clark National Park, flew to Seattle to meet with French’s descendants at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, which had a large collection of the doctor’s items.

“Ultimately, we got the images from the family and some transcriptions of letters he’d written. So, we were looking at these photos, and after a while we’d see these photos of kids, and, ‘What’s the story there? What’s happening?’ Oh, wait a minute; these are kids who were survivors of the flu.’”

This particular flu strain tended to kill adults more than children, those with developed immune systems rather than those without, due to a backfiring that caused a deadly overreaction. Among the many heartbreaking accounts, Native children in the region were found alone in settlements, crying and huddled around their dead parents.

French’s documents led Troll to other sources. He learned that the Dillingham doctor and his two nurses were not only overwhelmed caring day and night for others, but were sick themselves. Three of the Alaska Packers Association canneries, including the NN Cannery, had their own hospitals. Best they could, they took care of the sick, built coffins, buried the dead, and looked after the grief-stricken orphans. Eventually, the children were taken to Dillingham, where French laid the groundwork for an orphanage before leaving the territory.

This ties into the NN Cannery story because of how well the Alaska Packers Association canneries responded to the disaster, Troll said. If it hadn’t been for their willingness to drop everything and step up, no doubt more would have died.

Although this year marks the 100th anniversary of the pandemic’s sweep through Bristol Bay, the story hasn’t received much attention.

“I can’t image too many families in Bristol Bay that don’t have a connection to an orphan. It’s a story people should know.”

Two New Savonoski children, orphaned by the influenza epidemic that hit Bristol Bay in 1919, arrive at the Diamond NN Cannery where they received medical care from the Alaska Packers Association’s doctor and nurse.

APA COLLECTION, ALASKA STATE LIBRARY, ASL-PO1-2437
A cross in Orthodox graveyard at the Village of South Naknek, which was settled next to the Diamond NN Cannery. Buried on one side of the graveyard are Orthodox residents, while buried in the other half are fishermen and cannery people of numerous ethnicities and faiths. Since many of the crosses are weathered, the identities and dates of death on many grave sites remain unknown. July 2019. COURTESY OF BOB KING.

A Croatian flag carved on top of a table located in the Fisherman's Bunkhouse at the Diamond NN Cannery. The flag reflects the presence of Croatian immigrants who made up a portion of the independent fishing fleet that caught salmon for the cannery at South Naknek. August, 2017. COURTESY OF KATHERINE RINGSMUTH.

Beach gang workers left behind their names and dates in the rope locker at the Diamond NN Cannery. Graffiti, which can be found on bunkhouse walls, beams, and workspaces through the property, are reminders of the thousands of people from near and far, who, for over the decades, constituted the cannery crew. July 2016. COURTESY OF KATHERINE RINGSMUTH.

Brushes, once used by the cannery's clean up crew, hang on a wall in a store room adjacent to the Cannery Building. The room, which hadn't been opened since the cannery ceased canning salmon in 2001, serves as a kind of time capsule, preserving a glimpse into the underrepresented story of cannery work. July 2019. COURTESY OF KATHERINE RINGSMUTH.
“Where in the universe would this small-town, white girl have the opportunity to have that kind of engagement? One where work, rather than race, class, or gender, drove the conversation?”

**HARD TIMES, HARD WORK**

Ringsmuth, King, and other members of the project team were in South Naknek in late July to work on the Cannery Caretakers film, interviewing descendants of those who fled诺瓦鲁普塔 in 1912, and, seven years later, survived the flu. At one point, King said, they poked around the graveyard at the village’s Russian Orthodox Church searching for graves of flu victims.

“We found some, we think, but it’s hard to tell,” he said.

That graveyard is one of at least three associated with the cannery. Some wooden crosses have fallen over and others are well on their way. If they once had names and dates, they’re gone, faded by time. Some graves have no markers at all.

The old graveyards, including one area that shows up on maps, King noted, as the “China burying ground,” speak to the harsh realities of early cannery life. Ringsmuth has plenty to say about those times. But her personal experiences are what give this project a heartbeat.

She knows what it’s like to leap from bed as late as possible, yank on jeans and a sweatshirt, pull on rubber boots, sprint down to the mess hall, shovel pancakes and eggs into her mouth, gulp a cup of coffee, run down to the boardwalk, climb into her rubberized bibs and slicker, tuck her hair under a hairnet, pull on gloves up to her elbows and, with earplugs jammed in her ears, dash to her position on the slime line just as the whistle blows at 8.

During the peak of the season, at each high tide, tenders would deliver 100,000 to 300,000 pounds of salmon, and the crews would often work until midnight, with breaks for mug ups and meals. Ringsmuth knows what it’s like to work until she can no longer feel her feet, to be so exhausted that demon fish hijack her dreams. Then, the next morning, staggering out of bed and doing it all over again.

“Katie definitely brings the unique perspective of having lived at the cannery, being brought up at the cannery, working in the cannery,” King said. “She knows the people from different cultures… and has great friends among them. It’s really that perspective that makes the NN Cannery Project special.”

“Where in the universe,” she wonders, “would this small-town, white girl have the opportunity to have that kind of engagement? One where work, rather than race, class, or gender, drove the conversation? I didn’t have to go to New York, I didn’t have to go to London or anywhere in the world because the world was right there.

“Nothing shaped my perspective within the context of work more than that cannery. It cultivated a worldview I didn’t even know I had until much later in life.”

The cannery even factored into her decision to become a historian—coupled with a horrific accident her dad had while vacationing in Florida in 1995.

“He and a friend rented a jet ski, were just tooling around in the jet-ski area, and an 18-year-old kid in a speed boat just moved them over.”

Her father suffered severe head injuries, and flatlined on the way to the hospital. But he pulled through, and with the help of Trident Seafoods, was eventually medevacked to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, where he spent months in rehab.

There, fishermen and others from the industry came to visit and told her story after story about his years running the cannery.

“People compared him to a mayor of a town, but in many ways, he was like a baseball coach, or a coach of a team, because he really relied on the expertise of people in all their positions. They really were competitive, and they wanted to beat the other canneries, they wanted to be the best.

“His doctors told us it was really important for him to be around his family, that he needed to feel like he had something to get better for. And it was his family, that cannery, and the people who worked for him, and with him, who helped him recover.”

At the time, Ringsmuth’s plan was to become an international journalist, and she’d just received a scholarship to study in Germany. Instead, because of the stories cannery people shared, she changed her major to history.

“Bristol Bay salmon and the cannery gave me everything. It put me through school, became the source of my professional interest; it defined who I am today. And importantly, the cannery and stories of the people who worked there gave me back my dad.”

The NN Cannery Project is her way of giving back.

Debra McKinney is a Pulitzer-winning Alaska journalist who writes frequently for FORUM. You can learn more about the project at nn cannery project.com.
A LISTENER
Alice Glenn was at her home in west Anchorage. She laughs that in every episode you can hear airplanes passing by. She clicked publish while in her bedroom and released her first Coffee & Quaq podcast last July. “The plan was to record three episodes before going live, but I was too excited,” she said to me over the phone.

Soon after she released her second episode and was a little shell shocked. “It’s one thing to create something and put it out into the world thinking no one’s going to listen or no one’s going see it or judge it,” she said. But she found out everyone she cared about was listening.

“Now I really gotta do it,” she thought. “Now I really gotta do it well.”

Alice grew up in Utqiaġvik. We’ve never met in person but chatted when she was visiting her home for Kivgiq. Usually a celebration after a good year of hunting, the community was celebrating their success in establishing a whaling quota in perpetuity at the International Whaling Commission meeting in Brazil last year. For communities reliant on the bowhead whale harvest for livelihood, identity, and culture, the obtainment of the perpetual quota was definite cause for a four-day celebration. Alice said she looked forward to the dancing—something she regrets not being involved in, but something she anticipates every time her community gathers for the messenger feast. I told her that in Unalakleet traditional dancing was abolished by early missionaries. We no longer dance, but some of us ache to see dancing and celebrations like Kivgiq return to our community. She gave me hope, saying Utqiaġvik experienced the same time of loss, but revived song, dance, and celebration. Now they host one of the biggest messenger feasts every two years.

Alice graduated a Barrow Whaler and left the state to attend Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. Once completing her program, she returned to Alaska.

In Anchorage, Alice is immersed in the Native community. “A lot of rural residents are moving to urban areas for jobs,” Alice said. “We don’t have the direct connection we had in our rural communities, so when we get together it’s a celebration. It’s special.” After spending time eating Native food, laughing, and talking with friends, acquaintances, and family, she had a huge desire to share from conversations. Working for the Rasmuson Foundation during that time, she received inspiration from artists applying for grants for their projects.
She saw artists who practice their art while working a full-time job. Artists with a normal life, but passionate about the art they create. "It really inspired me to see people in my state... people in Anchorage... people in the villages that are dedicated to their art," she said. "To what they do. Even if they don't get paid. Or even if they don't receive this grant. They're still going to do this work. It inspired me to go for what I wanted to do."

She's thought of issues and topics and found people to talk with and released seven episodes in a year. She's found there is no shortage of people who can be guests on the Coffee & Quaq podcast.

But Alice said the realization that people were listening after releasing her second episode scared her. So much that it took some time to release her third episode. "I was scaring myself into silence," she realized. But she couldn't stop. She already started the podcast. She had to keep going.

"I'm putting myself on the line," she said. "It might not be received well. But I can't be scared."

This realization is one probably most artists experience. We release the words on the page or display the painting at a gallery. What the reader, observer, or listener does with that art and information is up to them. Alice was dedicated and determined to spark conversations and provide a podcast for Native people.

She released the third episode. It featured Jenny Miller and Will Bean sharing insight and experience identifying as Two-Spirit, or LGBTQ+, in the Native community.

Like life, not every necessary story is light-hearted or at the forefront of conversation. Alice decided she wouldn't shy away from sparking conversation on issues that may be difficult or uncomfortable for some. Because the stories she is sharing aren't hers. "Although I don't always agree even with everything that everyone says, it's not about me," Alice said. "It's really about sharing these people's stories." The stories may ruffle feathers and she realized, maybe they should.

One thing that doesn't ruffle feathers in Alice's work is the natural incorporation of Iñupiaq values into the approach she takes for the podcast, from interviewing to editing and production. It's an approach she didn't even really think about in the beginning. Because she lives Iñupiaq values, they naturally came out in every step in the podcast.

Iñupiaq wasn't a written language, so Iñupiaq culture highly values the importance of storytelling and listening.

"My dad and my older sister are amazing storytellers. I never felt I was that great at storytelling, but I knew what I was great at and that was listening," Alice said.

Alice really pays attention to cadence and rhythm of speech. “The way Native people speak is engaging for Native people,” Alice said. “We’re so used to listening to our elders. People with positions of authority. Even my older sister," she said with a laugh. “The way she speaks is familiar to me, so I don't want to lose that in my work.”

Alice does something others in the medium of audio wouldn't even consider. It's definitely something not encouraged for journalists in the radio industry. She shares her work with those she interviews before releasing the episode. Her approach is partly influenced from an experience of being interviewed. “I felt exploited as a Native person to contribute to someone else's narrative,” she said. “Instead of really listening to what I was saying, instead of showing me respect, instead of showing me questions beforehand, I felt exploited in this specific interview.”

That interview and experience was at the forefront of her mind when approaching Holly Nordlum, her first guest, and every guest since. "I want to represent Native people well. I have a very clear relationship. I'm not just coming in and taking their story and sharing their story for myself. I want them to be proud of what they're sharing. I try to send them a copy of it first, so they're comfortable with what they're saying. There's a lot of respect, compassion, and humility in that.”

I admire her courage to be completely, wholly herself. In today's world, Inupiaq, and minorities in general, are expected to conform to and acquire traits of the dominant western culture to be successful. Alice shows she finds success because she works from an indigenous framework.

"Because she's Iñupiaq and I'm Iñupiaq, we connected on a level that you can't explain," Holly said. Holly is an Iñupiaq traditional tattoo artist and activist and was the first guest on the podcast. She has experience creating media, working with media, and having her story shared in the media. About a year ago her journey as a tattoo artist was shared in the New York Times. In July, Alice met Holly at her home studio for their recorded conversation. The two live close to one another and Holly said they talked for more than four hours. She sees Alice's work creating unity within the Native community. And it creates understanding for non-Native individuals.

Holly sees a new generation of Alaska Natives like Alice with tools, talents, and knowledge of who they are and where they come from that empowers them to show the broad spectrum of Native life rarely seen in today’s media. Like many, Holly wants to see more Alaska Natives working in the media because she's tired of read-
ing about us, seeing films about us, and hearing about us from a colonizer’s point of view. Holly is excited and encouraged to see people like Alice take it upon themselves to reflect Alaska Native life and speak their own truth about who they are. “In academia or in an outsider’s view of us, we’re a subject. They defined us for generations,” Holly said. “Seeing Alice allow individuals define themselves and speak their truth is so necessary and empowering.”

Alice approaches the interviews like any Native person would to a new acquaintance. She talks about where she’s from, who her parents and grandparents are. She talks about her family. Whether or not she or her guest played basketball in high school. She talks about the podcast and why she started it. She didn’t realize she was doing the traditional work of building trust and connection until after the fact. She understands that this approach likely wouldn’t take place had she been “educated” about how to do a podcast.

Because just five years ago, Alice didn’t know what a podcast was. Her partner, who she describes as a thinker, introduced her to the Joe Rogan podcast and she was struck by the depth of conversation and insight. Later, when she had the urge to create a podcast, she didn’t let the lack of training keep her from sharing peoples’ stories. She did go to her dad, mom, and her older sister, Patuk, who are her mentors in life, business, and the corporate world, for guidance. And ultimately, she just went for it and was willing and open to learning throughout the process.

“If you’re educated, you’re probably going to go about it like every other educated person,” Alice said. “But if you’re not educated, you’re going to do it how you think it should be done, rather than the way it’s always been done.”

And by learning how to share stories through audio, Alice is innovating. She’s created a podcast by Native people for Native people. She realizes the podcast is also valuable for non-Natives interested in Native issues, but her target audience is the Native community—something not before seen in Alaska.

She can do this because of a strong sense of self, a strong support system, and a strong direction.

“You don’t need to have it all planned out to get started,” Alice said. “You just need to have a strong compass. A strong direction of where you want to go. I didn’t know how to start a podcast. I didn’t have a plan. But I realized I can do this. I don’t need a map. I have a strong sense of self, a strong base, a strong foundation, and I’m doing it for the right reasons.”

Laureli Ivanoff is a writer who lives in Unalakleet, where she’s raising her two children, Joe and Sidney. She is a former news director of KNOM radio.
Leadership Transitions

THE MEMBERS of the Alaska Humanities Forum’s Board of Directors are active change-makers and community leaders, listeners, and storytellers from across the state. Board members serve for three years with a limit of two consecutive terms. At the annual meeting in late September 2019, Elizabeth Qaulluq Cravalho chaired her last meeting after six years with the Board, and handed the gavel to Moira K. Smith. They each took a moment to reflect on the transition with Jann Mylet, the Forum’s Director of Development and Communications.

Liz Cravalho
Elizabeth “Liz” Qaulluq Cravalho lives in Kotzebue where the Forum’s Sister School Exchange (SSE) and Creating Cultural Competence (C3) programs have engaged educators, students, and community members for many years. Almost a decade ago, Liz got to know former Forum Board member Jerry Covey when they worked together on some projects related to education and community engagement, and he suggested that she consider joining the Board.

In her six years on the Board, Liz has been proud to be part of a diverse group of Alaskans continually striving to improve how the organization serves communities and connects Alaskans across the state. The C3 program, in particular, has had a direct impact on Liz and her family. “Our son has special needs,” explains Liz. “The C3 program provides support and induction for teachers who are new to the community. It has made a difference in my son’s education and his ability to stay in the region by successfully integrating teachers so that they stay, providing the consistency he needs.”

She has also enjoyed playing a role in the re-grants process that provides funding for artists, writers, historians, filmmakers, and community conveners’ creative projects. “As a Board member, you get to learn about the things Alaskans are passionate about and it’s really cool to be a part of that process, to provide the tools to complete those projects.”

One of the strengths Liz believes her successor brings to the Board chair role is a commitment to curiosity—to ask and to understand what others are saying; to bring others’ voices to the table. She feels that Moira Smith will be well-served by this skill in leading the Board’s work by tapping into the different talents and strengths of each member. “I’ve watched her do that in her committee work,” Liz says. “She knows how to engage people and meet them where they are, and hear people for what they mean.” She’s also excited by Moira’s commitment to the endowment and is looking forward to seeing that move forward.

Although Liz’s final meeting as Chair was at the end of September, she is eager to stay engaged and to be available to the Board and staff through the transition to provide guidance and insight. She is really proud of the work that has been done on strategic priorities during her term and she is excited to see the Forum take that work to the next level. She wants to help more people across the state get to know about and experience the organization’s work. “The Forum is such a valuable resource for the state, with a committed and passionate staff. An amazing group of people on the front lines doing this community-building work. I’m hopeful for the state and the Forum’s role in its future.”

Moira Smith
As a lifelong Alaskan born in Anchorage and raised in Juneau, Moira K. Smith has known about the Alaska Humanities Forum’s work for much of her life. Several years ago, her brother-in-law Peter Metcalfe encouraged her to join him as a member of the Forum’s Board of Directors. She was elected in 2017 and has served as Vice Chair for one year; in September, she became the Chair.

The biggest surprise in Moira’s first year on the Board was just how many programs, events, and partnerships the Forum is engaged in across the state. She is proud of the Forum’s way of thinking through ideas, its inclusive and respectful problem-solving models, and its work with communities in rural Alaska. “The Forum is in an enviable position of strength right now where the Board is able to function in a thoughtful and proactive, rather than reactive, way.”

The most rewarding experience she’s had so far was at a meeting in Bethel where the bylaws were amended to ensure that programs honor, reflect, and elevate indigenous thought and decolonization models. As a result of this commitment, all Board members took part in a decolonization workshop. “I grew up with a high degree of intellectual knowledge about Alaska Native history,” Moira reflects. “At this training, the Alaska Native members of our Board, along with the facilitators, put together a timeline of events related to Alaska Native history. It was fascinating because it took some of my knowledge about court cases and settlements and federal acts and helped me to see them through the personal histories and narratives of my colleagues.”
As Moira looks ahead to her term as Chair, she wants to bring the work of the Forum to even more communities. She hopes to build on the Forum’s strategic partnerships with regional groups—continuing to take its programmatic models and customize them to local and regional needs and perspectives.

She is also eager to focus on launching the Forum’s new endowment fund managed by the Alaska Community Foundation. In the current economic and political climate, she believes that it’s more important than ever to secure funding that is diversified and sustainable for the future, and growing the endowment fund is something that she wants the Board to take a lead on.

In terms of her leadership style, Moira is eager to carry on Liz’s practice of forming consensus. “Liz is a remarkably thoughtful, deliberative person,” Moira explains. “She has brought a focus on consensus building to her leadership of the board, and I hope to carry that forward. While it’s not always possible to reach unanimous agreement, the process of working toward that goal is valuable and Liz has shone in her role as a leader in that regard.”

**Magnetic North**

*Now streaming at akhf.org/magnetic-north*

**Magnetic North is a documentary film project** exploring the personality and character of six Alaskans whose actions and ideas have shaped the history, spirit, and values of our state. Collectively, they challenge preconceived notions of the Last Frontier, promote a richer understanding of its unique identity, and speak to our shared experience of life in contemporary Alaska.

All six films are now available to stream online at akhf.org/magnetic-north, along with discussion guides that explore themes and topics that are central to each film.

You may also request a copy of any of the films on thumb drive or DVD by contacting Jann Mylet at jmylet@akhf.org.

Produced by the Alaska Humanities Forum in partnership with Rasmuson Foundation. Written and directed by Marla Williams. *Above: Nathan Jackson; photo by Kyle Seago.*
Joe Sonnier and Kris Palmatier

DONORS SINCE: 2017 and 2016

WHY WE GIVE: We find ourselves living at a unique point in time in human history and it is important for each of us to be connected to one another. The Alaska Humanities Forum creates a space where people from all communities can come together to express, to share, and most importantly, to listen.

What originally compelled you to donate to the Forum?

Joe: We were introduced to the Forum in 2016 when Kris was encouraged to apply for Leadership Anchorage; he became a member of LA 20 and Joe was accepted the following year into LA 21.

Kris: One of my good friends had experienced Leadership Anchorage a year before I participated. He told me very little about the program except that I would love it. After we spoke I researched it and learned that you get to work closely with others on current community issues. I was sold. I knew this program would challenge me and enrich my knowledge on how to be a leader in this time. And it did! Leadership Anchorage made an impact on my life that truly catapulted me into the person I am meant to be. It challenged me to listen to the issues and not solve them but create a solving environment.

Joe: I think that the magic of LA for me was that it was a safe place to be uncomfortable with other people. Everyone is there because they want to be there. It is really about deeper connections with people. And that's where that magic is. To make genuine connections with people that I wouldn't have. We give because we believe the world needs more of that magic.

How did you come to be in Alaska?

Kris: I was born in Palmer and my family moved to Anchorage when I was in elementary school. My first real exposure to the arts was playing violin in elementary and middle school, and then in high school I took dance as an elective somewhat accidentally. After I graduated from West Anchorage High School, I opened Underground Dance Company where I was introduced to accounting and finance. I left Underground in 2009 and began my career in finance. Today I serve as the Finance Manager for the Rasmuson Foundation where I have the unique opportunity to combine both my passion for Alaska arts and my passion for financial management.

Joe: My family moved to Anchorage when I was two and to Chugiak when I was eight after my parents separated. I graduated from Chugiak High School and worked a series of odd jobs prior to being offered an operations position for a local wholesaler in 2012. Today I serve as a Human Resources Business Partner at Hope Community Resources, Inc., which is a unique role supporting the organization's strategic management.

Kris and I met in 2013 and were married in 2017. In the time we’ve been together we’ve both completed bachelor’s degrees, and at the time
of this interview, I’m in the midst of completing a Master’s thesis and Kris is beginning his graduate studies. Together we’re an unstoppable team; on the same side of issues but using different lenses—Kris the artist; me, the academic.

**What are you reading right now?**

Joe: One of my goals for 2019 was to break away from business literature and military history and enjoy more fiction. So far, the book I—literally—could not put down is Tomi Adeyemi’s *Children of Blood and Bone*. Adeyemi quickly established herself as a master storyteller of a similar caliber as Rowling and I’m excited to dig into *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* as the next story in the series.

Kris: I’m a huge fan of fantasy and most recently finished re-reading the Eragon series by Christopher Paolini. I’ve always been a bit of a kid at heart so rich stories focused on the hero’s journey tend to really captivate me. I enjoy these stories not only because they’re generally written in a way that’s fun to read, but also because the themes and metaphors are really thought provoking.

**How’d you spend your summer?**

Joe: I’m a total home body. We live in the heart of the city on the Coastal Trail and there are few things better than a sunny summer day on Westchester Lagoon, Cook Inlet, and Chester Creek. When I’m not out and about exploring the city with my dog, Toby, I’m in my garden cultivating fresh herbs, vegetables, and perennials.

Kris: I love entertaining friends and family. Our house is a classic mid-century with floor to ceiling windows that open up to the waterfront and woods. Joe is an amazing cook and I love opening up the house for the indoor/outdoor effect. Also, one of my best friends’ birthdays is in July so we always travel to spend a week or so with him.

—Interview by Nancy Hemsath
THE HEART

The Forum creates the space for leadership development in Alaska

By Kathy Day

LIKE NO OTHER TIME IN HISTORY, competent and determined leadership is needed in Alaska and across our country. “The problems that we face aren’t simple,” explains Alaska Humanities Forum President & CEO Kameron Perez-Verdia. “They’re layered, they’re nuanced. And that’s what we often ignore. We try to solve problems in a technical way. We try to work around humans and tackle really complex issues. But at the heart of the issue, and at the heart of the solutions, are people.”

The Alaska Humanities Forum’s approach to leadership programming is about just that: people. The Forum brings together small groups of Alaskans from a diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures to help them become better listeners, to gain a better awareness of their own skills and biases and beliefs, and to build relationships with others so that they may understand a wider range of viewpoints and experiences. This process supports participants in developing the skills needed to build collaborative solutions to real problems—to build community.

“We believe that the core character of a leader is someone who is able to connect people,” says Perez-Verdia. “Our programs are focused on preparing participants to be the connectors who can find ways large and small to make a difference in their communities.”

The Forum’s approach to leadership development is not just to teach or transfer knowledge. It draws on dynamic community mentors and leaders as resources across its programs. Sessions are designed to engage and guide participants in building relationships, expanding curiosity, and drawing on their wisdom and experience to enrich dialogue and learning. Participants are asked to think deeply about how they show up in the world, to open their minds to other viewpoints, and to experience walking in each other’s shoes.

When asked if leadership development is working in Alaska, Perez-Verdia admits that the Forum isn’t ready to claim that it has it all figured out. But they’re learning all of the time and their strategy is based on the long game. As Anchorage community leader and LA contributor Jane Angvik explains, “You can’t change a community in a single quarter of a single year.”

Jessica Limbird, a recent graduate of LA22, currently works as a program manager with Recover Alaska. She finished the LA program with a renewed hope for what leadership can become.

“I hope that leadership becomes shared,” says Limbird. “Having one person at the top isn’t sustainable and it makes room for comparison and unhealthy competition. I hope leadership becomes more decentralized. Uplifting the voices of those most affected by the decisions being made is central to that work, and I want to see more of that.”
The flagship program in the Forum’s leadership suite is Leadership Anchorage (LA), entering its 23rd year in the fall of 2019. Each year, a cohort of up to 25 Alaskans are selected to take part in ten monthly sessions beginning in October and running through May. Since 1997, nearly 400 alumni have graduated from the program and are serving as leaders at all levels in every sector of the state.

“Before my experience with Leadership Anchorage, I wondered why on earth the Humanities Forum was sponsoring a leadership program,” says Stephanie Kessler, an LA17 graduate who works as a senior technologist at GCI. “I soon learned that their approach dives into people, culture, diversity, and humanities content that is essential to successful leadership.”

LA participants practice and strengthen essential 21st century leadership competencies including facilitation, coaching, collaboration, and team-building. Assessments, interactive activities, mentorships, and community projects provide a real-time, hands-on practicum experience. Throughout the program, participants are introduced to new organizations, individuals, venues, and connection points across the city so that they may better understand the unique challenges Anchorage faces as well as its resources and opportunities.

“Going into LA, I thought of leadership as the ability to get things done,” says Jonathon Lack, who was part of the first LA group of graduates in 1997 and now lives in Washington where he is the Family and Juvenile Court Commissioner of the King County Superior Court. “I learned that leadership is a lot more than the end result. True leadership is about an effective process for accomplishing goals and continued sustainability of the success is even more important than the success itself.”

LA is made possible through a blended model of base funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which requires a 1:1 match met through participant tuition and the support of alumni, community members, and corporate and foundation sponsors.
Alaska Salmon Fellows emerged in 2016 as a statewide version of the LA concept, drawing cohorts of 16 participants with the focal issue of salmon as a catalyst for conversation and connection. The Fellows, leaders in all areas of salmon policy, management, industry, activism, research, and cultural sectors, attend four week-long gatherings across an 18-month timespan and then connect virtually in between.

Mark Young, an associated professor of applied business at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) and someone who has guided for salmon in the saltwater for 15 years, says his experience as a Salmon Fellow led him to being more thoughtful about how he relates to others. Young also says he is hopeful that long-term policy change can be achieved from this program.

"Where salmon and people interact is very complex and it has various implications to a myriad of stakeholders," says Young. "I am an optimistic person and believe there will be long-term change but I don't know when that will occur or even what it will look like. If all of the Salmon Fellows touch a lot of people, who in turn touch a lot of other people, how can we not in some small way impact long-term change? We are all at the end of the day a part of the salmon-people ecosystem."

During their fellowship, Fellows work in smaller groups to implement some type of initiative—small seeds that are aimed at long-term change in Alaska salmon/people systems. One team organized a series of workshops exploring the premise that analyzing problems and understanding their causes before taking action is a critical step in developing achievable team initiatives for future cohorts of Alaska Salmon Fellows.

Another group put together a Salmon Values Initiative. The state’s constitution mandates that all Alaskans benefit from salmon as a resource, but the definition of “benefit” has been narrowly confined to economic values at the exclusion of other values such as social, cultural, recreational, ecological, food, wellness, story, and experiential. The Salmon Values initiative conducted research attempting to define and measure the non-economic values of salmon with the hope that baseline measurements and weighted distribution of economic and non-economic values can be used in future policy making and management of the state’s salmon resources.

In October 2019, the second program cohort will meet for its final gathering in Ruby, learning through the lens of village salmon culture on the Yukon River.

The Alaska Salmon Fellows program is a pilot program applying the Forum’s unique approach to leadership on difficult issues at a state-wide level. It has been made possible through a three-year grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Based on the success of the program, the Forum is examining opportunities and seeking partnerships to continue this work into the future.
The third Alaska Humanities Forum program that focuses on leadership development is a reflective, experience-based program for Alaska youth that launched in the spring of 2019. Between May and June, three separate groups of ten high school students who were interested in exploring leadership and inspiring change in their community were selected for week-long gatherings in Juneau and Washington, DC. The youth came from every part of the state—from Ketchikan to Barrow and cities and small villages in between. Similar to the programming designed for adults, the youth learned from one another and also met with leaders from a variety of sectors, industries, and leadership styles as they explored what leadership looks like and what it means to be a leader.

“There are many types of leadership development opportunities for young people,” says Kari Lovett, Youth Program Manager with the Alaska Humanities Forum. “But what made this pilot program unique was that we intentionally cultivated groups of kids who were regionally diverse and helped them to lean toward teachable moments. Their groups were small so there was no room for cliques and everyone had a chance to speak.”

AK|Next participants consistently gave the feedback that they came away with a new perspective on what it means to be a successful leader.

Aaron Partnow of Fairbanks started using some of the skills of reflection and listening to others that he learned in May during his summer job as an aide in the Fairbanks Legislative Information Office.

“My AK|Next experience allowed me to feel more comfortable asking necessary questions of those in positions of power,” said Partnow. “My contributions at my job this summer were more meaningful because I was confident enough to ask clarifying and philosophical questions of my peers.”

“I think some of our current leaders are failing because they are not listening to other’s voices and opinions,” said AK|Next student Melody Bergamaschi of White Mountain.

“Whatever we want for the future, we need to start training people for it today,” says Lovett. “Leadership development is a process and we need to start people thinking about how they can contribute when they are young.”

AK|Next is funded by the Alaska Department of Education’s Alaska Native Education Program and is offered at no cost to the youth who participate. Applications for the 2020 experience, which will offer two sessions in Juneau, will be due in February.
Heidi Catlett is passionate about Alaska Native dolls. It’s a passion that ignited in her, at least in part, because of her work in rural Alaska.

Catlett was working in Unalaska when the idea for Alaska Native Dolls: A Cultural Thread was born. She approached Melia Knetch, collections manager at The Museum of the Aleutians, to discuss collaborating on a museum exhibit.

“Aleut or Unungan dolls are very rare and hard to find,” Catlett writes. “I thought this was a perfect opportunity to study or document any local doll makers I could find. I wanted to use the dolls to generate discussion, encourage dialogue, share stories, and hopefully identify doll artists and their techniques.”

The partnership between Knetch and Catlett, with Knetch’s 15 years of museum experience and Catlett’s passion for collecting Alaska Native dolls and documenting their stories, was a happy one.

As a collector, Catlett writes that she “wanted to encourage people to bring in pictures of doll artists or dolls they have hidden away.”

She sees human miniatures as a pathway to “highlight the culture, stories and lifestyles of the artists who create these works of art, not just the dolls.”

Knetch was motivated to put into action the museum’s mission to preserve and share the cultural legacy of the region.

Catlett and Knetch were on to something. It’s hard to imagine a better way to explore and preserve culture than through an exhibition of dolls. Human miniatures as old as 3,000 years have been documented in Alaska, with many of the best preserved emerging from the permafrost in Northwest Alaska.

Historically, dolls have been used by Native cultures in many ways. Dolls were instructive in the lessons of adulthood—through making miniature parkas, for example, a child might learn the habits that will eventually allow her to sew full-sized parkas.

Some dolls offer only a coarse likeness; others are so exquisitely detailed that, in an example Catlett points to, something as minuscule as a drain plug in a kayak might be included. It is this ultra-fine detail, paired with the rich history of human miniatures in Alaska Native cultures, that makes A Cultural Thread a successful exhibit.

“The interface between the human and the spirit and the animal world is conducted through ritual, and the dolls play an important role in that,” Knetch explains.

Yup’ik dolls, for example, are believed to have been used as stand-ins for people at important meetings or events. A doll might also be displayed on the visor of a hunter as a charm to enhance the hunt, and dolls displayed prominently in and around the home are thought to have been used as consultants and as influencers of good fortune.

In matters of both use and style, dolls vary
dramatically by region in Alaska. Again in Yup’ik culture, for example, dolls were imbued with so much power that it was forbidden to play with them outside during the winter—to do so, it was believed, might expose family members or loved ones to storms and extreme cold.

Inupiaq dolls often include face tattoos and are recognizable by the fine detail of their accompanying objects. They are frequently accompanied by exact replica tools of everyday use, like hunting and sewing tools. Many dolls—including some of Catlett’s dolls that were featured in the exhibit—even feature variants of parka trim that the Inupiaq use to denote family or village ties.

Although Athabaskan dolls are rare, the few historic examples that exist are recognizable by the use of porcupine quill and caribou hair embroidery. Later, after introduction of Western materials, Athabaskan dolls featured large glass beads obtained through trade.

What Catlett’s collection—and the exhibit it enabled—does well is to shine a light on not only the history of doll making in Alaska but also the present. This moment is filled with Native artists from coast to coast who are fighting not just to create objects of beauty but also to preserve their cultures.

The dolls’ ability to beat back the fading of the cultures from which they come is part of what has driven Catlett in her work as a collector and a documentarian.

“Each passing year, I started to see fewer doll makers,” Catlett writes. “We were losing artists and their knowledge.” That’s why she started documenting, through notes and photographs, the stories of the doll makers she meets.

In one written conversation with Willis Oskbakken, Oskbakken describes a Tlingit shaman figurine he made in great depth, writing that the shaman, depicted in a canoe, is “kneeling with a split round of wood under him as this is the traditional method of paddling.”

Oskbakken goes on to elaborate on much more—on the traditional nature of the shaman’s headdress and hair style, on the shaman’s “wild and unkempt” appearance, right down to explaining that the design on a storage chest included in the likeness is a representation of Snag, a creature some Haida believe lives at the bottom of the sea.

Such detailed conversations have left Catlett with a wealth of information about...
not just dolls and the artistry that goes into them, but also about the traditions and histories that underpin each figurine.

Still believing that the exhibit would primarily feature Unungan dolls from the Aleutian region, Knetch flew to Homer to meet Catlett and help her select a few dolls from the collection. Speaking with Knetch on the phone, when she gets to this point in the story, it’s hard not to hear the excitement in her voice.

Right away, when Knetch saw the breadth and depth of the collection that Catlett had amassed over the years, she recognized the opportunity to create a much more expansive exhibit.

Catlett had thousands of dolls, representing the full range of statewide engagement with human miniatures, all stored in a room in her home in Homer—some of them in boxes.

At one point, Catlett almost lost everything in a fire. Not just her home, but every last doll in the collection that has become her life’s work. Luckily, though, neighbors and firemen carried the dolls out by the armload and saved every last one of them.

Some of the dolls in Catlett’s collection, Knetch says, might fetch as much as $15,000 each. When pressed on what she believes has driven Catlett to spend so much time and money on these dolls, and on documenting their stories, Knetch says that she believes for Catlett, it’s really about the artists.

“She gets them online—she’s able to recognize right away when something is valuable. But she also forms relationships, and will buy again from the same doll maker.”

In Homer, the two women spent three full days going through Catlett’s collection. Some of the dolls have catalogue numbers, an indication that they used to be museum artifacts. Some are esoteric, like the figure depicting a man who is carving his own face. And many are humorous, like the female figure glaring at her husband as a tiny baby doll pokes its head out of the bottom of her parka.

Knetch explains that they selected dolls not just for their quality and for the quality of information available about them, but also for their ability to represent the full spectrum of statewide doll traditions.

Once they had selected the dolls for the exhibit, Knetch packed a batch of dolls into two large Tupperware totes and boarded a plane back to Unalaska. Catlett followed later, this time on the ferry, bearing with her the second batch of figures.

Part of the exhibit’s goal was to engage the community, and Catlett and Knetch did so by hosting a volunteer-taught doll-making workshop at the Father Ishmail Gromoff Senior Center that drew community members in record attendance.

When asked if the exhibit was a success, Catlett and Knetch are unanimously in agreement: Yes. The exhibit brought dusty dolls out of closets and community members together. It provided a platform for stories about people and history. People from Unalaska came to see the exhibit and then they came back, this time with friends and family members they’d invited to come check it out.

“I’m proud of it,” Knetch says. “I think it’s one of the best exhibits we’ve ever done.”
The legacy of leadership

Great leaders leave a mark on the communities they serve. They bring people together, create a consensus, and work hard to make positive change. What is accomplished today can last for generations.

We proudly celebrate the great achievements of The Alaska Humanities Forum and Leadership Anchorage.

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Exposing Muybridge

The photograph arrived at my office in an overnight mail envelope from Canada. The two-by-three-inch carte de visite was in a plastic sleeve, sandwiched between two hand-cut pieces of cardboard held together with Scotch tape, inside a paper envelope. The photograph showed a group of Tlingit, an Alaska Native tribe, posing before a totem pole. Faded, worn around the edges, with a prominent crease running horizontally across its center, it wasn’t much to

GRANT REPORT

The innovative photographer’s images of Alaska come to attention after 150 years

By Marc Shaffer
Eadweard Muybridge No. 490, “Group of Indians.” The images depict a Tlingit group on Tongass Island in August 1868. The left photo of this view was used as Muybridge’s carte de visite. Paired images such as this, when viewed through special apparatus, can create an illusion of depth. Known as stereographs, they were popular in the early decades of photography. A similar principle underlies 3D movies.

COLLECTION PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ISLANDORA 102703
A HORSE IN MOTION

That Muybridge made photographs in Alaska is a barely mentioned footnote to his legendary career. What Muybridge is best known for, of course, is motion. On behalf of the California railroad baron, politician, and horse breeder Leland Stanford, Muybridge managed to do what no other photographer had yet been able to—capture something moving faster than the eye can see.

In 1872, Stanford approached Muybridge to settle a debate over whether at a full gait a horse's four hooves ever left the ground at once. Nobody knew for sure, because at that speed a horse's legs become a blur to the naked eye.

There was only one problem. In the early 1870s, cameras were sluggish machines, slower in fact than the human eye. “[S]uch a thing had never been heard of,” Muybridge told Stanford, “photography had not yet arrived at any such wonderful perfection as would enable it to depict a trotting horse at speed.”

Nonetheless, at Stanford’s insistence, Muybridge agreed to try, and after several failed attempts, finally succeeded. “[T]he pictures were little better than silhouettes, and it was difficult to distinguish, except by inference, the right feet from the left,” Muybridge later recalled. Though of poor quality, the photograph provided Stanford with the proof he needed: All four hooves could be seen to be elevated from the ground.

In 1877, Muybridge and Stanford reunited to produce the first sequences of horses in rapid motion, using an electric shutter system devised with Stanford’s railroad engineers that snapped photographs at an astonishing 1/2000 of a second.

Muybridge’s first equine motion sequence revealed that horses move very differently than the human eye perceives, provoking a storm of criticism. “Scientists ridiculed it, anatomists scoffed at it, and old turfmen jeered at it and aggressively maintained the impossibility of a horse ever getting itself into the position represented.”

Partly to persuade skeptics, during public lectures Muybridge would project single images of a horse in unfamiliar positions and then animate the sequence during which the horse’s movement appeared normal. These early “moving picture shows” would become instrumental to the later development of cinema. “Nothing was wanting but the clatter of hoofs upon the turf and an occasional breath of steam from the nostrils, to make the spectator believe that he had before him genuine flesh-and-blood steeds,” observed one reporter.

CAPTURING THE WEST

Muybridge’s motion work has largely overshadowed the first chapter of his career, during which he produced one of the most important catalogues of the early American West, images ranging from Alaska to Central America, the Pacific Coast to Utah.

If Muybridge’s motion work reflected his technological age, his landscape work highlights a time of dramatic social change—a wild Yosemite opening to tourism, the newly globalizing coffee industry in Guatemala, a fast developing San Francisco, an Indian War on the California-Oregon border.

I first came to know of Eadweard Muybridge while directing a PBS documentary, American Jerusalem: Jews and the Making of San Francisco. In search of pictures of early San Francisco, I was invariably drawn to those by Muybridge. They were seductive, absorbing, magnetic.

The closer I looked, the more I could see the mischievous Muybridge hiding in the shadows of our modern culture.

Intrigued, I began researching Muybridge, and quickly learned he was one of the most important photographers to ever live—the subject of books, museum exhibitions, even an opera. He has been a major influence on leading 20th-century figures in art and science such as Walt Disney, George Lucas, Francis Bacon, and the Nobel chemist Ahmed Zewail, among many others. The closer I looked, the more I could see the mischievous Muybridge hiding in the shadows of our modern culture—popping up in music videos, a hit cartoon, or an old Department of Defense propaganda film; serving as an inspiration for path-breaking motion picture special effects; his name gracing a career achievement award in biomechanics. I even found Muybridge’s horses galloping inside living cells, part of a breakthrough science experiment conducted at Harvard.

Muybridge’s personal life was as dramatic as his professional one was distinguished: he suffered a near fatal head injury after being thrown from a stagecoach; he killed his wife’s lover, and was acquitted by an all-male jury; he was nearly destroyed in an ugly falling out with his patron Leland Stanford.

In 2013, I began developing Exposing Muybridge (muybridgehimovie.com), the first feature documentary on the life and legacy of the photographer.

MUYBRIDGE IN ALASKA: 1868

In the summer of 2017, I decided to organize an exhibition of original Muybridge photographs of Alaska to coincide with the 150th anniversary of their making in 1868.

One of my first calls was to Leonard Walle, a major Muybridge collector. Len generously agreed to lend sixteen stereo views of Alaska to the exhibition.

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Eadweard Muybridge No. 480, “Fort Wrangle, from Rock Cod,” 1868. Published by BRADLEY & RULOFSON. J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM 84.XC.902.2
As for the carte de visite inscribed by Muybridge, I had first stumbled across it mentioned in a book of essays on the Tlingit people. I tracked it down to Mary Everson, a Tlingit woman whose ancestors had migrated to Vancouver Island from Alaska in the late 1800s. Everson happily agreed to share the photograph for the show.

Mary inherited the photograph from her mother, Margaret Frank, the great-granddaughter of Chief Andáa, believed to be the main figure wearing the frontlet in the image at right, taken on Tongass Island.

As a young woman, Frank had starred in the 1914 silent film *In the Land of the Head Hunters*, directed by the photographer Edward S. Curtis. In the mid-1970s, a writer named Peggy Walker, herself a former silent film actress, wrote an article about Frank and the Curtis film for the Screen Actors Guild. Somehow, Walker had the Muybridge photograph and gave it to Frank.

For many Tlingit, especially those related to figures in the photographs, Muybridge’s stereos are a cherished connection to the past. “When I see this picture, I see the woven tunics and I know which clans the people were from,” Everson says. “It’s history in a photo.”

“[Muybridge] gave us at.wóo, a precious thing,” echoes Richard Jackson, leader of the Tantakwaan Teikweidi clan pictured in the Tongass Island photographs. “This [photograph] is something that belongs to me and my soul.”

*Muybridge in Alaska: 1868* premiered in January at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage.

**JOURNEY TO ALASKA**

On July 29, 1868, Muybridge departed for Alaska aboard the steamship *Pacific* as part of an expedition led by Major-General Henry W. Halleck, commander of the U.S. Military Division of the Pacific.

On August 13, the Pacific crossed into Alaska, docking at Tongass Island, where the U.S. was constructing a fort. It continued north to Wrangle (now Wrangell), site of another new military base, before reaching Sitka, the U.S. capital, on August 18. The expedition spent a total of two weeks in Alaska.

Working in the wet-plate collodion process of his day, Muybridge recorded his images onto glass plates, which he bathed in a chemical solution just prior to exposure. He would develop the photographs immediately in the field, using a horse-drawn carriage he dubbed the Flying Studio as his darkroom.

“Helios Rampant,” is how a reporter on the expedition described Muybridge. “Helios … had come to Sitka with dismal forebodings that the fog would so obscure the face of nature as to render his art valueless; but now he had struck a streak of sunshine and was determined to make pictures while it lasted. With shirt-sleeves rolled up, and hair on end, he trotted his flying studio through the town while the daylight lasted, and was enabled to get a number of excellent views.”

Muybridge’s photographs were the earliest of Alaska to be commercially distributed, providing the general public with its first visual impression of the new American territory. They were also the first to be made of Tlingit people and of Sitka and the southeast.

As was typical of Muybridge, he strayed from his narrow commission to photograph military forts and harbors. Of his 39 published views, the most compelling are of people.

Halleck liked the pictures, and told Muybridge so. “These views, besides being beautiful works of art, give a more correct idea of Alaska, its scenery + vegetation, than can be obtained from any written description of that country.”

If manifest destiny served as the ideology of U.S. expansion, and economic opportunity its motive, then new technologies provided the engine. Telegraphs, trains, and steam powered ships shrank time and space, pulling once remote locales like Alaska within easy reach.

“Mail and telegraph communications will very soon be established between Sitka and San Francisco, and thence with all parts of America, Europe and Asia,” Halleck wrote prior to the expedition. “With these facilities for trade and commerce with other parts of the world, this new territory must soon become, what nature intended it to be, and what it has frequently been called “The New England of the Pacific.”

The camera played a vital role, too. Photographs fed the public’s imagination, inviting viewers to venture west to the new frontier. Muybridge’s first photographs, made in 1867, were commissioned to promote tourism in Yosemite Valley.

Regarding Alaska, Muybridge’s views helped counteract the widely held belief that the territory was a frozen wasteland, its purchase (Secretary of State William) Seward’s Folly.

“California photographers are doing a good service in many ways by their enterprise in landscape work,
Eadweard Muybridge No. 472, “Russo Greek Priests” in Sitka, August 1868. Published by COSMOPOLITAN GALLERY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ART, San Francisco. This image is one-half of a stereo pair. J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM 84.XC.902.4
which is making familiar in the parlors of the nation some of the finest scenery in the least explored parts of the Union,” a San Francisco newspaper wrote in 1868. “Muygridge [sic] brings us Alaska in a portfolio of sun pictures that give us a very favorable opinion.”

In his 1873 catalogue, Muybridge lent his own endorsement to the acquisition. “Until the purchase of this territory, [the farthest west of our country] by the United States, at the instance of that far-seeing statesman, William H. Seward, Alaska was scarcely ever heard of, excepting by the fur merchant and geographer, and even now the most erroneous ideas prevail, both with regard to its climate and resources… The entire coast line is a succession of beautiful scenery.”

CANNON OVER THE HARBOR

For Alaska Natives, like the Tlingit captured by Muybridge’s camera, the story was very different. The U.S. had invaded their home, which had belonged to them since “time immemorial.” They had neither been consulted on the sale nor received anything from it. To the contrary, they had been stripped of their sovereignty.

To prevent Native resistance, the U.S. ruled with military force. “A firm and just administration has a more important influence over savages than is usually supposed,” Halleck wrote upon his return from Alaska. “By establishing military posts in the vicinity of the larger tribes or villages, a salutary influence is soon obtained over them…. In this way, the whole country will be gradually opened to our settlers and traders, without the danger of hostile collisions. They will thus learn that our Government is able and ready to compel them to good conduct.”

Within months of Muybridge’s visit to Sitka, a clash between Tlingit and U.S. soldiers ended in the death of several Tlingit. In December 1869 at Fort Wrangell, the U.S. bombed the neighboring Tlingit village of Kaachxan.áak’w for two days before publicly hanging the village shaman.

In his photographs, Muybridge only hints at this version of the story—a cannon points over the harbor at Fort Tongass; in Sitka, a U.S. soldier, perfectly centered, looms over a group of Tlingit.

The English-born Muybridge is visiting Alaska for the first, and only, time. He is there to serve the U.S. War Department, and by extension to promote the U.S. purchase. He is making views he plans to sell to Euro-American customers who know nothing of the territory. It shouldn’t surprise, then, that his client, General Halleck, would consider Muybridge’s version of Alaska “correct” or that his images would lead a San Francisco newspaper to a “very favorable opinion” of Alaska.

Which brings us back to Mary Everson’s carte de visite. Surrounded, as Muybridge is, by unabashed racism towards Native Alaskans, the inscription on the back is striking.

It reads: “To the brave and noble chief of the Tongass, with Helios’ respect.”

Marc Shaffer is a documentary filmmaker in Oakland, California. For more information on Exposing Muybridge, please visit muybridgthemovie.com.

1. Leland Stanford’s Gift to Art and to Science, Mr. Muybridge’s Inventions of Instant Photography. (February 6, 1881). San Francisco Examiner.
3. Leland Stanford’s Gift to Art and to Science, Mr. Muybridge’s Inventions of Instant Photography. (February 6, 1881). San Francisco Examiner.
4. The Zoogroscope, (May 5, 1880) San Francisco Call.
7. Letter from General Henry Halleck to Muybridge dated October 13, 1868.
Eadweard Muybridge No. 478, "Group of Indians" in Sitka, August 1868. Note the soldier standing over the group at center. This image is one-half of a stereo pair.

COLLECTION OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ISLANDORA 102692
"I believe that prior to colonization, my ancestors did not discriminate against those who were gender variant or non-heterosexual. I believe that the value of an individual was measured by their contribution to their community and nothing else, leaving queer individuals free from judgment and harm."

— Jenny Irene Miller

Continuous, an ongoing portrait series by Inupiaq artist Jenny Irene Miller, is both intensely personal and purposefully public. The project features portraits and excerpts of interviews with Indigenous lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2) peoples from around Alaska and the Lower 48. While the terms LGBTQ+ may not be traditional nor incorporate Indigenous worldviews, Miller believes they are a stepping-stone to help communicate identities, to help people better understand each other, and to find connections.

In 2015, Miller began making portraits and documenting the stories that would become Continuous. Since then, the exhibit has been shown in Anchorage at the Alaska Humanities Forum and at Identity, Inc., and most recently as part of the the map is not the territory group exhibition at the Portland Art Museum in Portland, Oregon. Portions of the project have also been published in National Geographic magazine, Broadview magazine, and Canadian Art magazine. Jenny’s portrait of Will Bean was recently part of the Natives Photograph exhibition at Photoville in New York City.

The concept of Two-Spirit identity is both old and relatively new, referring to Indigenous pre-colonial values and traditions but coming into more popular use in the 1990s, according to Miller and the research she has conducted since 2013. The term stems from the Northern Algonquin dialect and refers to Indigenous people of Turtle Island (North America) who acknowledge they have both a masculine and feminine spirit. Those who identify as Two-Spirit may also identify as non-heterosexual or gender variant (also sometimes called gender nonconforming; the word describes people whose identity and expression don’t fit neatly within socially constructed gender norms). Miller uses the term to describe herself, as do some of the individuals featured in Continuous. And while the term Two-Spirit and its contemporary usage is a great way to connect Indigenous queer peoples, Miller points out that it may mean different things to each person, from those who self-identify as Two-Spirit to those whose family or community acknowledges this gift in them. It’s also important to note that the term Two-Spirit should not be appropriated by non-Indigenous people, and it is better understood through an Indigenous lens.

“What excited me about this is that there was a term for Indigenous queer peoples,” explains Miller. “For me, Two-Spirit acknowledges both my queer identity and also pays respect to my Inupiaq identity. It’s a way for me to acknowledge my indigeneity and queer identity, which were two communities I saw as completely distant and unrelated to each other until learning more about this concept. It has helped me understand that I belonged.”

Miller first conceptualized the project in 2013 after moving back to Alaska from Seattle. She started to think heavily about how to begin to have conversations about be-
Dig Deep and Host Your Own Conversation
Are you interested in bringing these conversations to your community? www.akhf.org/kindling-conversation.

Springboards for Discussion Articles, films, images, exhibits, and texts create common ground and allow everyone to contribute.

Conversation Toolkit A facilitator guide, promotional materials, and participant surveys are ready to go.

Facilitator Training We’ll walk you through the process and materials to ensure your community event is a success.

Funding A non-competitive $200 micro-grant defrays the cost of hosting.

The Continuous project is funded in part by a grant from Pride Foundation.

Jenny Irene Miller’s work can be seen at jennyirene.miller.com.

Miller understood that it would be a process. She knew to be respectful and to build trust, and that not everyone would be ready to talk about this topic. She also knew that so much had been lost and hidden due to colonization. “There are gaps in our history and realities that we are trying to fill in—so much of us today are reclaiming and revitalizing our diverse Indigenous cultures. Last year, for example, I learned from an elder from Wales, Alaska that there was an older term in our language for someone like me, but sadly the elder could not remember the Iñupiaq word and she also shared that with colonization, the term had become a ‘bad’ word.”

Miller hopes this project will inspire other Indigenous peoples to connect with the elders and the community members where they are from to bring histories and stories like this forward, if possible. She has also been working with peers at Native Movement on gender justice and LGBTQ+ education within an Indigenous worldview, and they have been discussing the power of creating new terms in the different Indigenous cultures and languages of Alaska for Indigenous LGBTQ2+ peoples. This would have to come from the communities themselves, but it’s an idea that she believes could aid in the healing process.

“I know that culture is not static. And I’ve come to learn that language is not as well.”

A 2018 grant from Pride Foundation made it possible to develop a toolkit that will utilize portraits from Continuous to spark conversation about individual and cultural understandings of gender and sexuality. This resource, Continuous Conversation, was intentionally designed for facilitators with varying levels of experience to use as a tool to engage people in talking about how to support, welcome, and make Indigenous LGBTQ2+ peoples feel safe in their communities, whether rural or urban. The toolkit centers on the guiding question, How does culture shape our understanding of gender? It begins from the belief that all of us have people, events, and experiences in our lives that have shaped our own assumptions and understandings of gender and sexuality. To explore yours, turn the page for a preview of the portraits and discussion questions.

The Continuous Conversation toolkit is part of the Alaska Humanities Forum’s Kindling Conversation program, and is available at www.akhf.org.
WILL BEAN, 2016

My name is Will “Kusiq” Bean. I live in Anchorage, Alaska and my family is from Wainwright, Alaska. I am Iñupiaq, Aleut, and Athabaskan.

“By increasing our visibility, I hope it will inspire other LG-BTQ2 Alaska Native persons to become more comfortable with their own identity. I think if we learn the words our peoples have used for persons like us, we can bring together Alaska Natives and LGBTQ2 identities to create a strong and thriving community.

It’s important to be visible to various communities, especially for the youth. I mention the youth because I, myself, didn’t know any adult LGBTQ2 persons and the ones I did see were on Logo TV. That took a toll on my self-confidence because I didn’t fit within that limited perspective of what a gay male is supposed to look or sound like.”

For Will being part of Continuous “allows me to look inwardly to examine where these two identities come together and from that I draw personal strength. I believe the more you know about yourself, the stronger you can be as a person. I don’t just say, ‘I am queer’ or ‘I am Alaska Native’, but proudly state, ‘I am a queer Alaska Native’ and I feel empowered by that. I’ve struggled with being queer and being Alaska Native but I’m realizing that I’m neither but both together and I am proud to be a part of these beautiful communities.

Question: Think about the adult role models you grew up with. What gender roles were modeled for you during your childhood, in the communities where you grew up?

TUIĜANA, 2016

Atiğa Tuiğana, Ulğuuniqmiunuruya. I am Iñupiaq. My namesake is Tuiğana. My family is from Wainwright, Alaska, which is about 90 miles southwest, down the coast from Utqiagvik. My aapaaluk is the late Bill Blair Patkotak Sr. and my aakaaluk is Amy Patkotak (Bodfish).

Tuiğana “came out” to her mother by way of text. “I hope you don’t disown me!” she typed. Her mother gave her the silent treatment for three weeks—not because she didn’t want her to be queer, but because she thought, even for a moment, that she would disown her daughter for being honest about who she is.

Tuiğana’s family is overwhelmingly supportive, but many others in her position are not so lucky. There’s a lot of confusion, shame, and pain being closeted, especially in a village where many do not talk about being LGBTQ2.

Is it common for parents to talk openly with their children about gender and sexual orientation in your culture(s)?
MORIAH SALLAFFIE, 2015

I am Uliggag: my English name is Moriah Sallaffie. I was raised mostly in Nome, Alaska, but my family is originally from Mamterilleq (Bethel). Wiinga Yup’iuga (I am Yup’ik).

“I belong to several marginalized communities—women, Indigenous, LG-BTQ—and like everyone, I exist in a world that has already defined for me what is considered normal and best: White. Heterosexual. Male.”

Recently, Moriah made the decision to move to Iqaluit, Nunavut, to live with her partner. “An elder, a friend, asked me about my move: ‘I hear you’re moving for love. What’s his name?’ I paused and replied, ‘Her name is Jesse’.”

Moriah’s friend was silent before changing the subject. “I was heartbroken,” Moriah writes. “I felt rejected.” It was through meaningful relationships with other women that Moriah learned more about, and felt more empowered to be, herself.

Her friend then told her that not long ago, when a man or woman—no matter what their sexual orientation—found a partner and brought them home, their family was happy and welcoming. “That is how it used to be,” he said. Homophobia was not traditionally practiced in Alaska Native communities. Moriah writes, “The colonial mindset has been imposed upon us and forced us to adopt lifeways, ideas, and understandings that are so backwards that we reject ourselves and other community members.”

To Moriah, “too much is at stake when we do not define ourselves; it’s time to change the narrative.”

“We are beautiful. Perfect. Powerful. Indigenous. Two-Spirit. Queer AF. LGBTQ.”

Do elders and young people view sexual orientation differently in your culture(s)? If yes, what are some of the differences you’ve noticed?

ANTHONY CAPO, 2016

My name is Anthony Capo and I am from Egegik, Alaska. I am of the Sugpiaq people native to the southwest shores of Alaska, and the Taíno Indian people native to Puerto Rico.

Anthony is openly gay, but admits, “It was not easy coming out, but I like to think I’ve gained some self-respect by doing so. Being closeted perpetuates the idea that being gay is wrong when it is not. Why should I hide something that should be celebrated?”

As a child, Anthony believed he was the only gay Alaska Native boy: “It was a very lonely feeling.” To Anthony, spreading the awareness that this community is out there is imperative to the health of many LGBTQ2 people. “It creates strength in numbers,” and in turn, “provides a better understanding of who we are.”

Today, Anthony finds strength in his Alaska Native culture. “We are a proud, yet humble people.”

Have you ever had a personal gender stereotype or assumption challenged? What happened?
Over the past year and a half, the Forum has been growing and tuning its suite of conversational programming, hosting conversations at the Forum's office space in Anchorage and at partner sites across the city and the state. These gatherings often use a springboard—a relevant text, short film, exhibit, or image—to create a common, shared experience and to increase accessibility and safety in addressing current topics like homelessness, the opioid crisis, or cultural understanding of gender and sexuality.

In addition to hosting these conversations, the Forum provides toolkits, training, and funding to Alaskans who want to hold their own thoughtful community discussions. It may seem at the outset that conversation is as natural as walking and not something we need to learn how to do. But just as a great running coach can teach someone to run faster and more efficiently, a great conversation coach can provide guidance and resources to design conversations and ask questions that more effectively strengthen relationships and build community.

Psychiatrist George Vaillant joined the Harvard Study of Adult Development in 1966 and served as its director from 1972 until 2004. “When the study began, nobody cared about empathy or attachment,” he says. But over the course of 80 years, the study’s research has validated the vital role of relationships in individual and social health. “The key to healthy aging is relationships, relationships, relationships.”

These findings, along with those of a number of other studies, emphasize the importance of social connectedness and also suggest that many of the challenges that threaten the health of our communities are rooted in a lack of relationship—a lack of connection, communication, and compassion. This shortage drives the Alaska Humanities Forum’s work. Whether it’s a two-hour community conversation, a two-day immersive training, or a ten-month learning cohort, the Forum designs experiences that bring people face-to-face to develop trust, understanding, and connection. In one of the truest expressions of the definition of “forum,” the Alaska Humanities Forum is a meeting place for essential community dialogue.

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The Forum currently offers two different trainings, both limited to 16 participants so that the experience is highly interactive and experiential. Leading Conversations That Build Community is a two-day series of reflective discussions in large and small group settings. Participants learn techniques and then have the
opportunity to plan and facilitate a conversation and receive feedback from trainers and other participants to help hone their practice. Ultimately, participants gain a clear understanding of both the value and limitation of conversations for building community; and they develop a concrete set of tools and resources to support them in planning and facilitating their own meaningful conversations.

The Art of Powerful Questions is a one-day workshop focused on developing “the one conversation tool that will make you better at absolutely everything.” This training is based on the premise that powerful questions build trust, inspire creativity and new ways of thinking, and encourage deep engagement. Powerful questions motivate insight, innovation, and action. Participants can expect to hone their questioning skills and gain new insights about real dilemmas they are facing in their personal or professional lives.

Kevin Co, a technology specialist at Homer Public Library, participated in Leading Conversations That Build Community on Yukon Island this past summer. He says that learning how to frame questions and structure conversations through the workshop was really powerful for him. When asked how he has applied this learning to his work, he described an interactive display that he put together at the library following the workshop. “I assembled an interactive origami and book display featuring Sadako and the 1000 Paper Cranes, a children’s historical novel set in Japan after World War II, to mark the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing,” Co said. “It brought so many people into the library. At the end, a patron of Japanese descent who had been born in a California internment camp came forward and donated second generation seedlings from a gingko tree that survived just a few kilometers from the hypocenter of the bomb in Hiroshima. Without this training, I doubt that I would have had the sensitivity necessary to approach the issue of nuclear warfare, or the ability to nurture the conversation into a positive place.”

SIGN UP FOR FACILITATION TRAINING
The Forum is in the process of scheduling workshop dates for the winter in Anchorage and Fairbanks, and will offer a summer course on Yukon Island in Kachemak Bay for the third time this July. Visit akhf.org/facilitation-training for details and registration or to arrange for a training in your community.

Your donation deepens understanding, trust, and connection across Alaska.

It’s an investment in programs, grants, events, and publications that connect people through stories, ideas, and experiences.

**Please support Alaska Humanities Forum** by making a gift before the end of the year to sustain these opportunities and resources into the future.

Your donation makes a real, lasting difference in communities across our state. Thank you.

[akhf.org](http://akhf.org)
TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE, Doyon, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks present the world premiere of Attla, a new PBS documentary on legendary sled dog racer George Attla. The film will be shown in Fairbanks on October 16 and 17 at the Regal Goldstream, and in Anchorage October 24 and 25 at the Regal Tikahtnu. Visit @AttlaDocumentary on Facebook for details about tickets and additional screenings this fall and winter. The film will be broadcast nationwide on PBS’ Independent Lens on December 16, 2019.
Alaska Humanities Forum Calendar

Community Conversations: Continuous Conversation

Wed., Oct. 16, 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
Alaska Humanities Forum  
421 W. 1st Ave, Anchorage

Fri., Oct. 18, 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
Mountain View Public Library  
120 Bragaw St, Anchorage

Please join us for a conversation using Jenny Irene Miller’s Continuous portrait series of Indigenous lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2) peoples from around Alaska and the Lower 48 to inspire conversation about individual and cultural understandings of gender and sexuality. Free and open to the public.

Culture Shift

Tues., Oct. 29, 6:00-7:30 p.m.  
Tues., Nov. 19, 6:00-7:30 p.m.  
Anchorage Brewing Company  
148 W. 91st St, Anchorage

Culture Shift is a monthly series, hosted by the Alaska Humanities Forum and held at Anchorage Brewing Company. Join us for this fun, interactive, and thought-provoking event to connect with new ideas and people! Tickets are $15 at akhf.org/culture-shift. No event in December; Culture Shift will resume in January.

Leadership Anchorage 23 Kick-Off

Wed., Oct. 23, 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
528 N. St, Anchorage

Join us in welcoming the newest members of Leadership Anchorage, LA23, as they begin this year’s program. LA alumni, mentors, community partners, and friends are invited to this reception and celebration. RSVP to George Martinez at gmartinez@akhf.org.

Grants Deadline

The Forum is currently reimagining its grant offerings and will have a new timeline and process for 2020. Please note that we will not have the December deadline for annual grants as we have had in the past, and we are not currently accepting applications. Information about our project grants and updated process and deadlines will be available at akhf.org/grants by January 2020.

Get more details about all Alaska Humanities Forum events and opportunities at akhf.org.