

Contact:

Jennifer Howell

Public Relations

Mitchell Museum of the American Indian

(847)475-1030

jhowell@mitchellmuseum.org

Mitchell Museum of the American Indian Announces “Miniature Artwork - Enormous Appeal” Exhibit Opening Saturday, April 4

March 26, 2015—Mitchell Museum of the American Indian’s newest exhibit, “Miniature Artwork - Enormous Appeal” is opening Saturday, April 4 for a year-long run. Visitors will marvel at the miniature interpretations of Native American utilitarian and ceremonial objects on display including basketry, silverwork, carving, weaving and pottery from the 1900s to today.

“The exhibit compares beautifully handcrafted miniatures made of silver, fibers, wood and clay to their full size counterparts,” says Janelle Stanley, Curator at Mitchell Museum of the American Indian. “Creating these miniature objects with the same technique and design details requires tremendous skill and dexterity.”

Miniatures came about under a variety of circumstances in the Native American and First Nation communities of the United States and Canada. At the turn of the 19th century, train routes entered rural Native American and First Nation communities where tourists first saw and wanted to buy Native products. Commerce generated collectors who encouraged and supported local artists. The artists produced utilitarian and traditional items in a small, portable size perfect for collectibles. As Euro-American ideas and styles influenced and changed the cultural landscape of Native communities, the artists developed innovative and traditional designs of miniatures in basketry, silverwork, carving, and pottery.

Even prior to the tourist train depots that dotted Native communities across America, indigenous people hand-crafted miniature tools, small-scale household items and dolls. These durable and miniature items served as teaching tools for Native children to learn lifeways, responsibility, and caring, thereby sustaining the traditional values of Native families and tribes.

“Miniature Artwork - Enormous Appeal” features exquisite examples of miniatures from tribal communities across the United States and Canada. Among Items on display are Woodland miniature baskets made of wood splints and braided sweet grass, A 2.5- inch miniature carving of the Hopi female deity Pahlik katsina and its 12-inch counterpart, and Inuit carved ivory items including a seal, micro dog sled team bracelet, and musk ox.

The Mitchell Museum is one of only a handful of museums in the country that focuses exclusively on the art, history and culture of American Indian and First Nation peoples throughout the United States and Canada. In 2012, the Mitchell Museum was named “Best Museum of The North Shore: Up and Comer” by *Make it Better* magazine, won the Superior award by the Illinois Association of Museums and was named a national finalist by the American Association of State and Local History award program.

For more information about the Mitchell Museum of The American Indian, visit www.mitchellmuseum.org or call 847-475-1030. The museum is open Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday noon to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors, students and children and Free for Mitchell Museum members and Tribal members.

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