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Alaska Positive Photography Exhibition Opens at State Museum

Every two years the Alaska State Museum samples the best of Alaskan photographic art through a competitive exhibition judged by a prominent photographer. This year's exhibit, "Alaska Positive 2010," was recently selected and will open on Friday, May 7, with a free public reception from 4 to 7 p.m., hosted by The Friends of the Alaska State Museum.

The show's juror was Richard Ross, an internationally-known photographer from Santa Barbara, where he is on the faculty of the University of California. He has photographed for Time, Newsweek, Vogue, and numerous other magazines and newspapers in the U.S. and in Europe. He has an extensive record of exhibitions and is the recipient of Guggenheim, Fulbright and NEA fellowships.

Ross selected 44 photographs by 36 photographers for inclusion. Overall, 71 Alaska photographers submitted 250 works for the competition.

The top award, the Juror's Choice, went to Maggie Skiba of Eagle River for her photograph titled "Musk Ox, Portage, Alaska." Awards of Recognition went to Tom Fally from Fairbanks, and Ward Hulbert of Anchorage.

In addition, seven other photographers were given Honorable Mentions: Dimitra Lavrakas, Skagway; Barry McWayne, Fairbanks; David Riccio, Juneau; Buddy Ferguson, Juneau; Kenneth Moriarity, Juneau; Hal Gage, Anchorage; and Indra Arriaga, Anchorage

After selecting the exhibition, juror Ross reflected on the experience in a juror's statement: "What I always try to do is analyze the strategy of what the artist was trying to accomplish and then evaluate how successful he or she was. Following that I tried to include as many genres and people as possible. Where I might prefer to see more of a person's work in depth in an exhibition, I chose to use fewer pieces from more individuals to make an exhibition that might be more inclusive, celebratory, and even fun.

“There was some work included because it challenged; others because of a visceral response to the beauty of the scene...The juror’s prize was selected with no hesitation. It was beautifully done, unique, poignant, and singular... The role of the artist is to tread in new water and explore. In this respect, the photograph selected had no peer.”

The exhibit will be on view at the museum through October 23. It will then travel to other museums in the state.

The museum also begins summer hours that week. It will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, with \$3 admission. It will be closed Monday then, beginning Tuesday May 11, open daily except holidays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission will be \$5.

Visitors 18 and under are admitted free of charge. An annual pass that allows unlimited visits to the Alaska State Museum and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka is available for \$15. Assistance is available for visitors with special needs. Please contact Visitor Services at 465-2901 before the visit.

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