



NEWS RELEASE

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SEATTLE ART MUSEUM PRESENTS ***BEHIND THE SCENES: THE REAL STORY OF QUILEUTE WOLVES***

Exhibition brings together rare, never-before exhibited art works and creates a public forum for clarifying misconceptions resulting from the popular Twilight books and films.

Exhibition Dates: August 14, 2010-August 14, 2011

Opening celebration Saturday, August 14, with a performance of Quileute song and dance.

SEATTLE, July 27, 2010 — Organized in conjunction with the Quileute Nation – the Seattle Art Museum announces the exhibition *Behind the Scenes: the Real Story of Quileute Wolves*. The exhibition, comprised of approximately 25 objects of Quileute art, offers a counterpoint to the fantasy of the Quileute as werewolves, as portrayed in the *Twilight* series of books and films. It will be on view from August 14, 2010, through August 14, 2011, at the Seattle Art Museum, 1300 First Avenue in downtown Seattle. The opening will be marked by a performance by a Quileute song and dance group on Saturday, August 14, 2010, beginning at 1:00 PM.



Quileute, *Wolf Headdress*, Wood, paint and hair. Courtesy of National Park Service, Olympic National Park, Photo: Martin Hutten

The wolf plays a major role in the cultural beliefs of the Quileute Native Peoples of coastal Washington. According to oral traditions, the first Quileute people were changed from a pair of wolves into human form by the Transformer, Kwati. This creation legend is central to the Quileute world view, and wolf imagery is prominent in their art – from canoe prows to carving tools, fishing equipment to basketry and, especially, ceremonial wolf masks and rattles. In fact, to this day, the tribe continues to enact masked dances to honor the original supernatural connection to wolves.



Quileute, *Basket with wolf design*, early 20th century, Bear grass, sweet grass, cedar bark. Courtesy, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.

Recently, the Quileute were thrust into twenty-first-century popular culture with the release of the *Twilight* books and movies. The books and films morphed the native origin stories of wolves into tales of aggressive teen werewolves – a far cry from the poignant wolf creation myths that mark the true Quileute culture.

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Behind the Scenes: the Real Story of Quileute Wolves provides a public platform for the display and authentic interpretation of art works representing Quileute wolf mythology. Organized in close consultation with a Quileute advisory committee, objects displaying wolf imagery are presented as one part of a larger sphere of beliefs about spirituality and transformation. Quileute commentary about their recent portrayal in the *Twilight* series will raise important issues of identity and cultural appropriation.

Among the works on display, five wolf headdresses spanning seventy years (1870s-1940s) will be featured, drawn from the collections of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, Olympic National Park and the Washington State Historical Society. Other works in the exhibition include drums, rattles, a whale bone club, shaman's sculptures and basketry.

Visitors to *Behind the Scenes: the Real Story of Quileute Wolves* will have the chance to learn from the Quileute themselves about their history, visual and performing arts, unique language and oral traditions, and ways in which their important cultural beliefs are kept alive today. The exhibition includes historical photographs, a map of Quileute place names, a timeline of Quileute history and a 12-minute video that offers a unique opportunity to learn more about the rich cultural history of the Quileute Nation. Also on view are eight drawings of Quileute cultural activities – including wolf rituals – created by school children between 1905 and 1908; this is the first time they have been lent for exhibition by the National Anthropological Archives, Washington D.C.

Behind the Scenes: The Real Story of the Quileute Wolves is curated by Barbara Brotherton, Curator of Native American Art at SAM, in conjunction with the Quileute Advisory Committee, including Roy Black, Jr., Roger Jackson, Beverly Loudon, Chris Morganroth III, Ann Penn-Charles and Sharon Pullen. The exhibition is organized by the Seattle Art Museum. Corporate support provided by U.S. Bancorp Foundation. Additional support provided by Humanities Washington, Port Madison Enterprises, and The Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation.

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