Alutiiq MUSEUM
ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY

THE PAUL G. ALLEN FAMILY FOUNDATION

Inartalicirpet

Our Weaving Ways

EXHIBIT GUIDEBOOK

Inartalicirpet

Our Weaving Ways

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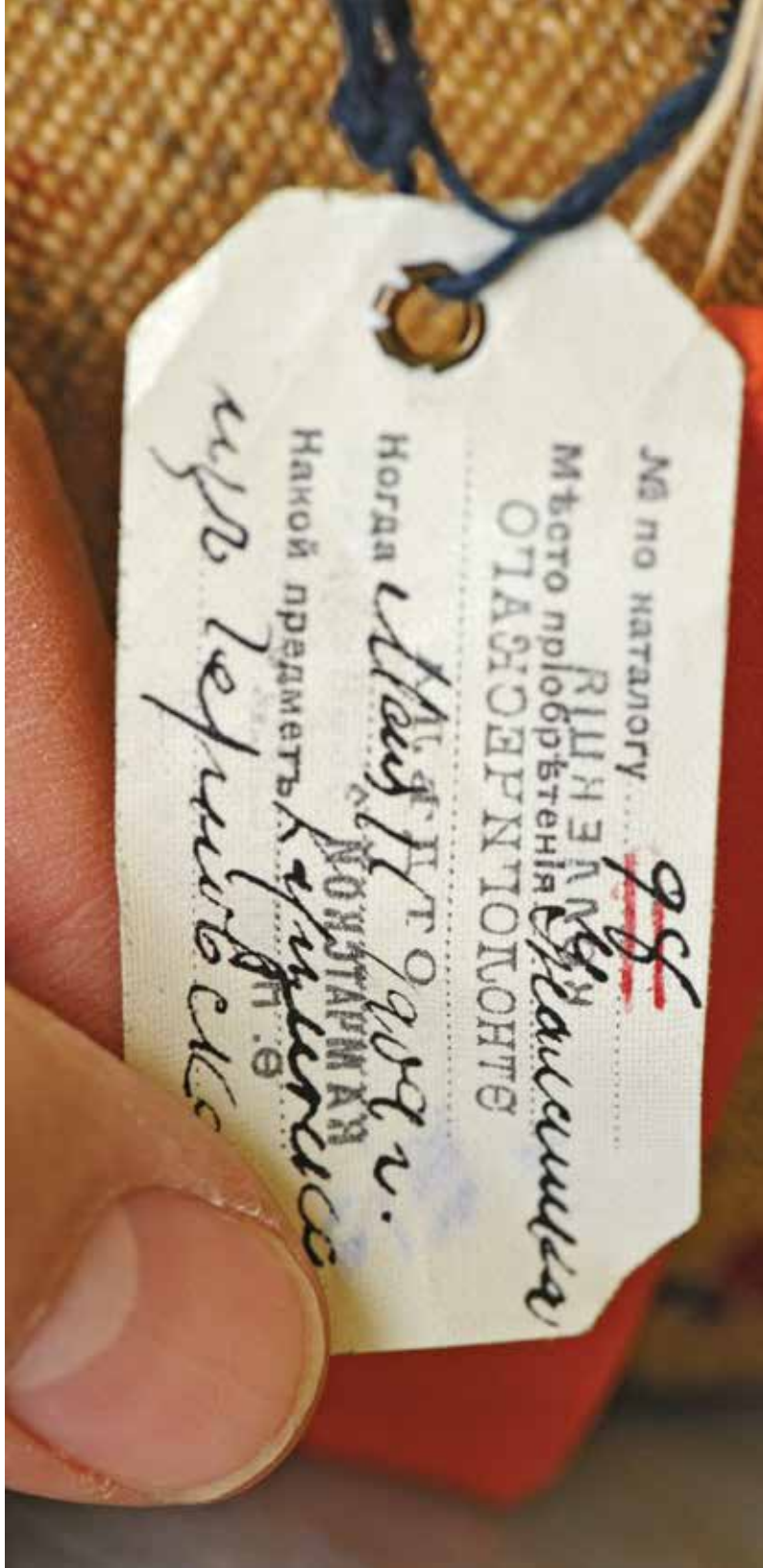

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Introduction

The Value of Ethnographic Collections

Two museums in St. Petersburg, Russia hold some of the earliest ethnographic collections of Alutiiq/Sugpiaq and Aleut/Unangan baskets in the world: The Russian Museum of Ethnography (RME) and the Russian Museum of Anthropology & Ethnography (Kunstkamera). In 2010, Dr. Sven Haakanson, Jr. led a group of weavers to visit their collections. He explains, "The whole idea of the project is to bring information home to share with the community so that we learn from our ancestors about what they made; we add to what the weavers already know; and then we pass that on." The benefits of this journey are intended to have a lasting impact on the lives and knowledge of many.

Firsthand Experience

Being able to experience collections firsthand has immeasurable value. As Coral Chernoff describes, "In a book, you can't look inside, underneath, the frontside of the stitch, the backside of the stitch. So, to be able to see all that, you get the whole picture."

Deeper Understanding

As weavers examined the baskets, they shared their knowledge with each museum. The weavers were able to identify what the baskets were made of and how they were made. Haakanson describes how in essence, they "started to weave in more stories of what the baskets mean to us, more than just as ethnographic pieces."

Inspiration

Before this experience, Alutiiq weavers had never studied such collections. As weaver Coral Chernoff explains: "Up until then, we see a few baskets here and there. We see a few in the Baranov collection. We see a few in books, but we've never seen that quantity." She and the other weavers will carry these experiences on to the students that they instruct. She goes on to explain how, "the quality of the workmanship was so amazing. It was unreal. It was pretty inspiring. I thought, 'I'm going to have to come back and not be so lazy and really put something else into my baskets.'"

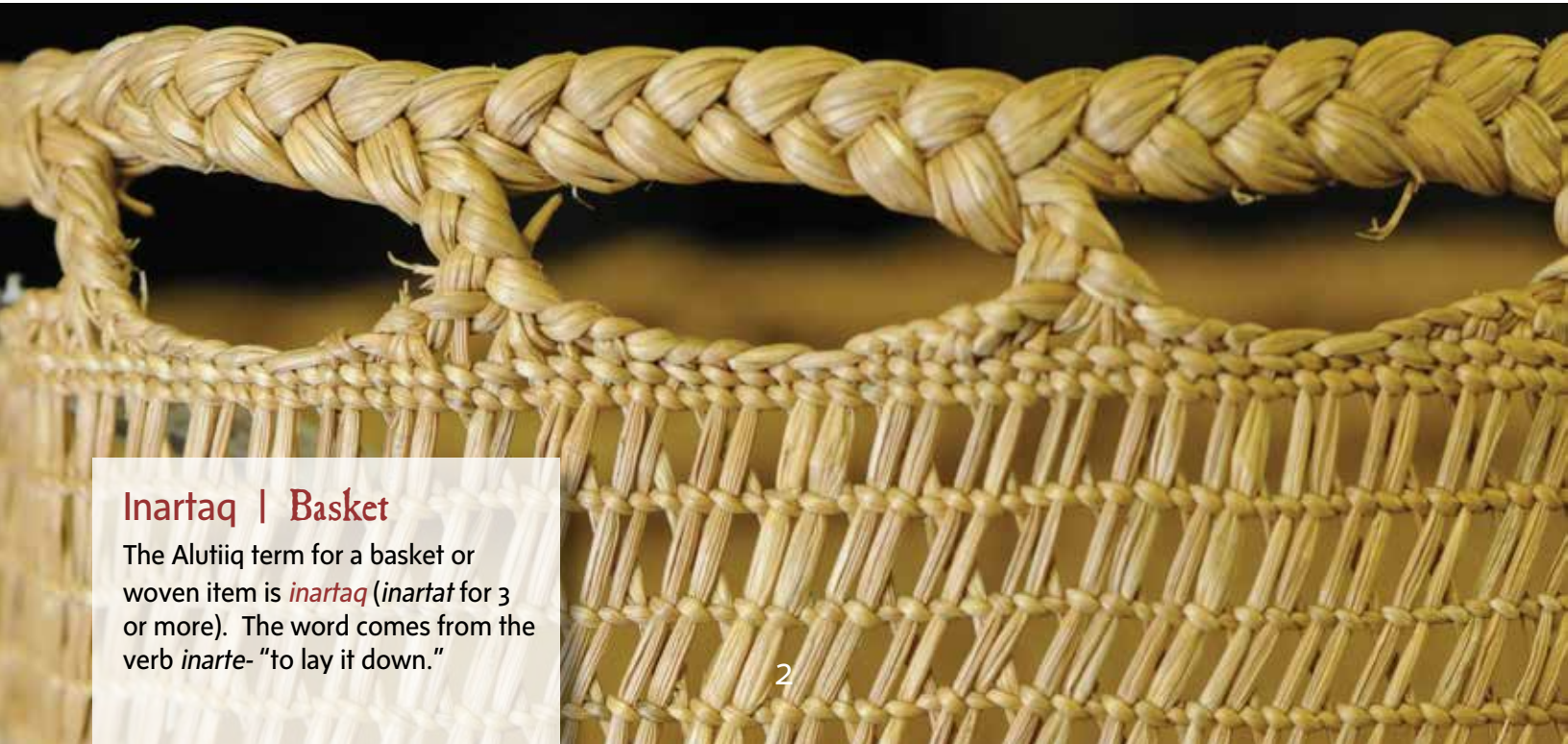
Our Weaving Traditions

Weaving is an ancient Alutiiq/Sugpiaq art. The Alutiiq people have been transforming plant and animal fibers into beautiful woven objects or *inartat* for thousands of years. The most common were spruce root, grass, and baleen. Materials such as sinew and other plant fibers were used to add color and texture to designs woven into the surface of objects.

Until the late 1800s, Kodiak Alutiiq families made much of their clothing, household utensils and tools with natural materials. But with the sale of Alaska to the United States and the development of commercial fisheries, Native people were pulled into a Western cash economy and began to purchase their belongings. And so, weaving traditions nearly faded from daily practice on Kodiak.

This exhibit celebrates the renewal of Alutiiq weaving, a process that started in the 1950s and continues to gain momentum. Studies of closely related Aleut/Unangan weaving techniques, examination of ancient Alutiiq woven objects, and trips to Russia to explore historic woven collections are reawakening ancestral knowledge in a new generation of weavers.

Photo courtesy Will Anderson



Inartaq | Basket

The Alutiiq term for a basket or woven item is *inartaq* (*inartat* for 3 or more). The word comes from the verb *inarte-* "to lay it down."

Wegnek Inartalicirpet

Grass Weaving Tradition

In Alutiiq households, grass was an essential resource. People collected grass regularly to insulate homes, cover floors, line boots, and make containers. Some weavers prefer collecting dry grass in the fall after it is cured by nature, others gather and cure grass in the summer. Where grass is harvested and how it is cured will determine its color and texture. In preparation for weaving, grass blades are split to use the inner stalk.

Napam Nukiinek Inartalicirpet

Spruce Root Weaving Tradition

The Sitka spruce forests of Northern Kodiak are relatively young, at less than 1,000 years old. Ancestral Kodiak weavers obtained spruce root through trade and travel, long before spruce grew on Kodiak. Spruce roots for weaving are typically collected in spring and summer. With a digging stick, the young roots are pulled from shallow soil. After briefly heating the roots to soften their sap, the outer brown bark is peeled away. The root's pale interior is then split with a fingernail to create narrow strands, and the root's core discarded. The resulting sturdy, and flexible, strands are soaked in water for pliability and bundled for later use.

Kagit'ruanek Inartalicirpet

Baleen Weaving Tradition

A select group of ancestral Alutiiq hunters pursued whales, harvesting Kodiak's largest sea mammals for food, fat, and raw materials. Sheets of baleen — a stiff, fibrous material found in the mouths of the humpback, grey, and minke whales — provided strands for weaving and lashing. Ancient baleen baskets are sturdy containers for carrying and storing items. They are commonly large with an open weave.

Inset photos of Karluk One woven items (top to bottom): AM193.87:10819, AM193.94:8, and AM193.87:19051, courtesy Koniag, Inc.

Spruce root photo courtesy Coral Chernoff

Whale photo courtesy Sven Haakanson, Jr.

Open weave baleen basket fragments
AM193.87:19050

Spruce root three-strand braid
AM193.94:3654

Ancient Weavings

The largest collection of ancient Alutiiq baskets comes from a 600-year old village site by the Karluk River. Here, cool, wet conditions preserved rare and fragile containers made from grass, spruce root, baleen, and birch bark.

Some of the Karluk baskets are small. People probably used these baskets to hold tools or as food bowls. One example held clamshells. Larger baskets were likely used for cooking and collecting. These baskets were so tightly woven they retained water. Some of the largest examples have burn marks on the inside, made by hot rocks dropped in the basket to heat its contents.

Photos from Koniag, Inc. Collection

Spruce root basket fragment with decorative false embroidery similar to a Tlingit design known as "mouth track of a wormwood"
AM193.87:19072

The World in a Basket

Many spruce root baskets have decorative rings on the base. These rings may represent the layers of the universe, drawn as circles in other forms of Alutiiq art. In an Alutiiq legend a woman who marries a star travels between the earth and sky worlds in a basket.

In a twinkle the old woman unbound her, and set her in a large basket, which she put on her back. 'Now close your eyes tight, and don't open them till I tell you,' cautioned the old woman. As they began to move, the girl felt the cold air while they buzzed and whizzed through it.

The Girl Who Married a Star, a Kodiak Island story collected by Frank A. Golder, 1903

Spruce root basket
UA85.193:3067

Raw Materials Harvest

Weg'et | *Grasses*

Beach grass is harvested, cured, split, and sorted for weaving. The thicker grass bundle, shown below, serves as spokes, and the thinner bundle serves as weavers.

Grass hung to dry, photo courtesy June Pardue

Napam Nukiinek | *Spruce Root*

Spruce root is harvested, heated, peeled, split and soaked in water to weave. The thicker spruce root, shown below, serve as spokes, and the thinner strands serve as weavers.

Spruce root splitting, photo courtesy KANA

Other Weaving Materials

pisiʀkat (N); pinguat (S) - beads
uqaayanat - nettles
kelugkaq - thread

Qikarlluk | *Sinew*

Land and sea mammal sinew is cut during the butchering process, cleaned, and dried. It is then split into strips and thread for weaving and sewing.

Deer sinew, photo courtesy Patrick Saltonstall

Arwam Kagit'ruanek | *Baleen*

Baleen harvested from a whale's mouth is dried and split into strips, depending on its intended use. The thicker strips provide the spokes, and the thinner strips serve as weavers.

Whale, photo courtesy J. Tunney / Shutterstock

nunamek taimasqat
materials from the land

imarmek taimasqat
materials from the sea

Raw materials pictured above prepared and donated by Coral Chernoff

Traditional Uses

Alutiiq people wove a wide variety of items for daily use. These are examples of the most common uses.

Inartanek Canamasqat | Woven Items

inartaq | basket

Material: spruce roots, straw, leather, paint
Dimensions: height 34 cm, diameter at top 29 cm, diameter at bottom 19.5 cm
Collector: L. A. Hagemeister, 1817-1818, Kodiak Island

Kunstkamera, No. 2552-1
Alutiit/Sugpiat Catalog p 174

awirnaq | spruce root hat

Material: spruce roots, straw, paint
Dimensions: height 12 cm, diameter of brim 40 cm, diameter of crown 9 cm
Collector: V. M. Golovnin, 1818, Prince William Sound region (Chugach Alutiiq)

Kunstkamera, No. 633-18
Alutiit/Sugpiat Catalog p 380

misuuk | bag

Material: straw, leather, paint, sinew, cotton and woolen threads
Dimensions: length 19 cm, width 12.5 cm
Collector: unknown, 19th century, Alaska (most likely Kodiak)

Kunstkamera, No. 2868-22
Alutiit/Sugpiat Catalog p 253

piiraq | woven mat

Material: vegetable fiber, paint
Dimensions:
length 140 cm, width 43.5 cm
Collector: unknown, 19th century, Alaska (most likely Kodiak)

Kunstkamera, No. 2868-230
Alutiit/Sugpiat Catalog p 177

"They have baskets woven from seaweed so tight that one can carry water in them and cook food with the aid of heated stones, which they place in the water with fish or meat."

— Naturalist CH Merck, Kodiak, 1790 (1980:207)

kugyaq
net

Baleen net from Karluk One village site, AM193.87.9351, courtesy Koniag, Inc.

naqugun
woman's woven belt

Material: rye grass
Dimensions: 7.5 cm, 18 cm diameter
Collector: V. I. Jochelson, 1909-10, Aleutian Islands
RME, No. 8762-16747
courtesy Will Anderson

inartanek unguwallriaq
woven animal (ritual cord)

Material: whale sinew, wood, caribou hair, cotton and woolen threads, bead, cloth
Dimensions: length 255 cm, length to bifurcation 115 cm
Collector: I.G. Voznesenskii, 1842-1843, Kodiak Island

slaapaq
brimmed hat

Material: rye grass
Dimensions: diameter 23 cm, height 13.5 cm
Collector: unknown, early 20th century
Received from Kiev University (Aleut)
RME, No. 4925-30
courtesy Will Anderson

aʀafkuq (N); iʀufkuq (S)
rope or cordage

same object as above

Kunstkamera, No. 2888-68
Alutiit/Sugpiat Catalog p 256

atkuq (N); agunaq (S)
clothing (cape)

Material: rye grass and wool thread
Dimensions: length 48 cm, width 37 cm
Collector: V. I. Jochelson, 1909-10, Umnak Island, Aleutian Islands
RME, No. 8762-16.736 (T)
courtesy Will Anderson

tangerhnit'staaq
ornament

This contemporary woven octopus ornament by June Pardue is featured on a beaded headdress owned by the Alutiiq Museum (AM650). Purchased with funding from the Rasmuson Foundation

The *Kashevaroff* Spruce Root Hat

History

Although we do not know its exact age or place of manufacture, this rare woven hat closely resembles an Alutiiq hat from Karluk collected by the Smithsonian in 1884.

Andrew Kashevaroff, an Orthodox priest of Alutiiq and Russian descent, collected the hat. Kashevaroff lived in Kodiak from 1897 to 1900. He was an avid collector who later became the first curator of Alaska's State Museum. Based on its connections to Kashevarof and its similarity to the piece in the Smithsonian, this hat is likely a 19th century weaving from Kodiak.

Over the years, the hat passed through the Kashevaroff family. Then in 1999, Natasha Calvin, Kashevaroff's granddaughter discovered the hat in her Sitka home. Careful assessment by the Alaska State Museum revealed an extremely rare piece. Only a handful of similar hats are known, most stored in distant museums.

Following Calvin's death, her family chose to sell the hat through a California auction house. As the asking price far exceeded the resources of any single Alaskan institution, the Alutiiq Museum and the Anchorage Museum formed an unprecendented fundraising collaboration. They successfully purchased the hat and returned it to Kodiak on January 4, 2005. Together the two museums co-own the hat.

Connections

Anthropologists believe that the Alutiiq people adopted woven hats from their neighbors — the Tlingit Indians. Among the Tlingit, such hats were symbols of power worn by wealthy men. While the size, construction and even use of Alutiiq spruce root hats reflects Tlingit influences, their decoration is distinctly Alutiiq. Tlingit hats featured the intricate, closely-spaced, designs of formline art which identified the wearer's clan, while Alutiiq hats featured more open, free flowing designs of helping animal spirits. While Tlingit hats were seldom decorated with attachments, Alutiiq hats often feature a dazzling array of beads, shells, woven attachments, and sea lion whiskers that declared the wearer's wealth.

Design

This hat features two distinct woven patterns, a conical cap with a stiff, slanted brim and an attached headband. Both pieces were twined from multiple strands of spruce root. The weaver alternated the number of strands and the direction of twining to form an open diamond pattern on the brim. The inside headband is woven from thicker roots and features a chinstrap of red wool.

Elaborate decorations provide the final touches on Alutiiq garments. Embroidery, painted designs, and attachments are among the design elements used to honor the plants and animals that sustain human life.

This hat was covered with vivid blue paint and then decorated with red and black lines depicting a creature with an open mouth and claws. The image may reflect a helping spirit. Historic sources indicate that spruce root hats were worn for hunting and that they could attract sea otters.

Other decorative elements include glass beads, dentalium shells and bundles of sea lion whiskers sewn to the hat's surface. Dentalium shells were obtained in trade with the societies of Southeast Alaska. Dentalium shell were used to decorate clothing and worn as earrings and nose pins. Historic sources indicate that a pair of delicate dentalium could be traded for an entire squirrel skin parka. The large number of shells on this hat suggests that it was owned by a very powerful person.

Cuumillat saaplitaarliit maani awirnat aturluku.
The ancestors around here made and wore spruce root hats.

"When I heard that we got it, I started crying ... We will be able to study it — the weaving technique, the shapes, the color, paints used. What this means is another piece of us is getting put back together again, after the destruction of our culture. We were always here, but most of our clothing, utensils, masks and everything else are all in museums, not here."

— Helen Simeonoff, Artist
Anchorage Daily News, January 2004

Hats in Alutiiq Society

Hats are essential in Kodiak's cool, wet weather. Alutiiq people fashioned a variety of different hats from natural materials. Warm, water resistant caps were sewn from bird and animal pelts, visors carved from wood, and hats woven from spruce root.

In addition to providing protection from the weather, clothing symbolized a person's place in society. A garment's materials and decorations reflected their wearer's age, gender, and social position. Members of the wealthy ruling class wore elegantly decorated parkas of sea otter, fox or ground squirrel pelts. Hats, jewelry and tattoos added to the appearance of prestige imparted by these rich materials. In contrast, the less affluent wore simpler clothes sewn from bird or sealskins. Spruce root hats were symbols of power and prosperity. They were considered heirlooms and passed down through families.

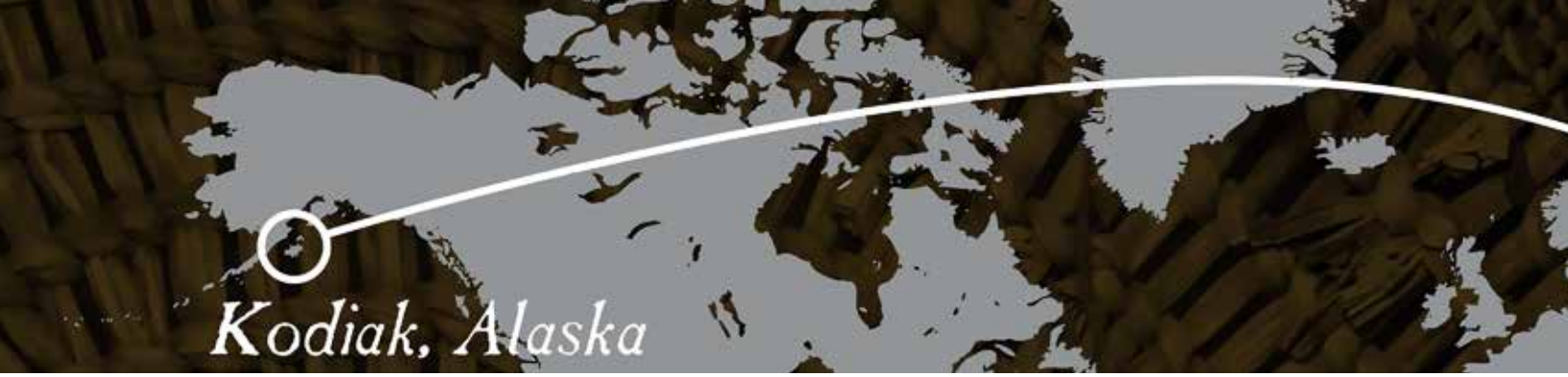
Supporters

This spruce root hat (AM516) was purchased jointly by the Alutiiq Museum and the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, with generous funding from:

Afognak Native Corporation
Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center
Koniag, Inc.
Old Harbor Native Corporation
Ed Rasmuson
Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak

Additional support for the purchase was provided by the Alaska State Museum & Alutiiq Heritage Foundation

Quyanaasinaq | Our Greatest Thanks



Kasaakat Nunii | Russia

In 2010, five weavers traveled with Dr. Sven Haakanson, Jr. to St. Petersburg to explore woven collections in two Russian museums.

The Russian Museum of Ethnography (RME) cares for approximately 120 woven items from the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands. Most of these woven items were collected by Vladimir I. Jochelson around 1909 (RME 8762). A new book showcasing this collection is under development.

The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) has nearly 40 weavings from Kodiak, Prince William Sound and the Alaska Peninsula. The

Russian Museum of Ethnography (RME)

2012 book, The Alutiit/Sugpiat: A Catalog of Collections of the Kunstkamera, shares these collections.

The Alutiiq Museum weaving exhibit (2014-2016) showcase the weavers' weeklong visit to study these collections. Their journey is also featured in the 2013 Sharing Alutiiq Stories: Weaving Our Past into Our Present film, produced by Liz O'Connell of WonderVisions.

Museum of Anthropology & Ethnography (Kunstkamera)

Inspiration & Meaning

For Alutiiq culture-bearers, studying and practicing traditional arts is a way of life that has deep personal and spiritual meaning. Their motivation is part of an internal process to grow as culture-bearers, and to assist community goals. They are helping to reclaim and share traditional knowledge for cultural revitalization.

Weavers shared the following reflections about what weaving means to them:

Identity

Vickie Era Pankretz describes how learning grass basket weaving was a part of her awakening as an Alutiiq person. She says, *"I wasn't really active before (going to Russia). I kind of just nosed my way into our culture because I had such a longing for it because I didn't get it from anywhere else."*

Connections

Elizabeth Peterson describes weaving as *"connecting to the past. How our people lived. How they made do with what was there. How they went and collected things and how they made it into something to work -- to make life. Basket weaving is soothing to sit there with your own self and your weaving, and with the past and happy times."*

Livelihood

As June Pardue raised her two daughters she relied on weaving as her livelihood. She recalls how, *"They didn't know that I was paying for their education. Little children and their little minds, they didn't know that's how I made my living. Something as simple as socks. If they needed a package of socks, I would weave a pair of earrings and sell those, and then I could get them what they needed."*

Healing

June Pardue began weaving again as an adult during an extended stay at the Alaska Native Medical Center. The women in the gift shop encouraged her and brought her grass to weave. *"When I think back on that, I think they were brought to me for a reason...It was healing for me. It was more than just lying in bed, and weaving a basket. It was putting my hands to work, knowing that I am Alutiiq, from Kodiak. I am a Native woman, and I can provide for my family even if I am bedridden... It really helped me during that time."*

"When I was invited to the trip over to Russia, I was kind of shocked. I just never dreamed that I would be able do something like that. To go over there to view all the beautiful work — baskets, inside of baskets, inside of baskets. Where did they have all that time to do that. It wasn't just one person who did it. Those were communities of work in those big boxes they have over there."

– June (Simeonoff) Pardue, 2013

(left to right) Coral Chernoff, Andreeva Elena of the RME, Dr. Sven Haakanson, Jr., Melissa Berns, Elizabeth Peterson, June Pardue, and Vickie Era.

Alutiiq Weaver Profiles

The following section shares a profile for each of the five weavers featured in the ***Inartalicirpet*** exhibit. These weavers were chosen for their skills, experience, and interest in teaching weaving traditions to the next generation.

Alutiiq weavers and RME curatorial staff visit over tea in their offices in St. Petersburg

Melissa Berns

Melissa learned to weave as a girl growing up in Old Harbor, both through cultural arts programs and in personal relationships with Elder weavers. She fondly remembers many of her teachers, including Christine Ignatin, Emily Bigoli and Marra Andrewvitch.

Melissa views traditional arts as her lifestyle, and chooses not to sell her work. She regularly gifts her creations to loved ones and nonprofit organizations. A hand injury and subsequent surgery kept her from being able to participate in this exhibit at its installation.

Today, Melissa lives in Old Harbor and enjoys sharing her traditional knowledge with students.

Photo examples of Melissa Berns' weaving, courtesy Melissa Berns and Will Anderson

Coral Chernoff

Coral Chernoff learned to weave from her mother, Arlene Skinner, who taught weaving in Kodiak for over 25 years. Arlene was teaching grass basketweaving at Kodiak College in the fall of 1990 when Coral signed up for her first weaving class. "From the first stitch I took, I loved weaving. I finished my first basket in that class and wove another basket that winter."

Coral was eager to learn how to gather and prepare more beach rye grass when summer came. Arlene stressed the importance of weaving with the local rye grass as well as learning the fine art of processing grass in the traditional manner. Gathering and curing grass requires a comprehensive knowledge of local materials and resources, from knowing where high quality grass grows to understanding how to correctly process the grass in order to achieve optimal functionality in the finished product. Coral appreciates the transformative process of curing grass and spruce root, the constant challenges inherent in achieving a quality end product and the learning necessary to perfect her processes over time.

In her earlier weavings, Coral emulated designs and techniques she saw in her mother's baskets, as well as those from the basket collection of the Baranov Museum. Exposure to other weaving designs and styles from traditional baskets throughout Alaska inspired her, and eventually Coral refocused on Alutiiq baskets from the Kodiak region. Coral found opportunities to travel abroad to study mid-1800s Alutiiq grass and spruce root weavings from Kodiak, viewing collections at museums in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2010 and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska in 2012.

Baskets in St. Petersburg collection particularly piqued Coral's interest because of their clearly functional nature, in contrast to the smaller trade, or decorative, baskets found in local Kodiak collections. Studying woven pieces made for actual use led Coral to expand her own processing and weaving techniques to achieve specific functional goals such as large baskets for gathering and carrying wild edible plants or folded woven wallets for storing personal items.

Coral notes that studying collections has been invaluable in terms of understanding how the materials, design and stitches combine and impact the functional nature of the finished woven item. "These old weavings not only impress me with their function but are astounding in their workmanship and beauty." Coral plans to continue her own weaving journey and to share her knowledge and experience with others.

1. *Beach rye grass open weave basket with braided handle and red, green and white wool, 2012, AM721, purchased with funding from Rasmuson Foundation*
2. *Beach rye grass basket bottle with multicolored silk thread, 2004, courtesy Coral Chernoff*
3. *Beach rye grass basket and lid with red dyed grass, 1991, courtesy Coral Chernoff*
4. *Beach rye grass basket and lid with duck motif, 1995, 98-12-1a, courtesy Baranov Museum*
5. *Open weave beach rye grass basket with handle, 2007, AM617*
6. *Beach rye grass and salmon leather wallet with ivory clasp, 2012, AM727:2*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Vickie Era Pankretz

Vickie Era Pankretz was born in Fairbanks, Alaska. Her mother Anna Griechen Benson was born in Naknek after their family was displaced from Katmai. When Anna was one-and-a-half years old, her mother died and she was sent to live in Unalaska at the Jessie Lee Home for Children. She lived there for eleven years until 1926 when it moved to Seward. After that, Anna moved back to live with her German father Gus Griechen, who worked in Pilot Point as a winter watchman.

It wasn't until she grew up that Vickie realized that her mother had come from "a generation in denial." She didn't even know her mother could weave until Vickie was in her twenties. She says, "That was when I began pursuing Native American things, especially with my kids, and this kind of brought her out of her shell..." [Vickie's mother Anna] made grass basketry in the Yup'ik coil style, influenced from living in Bristol Bay. Vickie says, "I only learned some of the coil kind. Other than that, I began learning the cedar bark basketry here [in Washington]."

Vickie explains that, "it wasn't until 1997 I took my first actual grass basket weaving class from Arlene Skinner. We brought her down to Seattle. I just messed around with it. I didn't make baskets fully out of the grass. I used sweet grass, sedge grass, raffia. I still mixed it with cedar. The cedar baskets from this area you weave from the bottom going up. Everything was completely opposite. I caught on really fast because I'd been weaving for a long time. You get the feel for the tensions. I'd also gotten an old anthropological paper from 1974 written by Ray Hudson. I read that and read that, and prayed and taught myself. I knew I wasn't going to do it myself. It helped that I was a weaver anyway.

Her mom had learned from her stepmom in Pilot Point. It wasn't until shortly before her mom died from Alzheimer's in 1994 that learned that her mother spoke Alutiiq. "It was then that she said different words in Alutiiq. There was a lot lost."

I wasn't really active in grass weaving before going to Russia. After Nancy Anderson died, I applied for her term at Natives of Kodiak. Through that I connected with the Alutiiq Museum and my culture. When Fish (Sven Haakanson) put the call out for the weavers, I applied. While I didn't have much of a grass weaving history, I had a lot of cedar weaving history. When I got chosen to go to Russia, I just fell in love with the grass weaving and welcomed the challenge to come up and teach." After returning from Russia she taught in Larsen Bay.

She began teaching basket weaving in the 1990s. But she taught Alutiiq grass weaving first two her own kids and grandchildren about six month after her return from Russia. She has since taught five classes. Today, she teaches at the Longhouse at Evergreen College in Olympia, Washington.

1. *Beach rye grass and raffia bottle basket with petroglyph from Cape Alitak motif, 2010, AM728*
2. Cotton on Rye — *beach rye grass bottle basket with Alaska cotton top, 2013, courtesy Vickie Era*
3. *Beach rye grass basket and lid with multicolored embroidery floss, 2010, courtesy Vickie Era*
4. *Beach rye grass basket with purple and turquoise embroidery floss, 2011, AM727:3*
5. *Beach rye grass bottle basket with porcupine quills and blue wool yarn, 2014 courtesy Vickie Era*

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June "Stephanita" (Simeonoff) Pardue

June Pardue was born in Old Harbor to Sophia Johnson and Jacob James Simeonoff, Sr. Sophia Johnson was Inupiaq and Jewish from St. Michael, Alaska. Jacob James Simeonoff, Sr. was Alutiiq and Russian born in Aiaktalik, and moved to Old Harbor prior to the 1964 tsunami.

June recalls, "Growing up in Old Harbor before the earthquake and tidal wave of 1964 were treasured memories because after the tsunami and the earthquake, more than just the village was lost. What was lost was being able to pick grass from the lagoon in a clean, untouched area because after the earthquake and tidal wave a boat harbor was put in and a runway right were we used to pick grass. Those of us who were children picking grass with our parents have those memories that would be hard to share with people today, because they can't picture in their minds what it was like then. I can remember the crispness in the fall because that's when weavers liked picking their grass. Not in the summer like weavers in some areas who collect and cure the grass during the summer. Traditionally in Old Harbor, weavers preferred that nature take care of curing it. Along with that would be the smell of smoked salmon in the fall on the racks on the beach. Listening to seagulls out there, dancing and flying around...something that I really miss, living inland like I do now."

She grew up surrounded by weaving. "In Old Harbor it was Feodosia Inga. She took my mother in as a weaver. So while my mother was learning I was on the floor picking up the grass and copying them." Many other weavers in Old Harbor, Akhiok and Kaguyak were influential to June. "One of our chores was to help mom pick her grass. So, we did that, along with carrying water in buckets. Those come with values, and parents always teaching us to respect our Elders. Today, we still see that in our family, which I'm really grateful for. I'm just proud that my grandchildren want to have that in their lives, too."

June has taught weaving and other traditional arts for decades. She also practices dance, tans and sews salmon skin, and stiches mittens, mukluks, hats, and regalia, beads headdresses, as well as gathers subsistence foods, berries, and makes seal oil. June has taught weaving and traditional arts for decades, traveling extensively to teach. She lives in Sutton, Alaska and teaches regularly at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage.

1. *Wire basket with glass beads, 2012 AM727:2, gift of June Pardue*
2. *Beach rye grass socks with red dyed grass, 2012 AM727, gift of June Pardue*
3. *Beach rye grass and cord woven earrings, 2012 AM729:1, gift of June Pardue*
4. *Beach rye grass basket with open wave bands, 1983, 83-26-1, courtesy Baranov Museum*
5. *Textile mat sampler, 2012, AM727:3, gift of June Pardue*


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Elizabeth "Lulu" Peterson

Elizabeth "Lulu" Peterson was born in Kaguyak on October 24, 1957, to Phyllis Peterson of Kaguyak and Nick Rastopsoff, Sr. of Afognak. She is the third oldest of eight children. She now works for Koniag, Inc. and has four sons, two daughters, and four grandsons.

Elizabeth reflects back on her childhood watching her mother weaving and harvesting grass. "When I was 13 to 15 years old, she used to be busy basket weaving, taking big bottles and weaving over them. She used to have us girls get involved and go help her go pick the grass. I used to be confused as to what kind of grass we were picking. She tried to show us and I still couldn't figure it out. But we helped her harvest the grass. The way we done it I remember picking a blade at a time; not the way it is done now. It's tedious work, 'cause you know it takes lots of blades of grass to make a basket. It would be fall time that she took us out there when the grass was already brown. She used to be busy basket weaving. She never kept them. She gave them to others. She tried to teach me. I tried my hands at it... but I never got the hang of it when I was young."

Then in 2009, Elizabeth saw a class offered in Aleut basket weaving at the Alaska Native Heritage Center taught by a woman from Unga. Since the art had died off at home, she thought she would go and learn to make sure that it stayed alive. "When I first tried, it was all sloppy, then after a couple of days it all came natural. I was weaving and I was back in the past. I could see my mom weaving. I could picture my mom weaving." About a year and a half later, she had the opportunity to travel to St. Petersburg, Russia with the Alutiiq Museum to experience historic collections firsthand.

"When I was in Russia and saw them up close, I saw that it was made with yarn. Beautiful color...it had dots of yarn, it was so beautiful. It just caught my eye. So that is why I used that color on that weave," she explains about the bottle basket she wove following the trip. She says she was most impressed with how the weavers of the historical baskets in Russia used color and incorporated yarn. Also, how they braided multiple strands to make handles. She says, "Grass is so brittle, you'd think it's going to break, but no they are tough. I want to make one that is not too closed up with a little space, that way when you pick berries, the dirt will fall out."

Elizabeth found it most helpful when she was able to visit and work with the other weavers who traveled to Russia. They were able to learn from each other as they exchanged ways of weaving. Since she started weaving in 2009, she has made over 20 baskets. Of those, she has sold 15 and donated the others to raffles or given them as gifts.

1. *Beach rye grass bottle basket with multicolored yarn, 2011, courtesy Koniag, Inc.*
2. *Small raffia basket and lid, 2010 courtesy Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc.*
3. *Raffia basket with open lid, 2008 courtesy Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc.*
4. *Raffia basket and lid with painted killer whales, 2008, courtesy Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc.*
5. *Beach rye grass basket and lid, 2010 courtesy Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc.*
6. *Raffia basket with turquoise and white embroidery floss bands, 2008 courtesy Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc.*
7. *Beach rye grass basket with red and blue embroidery floss, 2011, AM727:4*


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Weaving Renewal

During their visit to Russian museums the weavers led a workshop for students as part of the cultural exchange. After their return to the U.S., each weaver traveled to one of Kodiak's rural villages to teach grass basket weaving during Alutiiq culture week celebrations.

This project was part of the Alutiiq Museum's ***Traveling Traditions*** program — an effort to connect culture-bearers and youth that began in 2001.

The new ***Inartalicirpet – Our Weaving Ways*** exhibit is an extension of these efforts, to inspire and offer regular workshops in weaving as students and community members grow their skills and knowledge of traditional arts.

(left) June Pardue teaching at a 2010 weaving workshop in Russia at the Russian Museum of Ethnography. Photo courtesy Coral Chernoff

(right) Alutiiq week students in the rural villages of Akhiok, Larsen Bay, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions learning to weave. Photos courtesy Melissa Berns, Coral Chernoff, Vickie Era, and Sven Haakanson, Jr.

(far right) Grass basket lid collected by V. I. Jochelson from Unalaska, RME Aleut collection, courtesy RME 8762-16863/ab









Chain of Knowledge

Alutiiq weaving is a sustained living art, passed down through generations. However, by the 1950s there were few weavers actively practicing the art on Kodiak Island. Thankfully, several women in Old Harbor and Kodiak worked to regenerate this knowledge by offering community workshops and teaching in the schools. Their students and descendents are continuing these traditions.

In Old Harbor, Feodosia Inga taught and encouraged many women to weave. June (Simeonoff) Pardue recalls as a little girl how Feodosia took her mother in as a weaver. She tells, "while my mother was learning, I was on the floor picking up the grass and copying them."

The women who learned from Feodosia and other family members continued her efforts in an unbroken chain of Alutiiq weaving knowledge.

In Kodiak, Anfesia Shapsnikoff of Atka and Unalaska taught Aleut/Unangan grass basket weaving through the Kodiak Historical Society. Her students Eunice Neseth and Hazel Jones went on to teach many other workshops in Kodiak and rural communities to continue the art.

The five weavers showcased in this exhibit learned through this chain of knowledge — a chain that will continue to grow as more people learn.

Feodosia Inga of Old Harbor with her young students (1946-1949). (left to right) Fedosia Inga, Maria Inga, Bobby Inga, Carl Christiansen, and Jane Ann Shugak. Photo by Fred and Marie Bailey (school teachers in Old Harbor), courtesy Wilmer Andrewvitch (AM694:306)

Feodosia (Kahutak) Inga in 1970 Kodiak Historical Society PR 304 N

(above) Basket weaving workshop participants in Kodiak, 1981. (back row left to right) Dolores (Gallagher) Padilla, Mary (Panamaroff) Garoutte, Anne (Reft) White, Suzi Jones, Agnes (Prokopeuff) Thompson, Mary (Reft) Gallagher, Jan Steinbright. (middle row) Rita Blumenstein, Angie Dushkin, Linda (Krukoff) Saunders, Gertrude Dorothy (Hope) Svarny, Marian Johnson, Peter Corey. (front row) Margaret Lokanin, Eunice (von Scheele) Neseth, Marie Shugak, Laura Simeonoff, Mary Peterson and Martha (Naumoff) Matfay. Photo courtesy Kodiak Historical Society PR 413-12-b

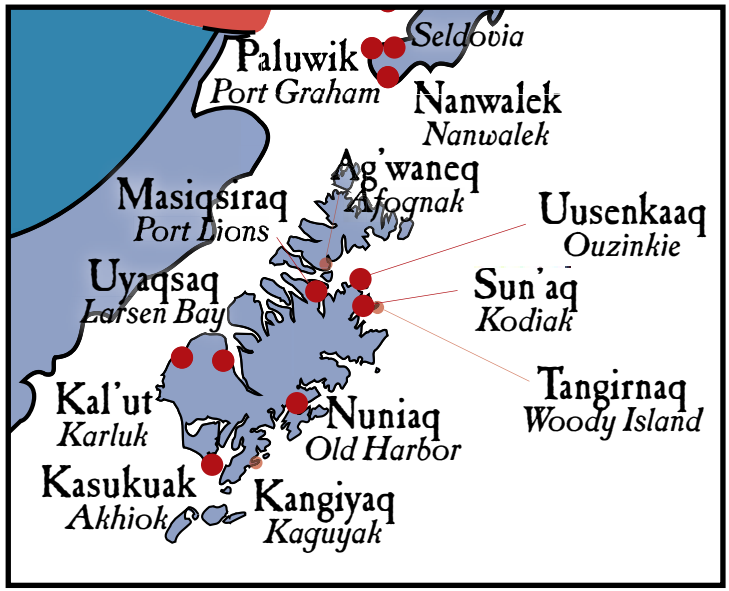
(left) Eunice Neseth (seated far left) and Hazel Jones (seated far right) learned to teach weaving from Anfesia Shapsnikoff (standing far right) of Atka and Unalaska. Photo courtesy Kodiak Historical Society PR 413-11-k

Cultural Map of Alaska

The Alutiiq nation is a crossroads for cultural exchange. Alutiiq people have always traveled widely, interacting regularly with Aleut/ Unangan and Tlingit neighbors. Many of these peoples have also made Kodiak their home. Alutiiq weaving reflects this diversity of cultural connections. It is a blend of the knowledge passed through generations, the teachings of neighboring traditions, and the study of ancestral objects.

Spruce root weaving has been practiced on Kodiak for centuries. Anthropologists believe that the Alutiiq people adopted woven hat styles from their neighbors — the Tlingit Indians, as described on page 10.

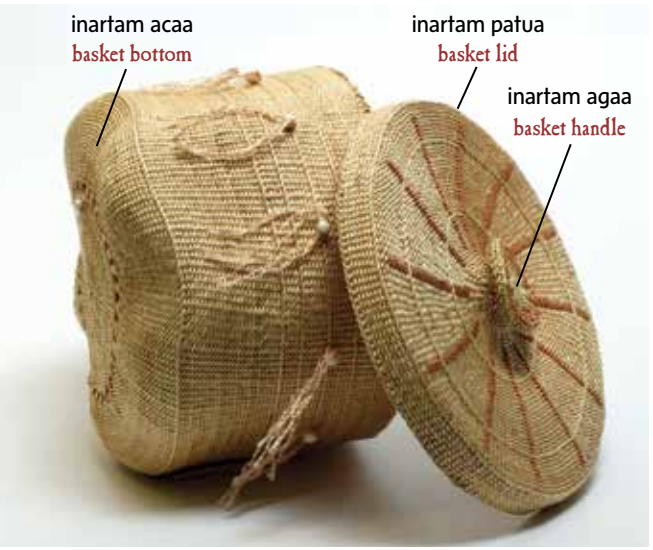
Kodiak Alutiiq weavings found in archaeological sites show that stitching techniques both resemble neighboring traditions and have their own Alutiiq style. While Unangan weavers favor a fine grass twining, Alutiiq weavers employ a thicker weave and more commonly create open weave designs. In the past 50 years, several Unangan women have taught weaving on Kodiak. Anfesia Shapsnikoff was one of the most influential Unangan weavers.



Based on Alaska Native Language Map (Krauss, 1982)

Inartam Ilai | A Basket's Anatomy

Grass basket start courtesy June Pardue



Beach Find - beach rye grass basket by Arlene Skinner with wavy bottom and tan floss and bone beads, 2006, purchased with Rasmuson Foundation funds, AM616

Qukakun aularnirluku.

The middle is where it starts.

Beach rye grass open weave basket by Eunice Neseth, 1978, courtesy Baranov Museum, 79-31-1a

"If you don't finish your basket, you'll get ***sukunuuk*** *(daddy-long-legs) in your house."*

— an Alutiiq proverb

Beach rye grass fish basket by Eunice Neseth, late 20th Century, AM657

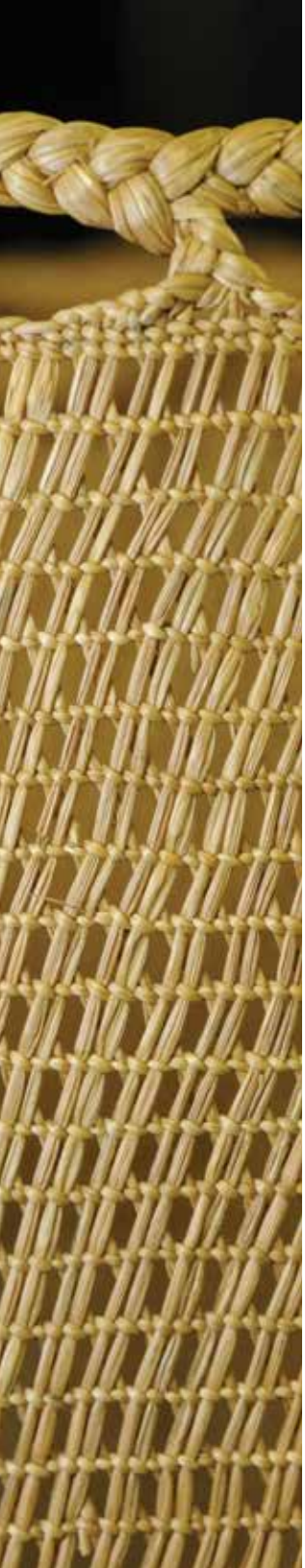
False Embroidery

"The Kodiak Island Alutiit practiced weaving on a vertical warp, wrapping two or three rows of weft around one or two rows of vertical warp. In decorating basketry articles with straw, they used a technique known as "false embroidery," in which three-strand weaving was employed. The third strand of the weft was replaced with straw. A design created by means of "false embroidery" appears only on the outside of an article."

— from ***Alutiit/Sugpiat: A Catalog of the Collections at the Kunstkamera*** (p 174)

(at right) Beach rye grass baskets by Martha Kahutak with silk floss or dyed grass and glass beads, 1992-2002, courtesy KANA Collection AM65:1-6

Beach rye grass basket with turquoise and red yarn by Feodosia Inga, 1960
93-2-1, courtesy Baranov Museum



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Quyanaasinaq!
Thank you very much

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Alutiiq - English Glossary

agunaq (S)	*clothing*
Alutiiq	*Sugpiaq; Aleut; Alaska Native people of Kodiak*
ar'uq; arwaq	*whale*
aʀafkuq (N)	*rope; cordage (see iʀafkuq (S))*
arwam kagit'ruanek	*baleen, of (literally: of whale's baleen)*
atkuq (N)	*clothing*
aturluku	*wear, to*
aularnirluku	*starts, it*
awirnaq	*spruce root hat*
cuumillat	*ancestors*
ilai	*parts, its many; anatomy*
imarmek	*from the sea*
inartalicirpet	*our weaving ways*
inartam acaa	*bottom, basket's*
inartam agaa	*handle, basket's*
inartam ilai	*anatomy, a basket's (many parts)*
inartam irui	*spokes (legs), basket's*
inartam natra	*floor, basket's*
inartam patua	*cover (lid), basket's*
inartanek canamasqat	*woven items; woven things that are made*
inartanek unguwallriaq	*woven animal; woven living being*
inartaq	*basket; woven item (inartat - plural)*
iʀufkuq (S)	*rope; cordage*
iruq	*leg*
kagit'ruanek	*baleen (see arwam kagit'ruanek)*
Kasaakat Nunii	*Russia (Russian's land)*
kelugkaq	*thread*
killtaq	*braid*
kugyaq	*net*
maani	*here (around)*
misuuk	*bag*
napam nukiinek	*spruce root*
napaq	*spruce tree*
naqugun	*belt, woman's woven*
nateq	*floor*
nunamek	*from the land*
patuq	*lid; cover*
piiraq	*woven mat*
pinguat (S)	*beads*
pisiʀkat (N)	*beads*
qikarlluk	*sinew*
qukakun	*middle (via or through)*
quyanaa	*thank you*
quyanaasinaq	*thank you very much*
saaplitaarliit	*hats, they always made*
slaapaq	*hat, brimmed*
Sugpiaq	*Alutiiq; Aleut; "real people"; Alaska Native people of Kodiak*
sukunuuk	*daddy-long-legs spider*
taimasqat	*materials (ones that come...)*
tangerhnit'staaq	*ornament*
unguwallriaq	*animal; living being*
uqaayanat	*nettles*
weg'et	*grass*
wegnek inartalicirpet	*grass weaving tradition, our*

English - Alutiiq Glossary

Alutiiq; Aleut	*Alaska Native people of Kodiak; Sugpiaq*
anatomy	*ilai (literally: its many parts)*
ancestors	*cuumillat*
animal; living being	*unguwallriaq*
bag	*misuuk*
baleen	*kagit'ruaq*
baleen, of	*kagit'ruanek; arwam kagit'ruanek*
basket; woven item	*inartaq*
beads	*pinguat (S); pisiʁkat (N)*
belt, woman's woven	*naqugun*
bottom, basket's	*inartam acaa*
braid	*killtaq*
clothing	*agunaq (S); atkuq (N)*
cordage	*aʁafkuq (N); iʁufkuq (S) (see rope)*
cover (lid), basket's	*inartam patua*
daddy-long-legs spider	*sukunuuk*
floor	*nateq*
floor, basket's	*inartam natra*
from the land	*nunamek*
from the sea	*imarmek*
grass	*weg'et*
grass, from	*wegnek*
handle, basket's	*inartam agaa*
hat, brimmed	*slaapaq*
hat, spruce root	*awirnaq*
hats, they made	*saaplitaarliit*
here (around)	*maani*
legs (many), its	*irui*
leg	*iruq*
lid; cover	*patuq*
woven mat	*piiraq*
materials	*taimasqat (ones that come...)*
middle (via or through)	*qukakun*
net	*kugyaq*
nettles	*uqaayanat*
ornament	*tangerhnit'staaq*
parts, its (many)	*ilai (see also anatomy)*
rope	*aʁafkuq (N); iʁufkuq (S) (see cordage)*
Russia	*Kasaakat Nunii (Russian's land)*
sinew	*qikarlluk*
spokes (legs), basket's	*inartam irui*
spruce root	*napam nukiinek*
spruce root hat	*awirnaq*
spruce tree	*napaq*
starts, it	*aularnirluku*
Sugpiaq	*Alutiiq; Alaska Native people of Kodiak*
thank you	*quyanaa*
thank you very much	*quyanaasinaq*
thread	*kelugkaq*
wear, to	*aturluku*
weaving ways, our	*inartalicirpet*
whale	*ar'uq; arwaq*
woven animal	*inartanek unguwallriaq (woven living being)*
woven items	*inartanek canamasqat (woven things that are made)*
woven mat	*piiraq*

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