

January Coffee and Collections with Tsimshian Carver, Abel Ryan

Local artist, Abel Ryan, will present on his solo exhibit, *Seeing Faces*, as part of the City Museum's on-going Coffee & Collections series on January 13th, 2018 from 10:30-Noon. Coffee & Collections is a free event, and coffee will be provided thanks to a generous donation by Heritage Coffee Company.

Ryan's Coffee and Collections presentation will focus on the carver's journey, exploring how he came to be where he is today. "Carving is not just about the object that is created and everyone sees when you are finished. To the carver, it is about the process of getting there. I have always enjoyed carving, especially masks, not because it is easy, but because it is challenging and forces me to be observant and reflective," states Ryan.

Ryan further notes there is much more to his artwork than the finished piece: "There are always many stories about family, community, friends, and making good and bad choices. The carved pieces that we use are not part of a written language, but are instead objects that help us to remember our stories, be they histories, morals, or personal."

Abel Ryan was born in Ketchikan, Alaska in 1978. His home is in Metlakatla on the Annette Island Reserve in Southeast Alaska. His parents are Conrad and Ellen Ryan. Abel is half Tsimshian, a member of the Metlakatla Indian Community, and an adopted member of the Wolf Clan. He has a BA from Sheldon Jackson College and a BFA from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Ryan has lived in Juneau since 2009.

Abel studied traditional Tsimshian art under master carver, Jack Hudson of Metlakatla. He has studied Tsimshian art with Jack Hudson and independently in Metlakatla since he was 11 years old. Working in the medium of wood and metal, Abel produces masks, bowls, spoons, pipes, ladles, plaques, combs, jewelry and other hand carved and painted items. He is also proficient in two-dimensional graphic design using Northwest Coast formline art.

"I love my culture, my heritage. I love that my people took such great care in creating the things that they used. They developed such a unique and beautiful style of expression that I wish to carry on. Come see me travel through my personal carved history and how I came to this show."

Ryan's work is sold in galleries in Ketchikan, Sitka, and Juneau. He also has work in private collections. ***Seeing Faces* is currently on display at the City Museum through February 24th, 2018. The artist's work is for sale.**