Berkshire Museum presents a Finding Raven Gallery Talk
October 15, 2016

[PITTSFIELD, MA] — Learn about the art and artifacts in the exhibition Finding Raven: Art and Stories from the Northwest Coast when Drs. Joan and Paul Gluck offer a gallery talk on Saturday, October 15, at 11 a.m. Finding Raven will be on view at the Berkshire Museum through October 30, 2016. The Glucks will be walking through the galleries, sharing information on the featured objects in the exhibition, which are all from their personal collection.

Museum visitors will experience the rich heritage of the indigenous peoples of the Northwest Pacific Coast, portrayed in dramatic stories and striking art objects. Tales set in the oceans, streams, and forests of the Pacific Northwest are accompanied by totem poles, carved masks, and other ceremonial and utilitarian objects reflecting the traditions and artistry of the Haida, Tsimshian, Kwak’waka’wakw, and Tlingit groups, among others.

This exhibition is funded in part by Mass Humanities, which receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and is an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. This exhibition is funded in part by the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation.

Finding Raven: Art and Stories from the Northwest Coast offers a look at the rich, vibrant cultural life of the indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest. The early inhabitants of this region crafted elaborate, sophisticated stories about the world that surrounded them — an enormous temperate rain forest, with towering trees and access to the
Pacific Ocean — which became an enduring part of their artistic and literary legacy. The brightly painted contemporary and historic objects, made both for ceremony and utility, from the Northwest Coast people -- Haida, Tlingit, Kwak'waka'wakw, Tsimshian, Coast Salish -- illustrate these multi-layered stories, drawing the imagery from the characters who inhabit these supernatural tales.

The exhibition includes a number of totems that suggest walking into a village on the Northwest Coast. Displays of elaborately carved masks, exquisite bentwood boxes, and button blankets illustrate the potlatch, an important ceremony for Northwest Coast native people. The potlatch is a community feast in which a key component is a ceremonial gift-giving. The potlatch may include dramatic costumed storytelling, music, dancing, and singing. A large traditional copper, one of the valuable gifts shared at a potlatch, will be on view, along with ladles and feast bowls. Most of the objects in the exhibition date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and are represented by historically significant artists including Kwak'waka'wakw artists Willy Seaweed, Blackie Dick, and George Hunt, Jr.

About the Berkshire Museum
Located in downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts, at 39 South St., the Berkshire Museum, a Smithsonian Affiliate, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is $13 adult, $6 child; Museum members and children age 3 and under enjoy free admission. For more information, visit www.berkshiremuseum.org or call 413.443.7171.

In association with the Smithsonian since 2013, Berkshire Museum is part of a select group of museums, cultural, educational, and arts organizations that share the Smithsonian's resources with the nation. Established by Zenas Crane in 1903, Berkshire Museum integrates art, history, and natural science in a wide range of programs and exhibitions that inspire educational connections between the disciplines. In the galleries, Little Cinema is open year-round. Feigenbaum Hall of Innovation, Worlds in Miniature, Aquarium, and other exhibits are ongoing.

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