



INNERSKINS  
OUTERSKINS

*GUT AND FISHSKIN*

## F O R E W O R D

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*The San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum is delighted to present Innerskins/Outerskins: Gut and Fishskin, the first exhibition anywhere to focus on traditional artifacts made from those materials by Alaskan native peoples. The exhibition also includes innovative work by contemporary artists who use gut or fishskin as a medium, thus making it possible to combine in one show the Museum's commitment to traditional ethnic folk art and its interest in fine craft.*

*The clothing, containers, and other objects from Alaska are tributes to human resourcefulness in a harsh environment. They also afford a glimpse into the belief systems of native Alaskan cultures, for whom gut and fishskin are spiritually charged materials, equally impenetrable by threatening natural elements and by hostile otherworldly forces.*

*The fragile and translucent qualities of gut and fishskin have captivated dozens of craft artists working today around the country, and the best of their artwork has been added to this exhibition carrying on the Museum's devotion to experimentation in the contemporary craft field.*

*We hope the Innerskins/Outerskins exhibition will give us new insights into the cultures of the North, too little known and understood. We believe that the current creations in gut and fishskin will provide artistic stimulation for us all, and that they may even inspire new forms of expression for the skills of native Alaskans who view the exhibit in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau.*

*The Museum's appreciation is expressed to the California Arts Council who contributed to the cost of this catalogue.*

J. Weldon Smith  
Director

*Cover photo: Detail of Aleut gut parka. Collection of Marjorie S. Patterson.*

*Figure 1, title page. Frances Usugan with inflated, dried seal gut. Toksook Bay, Alaska.*

INNERSKINS/OUTERSKINS: GUT AND FISHSKIN

Pat Hickman



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SAN FRANCISCO CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM

## INNERSKINS/OUTERSKINS: GUT AND FISHSKIN

San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum

October 31–December 20, 1987

Anchorage Museum of History and Art

January 17–February 21, 1988

University of Alaska Museum, Fairbanks

March 17–April 23, 1988

Alaska State Museum, Juneau

May 15–June 21, 1988

### SAN FRANCISCO CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM

Landmark Building A, Fort Mason Center

San Francisco, California 94123-1382

*There are friends and colleagues whose long-term support, encouragement, and interest in this project mattered more than I can say—Lillian Elliott, Ed and Katherine Rossbach, and Carole Austin. A small group of textile specialists, who believe in each other's work, gathered and listened to my questions and helped in subtle, yet significant ways.*

*Liz Lindsley made it possible for me to go to Alaska the first time by sharing friends who opened their homes to me. Karen Pladsen, a fellow traveler and friend, deserves credit for being there, in so many ways, whenever I needed her. Chuna McIntyre helped me understand.*

*The separate articles contributed to this catalogue give a broader perspective, which is greatly appreciated. The genuine support I felt in Alaska for this proposed exhibit made it become a reality.*

*Some unexpected new artwork in gut and fishskin by contemporary artists kept me going when my own lack of studio time was most discouraging. Karin Nelson's considerable effort must be recognized. Bob Hanamura's "eye," his visual solutions to unique problems of presentation, made such a difference, as did Gail Hovey's editorial suggestions.*

*And to the San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum staff, a sincere thank-you for the opportunity to bring this traditional and contemporary work together by providing space for this idea. It makes it possible to dream and imagine.*

*Most of all, I thank Bill and Hilary and Madelia.*

Pat Hickman  
Berkeley, California

Looking at what cultures create, especially their textiles and clothing, is an intimate way to begin to know another people.

Gut and fishskin textiles and clothing, the historic reference and inspiration for this exhibit, are not complex, structural puzzles to be analyzed. They are part of something larger, a system of belief, a unification—a hunter wearing a gut parka when hunting seal, a fisherman wearing protective clothing when catching salmon (*fig. 2*).



Figure 3. King Island dancers, Lulu Fairbanks Collection.

A cycle, a wholeness and completeness exist—integrally linked to the world of the spirits. The clothing is physical and spiritual protection, made from what was available, essential to a particular way of life (*figs. 3 and 4*).

In Alaska, that vast, quiet white land, necessity served as motivation. Life was about survival. Survival clothing. Survival tools. Nothing was wasted or tossed aside as useless.

I saw my first gut parka ten years ago in a museum exhibit. I remember the stunning visual beauty, the sensation that light was coming from within. I was astounded by the idea, by the totally unexpected possibility of someone using gut—intestines or other soft digestive organs—as a clothlike material. That overwhelming aesthetic response was the beginning of an exploration. The surprise, now, is that that initial response remains a

fresh one. I still feel wonder, along with a deeper understanding and appreciation.

Over the years I have studied several museum collections and the literature that mentions gut and fishskin, mostly in passing. Early ethnographers' and travelers' accounts and missionaries' and anthropologists' observations are invaluable. But in this exhibition catalogue, there are other voices I wanted to hear. I wanted the viewpoint of a native person working today in Alaska and invited Rita Pitka Blumenstein to talk directly about her own experience. John Burns answers questions from his perspective as a specialist on marine mammals. And Alice Hoveman, a conservator, shares her understanding of the uniqueness of these materials and her concern for extending their natural life.

In most of the world, intestines and fishskins have been regarded as throwaways.

Figure 2. Wearing gut parkas and carrying a catch of fish. Early Prints Collection.



Figure 5. John Webber. A man of Oonalashka. Engraving, 1784.



Figure 4. Yup'ik mask, Lower Yukon, late 19th century. Collection of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Gift of Elizabeth Cole Butler.

There are a few, select exceptions—examples of early Ainu fishskin garments in northern Japan or fishskin clothing along the Amur River region in Russia, made and worn by the Gilyak and Goldi peoples. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported a recent find in England: “Archeologists have discovered five condoms made of fish and animal intestines at historic Dudley Castle near Birmingham, leading them to conclude that English soldiers as far back as the 1640s took precautions against venereal disease.”<sup>1</sup> In the words of poet Adrienne Rich, I am reminded that “History is more than the tales of our finest hours. It isn’t just spoken words, verbal tradition either. Some representation of it is always being made.”<sup>2</sup>

What attention has been paid to the clothing or textile tradition in Alaska has focused primarily on the extraordinary use of furs—striking, visually dramatic, beautiful. Economic interest in furs as a valuable commodity has assured them some historic re-

ference. This exhibition focuses on gut and fishskin and their connectedness to a way of life in Alaska, which deserve a place in history.

## G U T

Brittle archeological gut fragments from Aleut burial remains in Alaska are visible reminders of an earlier use in a previous life and time.<sup>3</sup> Some of the finest 18th-century Alaskan examples of gut and fishskin parkas exist in European museum collections, primarily in England, West Germany, Russia, Finland, and Denmark. In addition to two gut garments brought back from Captain James Cook’s third voyage, there is artist John Webber’s 1784 sketch documenting the native wearing of such a garment (*fig. 5*). Cook even acquired gut parkas for his crew’s use, believing the garments to be much lighter, stronger, and more waterproof than oilskins.<sup>4</sup>

One of the oldest and finest Aleutian gut garments in this country exists in the collection



Figure 7. Aleut hunter wearing a "kamleika" and gut bag. Scientific illustration by Wanda Seamster.

Figure 6. Aleut "kamleika." Collection of The Peabody Museum, Salem.



of the Peabody Museum in Salem, received there in 1835. It is a Russian-style gut cape called a "kamleika," a term applied by Russians in Alaska to a native waterproof parka made of intestines (figs. 6 and 7). It reflects early Russian contact and influence, but more than that, it's a garment with aesthetic value for its own incredibly delicate work, elegance, and refinement.

It is curious that gut, an inner membrane, has become an outer skin, tough and protective, despite its fragile appearance. This transparent membrane is a thin skin between life and death, a link between the animal and human worlds, the worlds of giver and receiver. This clothing represents an intimate relationship, the connection between life of the land and life of the water. There is raw-

ness, transformed. And there is strength and power in the extraordinary closeness to nature (fig. 8).

Gut parkas were made, according to Dorothy Jean Ray, by all Eskimos\* except Central Canadian tribes.<sup>5</sup> The ribbonlike gut strips, the color quality, the weightlessness, the thinness, and the overall garment shape are similar. All gut parkas are made with the idea of separate strips used as a unit, joined side by side, parts becoming a larger whole. In textile history, one is reminded of African strip weave or patchwork quilt construction. Yet there are also significant differences in parkas. Gudmund Hatt suggests the gut parka evolved from the fur shirt made out of vertical strips of fur from small animals. In northern and eastern regions (fig. 9), the Inupiaq gut parka is of short, vertical lengths of intestines, seldom decorated in the seams.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere there is a horizontal placement of the gut strips, stitched as if coiling around the body (fig. 10). Hatt sees this alignment as a southwestern Alaskan innovation. In either arrangement, the joining of one slit tube to the next may be abrupt or tapered and gradual. There is subtle but visual variation along the length of a single gut strip, with the creamy white of the center sometimes used as a design element.

\*The belief that "Eskimo" had a pejorative meaning, "eater of raw meat," has resulted in a shift to the self-designation of "Inuit," meaning "person or people," in Canada and "Inupiaq," "Central Yup'ik," and "Siberian Yup'ik" for those native Eskimo peoples in Alaska. Please refer to the map.

Figure 9. Native peoples and languages map of Alaska. Alaska Native Language Center. University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 1974.

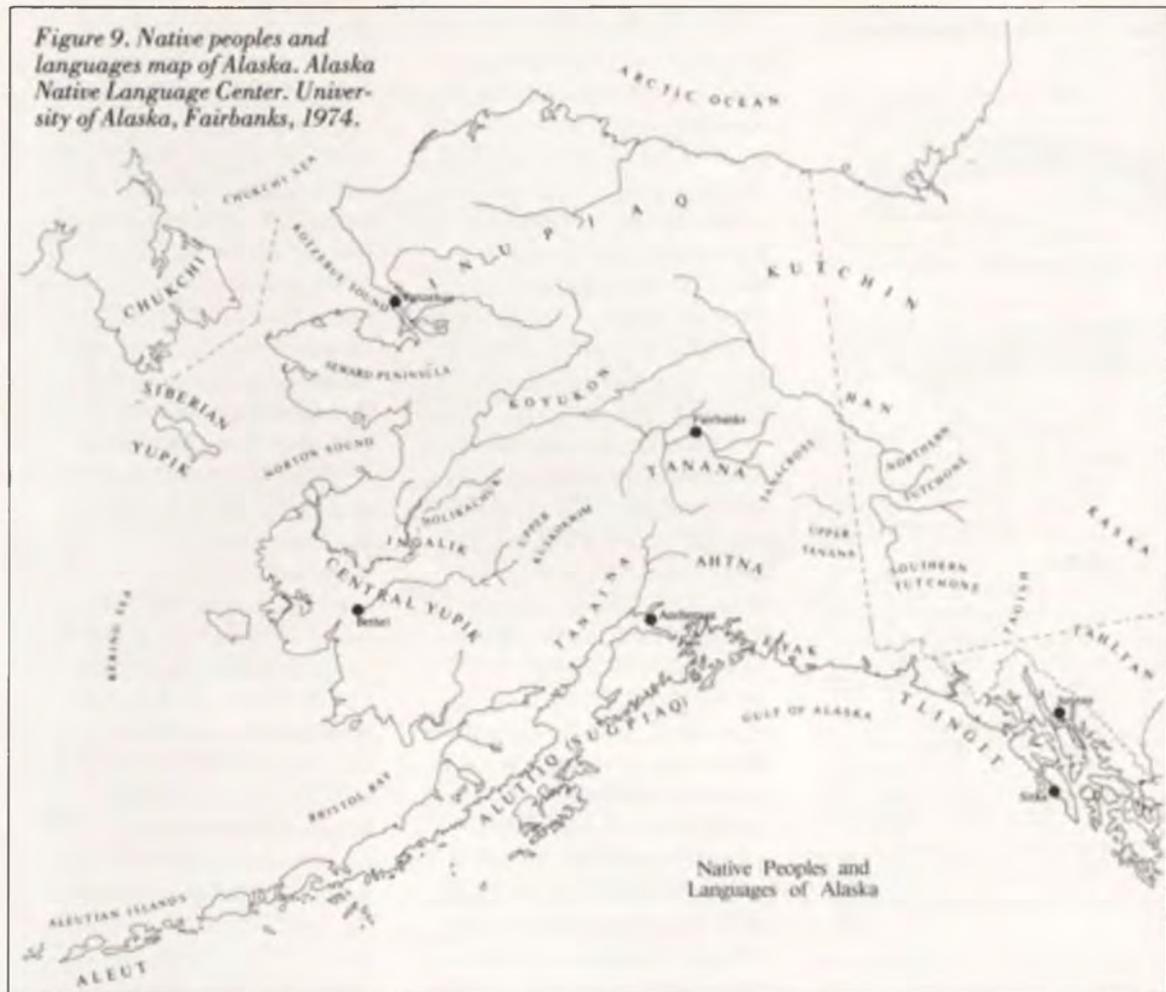
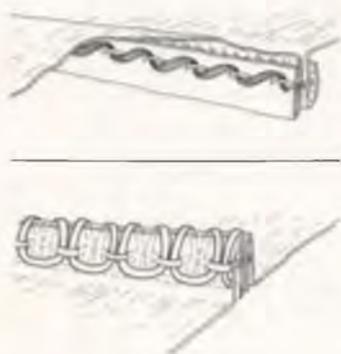


Figure 10. Lomen brothers, photographers.

Figure 8. Processing intestine, St. Lawrence Island. Otto Geist Collection.



Figure 13. Seam illustrations by Jane Becker.



The length and width of the gut strips vary, depending on the animal source and its size. The weight of a dry gut parka, however long, can be as little as three ounces or as much as seven ounces—remarkably lightweight and “breathable.” When wet, a parka changed shape, even got considerably longer (to contract later), but the wetness did not penetrate (fig. 11).

Lynn Morrison, in her article, discusses the contractile quality of gut. “The gut wall is a highly ordered and specialized tissue, like tendon. It is dense and although pierced by capillaries *in vivo*, these close up on the death of the animal, making the material impermeable and resistant to decay. Gut is extremely tough in order to perform its biological function of contraction. It will withstand high pressure.”<sup>7</sup>

The Siberian Yup’ik parka of St. Lawrence Island is particularly striking. Winter tanned gut, in opaque, parchmentlike strips, is preferred; this is an aesthetic choice (fig. 12, p. 20). The weather condi-

Figure 11. Photograph by James H. Barker.



tions elsewhere in Alaska would allow for the same freeze drying process, which causes an inflated wet gut tube to lose its transparency and become a satiny white strip. This irreversible transformation also makes the material more flexible. The membrane that results from the change from wet to dry remains nonprecious despite the appearance of satin. It is still close to its animal life.

Sinew (animal tendon) or grass were the two commonly used materials for stitching waterproof garments. Often used in combination, both could swell with moisture and keep the parka waterproof. Cotton thread, as Rita Pitka Blumenstein discusses, is now also used. G. I. Davydov writes that when a “coat is finished, the sleeves are tied together and it is filled with water. If there are no leaks, the kamleika is pronounced good.”<sup>8</sup> The waterproof seam most frequently used is a two-thread combination, using a running stitch and parallel elements, often grasses, carried along and secured in place with the running stitch (fig. 13). A decorative stitch was selectively used as well—a kind of looping technique through the running stitch. And along seams frequent additions, such as short bits of colored wool yarn, were locked in place. When grass was used for stitching gut parkas, there was usually no further embellishment. According to Otto Geist, “it is by the seam that a man’s raincoat and snowshirt are distinguished from a woman’s. The seams of a man’s raincoat are sewed on the outside, whereas a woman’s coat has the seams



Figure 14. Jesse Paul of Kipnuk picking herring roe on kelp. Near Cape Vancouver on Nelson Island.

on the underside."<sup>9</sup> This subtle inside and outside gender-related indication is an extension of the idea of membranes as innerskins and outerskins.

Frequently a gut parka was used over other parkas (fig. 14), as rainshirt or snowshirt, occasionally to keep fur or feathers dry. Sometimes gut was used as a lining for waterproofing; other times gut itself was lined with trade cloth, either silk or cotton. The color of the cloth through the membrane visually contributed to the piece.

I am reminded of Scythian burial finds of felt saddle blankets lined with silk. People use the material they know best. What makes something valuable and precious is a cultural attitude toward it, dependent, traditionally, on the amount of time directly involved in production. Ingenuity abounds. The Thomas Burke Memorial Washington State Museum in Seattle has a gut jacket lined with flour sack material.

Although these gut objects were used as everyday functional articles for protection against the physical elements, they were also used extensively by the shaman. There was a widespread belief in Alaska that the garment was a spiritually protective covering.

In Eskimo art, symbolic depiction of the lifeline, the central spiritual and biological channel of an organism, is common. The soft organs, from the mouth to the anus, through the whole digestive system, are suggested.<sup>10</sup> The literal use of these gut membranes in protective clothing, in both functional and ceremonial ways, is directly tied to the larger belief system, a

choice of materials with significant spiritual meaning.

The sound of dry gut is associated with contact with the spirit world. When a shaman was curing the sick and performing miracles "beneath the sea and in other sacred places," reference is made to the rustling sound of moving gut—the sound of a gut parka or two or three worn one on top of another.

Dorothy Jean Ray writes, "one man told me that about forty years ago, he saw a young boy who had drowned brought back to life by his father, an *angakok* (medicine man) famous throughout the North for his miraculous deeds. All were standing around, the teacher, the minister, everybody, when he shook his gutskin parka in front of his son and brought him back to this world."<sup>11</sup>

E. W. Hawkes said that in Labrador, when people wished to communicate with the spirits or were otherwise engaged in ceremonial performances, they always wore the gutskin raincoat because that was the dress of the spirits.<sup>12</sup> Ann Fienup-Riordan describes a shamanistic cure whereby "the shaman squatted in the birth position and then pulled a sick man from a prone position to a standing one by means of a tightly coiled gut raincoat. The patient then released the rope of gut and was pronounced cured."<sup>13</sup> "A King Island boy taking his first caught bird to the men's house, dressed in a waterproof parka to keep out any harmful influence. During the important whale ceremony on Little Diomed Island, before the first whaling trip of the season, the crew put on new clothes



Figure 15. Diomed Island whalers, 1917. Medicine women blessing a whale boat before it is taken out to open water. Smudge of fire in center of boat burns out all evil spirits.

and covered them with gutskin parkas to keep out spiritual uncleanliness" (fig. 15).<sup>14</sup> On Nunivak Island and in other parts of southwestern Alaska, women wore gut parkas while cutting seal skins for use as kayak covers in order to prevent any evil from entering or afflicting the new kayaks. Men wore waterproof parkas and mittens while handling sea nets "to prevent any evil influence passing from them to the nets and keeping seal away."<sup>15</sup>

Chuna McIntyre tells of the "Window to the Spirit World." (Please note the "window" he created for this exhibit.)

"Our last breath in this life  
Becomes our first in the next."

*We Yup'ik Eskimos believe in reincarnation. Life is continuous. We are made of many lifetimes. We are essentially one with our ancestors. They live through us. They live through us without possessing*

*or overpowering our individual selves.*

*From the time of Imumi, beyond the limits of memory, we have prepared our dead for their journey beyond, to the place called Pamani, the land of "over there." There were special preparations for the spirit to travel to that world. Our dead were placed in a sitting position in a wooden box on top of the ground. They were given a piece of driftwood fashioned into a short cylinder which was placed into the clasped hand of the dead as a symbolic weapon. This was to protect them from the vicious and dangerous spirits of the sled dogs which might attack them on their way.*

*Over the face was placed a specially prepared seal gut Death Mask. The journey to the spirit world holds many surprises, some pleasant and some not. Seal gut is translucent, light, and resilient. You can see images and shadows through the material. It was placed over the face to protect the traveler from the surprises that may bring harm during the journey. It was essentially a transparent shield, a window to the spirit world.*

In an account of his travels, 1842-44, Lt. Zagoskin mentions a memorial service for the dead, during which rain parkas made of intestine were brought as gifts for the deceased. On Nelson Island, "when guests were received from another village, for the annual mid winter dances, rolls of dried seal gut might be thrown out like streamers to the approaching kayaks."<sup>16</sup> Numerous significant events document the meaning and importance of gut, both in life and in death.

Mabel Ungdruk is a Siberian Yup'ik woman in Sitka, originally from Gambell on St. Lawrence Island. In the past, she said, when people in her village were afraid of attack, they took fish scales and smeared them on their hands and faces. The scales made them look old and shrivelled, of little interest to their enemies. This is the stuff of folk tales—that fine line between life and death, land and water, human and animal. Fishskin clothing, to someone from another culture, is only one step removed from this.

Many different kinds of fish were used for clothing and bags—dog salmon, lamprey, jack fish (pike), salmon trout, silver or king salmon, halibut, loché, grayling, and dark wolffish. Some fishskin is as thin and transparent as gut but with the literal presence or visible memory of scales. Where scales once were, there is subtle in and out play with light and shadow. The bright iridescence of wet fishskin fades in the drying process. Still, this clothing, even when dry, allows light to catch the magic of iridescence and encourages it to linger. Carefully selected alternate strips of dark and light fishskin were stitched side by side. The usual placement of tail end next to head end, with tail, head, and fins removed, holes patched, skin flattened out, and edges stitched, led to great variation, intricate fitting together, and created a shaded patchwork expanse. Natural fishskin shapes were not trimmed into equal sizes or exact shapes to fit more neatly.

Fishskin and gut do not

come geographically from exactly the same places. From Fairbanks, flying north to the Arctic Circle in a small plane, the extensive snakelike river systems are visible. This is fishskin country. Just a glimpse of the much wider river ahead and one feels the unmistakable presence of the Yukon. From the mouth of the Yukon to the Kuskokwim, fishskin was used as a traditional protective material. Nelson's comment is often quoted, that "very poor people (on the lower Yukon) utilize even salmon for making their frocks."<sup>17</sup> It is thought that he was reflecting a bias probably from northern Eskimos who didn't use fishskin clothing. "Poor" also may mean a nonhunter; even widows and orphans could get fish.

In the summer of 1986, Louise Peter, a seventy-one-year-old Athabascan woman of Fort Yukon, Alaska, demonstrated for me her preparation and processing of fishskin for a bag as she had learned and observed from Leah Roberts, also of her village (*fig. 16*). On a warm August day, outside in the yard, four king salmon, about ten pounds each, were skinned. Later the same day, Louise Peter worked with the cleaned fishskin, wet while she stitched it. Traditionally, according to Cornelius Osgood's account, fishskin was soaked in urine to promote swelling and remove fat. Louise Peter omitted this tanning, though today skins are sometimes worked with liquid detergent soap and water and wrapped in a towel to keep damp. The soft draping of the skin made it seem clothlike, except for the surprise of protruding



Figure 16. Fishskin bag, 1977. Leah Roberts, Fort Yukon. Collection of Dinjii Zhuu Enjit Museum.



Figure 18. Montage.  
Margo Fagan Kennedy.

fins—adding the visible reminder of recent life in the water (*fig. 17, p. 21*).

A strip of wetting, tanned caribou skin, later trimmed, was stitched with sinew in between two layers of wet fishskin, mostly to add strength and to keep the pieces from slipping and tearing. Louise Peter, in Fort Yukon, spins sinew, rolling it upward between her hands. In making the waterproof, overcast stitch, she makes an upward movement of the needle. She considers herself “up river.” People living “down river,” doing the same activities, she explained, would move their hands in exactly the opposite direction. While the bag is drying, Louise Peter fills it with sand or dry grass to keep its shape. When dry, such bags historically would keep out dampness and hold food or clothing.

Unity is in the idea that a fishskin bag was used for storing another form of fish—dried fish strips for food, for people or for the dogs. An old salmon skin boot was used as a bag for fish eggs. In addition

to food storage, salmon skin bags were sometimes used by mourning women for keeping locks of their hair, according to Osgood.

Osgood’s account of fishskin use by the Ingalik Athabascan Indians is the earliest careful documentation of process and treatment. He describes some articles made of fishskin that do not currently exist in an Alaskan collection. Reference is made to a fishskin cradle, made for a baby only after a family has lost one child by death. The salmon skin keeps away the evil spirits that caused the death of the previous child. After the first three months of a baby’s life, the cradle frame is thrown away, and the salmon skin is removed, rolled up, and put away with the baby’s original swaddling clothes.<sup>16</sup> Osgood also mentions a baby’s coveralls—a one-piece suit with trousers, footwear, and a front opening. As the child grows, the fishskin suit is enlarged by cutting it in the middle and inserting a strip of fishskin. Moss is put in the seat of the garment as a diaper.

Adults wore fishskin clothing, glorious raingear and much more, as protection against rain, wind, and uncleanliness.

Tight-fitting fishskin must be wet on the fish for it to survive. Worn as clothing on a human body, it must keep out the wet. Inadequacy and vulnerability are challenged by a thin membrane. Both gut and fishskin are ingenious as a human solution for keeping the outer world, visible and invisible, from penetrating.

Figure 19. Gut Cradle. Jane Gray.



Figure 21. Untitled Vacuum. Sheri Simons.



Figure 20. 50th Birthday Crown and Collar. Susie Lindbergh.

What really attracts artists is the visual impact of gut and fishskin. For the past ten years, a handful of contemporary artists have become interested in materials related to or inspired by the aesthetics of gut and fishskin. This exhibit combines some of this work with its traditional sources. Artists now freely draw on the widest range of visual references. Some are drawing on historic sources without knowing the real meaning associated with them. They feel freed from obligations and go their own personal directions. The medium is only part of the message.

In the late 1960s, Eva Hesse produced a very moving body of work in fiberglass and latex. Its qualities, which remind me of gut, qualities of translucency, fragility, and yet raw strength, had a strong impact on the art world, especially on women artists. Whatever today's multiple references are in this current work, one is reminded of Hesse's significant contribution.

In this contemporary work, all nonfunctional, some artists layer the skin membranes to get a "tougher" skin. Taut membranes are sometimes stretched over three-dimensional forms. Tension and light passing through membranes are common aesthetic concerns in this work.

Sometimes the materials are shocked, as in Margo Kennedy's boiling water treatment of gut and the resulting contraction and shrinkage. Most of this current artwork is not a mere statement of materials; it is the expression of ideas. The



Figure 22. Glacier.  
Lillian Elliott/Pat Hickman.



Figure 23. Pot. Allen Moe.



Figure 24. Wrigleys' Cache.  
Karen Pladsen.

effect is not gentle, and not at all the way gut was used traditionally.

I assume that all the contemporary artists in this show are somewhat familiar with the Alaskan use of gut and fishskin. Presumably, native people in Alaska have not seen any contemporary, non-traditional use of these materials. The Alaskan museums that invited the exhibit to travel are most interested in showing the contemporary work. I was told that there has never been a show of arctic things like this inside or outside of home territory.

The idea of nonpermanence is current in Western art. We see this in performance and installation art, in temporary site-specific visual statements such as Christo makes. Some of these present concerns are integral and appropriate to these skin membrane materials. The exploration has really just begun.

Traditionally these are outdoor materials, both originally in nature and as they were used and worn. How different they are when seen in museums—either on display or in storage drawers. It is an accident that they have survived beyond their expected time. They were meant to be used and worn out, then replaced. The appearance of a gut or fishskin parka, without the human body to give it form, without air around it to give it life, makes it seem especially flat and forgotten, folded and brittle, "frozen" in a dried, stiff shape. A cloth garment folded, familiar in a drawer at home, is much more possible to imagine in use and in life.

There is a strangeness in

Figure 26. Screen.  
Allen Moel Bruce Johnson.



Figure 25. Reliquary (Nuclear  
Age). *Manya Shapiro.*



Figure 27. Goody Two Shoes.  
*Marion Norberg.*

*Figure 28. Honoring Tradition III.  
Rick Bartow.*



*Figure 29. Black Writing.  
Gertrud Parker.*



*Figure 30. Seri Shirt.  
Peggy Vanbianchi/Emily Standley.*

writing about these materials, and in exhibiting them, in showing traditional and contemporary pieces together against white walls. They are not meant to compete with one another. Alaska's white landscape, and what it has produced, serves as historic inspiration yet is far away. But in exhibiting the traditional with the contemporary work, there is a silent, visual dialogue, across time and space, a shared sense of respect offered. The beauty, mystery, and connectedness to a larger part of life in Alaska that is represented speaks of a universal human expression. The visual response by contemporary artists is a confirmation of this. Traditional gut and fishskin clothing is subtle yet perseverant. The quiet wonder of it has not died or been abandoned—it is acknowledged in this exhibit as new possibilities and alternative directions are freely discovered.

1. "Early British Condoms Found in Castle Dig" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, December 12, 1986), p. 36.
2. Adrienne Rich, "Resisting Amnesia" (*Ms. Magazine*, March, 1987) p. 66.
3. Aleš Hrdlička, *The Aleutian and Commander Islands and Their Inhabitants* (Philadelphia: Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology, 1945), p. 589. Burials on Kagamil date to the late prehistoric period, around 1500 A.D.
4. J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 349, n. 3.
5. Dorothy Jean Ray, "The Eskimo Raincoat" (*The Alaska Sportsman*, November, 1959), p. 13.
6. Gudmund Hatt, "Arctic Skin Clothing in Eurasia and America: An Ethnographic Study" (*Arctic Anthropology*, 1969), trans. Kirsten Taylor p. 52.
7. Lynn Morrison, "The Conservation of Seal Gut Parkas" (*The Conservator* No. 10, 1986), p. 17.
8. G. I. Davydov, *Two Voyages to Russian America, 1802-1807* (Ontario, Canada: Limestone Press, 1977), p. 152.
9. Lola Cremens, "Eskimo Clothing on St. Lawrence Island," in *Excerpts from the Diary of Otto William Geist* (*Farthest North Collegian*, March, 1930), p. 8.
10. William Fitzhugh and Susan Kaplan, *Inua*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982), p. 201.
11. Dorothy Jean Ray, op. cit. p. 44.
12. Dorothy Jean Ray, *ibid.*
13. Ann Fienup-Riordan, *The Nelson Island Eskimo* (Anchorage: Alaska Pacific University Press, 1983), p. 225.
14. Dorothy Jean Ray, op. cit., p. 44.
15. Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian*, vol. 20 (Chicago: 1930), pp. 13, 19.
16. Ann Fienup-Riordan, op. cit., p. 225.
17. William Fitzhugh and Susan Kaplan, op. cit., p. 140.
18. Cornelius Osgood, *Ingalik Material Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 100.

By Rita Pitka Blumenstein  
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The fog rolls in from the Bering Sea and creeps through the *nunapik* or tundra that carpets the cliffs on the northeastern side of the village of Tununak. A cape to the west pokes through the fog, pointing the way to China. This village on Nelson Island in southwestern Alaska is home to about four hundred Central Yup'ik-speaking people. Rita Pitka Blumenstein was born in a fishing boat on the way from Bristol Bay to Tununak in 1936. Her mother had wanted to



Figure 31. Rita Pitka Blumenstein holding the 75-foot-long intestine from one black bearded seal.

give birth to Rita at her parent's home in the village, but the event occurred five days outside of Tununak.

Rita grew up in the village until she was seven years old, at which time she went away to a mission school in Holy Cross, a village on the Lower Yukon. She has returned to her home village many times to live and visit over the course of her life. Today she is a widely traveled, dedicated tradition bearer for her culture. She teaches the arts of basketry, natural dyeing, and skin sewing in and around her present home of Palmer, Alaska.

I first met Rita in 1981 at an Aleut basketry workshop sponsored by the Institute of Alaska Native Arts in Kodiak. Since that meeting, Rita and I have worked on many projects together including a quiet little book about the dyeing of grass for baskets using natural materials entitled *Earth Dyes*. This interview gave us yet

another wonderful excuse to spend time together and another rich opportunity for me to learn about the Yup'ik ways from one of that culture's most sensitive and knowledgeable people.

**JS:** Rita, what do you remember of the traditional ways from when you were growing up?

**RB:** I caught the tail end of the traditional ways. I saw the last of the bladder ceremonies; I witnessed the power of the shamans. Our only transportation then was dog teams, skin boats, and kayaks. We lived in sod houses (*enett*), lived off the land and sea and depended upon the weather.

**JS:** Rita, we're going to be talking about the use of fishskin and the intestines of animals by the Yup'ik people for clothing and ornamentation. But that is just a small part of the meaning of the animal to the culture. Tell me about how Yup'ik people respect, revere, and use both

the seal and the fish.

**RB:** In respect for the fish and the seal, you use every bit of it: the head, the insides, the bones, and the skin of the fish. And then whatever we don't eat goes to the dogs. The bones go back to the river or the lake, wherever you caught it from. If they're from the ocean, you take them there. That will ensure more fish in the next years. If it's a seal, same way. The bladder goes back to the sea. The seals will come back. You bury the bones near the sea so you won't find them floating all over the beach. I appreciate very much the respect for things when I was growing up. So you use every bit of it—the bones for tools, the insides for clothing, eat the kidneys and liver and the meat. Use the seal oil also. The stomach is used for storing the seal oil and for when you gather salmonberries. The skin you use for parkas, mittens, or mukluks. The bones you use for scrapers, runners for sleds and for tanning. The whiskers are used for toothpicks, and the faces are used for ornaments. The bladder goes back to the sea.

## F I S H S K I N

**JS:** What specifically do you remember about Yup'ik people using fishskin for clothing?

**RB:** Fishskins were used for mukluks, mittens, and raincoats (*immar enin*).

Fishskins were used especially by the river mainland people (Yukon-Kuskokwim). They also used the skins as bags for water containers. I remember my mother made a fishskin container out of pike. She skinned it whole, cut the

head off, and then from the head, she pulled the skin off and then cut the fins on the stomach. She got the esophagus of the seal from in between the stomach and the throat. She cut that and used that. It's bleached, and she sewed it waterproof with grass and the seal esophagus wetting and then she sewed an opening. Then on the tail end, she put a carved ivory hollow thing with a plug on it.

**JS:** What about mukluks? Were they made completely out of fishskins?

**RB:** Yes, they skinned the fish, opened the stomach all the way down to the tail, skinned it out, and cut off the fin in the back. They patched it the same way with the esophagus.

**JS:** What kind of sole would they use for this kind of mukluk?

**RB:** They used *ugruk* (in Inupiaq), *tungun qaq* in my language (black bearded seal). The fishskin mittens are trimmed with the esophagus of the seal, and the palms are made out of harbor seal flippers.

**JS:** Sewn right into the palm so it's tough?

**RB:** The flipper is not tanned or anything; it's just softened. It's thin and waterproof.

**JS:** What else do you remember fishskin being used for?

**RB:** I remember the bags for storing the fish eggs, half-dried fish eggs. The reason they did that is it stores better. You eat it like sausage. You cut it off and you can also eat the fishskin. The fishskins were also used on baskets as decoration, folded in with the grass like the seal gut but they didn't dye it. The fishskin

comes in different colors. It depends upon what kind of fish—if it's a king salmon, if it's a silver salmon, if it's a trout, or if it's a pike.

**JS:** You mentioned earlier that there are also different uses for these kinds of fish.

**RB:** The use for the fish depends upon the thickness, the strength, whatever. The king salmon is used for boots, heavy-duty boots. Only female silver salmon is used for hats for girls. And the pike skin is for water jugs. The trout is for bags. The river trout have those spots. They also use the spots for decoration on the mukluks.

**JS:** Is there any cultural or spiritual significance in using a certain kind of fishskin, or is it just for the utilitarian purposes?

**RB:** The significance of using it for decorations depends upon who you are making it for, like if it's a higher person—we look at a higher person for their skills. Good hunters are called “rich people”; they're chiefs, because they know more about things, you know. The firstborn child of a chief, if it's a girl, has to have a hat made of female silver salmon.

**JS:** What did they look like?

**RB:** There are three triangles of fishskin with wolverine fur in between. There is a face trim of seal esophagus, wolverine fur, and fishskin. Then there are beads and yarn tassels hanging off the flap.

**JS:** Would you also use the silver salmon for her mukluks and mittens?

**RB:** Yes.

**JS:** And what kind of fish would be for the chief?

**RB:** I think it's the king salmon, for the boots.



*Figure 12. Josephine Ungott  
sewing on a gut parka at Gambell,  
St. Lawrence Island, 1979.*



*Figure 17. Louise Peter, Fort  
Yukon, Alaska. Stitching fishskin.*

**JS:** Let's talk about the seasons for working the fishskin. They are taken in what months?

**RB:** The kings are in the springtime, when they first come in my area. And then the pike in the middle of the summer. It seems like the pike are thick when it's the rainy season. Silvers and whitefish in the fall.

**JS:** Were these fishskins ever dyed?

**RB:** Some of them are dyed with alder bark and moss. It just changes the color a little. They use aspen and birch to toughen the skin.

**JS:** Let's talk about the whole process. Explain to me how the skin is taken from the fish and how it's prepared to be used in sewing later.

**RB:** For whatever you're going to use for mukluks or whatever, you take the head and tail off and clean the stomach out, and then you peel the skin up towards the backbone. Then you peel it from the head and back to the fin, and then you cut the fin off. You take the skin off and soak it in the water, and then you scrape it with a seashell. Some fish you have to scale; some fish you don't. Like pike, you've got to scale it, also the whitefish. After you scale it, you soak it in urine. The urine has to come from a young boy baby before weaning. It doesn't have any chemicals or whatever, just mamma's milk. For tougher skins, you have to use the urine from an older boy, around the time his voice changes.

**JS:** How long do you soak it in that urine?

**RB:** Sometimes half a day, sometimes overnight. The longer you do it, the softer it

gets. Then my mother used to use Naptha soap, and she sudsed it in the water and then cooled off the water and then put the skin in it. Then she puts it in aspen shavings in the water, cools it off, and puts it in clear water, and then you rinse it out. My mother used to use a towel to absorb the water. I asked her one time in camp, "What did you use when you didn't have cloth?" She said they used dried moss. And then you put it on a smooth board, stick it there, the inside facing in. Then when it dries, it will just peel off itself. You store it away, and when you are ready to use it, you wet the shavings that you saved, and you pad them onto the fishskin on the outer side. Then you roll it and leave it until it dries. Then you shake it off. If you're going to dye it, you boil a solution of lichen or moss, and you cool it off and put your skin in there.

**JS:** Tell me about the different colors you get with the different materials.

**RB:** With lichen, it depends upon which kind you use. Rock lichen becomes green or blue. Moss lichen becomes kind of a yellowish, and wood lichen becomes a kind of grayish. Alder bark comes out kind of a rust color. We also use, I don't know what you call it, that blue rock for painting. They also used the red rock we have.

**JS:** Red ochre. Is the blue a clay or is it a rock?

**RB:** A rock. You chip it off. When it's on the ground, it's green, emerald green. And then when you chip it off and take it away, it turns blue. You mix it with seal oil or fish oil, or they also use blood.

**JS:** What about the mordants?

**RB:** Salt and urine.

**JS:** After they have gotten the skin off the fish and have taken care of the meat, are they going to work on the fishskin right away, or are they going to save the fishskin until winter when they have time to sew?

**RB:** After you peel the skin off and everything, you take care of the fish. After I process all of that fish, I don't have time to do the skin. I may make the skin for spring season because that's the rainy season. That's when you make the mukluks and the mittens. I have other things to do! I have to fish all summer and dry the fish and store it away. I have to go berry picking too, and then after berry picking, I go grass picking. The hunting season for the spring is in March, so I start my mukluks and mittens in about January or February.

**JS:** Then you have your furs and things to combine with your skins and you have time to work?

**RB:** Yes, we do it by seasons, two months ahead at a time. Like for winter use, fur seal, we start them in September.

**JS:** Rita, how exactly was the fishskin used as decoration?

**RB:** Cut up in strips or squares and used. For basketry, you use them like you use the seal gut. It's inserted into the rows of coils. You have to iron it out real good to make it flat. You try not to get it wet.

**JS:** How is it used on parkas?

**RB:** Some people use it when they are making tassels for the shoulder and arms. They are made of fishskin, bleached skin, tassels, and beads.

**JS:** Is the fishskin used mainly

for texture, not color?

**RB:** Yes, it usually is not dyed.

**JS:** What do they use today for dyes?

**RB:** Mainly Rit dye because it's easier and cheaper, and you get it all at once. You don't have to spend months gathering it. They used to use crepe paper, carbon paper, construction paper, Hershey bar wrappers, blue denim from jeans and any cloth that would fade.

**JS:** Rita, the elders were so resourceful with their use of natural materials, what did they think when the new modern materials came in?

**RB:** The elders I know like my grandmother and grandfather, they were so amazed when they first saw a funnel made out of tin, coming from the rock, and also iron pans making pancakes and making it (iron) into stoves and things like that. They said, "How did they do it. They made it into what we can use." And then when my mother first saw a plastic container, "How did they do that?" And the rock: glass, because this is what we used seal gut for, windows. When they saw that window made out of stone! It's no different from the resourceful way you are, the white people. The cloth from wool and the paper from wood!

## S E A L G U T

**JS:** Let's talk about the use of intestines, beginning with seal gut. Would you tell me about some of the articles of clothing and other things that were made from seal intestines?

**RB:** First of all, the raincoats called *immar enin*. And then the intestine's name: *qiluu*.

**JS:** Those raincoats are the forerunners of our waterproof nylon raincoats today, right?

**RB:** Yes. But most of the hunters just wear theirs for about two years. They wear out that quickly.

**JS:** What kinds of ornamentation would be added to the gut rain parkas from your area?

**RB:** Puffins' beaks hung along the shoulder and upper arm and around the wrists. That would be for the men's hunting coats, and I remember they would have feathers. They had the beaks for the reason that they would rattle and scare off the bad spirits from the hunt. They also used tails and fins on the hunting coats. For the ceremonial things, they'd have yarn tassels on the hood and shoulders. They would be red for suffering. Blood is for suffering. They also have everyday raincoats with nothing on them. For grass picking time, we would have those red tassels and trade beads and bird feathers on the coats. Women wear those fancy ones with trade beads and things on them. I had one when I was a little girl, but it didn't have trade beads.

**JS:** Describe your parka, would you?

**RB:** I had one which had seal esophagus around the hood where the drawstring goes. Instead of having grass welting around it, it had fishskin welting. The esophagus had the string in it, and the ends of the tube where the holes are would be for the string to come out.

**JS:** What was the string, sinew?

**RB:** Yes, braided sinew.

**JS:** What were the seams sewn with?

**RB:** I don't know a long time ago what they used; they probably used sinew. In my time, they use cotton because it doesn't unravel and it swells. Also along the seams, they use grass for welting, and it had to be picked only in the springtime. When it gets wet, it swells.

**JS:** When the gut gets wet, what happens to it?

**RB:** It gets so soft that it clings to you. It doesn't make your clothes wet though. The nylon, when it gets wet, it clings to you but your clothes get wet.

**JS:** When a hunter is going out in his kayak in his seal gut parka, how does he keep the spray out of the kayak?

**RB:** They tie the bottom of the parka, or the skirt, around the *qayaq* (kayak) hole. That's also done so when the *qayaq* flips, it rights itself. The hood also has a string around the face made of an esophagus. The mittens cover the sleeves of the parka at the wrists.

**JS:** How many of the cultures do you know use this kind of parka?

**RB:** The Aleuts do. They even use the gut for dresses. Their parkas had fur around them. I've seen the Siberian Yup'iks use the gut parkas but not the Inupiaq.

**JS:** Have you ever seen a fishskin parka out in your area of Nelson Island?

**RB:** Yes, and the people along the Kuskokwim and Lower Yukon made them, I think, a long time ago.

**JS:** Rita, tell me about the gut windows. And could you describe what the semisubterranean houses looked like and where these windows would be placed in them?

**RB:** Well, the house is three

sides or five sides, and it's dug down six feet, and it's lined with wood, and it's got beams. Then it's covered with moss and grass and the sod over, and then in the middle of the roof is the window. In my time, they started putting them off to the side because we didn't have stoves in the middle of our houses. I don't know why. The reason the windows were in the middle is that's where they used to cook, and the windows had to be taken off when they cooked to let the smoke out. I still saw that kind of window in the fifties in the camps, but not in the villages. The *qasgiq* (ceremonial house) used to have that kind of window all the time until they did away with them. It's made out of seal gut. Sometimes I think they have to use beluga intestine and walrus and black bearded seal and young black bearded seal. It's not made how you make a raincoat. The stitching is a little different. It overlaps, and it doesn't have the welting. It's a window, and it gets replaced all the time. Why should you sew it so it lasts, because the wind tears it, especially in my home because of where I come from. It's got two valleys, and it's windy all the time. And the window goes plip, plip, plip.

**JS:** Nice sound, huh?

**RB:** Yes, I liked it. I used to sleep at my grandma's house; I loved that window! My grandmother was very old-fashioned. I used to help my grandma at the camp make the windows. You make them horizontally or whatever, and you then put the esophagus of the seal around the outside of it to reinforce the gut. Then you put canvas on the outside

of that. Then you sandwich it between two wooden frames of driftwood. They would be about three feet by three feet. They would be sewn with the double plied thread unraveled from canvas cloth.

**JS:** What was the light like coming through that window?

**RB:** It's beautiful. When the sun hit it, there were nice colors in the house.

**JS:** Must be something like when you were riding down in the hold of the kayak looking through the *ugruk* skin at the waves.

**RB:** Yes, when I was a little girl, every spring we would go to our fish camp. It takes me forever to get there. The days were long. We didn't have time or clocks or anything. So we would get up early in the morning, get ready, put our stuff in the kayak. Then my stepfather and my mother and my brother, we'd get into the *qayaq* (kayak). I'd go in the rear with my dog, and my brother went in the front with his dog, and my mother sits in the rear, and the father is the one that paddles the kayak, so he sits in the front, and all day we go in the ocean. We always have the waves. The waves spray the kayak, and when the sun hits the drops of water running down the skin, it would make a rainbow of colors. I would lie on my back and sometimes sleep. That sound, it's so peaceful! I'm so fortunate, catching all those old ways like transportation in kayaks. If I didn't get it gradually, catching the tail end of the old ways and gradually getting into the new world, I think I would have been shocked. But I think everything has a reason to get it gradually. That's why most of

the people go crazy when they get into something new, just jump into it and grab onto it. They get sick from it.

**JS:** And how is the seal gut used for decorations on baskets?

**RB:** It's dyed and placed in strips. You sew a little on it, and then sew under, and then overlap, and then sew on it again. It comes out in little squares.

**JS:** Today, in 1987, when Yup'ik hunters go out after seal, are they wearing waterproof nylon and down and Gore-Tex and all of these new materials, or are there some people who still use the traditional clothing?

**RB:** Elders still wear the traditional raingear: fish boots or seal boots, waterproof boots, seal hats or wooden hats or whatever, and seal gut coats, and waterproof parkas. My brother (he's about fifty-two or fifty-three years old) prefers raingear and waterproof mukluks made out of sealskin. I asked him, "Why do you like to wear those still?" He said he doesn't have to fumble with buttons or snaps, and when he goes into the mud, rubber boots suck him down, but when he wears the regular things, "I go through mud just like there's nothing on. They don't suck my feet."

**JS:** Let's picture your brother when he goes out hunting. Describe what his outfit looks like.

**RB:** Sealskin boots with *ugruk* soles that were waterproof. Harbor seal or hair seal for mukluks; they don't shrink or stretch. His pants are made out of fishskin, king salmon fishskin. The sealskin boots with *ugruk* soles were waterproof. They were made out of

the poke seal, the one used to store the seal oil under the ground in a cache. When the oil is gone, they prepare this skin, which is harbor seal or hair seal. It doesn't wear out fast. His pants are made out of king salmon fishskin. He wears jeans or something under there for protection. Under his seal gut raincoat he wears a down parka or something. The hood of the seal gut parka covers his head. In winter hunting, he's got a different outfit. He has wolf leggings for his boots. They're not like pants; they have a tie to the waist. He would have a fur or a canvas parka over it, and he has a knitted cap.

**JS:** So the skin and gut are basically for summer wear?

**RB:** Yes, there's a lot of reasons for this kind of clothing. In springtime, if you go through the ice, you can float. Also in summertime, you float better in the ocean or in a river. For instance, if you wear hip boots, your hip boots fill up with water, and they can't slip out. Using the sealskin waterproof boots, they may fill up, but they're not as heavy as the rubber boots. And the same thing with the seal gut parka; you can float.

**JS:** Let's go through the whole process of obtaining seal gut, curing it, bleaching it, and dyeing it.

**RB:** When you open the seal, you take the membrane out; it's in a coil. You get it home, and what a woman does first, she cleans the inside. She fills it with water and squeezes it out by hand. (The gut is inside the intestine.) Then she fills it with water and washes it again. Then after they wash it real good, they take the outer

part off. There's a thick layer of it. This part you use for eating. Then you work on the gut. (That's the very last thing you do about the seal for clothing.) Then after you scrape it with a clam shell, you soak it in urine overnight. Then you take it out and rinse it again, and you put it in a soap solution. In my time, we used Naptha. And you rinse it out in the water, fill it with water, and clean it real good. And then, when you're ready for it, two or three women and girls go outside when it's not windy, but breezy and sunshiny and go to the fish rack where you're going to hang it, and you blow into it with air. And then you stretch it out and wrap it on those fish racks, and then you dry it that way, or you do it in a long strip.

**JS:** You blow it up and seal off the air so it's like a long balloon?

**RB:** Yes. And then you leave it there until it dries, and then you cut the ends off. And you let the air out, and you fold it in the middle, and you cut it open along the fold on the top side and roll it when it dries. If you're going to bleach it, you leave it whole. You put it into the salt water, and then you take it out into the wind and that's how you bleach it.

**JS:** How long would you leave it out in the wind?

**RB:** About two days and two nights. It turns out off-white. Then you roll it. That's how you store it.

**JS:** If you decide to dye it, do you use the bleached or unbleached?

**RB:** It doesn't matter, but it will be a different color. When you dye it, you can either cut it into pieces or dye a whole roll at a time. You boil some

solution, and you put it into the solution when it's cool.

**JS:** What are the natural dyes used for dyeing the gut?

**RB:** Well, when my mom dyed gut for use on baskets or wetting for the fishskin bags, she used alder bark, lichen of all kinds, moss, and berries. She got all these different kinds of things, and she cut the gut up into even lengths. She has all these solutions in coffee cans. She'd put the gut in there, and when she got her desired color, she takes it out, hangs it up, and when it dries, she folds it up.

**JS:** What kind of mordant is used?

**RB:** Urine and salt. She puts the urine, little bit, in the color and the salt in when it's boiling. She would use either one or the other. With berries, she used mostly urine because it sets better.

**JS:** Starting with the dyes from moss and lichens, would you name the range of colors you've seen gut dyed in?

**RB:** Moss is yellowish-orangish. With lichen, it depends upon where it comes from, like with the fishskin dyeing. Alder bark is rust. The cranberries give red; only you've got to use low bush cranberries and pick them after it freezes hard. High bush (cranberries) give you a pink color. Blueberries give blue color. Blackberries give you a bluish-black. The colors come out very different on the gut from how they do on the grass. It's faster color, it takes much less time, and you color the gut when it's cold (the dye bath). The grass you color when it's hot (the dye bath).

**JS:** Do you use salmonberries?

**RB:** No, I always asked my

mother, "Why don't you use salmonberries?" she says, "Why waste the berries?" That's a good reason.

**JS:** It sure is. How do you get green?

**RB:** Green is from the algae from the ponds.

**JS:** Let's talk about the significance of the colors. You described that for the colors on a large woman's basket you did recently for an exhibit.

**RB:** Well, on a woman's basket, the darks, blacks and browns, signify a woman's work, which is preparing the food: meat, drying it, cooking it, storing it away. The green signifies the vegetables, the greens that you pick, whether it is *ikiu tuk* (wild celery), *quageciq* (sour dock), or *itegar alek* (beach greens). These are the foods. It also goes for the green grass, all kinds of grasses, whether for your feet, for your baskets, for storing your food. And these are the marsh grass, beach grass, and land grass. The blue and the red stands for the berries, all kinds of berries. And the pink, sort of rose color, stands for fish. That's what she stores and prepares. It's only on those women's baskets. They are for mementos. The cover of the basket is filled with seashells, rocks, whatever. Whenever you open the basket, it rattles. That basket is also called a "thief's basket." If somebody gets into it, you hear it. Inside are first things that go in there, and next to those are your grandmother's or mother's things too. The first thing that goes in is the umbilical cord of the firstborn child. The cuttings of the hair, toenails, and fingernails, and the first tooth that comes out goes in there (fairy don't get

that). And then, if it's a boy, first catch. If it's a bird, feathers go in there, if a seal, the nails of the seal. If the firstborn is a girl, all of her things go in there.

**JS:** It's a history basket, isn't it? Would this then be passed on to a daughter?

**RB:** Yes, it's a history basket. It goes to the firstborn daughter, and if they don't have a daughter, it goes to the first granddaughter. I have my great-great-grandmother's nails, hair, and umbilical cord. And my great-grandmother's, same thing. And my grandmother's and my mother's and mine are in there, and it goes to my daughter.

**JS:** Getting back to the intestine work we've been talking about, we've discussed the uses of the gut from the black bearded seal only. Let's talk about some of the uses of the intestines from other kinds of seals and from other animals.

**RB:** Sea lion gut is much thinner and transparent, and it's narrower. It's about three inches wide, whereas the black bearded seal's is about four inches wide. They used it mostly for dresses. I heard about it a long time ago, but I never did actually see one. I did see one in Aleut style though. What a work! I mean the stitching!

**JS:** How is the Aleut different from the Yup'ik?

**RB:** I think the Aleuts are more patient.

**JS:** Finer stitches?

**RB:** Finer work. Everything they do is fine. I noticed that.

**JS:** What about walrus and beluga?

**RB:** Walrus, they use for windows because it's tough, and they also use it for tarps. They sewed it with grass and seal

esophagus welting in between. Imagine the intestine of a big mammal like the beluga!

Guess what—it's not as wide as *ugruk* (black bearded seal). But it's tougher, and when you tan it, it comes out a little different. It's not transparent; it's white like cloth. They use it mostly for trimming like the tops of mukluks. They also use it for fringes, which symbolize the future generations.

**JS:** Rita, I feel like I've been privileged to take a trip back in time with you to the village of Tununak, to a time when life was so closely linked to the land that it was hard to separate the two. I feel the peace of that time and the tremendous harmony that comes from respecting nature.

**RB:** From the beginning to the end of our work together on this project, it brought back good memories, making me realize the hard work my ancestors did and the great respect that they had for the animals. They did not have the benefit of the modern tools we have today, and I want our future generations to learn and appreciate what our ancestors did. I want the youth to work hard for their education because that is the tool they need for today.

By John J. Burns,  
A Marine Mammals Biologist

*This response is based on a series of questions posed by Pat Hickman to John Burns.*

*John J. Burns did graduate work at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. His thesis study was in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, 1960-62. He has been with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1962-86, and is now in private business in Fairbanks, still studying marine mammals. John's specialty is Arctic marine mammals, subsistence use of same, and the ecology of seasonally ice-covered, northern seas. He has a close affiliation with the University of Alaska Museum.*

Identifying the kind of gut used in a gut parka involves three things: a knowledge of the characteristics of gut from different animals, some knowledge of the animals available at the different villages where the manufactured items were obtained, and preferences of use by the local people. Proper identifications are sometimes very difficult because there is overlap in the dimensions of gut strips from some animals (i. e., I cannot differentiate among gut "tubes" from ringed,

spotted, and ribbon seals). However, I was often told of the strong preference, in the Bering Strait region, for ringed seal gut over the other two and for bearded seal gut over that of all the other seals. In the regions occupied by the Aleuts, the preference was for gut from sea lions. At the walrus hunting villages, utility garments such as rain parkas and the waterproof garments used by kayakers were made from walruses, whereas fancier garments were made from bearded or ringed seals because of the greater frequency of contrasting colors. Very fancy items are the hardest to identify with certainty, because these were often traded and/or included delicately sewn small pieces originally acquired through trade. Items bartered at the traditional trade festivals (held at many locations, but especially near present-day Port Clarence and Kotzebue) resulted in inlanders acquiring items of

marine origin and vice versa.

In collections, Aleut items labeled "bear" are a bit troublesome. Brown bears can be discounted as the animal of origin for items that came from villages west of Unimak Island, as bears do not occur beyond that island. However, brown bears do occur throughout most of the remainder of the region occupied by the Aleuts. "Bear" could be a reference to the sea bear, which was a common way of referring to fur seals, especially by the early Russians. If the items came from the Alaska Peninsula or Kodiak Island, they could well be made from bear gut. I know that small sacks, used to store or carry talismans, charms, personal amulets, etc., were sometimes made from the gall bladder or urinary bladder of bears.

I know the Nunamuit (inland Eskimos) used caribou gut. I have heard that they often traded for marine mam-

mal gut and sinew when they could. I have seen walrus and belukha (beluga) stomachs prepared and inflated to dry. I have seen both used as storage containers. Both are also used as drum heads (*fig. 32*). Unlike gut, which is very easy to open along a naturally occurring line and has long continuous pieces, stomachs are irregular ovals. I was told that the sack around the heart of both walruses and bowhead whales was also used to make storage containers. Stomach material is definitely thicker and less pliable than intestine, and is easily torn along wrinkles and folds.

Both the small and large intestines were used, especially from bearded seals and walruses. On the whole animal one can tell the difference between the two. With prepared membrane, I cannot distinguish between them, except on the basis of width of the strips. I think preference of one over another is largely a matter of availability and style. There is far more small than large intestine in each animal. As examples, the mean lengths of small intestines from walruses and bearded seals were 1600 inches and 845 inches, respectively; large intestines were 254 inches and 121 inches.

The darker coloration on either side of the creamy center is from that portion of the intestine tube to which the mesentery, with its heavy vascularization, is attached. The mesentery occurs along the entire length of the intestine. It is sort of the dorsal midline of the intestinal tube. Usually the tube is slit along this dorsal midline because it presents a natural "crease"

along which to cut. The flattened, cut section produced shows a narrow dark band, then a broad light band and another narrow dark band. The dark coloration is from blood in the vessels of the intestine. Depending on the wishes of the person who did the preparation, the dark coloration can be bleached out by prolonged exposure in cold weather, or it can be retained. I presume that material maintained in collections for a long time would lose color—the creamy white becoming yellow and the transparent blue-grey also tending toward yellowish.

The very white garments of St. Lawrence Island could be made elsewhere and by the same methods of winter exposure and preparation with urine. Most of the very white garments I saw in the past were decorated with dark tassels, strips of fur, parts of bird beaks, or other items (referring to St. Lawrence). I have not seen such white garments elsewhere and have been told by the Diomeders that they were for show and did not stand up too well because all of the oil had been removed. I think the very white garments are a matter of local style. I have never seen one on a man from St. Lawrence Island, except at a traditional dance or celebration.

As stated above, urine was usually used in preparing gut and bleached skins. Under some circumstances, soot or ash was also used, as was blood. At different stages the gut was repeatedly washed in salt water. The inflated tubes were hung to dry after the processes of partial autolysis and soaking were completed. The intestine has to decom-

pose to the point that the membranes could be separated. The drying process depended on temperature, wind, and desired extent of bleaching. It also depended on how soon the material was to be used. My experience on this point is from Diomed and King islands, and not from St. Lawrence. On those islands I have seen the tubes partially dried indoors for two days and then outside for one. At Buckland I saw a belukha whale stomach drying for three days, and at King Island I saw walrus stomachs put out for parts of three consecutive days. When I asked how long it took, the answer was always something to the effect that "it depends." I guess that means there is no absolute, fixed period.

Any suitable-sized piece (length) of gut was usable for a thermos. Bearded seal was the common type used in the Bering Strait region. Windows were made of stomach on Diomed and of intestine or stomach on King Island. I do not know about St. Lawrence Island, because the traditional houses were gone by the time I came on the scene. Interestingly, on Diomed, houses were semisubterranean with the "window" in the roof. On King Island the houses were above ground, with windows in the walls. From what I surmised, stomach was better window material because it was less flexible and did not flap and rattle so much in the wind. Also, it did not sag quite as much when wet.

Traditionally, bladders were inflated, dried, and saved for the annual so-called "bladder feast," when each hunter released the bladders of all the animals he had

caught during the year. The soul or spirit of an animal was contained in the bladder. By releasing the bladders, the spirits of the animals would be free to return to others of their kind in the world of the living. They would inform the other animals about how careful the hunter and his family were in abiding by all the rules and taboos, and how careful they were in the treatment, processing, storage, and use of all the things a particular animal provides to man. A hunter does not really catch an animal; rather, the animal gives itself to a hunter. If the hunter pleases the animal spirit, the spirit conveys the notion that other animals



*Figure 32. Stretching a stomach membrane for a drum head. Division of Tourism Collection. Courtesy of the Alaska Historical Library.*

of this type should also give themselves to a particular hunter and his family. There is fascinating power attached to this, especially when a man becomes a very successful hunter of whales or of polar bears. Some animals and their spirits are not to be touched. These may include types such as the killer whale in the Bering Strait or shrews by the King Islanders.

One can easily distinguish between urinary bladders and stomachs when they are inflated. One is almost a sphere with a single opening; the other is elongate to recurved, with two openings. The gall bladders are small, thick-walled, elongated sacks with a single opening. There is indeed a great difference in size and shape of stomachs from different animals.

Regarding the use of fishskin, my impression is that it was used when and where gut was not easily available. I saw fishskin garments, mainly footgear, made by the Yup'ik Eskimos of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in the early 1960s. Salmon skins were used along the two main rivers and pike skins by people from the tundra villages. I know nothing about the waterproof garments of the Athabascans, except that in the transition areas where the two were in contact, they both used the same things.

Blood, urine, and oils were used to cure skins for footgear. However, traditionally, one could not mix the products of creatures from the different biospheres. One did not put seal blood on fishskins from fresh water rivers or lakes, nor sew seal skins with caribou sinew, etc. One did

not traditionally mix foods from the different biospheres either. They (at least the Eskimos with whom I am familiar) could combine products of the sea at a meal, such as tomcod, crab, walrus, and auklet, but could not also include reindeer, caribou, etc. There were also some seasonal restrictions of diet and dress, as well as situational restrictions. Almost all of these practices are things of the past.

There are no federal or state restrictions on the use of marine mammal products "by Eskimos, Indians or Aleuts residing on the coast of the North Pacific ocean" if such use is for the purposes of subsistence or for the creation of "authentic articles of Native handicraft." Natives can sell such products. There are restrictions on barter and commerce, with non-natives, of unprocessed items such as raw seal skins, raw ivory, unaltered baleen, etc. My interpretation of the restrictions is that a person certainly can acquire articles made out of gut. Because gut, bladder, and stomach material that has been prepared for use is certainly already processed, it is an item of legal commerce. However, one will not find much of it around.

By Alice R. Hoveman

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The preservation of museum artifacts is based on physical, chemical, and ethical considerations. Determining an appropriate treatment to preserve not only the physical condition of an object, but the integrity of it as well, is influenced by an exact knowledge of how it was made and used, what its present condition is, and what factors cause it to deteriorate. This information is not always readily available. Though presently incomplete, the conservation literature

exploring the preservation and deterioration of leather and similar materials like fishskin and gut is growing.<sup>1</sup>

In my experience, some 100- and 200-year-old gut artifacts are in excellent condition, appearing light in color, translucent or opaque, depending upon processing, relatively flexible and strong. Possibly these artifacts were not heavily used for more than ceremonial occasions, so they may not have needed the application of oils. Artifacts in a weakened state often appear dark yellow or even an opaque brown, perhaps from the oxidation of oil dressings from past use. Regardless, most fishskin and gut artifacts are stiff and fragile in their dry state. Insect infestation and improper or rough handling have taken the largest toll on the condition of collections of this kind.

In caring for these artifacts, museum conservators generally categorize them with ones

made of skin and apply what is known of leather chemistry and technology to their preservation. But the structure and chemistry of these thin membranes are not exactly the same, and too little research has been focused on the difference. Often the reason for treating gut has been to make the material supple and therefore somehow safer to handle and to preserve. Until such time as the causes of embrittlement of the material are fully understood, and until we know whether a specific coating will or will not counteract these causes, gut and fishskin collections will be better preserved and more easily chemically analyzed if lubrication for the sake of suppleness is not attempted.

In the meantime, the preservation of gut and fishskin artifacts centers largely on avoiding harmful or damaging effects that cause deterioration to most organic materials such as excesses in heat (causing

skin's collagenous fibers to shrink), excesses in moisture (causing swelling of the fibers), combinations of heat and moisture (encouraging mold growth and eventually causing the skin fibers to dissolve), attack by insects, and attack by alkalis or acids. Damage caused by these conditions is irreversible.<sup>2</sup>

My best advice on preserving fishskin and gut objects is to avoid these harmful factors. Keep skin and gut objects away from extreme heat from radiators, heat pipes, sunlight, or lamps. Provide ventilation to minimize growth of microorganisms or mold. Stuff objects gently with soft, acid-free paper, plastics, or fabrics to retain or regain their shape. Provide adequate support for any object on display or in storage, and most of all, handle these objects with extreme care.

<sup>1</sup>Bibliography from the Workshop on Preservation of Semi-tanned Leathers, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1986.

<sup>2</sup>Alice Hoveman, *Conservation Wise-Guide*, Alaska State Museum, 1985.



Figure 33. Doll wearing seal intestine parka. *Rosalie Paniyak*.

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OBJECT LIST: TRADITIONAL PIECES

1. Gut Parka, Aleut  
Late 19th century, 44" x 32"  
California Academy of Sciences,  
San Francisco  
No. 146-19  
Seal or Walrus Intestine
2. Gut Parka, Inupiaq  
47" x 57" (sleeves extended)  
Alaska State Museum, Juneau  
No. II-A-5805  
Intestine, Seal Fur
3. Gut Parka, Siberian Yup'ik  
48" x 54" (sleeves extended)  
Alaska State Museum, Juneau  
No. II-F-274  
Winter Tanned Intestine, Hair  
Seal, Fur Seal Tassles, Red Fabric
4. Gut Parka, Inupiaq (?)  
48" x 32" (approx.)  
Anchorage Museum of History  
and Art  
Gift of Elizabeth Cole Butler  
No. 83.153.102  
Intestine, Seal Skin
5. Roll of prepared Seal Gut  
10" x 4" x 4" (approx.)  
R. H. Lowie Museum of  
Anthropology, Berkeley  
Gift of Alaska Commercial Co.  
No. 2-6541
6. Polar Bear Intestine  
1891, 18" x 10" (diam.)  
Point Hope, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.K.285
7. Intestine Scraper  
1890, 4½" x 2½"  
Point Hope, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.K.188  
Bone
8. Intestine Scraper  
1890, 3¼" x 4½"  
Point Hope, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.K.189  
Bone
9. Gut Cover  
78" x 60"  
Anchorage Museum of History  
and Art  
No. 78.30.53  
Seal Intestine, Seal Hide, Leather  
Grommets, String
10. Gut Window with Seal Skin Border,  
Yup'ik  
1980, 27" x 24½"; 1½"  
Kotzebue, Alaska  
Alaska State Museum, Juneau  
No. II.A.2279
11. Gut Bag, Siberian Yup'ik (?)  
19th century, 6½" x 3½" x 2½"  
Anchorage Museum of History  
and Art  
No. 81.7.2  
Commercial Twine, Cloth, Seal  
Hide, Intestine, Sinew,  
Commercial Thread
12. Bag with Gut Parka inside, Yup'ik  
Late 19th, early 20th Century,  
15" x 8"  
Anchorage Museum of History  
and Art  
Gift of Elizabeth Cole Butler  
No. 83.153.12  
Intestine, Mattress Ticking,  
Ribbon, String
13. Gut Container, Aleut  
1892, 6" x 6" (diam.)  
Attu Island, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. III.B.2a,b  
Seal Intestine, Cloth, Dyed Skin
14. Gut Wall Pocket, Aleut  
8½" x 11½"  
Alaska State Museum, Juneau  
No. II.F.331  
Intestine, Feather Down, Dyed  
Gut, Cotton Muslin
15. Gut Bag, Athabaskan  
1971, 7½" x 7½"  
Alaska State Museum, Juneau  
No. II.C.120  
Moose Bladder, Tanned Moose  
Hide, Rawhide,  
Felt, Thread
16. Gut Panels, Aleut (?)  
1915-22; 1921, 11½" x 5½"  
Port Moller or Hereneen Bay,  
Alaska  
Alaska State Museum, Juneau  
No. II.A.2497a,b  
Intestine, White Muslin,  
Embroidery Thread
17. Game, Inupiaq  
1968, Bag: 8½" x 5"  
Point Hope, Alaska  
University of Alaska Museum,  
Fairbanks  
No. UA68-3-10  
Seal Bones, Intestine, Sinew
18. Gut Bag with Ivory Stopper,  
Inupiaq  
10½" x 6" (approx.)  
King Island, Alaska  
Alaska State Museum, Juneau  
No. IIA4370  
Intestine, Ivory, Wood, Thong
19. Flat Pouch, Siberian Yup'ik  
3½" x 5½"  
St. Lawrence Island, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.Z.4  
Intestine, Seal Skin
20. Gut Bag, Tlingit  
8¼" x 9½"  
Collection of Irene Shuler  
Intestine, Beads
21. Bag, Aleut  
1940s (approx.), 9" x 11" x 8"  
Collection of Marjorie S. Patterson  
in memory of Robert (Pat) Patterson  
Intestine, Natural and Dyed Grass,  
Yarn, Cloth, Embroidery Thread,  
Feathers
22. Bidarka Model, Aleut  
14" x 4" x 4" (approx.)  
Alaska State Museum, Juneau  
No. II.F.309  
Intestine, Wood, Mixed Materials
23. Gut Parka, Siberian Yup'ik  
Prior to 1972, 44" x 32" (approx.)  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
Intestine, Cotton Cloth
24. Basket, Yup'ik  
1984, 12" x 8" (diam. approx.)  
Lena Atti, Kwigillingok, Alaska  
Private Collection  
Rye Grass, Dyed Intestine
25. Basket, Yup'ik  
5½" x 7" (diam.)  
Kipnuk, Alaska  
Collection of Ethel M. Montgomery  
Beach Grass, Dyed Seal Intestine,  
Seal Skin Handle
26. Basket, Yup'ik  
1987, 5" x 5" (diam.)  
Rita Pitka Blumenstein  
Palmer, Alaska  
Rye Grass, Dyed Seal Intestine
27. Fishskin Trousers, *irruclik*, Yup'ik  
(on exhibit in San Francisco)  
40" x 16" x 10" (approx.)  
Lower Yukon Delta, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.H.16  
Fishskin, Dyed Seal Skin
28. Fishskin Parka, Yup'ik  
(on exhibit in San Francisco)  
44" x 55" (approx.)  
Lower Yukon Delta, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.H.15  
Fishskin, Seal Throat
29. Winter Tanned Gut Bundle,  
Siberian Yup'ik  
26" x 8" x 2" (approx.)  
St. Lawrence Island, Alaska  
Heritage Museum, Anchorage  
No. 130138  
Walrus Intestine
30. Fishskin Parka, Yup'ik  
35" x 21"  
Lower Yukon Delta, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.H.73  
Salmon Skin

31. Gut/Fishskin Parka, Inupiaq  
1890, 38" x 42"  
Pt. Barrow, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.V.9  
Walrus Intestine, Seal Skin, Swan's Feet, Fishskin
32. Fishskin Parka, Model,  
Woman's Style, Yup'ik  
18½" x 17"  
Lower Yukon or NW Bering Sea  
Region  
R. H. Lowie Museum of  
Anthropology, Berkeley  
Collected by Charles L. Hall  
No. 2-2851  
Fishskin, Fur Trim
33. Child's Fishskin Coat, Yup'ik  
25" x 38"  
Lower Yukon River, Alaska  
R. H. Lowie Museum of  
Anthropology, Berkeley  
Donor: Dr. H. M. W. Edmonds  
No. 2-6905
34. Fishskin gloves, *aigak*, Yup'ik  
10" x 4"  
Lower Yukon Delta, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.H.82a,b  
Salmon Skin
35. Fishskin Mittens, *alimatek*, Yup'ik  
6½" x 4"  
Lower Yukon or Kuskokwim,  
Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.H.19a,b  
Salmon Skin, Dyed Seal (?) Skin
36. Fishskin Boots, *amiriik*, Yup'ik  
1973, 18" x 4¼" x 11½"  
Mary Moon Wassilie  
Tuntutuliak, Alaska  
Anchorage Museum of History  
and Art  
No. 73.45.1a,b  
Salmon Skin, Seal Skin, Red Fox,  
Cotton Thread, Nylon Cord, Grass,  
Blue Denim
37. Girl's Fishskin Boots, Yup'ik  
12" x 5" x 6" (approx.)  
Moravian Historical Society,  
Nazareth
38. Boots, *aliqsak*, Yup'ik  
9" x 9¼"  
Lower Yukon Delta, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.H.88a,b  
Fishskin, Skin, Sinew
39. Storage Bag, *kelarvik*, Yup'ik  
16" x 10" x 2"  
Lower Yukon or Kuskokwim Delta,  
Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.H.18  
Natural and Dyed Salmon Skin
40. "Housewife" and Fastener  
9½" x 2¼"  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. IIX22a,b  
Fishskin, Intestine, Sewing  
Thread, Ivory Fastener, Seal Skin,  
Cloth
41. "Housewife," *kakivik*, Yup'ik  
19" x 10" x 6"  
Lower Yukon Delta, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.H.94  
Salmon Skin, Seal Skin, Brown  
Thread, Caribou (?) Skin, Seal Hair
42. Ball  
7" x 5½" (diam.)  
Alaska State Museum, Juneau  
No. II.A.6881  
Salmon Skin, Tanned Leather
43. Bag, Fragment  
13" x 9"  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.X.596  
Fishskin, Intestine
44. Fishskin Hood, *yuraryaraq*, Yup'ik  
25" x 17" x 10" (approx.)  
Nushagak, Alaska  
Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka  
No. II.A.17  
Salmon Skin
45. Pike Skin Sample  
16" x 8" (approx.)  
Yugtarvik Museum, Bethel
46. Sheefish (Cuiret) Skin Sample  
16" x 8" (approx.)  
Yugtarvik Museum, Bethel
47. Malignat Lush Skin Sample  
16" x 8" (approx.)  
Yugtarvik Museum, Bethel
48. Akakik Whitefish Skin Sample  
16" x 8" (approx.)  
Yugtarvik Museum, Bethel
49. Fishskin Pouch with Ivory Dolls,  
Yup'ik  
9" x 9" x 7" (approx.)  
Yugtarvik Museum, Bethel  
Fishskin, Ivory, Cloth, Fur, Grass
50. Fishskin Backpack, Yup'ik  
18" x 10" (approx.)  
Yugtarvik Museum, Bethel  
Fishskin, Cloth
51. Fishskin Bag, Athabaskan  
1986, 16" x 12"  
Louise Peter, Ft. Yukon, Alaska  
Fishskin, Tanned Moosehide,  
Velvet
52. Doll, Cupik  
1982, 17" x 14" x 6"  
Rosalie Paniyak, Chevak, Alaska  
Collection of Suzi Jones  
Seal Intestine, Seal Skin Face,  
Beach Grass, Blue Glass Marbles,  
Cloth
53. Boy's Drum and Drumstick  
Drum: 18" x 10½" x 2½"  
Stick: 16" x 1½"  
Mekoryuk, Memvak Island, Alaska  
Collected by Margaret Lantis, 1940  
R. H. Lowie Museum of  
Anthropology, Berkeley  
No. 2-16732a,b  
Wood, Gut Membrane, Cotton  
String
54. *Window to the Spirit World*, Yup'ik  
1987, 10" x 12"  
Chuna McIntyre, Eek, Alaska  
Summer-dried Seal Intestine,  
Tundra Grass, Caribou Sinew,  
Red-earth Dye
55. Walrus Stomach  
35" x 15½"  
Gift of Anchorage Museum of  
History and Art

- For the juried and invitational part of this exhibit, there were 184 entries submitted by 63 individual artists from across North America; a total of 41 pieces by 26 artists was accepted.
- Anderson, Danae  
*Fata Morgana IV*, 1986  
60" x 24" x 6"; 48" x 30" x 6"  
Paper, Resin
  - Bartow, Rick  
*Honoring Tradition III*, 1986  
30" x 22"  
Courtesy of Jamison/Thomas Gallery  
Portland, Oregon  
Pastel on Paper
  - Bartow, Rick  
*Traditional Loss/Gain*, 1986  
30" x 22"  
Courtesy of Jamison/Thomas Gallery  
Portland, Oregon  
Pastel on Paper
  - Bowen, Gaza  
*Pas de Deux*, 1987  
18½" x 17½" x 12"  
Rawhide, Gut, Acrylic Paint, Plexiglas
  - Burtner, Judith W.  
*Kakivik*, 1985  
Folding Sewing Kit  
10" x 8"  
Red Salmon Skin with Caribou Antler Button
  - Christen, Margarithe  
*Legende*, 1986  
13¾" x 11¼" x 8¼"  
Mixed Materials
  - Cumberledge, Sherry  
*Algae*, 1986  
36" x 40"  
Handmade Abaca Paper, Paint
  - Elliott, Lillian/Hickman, Pat  
*Glacier*, 1987  
24" x 26" x 22"  
Mixed Materials
  - Gray, Jane  
*Can the Fishes See It Snowing?*, 1986  
12" x 9" x 4"  
Paper, Fishskin, Wood, Twine, Handmade Linen Paper
  - Gray, Jane  
*Gut Cradle*, 1983  
33" x 23" x 10"  
Collection of Isabel Griffith  
Paper, Garden Hose, Wire, Rhoplex, Twine
  - Hanson-Spofford, Mary  
*Burden Series/The Sorrows Quiet Defense*, 1984  
36" x 18" (diam.)  
Gut, Willow, Gauze, Bone, Quills, Rhoplex, Paint, Thread
  - Hanson-Spofford, Mary  
*Burden Series/The Sorrows Silenced*, 1984  
40" x 13" (diam.)  
Gut, Willow, Gauze, Rhoplex, Paper, Ink, Thread
  - Holmes, Mimi  
*Altar (Not) Box for a Shattered Self*, 1982  
7½" x 5" x 4½"  
Gut, Wire, Thread, Beads
  - Iwata, Kiyomi  
*Layer Six*, 1979  
22" x 22" x 5"  
Dyed Silk Broadcloth and Organza, Gold and Silk Threads
  - Kamrar, Preston  
*Salmon Dancing*, 1987  
Shaman's Mask  
15" x 20"  
Earthenware Clay, Raku
  - Kennedy, Margo Fagan  
*Montage*, 1987  
Individual pieces, 22½" x 33"  
Dyed Reed, Raffia, Waxed Linen, Cotton Thread, Beef Intestine
  - Kennedy, Margo Fagan  
*The Tower*, 1987  
19½" x 19" (circum.)  
Dyed Reed, Raffia, Waxed Linen, Cotton Thread, Beef Intestine
  - Lammers, Lebeth  
*Kite Form #1*, 1985  
39" x 30" x 8"  
Fishskin/Mixed Materials Collage
  - Lawrence, Jaye  
*Five Figures*, 1985  
16½" x 22" x 9"  
Gut, Rawhide, Sticks
  - Lindbergh, Susie  
*Feather of Swan Spirit Vessel*, 1986  
6½" x 9" (diam.)  
Gut, Swan Feathers
  - Lindbergh, Susie  
*50th Birthday Crown and Collar*, 1987  
Crown: 13½" x 7" (diam.)  
Collar: 4" x 9" (diam.)  
Knitted Hog Gut
  - Moe, Allen  
*Pot*, 1987  
6½" x 9" (diam.)  
Clay, Halibut Skin, Caribou Skin, Sinew
  - Moe, Allen  
*Pot*, 1987  
6" x 8½" (diam.)  
Clay, Norwegian King Salmon Skin, Caribou Skin, Sinew
  - Moe, Allen  
*Pot*, 1987  
4½" x 7" (diam.)  
Clay, Big Eye Tuna Fins, Raccoon Skin
  - Moe, Allen/Johnson, Bruce  
*Screen*, 1987  
74½" x 28" x 29"  
Ash, Pacific Rock Cod, Norwegian Salmon, Dental Floss Dyed in Tan Oak Bark, Mule Deer
  - Moulton, Peggy  
*Basket*, 1987  
17" x 7" (diam.)  
Eucalyptus Bark, Gut
  - Moulton, Peggy  
*Jelly Fish Skin Bowl*, 1987  
3" x 7" (diam.)  
Jelly Fish Skins
  - Moulton, Peggy  
*Basket of Gut, Plaited and Tied*, 1987  
12" x 6½" (diam.)  
Gut, Waxed Linen, Felt Pen
  - Norberg, Marion  
*Goody Two Shoes*, 1987  
11" x 3¼" x 2" each  
Hog Casings, Ink, Floss
  - Norberg, Marion  
*Second Hand Rose*, 1987  
7" x 13½" (diam.)  
Gut, Fiber Reactive Dyes, Colored Ink, Hat Band Dye from Black Rice
  - Parker, Gertrud  
*Black Writing*, 1986  
33" x 46"  
Natural Dyed Gut, Linen, Wool, Fiberglass
  - Pladsen, Karen  
*Salmon Run*, 1985  
72" x 42" x 2"  
Xeroxed Image on Paper
  - Pladsen, Karen  
*Skraeling Kamiks*, 1985  
24" x 12" x 12"  
Silk Fabric, Tie Dyed, Silkscreened

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34. Pladsen, Karen  
*Wrigleys' Cache*, 1985  
18" x 28" x 18"  
Foil Gum Wrappers, Acrylic
  35. Prier, Carol Molly  
*Boat of Prayers*, 1987  
3" x 23" x 9"  
Bamboo, Chinese Prayer Paper
  36. Reed, Fran  
*Alaskan Wailing Cap*, 1987  
26" x 15" x 7½"  
Coconut, Salmon Skin, Baleen,  
Sinew
  37. Shapiro, Manya  
*Reliquary (Nuclear Age)*, 1987  
17" x 13" x 5"  
Gut, Wood, Glass, Paper
  38. Simons, Sheri  
*Untitled Vacuum*, 1985  
36" x 12" x 21"  
Steel, Rubber, Cow Gut
  39. Vanbianchi, Peggy/  
Standley, Emily  
*Seri Shirt*, 1985  
41" x 47"  
Gut/Mixed Media
  40. Vanbianchi/Standley  
*Ghost Dance Memory*, 1987  
52" x 30"  
Gut/Mixed Media
  41. Vanbianchi/Standley  
*Sister*, 1987  
48" x 21"  
Gut/Mixed Media

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

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*Alaska State Museum, Juneau*

*Anchorage Museum of History and Art, Alaska*

*California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco*

*Heritage Museum, Anchorage, Alaska*

*Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, Oregon*

*Moravian Historical Society, Nazareth, Pennsylvania*

*R. H. Lowie Museum of Anthropology, Berkeley, California*

*Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka, Alaska*

*University of Alaska Museum, Fairbanks*

*Yugtarnvik Museum, Bethel, Alaska*

*Patricia Bulitt*

*Isabel Griffith*

*Individual Artists*

*Suzi Jones*

*Ethel M. Montgomery*

*Marjorie S. Patterson*

*Irene Shuler*

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*Figure 10:* Courtesy of the Alaska Historical Library.

*Figure 11:* James H. Barker.

*Figure 12:* Robert W. Stevens.

*Figure 14:* James H. Barker.

*Figure 15:* Courtesy of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art.

*Figure 16:* David Backus, Courtesy of the Institute of Alaska Native Arts.

*Figure 17:* Karen Pladsen.

*Figure 18:* Courtesy of Margo Fagan Kennedy.

*Figure 19:* Robert Gray.

*Figure 20:* John Schulman.

*Figure 21:* Sheri Simons.

*Figures 22 and 23:* Pat Hickman.

*Figure 24:* Karen Pladsen.

*Figure 25:* Bill Bachhuber.

*Figure 26:* Pat Hickman.

*Figure 27:* Marion Norberg.

*Figure 28:* Lee Fatherree.

*Figure 29:* Thomas Weir.

*Figure 30:* Ron Vanbianchi.

*Figure 31:* Jan Steinbright, Courtesy of the Institute of Alaska Native Arts.

*Figure 32:* Courtesy of the Alaska Historical Library.

*Figure 33:* Karin Nelson.



