

MAM Celebrates Hmong-American Culture with Dancing, Music, Art

Textile Exhibition Showcases Hmong Traditions, Stories



Missoula, Mont. — The Missoula Art Museum is hosting a family-friendly celebration of Hmong-American culture, July 26 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. to coincide with the MAM exhibition, *From Flower Cloth to Story Cloth: Hmong Textiles in the MAM Collection*, on display through September 20 in the Carnegie Gallery. The event is free and open to the public.

Guests are invited to tour the colorful exhibition and enjoy traditional dance performances by Annalysse Moua, Athena Moua, and Ntsailias Vang. Blong Vang will play the traditional *qeej* instrument, and Mao Thao will sell her embroidery. Food is available from the Hmong food truck, The Noodle Wagon.

Since the late 1970s, Missoula and the Hmong community have grown and evolved together. Since the Hmong arrived in Missoula, MAM has presented numerous exhibitions featuring Hmong textiles. The first in 1978 helped Montanans better understand and appreciate the complexities of their new neighbors. The second in 1993 was co-curated by Bounthavy (Vee) Kiatoukaysy, Tou Yang, and Susan Lindbergh Miller; and the third in 2014 focused on story cloths. The current exhibit, *From Flower Cloth to Story Cloth*, celebrates the richness of Hmong culture preserved in Missoula and provides a glimpse into changing traditions.

MAM Senior Curator Brandon Reintjes sees this current exhibit as an opportunity to display some of the 238 new gifts donated to the collection in 2011 by Susan Lindbergh Miller. “While the objects in this exhibition represent a static moment in time,” Reintjes said, “they also represent the dynamic evolution of Hmong-American culture and traditions. This exhibition is intended to spark a dialogue about a refugee community that continues to evolve and thrive in Missoula today.” The exhibition is sponsored by First Interstate Bank and First Interstate BancSystem Foundation. Local author Gayle Morrison returns to MAM Wednesday, July 19 at 6 p.m. for a book club discussion of her 2013 volume, *Hog’s Exit: Jerry Daniels, the Hmong and the CIA*.

The Missoula Art Museum engages artists and audience in the creative exploration of contemporary art relevant to our community, state and region. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Regular museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and office hours are from Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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For more information, please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406-728-0447, visit the MAM website at www.missoulaartmuseum.org, or contact Senior Curator Brandon Reintjes brandon@missoulaartmuseum.org, 406-728-0447 x230. Image credit: Blia Lee, Flower Cloth, appliqué and embroidery, 1991, MAM Collection, donated by Susan Lindbergh Miller in honor of Montana's Hmong Community, 2011.