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MEDIA RELEASE

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**Marie Watt, Scott Fife, and Julie Speidel Commissioned to Create
Outdoor Artworks for Tacoma Art Museum**

Two Art Installations to be Unveiled in Late Fall 2014, Timed with the Opening of the Building Expansion and Haub Family Galleries

(Tacoma, WA) - Tacoma Art Museum is pleased to announce that artists **Marie Watt, Scott Fife, and Julie Speidel** have been commissioned to create outdoor sculptures as part of the museum's building expansion. The works by Marie Watt and Julie Speidel will be unveiled when the new Haub Family Galleries, which will showcase The Haub Family Collection of Western American Art, open in late Fall 2014. The sculpture by Scott Fife will be unveiled in Spring 2015. The building project will double the museum's gallery space, provide greater art experiences for visitors, and increase the museum's visibility in downtown Tacoma. Award-winning firm Olson Kundig Architects designed the expansion and redesign.

"We selected proposals from key Northwest artists to create ambitious new works that will activate the spaces around the museum," said Stephanie A. Stebich, Director of Tacoma Art Museum. "These works will be an inspiration for visitors to Tacoma and the museum for generations to come."

The three commissioned sculptures will be situated throughout the museum's campus. Marie Watt will create a sculpture for the southern corner of the Haub Family Galleries. Her work is based on the humble yet significant role blankets play in people's lives, in Native American communities, and in the settling of the West. Scott Fife's work will be located directly outside the museum's new family interactive gallery. His work is a sculpture of a black bear cub and eaglet, two easily identifiable Northwest characters. Julie Speidel will create an installation for the museum's newly designed lower entrance. Her work is an artistic interpretation of the region's remarkable geological history.

“Marie Watt, Scott Fife, and Julie Speidel are all well-known to the Tacoma Art Museum community through our exhibitions and their works in our permanent collection,” said Rock Hushka, Director of Curatorial Administration and Curator of Contemporary and Northwest Art. “We are especially thrilled to unveil these installations when we open our new expansion later this year.”

Details of each installation are as follows:

***Blanket Stories: Transportation Object, Generous Ones, Trek* by Marie Watt**

Marie Watt is a member of the Seneca Nation of Indians (one of the six tribes that comprise the Iroquois Confederacy). Watt fondly recalls from her tribe that blankets are given away to mark important life events. The title’s phrase “generous ones” refers to Tacoma’s first residents, the Puyallup people, and acknowledges the generosity of the Puyallup to all who visit. Her work for the museum will be created from blankets collected from the Tacoma community. The blankets will be transformed into a cast bronze sculpture made of two columnar forms of folded and stacked blankets in an arching gesture implying a loop. One column will be almost 16 feet tall; the other will be 14 feet tall. The forms will cross each other, suggesting an “X,” which can represent a signature, a term of endearment, the indicator of a name on a treaty, or a marker of a place or event. The sculpture will be finished with a patina in a cerulean hue (known as “safety blue”), referencing both water and sky.

Watt and the museum will work together to ask members of the Tacoma community to contribute blankets that will become part of the permanent artwork. The artist will record each blanket’s provenance and history as written by its contributor. The stories about the blankets and photographs

of the contributors will be preserved as part of the sculpture's interpretive materials. In exchange for their contributions, participants will receive a limited edition silkscreen print from Watt. Information about blanket donations will be found on the museum's website. The museum will begin accepting blanket donations through May 18, 2014.

Explorers by Scott Fife

Scott Fife, whose 10-foot-tall *Leroy, the Big Pup* has become an icon of Tacoma Art Museum, will create a sculpture of a black bear cub and eaglet standing on a wooden raft. The wild animals find themselves exploring the new urban environment, resettling and serving as a metaphor for the new opportunities found in the American West. The powerful quality of these two creatures will be their large scale and size: the cub will stand approximately 5 feet tall and the eaglet approximately 3 feet tall. Fife envisions the animals peering into the building as a way to generate conversations about the relationship between the museum and everyday life outside the building.

Each creature will be cast in bronze, using a mold taken from forms created by Fife in his iconic cardboard technique and made to resemble chain-saw-carved wood. The rough, machine-carved surface of wood calls attention to the artist's hand as well as to the much-loved folk art tradition.

Kinetic Repose by Julie Speidel

Julie Speidel seeks to arouse curiosity and wonder through forming a link between the present and a larger history reaching back to geological time. Fourteen thousand years ago, the Vashon Glacier, the last glacier that covered the area, receded, and the meltwater beneath the ice gouged out the fjords that became the Puget Sound. The ice sheets that originated in

the mountains of British Columbia lifted boulders and carried them with it from these mountains down to the region. As the glacier melted it scattered boulders, leaving evidence of an enormous energy that reshaped the Northwest.

Speidel's artistic interpretation of these "erratic boulders" simultaneously refers to the local culture and natural history, inviting the viewer to contemplate the prehistoric past while experiencing it in the here and now. Each erratic stone sculpture, made of painted stainless steel, will draw visitors in from every angle and invite them to walk around, experience, and touch the rock-like sculptures and benches. Speidel's installation will provide seating and a gracious transition zone from the parking area into the museum.

About Tacoma Art Museum

Tacoma Art Museum's mission is to connect people through art. The museum serves the diverse communities of the region through its collection, exhibitions, and learning programs, emphasizing art and artists from the Northwest. Tacoma Art Museum is located in the downtown Cultural District, near the Museum of Glass, Washington State History Museum, and Union Station.

HOURS: Wednesday-Sunday, 10 am-5 pm, Third Thursdays 10 am-8 pm

ADMISSION: Adult \$9, Student/Military/Senior (65+) \$8, Family \$25 (2 adults and up to 4 children under 18). Children 5 and under free. Third Thursdays free from 5-8 pm. Members always free.

CONTACT: 253.272.4258, www.TacomaArtMuseum.org,
info@TacomaArtMuseum.org

Hours

Wednesday 10am - 5pm

Thursday 10am - 8pm, free admission 5pm - 8pm

Friday 10 am - 5pm

Saturday 10am - 5pm

Sunday 10am - 5pm

Location

1701 Pacific Avenue

Tacoma, WA 98402

Contact

253-272-4258

Info@TacomaArtMuseum.org

Connect

Tacoma Art Museum is located on the homelands of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. We recognize and honor the Puyallup people and Coast Salish communities who have endured so much, so that we can all thrive here today.

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