



Arctic Ambitions
Captain Cook and the Northwest Passage
On view March 27 – Sept. 7, 2015

EXHIBIT AT A GLANCE

TITLE	“Arctic Ambitions: Captain Cook and the Northwest Passage”
DATES	March 27 through Sept. 7, 2015
BRIEF OVERVIEW	It's one of science's hottest topics: Melting Arctic ice is revealing a Northwest Passage – the very thing Captain Cook sought but never found. Mostly celebrated for his explorations of the South Pacific, Captain James Cook also braved the frozen Arctic searching for a northern route to Asia. This exhibition focuses on his journeys in the northeast Pacific during 1778 and 1779. Visitors learn about the intriguing issues at play in the North during Cook's expedition that are still relevant today, including different nations' claims to the region and its resources.
SOURCE	Organized by the Anchorage Museum
ADMISSION	Included in Anchorage Museum general admission: \$15 adult, \$12 Alaska resident adult \$10 student/senior/military, \$7 child Free ages 2 and younger Purchase at anchoragemuseum.org
ADDRESS	Anchorage Museum 625 C St Anchorage AK 99501 On the corner of Sixth Avenue and C Street
PUBLIC CONTACT	www.anchoragemuseum.org (907) 929-9200

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Laura Carpenter (907) 929-9227, lcarpenter@anchoragemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229, jasarao@anchoragemuseum.org



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Laura Carpenter (907) 929-9227, lcarpenter@anchoragemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229, jasaro@anchoragemuseum.org

High-res jpegs are available in the [online media room](#) at anchoragemuseum.org.

Issues at play during Captain Cook's expedition are still relevant today
"Arctic Ambitions" opens March 27 at the Anchorage Museum

It is one of science's burning questions: Will the melting Arctic ice reveal a Northwest Passage – the very thing Captain Cook sought but never found?

The foremost British explorer of the 18th century, Captain James Cook circumnavigated the globe twice before setting a course for the North Pacific. Mostly celebrated for his explorations of the South Pacific, Cook also braved the frozen Arctic searching for a northern route to Asia.

"Arctic Ambitions: Captain Cook and the Northwest Passage," on view March 27 through Sept. 7 at the Anchorage Museum, focuses on his journeys in the northeast Pacific during 1778 and 1779. Artifacts, art and hands-on activities for visitors of all ages bring to life this exciting era in history – a time of bold discoveries made dangerous by uncharted waters, rocky coasts and unrelenting ice.

The exhibition examines the legacies of Cook's northern voyage, including changes to indigenous life. Visitors learn about the intriguing issues at play in the North during Cook's expedition that are still relevant today, including different nations' claims to the region and its resources.

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

The Anchorage Museum is the largest museum in Alaska and one of the top 10 most visited attractions in the state. The museum's mission is to connect people, expand perspectives and encourage global dialogue about the North and its distinct environment. Learn more at anchoragemuseum.org.

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FOR MEDIA ONLY

Media are invited to a media preview of "Arctic Ambitions: Captain Cook and the Northwest Passage" from 10 a.m. to noon Thursday, March 26. RSVP required. Email Laura Carpenter, lcarpenter@anchoragemuseum.org, to register.

ARCTIC AMBITIONS-RELATED EVENTS

Half-open, Half-off: Anticipating Cook's Arrival in the North

6 to 9 p.m. Friday, March 27

Join us in the map room, on the yacht rock and more as part of the "Arctic Ambitions" exhibition. Nautical attire welcome but not required. Parts of the museum are open late on designated Fridays for Half-open, Half-off. Enjoy programming for grownups at the museum after hours. Admission is half the usual price.

Arctic Ambitions Museum-wide Opening Reception

6 to 9 p.m. Friday, April 3

On April's First Friday, the museum turns into an exploration space complete with maps, navigational experiences and melting sea ice. Enjoy gallery talks, food and music in the atrium, and performances in the elevator as the museum takes a contemporary look at why Captain Cook's voyage North gives us plenty to ponder today. Free general admission

Museum Interventions

Alaska Native artists create new work in response to the exhibition "Arctic Ambitions: Captain Cook and the Northwest Passage." Presented during First Fridays in April and June. Free

Sonya Kelliher-Combs, 6:30 to 9 p.m. Friday, April 3: This multi-artist performance speaks to the commodification of culture and involves a variety of Alaska Native artists and culture bearers.

Da-ka-xeen Mehner, 6 to 9 p.m. Friday, June 5: A new artwork incorporating performance, photography, and a local monument is on display beginning June's First Friday.

Allison Warden, date and time TBD: New performance work from an Iñupiaq interdisciplinary artist who also raps under the name AKU-MATU.

Arctic Ambitions Dinner

6 p.m. Sunday, April 5

Begin the evening with a private after hours showing of "Arctic Ambitions," followed by a three-course dinner inspired by Captain Cook's voyages. Prix fixe menu with wine pairings is \$79. Reservations are required 929-9210.

Anchorage Centennial

"Arctic Ambitions" is an official program of the Anchorage Centennial Celebration. For more information about the Centennial, visit anchoragecentennial.org.

Polar Lab

The museum's Polar Lab looks at the contemporary and future North through exhibitions and programs that connect art, science, and the environment. Join us for curated conversations, artist interventions and other Polar Lab activities that further explore the issues raised in "Arctic Ambitions." Visit anchoragemuseum.org/polarlab for more information.



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ARCTIC AMBITIONS-RELATED EXHIBITIONS

On Sea Ice

On view May 1 through Sept. 20, 2015

Formed from frozen seawater exposed to periods of enduring cold, sea ice is a simple material with complex implications. Sea ice provides hunters and whalers with vital access to resources, it helps to moderate the world's weather, and it is home to much of the microscopic life that supports some of the world's most valuable fisheries.

"On Sea Ice" explores the historical role this material has played in the Arctic, presented through the perspectives of science, business, government and individuals whose lives and livelihoods are inextricably tied to its dynamic conditions.

"On Sea Ice" provides context for looking at the future of the North and how life here is ever changing for people, whales, walrus, plankton, and more.

To the Arctic: Florian Schulz

On view May 22 through Nov. 1, 2015

Although the common perception of the Arctic is that it is a vast nothingness, Florian Schulz's photographs reveal a world teeming with life amidst complex natural systems — systems that fuel our global economy and impact our health and our environment.

An award-winning wildlife photographer, Schulz photographs throughout the Circumpolar North, from Alaska to Canada, Greenland and Norway. To capture these images, he and his crew endure subfreezing temperatures, camping on ice sheets, diving beneath icebergs, and riding on dogsleds.

His photographs reveal the vast scale of the Arctic plain, which is host to migrating birds from around the globe, as well as the yearly migration of thousands of caribou. They also expose how the loss of polar ice and snow is dramatically altering the fabric of the Arctic life on land and sea.

Artist Talk 7 to 8 p.m. Friday, June 12

KEY OBJECTS IN ARCTIC AMBITIONS

Cook's Journal

For the first time since Captain Cook sailed to Alaska, his journal from his last voyage returns to North America. "James Cook: Manuscript Journal of the Third Voyage, February 10, 1776 – January 6, 1779" contains 605 folios each making up two pages. From the text's format Cook was clearly 'writing a book' that would require no intrusive editing. On loan from the British Library.

Cook's sextant

Sextant made by Jesse Ramsden, London (c. 1772), issued by the Board of Longitude to Cook's third voyage. On loan from Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. Also included in the exhibition is Cook's nautical telescope.

Chugach Chief's Hat

This Chugach spruce-root "chief's hat" was acquired by the Cook expedition at Prince William Sound in 1778. The woven cylinders atop the hat most likely signify that the owner had hosted several feasts of the dead. On loan from the British Museum

Culturally Significant

Objects imported for "Arctic Ambitions" have been deemed "culturally significant" and "in the national interest" by the U.S. Department of State.

<http://regulations.justia.com/regulations/fedreg/2015/03/20/2015-06421.html>

INTERACTIVES IN ARCTIC AMBITIONS

Timeline

Throughout the voyage sections of the exhibition, visitors learn about major milestones during the expedition and about different aspects of life aboard the ship, including smells, language, food, gear and conditions.

LED Globe

This globe uses lights to chart the traditional route from Europe to Asia in the 18th century and chart the route the Northwest Passage would have taken, demonstrating the significant reduction in length.

Map Table

Explore routes that Cook took for each voyage and learn about landmarks and what happened in various parts of the world.

Rights, Resilience and Resources

Kiosks poll visitors about who should control the Northern Passage today and other contemporary issues. Answers will be collected here and in Tacoma where the "Arctic Ambitions" exhibition travels next.



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ARCTIC AMBITIONS SPONSORS

“Arctic Ambitions” is presented in collaboration with the Washington State History Museum.

Support for “Arctic Ambitions” is provided by these generous sponsors:

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