



Snohomish County
Office of the Executive
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Works of prominent artist featured at courthouse

“The Book of Fishing,” a series of seven linocut block prints by Seattle-based artist and author Barbara Earl Thomas, will be on exhibit in the first-floor lobby of the Snohomish County Courthouse beginning Friday, April 18.

The visual narrative of the pieces interprets the rituals of fishing while exploring the historic and cultural activity that stretches across all cultures.

“I am from a family of fishermen who migrated from the South in the early 1940s, specifically Louisiana, Texas and Florida. While they left much behind, what they brought with them was a love for being out of doors on the lakes fishing for food to feeding the family and sometimes the whole neighborhood,” Thomas says of the new work. “For years after my family’s arrival in the Northwest in the 1940s there was no concept or talk of trout or steelhead. It was catfish, crappie and perch that lived in our dreams. Hence my narrative starts with a search for night crawlers and earthworms.”

Thomas was born, raised and educated in Seattle where she attended the University of Washington. There, she studied with contemporary African-American artist Jacob Lawrence and received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in the fine arts. She has exhibited her artwork at the Bellevue and Whatcom art museums and has been included in a number of prestigious private and public collections including the Safeco Corporate Collection, the Microsoft Corporate Collection and the Seattle Art Museum’s permanent collection.

In 1998 and 2000, Thomas received the Seattle Arts Commission award for new non-fiction. Her essays have appeared in numerous publications and anthologies, including “Raven Chronicles,” “Intimate Nature: The Bonds between Women and Animals” and “Storm Watch: The Art of Barbara Earl Thomas,” which was published in 1998 by the University of Washington Press.

Thomas is currently the deputy director and curator for the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle.

The exhibit, sponsored by the Snohomish County Arts Commission, is free to the public and available for viewing through April 2009 at the Snohomish County Courthouse, 3000

Rockefeller Avenue, Everett. The courthouse is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information on this exhibit or others located on the Snohomish County campus, contact Wendy Becker, economic and cultural development officer, at 425-388-3186 or go to www.snohomishcountyarts.org.

For more information on Thomas and her work, go to www.barbaraearlthomas.com.

