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For more information, contact:

Susan Sheoships, Education Coordinator

E-Mail: tci.education@tamastslíkt.org

TEL (541)429-7723

TAMÁSTSLIKT CULTURAL INSTITUTE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE UMATILLA INDIAN RESERVATION

72789 Hwy 331

Pendleton, OR 97801

www.tamastslíkt.org

SENECA ARTIST TO EXHIBIT AT TAMÁSTSLIKT

(Mission, OR) Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute invites the public to attend a reception to honor artist Marie Watt on Friday, May 15, 2010, from 4:00-6:00 pm. The new exhibit, *Forget-Me-Not: Mothers and Sons*, will be on display in the Tamástslíkt gallery from May 14 through July 9, 2010. The reception is free and open to the public.

The central construction of *Forget-Me-Not* features a 10-foot-tall semicircular webbed wall of cut-up blankets with attachments of embroidered portraits of mother figures and soldiers killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. An interpretive document prepared for the *Forget-Me-Not* exhibition can be downloaded at Watt's website (5.9Mb PDF) http://mkwatt.com/index.php/content/work_detail/category/forget_me_not/. A complete collection of cameo portraits may be found at Watt's Flickr site. [flickr.com / photos / marie-watt-studio](http://flickr.com/photos/marie-watt-studio).

Artist Marie Watt explores social and cultural histories found in everyday objects, like reclaimed blankets. She is known for transforming blankets into complex cultural objects. Frequently engaged in large-scale projects, Watt has enlisted others to participate in extended sewing circles, thus creating forums for sharing stories and engaging communities.

On Saturday, May 15, 2010, from 10:00am to 12:00 pm, Ms. Watt will conduct a sewing circle to construct a community project. Any interested person may participate. Materials will be provided. Participants are welcome to create woolen blossoms to add to the exhibit construction. Watt has set a goal of creating 80,000-90,000 flowers to represent the number of civilian lives lost in the Iraq war. Flowers are used as a symbol of remembrance, a vehicle for storytelling, and as a metaphor for the life cycle itself.

At 1:00 pm on Saturday, May 15, 2010, Ms. Watt will give a talk in the Tamástslíkt gallery. This event is free and open to the public.

Ms Watt expresses her interest in heirlooms and the notion of things— built, natural, spiritual—passed down from one generation to another. For *Forget-me-not: Mothers and Sons*, Watt has sewn woolen cameos of each member of the U.S. military, "sons," from Oregon who have died in the Iraq war. She is also creating an equal number of cameos of women who have passed; these "mothers" have been nominated by men (also sons), friends and acquaintances of the artist. In this way she represents both mothers and sons,

as well as both the strict and more metaphorical relationship of parent/child, giving/receiving, and loss/remembrance.

The companion work, *Forget Me Not: Blossoms*, consists of a core of basalt columns surrounded by risers. The risers refer to the concept of the seven generations that considers how current decisionmaking will affect people seven generations to come and recognizes that we are living out the choices made by forebearers seven generations ago. The risers will be covered in army blankets and then with wool blossoms.

Marie Watt is a multidisciplinary artist who lives and works in Portland, Oregon. Born in 1967 to the son of Wyoming ranchers and a daughter of the Turtle Clan of the Seneca Nation (Iroquois / Haudenosaunee) Watt identifies herself as “half Cowboy and half Indian.” Formally, her work draws from indigenous design principles, oral tradition, personal experience, and Western art history. Her approach is shaped by the proto-feminism of Iroquois matrilineal custom, political work by Native artists in the 1960s, a discourse on multiculturalism, as well as Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art. She is interested in “things that the mind already knows.” She uses a vocabulary of natural materials (stone, wool, cedar, cornhusks,) and forms (blankets, pillows, bridges) that are universal to human experience (though not uniquely American) and noncommercial in character. She is represented by the PDX Contemporary Art gallery in Portland, Oregon, and the Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle.

Watt draws attention to the unnoticed parts of our lives. 'I am particularly drawn to the human stories and rituals implicit in everyday objects,' she has said, 'like blankets, bridges, and doorknobs. Made familiar by use and scaled to the body, they often go unnoticed, but make me think about the relationship between part and whole; I wish to capture this sense of familiarity in the objects I make.'"

Contact Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute at (541)966-9748 or visit www.tamastslíkt.org for more information. Tamástslíkt is located at the far end of the main driveway of the Wildhorse Resort & Casino, 10 minutes east of Pendleton, Oregon. Tamástslíkt can be reached via Exit 216 off Interstate I-84 or by following the “Mission-LaGrande” sign south off Highway 11 onto Highway 331. In addition to the museum and interpretive center, Tamástslíkt operates a museum store, café, and meeting room rentals. Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute is owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.