

Joel Isaak



Professional Summary

Dedicated educator, culture bearer, language keeper, artist, and lifelong learner committed to keeping the Dena'ina language and culture alive. Dynamically navigates and responds to the complex multi-cultural, policy, and legal environments that exist between Tribal governments, the State of Alaska, and United States Federal government.

Education and Arts Related Employment

- 2022-Present **Director of Tribal Affairs**, State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, AK
- 2021-Present **Language Contractor**, Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Kenai AK
Linguistic and cultural expert for the Dena'ina Language Institute
- 2018-2022 **Tribal Liaison**, State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, AK
- 2018-2021 **Director**, Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Kenai AK
Dena'ina Language and Culture Revitalization Project
- 2017-Present **Adjunct Professor**, Kenai Peninsula College, Soldotna, AK
Elementary Dena'ina instructor
- 2016-2017 **Manager**, Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Kenai AK
Dena'ina Language and Culture Revitalization Project
- 2016 **Instructor**, George Washington University, Washington DC
Fish skin sewing workshop
- 2015 **Instructor**, Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C
Fish skin workshop
Instructor, Alfred University, Alfred, NY
Liberal Arts Sculpture
- 2014-2016 **Teaching Assistant**, Alfred University, Alfred, NY
Introduction to Sculpture
Introduction to Glass
Freshman Foundations

Degrees

- In progress **PhD Indigenous Studies**, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK
- May 2016 **Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture**, Alfred University, Alfred, NY
- May 2012 **Bachelor Fine Arts Sculpture**, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK

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Dena'ina Cultural Projects

- 2021-2022 **Ch'ehdghaztl'in We Helped Build the House**, *The CIRI Foundation*, Litnaurluni multi-year birch bark canoe building, Kenai, AK
- 2019-2022 **Dr. Alan Boraas Anthropology Lab Legacy Stabilization**, *Kenai Peninsula College*, Soldotna, AK
- 2018 **Grandma Olga**, *Mouth of Ship Creek*, Outdoor multi-sculpture installation of a Dena'ina fish camp, Anchorage, AK
- 2017 **Documenting Moose Hide Tanning**, *Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center*, Demonstrated Dena'ina Moose Hide Tanning for video documentation
- 2014 **Luqa' Nagh Ghilghuzht Fish Camp**, *Kenaitze Indian Tribe*, Outdoor multi-sculpture installation of a Dena'ina fish camp, Kenai, AK
- 2013 **Arts and Culture Expert on the Floor Dena'ina Huch'ulyeshi**, *Anchorage Museum*, Dena'ina exhibit, Anchorage, AK

Selected Public Presentations

- 2023 **Panel Moderator**, National Indian Education Association Hill Week, Washington D.C.
- 2022 **Key Note**, Conference of the Foundation for Endangered Languages XXVI, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2019 **Presenter**, Dene Language Conference, Davis, California
- 2017 **Presenter**, 150 Year Kenai History Conference, Kenai, Alaska
Presenter, Alaska Native Studies Conference, Fairbanks, Alaska
Panelist, De-Colonizing Alaska, George Washington University, Washington DC

Selected Grants and Awards

- 2021 **Tribal Member Legacy Award**, Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Kenai, AK
- 2019 **First Nations Futures Fellows**, First Alaskans Institute, Stanford ,CA
- 2017 **Sheldon Jackson Artist in Residence**, Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka, AK
- 2015-2016 **Graduate Diversity Fellowship**, State University of New York, Alfred, NY
- 2013 **Individual Artist Museum Research Grant**, Bill Holmes Center, Burke Museum, Seattle, WA
- 2013 **Alaska Native Visionary Award**, First Alaskans Institute, Anchorage, AK
- 2011 **Eiteljorg Student Fellowship Scholarship**, Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Indianapolis, IN

Research

- 2023 **Alaska State Museum**, Juneau, AK
- 2019 **Alaska Native Language Archive**, Fairbanks, AK
- 2017 **Sheldon Jackson Museum**, Sitka, AK
- 2015 **Smithsonian Museum of Natural History**, Washington D.C.
Harvard Peabody Museum of Natural History, Cambridge, MA