

North Dakota Museum of Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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1997 Revisited

On display at the North Dakota Museum of Art

The American flag that flew over the Grand Forks Herald newspaper building while it burned down in four feet of floodwater in the downtown fire of April 19, 1997.

A beer tapper faucet from Whitey's Wonder Bar of East Grand Forks.

A button from Grand Forks Mayor Pat Owens's dress jacket.

A stuffed mouse, a toy of a mama cat that saved her newborn kittens by placing them in the basement rafters just above the flood waters. She was found drowned in the stairwell.

A trumpet found in twelve foot high tree branches in Lincoln Park.

Barton Benes' handwritten labels in the artwork, *Ebbtide*, describe each item's relation or meaning to its previous owner in a condensed anecdotal manner whether it was a human or animal possession.

The memories and reflections of over 350 people from throughout the region fill the galleries of the North Dakota Museum of Art. To commemorate the Flood of 1997, the Museum has brought back four collections of artwork made by artists in collaboration with community members. **The exhibition, *1997 Revisited*, will be on display through March 18, 2007.**

Residents of Grand Forks, ND, East Grand Forks, MN, and surrounding areas were asked to donate to the Museum, flood items of memorable quality relating to their personal experiences in living through the worst flood in five hundred years. The resulting artwork titled, *Ebbtide*, became a large contemporary altar piece filled with objects from the flood brought in by Grand Forks and East Grand Forks area residents. The three, five by nine foot wooden cabinets stretch out twenty-eight feet across the exhibition wall space and contain one hundred and twenty pigeon-holed artifacts. The wood is collaged with newspaper flood stories and photographs.

Children's flood murals were created by local artists working with 100 students in response to the flood. The exhibition entitled *Through the Eyes of Children: the Flood of 1997*, includes model cityscapes, quilts, puppets, books, paintings and sketches by children from various schools throughout the region.

Also included in the exhibition is a selection of images from the historic collection of 160 photographs, by 55 photographers, of the 1997 Red River Valley flood, titled *Under the Whelming Tide: The 1997 Flood of the Red River of the North*. Professional photographers from such publications as National Geographic and Life magazine joined our regional news photographers, AP staff photographers, photojournalists, amateurs and artists to record this point in the visual history of our region. The book, *Under the Whelming Tide*, encompassing the images from the exhibition is available for the sale price of \$15 in the Museum Shop.

One gallery is filled with what could be described as a crowd of memories. Japanese artist Mitzuo Toyazaki created work about the Flood based upon his experience of an earthquake that devastated his home town of Kobe, Japan. To enlist the help of people throughout the region Toyazaki sent out this message.

"I want to discover your memories and what you experienced in the flood. Then I want to collaborate with you on a T-shirt installation. I ask you to bring your memorable things for me to see. First I want to take a photo of you with those objects by Polaroid camera. I want you to sign your autograph and write a special message. We will make that photo into a color copy and then transcribe it onto T-shirts by hot iron.

"Through making this work of art I believe we can symbolize the power of humans to cooperatively fight disasters."

The North Dakota Museum of Art is located on Centennial Drive on the University of North Dakota campus in Grand Forks. Gallery hours are weekdays from 9 am to 5 pm and weekends from 11 to 5 pm. The Museum Shop is open during these hours as well. The Museum Café is open weekdays 10 – 4 pm with lunch served from 11 – 2 pm. Although the Museum does not charge an admission fee, the suggested donation is \$5 for adults and pocket change for children.

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