



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"Our"Story: 400 Years of Wampanoag History

As part of Massasoit Community College's 50th Anniversary celebration, the College has partnered with Plymouth 400 to bring the "Our"Story traveling exhibit to the Akillian Gallery at the Canton campus. "Our"Story will be on display at Massasoit through March 3.

The interactive traveling exhibit, told in the Native voice, shines a light on pieces of history that had a significant impact on the Wampanoag tribe, its relationship with the Mayflower Pilgrims, and the founding of Plymouth Colony, cornerstone events that shaped America's earliest beginnings. Each year, a new theme is added to the exhibit; "Our"Story debuted in 2014 with "Captured 1614," a critical back story to colonization and the roots of the American holiday, Thanksgiving. "The Messenger Runner" added new context regarding the Wampanoag tribe's communication traditions and territory. The newest panel, titled "The Great Dying," depicts the catastrophic effects of a plague that devastated the Wampanoag nation between 1616 and 1619.

"It was so important for us to address this theme, The Great Dying, with particular compassion for the victims," said Paula Peters, a Mashpee Wampanoag tribe member and the executive producer of the exhibit. "History simply writes off tens of thousands of Wampanoag as a footnote. Just because no one recorded it does not mean that there was not despair and grief."

The art for "The Great Dying" panel was created by Robert Peters, a Mashpee Wampanoag artist, writer, and activist and his son, Robert Peters Jr.

"Revisiting the historic Great Dying gave me cause to meditate, look into the past and reimagine the scene," said Robert Peters Sr. "The balance between historic accuracy, artistic stylization and realism created a scene that we intend for people to take the time to look at and consider how it impacts our lives. It was a privilege to work on, a long process to make it all come together and truly a family grown success. I hope that this work will help people see that Native American People are not just a part of history but have a place in the future too."

"We are pleased to be partnering with Massasoit Community College to bring Plymouth 400's Wampanoag exhibit to its Canton campus. The College, named for the Great Sachem Massasoit Usamequin, is commemorating its 50th anniversary, and we believe this is a fitting addition to their celebration," said Michele Pecoraro, Executive Director of Plymouth 400, Inc. "Most of what we know about this period in history comes from accounts written by Englishmen. We now have the opportunity for the Native story to be highlighted and told in the Native voice. This exhibit is just one of the ways Plymouth 400 is working to create a commemoration that is historically accurate and representative of the cultures involved."

"Our"Story will continue to travel and engage viewers in these honest and powerful narratives as part of the *Signature Events and Programs* of Plymouth 400, the organization planning the international 400th anniversary commemoration of the 1620 *Mayflower* voyage and the founding of Plymouth Colony.

There is no cost to view the exhibit. The Akillian Gallery is located on Massasoit Community College's Canton Campus, 900 Randolph Street, Canton. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or by appointment.

Call 508-588-9100, x2124 for more information.