

Cedar has been a “Tree of Life”, providing material for many uses. Humans have approached the cedar tree with respect, skill, and knowledge. This year’s featured exhibit at the Historical Museum is titled: Cedar. It contextualizes cedar in nature, history, and art and includes photos from the Museum’s archives, baskets, tools, and more. The exhibit includes an interactive cedar processing station that allows visitors to touch, smell, soak, and beat bark.

Cedar art by local artists is also featured, specifically the work of Rivkah Sweedler who co-curated the exhibit. Rivkah co-collaborated with Walter Barkas as they lived in the forests of the Pacific Northwest in cabins they built of fir poles, logs, and cedar shakes. They began their collaboration of life and art in 1978. Their stories, sculptures, paintings, photographs, living spaces, all evolved as egalitarian conditions. They shared a basic desire to learn, experiment, have fun and do their best. The goal was to live by their own skills as much as possible using the windfalls of nature, including cedar, and the cast off windfalls of the consumer society. To live in the forest and harvest from the forest without destroying or “civilizing” the forest. Walter died in 1995. Rivkah continues to live simply on Orcas Island, wishing to share through story and art the basic human skill of a handmade life.

Art by Peter Fisher, Colleen Stewart, Tweed Meyer is also featured.

The exhibit will run Friday, May 25 – Saturday, Oct 26. The community is invited to a free exhibit reception on Thursday, June 13 from 4-6pm.

The Orcas Island Historical Museum is open Tuesday – Saturday 11am-4pm & Sundays 12-3pm. The Crow Valley School Museum will be open Memorial Day – Labor Day Thursday-Sunday 11am-3pm. Entry to both Museums is by donation and members are always free. Contact the office for more information at 360-376-4849 or [info@orcasmuseum.org](mailto:info@orcasmuseum.org).