

Portraits of the North, a traveling exhibit created by The Manitoba Museum, will be displayed in Amtsbókasafnið á Akureyri, in Akureyri, Iceland from August 30 to September 30, 2008. This is the first time a Manitoba Museum exhibit has been displayed overseas.

Portraits of the North is a collection of artist Gerald Kuehl's spectacular graphite pencil drawings of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Elders. Kuehl's work goes beyond mere portraits to capture his subjects' very essence. The challenges and triumphs his subjects have survived are clearly etched on their faces, making each portrait a stirring visual monument. The unbelievable artistry of Kuehl's portraits, which are so realistic they seem to draw breath, inspires strong emotions in the viewer.

"We are honoured that this distinguished institution in Iceland will be displaying our exhibit," says Claudette Leclerc, Museum CEO. "We are grateful to Minister Bjornson for encouraging us to showcase the exhibit in Iceland, and to Minister Robinson for supporting this important project."

"Our Icelandic heritage is the key to Gimli's past, present and future," said Peter Bjornson, Manitoba Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth. "Icelandic artists have long shared their talent with Manitobans and I am pleased we have this first opportunity to share some of Manitoba's art and rich history with Iceland."

Akureyri is the twin community of Gimli, Manitoba. Peter Bjornson, MLA for Gimli, and Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth; Tammy Axellsson, Mayor of Gimli; and Anna Blauveldt, Canada's Ambassador to Iceland, will be attending the exhibit opening in Iceland.

"Icelanders were early settlers to our province, joining the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people depicted in these works of art," said Eric Robinson, Manitoba Minister of Culture, Heritage and Sport. "The government of Manitoba is pleased to support this exhibit as it brings a new perspective to Icelanders."

If you'd like more information on Gerald Kuehl or his work, you can access his website at www.portraitsofthenorth.com.

The support of the Department of Canadian Heritage through its Museums Assistance Program is gratefully acknowledged in the development of this exhibit.