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MILES CITY HOSTS FRANCES SENSKA CLAY SHOW

Miles City will honor the “Mother of Montana Ceramics,” Frances Senska, with an exhibit of her ceramic work and early prints at the Custer County Art & Heritage Center, November 19 – December 31.

“Frances Senska has been a leader in contemporary ceramics for more than sixty years, and as an art instructor at Montana State University she shaped the lives of many internationally recognized ceramic artists,” said Rose Emily Longan, President of Custer Country. “Two of her students in particular, Rudy Autio and Peter Voulkos, are world famous for their work in contemporary ceramics. And through Senska’s encouragement, Autio and Voulkos met with Archie Bray, a collaboration that led to the creation of the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts in Helena.”

Born in 1914 in Cameroon, Africa, Senska was the only child of missionary parents. Senska moved to Iowa City, Iowa in 1929 and earned a Bachelor of Art Degree from the University of Iowa in 1935 as well as a Master of Art Degree in 1939. After four years in the U.S. Navy, Montana State University hired Senska as a general art teacher 1946. Throughout her career, Senska taught hundreds of students about the ceramics process - from digging and mixing clays to creating glazes, from slab building to the potter’s wheel to firing techniques.

An honorary life member of the National Council of Education for the Ceramic Arts, Senska is a founding member of the Montana Institute of the Arts, where she served as Director in 1961, and was named an MIA Fellow in 1964. The Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts recognized Senska in 2002 with the Meloy-Stevenson Award of Distinction for playing a leading role in the Foundation’s history. Montana State University awarded Senska with an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts in 1982 and in 1988, she was recognized with the Montana Governor’s Award for Life Time Achievement in the Arts. In tribute to Senska’s achievements as an artist and professor, Beall Park Art Center in Bozeman and the Senska-Wilber Graduate Studios at MSU both bear her name.

The *Frances Senska: A Life in Art* retrospective will be on display through December 31, 2006 at the Art & Heritage Center, located on Waterplant Road west of downtown Miles City. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 1 – 5 pm. An opening Holiday Reception is set for Sunday, November 19th from 1 – 4 pm.

Working with Travel Montana, Custer Country promotes tourism in 13 southeastern Montana counties: Big Horn, Carter, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Powder River, Prairie, Rosebud, Treasure, Wibaux, and Yellowstone, and on the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations.

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