



For Immediate Release

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AICCM'S Inaugural Touring Exhibition Featured in Okmulgee at Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Okmulgee, OK (*April 27, 2007*) – A century after statehood, what does it mean to be an American Indian in Oklahoma? How do Indian's identify themselves in a contemporary context? What is considered Indian Art? This exhibition reveals the complex undercurrents that encompass being American Indian in 2007. Indian Artists have been asked to initiate a dialogue in their visual language that will stimulate an ongoing discussion. As the exhibit travels to five different regions the exhibit will survey the change in American Indian art since statehood and offer a broader view of what contemporary "Indian Art" encompasses, giving rural residents an opportunity to see the many sides of today's work. It will chronicle representative works from each decade beginning with some of the well known precedents such as: Ledger Art, Kiowa 5+1 and boarding school art programs; and culminate with a display of contemporary Native Art that expresses Indian culture at this significant moment in Oklahoma's History. The partnership between the **American Indian Cultural Center & Museum** and Co-Curators **Mary Jo Watson** and **heather ahtone** entitled "**Art from Indian Territory 2007: the state of being American Indian**" premiered at Southwestern Oklahoma State University and then proceeded to the Southern Plains Indian Museum, Anadarko, OK. This exhibition will be presented at **Muscogee (Creek) Nation Capitol Complex** from **May 14 – June 22, 2007**. There will be a reception on **Friday, May 18, 2007** that is **free and open to the public** from **4-6 p.m.** Several of the participating artists will attend the exhibit opening. For more information regarding the exhibit at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation call **Ted Isham** at **(918)756-2324**. This touring exhibition is sponsored by the Chickasaw Nation. The opportunity for this touring exhibition to travel to Okmulgee has been made possible by Muscogee (Creek) Nation, A. D. Ellis, Principal Chief.

"Art From Indian Territory 2007: the state of being American Indian" premiered at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, OK on February 4, 2007, it then proceeded to the Southern Plains Indian Museum, Anadarko, OK and now continues on to Muscogee (Creek) Nation, it will then continue on to the fourth location at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, OK from July 2 – August 10, 2007 and will conclude at the Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City, OK from August 20 – September 29, 2007. For more information regarding the remaining touring locations or information about the exhibit, log onto www.aiccm.org or call (405) 239.3270.

"It doesn't take long, in a discussion about Indian art, for the question to arise – What is Indian Art? At the core of this question lies the rhetorical and existential question of identity," says Mary Jo Watson, Co-Curator for the exhibition. The exhibit has been arranged around three themes that pertain to Oklahoma Indian identity. These themes are:

Intimacy – artists whose families and tribes have a history in Oklahoma.

Multiplicity – artists who count more than one tribe or race in their heritage.

Geography – artists whose tribes are not located in Oklahoma, but who consider themselves Oklahomans.

Participating artists were asked to self-identify with one of the above themes. Jereldine Redcorn's selection of "Intimacy" embraces her Caddo heritage and the tribe's history with this place. Her use of circular patterns and gourd-like shapes reminiscent of the Spiro culture perpetuates a living connection with her past through her contemporary expressions. Tom Fields' photography often captures the intimate moments that only a

community member witnesses. His photo of a drum stick hitting a water drum captures the dance of water on the drum surface and brings a distinctly American Indian aesthetic to this non-traditional medium.

Co-Curator, heather ahtone suggests, “Identity is often subject to someone else’s discriminating identification.” Tony Tiger and Matt Bearden both selected “Multiplicity” because each were raised within communities where their tribes were not the dominant culture.

Geography can also be an important identifier, especially in a state where tribes were relocated from other regions. American Indians who come to Oklahoma from other regions are usually well supported by the local Indian community because there is an inherent understanding relating to the experience of relocation. Marwin Begaye comments, “My wife is from Oklahoma and when we moved here we started to be a part of the unique Oklahoma community. By being a part of this community, you start noticing the social issues that are common.” Begaye’s attention to some of the common social and popular culture issues have been equally embraced by the Oklahoma community, as well as within his home community.

The American Indian Community has evolved considerably throughout the last century. This exhibition will visually narrate the journey between ancient traditions and an adaptive spirit that embraces innovation.

Exhibition Artists include: Brent Greenwood, Joanna Underwood, Daniel Worcester, Matt Bearden, Heidi Bigknife, Tom Fields, Tony Tiger, Anita Fields, Kennetha Greenwood, Ben Harjo Jr., America Meredith, Gerald Cournoyer, Blas Flores, Joshua Hinson, Marwin Begaye, Nathan Hart, Jereldine Redcorn, Richard Ray Whitman, Susan Shannon, Rachel Dew and Sharron Ahtone-Harjo.