



Media Contact: Gleny Beach
Email: gbeach@sosu.edu
Phone: (580) 745-2352

AICCM'S Inaugural Touring Exhibition Featured in Durant at Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Durant, OK (*July 2, 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? "Art from Indian Territory 2007: the state of being American Indian" reveals the complex undercurrents that encompass these issues through a partnership between the **American Indian Cultural Center & Museum** and **Co-Curators Mary Jo Watson** and **heather ahtone**. This exhibition will be presented at **Southeastern Oklahoma State University's Visual and Performing Arts Center Gallery** from **July 2 – August 10, 2007**. There will be a reception on **Friday, June 30th** that is **free and open to the public** from **6-8 p.m.** Several of the participating artists will attend the exhibit opening. For more information regarding the exhibit while it is in Durant, call **Gleny Beach** at **(580) 745-2352**. The exhibition tour is sponsored by the Chickasaw Nation.

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.

"Art From Indian Territory 2007" has been touring throughout the state at the following locations: Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford; Southern Plains Indian Museum, Anadarko; Muscogee (Creek) Nation Capitol Complex, Okmulgee and will conclude at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City, OK. For more information regarding the remaining touring locations or for more information about the exhibit, log onto www.aiccm.org or call (405) 239-5500.

"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 the 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, Joshua Hinson, Marwin Begaye, Nathan Hart, Jereldine Redcorn, Richard Ray Whitman, Susan Shannon, Rachel Dew and Sharron Ahtone-Harjo.