NEWS RELEASE May 30, 2017

FRED JONES JR. MUSEUM OF ART
THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA - NORMAN
CONTACT: MICHAEL BENDURE, Director of Communication, (405) 325-3178, mbendure@ou.edu
FAX: (405) 325-7696
www.ou.edu/fjjma

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WITH IMAGE

(EDITOR’S NOTE: heather ahtone prefers that her name be printed in all lower case letters.)

Mellon Interns Shape OU Art Museum’s Summer Research

NORMAN, Okla. – School may be out for summer, but for three interns at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, research is just beginning. Thanks to a recent Mellon Foundation grant, the University of Oklahoma students are taking a hard look at Native American art and history at the art museum on the OU Norman campus.

In February, the university announced a $750,000, four-year Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant to support an initiative to increase cultural diversity and grow a mutually beneficial relationship between OU’s doctoral program in Native American art and the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. The comprehensive program will increase the representation of Native Americans in curatorial and academic positions through collaboration, creativity and commitment toward the goal.

The program’s core projects include paid internships for the museum’s Native American art collection and pre-doctoral fellowships, accompanied by a teaching assistantship to students dedicated to the study of Native American art and culture.

“We are incredibly excited to have this inaugural cohort of Mellon Foundation Native American curatorial interns working with us this summer,” said heather
ahtone, the museum’s James T. Bialac Associate Curator of Native American and Non-Western Art.

“The application pool was robust and allowed us to choose from among a diverse body of students with broad interests and refined skills. Their support for our exhibitions and collections research will be invaluable. I look forward to working with each of them and supporting their development in keeping with the Mellon Foundation’s intent to cultivate a new pool of diverse museum professionals.”

Mark Esquivel has completed his first year of doctoral studies in Native American art history at OU. He will be supporting exhibitions development and providing object research on the work of Luis Jiménez, Emelio Amero and the Mexican photography materials held in the museum’s permanent collections. According to ahtone, Esquivel’s research interests include “trans-Indigenous visualities, post-digital aesthetics, art and politics.” He received his master’s degree from Arizona State University and previously served as curator at the Institute for Humanities Research, Arizona State University.

Ashley Holland recently completed her first year of doctoral studies at OU in Native American art history. She will support exhibitions development and provide object research on the Cherokee materials held in the museum’s permanent collection. Her research interests include Cherokee art and contemporary Native American art. Holland earned her master’s degree in museum studies from Indiana University. Holland formerly served as assistant curator at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art.

Alicia Harris has completed her doctoral coursework in Native American art history at OU. She will be supporting exhibitions development and providing object research on materials made by Native American women held in the museum’s permanent collection. Her research interests include the relationship of art to place-based knowledge, photography and women artists. Harris received her master’s degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is an independent curator.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is located in the OU Arts District on the corner of Elm Avenue and Boyd Street, at 555 Elm Ave., on the OU Norman campus. Admission to the museum is complimentary to all visitors, thanks to the generosity of the OU Office of the President and the OU Athletics Department. The museum is closed on Mondays. Information and accommodations are available by calling (405) 325-4938 or visiting www.ou.edu/fjjma.

###
Thanks to a recent Mellon Foundation grant awarded to the University of Oklahoma, three Native American art history doctoral students are conducting research this summer at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. From left are Alicia Harris, Mark Esquivel and Ashley Holland.