

# NEWS RELEASE

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FRED JONES JR. MUSEUM OF ART  
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA - NORMAN  
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## 'Sooners' Exhibit Explores Oklahoma, New Mexico Art

NORMAN, OKLA. - Deep within the history of Oklahoma art lies a connection with New Mexico, an enchanted land and home to Western and Native American artists who inspired Sooner artists for decades and beyond. A new exhibition at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art examines this influence of New Mexican artists in the early 20th century and the landscape and cultures that changed the way Oklahomans approached art.

*Sooners in the Land of Enchantment: Oklahoma Artists and New Mexico* opens Friday, Oct. 9, with a special reception from 7 to 9 p.m. A guest lecture by Eugene B. Adkins Curator Mark White will accompany this exhibition's free opening at 6 p.m. The opening reception also doubles as the Museum Association's 2010 membership party. Association members and the public are invited.

The exhibition will remain on display through Jan. 3, 2010.



Artists such as Oscar Jacobson, Nan Sheets and the painters and dancers who eventually became known as the Kiowa Five began visiting the "Land of Enchantment" in the early decades of the 20th century, forming important relationships with artists who resided there. In the post-World War II period, other Oklahomans, such as T. C. Cannon, Allan Houser, Woody Crumbo and Doel Reed, made New Mexico their home and produced

engaging bodies of work that have become closely identified with New Mexican art history.

To this end, the exhibition will not only include the works of Oklahoma artists, but also the prominent New Mexican artists with whom they associated, such as Ernest Blumenschein, Victor Higgins, Maria Martinez and Bert Phillips.

“Oscar Jacobson was among the first to form close relationships with the Santa Fe and Taos colonies,” White said. Jacobson’s friends included modernists like Frank Applegate, Josef Bakos and B.J.O. Nordfeldt.

Jacobson, director of the University of Oklahoma School of Art in 1915, was later named the first director of what would become the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. He not only exhibited many of these artists at OU, but also purchased their works of art for the permanent collection.

His summer visits to New Mexico drew him to both the pueblos and to the Santa Fe Indian School, where the Studio under Dorothy Dunn was helping to foster modern Native painting.

“Just as Jacobson had begun to acquire the paintings of Kiowa artists for the collection at OU, he also began collecting paintings from the Studio and became one of its early important patrons,” White said.

Apart from the Kiowa, many of Jacobson’s fellow professors and his students visited New Mexico in the 1920s, including Ina Annette, Leonard Good and Lawrence Williams.

Jacobson and his OU colleagues were not the only Oklahomans to frequent New Mexico in the 1920s. Alexandre Hogue, a Dallas artist who would eventually chair the University of Tulsa art department, visited Taos sporadically throughout the decade and became close friends with many of the Taos artists. Like Hogue, Oklahoma City painter Nan Sheets became well acquainted with the Taos Society of Artists.

In the postwar years, Taos, in particular, drew numerous Oklahomans, some of whom decided to settle. Woodrow Wilson “Woody” Crumbo (Potawatomi) relocated to Taos in 1952, where he opened a serigraph studio to produce affordable mass-produced prints. Tulsan Bettina Steinke also moved to Taos in 1956 after exhibiting regularly at the gallery of Charles Reynolds, another Oklahoma expatriate.

But perhaps the most influential of the Oklahomans to resettle in Taos was Oklahoma State University professor Doel Reed. After frequent visits in the 1940s and 1950s, he purchased a house in Talpa in 1959. Reed found inspiration in the small Spanish villages and the rugged topography of northern New Mexico.

While artists like Reed, Steinke and Crumbo settled in Taos in the postwar period, there were a number of Oklahomans who were drawn to Santa Fe. Allan Houser (Chiricahua Apache) arrived in Santa Fe in 1934 to study at the Studio

and was later hired in 1962 as a faculty member of the school that replaced it, the Institute of American Indian Art.

Another Oklahoman, T.C. Cannon (Kiowa/Caddo), enrolled at IAIA in 1964 and developed a fondness for Santa Fe, where he lived intermittently for the rest of his life.

*Sooners in the Land of Enchantment* draws almost exclusively from the permanent collection at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, with loans from the Oklahoma City Museum of Art and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma.

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 free to all OU students with a current student ID and all museum association members, \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, \$3 for children 6 to 17 years of age, \$2 for OU faculty/staff, and free for children 5 and under. Admission is free on Tuesdays. The museum's Web site is [www.ou.edu/fjjma](http://www.ou.edu/fjjma). Information and accommodations on the basis of disability are available by calling (405) 325-4938.

Construction on a new wing is under way, but the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is open and fully functional with exhibitions and programming throughout the entire construction process.

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## IMAGE CREDIT

Oscar Brousse Jacobson (U.S., b. Sweden, 1882-1966)

*In the Navajo Country*, 1938

Oil on canvas, 20 x 26 in.

Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma, Norman; 1987

Oscar Brousse Jacobson is one of many Western and Native American artists going on display soon as part of a new exhibition at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. *Sooners in the Land of Enchantment: Oklahoma Artists and New Mexico* opens Oct. 10 on the University of Oklahoma Norman campus. This 1938 oil on canvas by Jacobson, *In the Navajo Country*, joins other images of landscapes and Southwest culture throughout the exhibition.