

NEWS RELEASE

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FRED JONES JR. MUSEUM OF ART
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA - NORMAN
CONTACT MICHAEL BENDURE, Public Relations Officer, 405-325-3178, mbendure@ou.edu
FAX: 405-325-7696
www.ou.edu/fjjma

Native Artists to Discuss Identity Issues Sept. 11 at FJJMA

NORMAN, OKLA. – Eight Native Oklahoman artists are gathering for a public panel discussion about survival strategies and identity issues during a special event at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art on Friday, Sept. 11. At 10 a.m., the artists will begin a session titled *Art as Identity: The Operative Principles of Affirmation, Accommodation and Appropriation in the Native American Artistic Pursuit of Self*.

Moderated by art critic Edwin L. Wade and art collector Rennard Strickland, the morning and afternoon sessions will use the museum's new exhibition, *Spirit Red: Visions of Native American Artists from the Rennard Strickland Collection*, as a framework to discuss critical aesthetic issues confronting contemporary Native American artists.

The sessions are free and open to the public. Seating is limited.

Over the course of the past four centuries, Native Americans have employed the survival strategies of affirmation (who they are), accommodation (who the non-Native American world wants them to be) and appropriation (who they become through borrowing from others). Wade asserts that the evolving image and diversity of Native arts further illustrate these strategies.

Guest artists include Joseph Erb, Ruthe Blalock Jones, Shawna Morton Cain and Roger Cain in the morning. Afternoon session artists will feature Bill Glass, Bill Rabbit, Martha Berry and Lisa Rutherford.

Strickland, who is of Osage and Cherokee heritage, served as curator of Native American art at the FJJMA in the early 1990s. In 2007, he announced that he wished to give his remarkable collection to the museum in memory of his mother, Adell Tucker Strickland. In addition to his passion for Native artwork, Strickland is an internationally noted law professor and legal historian, especially for his introduction of Indian law as a subject of study at major universities. He currently is Senior Scholar in Residence in the OU College of Law and Philip H. Knight Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus at the University of Oregon School of Law.

Wade has authored and edited multiple publications on the subject of American Indian art. For nearly 30 years, he has overseen the initiation, administration and academic curatorial supervision of cultural programs such as international exhibitions and publications. He specializes in primitive art, cultural change and community and Oceania, and has curated several exhibits exploring native arts.

Erb is an artist and storyteller who works in digital media. A member of the Cherokee tribe, he created the first animated Cherokee story in the Cherokee language. Since 1979, Delaware/Shawnee/Peoria painter Jones has taught art at Bacone College in Muskogee, Okla. Her paintings' subjects derive from her personal experiences, and she concentrates on painting Indian women in dance attire.

Designated in 2006 as a Master Craftswoman Living Treasure of the Cherokee Nation for her traditional basketry, Shawna Morton Cain and her husband, Roger Cain, study 21st-century Cherokee life and the tribe's continued hunting and gathering activities. Roger Cain is the 2007 recipient of the Cherokee National Treasure Award. His artistic creations amplify traditional Cherokee craftsmanship and include stone pipe carvings, hickory ball sticks, blowguns, dart guns and chunky stones.

For nearly 25 years, Cherokee ceramicist Glass ran the Bill Glass Ceramic Studio in Locust Grove, Okla. In 2001, he and his son, Demos Glass, established Glass Studio. This summer, their collaborative work was selected for the American Indian Cultural Center and Museum's new public art piece. Pryor, Oklahoman Rabbit is a self-taught jewelry-maker and acrylic painter from Pryor, Okla., whose art was heavily influenced by the stories he heard from Cherokee elders.

Berry is an accomplished Cherokee beadworker who has conducted extensive research in the area of Southeastern-style beadwork and has worked as a curator and as an educator with the National Museum of the American Indian. Rutherford focuses on traditional pottery and 18th-century clothing and beadwork. Using materials as authentic as possible to the late 1700s and early 1800s, she creates southeast appliqué Cherokee beadwork and fires her own pottery by hand.

The *Spirit Red* exhibition features more than 100 paintings, baskets, pottery, textiles and sculpture representing some of the most acclaimed artists of the 20th century. The exhibition remains on display through Sept. 13.

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. The museum's Web site is www.ou.edu/fjjma. Information and accommodations on the basis of disability are available by calling (405) 325-4938.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is under construction but open and fully functional with exhibitions and programming throughout the entire construction process.

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