

For Immediate Release

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**CHICKASAW COUNTRY TO DEBUT NEW ART INSTALLATION AT
EXHIBIT C GALLERY IN OKLAHOMA CITY – OPENS NOVEMBER 1**

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK-- A new exhibit, “Visual Narratives: First American Photography,” is set to open November 1 at Oklahoma City’s Exhibit C Gallery. The installation, which will continue through February 28, 2023, showcases works by five First American photographers representing various tribes, including Cherokee, Chickasaw, Patawomeck, Kiowa and Otoe-Missouria.

Featured artists include Philip Busey Jr., Peggy Fontenot, Lester Harragarra, Kelly Langley and Jim Trosper. The show explores First American heritage and culture through the lenses of the featured artists, who hail from varying backgrounds and tribal influences.

“It’s often been said that the camera doesn’t lie,” said Paige Williams Shepherd, director tourism for the Chickasaw Nation, “And this exhibit certainly offers a powerful glimpse into each subject, whether it’s a rural landscape, tribal ceremony or a breathtaking destination. These artists have done a remarkable job at capturing moments in time that also tell an entire story.”

In 2002, **Philip Busey Jr.**, a Cherokee Nation citizen, first picked up a camera while participating in the Washington Internship for Native Students (WINS) Program at American University in Washington, D.C. That led to a solo exhibition at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, where he enrolled, and catapulted him to becoming the staff photographer for the campus’s weekly student newspaper as well as a photographer for a local daily newspaper and the university’s public relations office. For more than a decade, from 2004 to 2015, he all but abandoned photography, only to rediscover his passion after establishing a career as an executive in the aerospace defense industry. His stills focus on landscape and art.

Los Angeles-based artist **Peggy Fontenot**, a member of the Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia and a certified Potawatomi artist, works in various mediums, including photography, beadwork and precious metals. Her photographs document relevant social issues, including the plight of First Americans. Her work, which has been exhibited nationally for nearly 40 years, has graced the walls of the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D. C., the Briscoe Museum in San Antonio, TX and the

New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe, NM just to name a few. She remains devoted to film foregoing digital imagery, and still processes her prints in her wet darkroom using a Split-Filter technique.

Photographer **Lester Harragarra's** First American roots run deep. A member of the Otoe-Missouria tribe and a descendant of the Kiowa tribe, his father was a World War II veteran and former tribal chairman. His paternal grandfather was one of the last hereditary chiefs of the Otoe-Missouria tribe, while his paternal grandmother is credited with initiating the first American War Mothers Indian chapter in 1943. His mother was one of the first members of the Kiowa tribe to graduate from the University of Oklahoma, class of 1951. Harragarra's interest in photography began at an early age when an aunt presented him with his first camera for his 8th birthday. While attending the University of New Mexico, where he studied engineering, he purchased a 35 mm camera and spent hours in the darkroom. His photographs capture the brilliant colors of First American headdresses and ribbon skirts as well as haunting images of buffalo and life on the range.

Native Oklahoman **Kelly Langley**, PhD is a retired educator and member of the Chickasaw Nation. Her early interest in photography was rediscovered as an adult while living in the Wasatch Mountains of Utah, where she spent time exploring the region's beauty and national parks. Her award-winning images have been exhibited in museums and galleries, as well as juried competitions throughout the southwest. While many of her landscape photographs recall her rural Oklahoma upbringing, Dr. Langley's portfolio also highlights a range of subjects fostered by her keen interest in the world around her and a love of travel.

Chickasaw citizen **Jim Trospen** believes that the fundamentals of good photography are needed to create a good photo, but emotion is essential to producing a great image. From an early age this shutterbug rarely was without a camera in hand, taking pictures during family vacations and elsewhere. He attended the University of Central Oklahoma, where he earned a degree in photographic arts. As a professional photographer, Trospen has spent much of his time capturing live bands at the Zoo Amphitheatre in Oklahoma City, OK, live horse racing at Remington Park in Oklahoma City, OK and destinations, such as White Sands National Park in New Mexico.

"Visual Narratives: First American Photography" opens November 1 at Exhibit C Gallery, the Bricktown district's premier art and retail space, where visitors can explore a diversity of arts and culture from First American artists. The gallery, located at 1 E. Sheridan in Oklahoma City and open daily from 9am-6pm, unveils new exhibits each March, July and November. For more information, call 405.767.8900 or visit online at exhibitcgallery.com

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About Chickasaw Country

Located in south-central Oklahoma, [Chickasaw Country](#) is a regional tourism organization representing 13 of Oklahoma's 77 counties. As the official destination tourism organization, Chickasaw Country includes 7,648 square miles, 11 percent of Oklahoma's total 68,597 square miles. Chickasaw Country, a division of the Chickasaw Nation, is a tourism source for visitors and communities within the region and promotes destinations, attractions and festivals. Chickasaw Country is a diverse and culturally vested destination, with new adventures and experiences at every turn.

About Exhibit C Gallery

Exhibit C Gallery, Oklahoma City's premier First American art gallery, is located in Oklahoma City's Bricktown district. The gallery displays works of numerous artists from the Chickasaw and southeastern tribes and artists from across Indian Country. Exhibit C Gallery continues the vision of raising awareness of the many cultural experiences in Oklahoma set forth by Chickasaw Nation Governor, Bill Anoatubby. Exhibit C Gallery is open daily from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. at 1 E. Sheridan, Oklahoma City. All art and retail located in Exhibit C Gallery are for purchase.

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