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DIRECTOR’S REPORT

A New Presentation of the Gilcrease Collection

As one of the major projects in the Vision Tulsa package, the plan for transforming Gilcrease Museum is underway to modernize and expand the facility and re-envision the interpretation of its world-renowned collection.

In the evolution of Gilcrease Museum, developing a new Interpretive Plan is key to attract new audiences and to ensure its relevancy to visitors. An Interpretive Plan is an important tool used by museums to communicate messages and to create experiences that provoke emotion or thought by focusing on content that is relatable to our visitors. It directs the vision for the way exhibitions are presented and what public programs are offered. The soon-to-be reimagined Gilcrease Museum has the potential to ignite the community with contemporary and inspiring traveling exhibitions, innovative learning tools, and multidisciplinary and multicultural interpretations of the museum’s extensive collection from new and fresh perspectives.

For Gilcrease to be relevant to future generations, the institution must change people’s perceptions of it and its contribution to the community. It must infuse history with the present by putting a historical lens on modern times. The purpose of the Interpretive Plan is to expound upon the knowledge of those who know the museum best — its staff, volunteers and members — and use their guidance to create a new Gilcrease Museum that is vibrant and inspirational.

The plan is essential in informing the content and design of the new exhibition spaces and will have significant influence on the architectural design. It will help upgrade our established strengths and address our challenges to make Gilcrease a top destination in our city with visitors returning repeatedly for a unique experience each time. It also will assist staff in creating consistent messaging, gallery graphics and technology in every exhibition space.

Programming will improve by providing more options for independent learning through interactive technology and hands-on activity in the galleries and dedicated learning spaces. The plan will guide development of multimedia presentations that bring together our art, archival and anthropology collections, and steer the selection of touring exhibitions that will excite our audiences. And, it will enable staff to make more of the collections accessible and relatable to all visitors and will influence the creation of exhibitions that result in a new and exhilarating Gilcrease Museum.

With an unparalleled collection, the academic resources of The University of Tulsa, and a comprehensive and effectual Interpretive Plan, the museum is positioned to reveal incredible untold stories, be a venue for engaging the community in thought-provoking conversations and be a societal hub for education, art and recreation.

Kindest regards,

James Pepper Henry
Executive Director

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Textured Portraits: The Ken Blackbird Collection

Textured Portraits: The Ken Blackbird Collection, which opens February 26 and runs through August 27, 2017, is a traveling exhibition of the work of Ken Blackbird, a photojournalist with 30 years of experience photographing Native life on reservations in Montana and Wyoming. The 30 photographs selected for Textured Portraits reflect his exceptional visual artistry — the subjects are expressed in a range of photographic genres, from action to abstract studies of light and shadow. Quiet portraits of tribal elders are juxtaposed with night scenes at Crow Fair, behind-the-scenes glimpses of the Cody Stampede rodeo, and ranching and rural life on the Fort Belknap Reservation, where he is an enrolled Assiniboine member of the community. Blackbird offers what have been described as “textured portraits of life,” studies of people “interspersed with their environment or steeped in their rituals.”

He captures the vitality of Native life. Unlike romantic figures seen in historic photographs, he makes images of “life as it should be — the people still holding powwows and ceremonies, and knowing that they always will.” The collection also includes oral history interviews with his subjects, reflecting his dedication to the people he photographs.
Blackbird sees his work as a continuum. Rather than telling stories in the old ways — on painted hides or ledger books — he captures history with a camera. When visiting home, or other reservations, he always enjoys meeting people and spending time with them, and recording these moments in images. He has learned to take good pictures to honor his subjects and knows it is important to follow cultural protocol, even as a tribal member. The process can be a slow one, but the time spent brings opportunities to visit and learn and often brings the unexpected to the photographs.

Textured Portraits: The Ken Blackbird Collection; Photography from the Buffalo Bill Center of the West is organized by the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming, with support from the Wyoming Arts Council; WESTAF, the Western States Arts Federation; Wyoming Humanities Council; and the National Endowment for the Arts.
UPCOMING EXHIBITION

Plains Indian Art: Created in Community

February 26 – August 27, 2017

The exhibition, Plains Indian Art: Created in Community, will explore the unparalleled talent of certain individuals and the special role of Plains artists in their communities. Highlighting Plains art as an expression of cultural tradition and community vibrancy, the exhibit focuses specifically on generational change in style and function and the innovative techniques used by various artists. Visitors will learn how art is created within Native American communities as well as understand the shifting cultural meanings of certain artistic expressions. This exhibition also celebrates the different approaches — from the curator, historian and artist — to understanding Native American art.

In the second and third quarters of the 19th century, Plains Indian culture reached a zenith of artistic expression and development. The re-introduction of the horse shortly after 1680 (when the Spanish territory formed in the south) and the introduction of firearms around 1720 (from French fur traders based in the Great Lakes area) gave the Plains Indians the mobility and the armaments needed to create a food surplus based primarily on buffalo hunting. In turn, the food surplus gave the Plains tribes the leisure time to create and excel in artistic expression. Some of the finest Plains Indian art of the 19th and early 20th centuries can be found in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In the vast collection of Gilcrease Museum are about 25,000 ethnographic items, many of which reflect the height of Plains cultural and artistic achievement of the 19th century. A Visiting Scholars Program at the Helmerich Center for American Research hosted a symposium on November 13, 2015, that focused on the study of the Plains Indian ethnographic collection at Gilcrease Museum and the private collection of Jon R. Stuart. Stuart, a longtime supporter of Gilcrease Museum, is currently serving as chair of the Gilcrease Museum National Advisory Council. He previously has served as vice chair of the Gilcrease National Board and is a past president of the Thomas Gilcrease Museum Association. The Stuart Family Foundation provided the lead gift in support of programming at the Helmerich Center for American Research at Gilcrease Museum. Stuart also has made gifts of fine art and ethnographic material to the museum’s collection.

Six scholars made presentations on a variety of topics related to the theme “Art and Artistry of Plains Indian Communities,” focusing on recently conducted research. All of the presentations looked at the various artistic media found in Plains Indian communities, from beadwork to ledger art drawing, analyzing not only tribal but also individual artistic styles.

Drum, From the Collection of Jon R. Stuart

Parfleche, Cheyenne, ca. 1900
rawhide, paint
GM 8926.100

Cradleboard
Wood, buckskin, sinew, glass beads, thread, copper alloy, iron tacks, twine, cloth and rawhide
GM 8426.628
The symposium brought together experts in the fields of Plains history and culture. They explained that beginning in the late 19th century, new and elaborate forms of artistic expression emerged. Arts and artists played a vital role in Plains cultural revitalization.

Among the speakers for the symposium and cocurators of the exhibition were Gaylord Torrence (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art), who discussed the tobacco bags and parfleche at Gilcrease Museum and the Jon R. Stuart collection; Emma Hansen (Buffalo Bill Historical Center), who analyzed the Cheyenne ledger books in the Gilcrease collection; and David Penney (Smithsonian), who examined the larger theme of tribal attribution. Duane King (Helmerich Center for American Research) explored the art of White Swan, a Crow Scout with Custer’s 7th Cavalry who survived the Battle of the Little Big Horn but was permanently disabled from his battle wounds and turned to art as a means of preserving the record of his military accomplishments. A contribution by Jennifer McKinney (Oklahoma State University) examined the photography and art associated with the 1862 Sioux uprising. The papers written for the symposium will serve as the storyline for the exhibition that will open at Gilcrease Museum in February 2017.

The papers presented at the symposium will be published in a highly illustrated companion volume for the exhibition. Plains Indian Art: Created in Community will guide museum visitors through an exploration of artworks by Plains women and men beginning with beadwork and quillwork. Beautifully crafted objects (such as dresses, baby carriers, and pipe bags) highlight the exceptional talent of Plains artists. The artwork of individuals from various Plains cultures will be represented, including Southern Cheyenne, Kiowa, Lakota and Crow, among many others. The exhibition also will feature sections devoted to pictographic war records, the Native American Church and outstanding contemporary American Indian artwork.
Kravis Discovery Center Renovation

The Kravis Discovery Center in Gilcrease Museum is undergoing a major overhaul, thanks to a generous gift from the Raymond and Bessie Kravis Foundation.

The reimagined Kravis Discovery Center will be rich with interactive technology and connectivity to the vast Gilcrease object database, Piciton, which will lend itself to a “deep dive” into the collection and provide users with a self-curating experience while here.

Working with TEQ4, a Brighton, UK-based technology firm specializing in immersive programming for museums, science centers and theme parks around the world, museum staff spent many hours refining the concepts and content for the Discovery Center’s interactives. The team is now working collaboratively to optimize the overall experience visitors will have when interacting with the technology.

Specifically, staff are developing the key stories that will help interpret select content from the Gilcrease collection. Thematic approaches are still being refined, but will incorporate distinct areas of the larger museum collection to engage target audiences in the art, culture and history that exist in the collection.

“We are thrilled that the new Kravis Discovery Center will be able to reach even more deeply into the Gilcrease collection and give us the opportunity to preview the future Gilcrease Museum through this one gallery enhancement. We would not be able to make this leap without the dedicated support of the Raymond and Bessie Kravis Foundation,” said James Pepper Henry, executive director.

Through comprehensive sessions with staff, TEQ4 has developed a design that comprises a series of ‘story pods’ placed within the existing Kravis Discovery Center. These pods will house interactive exhibit items and graphics to tell stories and impart information about the museum’s collection. Each pod will feature an animal, such as an eagle, bear or bison, that will serve as guides for visitors via interactive tablets. Stories will be based on Native cultures represented in the Gilcrease collection, and the Discovery Center’s existing artifact viewing drawers will remain in place, giving users the opportunity to connect directly with items in the Center, as well as virtually through technology-mediated interaction.

According to Pepper Henry, “When the Kravis Foundation funded the initial concept and build-out of our Discovery Center in the 90s, it became a model for a number of museums. In fact, some of the basic concepts implemented at Gilcrease can still be seen in other institutions. We believe that when completed, the new Kravis Discovery Center will have the same inspiring effect on the museum field all over again.”

The foundation also provided resources for Gilcrease staff to travel to a number of museums to sample new technologies and interpretive strategies, and evaluate their potential for inclusion in the re-imagined Discovery Center. These site visits proved fruitful in many ways, and the lessons learned will not only influence the new Discovery Center, but also in the expanded museum that was made possible by this year’s Vision 2025 tax extension.

“Our goal is to outfit the current Kravis Discovery Center with the new interactives in the summer of 2017, which will represent the first of two changes to the gallery. This will give the community a chance to test the technology and allow us to learn from their initial use of the renovated space. We can then make necessary changes as we plan for the expanded facility in the near future,” said Pepper Henry.

“The prospect of the new Kravis Discovery Center is energizing,” said Pepper Henry. “As we begin taking steps for the eventual museum expansion, we are able to use developments within the expanded Discovery Center to both influence and complement the larger project, which will most assuredly lead Gilcrease to a future that will amaze and inspire new generations. We are extremely grateful to the Kravis Foundation, and specifically George Kravis, who has championed this project tirelessly.”

Construction to modify the existing Discovery Center is already underway.

Conceptual renderings of the Kravis Discovery Center renovations.
Adding to the Collection
By Mark Dolph, Associate Curator of History, Gilcrease Museum

Thomas Gilcrease assembled a collection of Western art that many consider second to none. Works in the collection by artists such as Frederic Remington and Charles Russell define for many the essence of the American West — one filled with heroic as well as tragic figures and circumstances. But the creation of the West in our collective imaginations, and the role the West played in defining American national identity, didn’t end with the deaths of Remington and Russell. No, Remington and Russell were just part of a long continuum in the presentation of the West that continues to this day through not only paintings and literature, but also since its inception in the early 20th century, film. Likewise, important and significant additions to Gilcrease Museum’s collection did not end with Gilcrease’s death in 1962.

Thanks to generous donations, the museum’s world-class collection continues to grow. An example, recently gifted to the museum, is a collection of stereoscopic photographs taken during the filming of the 1930 movie The Big Trail. At first glance this addition to the collection may seem incongruent with advancing the museum’s goal of telling the many stories of the American experience. On the contrary, motion pictures, like no other medium, have helped define, for better or worse, accurately or otherwise, the West to worldwide audiences.

The donated photographs are stills taken during the filming of The Big Trail. It is likely that many, if not all of these photographs are one-of-a-kind images. Like the museum’s 101 Ranch collection, they are especially valuable in understanding how the West was presented to audiences around the world by way of popular film. The stills from The Big Trail will fit nicely in any future exhibit that examines the role Wild West shows and Western films played in shaping the mythology of the West.

So why get excited about this acquisition? The Big Trail is significant in several ways. In 2006, the Library of Congress deemed the film “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant,” and selected it for preservation in the National Film Registry. It was noted that “the plot of a trek along the Oregon Trail is aided immensely by the majestic sweep provided by the experimental Grandeur wide-screen [70 mm] process used in filming.” The Big Trail was the first big-budget outdoor spectacle of the sound era, made at the then-staggering cost of over $2 million. It was filmed on location in five western states, a very costly attempt at presenting the Oregon Trail migration as realistically as possible to moviegoing audiences of the day. Ironically, this big-budget widescreen epic was a box office flop. Most theater owners of the day refused to invest in the necessary projectors for the new widescreen format due to the financial impact and uncertainties of the Great Depression.

And then there was John Wayne. The Big Trail was Wayne’s first leading role, and the first film where he used the name John Wayne instead of Duke Morrison. The film’s director Raoul Walsh, a founding member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, first offered the lead role to Gary Cooper, who turned it down. Walsh then asked friend and fellow director John Ford for suggestions. Ford recommended the then-unknown Wayne because he “liked the looks of this new kid with a funny walk, like he owned the world.” Wayne would go on to star in many of the most iconic Westerns ever made, such as Stagecoach (1939), Fort Apache (1948), Red River (1948) and The Searchers (1954) to name a few. But first there was The Big Trail, and now those behind-the-scenes images are a part of the Gilcrease collection.
**Calendar of Events**

**January**

3 & 17 Open Studio for Adult Artists, 1-7 p.m. Zarrow Center. Bring your own supplies. Free.

6 First Friday Art Crawl with Gilcrease Museum at Central Library, 4-30 to 3 p.m. For families with children ages 3-15.

6 First Friday Art Crawl, 6-9 p.m. Zarrow Center. Enjoy the Brady Arts District. Free.

7 Mini Masters, 10-11:30 a.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

10 Mini Masters, Noon-1 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

10 Art Explorations, 10 a.m.-Noon, Gallery 18. Free.

12 ZACH: Teen Time, 10-11:30 a.m. Zarrow Center. Teen art program designed especially for the homeschooling community. $12 members, $15 not-yet members.

12 ZACH: Zarrow Art Classes for Homeschool, 1:30-3 p.m. Zarrow Center. For ages 6-12: $10 members, $12 not-yet members.

12 Music On Exhibit, Performances of musical styles that are reflected in the art and historical time periods of the collection. 2 p.m. Tom Gilcrease Jr. Auditorium.

13 Art Explorations, 10 a.m.-Noon Gallery 18. Free.

15 Mini Masters, Noon-1 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.


16 Extended Pose Figure Drawing, 1-3 p.m. Zarrow Center. Registration required. $25.

20 Family Drop-in Day, Noon-1 p.m. Zarrow Center. For ages 6-12. $10 members, $12 not-yet members.

20 Sunday Draws, 1-2:30 p.m. For ages 8-10 and Noon-1 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.


21 Extended Pose Figure Drawing, 1-3 p.m. Zarrow Center. Registration required. $25.

21 Music in the Museum, Tulsa Symphony Orchestra, 1-3 p.m. Enjoy small ensemble performances spanning four centuries of music. Helmerich Hall.

22 Sunday Frieday, Noon-4 p.m. For families with children ages 3-15. Free.

22 First Friday Art Crawl, 6-9 p.m. Zarrow Center. Enjoy the Brady Arts District and view Abstract Art: A Selection of Abstract Works by American Artists. Free.

23 Mini Masters, 10:30-11:30 a.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

23 Sunday Draws, 1-2:30 p.m. For ages 8 and up. $5 members, $8 not-yet members.

23 ZACH: Zarrow Art Classes for Homeschool, 10-11:30 a.m. or 1:30-3 p.m. Zarrow Center. For ages 6-12. $10 members, $12 not-yet members.

23 Exhibition Opening, A members-only opening of Plains Indian Art. Created in Community Reception begins at 6 p.m., and galleries will remain open until 8 p.m.

23 Mini Masters, 10-11 a.m. and Noon-1:00 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

23 Plains Indian Exhibition, Opening Lecture, 2 p.m. Curator Emma Hansen will talk about the exhibition.

3 **March**

3 First Friday Art Crawl, 6-9 p.m. Zarrow Center. Enjoy the Brady Arts District and view Abstract Art: A Selection of Abstract Works by American Artists. Free.

4 From My Point of View, Tony and the Native American Church. Daniel Swan, Ph.D., will discuss the sacramental use of peyote cactus. Noon. Gallery 18. Free.

4 Mini Masters, 10-11:30 a.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

5 First Friday Art Crawl, 6-9 p.m. Zarrow Center. Enjoy the Brady Arts District and view Abstract Art: A Selection of Abstract Works by American Artists. Free.

5 Mini Masters, 10-11 a.m. and Noon-1 p.m. Zarrow Center. For ages 6-12: $10 members, $12 not-yet members.

6 First Friday Art Crawl, 6-9 p.m. Zarrow Center. Enjoy the Brady Arts District and view Abstract Art: A Selection of Abstract Works by American Artists. Free.


7 Open Studio for Adult Artists, 4-7 p.m. Zarrow Center. Bring your own supplies. Free.

7 ZACH: Teen Time, 10-11:30 a.m. Zarrow Center. Teen art program designed especially for the homeschooling community. $12 members, $15 not-yet members.

7 Museums Babies, 10:30-11:30 a.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

8 Mini Masters, 10-11 a.m. and Noon-1:00 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

8 Plains Indian Exhibition, Opening Lecture, 2 p.m. Curator Emma Hansen will talk about the exhibition.

10 Mini Masters, 10-11:30 a.m. Zarrow Center. Teen art program designed especially for the homeschooling community. $12 members, $15 not-yet members.

10 Arts Explorations, 10 a.m.-Noon Gallery 18. Free.

11 Music On Exhibit, Performances of musical styles that are reflected in the art and historical time periods of the collection. 2 p.m. Tom Gilcrease Jr. Auditorium.

11 Art Explorations, 10 a.m.-Noon Gallery 18. Free.

15 Art Explorations, 10 a.m.-Noon Gallery 18. Free.

15 Mini Masters, 10-11:30 a.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

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16 Art Explorations, 10 a.m.-Noon Gallery 18. Free.

16 Mini Masters, Noon-1 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

16 Museum Babies, 10:30-11:30 a.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

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17 Extended Pose Figure Drawing, 1-3 p.m. Zarrow Center. Registration required. $25.

17 Music in the Museum, Tulsa Symphony Orchestra, 1-3 p.m. Enjoy small ensemble performances spanning four centuries of music. Helmerich Hall.

19 Sunday Days, Noon-4 p.m. For families with children ages 3-15. Free.

21 First Friday Art Crawl, 6-9 p.m. Zarrow Center. Enjoy the Brady Arts District and view Abstract Art: A Selection of Abstract Works by American Artists. Free.

21 Mini Masters, 10-11 a.m. and Noon-1:00 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

22 Jazz Night, Performer TBA. Vista Room. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Galleries remain open until 8 p.m. Buffet dinner available. $5 per person.

23 Introduction to Basketmaking, 1-3 p.m. led by Teresa Glosey, teaching artist. $12 members, $15 not-yet members. For adults and children ages 7-16.

23 ZACH: Zarrow Art Classes for Homeschool, 10-11:30 a.m. or 1:30-3 p.m. Zarrow Center. For ages 6-12: $10 members, $12 not-yet members.

23 Music On Exhibit, Performances of musical styles that are reflected in the art and historical time periods of the collection. 2 p.m. Tom Gilcrease Jr. Auditorium.

23 Art Explorations, 10 a.m.-Noon Gallery 18. Free.

23 Mini Masters, Noon-1 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.

24 Spring Break Family Drop-in Day, Members Only. A special day of art activities and refreshments. 1-4 p.m.

26 Spring Break Family Drop-in Day, All are welcome for a special day of art activities. 1-4 p.m.


**Student Art Exhibitions**

Creative Learning Center Gallery

January 7 – 29

Edison Preparatory School

January 31 – February 26

Catholic Diocese Middle/High Schools

February 28 – March 26

Regent Preparatory School

March 20 – April 23

Catholic Diocese Elementary Schools
Tuckabache: Founding Citizen of Tulsa

J.D. Colbert

The Midland Valley Trail. The Gathering Place. Maple Ridge. Council Oak Tree. Tulsa Coal Mines. These and other historic places all trace their roots to Tuckabache. The story of Tuckabache is the story of Tulsa and will be told at the annual Gillies’ Gilcrease Forum, in the Tom Gilcrease Auditorium, March 17, 2017, 1 p.m. by noted historian and storyteller J.D. Colbert.

A member of the Locvpolv Tribal Town of the Creek Nation, Tuckabache walked to Indian Territory on the Trail of Tears and participated in the initial founding of Tulsa in 1836 at the Council Oak Tree. Residing in a log cabin at the intersection of Hazel and Cincinnati, he lived to see the transition of Tulsa from Creek town to Oil Capital of the World. Upon his death at the age of 100, the Tulsa World wrote: “Like the death of Geronimo, the demise of Tuckabache was the passing of one of the famous Indian characters of the Southwest.” Famed Tulsa storyteller and scholar J.D. Colbert (Creek/Chickasaw) will talk about this intriguing person and the history he created that is now shared by all Tulsans.

In addition to being an avid student of the early history of Tulsa and Indian Territory, Colbert is president and CEO of Holisso Hakv Inc., a banking and financial services consulting and advisory firm. He is a recognized expert on matters related to commercial banking and Indian tribes. He also is active in legal, regulatory and policy formation in the areas of banking, community development, economic development and Federal Indian policy. He holds an undergraduate degree in business management from the University of Oklahoma and master’s degrees from Harvard and Johns Hopkins universities.