WEST MEXICO
Ritual and Identity
June 26 – November 6, 2016
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DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Vision Tulsa Vote Critical to Future of Gilcrease Museum

Dear Members and Friends,
It’s hard to believe that nearly a year has passed since I became your executive director at Gilcrease Museum. The year has certainly been an eventful one, and we’ve laid the groundwork for many exciting initiatives ahead.

One of my first priorities after taking the helm was to develop a strategic plan that would position the museum for the next generation and beyond. This extensive strategic planning exercise identified current challenges and the necessary and essential elements to improve the visitor experience at the museum. Priorities include a focus on relevancy, sustainability and audience development. The strategic plan discussions reinforced our position of lobbying for Gilcrease Museum’s inclusion in the Vision Tulsa initiative.

On April 5, 2016, the citizens of Tulsa will consider the path for its future through a public vote on the renewal of the Vision 2025 sales tax extension. This initiative includes funding for public safety, streets and transportation and economic development. The package strikes a balance of addressing Tulsa’s public safety and street improvement needs while laying the foundation for growth in economic development and quality of life projects.

The mayor and City Council unanimously agree that Gilcrease Museum, the city’s most valuable asset, is worthy of inclusion in the economic development portion of the Tulsa Vision package for $65 million. They see the potential for Gilcrease Museum to be an anchor for cultural tourism, attracting an additional 500,000 visitors each year to Tulsa to experience one of America’s finest art and archival collections. These additional visitors will not only be a boost to sales tax revenues for the city through additional nights at area hotels, shopping and eating at local restaurants, but also will spur economic development in the museum’s vicinity. The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, has seen more than two million visitors since opening four years ago and has been a great economic driver for that community. The impact of this endeavor is an example of the success Gilcrease Museum hopes to achieve.

The Gilcrease Museum Vision Plan includes capital improvements to the existing facility, a 100,000-square-foot building expansion to include a state-of-the-art traveling exhibition space, an extended permanent collection exhibition gallery, expanded children’s discovery space, expanded and improved parking and many other amenities that will vastly improve the visitor experience. These improvements and upgrades will keep Gilcrease Museum competitive with other great cultural institutions in our region for the next several generations. Our managing partner, The University of Tulsa, has committed to raise an additional $50 million in private donations to create an operational endowment for the museum, ensuring its long-term sustainability.

We are on the cusp of a transformative moment in the life of Gilcrease Museum. We encourage our Tulsa citizens and museum patrons to support this initiative to help Tulsa and Gilcrease Museum realize their true potential. Please join us in making this transformation a reality. Vote yes on April 5!

Kindest regards,

James Pepper Henry
Executive Director

A yes vote for Vision Tulsa means the support of a well-balanced economic development package including funding all things essential to Tulsa’s growth:
- Public Safety
- Streets and Transportation
- Education support
- Water in the river and a number of projects that increase jobs and the quality of life in Tulsa including a transformed and re-imagined Gilcrease Museum, without raising taxes!

VOTE YES APRIL 5
The symposium *From Removal to Rebirth: The Cherokee Nation in Indian Territory*, will be held at the Helmerich Center for American Research on April 22 & 23, 2016. Nationally known scholars who have specialized in the study of Cherokee history will convene for the two-day event to present findings of recent research of the museum’s own collections.

The symposium will explore the resilience of the Cherokee people during one of the most tumultuous periods in the nation’s history. From 1828 to 1866, in the face of forced relocation, internal factionalism, and repeated threats to sovereignty, the Cherokees created a strong central government, a national school system, and thriving business and cultural communities.

The period covered coincides with the tenure of John Ross as principal chief, whose papers are housed in the Helmerich Center for American Research at the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art.

Steven Inskipp, host of National Public Radio’s *Morning Edition* and author of the book *Jacksonland* about President Andrew Jackson’s relentless efforts to dispossess the Cherokees of their homeland, will be the symposium’s keynote speaker.

Other speakers include Candessa Tehee, Ph.D., Cherokee Heritage Center; Julie Reed, Ph.D., Department of History, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Rose Stremlau, Ph.D., Department of History, University of North Carolina, Pembroke; Cécile Ganteaume, M.A., Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian; Roy Boney, Jr., M.A., Cherokee Nation Language Program; Sharon Baker, Ph.D., Department of Urban Education, The University of Tulsa; and Natalie Panher, Ph.D., Helmerich Center for American Research. The papers presented at the symposium will help inform an exhibition on the same subject at Gilcrease Museum in 2017.

Registration for the Cherokee symposium is required for attendance. Seating is limited. For more information, contact Karol Ellington, Helmerich Center for American Research, at karol-ellington@utulsa.edu, or call 918-631-6412.
EXHIBITION FEATURE

WEST MEXICO
Ritual and Identity

Crude. Strong. Exotic and enigmatic describe the solid and hollow ceramic figures from western Mexico. West Mexico: Ritual and Identity presents an innovative archaeology exhibition that also includes perspectives from contemporary art, art history, anthropology and various materials testing sciences. The exhibition, set to open June 26 at Gilcrease Museum, sheds new light on one of Mexico’s sophisticated ancient cultures.

Organized by Gilcrease Museum, the exhibition will feature a spectacular selection of ceramic figures and vessels from the Gilcrease collection, augmented by items from public and private collections.

Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo saw these and other prehistoric figures as symbols of the rich ancient cultures that provided the foundation of modern Mexico. As artists, they appreciated the strong features and ingenious forms used, and they incorporated these images in their own works.

Cultures such as the Olmec, Aztec, Maya and Toltec are widely known. They too have distinctive styles that depict the kings and gods of their own worlds. Perhaps because of their monumental stone architecture of the earlier cultures or direct contact with the Aztecs by Spanish conquistadors and chroniclers, these cultures are more familiar to today’s audiences.

The western region of Mexico, including Jalisco, Colima, Nayarit and portions of Michoacán and Sinaloa, is less familiar. Yet, this region was also the home of important and innovative ancient cultures. About 1300 BCE, people began living in large towns as well as small farming hamlets. While the cultures of the central Valley of Mexico built square platform pyramids and temples, in western Mexico, towns and villages were designed on a circular plan. Circular pyramids were surrounded with a circular plaza, which was encircled by houses and temples on raised platforms. Long, narrow, stone-lined ball courts indicate that the inhabitants played a version of the Mesoamerican ballgame that was both sport and ritual.

For centuries, people thrived on the ecologically rich and diverse resources in the region. These cultures were already ancient and the sites were long abandoned by the time the Spanish soldiers, adventurers and priests came to the western lands.

In the last century and a half, local Mexican farmers found that ruins also included large and sometimes deep shaft and tomb complexes. As is true in many parts of the world, the dead sometimes were accompanied by many kinds of finely made objects. Because of the elaborate tombs and the enigmatic ceramic figures found within, the cultures of western Mexico were called the Shaft Tomb Culture by 20th century archaeologists; a name that these ancients would not have used to describe themselves.

Ceramic human figures adorned with brightly colored clothing, tattoos and body paint provide an intimate look at men and women of the culture, along with a variety of animals, birds, fish and reptiles. In the 1940s and ’50s, Thomas Gilcrease amassed a collection of more than 500 ceramic figures and vessels from West Mexico, including two significant human figures, each more than 30 inches in height, and among the finest figures from the region.

Recently, archaeologists from many countries, including Mexico and the United States, have begun to take another look at the people, sites and material cultures of this region. Archaeologists and other researchers are looking beyond the surface and asking questions about what these figures mean, and what they can tell us about these ancient societies. Research in museum collections and from science labs—along with contextual data from archaeological excavations—provides new insights, yet there is still much that we don’t understand about how these people lived or why these cultures seemed to disappear.
As is true with virtually all archaeological research and exhibitions, there are ethical, legal and authenticity issues involved. This exhibition explores these sensitive issues and discusses how research, exhibitions and museum practices are impacted.

*West Mexico: Ritual and Identity* opens a new chapter in archaeological exhibitions. It incorporates multiple new research perspectives and techniques in the analysis of the artifacts in an attempt to shed light on the meaning and use of these extraordinary objects. The exhibition acknowledges the problems of working with objects that have been torn from their context and the difficulties thus created. It also acknowledges that in addition to complete and genuine objects, many archaeological objects, particularly ceramic figures, have been repaired, modified, altered or forged over the years. Yet, instead of dismissing these objects, these issues are seen as part of the exciting challenge of working with museum collections.

The third part of the exhibition highlights the ongoing link between antiquities and modern artists who are still awed and inspired to use the imagery, themes and forms from ancient times in their own works. This idea may have been new in Rivera’s and Kahlo’s time, but it is no less important today.

Highlighting the artistry, incorporating new research and connecting the past with the present are the ways that *West Mexico: Ritual and Identity* helps humanize the ancients and to reveal the research behind the exhibition.
On February 29, 2016, the centennial of the birth of Oklahoma sculptor Willard Stone was celebrated. To recognize the occasion, Gilcrease Museum presents *Following the Grain: A Centennial Celebration of Willard Stone*, an exhibition highlighting Stone’s unique artwork and the legacy of his collaborations with the museum.

In 1945, recognizing the sculptor’s potential, Thomas Gilcrease offered Stone a position as the first artist-in-residence for the Gilcrease Foundation. A three-year appointment that began in 1946, the residency provided a stipend of $200 per month with a year-end bonus of $600, giving Stone the opportunity to concentrate on his art without the worries of supporting his growing family. The two men sealed the agreement with a customary handshake, beginning a mutually beneficial arrangement: all the art that Stone created during his residency would belong to the museum, and he was able to earn a steady income to care for his family. With the freedom to create, Stone developed a distinct streamlined style of woodcarving influenced by modern Art Deco design and his own Oklahoma heritage.

Stone would later reflect: “Tom Gilcrease gave me the chance to find out what I could do with wood and clay and to develop a style of my own. I would not have been recognized had it not been for him because he gave me the courage to try. His criticism helped me to correct erroneous approaches to my subjects. He had a good eye for art, and if I was working on a carving, he would not say too much, but when he did voice an opinion he would comment only on the good points. His omission of the bad ones told me what he wanted to convey.”

Stone credited Thomas Gilcrease as the single greatest influence on his artwork. Given his impact on Stone’s art career, Gilcrease Museum is the perfect venue to celebrate Stone’s remarkable sculptures. *Following the Grain: A Centennial Celebration of Willard Stone* features more than 30 carved sculptures as well as several drawings, photographs and correspondence between Thomas Gilcrease and Stone. Works in the exhibition represent several of the themes that inspired Stone’s art, including depictions of the natural world, Native American figures and carvings that speak to world events and politics of the 1940s. By highlighting the unique forms of Stone’s work, *Following the Grain: A Centennial Celebration of Willard Stone* reveals how this singular Oklahoma sculptor transformed “whittling” into exquisite art.
The Art of Alfredo Zalce

Alfredo Zalce was a painter, printmaker, sculptor and jeweler, a practitioner of almost every aesthetic medium at one point or another throughout his 75-year career. In essence, he was an artist. Zalce was born in Patzcuaro, Michoacan, Mexico, in 1908 and was introduced to art through his parents, both of whom were photographers and encouraged their son's artistic abilities. Their influence would prove helpful while Zalce attended the art school Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes. He supported himself by working as a photographer at this time. He received some notice early in his career and exhibited works in Seville, Spain; Chicago, Illinois; and throughout Mexico. Zalce dedicated himself to representing the historic art of Mexico. His heritage and cultural identity gave him a unique opportunity to accurately depict the changes and struggles taking place in Mexico during his lifetime. With his murals and prints, Zalce hoped to inspire people to get involved in shaping the course of Mexican politics. Many of his prints have a political message, illustrating the corruption and injustice of the government and the conditions in his country.

Although Zalce was trained traditionally at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, he developed his own artistic language while working in a regional style. In 1930, he founded a painting school in Taxco, Mexico. He attended a lithograph workshop instructed by Emilio Amero in 1931 and printed several lithographs that year. While teaching for the Mexican Secretariat of Public Education in 1932, he began painting al fresco murals for area public schools, a project he would work on for the next 18 years. His first one-man show, featuring prints and paintings, occurred in 1932 at the Sala de Arte de la Secretaria de Educacion Publica. The following year he exhibited in Chicago.

Alfredo Zalce, Mercado de Flores, 1996
oil on canvas, GM 01.2553

Alfredo Zalce, Coscomate, 1946
tempera, GM 0247.1477

Alfredo Zalce, Creacion, 1982, etching, GM 1400.903
In 1945, he produced his most famous print portfolio, Estampas de Yucatan, which included *Rio Palizada*. Three years later a major exhibition of his work appeared at the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes and then traveled to the Museo Michoacano de Morelia. In 1950, he became director of Escuela Popular de Bellas Artes de Morelia, where he was based for the rest of his life.

Zalce worked with many different groups of artists throughout his career and was influenced by their various techniques. He embraced the ideals of the Mexican School of Painting, but also allowed himself to break away from prescribed schools of thought. He sought out artists and groups with political agendas, like the Taller de la Gráfica Popular (Workshop of the People’s Graphics), which worked out of a small print shop in Mexico City producing multiple-run linoleum and woodcut prints. The group’s intensity was somewhat exhausting for Zalce, who has been described as “such a gentle person, but really stubborn,” though he enjoyed their study of works by European artists. Zalce was particularly interested in the forms and methods developed by Picasso.

The media through which Zalce moved so fluidly to express his own self-described “Realist Lyricism” were affected by circumstance, opportunity and personal connection.

Alfredo Zalce is loved by Mexicans for his ability to portray a message that resounded with people. He continued to create until the end of his life in 2003. Zalce’s career spanned many years and many different types of materials, but he will be remembered as one of the foremost Mexican artists of the 20th century.

Community activists and patrons of the arts in Tulsa, George Schnetzer and Mary Lhevine are familiar faces to the Gilcrease Museum and University of Tulsa family.

The couple has been immersed in the civic and cultural fabric of the Tulsa community for many years and have been members of Gilcrease Museum for nearly three decades. And, appropriately, they have a great love for museums. On a recent visit to Gilcrease, they talked about the many museums they’ve visited over the years.

“Any time we visit a university and they have a museum, we see it,” said Lhevine.

“We’ve been to the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, which doesn’t hold a candle to Gilcrease, Crystal Bridges and many others,” said Schnetzer.

The couple took a recent trip to Egypt and visited museums there. But they always come back to Gilcrease, a museum they consider one of the best in the world and one that deserves to be more widely recognized and known as such.

“At Gilcrease, you come here as a child. And you keep coming, and coming and coming,” said Lhevine. “Each time I may see something I didn’t see before,” she said. “Things do change here.”

One of Schnetzer’s favorite paintings is Thomas Moran’s Shoshone Falls on the Snake River, and he says that his favorite exhibition at Gilcrease was the Thomas Moran exhibition in 1998. That exhibition, coupled with Philbrook’s J.M.W. Turner show, were highlights of all exhibitions he ever viewed.

“And seeing both the work of Turner and Moran at the same time, you know, I think Moran was better,” Schnetzer said with a grin.

When asked about her favorite artwork, Lhevine said, “How could you have one favorite piece?”

A tour of the recent Birds in Art exhibit brought stories of their travels to the Galápagos Islands, and a stroll through Focus on Favorites did bring Lhevine to point out the iconic Black Hawk and His Son Whirling Thunder by John Wesley Jarvis as one of her favorites.

Because Gilcrease Museum is a point of pride for many Tulsans and Oklahomans, Schnetzer and Lhevine always bring out-of-town guests to visit Gilcrease.

“You’ve got some great stuff here,” Schnetzer said as he looked around the Favorites gallery featuring a Moran, the Jarvis, William R. Leigh’s Grand Canyon and Alfred Bierstadt’s Sierra Nevada Morning. Painting to a spot in Sierra Nevada Morning, Schnetzer said, “That looks like a great camping spot right there.”

As they were leaving Gilcrease after their most recent visit, the couple promised they would return soon. Just as they have for the last 30 years. Who knows, you may even find Schnetzer camping in a gallery.
Calendar of Events

APRIL
1 First Friday Art Crawl, 6-9 p.m. Zarrow Center. Enjoy the Brady Arts District and view Art of Political American Political Cartoons. Free.
2 Mini Masters, 10:30-11:30 a.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.
3 Sunday Draws, 1-2:30 p.m. For ages 2 and up. $5 members, $8 not-yet members.
5 Music on Exhibit, Tulsa Symphony Orchestra Ensemble. 2 p.m., Tom Gilcrease Jr. Auditorium.
6, 11 Mini Masters, 10-11 a.m. or Noon-1 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.
5 & 12 Open Studio for Adult Artists, 4-7 p.m. Zarrow Center. Bring your own supplies. Free.
7 Kids Dig Books, 10-11 a.m. or Noon-1 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.
7, 8, 14-16 Museum Babies, 10:30-11:30 a.m. For ages birth to not-yet 3, accompanied by caregiver.
10 Sunday Matinee Film, Appalachian: A History of Mountains and People, Photo 14/2, 1:30 p.m. Tom Gilcrease Jr. Auditorium.
12 Art Explorations, 10 a.m.-Noon. Gallery 10/The Study. Free.
14 ZACH: Teen Time, 10-11:30 a.m. Zarrow Center. Teen art program designed especially for the homeschooling community. $10 members, $12 not-yet members.
14 ZACH: Zarrow Art Classes for Homeschool, 1:30-3 p.m. For ages 6-12. Zarrow Center. $10 members, $12 not-yet members.
16 Extended Pose Figure Drawing, 1-3 p.m. Zarrow Center. Registration required. $25.
17 Sunday, Noon-1 p.m. Families with children ages 3-15. Free.
22 & 23 Watercolor Basics with Romney Nesbitt. 1-4 p.m. Zarrow Center. Learn basic watercolor techniques in this class for beginners and up. All supplies included. $75 members, $85 not-yet members.
23 ZACH: Zarrow Art Classes for Homeschool, 10:11 a.m. or 1:30-3 p.m. For ages 6-12. Zarrow Center. $10 members, $12 not-yet members.
23 ZACH: Zarrow Art Classes for Homeschool, 10-11 a.m. or 1:30-3 p.m. For ages 6-12. Zarrow Center. $10 members, $12 not-yet members.
24 Wine and Design: Spring Paintings, 6-8 p.m. Zarrow Center. Indiana artist Donna Whitsitt will demonstrate easy techniques to create a colorful spring watercolor. $25 members, $30 not-yet members.
25 Lunch Lecture, “Street Level”-C. Todd Larsen, Ph.D, Tulsa Botanic Gardens president and CEO will discuss regional gardens and public garden activities.
25 First Friday Art Crawl, 6-8:30 p.m. Zarrow Center. Enjoy the Brady Arts District and view Street Level: Photographs by Mike Simon. Free.
25-26 Mother’s Day Jewelry Sale, 10 a.m.-Noon. Off all jewelry in the museum store. Free.
25 Sunday Matinee Film, Appalachian: A History of Mountains and People, Photo 14/2, 1:30 p.m. Tom Gilcrease Jr. Auditorium.
26 Art Explorations, 10 a.m.-Noon. Gallery 10/The Study. Free.
27, 28 Mini Masters, 10-11 a.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.
28 ZACH: Zarrow Art Classes for Homeschool, 10-11:30 a.m. or 1:30-3 p.m. For ages 6-12. Zarrow Center. $10 members, $12 not-yet members.
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29 Sunday Draws, 1-2:30 p.m. For ages 8 and up. $5 members, $8 not-yet members.
29, 30 Mini Masters, 10-11 a.m. or Noon-1 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.
30 ZACH: Zarrow Art Classes for Homeschool, 10-11:30 a.m. or 1:30-3 p.m. For ages 6-12. Zarrow Center. $10 members, $12 not-yet members.
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31 ZACH: Zarrow Art Classes for Homeschool, 1:30-3 p.m. For ages 6-12. Zarrow Center. $10 members, $12 not-yet members.

MAY
1 Sunday Draws, 1-2:30 p.m. For ages 8 and up. $5 members, $8 not-yet members.
1 Music on Exhibit, Pina and Will Anderson. 2 p.m., Tom Gilcrease Jr. Auditorium.
3 & 17 Open Studio for Adult Artists, 4-7 p.m. Zarrow Center. Bring your own supplies. Free.
5 Kids Dig Books, 10-11 a.m. or Noon-1 p.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.
10 First Friday Art Crawl, 6-8 p.m. Zarrow Center. Discover the healing powers of creativity in this class designed especially for veterans and their families and taught by a licensed art therapist. Free, but registration is required. Call 918-631-4402.
12 Mini Masters, 10:30-11:30 a.m. For ages 3-6, accompanied by caregiver.
13 Sunday Matinee Film, Appalachian: A History of Mountains and People, Photo 14/2, 1:30 p.m. Tom Gilcrease Jr. Auditorium.
VISION TULSA AND GILCREASE MUSEUM

Gilcrease Museum has a $65 million capital project that is part of the Vision Tulsa referendum to be presented to Tulsa voters on April 5, 2016.

The benefits of a reimagined and expanded Gilcrease Museum are great and many — attracting an additional 500,000 visitors to Tulsa, expanding tourism for the local community and contributing to the local economy via sales tax and other investments. Enhancing Gilcrease Museum would put this major asset to work for the residents of Tulsa. Studies have shown that for every $1 invested in museums and other cultural organizations, $7 is returned in tax revenues.*

The last expansion of the museum was completed in 1987. Now is the time to reinvest in this special Tulsa treasure. With Vision Tulsa funding, planned improvements at Gilcrease Museum include a 100,000-square-foot expansion of the museum, grand entry and great hall, children’s discovery space, new state-of-the-art traveling exhibition space, extended permanent collection exhibition space, and more amenities to enhance the visitor experience.

Vision Tulsa is not a new tax, but an extension of one that has been in place since 2003. The 0.6 percent Vision 2025 sales tax has raised more than $645 million for development, including the BOK Center, Tulsa Parks, the Oklahoma Aquarium, street improvements and other projects.

A yes vote on April 5 can transform Gilcrease Museum into the world-class facility our city-owned treasure deserves.

VOTE YES APRIL 5

*Americans for the Arts