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FAMily Discovery Center Illustrator Wins Multiple Awards Ahead of Exhibit's First Anniversary

OKLAHOMA CITY (Sept. 14, 2026) – UK-based illustrator Mark Oliver was recently honored twice over at the World Illustration Awards for his work on the FAMily Discovery Center at First Americans Museum (FAM), the museum's newest attraction, which opened in September 2025.

Selected from more than 4,500 entries from 83 countries, Oliver was named the Overall Professional Award Winner and the Professional Site Specific category winner for his FAMily Discovery Center illustrations.

"I can imagine stepping into this learning space and being completely immersed in a fun, engaging, larger-than-life pop-up book environment," said World Illustration Awards adjudicator Emily Malins. "The depth of research combined with such creativity brings an important subject to life in a way that feels playful, accessible and memorable, demonstrating the power of site-specific illustration to transform public learning spaces."

The FAMily Discovery Center combines hands-on play, immersive storytelling and Oliver's award-winning visuals to create a forest alive with First American values and Oklahoma's natural wonders where guests of all ages engage in interactive, sensory-rich learning that deepens their relationship with the living world.

"I appreciate all the research Mark did to ensure all the flora and fauna are Oklahoma-specific and imbued with a sense of imagination. The FAMily Discovery Center is an engaging learning environment for our visitors and environmental enthusiasts alike," said FAM executive director Dr. Kelli Mosteller (Citizen Potawatomi Nation).

Oliver worked alongside FAMily Discovery Center co-curators Shoshana Wasserman (Thlopthlocco Tribal Town/Muscogee) and Kimberly Rodriguez (Muscogee/Oglala Sioux), exhibition designers at Storyline Studio, and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry to illustrate 114 Oklahoma plants, animals and ecosystems for the two-story, 5,000-square-foot exhibition.

“Mark didn’t simply illustrate this space—he helped bring an entire world to life,” said Wasserman. “The process was guided by our cultural knowledge and context, Mark’s mastery of illustration and technical skills, and the design vision of Storyline Studio, all working together to create a magical pop-up-book world where families explore and discover together.

“The project's underlying philosophy that 'We Are All Connected' is both pertinent and relevant,” said Oliver. “Taking six years from initial brief to completion, I am proud to have been instrumental in its success.”

The announcement of this award comes just one week before the one-year anniversary of the FAMily Discovery Center’s grand opening at FAM, underscoring the uniqueness of the exhibition’s design and adding excitement to the milestone.

Open until 4 p.m. on the museum’s operating days, the FAMily Discovery Center experience is included in the general admission price. Plan your visit at famok.org.

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ABOUT FAM

First Americans Museum celebrates our shared American history through the collective stories of 39 distinct tribal nations in Oklahoma today. The museum promotes awareness and educates the broader public about the unique cultures, diversity, history, contributions, and resilience of the First Americans. The 175,000 sq. ft. museum is located at 659 First Americans Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73129.

ABOUT WIA

The World Illustration Awards is a global celebration of illustration. The Association of Illustrators has run a juried illustration competition since 1976. The latest incarnation, the World Illustration Awards in partnership with the Directory of Illustration, has been going strong and growing since 2015. World Illustration Awards focuses on supporting and celebrating creativity internationally, by connecting illustrators with their peers and the global illustration industry.