First Americans Museum Receives New Getty Grant to Advance Museum Interpretation Practices

OKLAHOMA CITY (Oct. 30, 2026) – First Americans Museum (FAM) has been awarded $300,000 from Getty's latest initiative, "New Interpretations," a new grant program to strengthen visitor-centered approaches to the interpretation of artworks in museums worldwide.

Named one of 11 recipients in its pilot round of funding, FAM will utilize the grant to deepen connections between visitors and the exhibitions displayed in its Community Gallery. Free and open to the public, this gallery presents temporary exhibitions to represent different aspects of Native life as told through the arts and cultures of the 39 Tribal Nations in Oklahoma.

"Museums play a vital role in helping people explore the resonance and complexity of our shared world history and of our present moment," said Heather E. MacDonald, senior program officer at the Getty Foundation. "These dynamic projects reaffirm the importance of museums as trusted public institutions and will help visitors access the multitude of meanings that art objects can hold."

FAM centers Indigenous authority in its exhibition and programming strategies, guided by principles of rhetorical sovereignty, shared authority, and a values-based framework centered on respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationship. The new funding will support this endeavor through three full rotations of the Community Gallery, including the current exhibition, *By the Dawn's Early Light: Oklahoma Tribal Flag Songs*, an upcoming exhibition on Indigenous rodeo opening in January 2027, and an exhibition on Wichita architecture opening in late May 2027.

"Getty's investment in FAM is deeply encouraging. They recognized the Community Gallery as an incubator for good curatorial practices, fostering work that can be modeled for other institutions. Their sponsorship supports our continued commitment to serving the 39 Tribal Nations in Oklahoma with accurate and meaningful representation," said Dr. heather ahtone (Choctaw/Chickasaw Nation), FAM curatorial affairs director.

The grant will also fund key museum audience research in preparation for a forthcoming exhibition. This year-long study will help shape an inaugural planning convening and new artistic and interpretative approaches for the exhibition.

"The award from Getty reflects the importance of FAM's work in our tribal communities and for the larger museum sector. Their support allows us to better understand our audiences while innovating new interpretation and evaluation practices," said Adrienne Lalli Hills (Wyandotte Nation), FAM learning and community engagement director.

New Interpretations grants are awarded on an annual basis and are open to museums and visual arts nonprofits worldwide of all sizes and types, but with a focus on visual artworks.

Other pilot grantees include Walker Art Center; Queens Museum; Leeum Museum of Art, in partnership with M+; Manchester Museum, The University of Manchester; Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; Fowler Museum at UCLA; Denver Art Museum; Baltimore Museum of Art; the Australian Centre for the Moving Image and the Association for Art Museum Interpretation.

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About First Americans Museum
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. Learn more at famok.org.

About Getty
Getty advances art's meaning and impact—bringing people together to preserve the past, inspire the present, and shape the future.

The Getty Foundation fulfills the philanthropic mission of the Getty Trust by supporting individuals and institutions committed to advancing the greater understanding and preservation of the visual arts in Los Angeles and throughout the world. Through strategic grant initiatives, the Foundation strengthens art history as a global discipline, promotes the interdisciplinary practice of conservation, increases access to museum and archival collections, and develops current and future leaders in the visual arts. It carries out its work in collaboration with the other Getty Programs to ensure that they individually and collectively achieve maximum effect. Additional information is available at getty.edu/foundation.