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Chickasaw art exhibitions open March 1

Chickasaw Country, Okla.— New artwork from two Chickasaw artists will open on exhibit at the Chickasaw Visitor Center in Sulphur and the Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center in Davis beginning Friday, March 1, 2024.

Donna Courtney, a Chickasaw artist and Chickasaw Nation employee, will exhibit her artwork at the Chickasaw Visitor Center from March 1 through June 30, 2024.

Courtney specializes in a variety of art mediums including copper, woodburning, acrylics, pencil and her primary art form - gourds. She has used gourds in her art for more than 20 years and is inspired by the cultural significance, versatility and usefulness of gourds in the ancient past through the present.

"I find inspiration for my art in everyday life, as well as in the mediums themselves," said Courtney. "Gourds often convey what they should be by the way nature has shaped them during the growing season."

She researches traditional Southeastern tribal designs and incorporates the ancient motifs in her work, utilizing a balance of geometry along with the creative process.

"I gain much satisfaction and fulfillment sharing my art with others, especially when I can incorporate my Chickasaw heritage," said Courtney. "I am thankful and grateful for the talents I've been blessed with and hope to bring joy and encouragement to others."

Courtney, a traditional Chickasaw storyteller, signs her pieces with her Chickasaw name "Dancing Star" given to her by her late father, Ben Courtney, son of original Chickasaw enrollee, Willie Courtney.

Courtney is an award-winning artist who has exhibited in California, Utah and, locally, at the ARTesian Art Gallery in Sulphur and the Chokma'si Gallery in Ada. She has won numerous awards at events such as the Southeastern Art Show and Market (SEASAM), the ARTesian Arts Festival and the Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference. She was also a featured artist on Chickasaw.TV (Season 5, Episode 8) and an illustrator for "Koni," the first children's board book published by the Chickasaw Press.

Larry Carter, a Chickasaw artist from Noble, Okla., will exhibit his artwork at the Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center in Davis from March 1 through June 30, 2024.

A lifelong passion for sketching transformed into oil painting in early 2010 for Carter. He focuses on bold colors and strong contrasts aiming to depict scenes that evoke an emotional response from the viewer.

His unique art style for his abstract native pieces is self-taught using a palette knife to create strokes of paint. Viewers will find an almost hidden focus, sometimes bison, horses, or faces, in his abstracts.

“Many of my works begin as an abstract background completely covering the canvas,” said Carter. “From there, I rotate to each different orientation, looking for a subject. It is similar to finding shapes in the clouds.”

Carter said his favorite response to his art is when someone glances in, looks away and then does a double take to look again for a long stare.

“My art has reached out and grabbed them,” he said. “That is what I desire.”

His mother was also a talented artist, and much of his inspiration comes from his father’s Chickasaw heritage.

In his art, Carter will “typically try to render a snapshot from one moment in time of America before Columbus’ arrival.

“Displaying my art at the (Chickasaw Nation) Welcome Center gives me a great sense of pride,” said Carter. “I’m proud for the progress we have made over the decades to reach such a place in time to be Chickasaw.”

Carter has exhibited at numerous art walks, festival and shows. His works are displayed in several buildings on the University of Oklahoma campus, and he has won multiple awards including a first-place award for the annual staff art show at OU.

Carter also enjoys painting en plein air and live paint demonstrations.

View Courtney’s exhibit at the Chickasaw Visitor Center and Carter’s exhibit at the Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center from March 1 to June 30, 2024. For more information, visit www.chickasawcountry.com.

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About Chickasaw Country

Nestled in the south-central region of Oklahoma, Chickasaw Country is a regional tourism organization representing 13 of Oklahoma's 77 counties. A division of the Chickasaw Nation, Chickasaw Country is a tourism resource for visitors and communities in the region, promoting local attractions, experiences and events. South-central Oklahoma is an easy, versatile, friendly and beautiful escape packed with First American and Western culture, outdoor recreation, local dining, breathtaking landscapes and one-of-a-kind festivals. For adventure-seekers, cultural lovers and everything in between, Chickasaw Country is uniquely positioned as a go-to, spur-of-the-moment, easy-to-get-to, ever-changing vacation, for a day, a weekend, a week or longer.

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