



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **The MAX celebrates the culture of Native Americans through two exhibitions** *Choctaw Expressions* in conjunction with *Savages and Princesses: The Persistence of Native American Stereotypes* opens May 1

MERIDIAN, Miss. (April 29 2021) – The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience will soon feature two special exhibitions celebrating Native American culture, particularly in Mississippi, and the Native American community’s right to tell its own story. Both exhibits will be on display May 1- August 8 at The MAX in downtown Meridian.

Through *Choctaw Expressions* we learn the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ incredible story of perseverance, resilience, and growth. Artifacts include basketry, beadwork, traditional dress, and stickball-related objects. The exhibition is just a sampling of what’s on display at the community’s museum, the Chahta Immi Cultural Center near Philadelphia, Mississippi. (The center is open Tuesday through Saturday. For more information, visit the tribe’s website, [Choctaw.org](http://Choctaw.org), or call 601-650-1687.)

Stereotypes of Native American peoples are ubiquitous and familiar. The exhibition *Savages and Princesses: The Persistence of Native American Stereotypes* brings together 12 contemporary Native American visual artists who reclaim their right to represent their identities. Recognizing that stereotypes often proliferate without conscious awareness, the exhibition explores common notions about Native peoples that are based on falsehoods, and corrects them with legitimate information. The artists use the unexpected – humor, shock, or other emotions – to prompt viewers to question and challenge stereotypes, including those that are unspoken or unacknowledged.

“The juxtaposition of these exhibitions allows the visitor to see and understand, in real time, the message that ultimately both exhibitions are trying to convey,” said Stacey Wilson, Curator of Exhibitions at The MAX. “*Choctaw Expressions* tells the story of a tribe whose members are our coworkers, neighbors, and friends while *Savages and Princesses: The Persistence of Native American Stereotypes* teaches us why the stereotypes placed upon them are untrue, hurtful, and harmful to the Native American community as a whole.”

These exhibitions are generously sponsored by Yates Construction of Philadelphia. “The Yates organization has a long-standing relationship with and a deep admiration of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians,” said Bill Yates, Chairman of Yates Construction. “Yates also has a great appreciation for The MAX and its efforts to recognize the arts in Mississippi. We are truly honored to be the sponsor of this exhibit, which showcases the Choctaw heritage and culture that is such an important part of Mississippi’s history.”

Originally presented at Tulsa’s 108 Contemporary in 2016, *Savages and Princesses: The Persistence of Native American Stereotypes* is organized by ExhibitsUSA, a program of Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Admission to the dual exhibit presentation at The MAX is free with regular museum admission. The interactive museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The MAX is located at the corner of Sela Ward Parkway and Front Street, overlooking the railroad at the edge of Meridian’s historic downtown. Street parking is available, with shops and restaurants within walking distance. For more information visit [MSarts.org](http://MSarts.org) or call 601-581-1550.

#### **About ExhibitsUSA**

This exhibition is toured by ExhibitsUSA, a national program of Mid-America Arts Alliance. ExhibitsUSA sends more than 25 exhibitions on tour to over 100 small and midsize communities every year. These exhibitions create access to an array of arts and humanities experiences, nurture the understanding of diverse cultures and art forms, and encourage the expanding depth and breadth of cultural life in local communities. For more about ExhibitsUSA, email [MoreArt@maaa.org](mailto:MoreArt@maaa.org) or visit [www.eusa.org](http://www.eusa.org).

**About Mid-America Arts Alliance**

Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) strengthens and supports artists, cultural organizations, and communities throughout our region and beyond. The organization explains: “We achieve this primarily through our national traveling exhibition programs, innovative leadership development, and strategic grant making. We are especially committed to enriching the cultural life of historically underserved communities by providing high quality, meaningful, and accessible arts and culture programs and services. We believe in more art for more people.” Additional information about M-AAA is available at [www.maaa.org](http://www.maaa.org).

**About The MAX**

The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience explores the state’s creative legacies in one immersive attraction. Come discover the Mississippi roots of some of the world’s arts and entertainment icons – Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, B.B. King, Faith Hill, Sela Ward, Margaret Walker, Eudora Welty, and Jim Henson, to name just a few.

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