

Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum featuring Tulsa Native American family in exhibit ‘Fluent Generations: The Art of Anita, Tom and Yatika Fields’

BY BRANDY MCDONNELL JANUARY 18, 2018

A family of accomplished Native American artists will showcase their works of photography, ceramics and paintings, celebrating the vitality of indigenous cultures, in the newest exhibit to be unveiled this month at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.

In “Fluent Generations: The Art of Anita, Tom and Yatika Fields,” Anita Fields (Osage), along with husband Tom Fields (Muscogee, Cherokee) and son Yatika Starr Fields (Osage, Muscogee, Cherokee), come together for the first time ever to illustrate their creativity and passion under one roof, with works that bring their cultural heritage to life inside the Sam Noble Museum.

“Fluent Generations,” will be located in the museum’s first-floor Fred and Enid Brown gallery, is sponsored by Fowler Automotive and Jones PR Inc. and on display Saturday through May 6. The exhibit features a number of never-before-seen pieces of artwork by the Tulsa-based family, whose works have been exhibited nationally and internationally, according to a news release.

The exhibit also features loans from the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, Oklahoma State University Museum of Art, the Arkansas Heritage Museum, private collections and the artists’ own collections.

Museum visitors will get the opportunity to not only develop a keen appreciation for the work of the Fields family, but a deeper appreciation for the impact of family — a building block of all cultures and communities around the world, said Dan Swan, exhibit curator and curator of ethnology at the Sam Noble Museum.

“I want our visitors to know the Fields family as people, and as a family,” Swan said in a statement. “And secondarily, I want them to develop a keen appreciation for their work. The whole key to this show is family, the impact that the family environment has, that all cultures and all communities are comprised of families as a building block for the social fabric of our lives. I think we need to do a better job of highlighting and celebrating successful families and not just in an aesthetic or career way, but in a holistic manner. I think the Fields family is a great place to start that.”

The Fields family has showcased their artwork separately throughout the state, but never before in one gallery. On display at the Sam Noble Museum will be Anita Fields’ works of clay and textile that reflect the worldview of her Osage culture and represent the disruption of balance found within the earth and our lives, and more broadly, early Osage notions of duality, such as earth and sky, male and female.

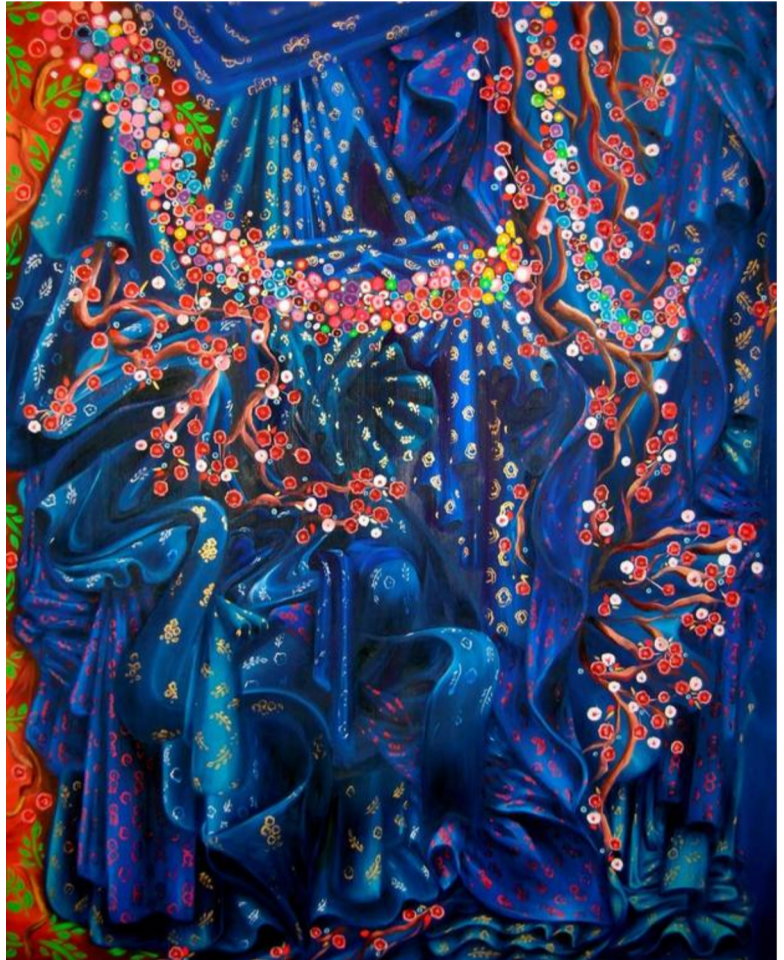
“The basic tenants of my Osage culture and its philosophies influence and inform my ideas,” she said in a statement. “Osage worldview is based on the division of the earth and sky; it represents the order, balance and duality found in life, nature and the universe. I use this as metaphor in my work and base numerous pieces on the premise of these beliefs.”

Tom Fields, who recently retired after 32 years working as a photojournalist, videographer and website developer for the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education, focuses his camera lens on what’s close to him, physically and spiritually.

“To accurately portray Native people, one must understand the soul of what makes us persevere,” he said in a statement. “It’s being able to experience the depth of our culture, which is more than just artifacts, art or dance; it’s the everyday movements of life, such as the dinners, adoptions, namings, births, graduations and spiritual ceremonies.”

Yatika Starr Fields, a successful street and gallery artist, will showcase his talents during multiple sessions as he paints a large mural in real time in the “Fluent Generations” exhibit space. A guiding motivation in his work is the search for freedom.

“The objects and forms (in my work) represent the past and present from my perspective as a member of the Osage, Cherokee and Creek Nations of Oklahoma, surrounded by beautiful colors and patterns joined by rhythm and dance from tradition,” he said in a statement. “Fast-paced cities and humble highways of the plains are defined by a historical layering of cultures, art and creativity that I seek to portray.”



Yatika Fields' (Osage/Muscogee/Cherokee) acrylic on canvas painting "Renewal"