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***Afro-Americana: Contemporary Black Artists in Oklahoma* exhibit to feature artwork by the Inclusion in Art**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Afro-Americana celebrates African American artistry and creativity. Formed to connect these artists with organizations and galleries, it also has resulted in greater visibility and new interest in Black artists.

The works of this growing population of Black artists and artisans will be acclaimed by 13 Oklahomans in the Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum's *Afro-Americana* exhibit, scheduled to open January 12 in the Museum's Tulsa World Gallery. Visitors will gain a greater appreciation of the African American culture, in which each artist strives to capture the diversity and richness of the culture in their own way, through painting, sculpture and high craft. The styles range from impressionism to realism and abstract work.

"It is a need to create that unites these artists and Afro-Americana is meant to embrace and endear these artists to Oklahoma's wonderful art community," said Inclusion in Art artist Nathan Lee, a vision in keeping with the Museum's goals for its temporary exhibit gallery. Since the Museum's opening in 2007, the Tulsa World Gallery has showcased a diverse range of mediums created by Oklahoma artists.

"Afro-Americana is a great opportunity to show the growing talent of Black artists and artisans we have here in Oklahoma," said Shannon L. Rich, president of the Gaylord-Pickens Museum and its parent organization, the Oklahoma Heritage Association. "We are thrilled to display Afro-Americana in conjunction with Inclusion in Art."

Artists featured in *Afro-Americana* are: Robert Skip Hill, Joyce Carley, Arisha Burlingame, Suzanne Thomas, Al Bostic, Rene Refour, Alex Kathilu, Andrew Akufo, Ronna Pernell, Nathan Lee, Marcus Eakers, Lola Jenkins, and Eileen Thomas. All pieces will be for sale.

Afro-Americana will be on display January 12 through April 21 at the Gaylord-Pickens Museum. An opening reception will be held Thursday, January 12 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Museum located at NW 13th Street & Shartel Avenue. The reception is open to the public and is free to attend. RSVP to Corie Baker at 405.523.3206 or clb@oklahomaheritage.com. Sponsors of the exhibit are Robert and Danielle Shelton.

Through high-tech, interactive exhibits, the Gaylord-Pickens Museum allows visitors to experience Oklahoma's story through its people. Video-driven displays and computer touch screen provide guests a unique look into the lives of famous and everyday Oklahomans who have impacted our state, country and world. For more information about the Museum, the Tulsa World Gallery or *Afro-Americana*, visit www.oklahomaheritage.com or call 405.235.4458.

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