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### **Exhibit series showcases Ponca City artists**

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City prides itself on telling Oklahoma’s story through the lives and accomplishments of its people. Visitors are quick to notice while touring the high-tech, interactive galleries that the Museum isn’t just about Oklahoma superstars like Reba McEntire or Will Rogers, but that exhibits also give a nod to the everyday people who have made an impact on the state.

In keeping with that theme, the Museum developed its art on shARTel series for 2008, which was designed to provide an outlet for Oklahoma artists to present their works to natives and tourists.

“When people think of Oklahoma, they don’t always think of the incredible creativity and passion for the arts that many of our residents have,” said Romy Owens, curator for the Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum’s art on shARTel series. “We wanted to create an exhibit series that proves that stereotype is grossly incorrect.”

Four groups of Oklahoma artists were selected by Owens to participate in the series – Oklahoma Citian Paul Medina and Tulsan Michelle Firment Reid were featured earlier in the year. The third exhibition presents a variety of Ponca City artists who were selected in a juried competition.

To be eligible to compete, artists had to be 18, current Oklahoma residents, and live in Ponca City or within a 30-mile radius. Any media was eligible for entry.

“We chose to do a juried competition in Ponca City because we received a lot of interest and desire to be involved from the community when we were in the beginning stages of planning the art on shARTel series,” said Owens. “We’re thrilled with the diversity of art we have to showcase in our Best of Ponca City show,” said Owens.

In addition to Owens, jurors for the show were Nathan Lee, founder of Inclusion in Art and accomplished sculptor, and Jeff Stokes, executive director of Individual Artists of Oklahoma Heritage.

The jurors had a wide variety of media – ranging from photography to oil to bronze – to select from when determining pieces to include in the exhibition. Artists included in the exhibition are: Elaine Armstrong, Lela Bouse-McCracken, Ken Crowder, Irena Hanchett, Cerita Helt, Neo Kirby, Ruth Loucks, Carl Peterson, Shirley Peterson, Ann Powell, Caroline Raley, Viola Reynolds, Jo Saylor, Audrey Schmitz and Margaret Yates.

The grand opening of the Best of Ponca City Show will be Thursday, July 17 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Tulsa World Gallery at the Gaylord-Pickens Museum. The event is free to the public and will include complimentary wine and appetizers by Cheever's Café.

The Best of Show Award, including a \$250 cash prize, will be awarded to one artist during the reception.

In addition to enjoying the reception, guests can tour the Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum, named best new attraction in Oklahoma by the Department of Tourism and Recreation, during the event.

"We have created a museum experience unlike anything else you'll find in the state," said Karlee Chill, director of museum exhibitions. "Student and adult visitors alike have enjoyed experiencing the history of our state's people through very unconventional means. Because visitors can touch and interact with the majority of our exhibits, they become very engaged in what they're learning."

The art on shARTel series will continue with Paul Mays' mixed media art on display from Sept. 26 to Dec. 31.

For information on the opening event, visit [www.oklahomaheritage.com](http://www.oklahomaheritage.com) or [myspace.com/artonshartel](http://myspace.com/artonshartel).

The Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum is located at NW 13th Street and Shartel Avenue in Oklahoma City. The Museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults and \$5 for seniors and students. Group rates are available for groups of 15 or more. For more information about the Museum, call 405.235.4458 or visit [www.oklahomaheritage.com](http://www.oklahomaheritage.com).

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