



Aug. 13, 2009

Media only: Eileen Maxwell (202) 633-6615
Leonda Levchuk (202) 633-6613

Media Web site: <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

National Museum of the American Indian Celebrates Four Landmark Anniversaries

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian inaugurates a season-long celebration of four landmark anniversaries through special exhibitions, events and family programming from September through November 2009. This fall marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the legislation that created the museum, the 15th anniversary of the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City, the 10th anniversary of the state-of-the-art collections facility in Suitland, Md., and the fifth anniversary of the opening of the flagship museum on the National Mall.

The museum complex stands as a symbol of Native history, vitality and contemporary relevance and has become a showcase for the beauty and genius of Native peoples. "We have so much to celebrate," said Kevin Gover (Pawnee/Comanche), director of the museum. "Since its creation, the National Museum of the American Indian has mounted scores of exhibitions and hosted more than a thousand Native American artists, dancers, leaders, musicians, poets, scholars and writers who have enlightened and inspired millions of visitors from around the world."

The museum's celebrations will feature an Anniversary Gala at the Mall museum Oct. 7. CBS news correspondent Hattie Kauffman (Nez Perce) will emcee the reception, and singer Buffy Sainte-Marie (Cree) and Wes Studi (Cherokee) will be among those attending as special guests. Oct. 16 marks the opening of "Brian Jungen: Strange Comfort," the museum's first major contemporary art exhibition of a living artist's work. This significant retrospective demonstrates the museum's commitment to its contemporary arts initiative and includes a Meet the Artist program Oct. 16 in the Ring Auditorium at the Hirshhorn Museum.

Public programming highlights include the Rochester Institute of Technology's annual Big Shot photo event that will illuminate the Mall museum building with the help of more than 1,000 community members' flashlights Sept. 26. "La Mission" starring Benjamin Bratt (Quechua), a film that explores the curative power of Aztec tradition, will be screened Oct. 9 at the Mall museum for a

Dinner & a Movie program and will be followed by a moderated discussion with Bratt and his brother Peter, who is the film's director. On Nov. 14, the eight-member Kevin Locke Native Dance Ensemble will engage audiences with a dramatic performance of traditional and contemporary American Indian dances. On Nov. 14 and 15, "From Deer to Dance," a museum-wide Fall Family Weekend festival, will explore the Native process of turning hides or skins of animals into beautiful regalia worn during traditional ceremonies and powwows. For a complete schedule of fall activities, please see the museum's Web site at www.AmericanIndian.si.edu.

Established in 1989 through an Act of Congress, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian is an institution of living cultures dedicated to advancing knowledge and understanding of the life, languages, literature, history and arts of the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere. The museum includes the National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall; the George Gustav Heye Center, a permanent museum in lower Manhattan; and the Cultural Resources Center, a research and collections facility in Suitland, Md.

###