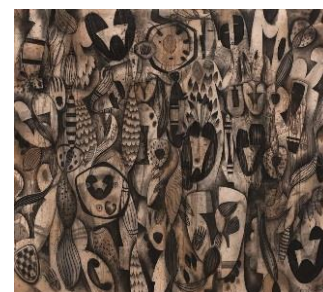


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**MNA SET TO HONOR NAVAJO CONTEMPORARY ARTIST TONY ABEYTA
AT THE 11th ANNUAL GALA WEEKEND JUNE 17 & 18, 2017**

(Flagstaff, Ariz.) January 17, 2016 – The Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) in Flagstaff will present its 11th Annual Gala Weekend & Fine Art Auction June 17 and 18, 2017. The gala, which serves as the primary fundraising event for the Museum, will honor contemporary Navajo painter Tony Abeyta and preview the exhibition *Tony Abeyta: Convergence*, on view to the public June 18 through Sept. 4, 2017.

Event attendees will enjoy cocktails and a silent auction featuring an array of artwork, jewelry and collectibles beginning at 5:00 p.m. on MNA's historic campus at the edge of the Rio de Flag on Saturday, June 17. Dinner and a live auction, including works from some of the Southwest's most accomplished artists, follows at 6:30 p.m. in a picturesque outdoor setting. The gala weekend will continue on Sunday, June 18, with an Artist's Brunch at 10:00 a.m. followed by a gallery talk at noon. All proceeds support MNA programs and exhibitions.

Tony Abeyta: Convergence features more than 20 works by the artist including paintings, drawings and mixed-media pieces and jewelry. The exhibition blends traditional and contemporary large-scale works depicting complex Navajo beliefs and imagery, modernist New Mexico landscapes and abstract geometric forms.

Born in Gallup, N.M., Abeyta was introduced to the arts at an early age. His Anglo mother is a weaver and ceramicist, and his late father is renowned Navajo artist Ha So Deh (Narciso Abeyta), a student of Dorothy Dunn. Abeyta began his formal education at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, N.M. at 16. After graduating, he continued his studies at the Maryland Institute College of Art before heading to Europe where he found freedom and artistic license through travel and studies in southern France and Florence, Italy. Upon his return, Abeyta earned his master's degree in fine art from New York University. His painting *Anthem* became the signature image for the opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. in 2004. In 2012, Abeyta was named a Living Treasure by Santa Fe's Museum of Indian Arts & Culture and received the New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. Abeyta's work is included in major museums across the country as well as numerous public and private collections. He divides his time between Santa Fe and Berkeley, Calif.

"Tony is one of the finest Native American artists working today," said Alan Petersen, MNA Curator of Fine Arts. "His richly layered paintings and mixed-media works pay homage to his heritage in a dynamic and contemporary visual language."

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“Tony is a gifted and innovative artist, whom we are thrilled to honor at this year’s gala,” added MNA Director and CEO Carrie M. Heinonen. “His remarkable body of work is a testament to his talent and the artistic legacy of his family.”

A small selection of work by the artist’s father will also be on view.

Weekend Highlights

Gala & Fine Art Auction: Saturday, June 17, 5:00 – 9:00 p.m., \$250 per person

Artist’s Brunch: Sunday, June 18, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., \$45 per person

Gallery Talk: Sunday, June 18, 12:00 p.m., free with Museum admission or membership

For table sponsorships and tickets, visit musnaz.org, email development@musnaz.org or call (928) 774-5211, ext. 227.

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The **Museum of Northern Arizona** inspires a sense of love and responsibility for the beauty and diversity of the Colorado Plateau. Founded in 1928, the 200-acre campus includes an historic exhibit building with nine galleries showcasing the geology, anthropology and art of the region; research and collections facilities; a museum shop and bookstore; and more than 450 public programs annually. To learn more, visit musnaz.org or call 928.774.5213.

Location: Museum of Northern Arizona, 3101 N. Fort Valley Rd, Flagstaff, Ariz. 86001

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Images: High resolution images are available upon request. All images courtesy of The Owings Gallery, Santa Fe, NM.

