



MUSEUM of
NORTHERN
ARIZONA

Celebrating the Colorado Plateau

PRESS RELEASE

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MNA presents the 68th Annual Navajo Festival of Arts & Culture

(Flagstaff, Ariz.) July 10, 2017 – Join more than 80 award-winning artists and presenters at the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) for a weekend of cultural immersion at the 68th Annual Navajo Festival of Arts & Culture, August 5 and 6, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. The Museum is located at 3101 N. Fort Valley Road in Flagstaff.

Ticket prices are \$12 for adults and \$8 for students (with ID), American Indians (10+ with tribal affiliation) and youth (10-17). Children under 10 are free. Weekend passes are \$18 for adults and \$12 for youth.

“Reaching the 68-year mark for the Navajo Festival of Arts & Culture is an incredible milestone on many levels,” said Museum Director and CEO Carrie M. Heinonen. “The festival is a place where culture, creativity and community come together, and it reflects the long-standing relationship between MNA and the Diné people.”

It all began in August, 1949, through a group of traders on the western portion of the Navajo Reservation when 15 trading posts submitted 10 of their best rugs to the Museum of Northern Arizona to compete for prizes. The Museum’s goal was to align both weavers and traders in keeping alive the old styles of weaving and improving the quality of yarns, dyes and designs. Today, this weekend event draws thousands of visitors from across the region and around the world, and comprises of much more than traditional weavings.

The public will have the opportunity to purchase traditional and contemporary examples of silverwork, jewelry, painting, weaving, folk carving, sculpture and more directly from the artists. Artist demonstrations, musical performances and the pageantry of Navajo social dances will also be featured.

“What is unique to this festival is the rare opportunity to meet and engage with so many talented artists,” said Cristen Crujido, MNA Director of Marketing & Public Affairs. “Each of our Heritage festivals provides an in-depth look into the cultures and peoples of the Colorado Plateau and allows for inspiring exchanges between artists and visitors.”

“Our main stage entertainment includes some of the region’s best performers,” said Crujido. “Both traditional and contemporary entertainers will take the stage Saturday and Sunday.

Festival-favorites The Pollen Trail Dancers and Jones Benally Family will present authentic social and hoop dances. New to the festival this year are two musical groups: The Sweethearts of Navajo Land

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performing social songs and Blackkiss whose music reflects the influences of Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson.

The *Heritage Insights* lecture series, presented by Arizona Humanities, will foster cross-cultural communication and understanding by presenting Diné history, personal experiences, family traditions and current issues facing the community. Series highlights include:

The Painted Desert Project Parts I & II

The Painted Desert Project is a community-building effort, begun by African-American physician and documentary photographer Chip Thomas (also known as Jetsonorama) which manifests as a constellation of murals across the western Navajo Nation, painted by artists from all over the world. The large-scale paintings and photographs adorning roadside structures address contemporary social, environmental and political justice issues deeply impacting the Navajo Nation. In Part II of this presentation, Thomas will look at how the project has evolved, its ongoing dialogue with the Diné people and its future.

The Long Walk of the Navajo People, 1864-1868

In 1864, Navajo people were forced to walk over 450 miles to Fort Sumner in eastern New Mexico. Imprisoned on a 40-square mile reservation for four long years they suffered from hunger, loneliness, illnesses and severe environmental conditions. The Long Walk has been collected in historical literature by non-Navajo authors. Absent from the literature is the Navajo perspective. Visitors will hear the Navajo elders' version of the Long Walk in this presentation by scholar Dr. Evangeline Parsons Yazzie.

Boarded Up: Social and Historical Interpretations of the American Indian Boarding School Era

American Indians are the only ethnic group in the U.S. who were subjected to forced education by the federal government for generations. This presentation will impart a social interpretation of how life among Indian Nations began to change due to the plight into which American Indian people were forced in the name of education. The presentation, led by Dr. Evangeline Parsons Yazzie, is from an American Indian perspective and will include the experiences of other community members.

The festival will also feature a public viewing of the Staples Rug, a large two-faced Navajo weaving created between 1885 and 1890 at the behest of pioneering trader Juan Lorenzo Hubbell. The weaving will be on view from 12-2 p.m. at the Museum's Easton Collection Center. The viewing is included with festival admission. The Staples Rug was last exhibited at the Museum in 2004.

A free member preview, Friday, August 4, from 6 to 8 p.m., includes a juried arts award ceremony, silent auction and first opportunity to purchase artwork from participating artists. To become a member of the Museum, call 928.774.5213, ext 219.

The Museum of Northern Arizona is located three miles from historic downtown Flagstaff on scenic Highway 180 leading to the Grand Canyon.

The festival is supported by the Arizona Commission on the Arts which receives support from the State of Arizona and the National Endowment for the Arts, Arizona Humanities, City of Flagstaff BBB Revenues and Flagstaff Arts Council and Mark Sublette Medicine Man Gallery.

For more information, including a complete list of scheduled performances and participating artists, visit musnaz.org. Information is also available by phone at (928) 774-5213.

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 a Museum with nine galleries showcasing the geology, anthropology and art of the region; research and collections facilities; a museum shop; 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, AZ 86001

Phone & Website 928.774.5213, musnaz.org

Images (L to R): A member of The Jones Benally Family Dancers, Pete Sands of Blackkiss and artist Elizabeth Whitethorne Benally.