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MNA Announces summer exhibition *Tony Abeyta: Convergence*

(Flagstaff, Ariz.) June 9, 2017 – More than 20 works by contemporary Navajo painter Tony Abeyta will be on view when the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) mounts its summer exhibition, *Tony Abeyta: Convergence*, opening Sunday, June 18, in the Museum’s Donald Ware Waddell Gallery. The exhibition runs through Sept. 4, 2017. A gallery talk with the artist is scheduled at 12 p.m. and is free with Museum admission or membership.

Convergence features paintings, drawings, 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. A small selection of work by Abeyta’s late father, renowned Navajo artist Ha So Deh, will also be on view.

“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.”

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 was 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.

A primary theme in Abeyta’s work is the emotional impact of landscape. Reminiscent of American Expressionist Marsden Hartley’s paintings of New Mexico, Abeyta’s paintings convey the primal power of nature and the unifying harmony of land and sky, so archetypal of the West. Paintings such as *The Black Cross* convey the transience of life and the human relationship with the land and larger cosmos.

“There exists a rhythm in the land where I was born,” said Abeyta. “I spend a lot of time deciphering the light, the cascades of mesas into canyons, the marriage between earth and sky and the light as it constantly

changes at whim, the intensity of rock formations, and the sage and chamisa that accent this poetic experience, unlike anywhere else I have seen. I am beckoned to remember it and then to paint it.”

The Museum of Northern Arizona is located at 3101 N. Fort Valley Road in Flagstaff, Ariz. To learn more, visit musnaz.org or call 928.774.5213.

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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

Phone & Website: 928.774.5213, musnaz.org

Images: High resolution images are available upon request.

