



Media only: Ann Marie Sekeres (212) 514-3823 or sekeresa@si.edu
Quinn Bradley (212) 514-3822 or bradleyq@si.edu

Dec. 10, 2009

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

American Indian Skateboarding Exhibition Now Open in New York

An exhibition celebrating the vibrancy, creativity and history of American Indian skateboarding culture is on view at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in New York, the George Gustav Heye Center. "Ramp It Up: Skateboard Culture in Native America" includes 20 skatedecks, rare images, video of Native skaters and skate decks from Native companies and contemporary artists. The exhibition will close June 27, 2010.

One of the most popular sports on Indian reservations, skateboarding has inspired American Indian and Native Hawaiian communities to host skateboard competitions and build skate parks to encourage their youth. Native entrepreneurs own skateboard companies and sponsor community-based skate teams. Native artists and filmmakers, inspired by their skating experiences, credit the sport with teaching them a successful work ethic. Highlights include a never-before-seen 1969 image taken by skateboarding icon, Craig R. Stecyk III, of a skatedeck depicting traditional Native imagery and 1973 home-movie footage of Zephyr surf team members Ricky and Jimmy Tavarez (Gabrielino-Tongva). The exhibition features the work of visual artists Bunky Echo-Hawk (Yakama/Pawnee), Joe Yazzie (Navajo), Traci Rabbit (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) and Dustinn Craig (White Mountain Apache/Navajo) and highlights young Native skaters such as 20-year-old Bryant Chapo (Navajo) and 10-year-old Augustin and 7-year-old Armondo Lerma (Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians).

The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in New York, the George Gustav Heye Center is located at One Bowling Green in New York City, across from Battery Park. The museum is free and open every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursdays until 8 p.m. By subway, the museum may be reached by the 1 to South Ferry, the 4 or 5 to Bowling Green or the R or W to Whitehall Street. For information, call (212) 514-3700 or visit the museum's Web site at www.americanindian.si.edu.

###