

The Story of California. The Story of You.

Oakland Museum of California



CONTACT: Kelly A. Koski
510-318-8453 or
communications@museumca.org

OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA RECEIVES EXHIBITION OF SPECIAL DISTINCTION AWARD FROM THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

OMCA Honored in AAM's 2012 Excellence in Exhibitions Competition

This release is available online at: www.museumca.org/pressroom

(Oakland, CA) May 17, 2012—The Oakland Museum of California's **Gallery of California History** is the winner of the **Special Distinction for "Exemplary Inclusion of Community Voices" Award**—one of the four awards presented at the **2012 Excellence in Exhibitions Awards** at the American Association of Museum conference in Minneapolis on May 1.

The peer-review competition chose the "Coming to California" Exhibit and History Gallery for this prestigious award due to its strong commitment to addressing **community needs** and including **community voices**. The award announcement states: "This permanent exhibition provides a history of California's people from pre-contact Native cultures to today. The overall goal of the exhibition is to provide a new type of public space within the museum—an inclusive place of inquiry, reflection, and public conversation about the history of California, with room for ongoing contributions by the museum's communities over time."

"We are delighted to be the recipient of this great honor, awarded by our peers in the museum exhibition field," said **OMCA Executive Director and CEO Lori Fogarty**. "We are not only enormously proud of the new History Gallery, but are particularly gratified by the process and the new ways of working that resulted in the success of the final exhibit. This was a truly collaborative process involving curators, exhibit developers, designers, evaluators, and interpretive specialists, and was produced locally with primarily in-house staff. Most importantly, as the award acknowledges, we worked directly with multiple communities, including the co-creation of exhibit elements and opportunities for ongoing visitor feedback and dialogue. The History Gallery represents a new model for exhibits for OMCA and we are now taking many of the practices of visitor and community inclusion into our other galleries and exhibitions," said Fogarty.

The overarching theme of the **Gallery of California History** is **Coming to California**—an idea evoking not only the arrivals and departures of people throughout human history and

their interactions with the inhabitants already here, but also the notion of coming to terms with the influence of California on our individual and collective identities. The Gallery showcases more than 2,200 historical artifacts, works of art, ethnographic materials, and original photographs to illuminate the influence of successive waves of migration—from the earliest Natives, to settlers during the Spanish and Mexican periods, to more recent immigrants and their interactions with people who arrived before them. Oral histories, storytelling, and interactive technologies play a prominent role throughout the Gallery.

The **Gallery of California History** reopened to the public on May 1, 2010, as part of a major renovation and expansion project led by the San Francisco architectural firm of **Mark Cavagnero Associates**. The Gallery of California History redesign and installation was led by **OMCA Senior Curator of History Louise Pubols** in conjunction with Creative Director **Kathleen McLean**, principal of Independent Exhibitions, a museum consulting firm specializing in exhibition development. The exhibit was designed by Gordon Chun of Gordon Chun Associates and independent designer Dirk Dieter.

The other museums to receive an Excellence in Exhibitions award include the **Detroit Institute of Arts** for its exhibition *Through African Eyes: The European in African Art, 1500 to the Present*; **Heart Mountain Interpretive Learning Center** for *Across the Wire: Voices from Heart Mountain*; Dinosaur Hall at the **Natural History Museum, Los Angeles**; and the *Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam* exhibition at **The New York Public Library**.

ABOUT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) brings together collections of art, history and natural science under one roof to tell the extraordinary stories of California and its people. OMCA's groundbreaking exhibits tell the many stories that comprise California with many voices, often drawing on first-person accounts by people who have shaped California's cultural heritage. Visitors are invited to actively participate in the Museum as they learn about the natural, artistic, and social forces that affect the state, and investigate their own role in both its history and its future. With more than 1.8 million objects, OMCA is a leading cultural institution of the Bay Area and a resource for the research and understanding of California's dynamic cultural and environmental heritage. OMCA's transformation continues with the renovation of the **Gallery of California Natural Sciences**, which is currently underway and will be completed in **June 2013**

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) is at 1000 Oak Street, at 10th Street, in Oakland. OMCA is situated between downtown Oakland and Lake Merritt. Museum admission is \$12 general; \$9 seniors and students with valid ID, \$6 youth ages 9 to 17, and free for Members and children 8 and under. OMCA offers onsite underground parking and is conveniently located one block from the Lake Merritt BART station, on the corner of

10th Street and Oak Street. The accessibility ramp is located at the new 1000 Oak Street main entrance. For more information, visit museumca.org.

ABOUT AAM

The American Association of Museums has been bringing museums together since 1906, helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. With more than 18,000 individual, 3,000 institutional and 300 corporate members, AAM is dedicated to ensuring that museums remain a vital part of the American landscape, connecting people with the greatest achievements of the human experience, past, present and future. For more information, visit www.aam-us.org

* * *