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Exhibit Opening at MAM Showcases Entirely New Work by Aaniiih Artist, First in Over a Decade

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Sean Chandler (Aaniiih) presents his first solo exhibition at a Montana museum and first significant exhibition in over a decade. His work infuses experiences from his childhood in Eastern Montana, including his love of Major League Baseball, and the history of Native assimilation into white culture, as well as teachings from his father. His father, Al Chandler, grew up on an Indian Residential School near Pierre, South Dakota, and was later the focus of a 1983 PBS documentary short called *I'd Rather Be Powwowing. Sean Chandler: The One Defined To Be No One* (formerly called *New Works*) features entirely new pieces by this talented Montana artist.

Chandler grew up in Glendive, Montana, and his family was among the only Native family in the community. He received his B.A. in Art and M.A. in Native Studies at Montana State University in Bozeman. He later earned an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Montana while employed as Director of American Indian Studies at Aaniiih Nakoda College on Fort Belknap Agency in Harlem, Montana. Recently, he was promoted to president of the College in August 2020. After nearly a 12-year hiatus, Chandler returned to creating art in 2018 and joined the artist collective Paintallica. His pieces range from oil, acrylic, paint stick, and charcoal on large canvases to drypoint prints and drawings. He cites Blackfeet artist Ernie Pepion (1943–2005), Salish Kootenai artist Corwin Clairmont, and Bozeman-based artist Jay Schmidt as mentors. He has received awards and exhibited at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, and the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis, Indiana, with work collected by the Museum of Natural History in Paris and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts Museum, Minnesota.

“Once in the mode to create, I like to just let the work take me where I’m supposed to go...But very often, parts of the painting that seemed to be the best expressions turn out to be better by covering them up. Maybe that is due in part to me, covering myself, layer by layer. More likely, however, it is a line formed by my own contemporary experiences in mainstream society connected to the years endured by ancestral experiences of dehumanization, racism, and cultural genocide,” he says of his work.

Sean Chandler: The One Defined To Be No One is on view at MAM from May 7 to August 8, 2021, in the Lynda M. Frost Gallery of Contemporary American Indian Art, a space dedicated to perpetually exhibiting contemporary Native artists.

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About MAM: Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM is emerging as the leading contemporary art museum in the Intermountain West. MAM is situated on the traditional, ancestral territories of the Séliš (Salish or “Flathead”) and Q̓lispé (upper Kalispel or Pend d’Oreille) peoples. MAM is committed to respecting the indigenous stewards of the land it occupies. Their rich cultures are fundamental to artistic life in Montana and to the work of MAM. MAM is a fully accessible, free public museum boasting eight exhibition spaces, a library, and an education center in the heart of Missoula’s historic downtown.

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