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***Sombreros, Texas and Bosses of the Plains* Exhibition at
The Cowboy Explores the Styles and Histories of Cowboy Hats**

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK – The most recognizable symbol of a cowboy is the hat, but where did the “cowboy hat” come from and why are there so many kinds? Learn about the origins and evolution of what is now known as the “cowboy hat” through the *Sombreros, Texas and Bosses of the Plains* exhibition, opening September 16.

Drawing from the extensive hat collection housed in the vaults of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, curators will display some of the first iterations of the iconic hat through the highly-personalized and decorated modern hats we see today.

“If you’ve ever wondered why Roy Rogers, John Wayne and Gene Autry have different styled hats, this exhibition is for you,” said Natalie Shirley, Museum President & CEO. “Visitors will learn the why behind different hat styles including region, time, purpose and personal taste.”

Beginning with wide-brimmed leather hats called *vaqueteadas*, *Sombreros Texas and Bosses of the Plains* will explore the evolution of the cowboy hat from woven sombreros, to “John B.’s” or ‘Stetsons”, to today’s working cowboy giant hats and flamboyantly creased and decorated hats of rodeo riders and entertainers.

Hats owned by actors John Wayne, Steve McQueen, and Tom Selleck, rodeo performers Shirley Jauregui and Toots Mansfield, and Western musicians Johnny Lee Wills and Michael Martin Murphey will also be included, some of which have not been exhibited for visitors to see in decades. Bing Russell’s hat worn during his time on *Bonanza* will also be

on exhibit. It is the only piece of Bonanza material culture in the Museum's collection and was donated to the Museum by his son, Kurt Russell, during the 2022 Western Heritage Awards.

The exhibition will be open through January 8, 2023. For more information about the Museum's permanent collections, exhibitions and upcoming events, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org.

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About the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City is America's premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Founded in 1955, the Museum collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts while sponsoring dynamic educational programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of the American West. The Museum is located only six miles northeast of downtown Oklahoma City at 1700 Northeast 63rd Street. For more information, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org.