

Where Objects Are Placed:

reflections on Aa-ashaachi as a guardian of sovereignty
and Holisso as a threshold to community



Chickasaw Cultural Center, Sulphur, Oklahoma

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When the Chickasaw Cultural Center's 184-acre campus opened just outside of downtown Sulphur, Oklahoma in 2010, several shifts happened simultaneously: Sulphur—known for its healing waters—re-emerged as a geographically-central cultural site for the tribe; the Cultural Center itself also became administratively separate from a series of other tribal museums, including the Chickasaw Capitol Building, Old Council House Museum, and Chickasaw White House (all located to the southwest in the Nation's capital, Tishomingo). Connected yet doubly separate from its peer institutions, the Cultural Center has come to serve a series of unique and vital functions within the tribe.

In this talk, I'll draw on my Collections Management Intern experiences to examine two of the Cultural Center's most impactful purposes: serving as an active guardian of tribal sovereignty by stewarding the tribe's material history and providing a space that functions as a threshold to community for tribal individuals. In doing so, I hope to elucidate the role that the Cultural Center plays in comparison to the Chickasaw Nation's other cultural initiatives and to consider the unrelenting importance of material history for tribal sovereignty.

12 -1 pm
Friday, Sept 12, 2025

Hatcher Library
Gallery Lab (Room 100H)

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