

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 28, 2023

The Autry Museum Presents *Reclaiming El Camino: Native Resistance in the Missions and Beyond*

*Opening on Dec. 9, 2023, the exhibition **Reclaiming El Camino** aims to educate Californians about the potency of Native life here, the efforts to erase them and their refusal to surrender their connections to the Land, Cultures and Communities.*



River Garza "What the City Gave Us" 2022, acrylic, spray paint and marker. Loan courtesy of the artist. Autry Museum; LT2023-59-1.

(November 28, 2023 - Los Angeles, CA)—The Autry Museum of the American West presents *Reclaiming El Camino: Native Resistance in the Missions and Beyond* in the Norman F. Sprague, Jr. Gallery opening on Dec 9, 2023. Working with Native advisors, tribal community members and Native artists, *Reclaiming El Camino* takes a hard look at a painful past.

In teaching about the settlement of California and its missions, educational materials in institutions, K-12 classrooms and museums have often overlooked Native perspectives. *Reclaiming El Camino* illuminates the goals, motivations and impacts of the California Spanish Mission system (beyond religious ones) from an Indigenous viewpoint, a story many students and most people have never heard before.

This exhibit explores three significant moments in time, commemorated in 2024, that demonstrate the way “El Camino” (meaning “the road”) is symbolic of oppression as well as revolution. The exhibition spotlights the enslavement and brutality that Natives experienced in and around the missions. It also reveals the resistance that Natives put up against missionaries and colonizers and that enabled their “survival” over the last two hundred and fifty years.



Katie Dorame "Mission Revolt" 2014, oil on canvas. Loan courtesy of the artist. Autry Museum; LT2023-64-1.

“This narrative takes you through the impacts and attempted erasure of Native people—under three colonial regimes, a multitude of laws and policies, stereotypes, and racist ideas—to today, where Native people continue to exist, resist and persist,” says Deana Dartt, curator of *Reclaiming El Camino*.

This telling of history has been informed and created by the people most impacted by the ongoing waves of disruption, who despite the continued trauma of the colonial legacy, carved out places for revitalization and reclamation.

The goal of the exhibit is to educate about the vitality and courage of the First Peoples of California while also conveying that there is no true celebration of *resilience* without the knowledge of what has been endured and survived. It is indeed a triumph of will, courage and fortitude that Native Californians remain.

Reclaiming El Camino's opening reception is on Saturday, Jan. 27, 2024.

For more information, please visit TheAutry.org/ReclaimingElCamino.

This exhibition was created in collaboration with guest curator Deana Dartt (Coastal Chumash).

Reclaiming El Camino is supported by Edison International, The Mildred E. and Harvey S. Mudd Foundation, Caryll and William Mingst, the National Endowment for the Humanities: Sustaining Humanities through the American Rescue Plan in partnership with the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums,* the Paloheimo Foundation, the Sacred Places Institute, and the Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation. This exhibition was created in collaboration with guest curator Deana Dartt (Coastal Chumash).



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*Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

About the Autry Museum of the American West

The Autry is a museum dedicated to exploring and sharing the stories, experiences and perceptions of the diverse peoples of the American West, connecting the past to the present to inspire our shared future. The museum presents a wide range of exhibitions and public programs—including lectures, film, theatre, festivals, family events and music—and performs scholarship, research and educational outreach. The Autry's collection of more than 600,000 pieces of art and cultural objects includes one of the largest and most significant of Native American materials in the United States. For more information, please visit TheAutry.org.

The Autry Museum of American West acknowledges the [Gabrielino/Tongva](#) peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). We recognize that the Autry Museum and its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Gabrielino/Tongva peoples and we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), 'Ahihirom (Elders) and 'Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging.

**AUTRY
MUSEUM**
OF THE AMERICAN WEST

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4700 Western Heritage Way

Los Angeles, CA 90027-1462

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [TikTok](#)

Museum and Store Hours

Tuesday–Friday 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Saturday–Sunday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

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