



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: JUNE 26, 2024**

FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: ACCESSION INTO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION TWO (2) CULTURAL OBJECTS FROM REGIONAL TRIBAL ARTISTS

ISSUE:

To recommend to City Council to approve accession into the permanent collection of two (2) cultural objects from regional tribal artists.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommends that City Council approves accession into the permanent collection of two (2) cultural objects from regional tribal artists.

BACKGROUND:

During planning for the Museum of Riverside's 100th anniversary, staff determined to commission new work from artists and/or culture bearers representing the four tribal groups mentioned in the Museum's land acknowledgement statement, which appears below:

The Museum of Riverside is grateful to stand on the traditional and ancestral lands of the Cahuilla, Gabrielino-Tongva, Luiseño, and Serrano peoples. The Cahuilla, Gabrielino-Tongva, Luiseño, and Serrano continue to live and thrive in Southern California.

Three objects and one set of songs were the result of this effort to commission new creative work. The present recommendation is in regard to two of the objects.

At its meeting on May 8, 2024, the Museum of Riverside's Collection Committee voted unanimously in support of recommending that the Museum of Riverside Board forward these recommendations to City Council.

DISCUSSION:

To “accession” an object is the process of including it formally in a museum’s permanent collection, which is the category of collection for which the greatest effort will be made to preserve the object in perpetuity.

The Museum of Riverside’s Collections Development Plan explicitly notes that the “Museum will not collect fine art, fine craft, or decorative art primarily for aesthetic reasons.” However, the Museum collects art for reasons that may be identified as historic or cultural. It also notes goals regarding the Indigenous collections and resources, stating that the “Museum must establish a continuum from the early collections to the contemporary era to reinforce the reality that Indigenous cultures are living cultures.” In the present, continuity of culture is often expressed through art objects.

Both of the objects described below will be exhibited for the first time in the exhibition *Dear Riverside: A Letter to Our First Love*, which will open on July 25, 2024, at the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties.

ITEM 1:

Tongva artist River Garza’s mixed media work (measures 36 x 48 inches) reflects the eclectic mix of influences that inform contemporary Indigenous art, and it expresses the cultural reality of an artist working today in a contemporary art world that is bold, aggressive, and—in its constant demand for “the new”—often at odds with cultures that adhere to different values.



ITEM 2:

This work was commissioned from Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians artist Anthony Vallez. It is a painted gourd that relates to the bird singing tradition of the Luiseño people. The bear silhouette on the gourd represents the artist's childhood nickname *húnwet*, which means "bear" in the Cahuilla language. Vallez is a member of the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians.

The work is on a gourd *Cucurabita* sp. known as a "kettle" gourd to the artist. The materials include automotive spray paint and clear gloss paint. The rattle handle was made from a cottonwood branch from Vallez's grandmother's land at Anza, California. The rattle would be accessioned with an accompanying cotton bandana and storage bag.



STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Strategic Priority, "Arts, Culture and Recreation" and in particular goal 1.1 (strengthening Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), goal 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and goal 1.5 (supporting programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors throughout the community).

Museum programs further support the Strategic Priority, "Community Well-Being." Specific goals supported by Museum programs and partnerships include goal 2.3, which includes strengthening neighborhood identities, and goal 2.5, which points to fostering relationships between community members and partner organizations.

1. **Community Trust** – The Museum's Collections Committee is composed of Museum

staff, Museum Board members, and members of the Riverside community. Strengthening the Museum's collections in accordance with the Museum's Collection Development Plan and with the involvement of community members builds community trust and supports the Museum's mission.

2. **Equity** – New collection resources enrich the stories that the Museum can tell across all neighborhoods through exhibitions and programs that are offered equitably. Contemporary artifacts from Indigenous communities reinforce the Museum's commitment to cultural continuity.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – These proposed new accessions were commissioned by the Museum to enhance its core programming. They pose minimal demands on current storage and recordkeeping resources.
4. **Innovation** – New accessions into the Museum's permanent collection expand the diversity and flexibility of collection resources, enabling more programming options.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Strengthening the Museum's collections in accordance with the Museum's Collection Development Plan, collection management policies, and mission enhances the City's ability to preserve Riverside's history for the future in a considered and judicious manner.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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