



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: OCTOBER 8, 2024

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: APPROVE ACCESSION INTO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF SIX (6) LOTS OF HISTORIC ARTIFACTS AND ARCHIVAL ITEMS FROM SIX (6) DONORS, A LARGE LOT CONTAINING 257 HERBARIUM SPECIMENS AND ONE (1) JOSHUA TREE SPECIMEN, AND TWO (2) CULTURAL OBJECTS FROM REGIONAL TRIBAL ARTISTS

ISSUE:

Approve accession into the permanent collection of six (6) lots of historic artifacts and archival items from six (6) donors, a large lot containing 257 herbarium specimens and one (1) Joshua tree specimen, and two (2) cultural objects from regional tribal artists.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve accession into the permanent collection of six (6) lots of historic artifacts and archival items from six (6) donors, a large lot containing 257 herbarium specimens and one (1) Joshua tree specimen, and two (2) cultural objects from regional tribal artists.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

At a hybrid meeting on April 24, 2024, the Museum of Riverside Board, with eight (8) members present for this vote and one (1) absent, unanimously voted to recommend that City Council approve accession into the permanent collection of six (6) lots of historic artifacts and archival items from six (6) donors and a large lot containing 257 herbarium specimens and one (1) Joshua tree specimen.

At a meeting on June 26, 2024, the Museum of Riverside Board, with eight (8) members present for this vote and one (1) absent, unanimously voted to recommend that City Council approve accession into the permanent collection of two (2) cultural objects from regional tribal artists.

BACKGROUND:

Donated historic objects (lots 1-6)

LOT 1: Riverside memorabilia including a Riverside trolley token box, a small 1876 Mason and

Hamlin organ, a twentieth-century phonograph record of “I Love You, California,” and thirty-seven (37) music sheets, books, or pamphlets from 1900-1961 with connections to Riverside stores or events

LOT 2: Two (2) crepe paper dolls crafted by former Riversider Leola Mae Gould in 1959 and donated by her heir

LOT 3: Three (3) fragments of asphalt from the former Riverside International Raceway, circa 1989

LOT 4: Skelley building directory sign, circa 1940

LOT 5: Three (3) cheerleader tops, two (2) cheerleader skirts, twelve (12) photos of the Ramona High School Cheer team, three (3) Ramona High School yearbooks, three (3) Sierra Junior High School yearbooks, and one (1) book of cheers.

LOT 6: One (1) postcard of Magnolia Avenue, circa 1910

Herbarium specimens (lot 7)

LOT 7: 257 herbarium specimens collected in 2021 by biologist Ivan Parr from California sites and one (1) Joshua tree specimen

Two objects from regional tribal artists

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.

Museum Collections Committee recommendations

The Collections Committee considered these recommendations at two regular meetings in November 2023 and March 2024:

LOTS 1, 2, and 7:

At its meeting on November 8, 2023, the Museum of Riverside’s Collections Committee unanimously supported the recommendation to accession into the permanent collection of:

1. Riverside memorabilia including a Riverside trolley token box, Mason and Hamlin organ, “I Love You, California” phonograph record, and thirty-seven (37) archival paper items from 1900-1961
2. Two crepe paper dolls crafted by Leola Mae Gould in 1959
3. 257 herbarium specimens collected in 2021 by biologist Ivan Parr and one (1) Joshua tree specimen

LOTS 3 through 6:

At its meeting on March 13, 2024, the Museum of Riverside's Collections Committee unanimously supported the recommendation to accession into the permanent collection of:

4. Riverside International Raceway asphalt fragments
5. Skelley building sign
6. Ramona High School and other cheerleader's items
7. Magnolia Avenue postcard

TWO OBJECTS FROM REGIONAL TRIBAL ARTISTS

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.

1. Painting by River Garza
2. Rattle by Anthony Vallez

DISCUSSION:

The Museum of Riverside (Museum) holds several categories of collection, for which different criteria of use and care apply. The permanent collection is the category to which the highest levels of care, documentation, and interpretive effort are accorded. Objects and specimens deemed significant enough for the permanent collection are formally recommended to the Museum's governing body for "accession" (i.e., formal acceptance) into the permanent collection. Governing body approval is required because acceptance into the permanent collection carries with it responsibilities for care, conservation, and use that incur costs and publicly reflect how the Museum interprets its mission. Conversely, formal removal from the permanent collection begins with "deaccession" recommendations. Details regarding these processes are codified in the Museum's Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies.

Recommendations regarding categories of collection are guided by the Museum's Collections Development Plan. In this plan, the Museum identifies areas for growth within its collections. Relevant to the current recommendation, the plan notes that "Through its collections, the Museum will work to broaden the inquiry into the ways in which material culture defines a shared understanding of history, place, and identity."

LOT 1:

This diverse collection of locally relevant content supplements but does not duplicate existing collection. The donor's family was among the original settlers of Rubidoux. They came to Riverside during the Depression, bringing the organ and other items with them. When Riverside ceased to have a trolley, a family member obtained token boxes from the trolley repository.



1876 Mason and Hamlin organ

Riverside trolley token boxes



LOT 2:

This donation by the artist's heir has established local provenance and contributes to the Museum's development of its decorative arts, crafts, and memorabilia collections while promoting the inclusion of female creators from Riverside. It contributes to the Museum's goal of expanding its collection to include more items from 1950 to the present.



Small handwritten note or label placed below the doll.

LOT 3:

The Riverside International Raceway closed in 1989. These fragments of track asphalt, annotated as having come from Turn 6, were donated by the widow of the racing enthusiast who collected them. The Museum possesses virtually nothing connected with this once-important regional site.



LOT 4:

The Skelley building directory sign is an institutional transfer to the Museum of Riverside from the A.K. Smiley Library in Redlands, California. The historical subject matter of this object relates to Riverside's early downtown businesses, architecture, and local historical figures.



LOT 5:

These items were donated by the widower of the original owner. They have clear provenience and accompanying documentation. The Museum currently has very little material on the history of Ramona High School. This material relates to a target area of collecting, mid-century objects.



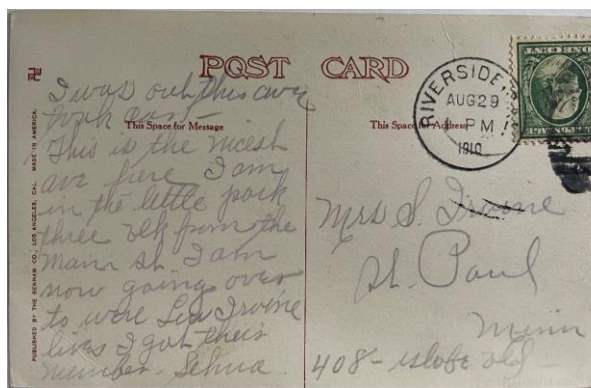
Three (3) Sierra Junior High School yearbooks, three (3) Ramona High School yearbooks, and one (1) book of cheers.



Twelve (12) photographs of Jacqueline Crilly and her cheer squad from 1967-1969.

Lot 6:

This postcard is offered as an institutional transfer to the Museum of Riverside from Marin History Museum in San Rafael, California. It is postmarked 1910, giving an approximate date for its use and production. It features the notable Magnolia Avenue in Riverside, California. The message from the sender describes Magnolia Avenue as the “nicest avenue here.”



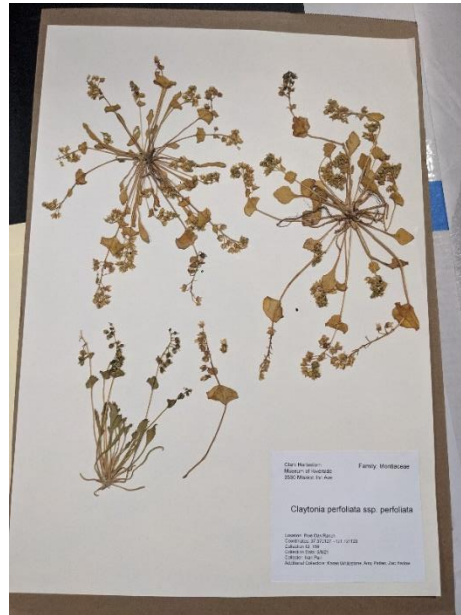
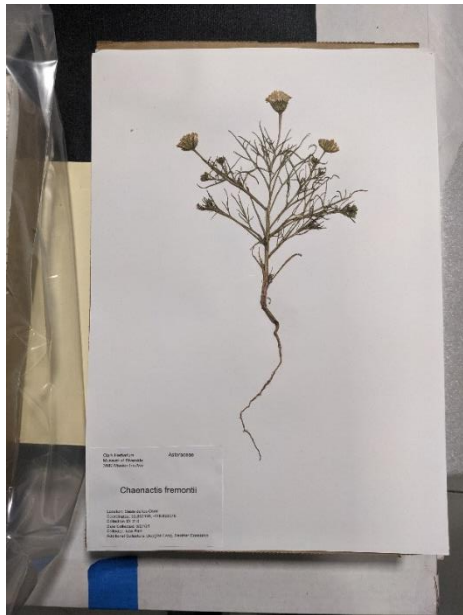
LOT 7:

These 257 herbarium specimens were collected on behalf of the Museum of Riverside, primarily by biologist Ivan Parr, across the state mostly during 2021. They were collected using museum supplies and were intended for permanent deposition with the Museum of Riverside. They were collected from recently fire-ravaged areas of California in order to provide a snapshot of the range of species that are the first to regenerate after a fire. Each has been fully prepared as an herbarium specimen.

The Joshua tree was likely collected prior to 1980 and has been on long-term exhibit in

a diorama at the Museum of Riverside since that time.

Only two examples of the herbarium sheets are illustrated.



The Joshua tree appears in the center of the image above. The specimen is currently on exhibit in *Dear Riverside, A Letter to Our First Love*, at the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties.

TWO OBJECTS FROM REGIONAL TRIBAL ARTISTS

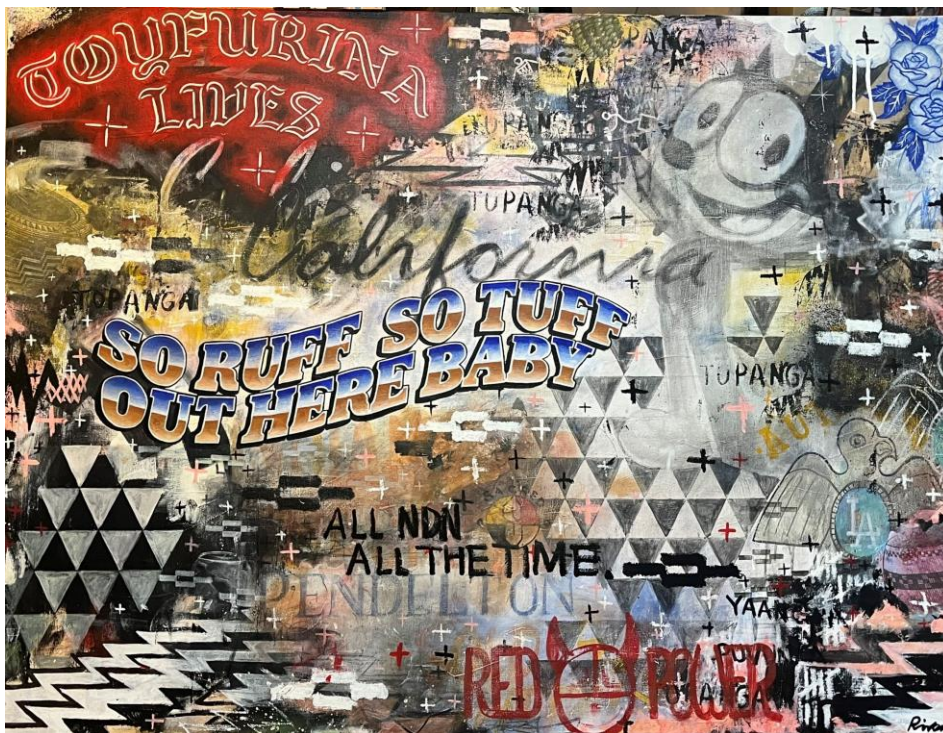
The Museum of Riverside’s Collections Development Plan explicitly notes that the “Museum will not collect fine art, fine craft, or decorative art primarily for aesthetic reasons.” However, the Museum collects art for reasons that may be identified as historic or cultural. It also notes goals regarding 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 are currently on exhibition for the first time in the exhibition *Dear Riverside: A Letter to Our First Love*, which opened 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. Acquisition of work by living Indigenous artists and artisans reinforces the awareness that these cultures thrive in our community today.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – These proposed new accessions came to the Museum by donation or budgeted purchase costs and pose manageable 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.

Prepared by:	Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Certified as to	
Availability of funds:	Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by:	Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Museum of Riverside Board Minutes – April 24, 2024
2. Museum of Riverside Board Minutes – June 26, 2024