

REDESIGNING THE LA COUNTY SEAL

INTRODUCTION

Create your own interpretation of the LA County Seal, inspired by Weshoyot Alvitre's artwork in *The Iridescence of Knowing* exhibition at OXY ARTS.



Current LA County Seal



Weshoyot Alvitre, *Tovaangar (A Seal of)*

Weshoyot Alvitre is a Tongva and Scottish artist based in Los Angeles. She created this illustration in response to the current Seal of Los Angeles County, adopted in 2004 to include a depiction of a Tongva/Gabrielino woman. "She is still dressed in European clothing with an air of westernized female servitude, reinforcing an illusion that the Original people were primitive hunter/gatherers and passive to colonial efforts" wrote Alvitre.

Her print depicts "a Tongva woman in traditional regalia and ceremonial objects. I seek to reassert the narrative that the Tongva are a sovereign nation and that Native women can also have a place in political power, serve as medicine people and chiefs, and collectively make decisions for the betterment and welfare of their people."

VOCABULARY

- **Tovaangar** - the area originally inhabited by the Gabrielino Tongva, spanning LA County, parts of Northern Orange County and the Southern California Channel Islands.
- **Gabrielino / Tongva** - the First Peoples and ongoing caretakers of Tovaangar, the Los Angeles basin.
- **City or County Seal** - a drawing or symbol adopted by a city or county to represent the region in official and legal documents and signs.

MATERIALS

- Pencil
- Eraser
- Permanent marker - sharpie or any non-water based marker
- Colorful markers
- Square piece of paper, 8" x 8" or larger

STEPS

- 1 Find an image of the seal for whichever county you currently reside in. If you don't know the name and history of the **First Peoples** where you live, look them up using native-land.ca. Research the history, stories, plants and symbols of the First Peoples in your region.
- 2 Using your pencil, draw a sketch of your new design for a city or county **seal**, using imagery, plants, symbols, etc. from your research. Some seals are round, but you can choose what shape and style you want to create your seal in. How can the shape and colors reflect the histories and stories you want to represent?
- 3 Once you have finished your design, outline your pencil marks with sharpie. Erase any leftover pencil marks. Color in your design using the colorful markers. Think about which colors you want to use to represent your region. Are there colors from the natural environment you want to use?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How is your **seal** different from the existing **seal**? How is it similar?

If you are not Indigenous to the region where you live, what does it mean to design a seal that represents an area where you are a visitor?

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