

The IRIDESCENCE of KNOWING

ACTIVITY +
REFLECTION
GUIDE

September 14 - November 18

Image: Katie Dorame, *Sunbridge* (2023)

OXY
ARTS



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OXY ARTS sits on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the [Gabrielino/Tongva](#) peoples. We acknowledge the Gabrielino/Tongva as the original caretakers of Tovangaar which spans LA County, parts of Northern Orange County and the Southern California Channel Islands.

The Gabrielino/Tongva people continue to remain in relationships with these lands through ceremony, culture, and stewardship. We pay our respects to the [Honuukvetam](#) (Ancestors), [‘Ahihirom](#) (Elders) and [‘Eyoohiinkem](#) (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging.

The Iridescence of Knowing is an exhibition that explores the artwork of different makers from Southern California First Peoples communities. There are threads between the artworks in these rooms that span space and time – the artists in the exhibit come from different generations and from different places. Some of the artists have literally learned their craft from each other, showing a direct link of how knowledge is shared from generation to generation.

But it is not always so linear, knowledge sharing happens in all directions and waves of influence ripple across the artworks in these rooms. Some contemporary artists make baskets, instruments and other objects using traditional materials or in a traditional style. Other artists are creating artworks that are in conversation with traditional knowledge, stories or materials, but use different mediums and explore different themes. As you walk through the exhibition, notice where you can find these moments of [iridescence](#) between the artworks.

VOCABULARY

Tovangaar - Los Angeles basin - 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 Tovangaar, the Los Angeles basin.

Honvukvetam - Ancestor - a person, animal or plant from whom one is descended.

Pattern - a combination of shapes or elements repeated in a regular order.

litar - Coyote.

Aapo - Abalone.

Ti'at - Canoe made of redwood planks

Iridescence - a lustrous effect caused by different refractions of light waves bouncing off a surface.

To learn more Tongva words and hear their pronunciations, scan the QR code:



FIND...

Tovaangar by Adrienne Kinsella

This map of **Tovaangar**, or the Los Angeles basin, shows a current map of LA County with Tongva village names and drawings of the plants and animals that are native to this area layered on top. The artist is representing her home through all of these different elements on the map.

On the next page, draw your own map of any place that is important to you. This can be of your home, neighborhood, or any place that is special to you. Be sure to write or draw the names of the places, people, plants and anything else you would like to be remembered. You can also add drawings, patterns, or any of your own decorations that represent the place you are depicting.

FIND...

Tongva Style Basket No. 2 by Theresa J Ambo

Lepo Lepo by Leah Mata Fragua

Continuum by Gerald Clarke

For around 100 years, Tongva basket weaving has been dormant. Artists today are creating baskets by learning from Tongva baskets held in museum collections. These baskets were made by their *honuukvetam*, and learning how to make them is a way to directly connect with their ancestors.

What skills have you learned from your ancestors? Why is it important to pass along skills, stories and crafts? Write your answers here:

Many baskets have a repeating pattern. Some of these patterns are made of shapes, and others are made of words. Look closely - what kinds of patterns do you see in these baskets?
Can you read any specific words?

Draw the patterns you see in the baskets, or in any of the other artwork in the show. You can also draw your own repeating patterns inspired by shapes and words you like:



Can you find the three artworks that have Coyote in them? Look around to see if you can find Coyote, or you can look for these names on the wall labels to find them:

FIND...

Sky Coyote #1 by River Garza

Coyote Drops the Goblet by L. Frank

Manriquez

Petroglyphs in Motion I-IV by James
Luna

What do you notice about these two paintings?
How are they similar? How are they different?

Use the space below to write down what you notice.

Coyote is an important character in Tongva oral histories, and in many other stories from First Peoples cultures.

In Sky Coyote #1, River Garza included the word for Coyote in Tongva - *litar*. Coyote is holding a *Ti'at* (canoe) paddle. The background behind Coyote shows stars.

In an interview talking about why Coyote is an important character in her work, L. Frank explained that “...Coyote often does things in the wrong way or teaches us how to do things in the right way by doing it the wrong way...Coyote does very human things, like things we all want to do or not thinking about his actions– but for him, there is always a consequence.”

When you look at these artworks that depict Coyote, what stories do you imagine? What do you notice about where Coyote is standing, what is in the surrounding area, or other clues that help tell the story?

On the next page, you can write your own story about Coyote inspired by what you see. You can also draw or write about any other characters that you can dream up!



The Iridescence of Knowing is curated by Mercedes Dorame, 2023-24 Wanlass Artist-in-Residence and Joel Garcia, Fall 2023 Curator- in-Residence.

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