



# CONNECTED

CONTEMPORARY WORKS BY NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS ARTISTS

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2019 - SUNDAY, JULY 7, 2019

ARTS AND CULTURE EL DORADO • CONFIDENCE LAB  
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# ABOUT *CONNECTED*

Recent criticism in the art world at large has expressed a growing concern regarding the need to see and to provide greater representation of Native American and Indigenous artists in arts institutions across the U.S. While much of that critical concern is directed toward high-profile museums in major metropolitan areas, these issues remain just as important on a local level and change often begins at home. Supporting artists across this region and forging community partnerships is, after all, a foundational tenet of our organization's mission. We are embracing this role passionately and with the greatest intentionality.

As such, the concept of "connection" - around which curator Sigrid Benson has framed this exhibition - speaks deeply to us here at Arts and Culture El Dorado, as we continue to broaden the scope of our cultural endeavors. We seek to connect with, and in turn nurture, a growing arts presence in the Sierra Foothills region, as well as seek to connect with artists who work within, and who are themselves connected to, the richness and diversity of cultures across Northern California.

To that end, we were delighted when approached by Benson with the opportunity to host this touring exhibition, which has already seen at Blue Line Arts in Roseville, CA, and at the Exhibition and Collections Center at the Shingle Springs Rancheria. We were more than happy to offer Confidence Lab as another stop along the HWY 50 corridor, with the possibility – and the hope – of reaching a broader audience.

In bringing together a widely varying body of works, produced by 16 individual artists, *Connected* examines the ways in which contemporary Native American and Indigenous Artists are connected as a community, while also articulating the diversity therein. In featuring contemporary artworks, the exhibition effectively dispels the often-homogenizing (historically colonizing) concepts most commonly associated with "Native American" artwork as a genre. Instead, this exhibition allows the artists' works to speak for themselves and for the artists as unique – yet connected – individuals.





Tiffany Adams  
*Hero*, 2017  
 Acrylic



Gemma Benton  
*Ancestors*, 2016  
 Cold wax, oils, natural pigments

# CONNECTED

*Connected* is a showcase of regional native perspectives on the way we, as humans, relate to the environment, and through it to each other. As it travels, stimulating the creation of artwork along the way, the exhibition reflects the processes of community building and exchange that lay at its core.

This diverse group of California Indian, Native American and Indigenous artists are connected not only by their shared identities as First Peoples, but by their mutual, shifting relationships to the region commonly referred to these days as Central California.

Each artist has a unique story that places them, individually, in this landscape. Some were born here, some live here and some work here, while others are brought here intermittently by networks of community relationships that extend back, beyond the awareness of history. Some are the living descendants of the original peoples of this land: unceded, aboriginal Nisenan territory.

From the Nis-sim Paw-we-nan on the Sacramento and Feather Rivers, across the valley to the people of the Northern and Southern Foothills, a traditional Nisenan worldview considers humans as peers of the other beings sharing this cultural landscape. Thus plants, animals, rocks and other relatives are to be treated accordingly.

This philosophy and these lands, shared by many California Indian and Indigenous communities, are subtly revealed by the work produced for this exhibition - water, ash, obsidian, sacred places, cherished ancestors, visions, baskets, relatives, futures, pasts and presents. These relationships, made visible, are a reminder of the native arts flourishing throughout the region.

The richness of this local cultural art scene owes much to the influence of the late Frank La Pena (1937-2019) whose mixed media piece *The Magician* speaks to our shared human potential. In considering these vast networks, Frank reminds us, "The main thing is to remember our relationship to the animals and the plants."

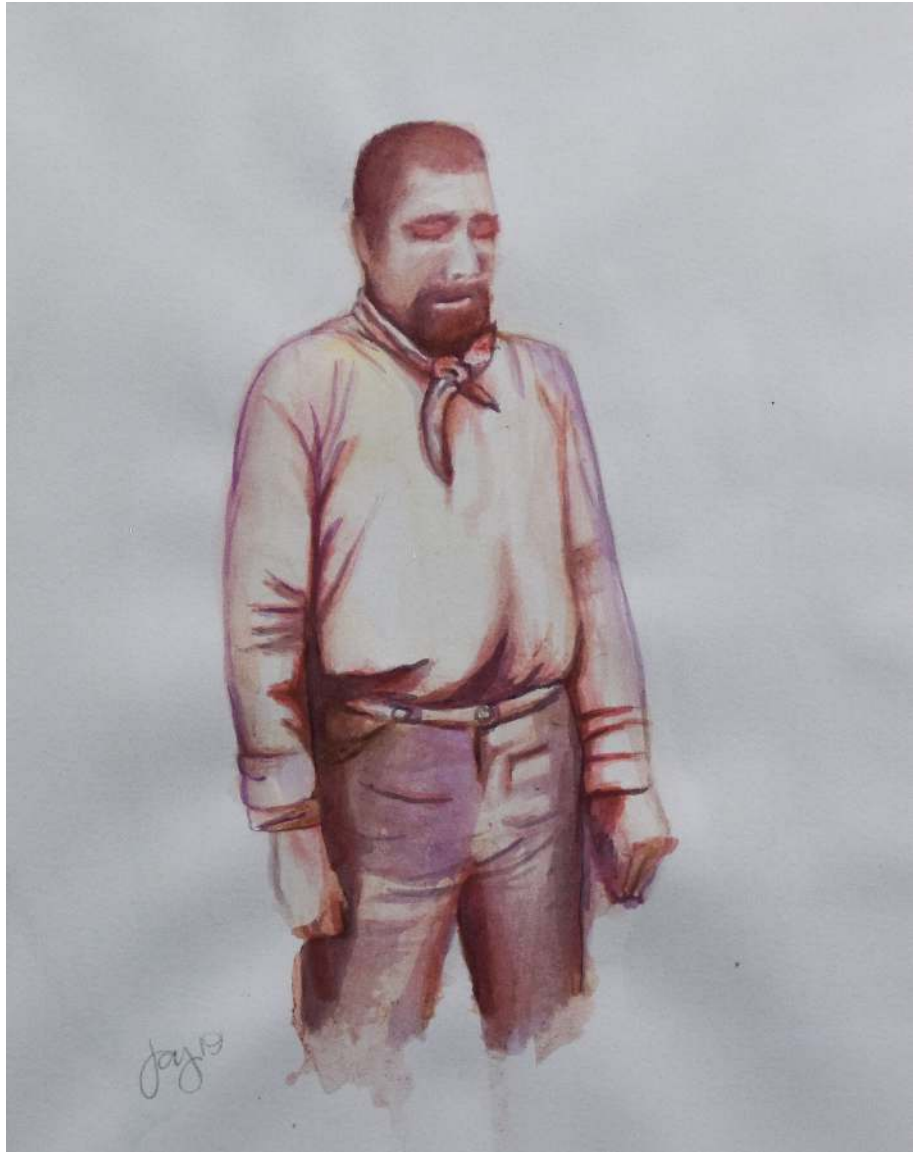
-Sigrid Benson, Director of Exhibits and Collections  
*Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians*



Noixium Berrios  
*Massaui Speaks*, 2018  
Beadwork on deerhide



Noixium Berrios  
*The Return of Chadaskatunwitchtalum*, 2018  
Beadwork on deerhide



Jacky Calanchini  
*Blind Tom*, 2019  
Watercolor

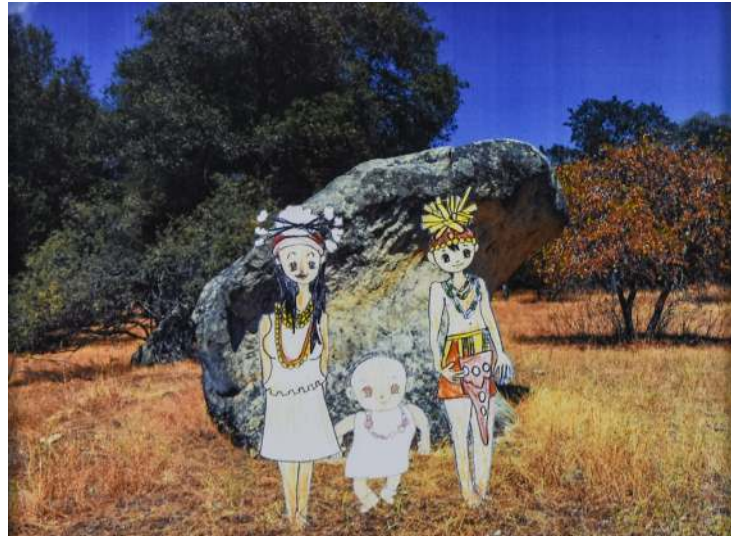




Kai LaPena  
Figure I, 2016  
Mixed media



Sonia Camp  
*Strong Family I*, 2017  
Digital art



Sonia Camp  
*Strong Family II*, 2017  
Digital art





Virginia Hefner  
*Creator's Vision*, 2019  
 Ram skull, Huichol style beading with  
 seed beads, and bee's wax

Sharon Campbell  
*Scarlett*, 2018  
 Block print



Charley Burns, *Globe of Truth Inside Blades*, 2018, Pen and ink



## The Magician

My magic act  
is having a wife  
two children of my own  
one 13 year old dog  
a siamese cat  
starting from her grandpa  
and being surprised  
by a crazy  
unpredictable world  
that made no sense

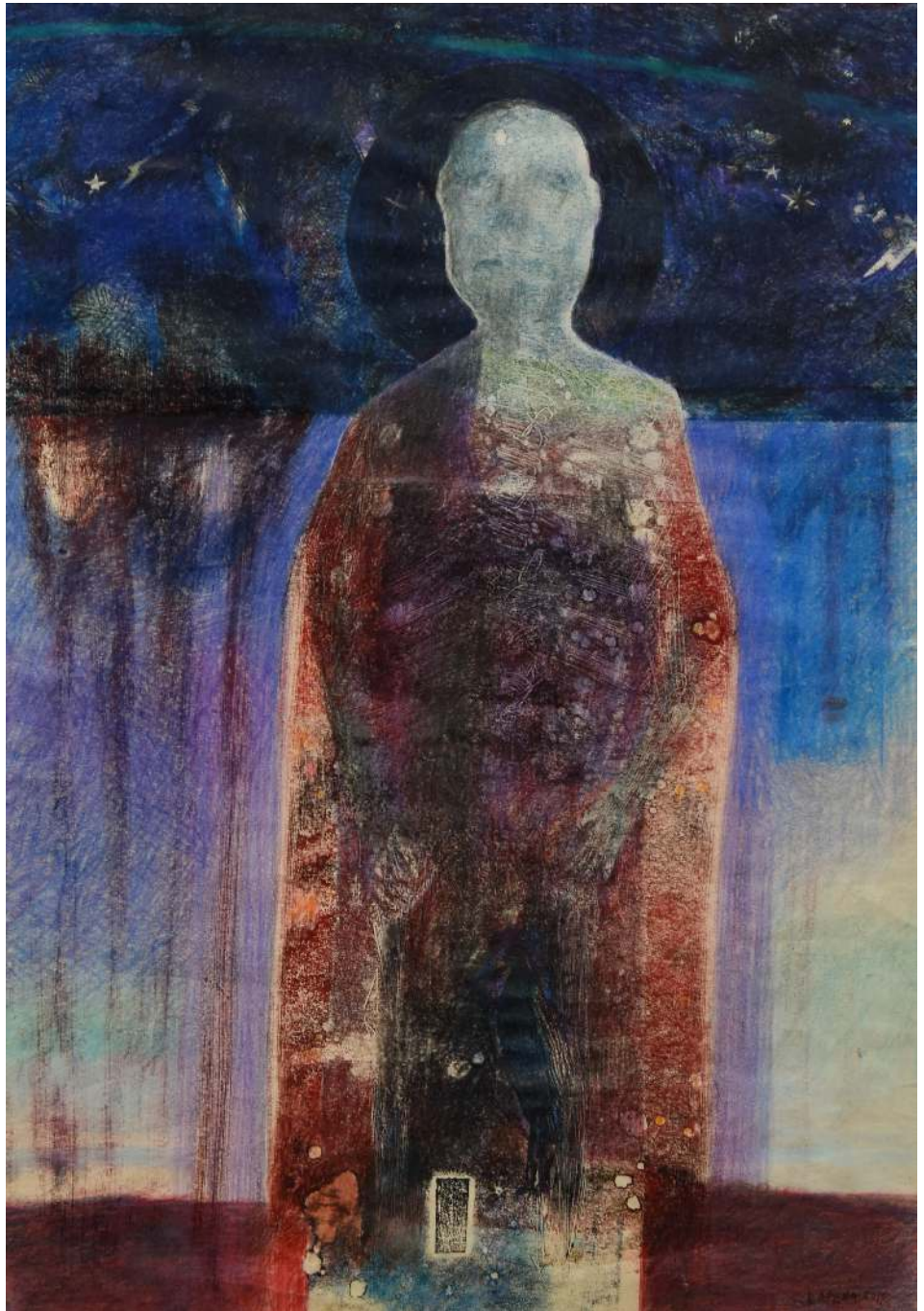
I wandered around  
wondering  
where did happiness go  
then I met  
a man of distinction

a mirror image  
of an old man  
but he walked  
straighter than most  
and reminded me  
Of my obligation

This old man  
Greeted me in the old way  
face to face  
with palms  
facing palms  
and told me  
of the reason  
for sickness

A human being is imperfect  
but the potential  
for magic  
and perfection is  
always possible.

-Frank LaPena



Frank LaPena  
*The Magician*, 2015  
Mixed media  
Cover image for *Connected* catalog





Meyo Marrufo  
*Calendula*, 2018  
Digital art



Meyo Marrufo  
*Paintbrush and Meadowlark*,  
2018  
Digital art

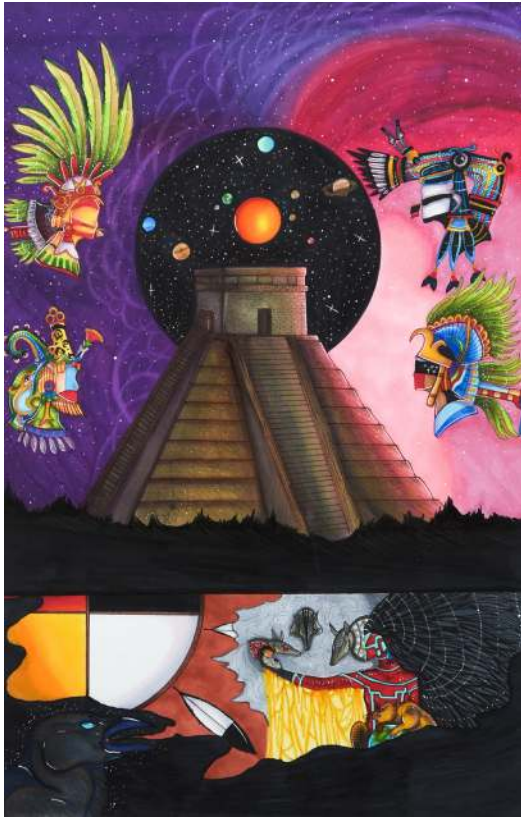


Meyo Marrufo  
*Lilac*, 2018  
Digital art



Meyo Marrufo  
*Butterfly Pattern*, 2018  
Digital art





Devany Rain Royalty  
*Toltec Nations*, 2018  
Pen and ink

Stan Padilla  
*Fourth Phase of Water*, 2018  
Natural mineral paints, acrylic



Melissa Melero-Moose  
*Wono*, 2017  
Mixed media







Gerald Stone  
*Seminole Seeker of Water*, 2018  
 Oil



Monique Sonoquie  
*Post Industrial Work Basket*, 2018  
 Electrical cable and metal spacers

## **Tiffany Adams**

Tiffany Adams is a citizen of the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe of Havasu Lake, Konkow and Nisenan from northern California and grew up in Benicia, California. Being one of a handful of native families in town, she was keenly aware of her skin color and that of her family. This has led her to connect her work to social and cultural issues. Her current work is focused on Indigenous femininity and community. She embeds elements of cultural identity with modern representations of cultural symbols and practices. Her work has been exhibited at the R.C. Gorman Museum, the Maidu Museum, and South Western American Indian Art Market, where she received a blue ribbon in 2014 in diverse arts for a traditional Maidu dance belt.

## **Gemma Benton**

Gemma Benton is a traditional Native American singer, storyteller and mixed media artist. Through her art, Gemma explores the intersections of time, spirituality and healing. In her transformational art workshops, she shares stories and wisdom gathered during her twenty-seven years of working in Native American and indigenous communities. She is the creator of the “Ancestors Journey,” an online creative journey of reconnection and healing with the Earth and the stories of our ancestors. Gemma is Menominee and Filipino. She lives in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada with her husband Bear, who is Western Shoshone, and her green parrot, Naivi.

## **Noixium Berrios**

Noixium Berrios (Yaqui, Maya, Mexica) grew up in the Bay Area in Decoto, CA. The first in his family to go to college, he holds a BS in Recreation and MS Science Education from Cal State East Bay. Noixium currently works at Camp Winthers in the Sierra Nevada Mountains as a Naturalist and Art Teacher for the San Juan Unified School District. “I believe Art and Nature go together and I try to tap people into both.” He currently resides in Cameron Park.

## **Charlie Burns**

Charley Burns is a Yurok Indian from the Humboldt County, Klamath River areas. Charley holds a BA in Art from Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA and is known for his vibrant pen and ink illustrations. He is an active participant in the cultural ceremonies of his people.



## **Jacky Calanchini**

Jacky Calanchini was born in Sacramento, CA and was raised between the valley and the foothills of El Dorado County. She is a certified Web Designer and lifelong lover of crafts. Jacky's true devotion is to the preservation of her heritage and she finds great comfort in the ability to create. Whether Jacky is weaving a basket, painting or creating a website, she finds much delight in the assembly of various elements to conceive a design.

## **Sonia Camp**

Sonia Camp is part of the Maidu Nisenan and Miwok tribes. She likes to draw Native people, anime, animals and plants, and to show her work with tribal members and non-tribal members so others can get the feeling of wanting to draw and look at pictures. Sonia finds confidence within her talents to draw and create. Currently, she is a student at Sierra College, and loves listening to Native music.

## **Sharon Campbell**

Sharon Campbell is a tribal member of Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians and was born in Santa Rosa, CA.

## **Virginia Hefner**

Virginia Hefner is a Senior at Union Mine High School. She is a Honey Lake Maidu Native, born in Susanville, California on the reservation. Virginia grew up with native culture all around her and grew passionate about learning where her ancestors came from. In studying her culture, she grew to love the art her people created. She became involved with a local Indian Education tribal center and developed a passion for beading and other art mediums. Beading, painting, weaving, and other mediums are a way for Virginia to stay in touch with her native culture, and to express herself.

## **Frank LaPena**

Frank LaPena Nomtipom Wintu (1937-2019) is a foundational figure of the contemporary California Indian art movement. An internationally exhibited artist, Frank served as Director of Native American Studies at CSU Sacramento and Professor Emeritus of Art and Ethnic Studies. As Dance Captain of the Maidu Dancers and Traditionalists, Frank has influenced generations throughout the California Indian community, and far beyond.

## **Kai LaPena**

Kai LaPena was born in Sacramento and descends from Wintu, Irish, Pilipino, and Prussian peoples. He has been culturally active in the northern California native community since he was three years old. Kai has received training and teaching from Elders and knowledgeable persons in the Maidu, Pomo, Wintun, and Miwok territories. He is still a student of culture. “Through my art I seek to promote a continuance of the material culture of my ancestors and a legacy for my descendants. My art focuses on the ceremonial regalia of Northern California.”

## **Meyo Marrufo**

Meyo Marrufo is Eastern Pomo from the Clear Lake Basin. Although tribally from Eastern Pomo, she has lived in several other California tribal areas, including Yurok, Hupa, Maidu and Miwok territories. She feels lucky to have been part of, and continues to be part of, her other “family” from these different tribes. When she started coming of age, she began her journey to learn regalia and traditional food processing from the ground up. Meyo states, “I have been lucky in my life to have known many gifted artists and have been able to learn some of those techniques.” As Marrufo deepened her art practice, she began sharing her knowledge in cultural arts, regalia making and traditional foods with others. She continues to share her skills and knowledge with her people.

## **Melissa Melero-Moose**

Melissa Melero-Moose was born in San Francisco, CA and spent most of her childhood living in Reno, Nevada. She is a Northern Paiute enrolled with the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe located in Fallon, Nevada with ties to Fort Bidwell Paiute in California. Her works are a part of the permanent collections of the School for Advanced Research (IARC), Santa Fe, NM, the Autry Museum in Los Angeles, CA, the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts in Santa Fe, NM, the Nevada State Museum in Carson City, NV, the Newark Museum in Newark, NJ and the Sheppard Museum at the University of Nevada, Reno. She is inspired by imagery found in the Great Basin landscape, petroglyphs, beadwork, and basketry from the Native tribes of Nevada and California.



## **Stan Padilla**

Stan Padilla is a native Yaqui and Xicano multi-media artista, educator and cultural activist. His artwork has been exhibited nationally and internationally since 1970. As an educator, he is currently an Artistic/Cultural Mentor for the Auburn Indian Community Tribal School in Auburn, CA. Stan is well known for his humanitarian work and cross-cultural activities within many cultures, concerning issues of social justice, human rights and environmental protection. He has been working, teaching and mentoring youth of all communities for over 40 years.

## **Devaney Rain Royalty**

Devaney is a 17 year old, self-taught freelance artist, born and raised in Sacramento, California. She is Ponca/Cree/Tsalagi/Cherokee Deer Clan and was raised the Beauty Way. Devaney follows the Red Road and the Teachings of the Medicine Wheel.

## **Monique Sonoquie**

Monique Sol Sonoquie (Chumash, Apache, Yaqui, Zapotec, Irish) is a multi-dimensional Indigenous Woman, in body, mind and spirit. As a Basketweaver, Documentary Filmmaker, Youth Advocate, Traditional Food and Medicine Gatherer, Educator, Romiromi Practitioner and EarthMother Protector, she has embodied many aspects of her rich heritages into her life and work. As a Basketweaver, she gathers traditional materials such as tule, juncus, hazel, and willow sticks, and more recently kelp and seaweeds. With limited access to gathering sites and materials due to toxins, land loss, and climate change, she has found alternative materials to preserve culture and land. Her new-found challenge and exploration is weaving with recycled materials, combining her passions of traditional weaving and her dedication for “Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.”

## **Gerald Stone**

Gerald Stone was born in Konawa, Oklahoma in 1947 and is enrolled 1/2 Seminole and 1/8 Cherokee ‘non-enrolled’. He was raised Seminole. After high school (1965), he studied printmaking and painting at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, followed by three years at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah. In 1971, due to a lack of income and a growing family, Gerald became a roofer and eventually received a BFA in the summer of 1974. For the next six years he worked on roofs in the day and painted at night. In ’81 he showed in The Indian Art Market in Tulsa Oklahoma, then entered competitions from 1984 through 1994, winning some awards. He has been showing works in the Sacramento region since 2009.



Arts and Culture El Dorado's mission to promote, connect, and empower arts and culture throughout the county is achieved by targeted programs and services, a vibrant gallery exhibition series, and a focus on initiatives which support and sustain the cultural life of the region.

Terry LeMoncheck, Executive Director

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