



A *Gathering of Nations* festival celebrating the history and traditions of indigenous people will be staged at the Bonita Museum and Cultural Center Nov. 5. The nearly day-long celebration will welcome indigenous artists and performers from around the world to South Bay San Diego. The festival will also mark the opening of a new exhibition, *New World/Old World*, by renowned artist Roberto Salas. The festival and exhibition are free and open to the public.

The festival, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., will feature indigenous craftspeople, storytellers and performers demonstrating artistic traditions that trace their ancestors and the evolution of all humans to the present day. Performers will include Kumeyaay Bird Singers led by Chairman H. Paul Cuero Jr., who is nationally known for his mastery of a cycle of songs named for the Takut. These cultural bird songs, of which there are 300 in the Takut cycle, are a metaphor for life.

Visitors will also meet master woodcarver and storyteller Abel Ryan, a member of the Laxiboo clan of Metlakatla, a Tsimshian artist from Juneau, Alaska. On stage, there will be presentations by the Ben Hale dancers. Southwestern College professor David Salomon, Tongva/Gabrielino, will perform traditional flute. From Arizona, there will be Zarco Guerrero, a nationally known sculptor, muralist, storyteller and performance artist. Visitors can also enjoy Aztec dancers and other storytellers throughout the day.

The festival will also feature educational resources and vendors from Kumeyaay College's Kosay Kumeyaay Market, Blackfeet displays with Chuck Jenson, jewelry with Carmen Guerrero of the Cultural Coalition and basket weaver Aurelia Ojeda Melendrez from the Kumeyaay tribal community of San Jose de la Zorra, Baja California, Mexico. Aurelia is famous for her stunning coiled rattlesnake basket patterns and Kumeyaay basket hats.

Food vendors will include Lucy Hale's Frybread stand, chefs Ángel & Ángel with MuMa Paxil, Taco El Pintor, The Kitchenistas of National City, The Empanada Spot and fresh tamales.

The *Gathering of Nations* festival is coordinated by the museum's Indigenous Cultures Educator Heather Gallana, who is currently working toward a master's degree in museum studies.

Salas' *Old World/New World* exhibition inside the museum seeks to honor the craft and artwork of indigenous people from the traditional Kumeyaay lands. Having grown up in El Paso, attended college in San Diego, and traveled the world, Salas and his art show us how our ancestral roots and artistic traditions inform our present life in South Bay San Diego. Large-scale artworks in the exhibition challenge the viewer as to their personal relationship and discovery of culture, as well as how their actions affect other cultures. The exhibit will continue through Dec.3.

Salas is also currently creating two new site-specific artworks for the Chula Vista Marina redevelopment project. In addition, Salas enjoys delivering art supplies and making art with the Pa-Ipai people near Ensenada.

The Bonita Museum & Cultural Center is working with Kumeyaay College to create a permanent exhibition in the museum about Kumeyaay past and present in the Sweetwater Valley. This exhibit would add an auditory element of the Kumeyaay language to objects. The language would be added by members of Kumeyaay College and the exhibition will be designed and implemented by the college. The museum, at 4355 Bonita Road, Bonita, CA 91902, is located in the Sweetwater River Valley near ancient Kumeyaay village sites.

For more information about these and other events, please find the museum at online at Bonitahistoricalociety.org.