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"We are still here, we are alive as a community: we’re not just separate individuals or families, we have always been here."

Charlene Nijmeh
Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Chairwoman

This Educational Toolkit was developed in collaboration between New Museum Los Gatos (NUMU), San José State University (SJSU) graduate and undergraduate Anthropology students, and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area, coinciding with the Reclamation exhibitions: Resilience of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and Aboriginal Ancestral Homeland of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe at NUMU. These two art exhibitions highlight the vitality of the Muwekma Ohlone today, featuring photographs of tribal members and their ancestral heritage sites and places within their aboriginal homeland, taken by their Tribal Photographer Kike Arnal. The exhibitions and accompanying toolkit were developed to promote a deeper understanding of local indigenous art, culture, history, and contemporary issues in Los Gatos and the greater Bay Area and preserve and share knowledge about critical issues surrounding the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe’s struggle to regain their federally recognized status.
Taking inspiration from the photographs in each exhibition, this Educational Toolkit was created to serve as a lasting resource for 3rd-5th grade teachers in the Bay Area to present concrete connections between California History-Social Studies content standards and the contemporary lives of a documented, local, historic Indigenous community. Through photos, activities, quotations, and discussion questions, students will learn about the cultural revitalization efforts of the Muwekma Ohlone and recognize that they have unique experiences and perspectives to share pertaining to local history. Their communities are dynamic, and their regalia, dance, language, and arts remain essential expressions of their identities. This Toolkit is meant to help students understand that the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has maintained a continuous presence in the San Francisco Bay Area for thousands of years, despite the United States government and Bureau of Indian Affairs Sacramento Superintendent removing the tribe from the list of landless California Indians awaiting land purchase for their homes. The Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Council is still actively forging ahead to regain their federal recognition, and by partnering with organizations like NUMU and SJSU, hopes to bring awareness to their struggle.

To learn more about the history of the Muwekma Ohlone, and support their current efforts, read through our Further Resources page.
Connecting to California Curriculum Content Standards

We have selected relevant California History-Social Science and Visual Arts content standards for 3rd through 5th grade. Below are the content standards that we feel are most relevant to this Toolkit as a whole. You will find more specific related content standards in each section. We hope this Toolkit can help you and your students think critically about the California content standards and fill in any gaps you might have in finding contemporary local examples to support learning objectives.

History-Social Science Content Standards

**Grade 3: Standard 3.2**
Students describe the American Indian Nations in their local region long ago and in the recent past.

**Grade 4: Standard 4.2**
Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.

**Grade 5: Standard 5.3**
Students describe the cooperation and conflict that existed among the American Indians and between the Indian nations and the new settlers.

Visual Arts Content Standards

**Process Component: Investigate**

2.3 Enduring Understanding:
People create and interact with objects, places, monuments/territorial markers, and design, and this defines, shapes, enhances, and empowers their lives.

**Essential Questions:**
How do objects, places, monuments, and design shape lives and communities?

**Process Component: Present**

Enduring Understanding:
Objects, natural features, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented by artists, museums, or other venues communicate meaning and a record of social, cultural, and political experiences resulting in cultivating appreciation and understanding.

**Essential Questions:**
What is an art museum?
How do objects, artifacts, and artworks that are collected, preserved, or presented, cultivate appreciation and understanding?

**Process Component: Perceive, Analyze**

7.2 Enduring Understanding:
Visual imagery influences the understanding of and responses to the world.

**Essential Questions:**
Where and how do we encounter images in our world?
How do images influence our views of the world?

History-Social Science Content Standards sourced [here](#).
Visual Arts Content Standards sourced [here](#).
**Glossary**

**Adaptation**
The process of changing in relation to the missionization period.

**Advocacy**
The public support for a particular cause or policy.

**Ancestral Homelands**
A person's familial or aboriginal lands.

**Forced Assimilation**
The process of taking in and fully understanding information or ideas like a new language. In this case, forcefully learning (Spanish) or European culture to destroy aboriginal culture and identity.

**Conversion**
The changing of one's spiritual beliefs or the action of forcing someone else to change theirs.

**Federal Recognition**
An American Indian or tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States. With the relationship, entities may be entitled to attached land, responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations.

**Land Acknowledgement**
A formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

**Regalia**
The distinctive clothing worn and ornaments carried at formal occasions as an indication of status.

**Reclamation**
The process of claiming something back or reasserting a right.

**Relocation**
The forceful removal of tribal entities from their aboriginal lands.

**Revitalizing/Revitalization**
The giving of life to cultural items, relics, languages, traditions, and spaces.

**Symbolic/Symbolism**
The depiction of items that show or represent the resilience and strength of the tribe and their ancestors.

*These definitions were written using the Oxford Language Dictionary (OED) and personal understanding. Find more words essential to understanding Ohlone heritage [here](#).*
Reclamation of Regalia, Dance, and Songs

“But we still practice, we still work on revitalizing our language, bringing our language back in our dances. And we work on projects like this to show that we are still here, and this is who we look like.”

Charlene Nijmeh
Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Chairwoman

BIG IDEA
Regalia, dance, and songs are integral to Muwekma Ohlone traditions and identity.

The Muwekma Ohlone have made it clear that they have maintained a continuous presence with the reclamation of regalia and their traditional dance performances. Today, the post-1960s generation has been playing an essential role in educating the current generation and teaching them the ways of the past in order to continue their traditions. Honoring their ancestors’ lives and their role in preserving culture gives agency to current and future generations of Muwekma youth to tell their own stories and find their place. The knowledge of regalia creation and dance originates with the ancestors. Each piece of regalia and dance moves has a story to tell. The Muwekma Ohlone strongly feel that their ancestors are still watching over them today; their living generations represent a bridge, a special relationship between their past, present, and future.

We’d love to hear your feedback! Take our survey.
The tribe is actively reclaiming and revitalizing their regalia and dance traditions by teaching the younger generation. Regalia creation and dancing are some of the various ways for Tribal members to experience closeness to their ancestors. Knowledge and techniques for regalia creation and dance have been passed down from generation to generation. Revitalizing regalia and dance is an important part of the Muwekma Ohlone sharing their culture with the public as they seek federal recognition and community support.

**History Social Studies Content Standards**

**Grade 3: Standard 3.2.1.**
Describe national identities, religious beliefs, customs, and various folklore traditions.

**Grade 4: Standard 4.2.1.**
Discuss the major nations of California Indians, including their geographic distribution, economic activities, legends, and religious beliefs.

**Grade 5: Standard 5.1.2.**
Describe their varied customs and folklore traditions.

**Related Visual Arts Content Standards**

**3.VA:Pr6**
Investigate and explain how and where different cultures record and illustrate stories and history of life through art.

**Grade 5: Cr2.3**
Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to recognize that:

1. The tribe is actively reclaiming and revitalizing their regalia and dance traditions by teaching the younger generation.
2. Regalia creation and dancing are some of the various ways for Tribal members to experience closeness to their ancestors.
3. Knowledge and techniques for regalia creation and dance have been passed down from generation to generation.
4. Revitalizing regalia and dance is an important part of the Muwekma Ohlone sharing their culture with the public as they seek federal recognition and community support.

**Click here to listen to a traditional Muwekma Ohlone song: José Guzman Song**

**Reclamation of Regalia, Dance, and Songs**
1. Ask students to bring an object, musical instrument, article of clothing, photograph, or family heirloom that represents their culture.
   - Ask students to explain the significance of their item to the rest of the class.
   - Encourage them to reflect on their pride in celebrating their culture through art, clothing, and traditions.
   - Are these belongings related to special occasions, or celebrations in your family's culture? If so, which ones?
   - Encourage them to reflect on how it felt to share their family treasures with the class.

2. Have your students take a photo of their family or a cultural gathering they are part of to share with the class.
   - What things do you notice in the photo that may signify your culture that others may not notice?

3. Have your students create an artwork inspired by their own culture:
   - This could be in the form of paper dolls, a drawing, or a painting that celebrates an aspect of their own cultural clothing.

Discussion Questions
- Is there something you or your family wear that represents your culture?
- How important is it for those items to stay within your family?
- Are these items passed down from generation to generation?
“As Native people revitalizing and reclaiming who we are, that was very empowering. There’s a lot of respect that goes with learning and saying that you speak the language, people respect that, and it breathes life back into your language. And that’s what we said; we did that we gave life back to our language. It was not dead. It was sleeping. That’s what we call it: a sleeping language.”

Gloria Gomez
Former Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Councilwoman and Member of the Muwekma Language and Dance Committee

BIG IDEA

Native languages such as Chochenyo, the Muwekma Ohlone’s native language (also called San Francisco Bay Costanoan; see Milliken et al. 2009), underwent a transformation due to the Spanish exploration and colonization of California. Now the Tribe is working on relearning and teaching their traditional language.

We’d love to hear your feedback! Take our survey.
To understand the importance of language revitalization today, we must look back on the past. Before the mission period (1769-1840) ancestors of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe traded with and intermarried other Ohlone and neighboring tribes. Interaction and cooperation remained fairly constant, and the Muwekma Ohlone were also very welcoming of visitors, such as the Spanish explorers. However, first contact with the Spanish was a difficult time. The Spanish soon established their missions and forcibly brought the Native Tribes into them to convert to Christianity and serve Spanish colonial elites. Over time, Native people were forcibly indoctrinated by the new religion with the idea of eradicating Native traditions and language. The Spanish missionization period brought about the fading of ancient tribal culture and way of life. The Spanish missionaries aimed to absorb as many Native individuals into the Mission to assimilate them into European culture and religion. In doing so, Muwekma traditions, such as cultural practices and the language Chochenyo, were meant to be eradicated. The Spanish also brought disease, and many tribal members died from diseases like measles and smallpox. Today the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe is re-establishing its presence through advocacy and education, honoring and sharing their ancient values and ways of life. Their traditional language Chochenyo, and rich cultural practices, have survived despite the Spanish missionization period.

Community initiatives, such as the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe Language Committee established in 2002, began the quest to restore the Tribe’s native Chochenyo language with the help of visiting UC Berkeley professor Juliet Blevens. Now, the Muwekma conduct translations for parks, schools, universities, and their ancestral heritage sites and places of significance to the Tribe. They incorporate their Muwekma Ohlone language into their land acknowledgments for the organizations they partner with, including words such as Hóršê ŧṳuxi (good day, hello) and Kiš horše ʹek-hinnan (thank you). Young community members are taking up the mantle of representing the Tribe by speaking Chochenyo during public events and ceremonies. The youth are the future, and learning their traditional language is important to keep their culture alive for generations to come.

### History Social Studies Content Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3: Standard 3.2.1.</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5: Standard 5.1.2.</td>
<td>Describe their varied customs and folklore traditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Related Visual Arts Content Standards

| 3.VA:Pr6 | Investigate and explain how and where different cultures record and illustrate stories and history of life through art. |
| Grade 5: Cr2.3: | Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance. |

### Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to recognize that:

1. There were two phases of colonization:
   - Before first contact and During/after Missionization. Post-contact Tribes faced forced labor, dislocation, and conversion through Spanish Missionization. The native presence shrunk drastically.

2. With the introduction of the Spanish language, the Muwekma Ohlone and their aboriginal Chochenyo language withstood assimilation and forced conversion.

3. Revitalization of Chochenyo is a central part of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe’s efforts to educate young generations about their culture and protect their traditions and identity.
Extension Activities

1. Have your students practice saying these Chochenyo phrases:
   - Hello, my name is ~ Hórše ťúuxi, káanak ráakat___________
     [hor-sheh troo-he, kahn-nahk rah-kaht]
   - Thank you ~ Kiš horše 'ek-hinnan
     [keesh hor-sheh ehk-hee-non]
   - Take care of yourself (goodbye) ~ 'Úţaspu méene
     [oo-trahs-poo men-neh]

2. Chochenyo Bingo
   - Students can have fun practicing Chochenyo phrases, such as horše ťúuxi (good-day) and ruupaywa [roo-pai-wah] (eagle), by playing bingo
   - Bingo card template available in the Further Reading and Resources section

3. Have your students share some important phrases in their own language(s).
   If your students speak other languages, encourage them to share the same phrases with the class.
   - Reflection: Come back as a group and explain why it is important to learn/respect languages and new cultures you may not have heard of.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
- Why are languages an important part of cultural identity?
- Why is naming places in traditional Native languages important?
- How important do you think it is to learn new languages?
- Would you like to learn any new languages?
- Do you think language is important in preserving cultures?
“But Muwekma’s existence and identity do not depend on federal recognition or acknowledgment of that recognition. The community, meaning the Muwekma People, make up the Tribe, and we were a Tribal community long before the Federal Government recognized us.”

Charlene Nijmeh
Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe

BIG IDEA

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has a deep and historic connection to their aboriginal ancestral homeland, which we all currently occupy.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe have a deep appreciation and value for their ancestors and their aboriginal ancestral homelands. The members of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe have an immense feeling of responsibility to honor their ancestors by protecting their aboriginal homeland and ancestral heritage sites. Protecting the land and their ancestor’s remains is a vital part of the cultural revitalization work that the Tribe is doing today. One example of the Tribe honoring the land and the legacy of their ancestors is a mural along the Guadalupe River (Thámien Rúmmey – thah-me-in roo-may). The location of this mural is very special to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. The mural is framed in a way to depict the ancestors to be watching over the current members of the tribe and offering them guidance. Other sites of significance, such as Máyyan Šáatošikma [my-yahn shah-tosh-sheek-mah] (Coyote Hills) in the East Bay, contain the Tribe’s aboriginal cemetery mounds constructed for their ancestral remains. These sites serve as reminders of the resilience and strength of the Tribe’s ancestors who stayed together during Missionization, forced separation and countless attempts of cultural erasure enforced on the Tribe.

We’d love to hear your feedback! Take our survey.
Aboriginal ancestral homelands are deeply important to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe because they represent the legacy of their ancestors, history, and Native identity. They are a physical reminder of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's identity, advocacy, and resilience in the face of systematic efforts to erase their history and identity.

Land acknowledgments are a symbolic gesture that we can all practice as individuals and in our communities as a way to honor Indigenous peoples and their role as traditional stewards of the land. Land acknowledgments are the first step towards building respectful relationships with Native communities and understanding the complex histories of erasure that have taken place because of colonization.

Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to recognize that:

1. Aboriginal ancestral homelands are deeply important to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe because they represent the legacy of their ancestors, history, and Native identity. They are a physical reminder of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe’s identity, advocacy, and resilience in the face of systematic efforts to erase their history and identity.

2. Land acknowledgments are a symbolic gesture that we can all practice as individuals and in our communities as a way to honor Indigenous peoples and their role as traditional stewards of the land.

3. Land acknowledgments are the first step towards building respectful relationships with Native communities and understanding the complex histories of erasure that have taken place because of colonization.

History Social Studies Content Standards

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**Grade 5: Standard 5.1.2.**
Describe their varied customs and folklore traditions.

Related Visual Arts Content Standards

3. **VA: Re7.2** Determine messages communicated by an image.

4. **VA: Re7.2** Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.

5. **VA: Re7.2** Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery.
Create a classroom land acknowledgment:
- Your classroom land acknowledgment should include the following:
  - The name of the Indigenous people(s) whose traditional territory the classroom is on
  - Ask students to think about what they love about the land (Hint: have them think about what they love about their special places that are on this land)
  - How they benefit from this land (Hint: we benefit from buildings on the land such as schools, houses, hospitals, and parks. We also benefit from the land, water, sky, and animals to provide us with life-sustaining food)
- Encourage students to make this land acknowledgment meaningful and personal. You might want to prompt students to think about how they can commit to taking care of the land. Click here to view NUMU’s land acknowledgment for inspiration.
- Watch this video for inspiration, where the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe created a land acknowledgment for Grant Elementary School.

Ask a class to create a mural representing the land that your school is on.
Research the Native Land that your school is built on.
- Have your students brainstorm all of the significant elements of the land: nature, places, culture, people, etc.
  - How has the land changed over time?
  - What is their favorite part of the land?
  - What parts of the land should we protect and take care of?
  - Why is this land important?

Have each student create an artwork of their own homeland.
- Think about what you would want people to know about your homeland, family, and culture:
  - How did you create your artwork to honor your family and ancestors?
  - Where would you choose to display it, and why?
Extension Activities

• Get Creative! Write, draw, or create a collage inspired by one of the following prompts:
  - Describe a memory you have of the land.
  - Show us a landscape that you hold close to your heart.
  - What does honoring the land mean to you?
  - Learn about this activity in detail on our blog.

• Create a Native Garden
  - Click here for a detailed how-to guide and to learn more about what the Muwekma Ohlone are doing to cultivate Native gardens throughout the Bay Area.
  - 1. Reach out to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Council to collaborate on your Native Garden project: email muwekma@muwekma.org.
  - 2. Make a Plan: Who will enjoy your garden and how will they enjoy it?
    • Think about the goals of your garden. What are your prioritized purposes? (E.g. Education for traditional uses, attracting pollinators/birds, water conservation, bird watching, etc.)
      - Designate a plot of land on your school grounds.
      - Source plants native to your area.
      - Plant and cultivate the plants.
    • Think about how you will access the plants for harvest, study, care, etc.
      - Click here to view a plant list from the Muwekma Four Directions Garden at the Stanford Farm
      - Use this free website to help come up with a list of plants.

FINAL DISCUSSION QUESTION
• What does honoring the land mean to you?
Becoming Stewards and Advocates

"It is the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Leadership's hope that this Educational Toolkit, developed alongside NUMU's exhibitions about our Tribe, *Reclamation: Resilience of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe* and *Aboriginal Ancestral Homeland of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe*, helps teachers and their students learn about our Tribe's history, traditions, language, places, spaces, art, architecture, sites of historical significance, and some of our selected ancestral heritage sites, but also understand who we are today as modern-day Native Americans. We are honored to have shared our culture, history, and teamwork with the administration and staff from NUMU, Mosaic, and the San Jose State Department of Anthropology faculty and students in order to bring forward to fruition these two wonderful exhibits and lasting educational resource. Aho!"

-Monica V. Arellano, Vice Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe

BIG IDEA

Students will pull together everything they have learned from the previous sections and demonstrate a holistic understanding of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and their continued presence in the San Francisco Bay Area.
The Muwekma Ohlone have faced many challenges in the past and continue to face challenges today as they advocate to be federally recognized. However, they have demonstrated an unwavering ability to persevere in the face of adversity—their traditions, like regalia creation, dance, and language, are still strong and vibrant today. Institutions like NUMU understand the value and the importance of raising awareness about the Muwekma Ohlone and sharing their story with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. There is a significant benefit in simply listening when learning from Indigenous peoples and leaving our expectations at the door. In collaboration with NUMU, our collective efforts and dedication have brought an educational piece that many can use to learn and appreciate the significance and continued presence of the Muwekma Ohlone.

When you travel somewhere or go back home, think about where you live and what native land you are on. Who was there, and who is still there? Are there any land acknowledgments you can use to honor the local Indigenous communities of your area?
**Final Photo Activity:** Through visual analysis and interpretation of art, students can closely examine the images in this Toolkit to reflect on the role of art and museums like NUMU in helping people learn about important topics:

- Have your students look through all of the images from the exhibitions and choose their favorite one, or the one they resonate the most with. Ask them the following questions:
  - Why did you choose this picture?
  - How does it make you feel?
  - Are there things you recognize or don't recognize in it?

**These photographs exemplify how art can be used to tell an important story.**
- What important stories do you think these photos are telling?
- Why should museums tell important stories?

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**Facilitated Reflection**

- **Students should reflect on their own familial experiences:**
  - Ask your family about the life of a family member from the past:
    - Where were they born? Where did they grow up?
    - What language(s) did they speak?
    - What traditions did they keep alive?
    - Did they have to move from one country to another? If so, why?
    - Was there anything surprising about their life story?
  - Practice telling the story of your family member’s life to a friend.
    - How was your family member’s experience similar or different to your classmate’s family member's?
    - What is one part of your family's history and culture that you are proud of?

- **Now brainstorm about how you think others would have told your family member's story:**
  - How would you feel if someone else told your family's story and got it wrong?
  - If your family’s history was told wrong, do you think that would impact how people feel about your family or understand your identity?
  - What would you do to advocate for your family to make sure their story is being told correctly?
Final Extension Activities

- As a class, ask your school to implement a land acknowledgment if they don’t have one:
  - Use the land acknowledgment developed by the class in the “Land and Identity” section as a starting point
  - Share your classroom’s land acknowledgment with other classrooms
  - Have your students share their land acknowledgment and what they’ve learned about the Muwekma Ohlone with their families at home.

- **Becoming stewards of the land:**
  - Consider volunteering as a class on community coastal and creek clean-ups, or help plant trees as part of habitat restoration projects.
  - Write down one way you can take better care of the land you live on daily. Be specific and make it visible so you are reminded to do it. This is a way to show thanks for the land and history of all the people who have come before us.

- **Arrange a class field trip to NUMU so students can see a more in-depth exhibit about the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe.**
  - Click here to learn about school tours
  - Click here to view our program offerings
Related Readings


Further Resources

Support the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe
- Sign the "Restore the Homeland" Letter
- Call Your Representative
- Donate to the Muwekma Ohlone's Efforts to Restore Federal Recognition
- Donate to the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy
- Donate to Muwekma Culture and Language Revitalization
- The Muwekma Ohlone Preservation Foundation

Learn More About the Exhibitions (Virtual Tours)
- Reclamation: Aboriginal Ancestral Homeland of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe
- Reclamation: Resilience of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe

Videos + Media
- Virtual Talks at NUMU:
  - Politics of Erasure: Federal Reaffirmation of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe
  - The Making of an Exhibition: Reclamation of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's History and Heritage
  - The Muwekma Ohlone Past and Present: Heritage Sites of Significance
- Back from Extinction | Documentary
- Time Has Many Voices | Documentary
- José Guzman Song

Downloads
- Download PDF of all Exhibition Photos
- Download the "We Are Muwekma Trifold Brochure"
- Muwekma Ohlone Tribe Chochenyo Study Guide
- Muwekma Ohlone Tribe Chochenyo Bookmarks
- Muwekma Ohlone Tribe Coloring Book

Related Blogs
- SJSU Intern Spotlight on NUMU's Blog:
  - Cesar Villanueva
  - Muwekma Ohlone Blog

Visit New Museum Los Gatos | NUMU
- Admission, Hours, & Directions
- School tours

Have the Museum Visit You
- Classroom visits
Stay Connected

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Kike Arnal | Tribal Photographer:
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Help us understand how to better serve you in the future! Take our survey.
Thank you to our sponsors

Major support for *Reclamation* is provided by the Borgenicht Foundation, Penumbra, the Farrington Historical Foundation, and SVCreates, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara.

This activity is supported in part by the California Arts Council, a state agency. Learn more at [www.arts.ca.gov](http://www.arts.ca.gov).

This project was made possible with support from California Humanities, a non-profit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit [www.calhum.org](http://www.calhum.org).

In-kind support provided by University Art.