

Reno/Sparks Indian Colony Newsletter, October 2014

Great Basin Native Artists Exhibit Work Regionally

Written by Melissa Melero-Moose

The Great Basin Native Artists is a group of artists that meet monthly in and around the Reno, Nev., and California. Plus, the group has designed a website resource directory for all working Native American artists residing in/or originally from the Nevada and the California Eastern Sierra Nevada mountain range.

Co-founders, Melissa Melero, a Fallon Paiute-Shoshone/Fort Bidwell Paiute, and Ben Aleck, a Pyramid Lake Paiute and a previous director of the Pyramid Lake Museum, started to form the group after exhibiting together at the 2012 Nevada Museum Art exhibit, “The Way We Live” held in Reno, Nev. They previously co-curated a show in 2001 at the Nevada State Museum and did not have a chance to exhibit again until the Nevada Museum of Art show in 2012.

“We knew there were a lot of Native artists in the surrounding Nevada and California areas, but it seemed difficult to locate us for Native art exhibits or educational projects in the community,” Melero said.

In January 2014, Melero and Aleck decided to put together the group called Great Basin Native Artists.

This collective group of artists wanted to be available to the public in one resource center and available to each other for professional support by providing a(n):

- Great Basin Native Artists website directory and image gallery online
- exhibiting opportunities as a group for local, national, and international Native exhibitions
- art business workshops for professional and emerging artists
- forum for Native artists and interested community members to connect

– online presence for rural Native American artists and opportunities to document artwork

“I think it is so important to display our Native arts in the community,” Melero said “It benefits our youth especially because it gives them motivation to create and the opportunity to know our Native culture and Native arts.”

According to Melero, there have been very few Great Basin focused Native art exhibits in this community and throughout the United States.

She said that to many, this kind of Native contemporary art will be an education--that Great Basin Native arts are still alive and not just a history lesson nor an old Paiute basket in a museum from the 1800's.

This group will unite and motivate existing Native artists to focus on their skills as well as educate the public on Natives in their area.

The Great Basin Native Artists have been received by the art community positively and has been working closely with our local arts organizations and museums to create venues to exhibit more work.

The group has had an unexpected amount of offers to show in the community in the brief amount of time since it officially started meeting as a group.

We have shown at the Nevada State Museum (2002), the Nevada Museum of Art (2012), the Stewart Boarding School, in Carson City, Nev., (2014), the Imago Mundi, International exhibit in Italy, and the Pyramid Lake Museum (Nov. 2014). This spring, the group will show at the Sierra Arts Foundation in Reno, Nev., the Churchill County Museum in Fallon, Nev., and the Maidu Museum in Roseville, Calif.

Please see our website: www.greatbasinnativeartists.com
and please contact us if you are interested in exhibiting with our group or
setting up an artist profile on the website.

All mediums of artwork are welcome including: visual arts, performing arts,
literary arts, digital and video arts, arts and crafts, photography, sculpture,
beadwork, basketry, and anything else art related.

For more information, call 775/424-3159 or email:
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