FIVE OAKS MUSEUM

SOCIAL MEDIA TAKEOVER:
KAT AND RYA

JULY 26, 2021

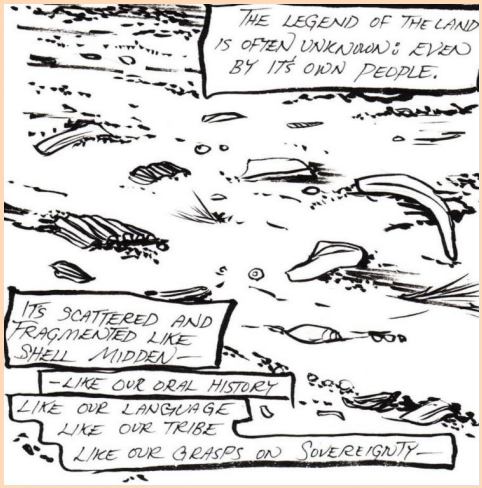
DAY 1:
Hello! Miyiiha! My name is Weshoyot Alvitre. I am a Tongva and Scottish comic book artist, author and illustrator. My social media handle is #WESHOYOT. I was born by homebirth on joint Tongva and Chumash tribal lands at Satwiwa: a traditional solstice site located in the Santa Monica Mountains. I currently reside on Ventureño Chumash territory.

This week I hope to give you a bit of insight into the way my art and culture combine to form the work I do. I hope to give audiences more insight into my people: the Tongva, the Original people of the Los Angeles basin. Our homelands expand across Los Angeles from Pasadena following the mountains down to Long Beach, and upwards along the coast to Malibu, encompassing the 4 southern Channel Islands. We have been here since time immemorial. We are not federally recognized. We have no designated reservation lands. Our language is part of one of the most complex and diverse linguistic centers in the world. Cities and streets today are words from our language: Topanga, Azuza, and Cahuenga. Our language was deemed extinct by outsiders, along with our people, at the turn of the 20th century. But We are still here. We are a sovereign nation made up of multiple groups who self-identify. We continue to fight for our sacred sites, our burial sites, our ancestors, and our lands. We are reawakening our language, We are re-learning to speak. We continue to sing. We are still here.

This week I hope to share more education and insight into my people. We have had outsiders tell our stories, translate our narratives, try to capture our language, but rarely are we given the space to talk about Our people on Our own terms. That is one of the focuses I use with the art I create: to retell our histories from Our own perspective as a sovereign group of people who were never given a voice in the colonial narratives of history. I'm excited to have this platform to share my stories with you.

#Tongvaland #Weshoyot #Sovereign #LosAngeles #WeAreStillHere

JULY 27, 2021



PRAYERS FOR PUYUNGNA

BY WESHOYOT ALVITRE

2019

JULY 27, 2021

DAY 2: Puvungna is a Tongva sacred site located beneath & around the campus of CSULB in Long Beach, CA. The campus has existed only since 1949. Before that, it was named Rancho Los Alamitos, a partition of the original 1784 Rancho Los Nietos Spanish land grant, which took over our sacred land & spring. The site has existed for Tongva people since time immemorial: it is literally the site of our creation story. It could be compared Mecca or Jerusalem, & yet is given such little respect or recognition because so many of our people have been lost.

Recently campus construction has disturbed sacred soils. In doing so the Native community has rallied once more to protect the sacred grounds, protect our access it to preserve it, & to protect our ancestors that lay interred within the soils. CSULB is the only campus to have reburial of ancestral remains on campus.

My family fought during the 1990's to stop the building & desecrations of lands on Puvungna. My uncle lived in a camper on the land for over 2 years, risking arrest for his presence & profiling for taking a stand on our own lands. My grandpa fought & prayed for the land. My aunt continues to protect the ancestors on campus through her work with NAGPRA. These actions were before social media, before newspapers or tv would cover native issues, & before today's awareness of activism & social justice movements.

My piece for this exhibit was created in 2019 as a love song to all the land means to me, as a descendant of the original people of the earth, the Tongva. Being unable to go down & take action on the site in person, the only way I could have my voice heard was through my artwork. I spent a month doing a page of art a day, publishing digitally to bring awareness to what was happening on the land, but not getting entangled with the divisiveness of the political groups that formed. I hope that this work moves people to understand the past hurt that has been done to the land, the hurt reflected in us as a community & I hope it helps us to move forward, with support and understanding, to respectfully give us space to handle our intertribal matters, religious freedoms, & sovereign right to our own tribal lands.

I ask you today to please visit the exhibition page for "Untouchable Artifacts" in the profile link. Spend some time to view and listen to "Prayers for Puvungna". If this information is new to you or resonates, I ask you to share it in solidarity with the land and our people: the Tongva. Thank you!

JULY 28, 2021

DAY 3: As a Native Author and Illustrator, it's impossible for me to separate myself from my relationship to my culture and land. I live on Ventureño Chumash land which is just north of my tribal lands. Pre-contact, Native communities not only traded and intermarried, but also spoke multiple languages and dialects of the same language, which aided the communities in their interactions spheres and showed reciprocity through all avenues of life. The Five Oaks Museum resides on the traditional homelands of the Tualatin Kalapuya people. Chumash, Tongva and Tualatin Kalapuya all share relationships with acorns and oaks, some of our oldest living relatives today. These relationships with our plant relatives sustained us as thriving people for thousands of years. Without these relationships, we would cease to be.

The land I am on informs the work I do. I have a relationship with it, I am aware of seasonal changes, of plant relatives, of water tables and burn scars. Living on the west coast of the now United states is living on Native lands, no matter where you are or how much cement separates the bottoms of your feet from the earth beneath.

With land loss, climate changes, globalization, colonization, population, gentrification, etc all now playing a real part on how healthy the land is and will be in the future, I would like to ask you today: Do you know whose tribal lands you currently reside on? Do you have any relationships with the land? And most importantly, which I think often gets thrown to the wayside after doing land acknowledgments, what are you doing in your life to support the original people whose land you are on in real time? What can you do to build those relationships?

I would love to encourage you all to share the tribal lands you reside on in the comments below.
I would love to encourage you to build connection with those living relatives today: people, plants and the land. I would love to see how you are supporting and giving space to the descendants of the original peoples on whose land you reside on, for the health of future generations and the benefit of all people.

#ChumashLand #TongvaLand #TualatinKalapuyaLand

JULY 29, 2021

DAY 4: Process

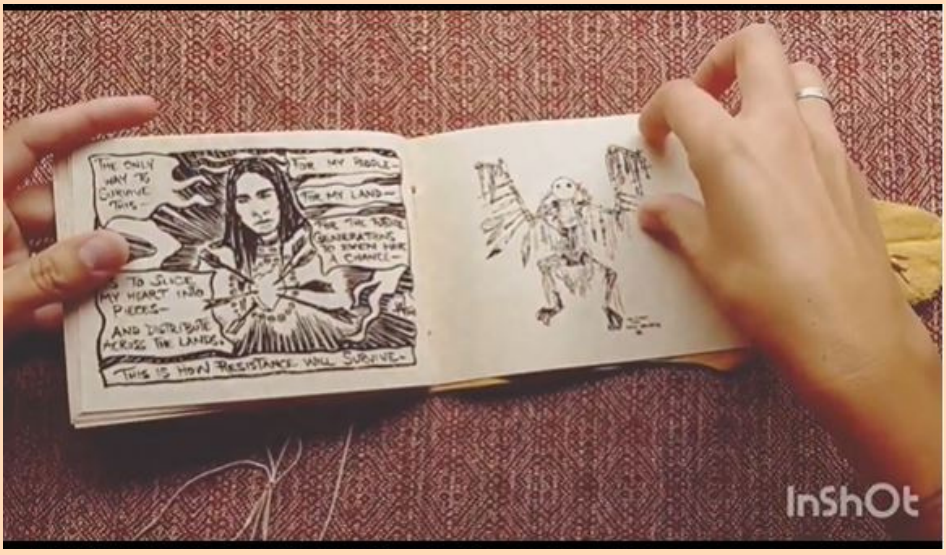
My art and writing center Native Voices and Indigenous stories. By giving voices to silenced Native history and reclaiming the stories of the past, it helps to embolden who we are today.

If you have any questions about my process, please ask in the comments.

Video by @beautifulnewssa

JULY 30, 2021

DAY 5: Details

A project that I feel very passionate about is one I am currently working on involving the retelling of one of our Tongva ancestors: Toypurina. Toypurina was a medicine woman and chiefs daughter who lead a revolt against the San Gabriel Mission in 1785. She was witness to the quick upheaval of tribal life and the full effects of the mission system on her own people here in southern california.

#weshoyot #toypurina #tongvaland