

# California Indian Condor Art

curated & assembled by Linda Yamane  
November 2020



artwork copyright L. Frank Manriquez

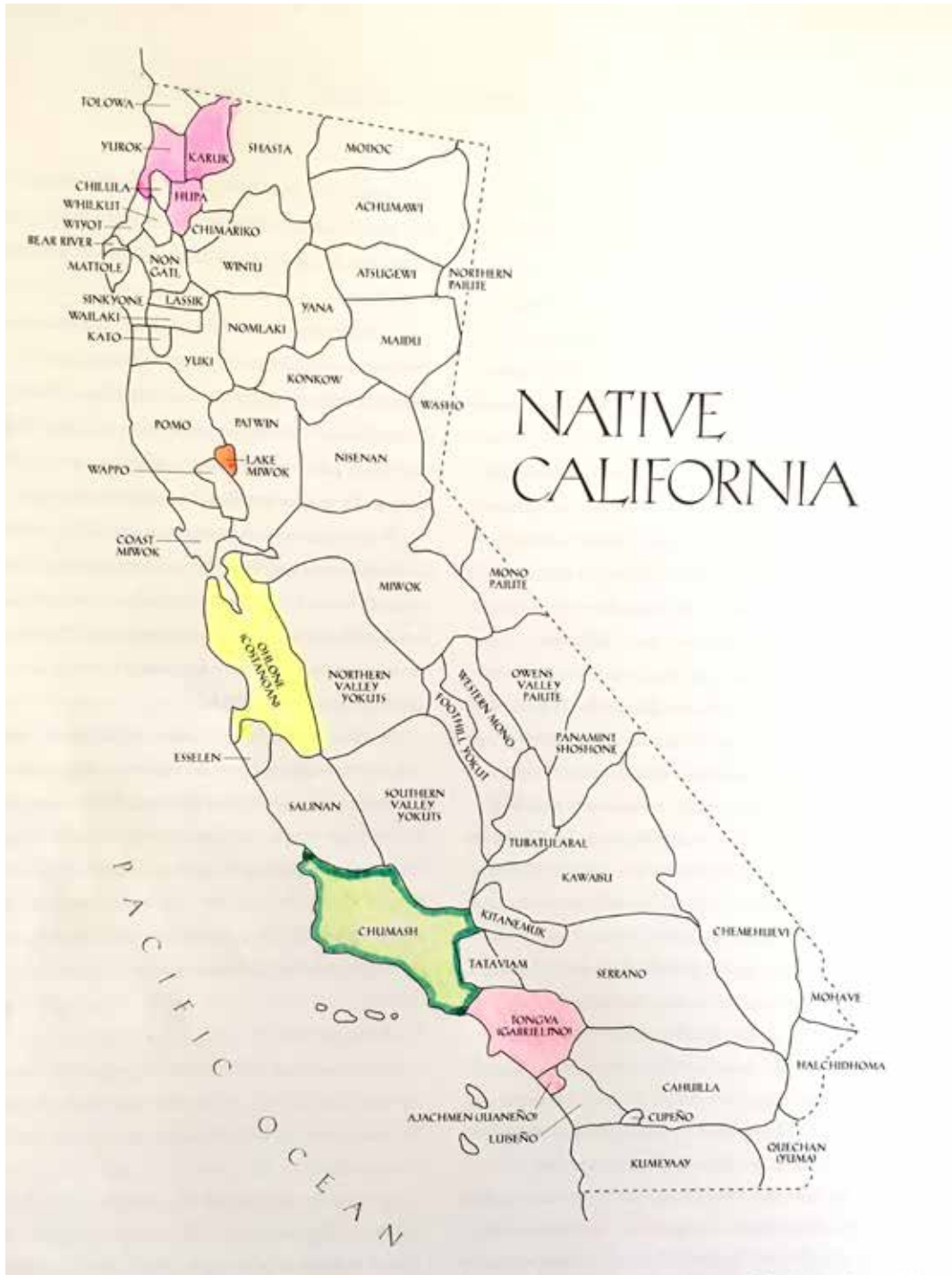


Yungáavaywut by L. Frank Manriquez (*Tongva/Ajachmem/Rarámuri*)

## California Indian Condor Art

For thousands of years, California's first peoples have had both practical and supernatural relationships with Condor and other native wildlife species. Though times have changed, contemporary California Indian people still treasure those traditional relationships and keep them alive in various ways, including through art.

In this slide presentation, nine California Indian artists, both young and seasoned, share their artworks that feature the magnificent Condor.



This small sampling of contemporary California Indian Condor art spans the length of the state.

But first let's begin with a look at a rare surviving example of California Indian condor dance regalia.

## Condor Skin Cloak

*"Mollok"*

Collected by a Russian  
visitor to California  
(Voznesenskii) in 1841,  
in the Sacramento region

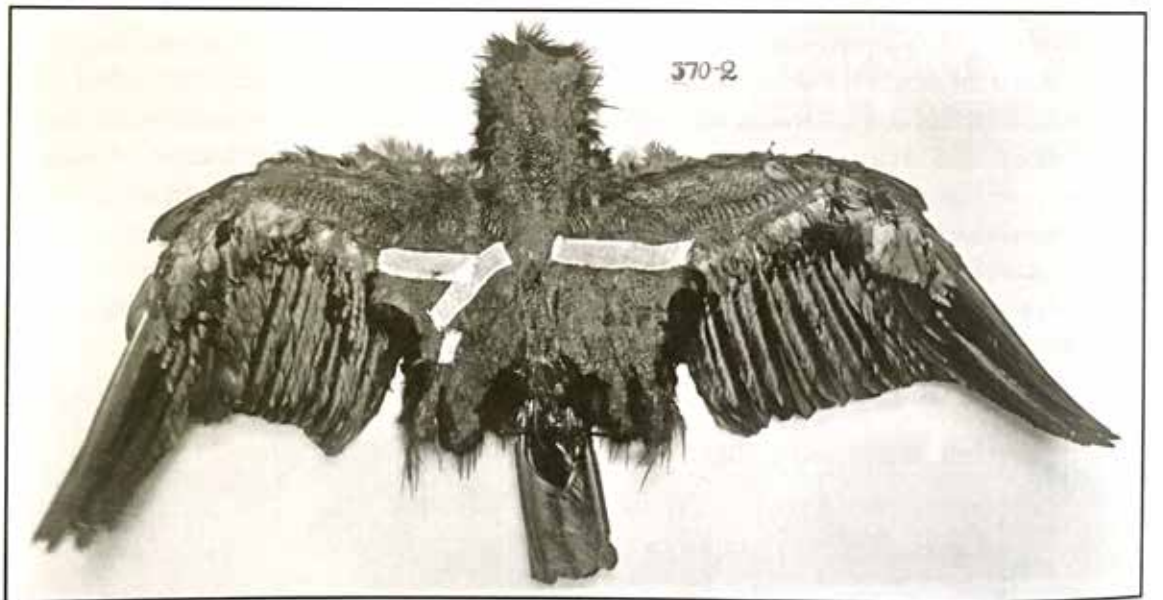
Currently in the  
Kunstkamera museum in  
St. Petersburg, Russia.  
(Item #570-2)

Photos from Kunstkamera  
museum catalog of California  
Indian materials in their  
collection.



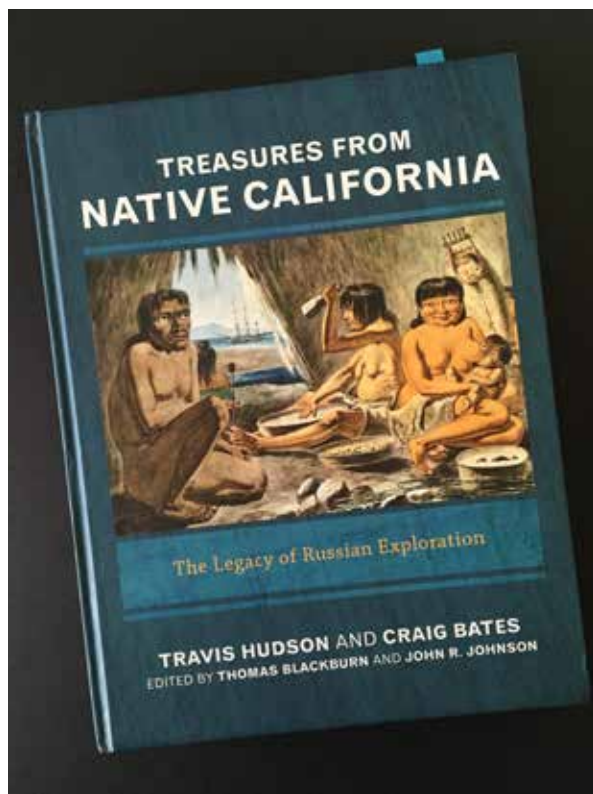


a.



b.

Figure 7.20. Two views (a, b) of mollok cloak (570-2). Photos courtesy of the MAE, St. Petersburg.



*Treasures From Native California* was printed by Left Coast Press in Walnut Creek, CA. The 2015 copyright is held by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

### Mollok Cloak

A condor-skin cloak (S70-2), which was labeled *mollok* by Voznesenskii, is the second of the two objects which he is known to have acquired someplace in the Sacramento region. The cloak, which was made from the entire skin of a California condor, is the only such object known to exist. It measures about 2.74 m from wing tip to wing tip, and the pointers or wing spikes are approximately 60 cm in length. An unpeeled shoot was inserted into the base of the tail to keep the feathers somewhat spread (Figure 7.20). The presence of some slightly whitish feathering on the wings indicates that the bird was an immature adult (Hamber, personal communication, 1984).

The condor was venerated throughout much of central California, and the use of the skin of a condor in certain sacred dances was common among such people as the Patwin near Colusa (A. Kroeber 1932:387; Loeb 1933:213), the Valley Nisenan at the villages of Pusuni and Olac near the present city of Sacramento (A. Kroeber 1929:269) which Voznesenskii visited, and among the Sierra Miwok (Gifford 1955:287). The Valley Nisenan term *mo'lo'ik* for the ceremony suggests that Voznesenskii may have collected the item from these people, not far from Sutter's Fort, or was given the condor pelt by Sutter himself.



a.



b.

Figure 7.20. Two views [a, b] of mollok cloak (S70-2). Photos courtesy of the MAE, St. Petersburg.

Now let's meet the artists ...



photo courtesy of Lyn Rising

Starting in the far northwestern corner of California, meet Yurok/Karuk/Hupa artist Lyn Rising.

artwork copyright Lyn Risling



**Achviivkaam tu'ipak (Condor Returns)**  
**Lyn Risling**  
*(Karuk/Yurok/Hupa)*



artwork copyright Lyn Risling



“This painting was inspired not only by this majestic bird, but also by the Yurok Tribe’s ongoing efforts with others to bring the California Condor back to the Tribe’s ancestral territory. The condor is considered sacred to the Yurok and surrounding tribes (i.e., Karuk and Hupa) of northwestern California. He is an important part of our World Renewal ceremonies and his feathers are worn in the dances. He helps bring healing and the restoring of balance to our world.”

*Title is in the Karuk language.  
Acrylic on Canvas (5'x 4'), 2018*

## **Achviivkaam tu'ipak (Condor Returns)**

**Lyn Risling**  
*(Karuk/Yurok/Hupa)*



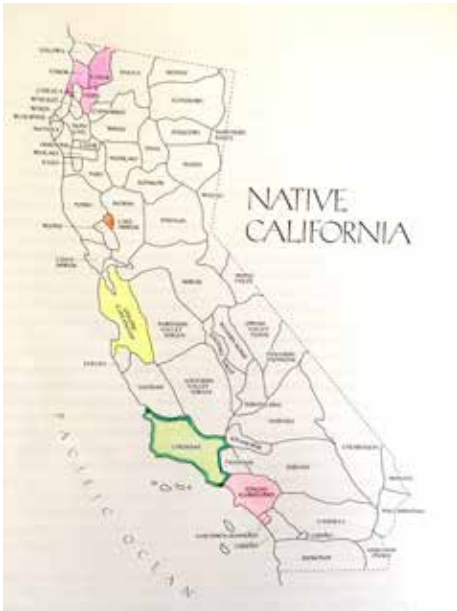
**Peethívthaneen ikyáavan  
(Fix the World Person)**

**Lyn Risling**  
*(Karuk/Yurok/Hupa)*

“The condor has always been sacred to the tribes of northwestern California, such as the Karuk, Yurok and Hupa. He is an important part of our “Fix the World” ceremonies. In this painting the Condor wears regalia used in the White Deerskin Dance to remind us of our connection to Heaven and Earth. He helps send out songs of prayers to give thanks and to bring renewal and balance to our world.”

*Title is in the Karuk language.  
Acrylic on Canvas (36” x 48”), 2018*

## Meet Miwko? (Plains Miwok) artist Don Hankins



Due east of the uppermost tip of San Francisco Bay is Miwko? (Plains Miwok) territory, ancestral homeland of Don Hankins.



photo courtesy of Don Hankins

# The Day Before They Came

Don Hankins

(Miwko? - Plains Miwok)



artwork copyright Don Hankins



## The Day Before They Came

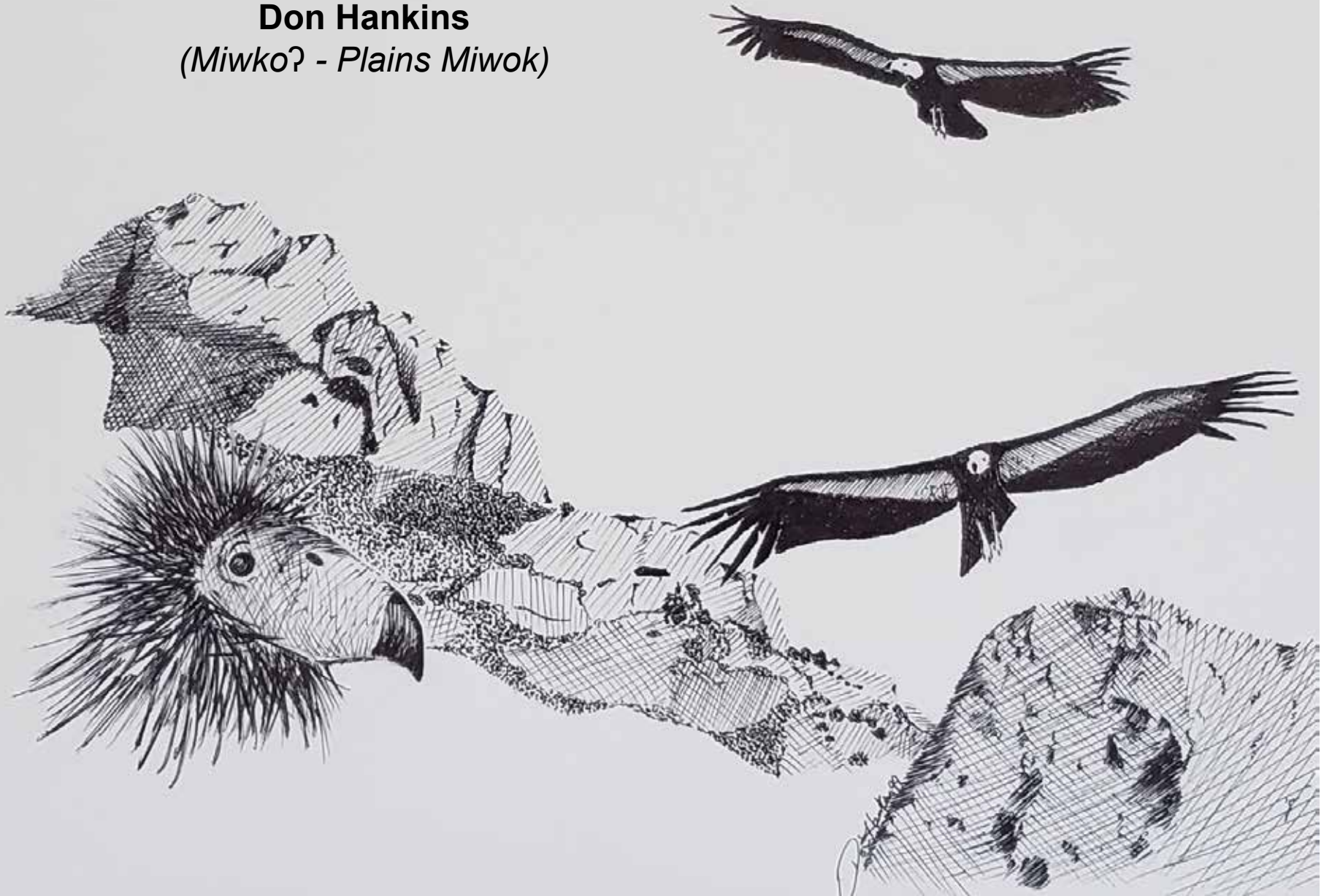
**Don Hankins**  
(*Miwko? - Plains Miwok*)

“Painted with ochre and charcoal pigments, with duck fat binder, materials that were collected within the *Miwko? waali?* (Plains Miwok world).

The painting reflects upon the question, “What was happening in indigenous villages the day before colonizers arrived?” Here the Mollukenu? (Condor Spirit) is dancing a sacred dance upon the land, which has been freshly burned to care for it as a commitment to our ancestral obligations and unborn generations. Linked to those obligations are the radiating symbols for land (lines) and water (dots) as prayers cast to the directions. The horizon is filled with smoke that serves a purpose of cleansing the lands and its inhabitants while sheltering the surface waters and creating particulate to bring rain. The disconnect to these traditions began with the arrival of colonizers, and we currently grapple with reasserting our knowledge in fulfillment of our traditional obligations, our languages, and other elements of culture including the production of traditional paints.”

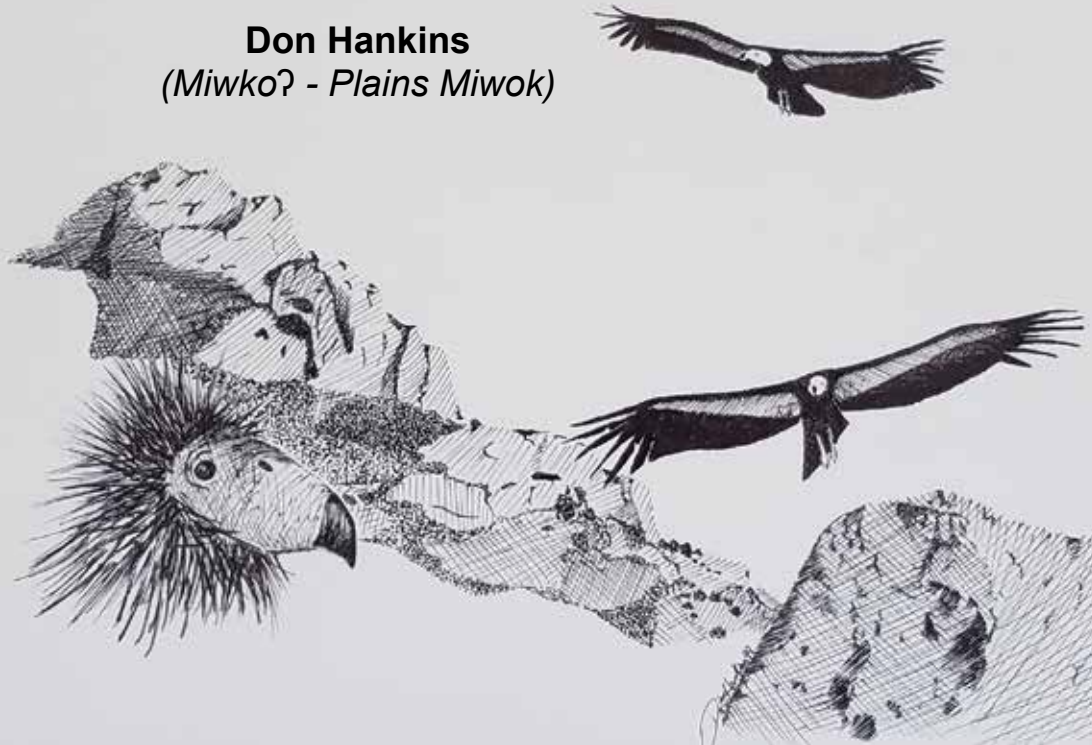
# Molluk

**Don Hankins**  
(*Miwko? - Plains Miwok*)



**Molluk**

**Don Hankins**  
(*Miwko? - Plains Miwok*)



artwork copyright Don Hankins

“After spending the summer and fall of 1998 working with condors in southern California, I created this sketch to illustrate the motion and social behavior of the birds I worked with near the Chumash story sites around Lion Canyon. I reflect upon the spiritual power of these birds in this cultural landscape. I imagined the connection between past and future to see these birds without patagial tags used to identify the birds.”

*Ink pen on sketch paper*

**Meet Mutsun Ohlone/Chumash/Mohwak  
artist  
Kanyon Sayers-Roods**

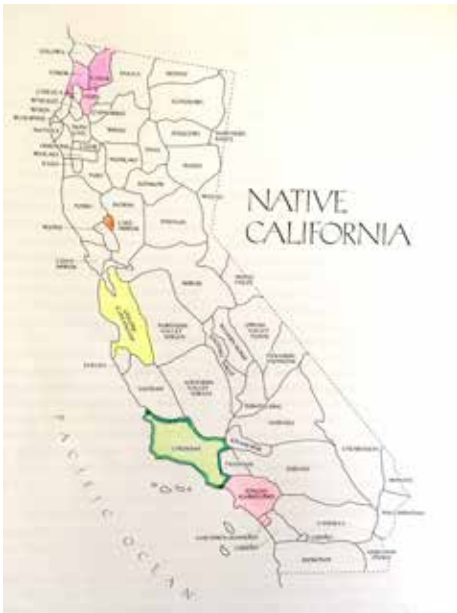
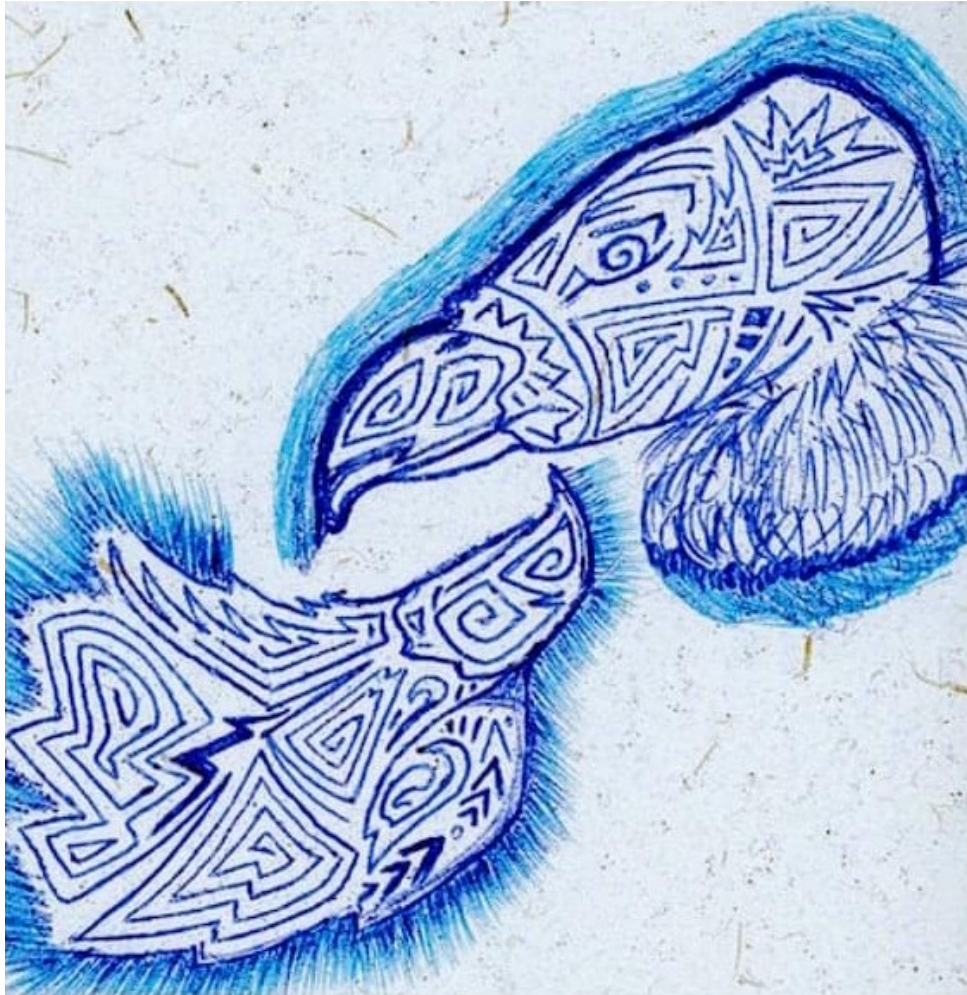


photo courtesy of Kanyon Sayers-Roods



artwork copyright Kanyon Sayers-Roods



## **When Eagle Meets Condor**

**Kanyon Sayers-Roods**  
*(Mutsun Ohlone-Indian Canyon  
Band/Chumash/Mohawk)*

“This drawing was inspired by  
intertribal ceremonies and  
Peace and Dignity Journeys.”

*Ballpoint pen on recycled fiber  
paper.*

**Meet Rumsen Ohlone artist  
Linda Yamane**

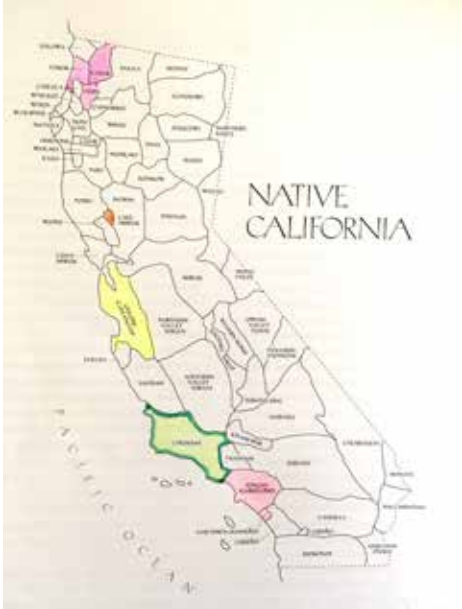


photo courtesy of Linda Yamane



## Wassak — Condor

**Linda Yamane**  
*(Rumsen Ohlone)*

“As a California Indian basket weaver and artist, I have depicted *wassak* soaring above our central coast, where the beauty of nature and our traditional cultures still thrive in this modern world. The swirling pattern comes from one of my baskets, and the shimmering abalone pendants that dangle from their tips were inspired by another.

When given the chance, Condor simply lives — oblivious to our philosophies and intentions. But surely Condors are a tribute to what is possible when people work together for good.”

*Acrylic on canvas*



Here I share a few of my baskets, so you can see where some of the inspirations for my condor painting came from.

photo copyright Linda Yamane

Baskets by Linda Yamane



photo copyright Linda Yamane



Basket by Linda Yamane

**Meet Rumsen Ohlone artist  
Nona Yamane (age 8)**

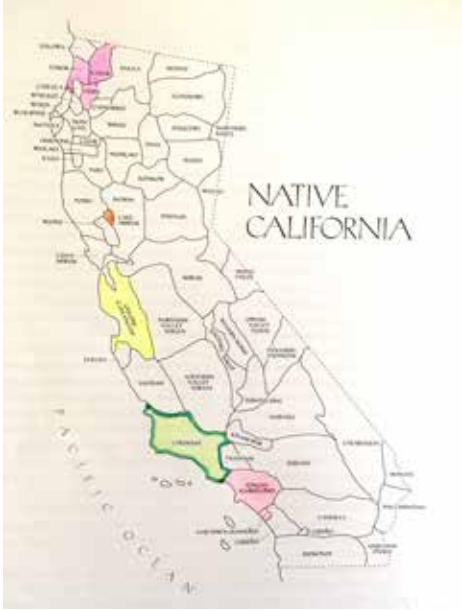


photo courtesy of Robert Yamane



**California Condor**  
**Nona Yamane (age 8)**  
*(Rumsen Ohlone)*



“I did two drawings of condor — one is realistic and the other one is from my imagination. For this first one I used chalk pastels and the condor is flying through a cloud. You can see the cloud by its tail.”



## Queen of the Condors

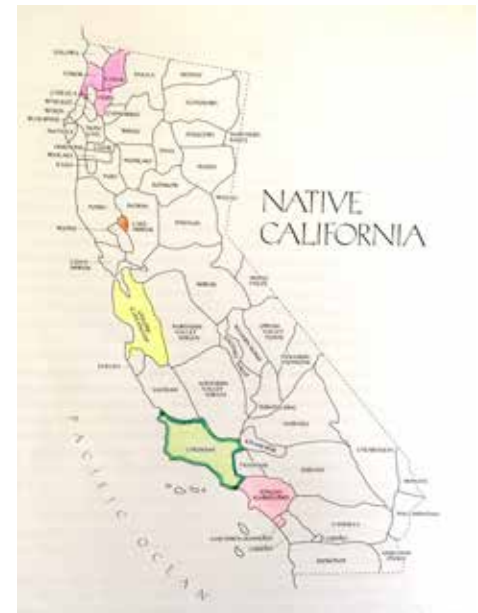
**Nona Yamane (age 8)**  
*(Rumsen Ohlone)*

“I drew this make believe imaginary drawing of a California Condor with crayons. I call it the “Queen of the Condors” because of its beautiful giant black and white wings. Right now this condor is in a secret place to stay safe, and is sitting in a comfortable queen chair. She is staring at the delicious food in front of her. I hope the condors that are released survive and have a happy life like this queen of the condors that I drew!”





**Meet Rumsen Ohlone artist  
Ittiishmen Salamasina  
Tupuivao Miranda (age 10)**  
*(Rumsen Ohlone/Samoan/  
Kanaka Maoli/Mexican)*





## The Change

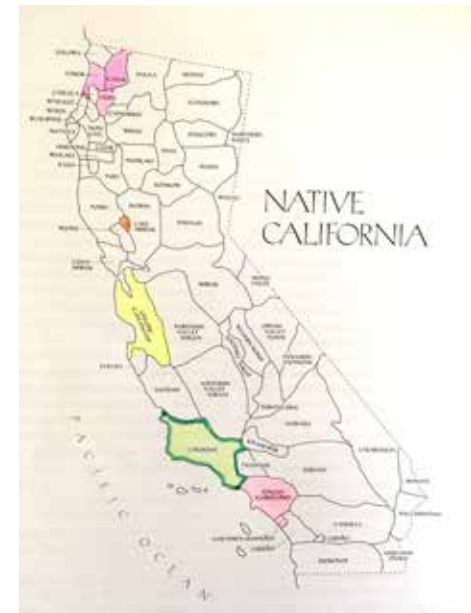
**Ittiishmen Salamasina  
Tupuivao Miranda (age 10)**  
*(Rumsen Ohlone/Samoan/  
Kanaka Maoli/Mexican)*

“When preparing to paint I thought about how much the lives of Condors have changed like our Native people. From freedom to near death, captivity and finally back to freedom — that’s what I painted.”

photo copyright Linda Yamane



**Meet Rumsen Ohlone artist  
Kalleni Iva Tupuivao  
Miranda (age 8)**  
*(Rumsen Ohlone/Samoan/  
Kanaka Maoli/Mexican)*





## Relationships with Their Natural Home

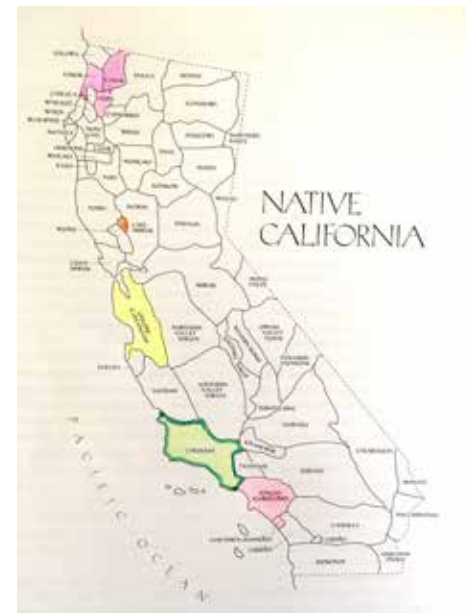
**Kalleni Iva Tupuivao Miranda**  
(age 8)  
*(Rumsen Ohlone/Samoan/  
Kanaka Maoli/Mexican)*

“This image is what came to me when I thought about Condors — relationships. Relationships between Condors and humans, Condors and their release, Condors and their home.”

photo courtesy of Christopher Tadaí Diaz



**Meet Chumash/Tohono  
O'odahm/Mayo artist  
Christopher Tadaí Diaz**





## Condor Dance Shawl

**Christopher Tadaí Diaz**  
(*Chumash/Tohono*  
*O'odahm/Mayo*)

### Back View

“This Condor shawl was one of the first I made. I grew up on the powwow circuit selling our crafts and jewelry with my grandparents. I noticed that California Indians are very under-represented, and decided to honor our tribes and ask our women to dance with our symbols on their backs.”

photo courtesy of Christopher Tadai Diaz



## Condor Dance Shawl

**Christopher Tadai Diaz**  
(*Chumash/Tohono*  
*O'odahm/Mayo*)

### Front View

“Condor goes back to the beginning of our people. This shawl is foam green, chosen to represent the mixture of our ocean and our forest. The Condor represents our Ancestors and takes up the whole shawl so when it’s worn it embraces the woman, and when she opens her arms everyone can watch our Ancestors fly.”

photo courtesy of L. Frank Manriquez



**Meet Tongva/Ajachmem  
artist  
L. Frank Manriquez**







## Yungáavaywut

**L. Frank Manriquez**  
*(Tongva/Ajachmem/Rarámuri)*

“She flies the highest, is the strongest, and can find things and people because she sees everything.”  
*Title is in the Ajachmem (also known as Luiseño) language.*



## California Condor — *Immano Eemext!* (Always Alive!)

We hope you've enjoyed this peek into the world of California Indian culture that hints at the relationships we've always had with the land and with the creatures we share it with.

