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Zuni artists proceed beyond the map

***A:shiwí A:wán Ulohnanne—The Zuni World* opens on September 13, 2015**



Edward Wemytewa, *K'yawakwayina:we* (Waterways), 2006. Oil on canvas, 36 x48 in.

*A:shiwí A:wán Ulohnanne—The Zuni World* presents two dozen map art paintings by ten Zuni artists. The maps were commissioned by the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center between 2006-2013, as a means of raising awareness about Zuni cultural landscapes by using art as a medium for mapping. The impetus for the exhibition came from a Zuni elder's question when she studied a conventional map of her homeland and then asked, "Where are we?" When Jim Enote, the exhibition's curator and director of the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center, heard that pointed question from his mother, it became clear to him that there must be other ways of mapping that can respond to Zuni sensibilities of place. Enote said, "In the face of modernity and globalization, Zunis along with other indigenous peoples are struggling to maintain a relationship with cultural landscapes. I believe in addition to conventional maps we need new ways to represent our world, it is time to proceed beyond the map."

The ancestors of the Zuni traveled through much of the Colorado Plateau, stopping at various places over thousands of years and eventually arriving at the Middle Place, or Halona: Idiwana'a, their physical and spiritual center. Subsequently, western cartographic methods were employed to map and rename places the Zuni still consider the Zuni world. The Zuni—who live in present-day New Mexico and Arizona—never lost their attachment to places comprising the Zuni world no matter how distant or peripheral. These connections were maintained through complex oral traditions that functioned as verbal maps guiding listeners through both physical and cultural worlds.



Geddy Epaloose, *Halona: Idiwaná a (The Middle Place)*, 2006. Acrylic on canvas, 33.3 x 43.5 in.

Infused with knowledge from these rich oral traditions, the Zuni Map Art displays in two dimensions, how Zuni see their own history, their ancestral migrations, and the parts of nature that sustain them. The maps also evoke conversations and guide viewers through the cosmology of the Zuni world. Enote sums up the exhibition by saying, “The Zuni understand meanings within these maps while others may not, the latter group is confronted with an unfamiliar world view, an unfamiliar system of knowledge sharing, and an appreciation that we live in a world with many ways of knowing.”

The artists represented in these works are a who's who of Zuni painters. The exhibition features works by established “masters” Ronnie Cachini, Duane Dishta, and Edward Wemytewa. It also features young and emerging Zuni artists, Keith Edaakie, Geddy Epaloose, Larson Gasper, Ermalinda Pooacha-Eli, Kenneth Seowtewa, Levon Loncassion, and Joey Zunie. The majority of these Zunis are self-taught artists who employ a variety of mediums in their map art paintings, including oil on canvas, watercolor on paper, acrylic on canvas, and digital painting. The exhibition will be on view September 13, 2015—January 10, 2016.

*A:shiwí A:wán Ulohnanne – The Zuni World* is organized by the Fowler Museum at UCLA in collaboration with the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center.

**The Fowler Museum at UCLA** is one of the country's most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$12 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310 825-4361 or visit [fowler.ucla.edu](http://fowler.ucla.edu).