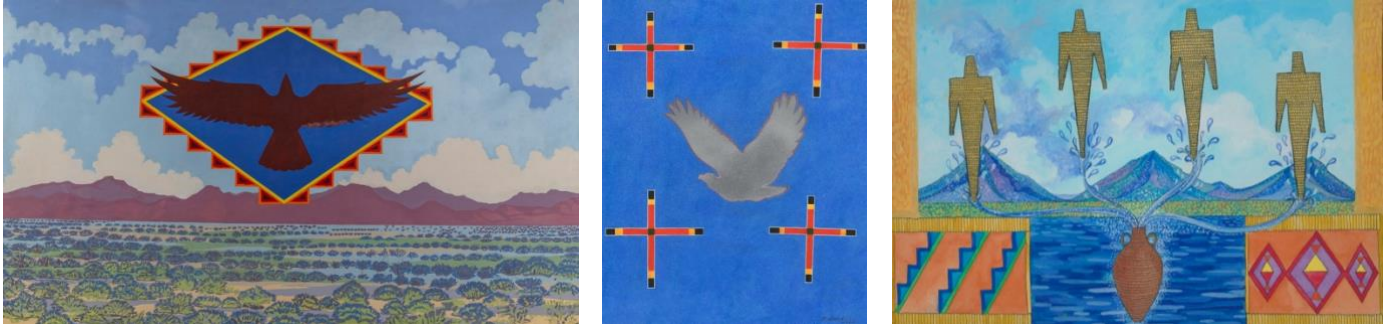


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**THE ART OF BEN ALECK HONORS CAREER OF INDIGENOUS NUMU (NORTHERN PAIUTE) ARTIST AND EDUCATOR**

**Reno, NV (April 1, 2023)** - The work of lifelong artist, educator, and enrolled member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (*Kooyooe Tukadu/cui-ui* fish eaters) Ben Aleck will be featured in an exhibition titled *The Art of Ben Aleck* opening April 1 at the Nevada Museum of Art. The exhibition coincides with the release of a 128-page book dedicated to Aleck’s artistic practice. The exhibition features over thirty of Aleck’s paintings, drawings and mixed-media artworks, and traces his long career through works that emphasize deep connections between Indigenous communities and the Great Basin.

An active and exhibiting artist in Northern Nevada, Aleck had his first solo exhibition at the age of 23 at the Nevada Museum of Art (then called the Sierra Nevada Art Gallery in Reno) in 1972. For many years, Aleck was employed by the Pyramid Lake Museum and Visitor’s Center, and his art often relays the stories of the plants, animals, and geography of Pyramid Lake, located forty miles northwest of Reno within the boundaries of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation. His paintings and drawings also give visual form to Indigenous stories about the stars, coyotes, the formation of Great Basin lands, and the origins of its people, while at the same time tackling issues involving the environment and water use.

A longtime Nevada resident, Aleck was born in Reno in 1949 and was raised on the Reno Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC). As an aspiring artist at Wooster High School, Aleck became part of the Upward Bound Program and was invited to take art classes at the University of Nevada, Reno. After graduating in 1968, Aleck attended the California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of the Arts (CCA)) in Oakland, California. During his time in the San Francisco Bay Area, he witnessed the politics and protest of the Vietnam War era and the countercultural Hippie Movement. He became involved with the American Indian Movement (AIM) and participated in the American Indian Occupation of Alcatraz. He graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting from CCA in 1972.

“The Creator provided Ben with amazing gifts including the ability to address injustices effectively and succinctly. Ben is empathetic to all our relatives be they breathing or inanimate.... Ben’s art reflects how he prioritizes our stories, traditions, and our beloved Mother Earth. His work is heartening, and so necessary as we make our way through the drudgery and beauty of today’s world,” said Executive Director of the Nevada Indian Commission Stacey Montooth, who is also a member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe.

The many issues Aleck addresses in his work align with themes that underlie the Museum’s permanent collections, especially the Robert S. and Dorothy J. Keyser Greater West Collection, which includes Aleck’s work. “Ben blends humor, knowledge, and emotion to open eyes and hearts to contemporary issues of the region we call the Greater West,” said the Andrea and John C. Deane Family Chief Curator and Associate Director Ann Wolfe. “The Nevada Museum of Art is committed to amplifying and celebrating the many voices of Indigenous artists in the Great Basin and Sierra Nevada.”

Over the years, Aleck has contributed his knowledge to other organizations in his role as a co-curator of the exhibitions *Under One Sky* at the Nevada State Museum and *The Way We Live: American Indian Art of the Great Basin* at the Nevada Museum of Art. Aleck was also a speaker and participant at the inaugural Art + Environment Conference of the Nevada Museum of Art in 2008. He is a founding member of the Great Basin Native Artists and has shown his work regularly in exhibitions at

galleries and museums throughout the American West. Pieces of his artwork are in the permanent collections of the Nevada Museum of Art and the Nevada State Museum.

For the duration of the exhibition, all members of tribal communities will be offered free admission.

To access high-resolution images, [please follow this link](#).

### About the Book

The Museum has published a 128-page hardcover book, *The Art of Ben Aleck*, in conjunction with organization of the exhibition. The book, which will be officially released on April 1, contains a primary essay written by Melissa Melero-Moose, and independent scholar enrolled with the Fallon-Paiute Shoshone Tribe (*Toi Ticutta/cattail eaters*). The book includes contributions from: Ralph Burns, Kevin “KC” Eben, Michon R. Eben, Robert “RJ” Eben, Gene Hattori, Jack Malotte, Arlan D. Melendez, Stacey Montooth, Cheryl Eben Williams, and Ann M. Wolfe.

The book is available in the Museum Shop for \$40.

**The Museum gratefully acknowledges those individuals and foundations who supported *The Art of Ben Aleck*:**

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Image captions: Ben Aleck, *Kwe'naa'a (eagle)*, circa 2010, acrylic on canvas, 6 x 10 feet. Collection of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Ben Aleck, *Water Jug, Beaded Bottle and Basket*, 2005, Print, 11 x 14 ¾ inches. Collection of the artist. Ben Aleck, *Great Basin Tribes*, 2019, Acrylic on paper, 16 ¾ x 23 inches. Collection of Melissa Melero-Moose.

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**The Nevada Museum of Art** is the only art museum in Nevada accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). A private, nonprofit organization founded in 1931, the statewide institution is supported by its membership as well as sponsorships, gifts and grants. Through its permanent collections, original exhibitions and programming, and E.L. Cord Museum School, the Nevada Museum of Art provides meaningful opportunities for people to engage with a range of art and education experiences. The Museum's **Center for Art + Environment** is an internationally-recognized research center dedicated to supporting the practice, study, and awareness of creative interactions between people and their environments. The Center houses unique archive materials from more than 1,000 artists working on all seven continents, including Cape Farewell, Michael Heizer, Walter de Maria, Lita Albuquerque, Burning Man, the Center for Land Use Interpretation, Great Basin Native Artists Archive, Ugo Rondinone's *Seven Magic Mountains*, and Trevor Paglen's *Orbital Reflector*. Learn more at [nevadaart.org](http://nevadaart.org).

### Land Acknowledgement

The Nevada Museum of Art acknowledges the traditional homelands of the *Wa She Shu* (Washoe), *Numu* (Northern Paiute), *Newe* (Western Shoshone), and *Nuwu* (Southern Paiute) people of the Great Basin. This includes the 28 tribal nations that exist as sovereign nations and continue as stewards of this land. We appreciate the opportunity to live and learn on these Indigenous homelands.