



**29 PALMS ART GALLERY AND JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK ANNOUNCE
SAND TO STONE: CONTEMPORARY NATIVE AMERICAN ART
IN JOSHUA TREE**

**ON MAY 7, FROM 5-8 PM, THE 29 PALMS ART GALLERY WILL HOST A SPECIAL EXHIBITION RECEPTION,
ARTIST TALK, AND PERFORMANCE**



Gerald Clarke Jr., Brand. Metal



Cara Romero, Water Memory, 2015. Photo



Lewis deSoto, Carlota, 2016. Site-specific installation

29 PALMS, CA (APRIL 10, 2016) – On May 7th, artists Lewis deSoto, Cara Romero, and Gerald Clarke Jr., will gather with local artists, tribal members, and the community to celebrate the highly anticipated project Sand to Stone: Contemporary Native American Art in Joshua Tree. This multidisciplinary art project highlights contemporary Native American artists from tribes (Cahuilla, Chemehuevi, Mojave and Serrano) with significant cultural ties to Joshua Tree National Park. The goal of this community collaboration is to increase awareness about Native American art and culture, encourage Native American artists, individuals and local communities to interact with park land, and foster cross-cultural relationships.

Project Director and Curator, Rhonda Lane Coleman states, “This project, for the first time in our region’s history, acknowledges contemporary Native American Art and challenges us to reconsider long-held assumptions. While many Native American artists continue to work in traditional art forms (basketry, beading and pottery), others are working outside this context in a variety of media – photography, film, and installation. The artists chosen for this exhibition draw from their indigenous roots and challenge preconceived notions about what contemporary Native American art is and offer new models of cultural identification.”

The artworks by Lewis deSoto, Cara Romero and Gerald Clarke Jr. serve as cornerstones for discussions about cultural mythologies, relationships with land, and the complexities of the modern Native American experience. Superintendent David Smith says, "The Park welcomes the opportunity to showcase art offerings from Native Americans who have deep ties to this land. Sand to Stone highlights the fact that Native American art has a progressive, contemporary component which is presented in the exhibition and site-specific installation."

The site-specific installation entitled Carlota by Lewis deSoto, opens on May 7, at Joshua Tree National Park's Oasis Visitor Center in 29 Palms. deSoto tells a story about Carlota and Will, inspired by the 1909 "Willie Boy Manhunt" portrayed in news media of the time as the saga of a drunken murder, kidnapping, and attacks against a posse. The artist's version is written from Carlota's point of view, and although speculative, for deSoto, rings truer than the journalistic slant against Native Americans in the early 20th Century. This story is presented in three forms: at the JTNP Visitor Center, it is told by a rich sonorous soundtrack by Erin Neff and a series of plaques located around the walking path; at the 29 Palms Art Gallery one hears the story told by Carlota in what might be coined as a "radio drama;" and finally, on the internet, it is a combination of all these events.

EXHIBITION ARTISTS



Lewis deSoto

Cara Romero

Gerald Clarke Jr.

Lewis deSoto, Exhibiting Artist and Site-Specific Installation Artist

Lewis deSoto, an artist of Cahuilla ancestry, is internationally recognized for his photographs, installations, sculpture and public art that engage cosmological questions, notions of self, and cultural mythologies. Influenced by anthropology, sociology, history, religion, literature, and music, he is most known for his site-specific installations that transform spaces through light, audio and video.

Cara Romero, Exhibiting Artist

Cara Romero, daughter of a Chemehuevi father and German-Irish mother, studied cultural anthropology and photography. Her photographs present whimsical and complex ideas with a modern Indigenous worldview. She is a contemporary visual storyteller interested in rewriting the ideas of Indian identity, battling cultural misappropriation, and dispelling stereotypes all while preserving tradition and maintaining cultural sensitivity.

Gerald Clarke Jr., Exhibiting Artist and Project Advisor

Gerald Clarke Jr. is a member of the Cahuilla Band of Indians. Clarke often employs traditional Native techniques in a conceptual format, but he works in a variety of media. A selection of his photographs are currently on view at the Palm Springs Art Museum in an exhibition entitled Changing the Tone: Contemporary Native American Photographers. Clarke lives on his family's ranch on the reservation, has served on the Tribal Council as Vice-Chairman, and teaches Sculpture, Drawing and New Media at Idyllwild Arts Academy.

PROJECT SUPPORT

This project is organized by Rhonda Lane Coleman for the 29 Palms Art Gallery and Joshua Tree National Park, and is made possible, in part, by the California Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional support provided by the Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations as well as in-kind support from Copper Mountain College, Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts, and Benchmark Studios.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SPECIAL EXHIBITION RECEPTION, ARTIST TALK and PERFORMANCE
Saturday, May 7, 5 – 8 pm / Artist Talk at 6 pm / Performance at 7 pm
29 Palms Art Gallery, 74055 Cottonwood Drive, 29 Palms, CA 92277
FREE; Open to the public

The 29 Palms Art Gallery is hosting a special reception to celebrate this large multidisciplinary project. The evening will feature an artist talk with Gerald Clarke Jr., Lewis deSoto, and Cara Romero, and be moderated by Curator, Rhonda Lane Coleman. The talk will be followed by a special performance of Lewis deSoto's collaborator, opera singer Erin Neff, and Bird Singers. All artists, participants and partners are invited to join in the festivities.

SITE-SPECIFIC ART INSTALLATION: by LEWIS deSOTO
Opens May 7, 2016

Joshua Tree National Park Oasis Visitor Center, 74485 National Park Drive, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277
FREE; Visitor Center open year round, 8am – 5pm

Lewis deSoto, is known worldwide for his site-specific artwork. His piece, entitled Carlota, presents a story inspired by the "Willie Boy Manhunt" of 1909, and raises questions about how Native Americans were portrayed in the early 20th century. He collaborated with contemporary opera singer Erin Neff, artists Emily Clarke and Vincent Desjardins to create this sound and didactic installation at the Park's Oasis Visitor Center.

EXHIBITION: LEWIS deSOTO, CARA ROMERO, and GERALD CLARKE JR.
April 27 – May 22, 2016

29 Palms Art Gallery, 74055 Cottonwood Drive, 29 Palms, CA 92277
FREE; Gallery hours, Wednesday – Sunday, 12 – 3pm

The exhibition features photographs by Cara Romero, a sound installation by Lewis deSoto, and sculpture, video, and installation by Gerald Clarke Jr.

For more information, visit www.sandtostone.org and www.29palmsartgallery.com or contact Rhonda Lane Coleman, 760-367-7819 / rhonda@sandtostone.org. 29 Palms Art Gallery is located at 74055 Cottonwood Drive, 29 Palms, CA 92277 (off National Park Drive). Joshua Tree National Park Oasis Visitor Center is located at park headquarters, 74485 National Park Drive, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277, at the junction of Utah Trail and National Park Drive.

About 29 Palms Art Gallery

Located in a historic adobe, the 29 Palms Art Gallery is the longest-standing non-profit art organization in the Joshua Tree Gateway Communities and for over fifty years has consistently provided art exhibitions and education to participants of all ages and skill levels. The mission of the 29 Palms Art Gallery is to present high-quality art, to encourage creative growth through innovative educational programs, and to offer an inclusive environment for artists and community members to meet, exchange ideas, and create art. Admission is free and open to the public. For more information, call 760-367-7819, visit www.29palmsartgallery.com and follow us on Facebook.

Media Contact

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