

Paintings of California Missions

Langson IMCA's collection includes paintings of California missions, such as those located in San Juan Capistrano and San Diego, among others. There are varied perspectives and experiences of these sites and their visual representations, making paintings of missions fraught and contested historical objects.

Twenty-one missions were established along El Camino Real in California by Catholic priests from Spain between 1769 and 1833. Missions served as sites of religious conversion of Indigenous people and as tools of colonization that enabled Spain to expand its empire. Indigenous communities were displaced and forcibly resettled to live and work at the missions where they faced disease, malnutrition, violence, and death. Today the missions continue to operate as active Catholic parishes and places of worship. Many of these sites evolved into the major cities of California.

In the 19th and early 20th century the decaying architecture of the California missions attracted many painters working on the West Coast. Artists often portrayed these picturesque ruins as treasured historical relics, obscuring the history of violence and forced relocation that occurred at missions. Paintings of missions often reflect a romantic view of the past from a settler-colonial perspective rather than the lived experiences of Indigenous people who continue to face conditions of colonization.

Statement on California Missions by the Autry Museum of the American West

bit.ly/3GCTEkH

Statement by Mission San Juan Capistrano

missionsjc.com/history/

California Missions as Historic Sites for Tourism

bit.ly/3lJtmTl

Further Resources

Bargellini, Clara. "The California Missions in Art History." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, July 2020, pp. 60–66.

Black, Charlene Villaseñor. "Rethinking Mission Studies." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, July 2020, pp. 3–7.

Chavez, Yve. "'Remarkable Native Paintings': Indigeneity and Exhibitions of California Mission Art." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, July 2020, pp. 99–108.

Cordero, Jonathan. "Concluding Thoughts: On Decolonizing the Study of Mission Art." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, July 2020, pp. 109–11.

Gilio-Whitaker, Dina. *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock*. Beacon Press, 2019.

Hackel, Steven W. *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850*. University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Lewis, Cynthia Neri. "Imagined Mission Spaces: Challenges in Visual Culture Interpretation." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, July 2020, pp. 67–75.

Pinturas de las misiones de California

La colección Langson del IMCA (Institute and Museum of California Art) incluye, entre otras obras, pinturas de las misiones de California, como las que se encuentran en San Juan Capistrano y San Diego. Por la variedad de perspectivas y de experiencias que existen en relación con estos lugares y sus representaciones visuales, las pinturas de las misiones se han convertido en objetos históricos que suscitan tensión y controversia.

Veintiuna misiones fueron establecidas en El Camino Real de California entre 1769 y 1833 por sacerdotes católicos de España. Las misiones sirvieron como lugares de conversión religiosa de los indígenas, así como herramientas de colonización que le permitieron a España expandir su imperio. Las comunidades indígenas fueron desplazadas y reubicadas a la fuerza para vivir y trabajar en las misiones, donde enfrentaron enfermedades, desnutrición, violencia y muerte. Hoy en día, las misiones siguen funcionando activamente como parroquias católicas y lugares de culto. Muchos de estos sitios evolucionaron hasta convertirse en las principales ciudades de California.

Durante el siglo XIX y comienzos del XX, el deterioro arquitectónico de las misiones de California atrajo a muchos de los pintores que trabajaban en la costa oeste. Los artistas retrataban a menudo las pintorescas ruinas de estos edificios como preciadas reliquias históricas, ocultando la historia de violencia y reubicación forzada que sucedió en las misiones. Las pinturas a menudo reflejan una visión romántica del pasado desde la perspectiva de los colonizadores, y no aquella de las experiencias vividas por los pueblos indígenas, los cuales hoy en día continúan enfrentando condiciones de colonización.

Declaración sobre las misiones de California del Autry Museum of the American West
bit.ly/3GCTEkH

Declaración de la Misión de San Juan Capistrano
missionsjc.com/history/

Las misiones de California como lugares históricos para el turismo
bit.ly/3lJtmTl

Otras Fuentes

Bargellini, Clara. "The California Missions in Art History." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, julio de 2020, págs. 60–66.

Black, Charlene Villaseñor. "Rethinking Mission Studies." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, julio de 2020, págs. 3–7.

Chavez, Yve. "'Remarkable Native Paintings': Indigeneity and Exhibitions of California Mission Art." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, julio de 2020, págs. 99–108.

Cordero, Jonathan. "Concluding Thoughts: On Decolonizing the Study of Mission Art." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, julio de 2020, págs. 109–11.

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Lewis, Cynthia Neri. "Imagined Mission Spaces: Challenges in Visual Culture Interpretation." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, julio de 2020, págs. 67–75.