



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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“The Grandmothers Mural” at Main Library First in a Series

Four additional murals that celebrate Native American culture are at branch libraries

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The “Grandmothers” murals are at a library near you.

The series of murals were created by Riverside artist Denise Silva, who said they represent the indigenous peoples of this area: Tongva, people of the Earth; Luiseño, people of the West; Cahuilla, people of the desert; and Serrano, people of the pines.

The murals are “totems – spiritual guardians – for those who respect the divine feminine and ultimately, Mother Earth, who is our oldest ancestor,” she said.

A large 40-foot mural is on the west-facing wall of the Main Library, 3900 Mission Inn Ave. in downtown Riverside. Silva, who became a grandmother herself on 2020, was assisted by artists Amparo Chi, Jeshua V and Solomon Cortes.

Four smaller grandmothers are printed on metal and installed at the Arlanza, La Sierra, Orange Terrace and Casa Blanca branch libraries. Silva said the colors of the murals represent “our collective skin color as well as our Inland Empire landscape.”

“The Arts & Cultural Affairs Division’s mission is inclusion through dynamic and diverse arts, culture and entertainment,” said Margie Haupt, Arts and Cultural Affairs Manager. “We enrich, elevate and motivate our community and its visitors, so we and the Library Department were happy to support this mural.”

Silva was born in East L.A. and raised in Riverside. She studied design and illustration at California State University, Los Angeles, and works from her home studio in Riverside.

“The grandmothers will serve as a reminder for all to see whose land they are standing on, to step with mindfulness, to step with care,” Silva said. “Standing under each grandmother, pause to take a breath, give thanks and reset your nervous system. As you look up at them, you will feel their protection, their fierce and tender love.”

Silva's work can be found at www.pear mama.com and on Instagram @pear mama