

ART & ARTIFACT EMERGENCY RESTORATION



Founding Painting of Father Serra's first Mass, Leon Trouset, California, 1877, oil on canvas, 53"x72"

Mission San Carlos Borroméo del Río Carmelo, known as the Carmel Mission, houses one of the most extensive collections of Spanish Colonial paintings known in California and all of New Spain. There are approximately 120 paintings and over 1,500 objects in total, including sculptures, liturgical silver, vestments, and over 600 books.

The rich painting collection includes key figures in Christianity, at least one painting by a Native American, paintings of the Mission itself, and paintings of Junípero Serra, the

Mission's founder. This collection was accumulated during the Mission's long and colorful history beginning with its early days as one of California's first outposts established by Spain during the Spanish Colonial period (1492–1821). The California missions were founded by Franciscan missionaries, designed by artisans from Mexico and Europe, built and decorated largely by Native Americans, and preserved by American newcomers. The paintings in the collection are a tangible link to eras during which the cultural foundations of California were laid. Each painting represents a piece of the Mission's collective history.



Basilica interior showing some of the art & artifacts

One of the critical areas needing attention is the historic books in California's first library within the Convento Museum. Junípero Serra brought the first of these books with him to Carmel. They were

already old, "cast-offs" from Spain and Mexico, with the earliest dating back to 1511. There were about 50 books when Serra died. Today, the Library contains about 600. The books are housed on painted wood shelving and need protection from light and particulate pollution. The books contain evidence of insect activity and mold.



California's first library

While the museum seismic stabilization, infrastructure upgrades, and other renovation work is being performed, the artifacts need to be

inventoried, removed, and temporarily stored. This is an opportune time for them to be cleaned and emergency restoration work performed.



Early Mission kitchen reconstruction and artifacts.



Mission artifacts, including Junípero Serra's bible used by Ronald Regan when sworn in as first term governor of California in January 1967.