

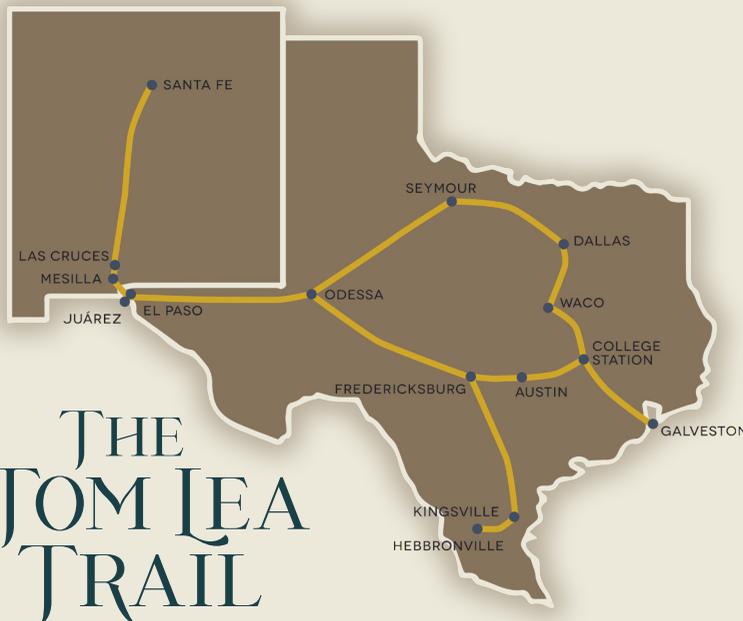
The Tom Lea Trail in Texas – IT'S OFFICIAL!

THE *Tom Lea Trail* was recognized by the State of Texas and the legislation signed into law by Governor Greg Abbott on June 12, 2017.

Tom Lea – called “an unsung genius of our time who made it purely on the quality of his work” by Pulitzer-winning biographer Robert Caro – was a native of El Paso, whose prodigious talent as a painter and writer was manifested in murals, landscapes, portraits, war art, illustrated novels, poems and history books. Though some of his artwork is housed in national repositories – the U.S. Army Center of Military History at Fort Belvoir, VA, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum among them – the majority can be found in Texas, providing testament to the state’s epic history.

Without precedent in Texas and in the United States, the *Tom Lea Trail* is modeled on the Piero della Francesca Trail of Italy that draws millions of visitors annually. When an Italian Renaissance professor at the University of Poitiers, Luciano Cheles, came across pictures of Tom Lea’s work in 2007 while perusing a mural book, he noticed a resemblance to the Renaissance master Piero della Francesca, and Googled Lea’s name. My name popped up, as representing Tom Lea in my gallery. Luciano asked if Tom Lea was influenced by Piero della Francesca, and I knew he was. Then the wheels began to turn. If I loved travelling back roads to see Piero’s work when I studied in Italy, why wouldn’t Europeans come to Texas to see Tom Lea’s?

The Tom Lea Institute has seen international visitors and I heard from the Seymour postmistress that a handful of Europeans have dropped by since *Texas Monthly* and *Texas Highways* announced the Tom Lea Trail in 2013. Now that it is official, we can expect more visitors to travel across Texas to learn the varied histories not only of large urban areas but of smaller communities like Seymour,



THE TOM LEA TRAIL



Sitting Bull. Oil on canvas. Collection of the Texas State Capital, Austin, Texas

Odeessa, Galveston, and Kingsville through Tom Lea’s art. When visitors arrive at El Paso, they’ll cross the border to visit Las Cruces, New Mexico, where three Tom Lea murals exist, and Juárez, Chihuahua, where Fray García de San Francisco – one of Tom Lea’s XII Travelers – built the beautiful Misión de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, founded in 1659!

A sincere thank-you to Senators José Rodríguez and Craig Estes for co-authoring the legislation and to Representatives Joe Pickett and Joseph Moody who shepherded it through the House. A total of 55 legislators, from every community along the Trail, co-signed the bill and showed their commitment to preserving the history and heritage of Texas.

– Adair Margo, Founder



LEFT: *O Pass of the North, Now the Old Giants Are Gone We Little Men Live Where Heroes Once Walked the Inviolable Earth*, 1938. Oil on canvas, 11 x 54 feet. U.S. Courthouse, El Paso, Texas. Commissioned through the Section of Fine Arts, 1934-1943. Fine Arts Collection, U.S. General Services Administration.



RIGHT: *Mural on South Wall, West Texas Room*, 1936. Oil on canvas, 7 X 20 feet. Hall of State, Dallas.



Paola Martinez with her mural at the W.S. Hills Building in El Paso, where Tom Lea once had his studio.

Words from an Artist

WORKING for the Tom Lea Institute I am constantly exposed to artwork that offers much more than an image on canvas or paper. In these pieces of art, I can see stories, thoughts, and most importantly the essence of the artist, Tom Lea. I am always mesmerized, as the curator brings forth with such delicacy a piece of artwork and then carefully unwraps it. In that moment, we become witnesses to the opening of a time capsule that holds the life of a man and his legacy.

When I am not working at the Institute in my position as membership coordinator, I am always working toward becoming a

better artist. Tom Lea's artwork is a continuous and endless channel of creative nourishment for my personal work. With access to Tom's books, stories of him stay in the back of my mind. Slowly and almost undetected, Tom's influence began to appear in my work.

Not too long ago I was given the opportunity to create a mural inspired by Tom Lea's novel *The Brave Bulls*. El Paso artists were assigned walls inside the W.S. Hills Building. The project was to be finished in two weeks and displayed during the event "Head for the Hills." Imagine ten artists painting seven murals late into the night. And to think that we were



working in the same building where Tom Lea once had his studio. It was a very gratifying experience.

Thank you, Tom, for opening yourself to others and constantly inspiring me with your work.

— Paola Martinez,
Membership Coordinator

A Visit from Gopal Raman, 2016 National Student Poet

ON April 20 and 21, the Tom Lea Institute hosted a bright young man named Gopal Raman from Dallas. Gopal is recognized as the national student poet for the Southwest Region. The National Student Poets Program honors student poets, showcases their achievements, and is supported by The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers.

Gopal presented to middle and high school students enrolled in the El Paso and Ysleta Independent School Districts. His presentation involved students finding artwork or something else to reflect upon. While in El Paso, the focus was on the art of Tom Lea. Gopal asked the students to find something specific about an artwork that they found interesting and to write about it. From there, the students wrote their own poetry and read it aloud.

On his first day in El Paso, I escorted Gopal and his mother to the YISD District Office where he spoke to 50 students. From there we went to lunch for some authentic Mexican food. They drank *horchata* for the first time and they loved it. Then I escorted him to Ysleta and Desert View Middle Schools where he presented to more than 40 students, followed by a presentation at Ciudad Nueva, a youth empowerment program. The following day I took him to El Paso High School, where he presented to around 70



Gopal Raman (center right) has lunch with students from El Paso High School. (Photo courtesy of Citra Raman.)

students. After the presentation, the students had lunch together and talked about music and the many other things they had in common. I turned my back for a few minutes and discovered that Gopal had disappeared. The students had taken him to see a secret tunnel, rumored to connect El Paso High School with Cathedral High School, a few miles away.

As a result of Gopal Raman's visit to El Paso, students were inspired to write their own poetry and several schools are planning to organize poetry teams. After the final presentation a student named Maria stood up and read her poem. It was awesome! Maria will submit her poetry to the National Student Poet Program for consideration in the 2018 selection process.

– Arturo Flores, Finance Manager (e& VIP Guide)

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Keep up with the latest events and support the Institute.

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Paola Martinez, *Membership Coordinator*



More than 2,000 students participated in the camps, which took them to see *Our History* by Carlos Callejo and some fascinating relics at Dave's Pawn Shop in downtown El Paso. Teachers and tutors received training on how to conduct the camps using our curricula.





Students take a field trip to the El Paso Museum of History.

It's Time for Summer Camp in the Ysleta Independent School District

RECENTLY Adair Margo and I trained 25 Ysleta school teachers and tutors to conduct summer camps for middle schoolers using two of our curricula, “Awakening the Giants of Our History” and “The Mexican Revolution Through the Eyes of Tom Lea and José Cisneros.” Teachers were delighted with the curriculum, rating it as “highly engaging and relevant.” One teacher commented, “I thought it was going to be the ‘same old same old’ but was surprised at how great it is.” The workshop included regional history, how to teach about art, innovative techniques featured in the curriculum, and teacher demonstrations.

With more than 2,000 students participating in the Summer Camps, our tour schedule is quite busy. Highlights include mural tours of *Pass of the North* (1938) by Tom Lea and *Our History* (1995) by Carlos Callejo, and the DIGIE wall at the El Paso Museum of History. The “Mexican Revolution” tour incorporates stops at several historic buildings including the Elite Confectionary (once Pancho Villa’s favorite stop for a strawberry soda, now a CVS) and the Caples Building, where Francisco Madera headquartered his provisional Mexican government. There is even a stop at Dave’s Pawn Shop, where students can see a relic from

the Revolution (Pancho Villa’s alleged mummified trigger finger). Following a look through the pawnshop window, students are engaged in a discussion about the myths, the legends, and the realities of the Mexican Revolution. Thank you to Shannon George and Stephanie Bulloch for volunteering their time to work with staff on creating and leading tours around downtown El Paso.

For more information about implementing the curriculum in your school or district, please contact the Institute.

– Holly P. Cobb, Director of Education



Summer Camps include visits to the DIGIE wall at the El Paso Museum of History and a mural tour of *Pass of the North* at the historic Federal Courthouse.

CURATOR'S TREASURE

ON September 15 of 1944, U.S. Marines fighting in World War II landed on the small island of Peleliu in the western Pacific. Over the next several weeks the Marines encountered fierce Japanese resistance, resulting in mass casualties before the U.S. finally secured the island. Tom Lea was there to record the battle. Of the approximately 28,000 Marines and infantry troops involved, 35 percent of them died or were wounded, totaling 9,800 men (1,800 killed in action and 8,000 wounded). Movies like *Hacksaw Ridge* can give you a glimpse into what the fighting between the Japanese and American troops was like. As one of the lesser-known, bloodiest battles in the Pacific Theater during WWII it's a wonder that Lea and native El Pasoans Manny Rivas and his twin brother survived.

Walter Negley, one of our avid institute supporters and a WWII buff, gave the Institute a bullet that he acquired from Peleliu. According to Negley, bullets like this can still be found just walking around the island. Knowing the history of this bloody battle is enough to send shivers down your spine but when you are faced with an actual artifact from that



LEFT: A Japanese bullet found at Peleliu. RIGHT: *This is Sad Sack Calling Charlie Blue*. Oil on canvas, 20½ X 26½. Life Collection of Art WWII, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

battle, your skin crawls – or at least mine did.

As a historian, my expertise does not extend itself to ballistics so I reached out to some peers to confirm the bullet's history and was put in contact with a WWII expert at the U.S. Army Center of Military History at Fort Belvoir, VA. After an email and photograph exchange, it was confirmed that the artifact was a Japanese 7.7 x 58mm Type 92 semi-rimmed armor-piercing projectile, used by the Japanese in a Type 92 heavy machine gun on Peleliu. This confirmation is equally cool as it is eerie. On the one hand, it's a small artifact that connects to a historical event, on the other hand it's a bullet that was shot at a United States Marine.

– Sarah Prezioso, Collections Curator

'Manny Rivas' Peleliu'

THE short film *Manny Rivas' Peleliu* was selected for screening during the Plaza Classic Film Festival. With our own Holly Packard Cobb as producer and Arturo Flores as cameraman, David Guerin edited the film as a part of the Institute's WWII curriculum.

Manny Rivas of El Paso, Texas, was a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps and served as an infantryman with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment during World War II. Mr. Rivas took part in epic battles in the Pacific

from Solomon Islands and New Britain to Peleliu and Okinawa. In the film, Manny Rivas recounts his and his twin brother's experiences at the battle of Peleliu as illustrated by Tom Lea, WWII artist/war correspondent.

Manny Rivas' Peleliu was selected from more than 90 submissions to the Local Flavor Showcase, the region's largest showcase of independently made shorts, features, animated, documentaries, music videos, and experimental films. Congratulations to our filmmaking team!



Manny Rivas' Peleliu will be screened on Friday, August 4, at 8:00 p.m. in the Foundation Room, 333 N. Oregon, El Paso.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Coming Soon: Tom Lea Month

WE are in the final stages of planning another wonderful Tom Lea Month. Some traditional favorites are included as well as a few new events. The theme is, of course, the *Tom Lea Trail*. Please join us as we celebrate the formal designation of this unique artist-heritage trail through Texas, New Mexico, and northern Mexico.

There will be lectures and workshops aplenty in communities along the *Tom Lea Trail*, on topics as diverse as history, geology, heritage tourism, conservation, WPA murals, and fine art.

The El Paso Museum of Art will be opening a new exhibit of works on paper by Tom Lea. The museum plans to include some seldom-seen watercolors from its Permanent Collections along with pieces from the collection of James D. Lea (Tom's son). Jim Lea also will lend a few works of art and some Casas Grandes pottery to the El Paso Museum of Archeology for a temporary display.

In the late 1920s, Tom Lea created an illustrated catalog of Casas Grandes pottery that his father collected early in the 20th century. This is a wonderful opportunity to see pieces from the private collection of the Lea Family.



Made in El Paso, our annual fundraising event, will focus on celebrating the foods and experiences to be found in the borderland. We are working with instructors and students from El Paso Community College to create a wonderful culinary adventure featuring foods sourced and made in the El Paso area. Proceeds from the dinner will benefit the EPCC Culinary Scholarship Fund.

Along with the dinner we will offer an auction of experiences – with the winning bid you can “Fly the *Tom Lea Trail*,” “Explore the Mesilla Valley Wine Trail,” and discover the joys of having a custom-made pair of Rocketbuster Boots. These and many other experiences will be up for bid with auction proceeds benefiting the Institute and its educational programs.

The full schedule will be announced in September. If you are interested in being a sponsor of Tom Lea Month or would like to support one of our many educational programs, please contact the Institute at 915-533-0048 or email TLI@tomlea.net

Your support is greatly appreciated and provides the foundation for our success in serving the community that we love.

– Lisa M. Pugh, Executive Director



TLI staff work with kids on a community story project at an El Paso Chihuahua game in May.

What Do Baseball and Tom Lea Have in Common? Reading!

ON May 17, members of the Tom Lea Staff enjoyed a day with the El Paso Chihuahuas as participants in their Student Game Days. Every year the Chihuahuas host a series of game days for students from all over El Paso that are themed around music, reading, and art.

Our game's theme was reading, so in preparation for 3,500 students we made bookmarks that showcased the

Pass of the North mural and included an excerpt from Tom Lea's *A Word in the Night*, where he talks about a childhood experience during the Mexican Revolution. We also set up a large notepad where we had students continue a story, line by line, to create a community story project! A good time was had by all.

– Sarah Prezioso, Outreach Coordinator

Tom Lea
INSTITUTE

P.O. Box 103, El Paso, TX 79941
201 E. Main, Suite 100, El Paso, TX 79901
915-533-0048 | tomlea.com

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