

# Along El Camino Real

*Sullivan Goss presents a never-before-seen exhibition of Edwin Deakin's 21 missions in watercolor*

**Through June 30**

**Sullivan Goss,  
An American Gallery**  
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**A**cross the coastal region of California from San Diego to San Francisco is a series of 21 missions established by the Spanish Catholics of the Franciscan Order. Founded between 1769 and 1823, these outposts have endured over time and are among the oldest monuments

in the state. The missions have a vast and significant local as well as national history that has been shaped through time and preservation.

Works of art featuring the Franciscan missions have been around for centuries, but there are few paintings as rare and elusive as the 21



Edwin Deakin (1838-1923), *San Francisco de Asis*, ca. 1897-1899. Watercolor on paper, 8½ x 11½ in.



Edwin Deakin (1838-1923), *Santa Barbara Virgen y Martir*, ca. 1897-1899. Watercolor on paper, 8½ x 11½ in.



Edwin Deakin (1838-1923), *San Diego de Alcála*, ca. 1897-1899. Watercolor on paper, 8½ x 11½ in.



Edwin Deakin (1838-1923), *Santa Inés Virgen y Martir*, ca. 1897-1899. Watercolor on paper, 8½ x 11½ in.

some of the missions were already falling into ruins. His interest in them may have been sparked from the English notion of the picturesque, which is often found within Deakin's paintings. This concept is a romantic painting and literature movement that, according to Tessmer, "focuses on scenes devoid of people...architecture in some sort of decline...and has a sense of melancholy and passage of time." Because of the state of some of the missions, there was a ready-made subject for the artist.

In 1897, Deakin announced to a reporter that he would create an entire collection of the missions. The works were completed by 1899. This was in the midst of the Mission Revival movement that already was flourishing around him. As Tessmer explained, Helen Hunt Jackson's pivotal novel *Ramona*, published in 1884, was one of the first notions that people should celebrate the Spanish era of California history. Tessmer also noted that others were part of the movement including artist

Henry Chapman Ford who presented etchings of the 21 missions at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.

The infamous mission watercolors by Deakin have been written about for more than 100 years but were never more than a story. Changing hands likely only twice since the artist's death in 1923, the exhibit at Sullivan Goss marks the first time they will be on display. Also on display with the 21 watercolors will be other pieces that help tell the story of the Mission Revival movement. ■



Edwin Deakin (1838–1923), *Santa Clara de Asis*, ca. 1897–1899. Watercolor on paper, 8½ x 11½ in.



Edwin Deakin (1838–1923), *La Exaltación de la Santa Cruz*, ca. 1897–1899. Watercolor on paper, 8½ x 11½ in.

watercolors by English-born artist Edwin Deakin (1838–1923). Newly re-emerged, these late 19<sup>th</sup>-century watercolors of the missions will be on display—and sold—at Sullivan Goss, An American Gallery, in Santa Barbara, California, through June 30. Deakin is credited as the first to paint a complete series of the missions.

“Deakin is known for a number of different scenes, but probably the chief achievement of his lifetime was through his paintings of the missions,” says Jeremy Tessmer, gallery director of Sullivan Goss. “Deakin, known as ‘the indefatigable,’ made a complete set of the missions in watercolor and two complete sets in oil, and he is widely credited with providing the images that helped the Mission Revival movement gain cultural currency.”

When Deakin first arrived in San Francisco by way of Chicago in 1870,