

Press Release

For immediate Release
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Museum of Sonoma County's Annual Día de los Muertos Exhibition Coming This Fall to the Sculpture Garden October 22-November 8, 2020

(SANTA ROSA, CA)- September 25, 2020– The Museum of Sonoma County (MSC) is pleased to present its 24th annual *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) exhibition, on view from October 22 through November 8, 2020. The exhibition will take place in the outdoor Sculpture Garden, which will be open to the public free of charge, with additional displays on view in the Window Gallery on Seventh and B Street.

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a joyous remembrance of the lives of family members and loved ones who have passed and a celebration of the cycle of life. The holiday is celebrated on November 1st and 2nd throughout Latin America, but is more closely associated with Mexico, where it originated. Traditionally, it is said, the souls of the dead return to visit the living for a few brief hours during the celebrations. In Mexico, cemeteries are cleaned and decorated, special food and candies are cooked, and home altars are designed with offerings (*ofrendas*) to the dead of the things they enjoyed most in life, including food, drink, and even music.

This year's exhibition is presented in the Sculpture Garden for the first time. The outdoor exhibition echoes the setting of many Day of the Dead observances which often take place in cemeteries. The exhibition provides a place to remember the people who have been lost, whether in 2020 or in years past. This year's altars and artwork have been designed and created by Liz Camino-Byers, Scott Daniel Braun, Peter Perez, Mario Uribe, and Martín Zúñiga, along with contributions from community participants. We are also proud to include special works made in past years by the Museum's Youth+Art students.

"The event has been taken back to its original roots and the celebration will be more traditional than ever," says artist Peter Perez. While the exhibition includes traditional elements, the altars and artworks created each year often reflect current themes, with this year being no exception. Perez's installation will include an 8-foot tall mask, with layers of imagery and meaning, a statement about the current COVID-19 pandemic and a tribute to those who have lost their lives to the virus.

Artist Mario Uribe is incorporating his existing “Peace Tree” sculpture into his altar design. “Peace Tree” was created by Uribe in 2013 through a collaborative project with students from South Korea and Elsie Allen High School, exploring the parallel experiences of living near the Norteño-Sureño gang conflict in Northern California with the Demilitarized Zone in Korea. “The COVID-19 pandemic has brought added meaning to everything we do, especially this day,” says Uribe. “Using my ‘Peace Tree’ sculpture as a site for this altar is very appropriate; it was created originally as a collaborative prayer between young people of diverse backgrounds trying to overcome injustice and inequality. In the past, I have created altars that honor specific people whose lives have touched me significantly, Andy Lopez is one of them. This altar is interactive, and people can come and add to it if they feel so moved – out of support and respect for his memory, and as an added prayer for justice and peace.”

In previous years, the Memory Portrait Competition has been an art and storytelling contest for students. This year, artists of all ages are encouraged to submit memory portraits, which will be displayed on the exhibition webpage beginning October 22. Memory Portrait details and the submission form can be found online: <http://bit.ly/MemoryPortrait>.

Visitors are invited to participate in the exhibition by contributing miniature altars in a box, photos (copies), traditional offerings (such as flowers), led lights, and other items to the community altar (no open flames, please). Items can be added during open hours and can be picked up during the final days of the exhibition (November 5-8). Contributed items should only be objects that visitors are willing to part with and can be exposed to the outdoor environment. The Museum of Sonoma County is not responsible for any loss or damage to objects left in the exhibition.

In partnership with the Children’s Museum of Sonoma County, at-home activity handouts will also be available, featuring step-by-step instructions to create paper monarch butterflies and candles. These activities can be done at home and brought to the Museum to be hung from the trees in the Sculpture Garden or placed on the community altar.

From October 31-November 2, the Museum will offer evening hours (4:00-7:00pm), allowing visitors to view the glowing lights of the ofrendas.

To ensure a safe and enjoyable visit, the following visitor protocols are in place:

- Limited capacity
- Properly worn face coverings are required at all times for visitors over the age of 12
- Visitors must maintain 6 feet of social distance from those not from your household; children must stay with adults at all times
- Drinking fountains are closed
- Restrooms are closed

- Hand sanitizer is available
- Do not visit if you feel sick, have a temperature above 100°F, or have recently been in contact with someone who is sick
- Avoid unnecessary touching of surfaces
- No pets, please (service animals only)

Hours:

October 22-November 8, 2020: Thursday-Sunday (10:00am-1:00pm)*

*Except Saturday, October 31-November 2 (evening hours only: 4:00-7:00pm)

This exhibition is generously sponsored by Collette Michaud and Steve Purcell, Children's Museum of Sonoma County, and Out There Santa Rosa.

For more information, please visit our website: <https://museumsc.org/2020-dia-de-los-muertos/>

Programs and Events

Virtual Members' Opening Reception

Thursday, October 22, 2020

7:00-8:00pm

Museum members are invited to attend an exclusive virtual members-only opening reception for the *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) exhibition. Participating artists will be joining us to discuss their altars (*ofrendas*) in the exhibition and will be answering your questions. A recording will be available to the public shortly after the event.

Honoring the Dead: Exploring Different Traditions

Thursday, October 29, 2020

7:00pm-8:30pm

The Museum will host a virtual panel discussion, moderated by Sonoma State Professor of Anthropology, Alexis Boutin, exploring different cultural traditions of honoring the dead. Panelists include Santa Rosa Junior College Professor, Laura Larqué, and Enmanji Buddhist Temple Dharma School Superintendent, Loren Miyasaki. Additional panelist information to be released shortly.

Details and registration available on our website: www.museumsc.org/events.

About the Museum of Sonoma County

COVID-19 Update: As of July 13, the Museum of Sonoma County's indoor galleries are closed to the public. The Sculpture Garden (located on Seventh and A Street) is open to the public, free of charge, Thursday through Sunday from 10:00am-1:00pm, pending air quality conditions. A menu of online offerings, including virtual tours of our current exhibitions, free art lessons, interviews with exhibiting artists and community members, and more, is available on our website. We look forward to reopening as soon as it is safe to do so.

Located in Downtown Santa Rosa on Seventh Street between A and B Streets, the Museum of Sonoma County (MSC) presents exhibitions of modern and contemporary art and local and regional history. MSC is open year-round with changing exhibitions, public programs, school tours, and special events. MSC preserves and manages a regional art and history collection of over 18,000 objects, the region's largest object documentation of Sonoma County's history and culture.

Mission

The Museum of Sonoma County engages and inspires our diverse community with art and history exhibitions, collections, and public programs that are inclusive, educational, and relevant.

Smithsonian Affiliate

The Museum of Sonoma County has been a Smithsonian Affiliate since 2009. Smithsonian Affiliations establishes long-term partnerships with museums, education and cultural organizations to facilitate the loan of Smithsonian artifacts and traveling exhibitions, as well as to develop innovative educational collaborations locally and nationally. Created in 1996 by an act of the Smithsonian Board of Regents, the program is overseen by the Smithsonian's Assistant Secretary for Education and Access and is one of the pillars of the Institution's national outreach efforts. There are more than 200 Smithsonian Affiliates in nearly every state, Puerto Rico and Panama. Affiliates represent the diversity of America's museum community—size, location and subject—and serve all audiences. More than 8,000 Smithsonian artifacts have been displayed at Affiliate locations for the past 20 years.

Museum of Sonoma County

425 Seventh Street
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
707-579-1500
www.museumsc.org

Images ([click here](#) to view and download)



Artist Peter Perez creating works for the 2020 Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) exhibition at the Museum of Sonoma County (image courtesy Jeff Kan Lee)

Artist Peter Perez stands next to an 8-foot tall mask he has created for the 2020 Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) exhibition at the Museum of Sonoma County (image courtesy Jeff Kan Lee)



Artist Martín Zúñiga creating works for the 2020 Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) exhibition at the Museum of Sonoma County (image courtesy Jeff Kan Lee)

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