



NEWS RELEASE

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BCA Presents 4th Annual Día de los Muertos Festival October 20–22, 2017 Featuring free family activities at the Breckenridge Arts District

BRECKENRIDGE, CO (September 22, 2017) –Breckenridge Creative Arts invites the community to embrace the folk arts of **Día de los Muertos** or Day of the Dead, an ancient tradition whose roots predate modern Mexico, from **October 20-22, 2017** on the **Breckenridge Arts District** campus in downtown Breckenridge.

“We are honored to once again host this important celebration for our community,” said Robb Woulfe, President and CEO of Breckenridge Creative Arts (BCA). “Día de Los Muertos is a celebration of life, culture and creativity, so we invite everyone to come out and experience the traditions of this colorful holiday and to participate in a wide array of free, family-friendly activities on our campus.”

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is the Mexican cultural tradition honoring deceased family members and friends each year on November 1 and 2 through the creation of calaveras de azúcar (sugar skulls), altares de muertos (altars of the dead) and ofrendas (offerings). A festive and social occasion, Día de los Muertos welcomes the return of those who have died and recognizes the cycles of life and death.

“It’s not sad,” explained Ana Valles of the Mexican Cultural Center in Denver, which joins BCA this year as a partner in the local Día de los Muertos celebration. “It’s about getting together, sharing stories, and having fun remembering our loved ones,” she said.

The Breckenridge event, now in its fourth year, has taken hold as a time for community members from all cultural backgrounds to experience folk art traditions that date back to the ancestors of the Mexican cultural

holiday—creating sugar skulls and paper flowers, watching Aztec and folkloric dancers, even learning the dances themselves. There’s a nightly candlelight vigil, and fond remembrances of loved ones lost.

It’s also an opportunity to learn more about Day of the Dead and related cultural traditions from around the globe, with bilingual students and teachers from Metropolitan State University Denver’s “Journey Through Our Heritage” program leading craft and dance workshops while shedding light on the meaning behind the traditions.

“Día de los Muertos demonstrates a strong sense of love and respect for one’s ancestors; celebrates the continuance of life, family relationships, and community solidarity; and allows people to talk about and find humor in death,” explained Dr. Renee Fajardo, director of the MSU Denver program.

Contemporary art of Mexico

Although the event officially kicks off October 20, the work of contemporary Mexican artists Damián Ortega and Pedro Reyes will be featured in BCA’s quarterly installment of BREW: Ideas + Creation Lab, a salon series taking place the night before on Thursday, October 19 from 5:30 to 9:00 pm at the Breckenridge Theater. Ortega’s work uses everyday objects from Volkswagen Beetles and Day of the Dead posters to locally sourced corn tortillas; Reyes is known for turning guns into musical instruments and transforming existing problems into ideas for a better world. The evening starts with a screening of film selections from the Art21 PBS documentary “Mexico City,” followed by a panel discussion on how art can provide community solutions and spark positive change. The panelists include Tamara Drangstveit, executive director of the Family Intercultural Resource Center; Marcela de la Mar, executive director of the Mexican Cultural Center; and Andrés Chaparro, general manager of Telemundo Denver.

On Friday, October 20 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm there will be a talk with the contemporary Mexican designer Ignacio “Nacho” Cadena, whose installation “Los Trompos” is on exhibit in the Breckenridge Arts District through October. Created with partner Héctor Esrawe, “Los Trompos” consists of a series of contemporary, large-scale spinning tops constructed of colorful, woven cords evoking the traditional weavers of indigenous Mexico, which visitors can climb on and set in motion. The work is meant to inspire playfulness, human interaction, and modern-day community building. Both “Los Trompos” and the growing Día de los Muertos celebration are generously funded by The Summit Foundation.

A tradition of ancestors

Day of the Dead ramps up on Friday, October 20 with an opening party at 6:00 pm at Old Masonic Hall, immediately following Cadena’s talk. In addition to the various folk art activities, there will be daily face-painting, make-and-take crafts in Breckenridge Theater, a photo booth, and an exhibit of meta-realist and Neo-Pre-Columbian works by Stevon and Arlette Lucero in Old Masonic Hall.

Starting at 10:00 am on Saturday and Sunday, October 21 and 22, the staff from the Mexican Cultural Center and students from MSU Denver will lead a variety of free workshops and hands-on craft activities, including the creation of an altar in Randall Barn, where community members are invited to give an offering for loved ones lost. In Mexico, Valles explained, altars honoring the lives of those who have passed away is one of the most

popular Day of the Dead traditions. “Altar offerings can range from food baked in the shape of skulls to incense or yellow marigolds,” she said. “These are elements that spirits enjoy when they return to earth to visit their families and friends.”

Wrapping up the weekend’s activities, Latin folk and soul band Jarabe Mexicano will present a free concert, part of the group’s new Día de los Muertos Tour, at the Riverwalk Center on Sunday, October 22, from 2:00 to 3:30 pm. The concert will be preceded by a free dance performance by local company, Baile Folklórico Del Valle, from 1:30 to 2:00 pm on the lawn of the Riverwalk Center.

Jarabe Mexicano hit the Latin music scene in 2015, electrifying audiences throughout the U.S. and Mexico. Performing on traditional mariachi instruments accompanied by lively percussion, Jarabe’s arrangements feature stunning harmonized vocals in Spanish and English. Along with traditional boleros, huapangos, sones, and rancheras, audiences thrill to their upbeat cumbias, revamped rock and roll hits, and reggae classics.

The Día de los Muertos celebration is presented in partnership with The Summit Foundation and sponsored by Epic Promise. Activities are produced in association with MSU Denver’s Journey Through our Heritage, Colorado Folk Arts Council and Mexican Cultural Center. For more details, please visit www.breckcreate.org/ddlm

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