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World Heritage Office Celebrates Dia de los Muertos with Two-Day Virtual Program



SAN ANTONIO (October 21, 2020) – The City of San Antonio World Heritage Office will celebrate Day of the Dead with a free online program on Sunday, November 1 and Monday, November 2, 2020. The virtual events will share the history of the Dia de los Muertos holiday, and its rituals, symbolism, and indigenous roots, as well as its gastronomical connections.

“Dia de los Muertos is a time we remember and celebrate our loved ones who have passed, and a time to pause and reflect on our cultural and familial traditions,” said District 3 Councilwoman Rebecca J. Viagran. “This year, more than any other, it’s important we take the time to honor and be thankful for the loved ones in our lives.”

On November 1, Mission Marquee Plaza presents, “Dia de los Muertos: Celebrando las Misiones - 300 Years of Mission San Jose,” as its third annual event and will be available to watch on the World Heritage Office YouTube channel ([@worldheritagesa](https://www.youtube.com/@worldheritagesa)) and Mission Marquee Plaza Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MissionMarqueePlaza) beginning at 4 p.m. The virtual event will include:

- Discussion on history, symbolism and traditions of Dia de los Muertos by Jesus de la Torre, cultural preservation educator and social marketer, and founder of Colectivo Cultural
- Tradition of Pan de Muerto during the holiday, presented by Patricia Bedoy, owner of Bedoy’s Bakery
- Demonstration by San Antonio artist and educator Terry Ybañez on how to make a sugar skull
- Presentation on altars created by descendant families of Mission San Jose
- Performances at Mission San Jose by Mariachi Alma de Mexico and ballet folklórico dancing by Compania Folklorica del Alamo

The celebration will also include a special outdoor exhibit featuring the works of 11 San Antonio artists and curated by Rigoberto Luna. “Alive in Memory & Spirit” is a visual interpretation of some of the critical contributors to San Antonio, the Missions and the

surrounding area. Each of the large-scale reproductions of original artworks commissioned by the World Heritage Office is a traditional or non-traditional portrait of these departed individuals whose memories are celebrated and honored. Artists for this exhibit include: Fernando Andrade, Richard Arredondo, David Blancas, Adriana M. Garcia, Cassie Gnehm, Omar Gonzalez, Raul Rene Gonzalez, Christopher Montoya, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Eva Marengo Sanchez, and Jesus Treviño.

“Learning about these histories was equally fulfilling as working with each of the artists. Each artwork is as unique and rich as the subjects they portray,” Luna said. “The opportunity to work directly with descendant families made it all the more special because these stories are not only essential to the mission communities, but also to the fabric of San Antonio’s history.”

The outdoor exhibit will remain on display at Mission Marquee Plaza, 3100 Roosevelt Ave., beginning November 1 through the end of December. Guests can view the exhibit from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily, and are encouraged to practice social distancing and wear face coverings when visiting. More information on the exhibit is available at www.missionmarquee.com.

On November 2, the San Antonio UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy designation, managed by the World Heritage Office, presents the second installment of its virtual Tamal Institute series, “Tamales and Día de los Muertos.” Created by The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, the Tamal Institute is a community effort to explore and provide information on the origins, history and cultural significance of tamales and tamaladas in San Antonio. This event includes:

- Introduction by author Dr. Carmen Tafolla on the historical and cultural significance of tamales for Day of the Dead
- A presentation and cooking demonstration by the Familia de la Torre on how to prepare tamales at home
- An opportunity to travel virtually to other UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy – Ensenada, Mexico; Merida, Mexico; and Belo Horizonte, Brazil – to learn about their culinary traditions for Dia de los Muertos.

“Traditions bring together loved ones, and tamal making is one that has been doing that for generations,” said Colleen Swain, Director of the World Heritage Office. “Food plays an important role in the practices of Dia de los Muertos and we are excited to share a deeper meaning and understanding of these through this year’s virtual program.”

Participants can register for the free event at <https://tamal-institute-diadelosmuertos.eventbrite.com>. The event will begin online at 6 p.m. Once registered, participants will receive a link to watch the program.

The 2020 Tamal Institute virtual series concludes in December with a third presentation on the tradition of tamal making during the holidays.

For more information, visit www.sanantonio.gov/worldheritage, www.missionmarquee.com, and www.sacityofgastronomy.org.

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