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## Day of the Dead 2022 at the Des Moines Art Center celebrates *Our Luchadores Ancestors*

**DES MOINES, IA (October 2022)** The Des Moines Art Center is proud to continue a 22-year tradition of celebrating Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) in person after two years of virtual programming. Day of the Dead activities honor those who came before us, our ancestors, and those we have loved and lost.

During this festive time of year, it is believed that souls return to enjoy earthly pleasures. Families honor their ancestors and the recently deceased with commemorative altars, called ofrendas, by filling them with flowers, photographs, pan de los muertos (the traditional bread of the dead), candles, sugar skulls, toys, and other symbolic items.

Last year, the Art Center began a new tradition of an artist-created ofrenda for the annual Day of the Dead celebration. Iowa Artist Miriam Alarcón Avila will continue that tradition in 2022 by designing an altarpiece inspired by her upcoming exhibition "Iowa Artist 2022: Miriam Alarcón Avila" in which Avila embraces the imagery and spirit of luchadores ancestors and Día de los Muertos.

Lucha libre and Día de Los Muertos are cultural parallels of Mexican origins. The word lucha has a double meaning as both the name of the popular wrestling sport, as well as the ability to use your whole heart and soul to overcome struggles and obstacles. "The beginning didn't start here. Our ancestors followed the path, opening the way and creating the space that allows us to be here now," Avila says.

The ofrenda designed by Avila will be on view October 29 through November 14, 2022 in the museum's lobby. The Day of the Dead celebration takes place Sunday, October 30 from 11 am to 3 pm with festive fun for the whole family.

- **Food and Drink**  
Enjoy free Mexican hot cocoa and pan de muelro (traditional Day of the Dead sweet bread). [Tamales Industry](#), [La Michoacana](#), and Tangerine at the Art Center will have food and drinks for sale.
- **Art Activities**  
Create your own paper flowers and luchador masks in the art studios.
- **Musical Entertainment**  
Enjoy performances and music by [Guitarras ATM](#), a Latin jazz and mariachi band from Des Moines, and [DeeJay Lizz](#).
- **Free Shuttle**  
Take advantage of easy parking and a free shuttle from Merrill Middle School running continuously from 11:30 am to 3 pm.
- **And More**  
Stay for a memorial film highlighting the lives of Gonzalo and Jesse Cortez, Daniel Garza, and Dr. Lorenzo Jasso.  
Participate in a creative writing activity.  
Shop Día De Los Muertos décor and merchandise to take home from The Shop at the Art Center.

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Support for the Des Moines Art Center's Day of the Dead event is provided by Homesteaders Life Company and Iles Funeral Homes.

#### Des Moines Art Center

Recognized by international art critics as a world-class museum in the heart of the Midwest, the Des Moines Art Center, an AAM-accredited institution, has amassed an important collection of art from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, with a major emphasis on contemporary art. Focused on quality and global in scope, it includes major works by Henry Ossawa Tanner, Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe, Francis Bacon, Andy Goldsworthy, Henri Matisse, Wangechi Mutu, Ai Wei Wei, and Kara Walker, among hundreds of others. The collection is housed in three major buildings, each designed by a renowned architect—Eliel Saarinen, I. M. Pei, and Richard Meier. With the exception of special events, admission to the museum is free.

In September 2009, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park opened in Des Moines' Western Gateway Park. Philanthropists John and Mary Pappajohn provided funding for and donated 31 sculptures by internationally acclaimed contemporary artists to the Des Moines Art Center. The collection of sculptures by such artists as Martin Puryear, Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Willem de Kooning, Mark di Suvero, Olafur Eliasson, Keith Haring, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Yayoi Kusama, Jaume Plensa, and Richard Serra, and Joel Shapiro is the most significant donation of artwork to the Art Center in a single gift in the museum's history. The Pappajohn Sculpture Park is a collaboration of the Pappajohns, the City of Des Moines, the Des Moines Art Center, and numerous corporate and private donors.

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