

Tacoma Art Museum Presents Virtual *Día de los Muertos* Festival for 2020

October 5, 2020 (Tacoma, WA)— Beginning October 31 and running through November 15, Tacoma Art Museum (TAM) will be presenting an online version of the annual *Día de los Muertos* Festival at the Museum's website. Now in its 16th year, this annual festival regularly draws thousands of people but with the ongoing prohibition of large public gatherings, the event has moved to a digital format this year.



“Safe social distancing means TAM will not be able to host thousands of visitors on November 1 as we originally planned, but our commitment to this festival has not wavered. Art is Always Open at TAM and this festival is a perfect example,” noted David F. Setford, TAM Executive Director. “While we will miss the lively performances, beautiful *ofrendas* and the *tapete* in the Museum lobby, this year’s multi-day event will allow for new experiences that have never been part of the

celebration before. During this incredibly challenging year, we saw an even greater need for people to come together to share the love and memories of those we have lost.”

A new, online version of the festival gives website visitors an opportunity to create art from afar, enjoy performances, and develop a virtual *ofrenda* or altar exhibition. The altars are a beloved centerpiece to the annual festival at TAM. Traditionally, families assemble altars in their homes laden with offerings of food and drink to nourish the spirits on their long journey back home. Flowers, candles, clay figurines, sugar skeletons with the names of the deceased, and personal messages to the spirits are placed on the altars.

“Over the years at TAM, we have seen many beautiful and powerful offerings to those who have passed, and we look forward to sharing the stunning altars created in homes, schools, and organizations across Tacoma this year,” stated Amelia Layton, TAM Public Programs Manager.



Tacoma Art Museum's annual *Día de los Muertos* Festival, hosted in partnership with Proyecto Mole and Centro Latino, has grown over the past sixteen years, bringing together community organizations, schools, families, and individuals to create altars, remember loved ones, celebrate culture, and share with community.

“Many relatives have passed away over the years that we have participated in TAM's *Día de los Muertos* celebration and our altar has grown with our memories of them and mementos. Every year this celebration has provided the environment and opportunity to process our grief as a family, to create together and to remember with laughter and tears. There is no way to express what the impact this celebration has had on our family, on me.”

- CC Mendoza, current and past participant

“The *Día de Los Muertos* festival held in the museum is important because this is a place that honors, values, and celebrates cultural contributions of the past which is the bridge to who we are today. The museum brings people together in a place that respects the diversity of families and connects us individually, by family, and as a community to the joy and wealth of our inheritance.

The Tacoma Art Museum has provided over the years the opportunity for the Mendoza family's *ofrenda* and the festival to change and grow, reflecting the complexity and diversity of families both traditional and modern. Families are heartstrings tied together in love and sorrow that deepen our sense of belonging and history.”

- Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama, current and past participant

Día de los Muertos is an annual celebration that spans centuries, generations, and cultures across Latin America with roots in Mexico. Celebrants believe that every year the souls of the dead can enter the human realm to reunite with loved ones, but only if they are remembered on the Day of the Dead.

Día de los Muertos Community Festival is generously supported in part by the Haub Family Endowment, The National Endowment for the Arts, Tacoma Creates and presented in partnership with Proyecto MoLE and Centro Latino.



About Tacoma Art Museum

Celebrating over 80 years, Tacoma Art Museum is an anchor in Tacoma's downtown with a mission of connecting people through art. TAM's collection contains more than 5,000 works, with an emphasis on the art and artists of the Northwest and broader Western region, 25% of which consists of studio glass. The collection includes the largest retrospective museum collection of glass art by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly on permanent view; the most significant collection of studio art jewelry by Northwest artists; key holdings in 19th century European and 20th century American art; and one of the finest collections of Japanese woodblock prints on the West Coast. In 2012, TAM received a gift of more than 300 works of western American art from the Haub Family Collection, one of the premier such collections in the nation and the first major western American art museum collection in the Northwest. The Haub family also contributed \$20 million for an endowment and expansion completed in 2014. In January 2019, TAM inaugurated the Rebecca and Jack Benaroya Wing which features the extensive Benaroya collection of studio glass as well as TAM's own collection of studio glass, which was started in 1971. TAM is located in the heart of Tacoma's vibrant Museum District which consists of six museums including the Museum of Glass, a frequent collaborator.

CURRENT SCHEDULE Friday-Sunday 10am-5pm

ADMISSION – All admission must be reserved online in advance.

\$18 Adult, \$15 Student/Senior (65+), \$40 Family (2 adults and up to four children age 6-18), Children 5 and under free every day. Children 18 and under free every Saturday. TAM Members; active duty military, reservists, veterans, and their families always free.

CONTACT – 253-272-4258/ www.tacomaartmuseum.org