

Young People's Ofrendas: Expressions of Life and Remembrance

October 23–December 3, 2012



MIA partners with students from four Minnesota schools for an exhibition exploring Day of the Dead traditions

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“Young People’s Ofrendas,” a deeply personal exhibition celebrating *el Día de los Muertos* (the Day of the Dead), is the result of a unique partnership among the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and four Minnesota schools: El Colegio Charter School (Minneapolis), Austin High School (greater Minnesota), Thomas Edison High School (Minneapolis), and Humboldt Secondary School (St. Paul). Students from each school explore world cultures’ reverence for ancestors in the classrooms and at the museum. Then they create contemporary *ofrendas* (shrines) to honor friends, family, or community members who have passed away. Sixty selected ofrendas—15 from each school—are on display October 23 through December 2 in the museum’s first-floor Community Commons. A related blog (www.artsmia.org/ofrenda) follows the students’ progress through videos and posts.

Using wooden fruit crates, symbolic of the agricultural work performed by many of Minnesota's migrant populations, each student makes an ofrenda that reflects his or her own experience. Traditional elements such as flowers, skeletons, foods, and candles, as well as personal items, are included within the crates to honor their loved ones.

Free public tours of the exhibition are offered in both English and Spanish. The English tours are available Tuesday through Sunday in November at 1 p.m.; tours in Spanish are on select Sundays (October 28, and November 6 through December 4) at 1 p.m., and Thursdays (November 8, 15, and 29) at 6:30 p.m.

Day of the Dead is celebrated each year on November 1 and 2. Likely based on an ancient Aztec festival, Day of the Dead is a celebration in which family and friends gather to honor those who have died. On this holiday, the departed souls are believed to return to visit their living relatives. The celebrants create ofrendas, or offerings, for the deceased, which contain favorite foods, mementos, pictures, and flowers. They can also recount amusing family stories or anecdotes. These offerings are meant to welcome the souls, so they can communicate with their living relatives and friends. Images of skulls and skeletons are seen during the festival and in the ofrendas, demonstrating that death is a natural part of the lifecycle. Day of the Dead is celebrated by people of Mexican heritage living in Mexico and throughout the world. In the United States, many cities with Mexican American populations celebrate this tradition in the weeks surrounding November 1 and 2.

Generous support is provided by Wells Fargo.

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ABOUT THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA), home to one of the finest encyclopedic art collections in the country, houses more than 80,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history. Highlights of the permanent collection include European masterworks by Rembrandt, Poussin, and van Gogh; modern and contemporary painting and sculpture by Picasso, Matisse, Mondrian, Stella, and Close; as well as internationally significant collections of prints and drawings, decorative arts, Modernist design, photographs, textiles, and Asian, African, and Native American art. General admission is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee. Museum hours: Sunday, 11 A.M.–5 P.M.; Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, 10 A.M.–5 P.M.; Thursday, 10 A.M.–9 P.M.; Monday closed. For more information, call (612) 870-3000 or visit www.artsmia.org.