



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **New Multimedia Days of the Dead Exhibition Captures Mexico's Living Culture**

**Toronto, ON, Tuesday, August 26, 2008** – Opening October 3, the Gardiner Museum's special exhibition Harvest of Memories: Mexican Days of the Dead will explore the timeless story of life and death, planting and harvesting. This story will be told through the visual splendor, crafts, and artistry associated with Mexico's Days of the Dead.

Running until January 18, 2009, the exhibition will feature work by Mexico's best known popular artists, including colourful papier-mâché skeletons by the Linares family, reproductions of prints by Guadalupe Posada and a clay tree of life by Tiburcio Soteno. The exhibition will be animated by several of the artists working at their craft (weaving, sculpting, toy making and glazing) in a studio space inside the exhibition. Visitors will have the unique experience of interacting with these artists.

The exhibition will also feature a photo essay by Toronto's Vincenzo Pietropaolo that documents the annual journey of the Mexican farm workers who work in Ontario and travel home to their families for Days of the Dead. The story of these workers will also be told through a community art project of handmade bowls and comments by the field workers who made them.

A program series has been developed to complement this exhibition (detailed below). Highlights include a Days of the Dead community festival from October 31 to November 2, and a free symposium on November 8 that examines the history and relevance of the Days of the Dead festival, the Mexican view of the cycle of life, and the plight of Mexican migrant workers in Ontario.

To attend the exhibition media preview on October 2 at 10am please R.S.V.P. to [eteodorini@gardinermuseum.com](mailto:eteodorini@gardinermuseum.com) or 416.408.5076.



Artist Tiburcio Soteno  
of Metepec, State of  
Mexico.

Photo by Vincenzo Pietropaolo



Artist Jose Garcia Antonio of San Antonino  
Castillo Velasco, Ocotlan, Oaxaca.

Photo by Vincenzo Pietropaolo



Papier-mâché by  
David Linares  
of Mexico City.

Photo by Alan Joson

## **ABOUT THE CURATOR**

Curator Diane Wolfe is the Director of Education and Programs at the Gardiner Museum. A history and archaeology graduate, as well as a ceramic artist, Diane Wolfe worked as an archaeologist in New Mexico and lived in South America before bringing her talents to the Gardiner. Wolfe has curated innovative exhibitions and websites involving clay and ceramic mediums, and has received awards for her work. Cultural specialist and author Chloë Sayer has worked alongside Wolfe planning and translating for the exhibition. UK based Sayer will be onsite at the Museum in October and November taking part in the exhibition special programming.

## **ABOUT DAY OF THE DEAD**

Day of the Dead is the signal fiesta celebrated in Mexico today in honor of ancestors, families and the cycle of life. Families build altars and decorate the gravesites of loved ones who have

died in dedication to their lives and to welcome their spirits back to the world of the living. This celebration has been an integral part of Mexican life since ancient times.

### **ABOUT GARDINER MUSEUM**

The Gardiner Museum offers an intimate look at one of the world's oldest and most universal forms of art and material culture—ceramics. The collection spans continents and time, giving a glimpse into the development of ceramic process, decoration and form. Year-round the Museum mounts special exhibitions, events, lectures and clay classes to complement its permanent collection. The Museum also features a destination restaurant with Jamie Kennedy as its executive chef, and the Gardiner Shop, which specializes in artist-designed, artist-made merchandise.

### **CONTACT:**

Elizabeth Teodorini  
Manager, Marketing and Communications  
Gardiner Museum  
111 Queen's Park, Toronto M5S 2C7  
Tel: 416.408.5076  
eteodorini@gardinermuseum.com  
[www.gardinermuseum.com](http://www.gardinermuseum.com)

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## MEXICAN DAY OF THE DEAD PROGRAM SERIES

### LECTURES & SPECIAL PROGRAMS

#### **ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION: Mi Vida, Mi Arte**

Mexico's best known popular artists sit down with cultural specialist and Days of the Dead author Chloë Sayer.

Tickets \$8

Oct 3, 6 pm	Altar builder Eugenio Estaquio
Oct 15, 6 pm	Wire sculpture artist Saulo Moreno
Oct 19, 4 pm	Clay artist Tiburcio Soteno
Nov 2, 4 pm	Textile artists Crispina and Margarita Navarro Gomez
Nov 19, 6 pm	Papier-mâché artists Felipe and Leonardo Linares

#### **COMMUNITY EXHIBIT: Days of the Dead Altars**

Oct 31–Nov 5 (extended hours: Nov 1 open until 2 am/ Nov 2 open until 11 pm)

Free with admission

See altars made by sisters Crispina and Margarita Navarro Gomez from Oxaca and members of the local Latin community. In Mexico altars are built inside homes to honour the life of ancestors and loved ones. They are decorated with mementos, food and art and are a gathering place during the fiesta when people share memories.

#### **SYMPOSIUM: Mexican Days of the Dead**

Sat Nov 8 9:30 am–5:30 pm

Free

Location: UofT's Munk Centre for International Studies (1 Devonshire Place)

Learn more about the history and relevance of Days of the Dead, the Mexican view of the cycle of life, and harvest issues including the future of Ontario's contract farm labour policy and sustainable agriculture in Canada and Mexico. *Organized in partnership with the Latin American Studies programme at UofT's Munk Centre and the Consulate General of Mexico in Toronto.* Speakers: David Carrasco, Harvard University, author of *City of Sacrifice*; Claudio Lomnitz, Columbia University, author of *Death and the Idea of Mexico*; Carlos Monsiváis, prominent author and cultural analyst; Carlomagno Pedro Martinez, exhibition artist, in conversation with cultural specialist Chloë Sayer, co-author of *The Skeleton at the Feast*, and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, director of excavations at the Aztec site of Templo Mayor.

*Organized in partnership with the Latin American Studies programme at UofT's Munk Centre and the Consulate General of Mexico in Toronto.*

#### **HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS**

Inspired by the imaginative Mexican toys on display in the exhibition. Learn to make toys and piñatas from Mexican master artist Leonardo Linares. Ages 10+, space is limited.

Toy Making: Nov 22, 2–4:30 pm \$20 or Nov 23, 2–4:30 pm \$20 (\$35 for both sessions)

Crafting Piñatas: Nov 29, 2–4:30 pm \$25

#### **FAMILY DAY: Navidad Sunday**

Sun Dec 14, 1–4 pm

Free with admission

A day of family activities including toy making and playing with clay and paper, Mexican music and refreshments in celebration of the holiday season and in honour of Mexico's Virgin of Guadalupe festival.

## FILM SERIES

Free with admission

Oct 17, 6pm      FILM Of Gods and Men Part I, II and III (BBC, 1979)  
Nov 21, 6 pm     Of Gods and Men Part IV, V and VI (BBC, 1979)  
Dec 19, 6 pm     Lucha Libre: Tales of Wrestling, Politics and Religion  
Jan 16, 6 pm      Children of the Sun

## FOOD SERIES

### A TASTE OF MEXICO

Tickets \$65, location: Gilead Café (4 Gilead Place)

Village-based Mexican cooks team-up with Jamie Kennedy's new Gilead Café to create a scrumptious dinner of specialties from their locally famous kitchens.

Oct 24, 6 pm      Central Mexican cuisine by Amalia Soteno from Metepec  
Nov 5, 6 pm      Oxacan cuisine by Crispina and Margarita Navarro Gomez from Santo Tomás  
Jalieza

### TALK: Secrets of Mexican Cuisine

Fri Dec 19 6:30 pm

\$10 members / \$12 public

Learn the secrets of cooking great Mexican food from cook and author Maria Elena Cuervo-Lorens of Mexican Culinary Treasures, Recipes from Maria Elena's Kitchen.