

BRECK CREATE

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Breck Create Presents the 2023 Día de Muertos Festival

Friday, October 13 – Saturday, October 14

Arts District Campus in downtown Breckenridge

More Information at breckcreate.org

Breckenridge, CO — Breck Create, the renowned arts and cultural organization in Breckenridge, Colo., is thrilled to announce the 9th annual Día de Muertos (DDM) festival on Friday, October 13th through Saturday, October 14th. The two-day commemoration of Day of the Dead, a lively celebration in Mexican culture that honors loved ones who have passed, features free hands-on workshops, art installations, performances and a cultural marketplace on the Arts District Campus in downtown Breckenridge.

The festival, designed to educate the public and emphasize common bonds through inclusivity, is produced in partnership with the Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) Department of Chicana/o Studies, Mexican Cultural Center (MCC), Chicano Humanities Arts Council (CHAC), Colorado Folk Arts Council (CFAC) and Colorado Mountain Dreamers.

“Our festival exists as a testament to the strength and vision of our producing partners,” says Tamara Nuzzaci Park, president and CEO of Breck Create. “Breck Create treasures the opportunity to work directly with them and the Latine community of Summit County in order to create a festival full of honor, symbolism and tradition.”

The respect toward Breck Create is mutual from the partners, says Dr. Renee Fajardo, noting that the celebration expands each year and applauds the organization’s inclusion of Spanish

translations on its website and exhibition plaques. Dr. Fajardo holds many titles including director of the Journey Through Our Heritage program within the MSU Denver Chicano/a Studies Department, chairperson of CHAC and board member of CFAC.

In addition to the festival and in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, Breck Create and the MCC will provide presentations and workshops that enable Summit County 6th, 7th and 8th graders to create art informed by the history of DDM.

“This is a great example of how an arts organization can build a bridge between communities who are culturally different through the respectful use of education and art,” Dr. Fajardo says. “Breckenridge is more than a ski town—we are all part of a thriving, vibrant experience where our connections to each other are multifaceted.”

This year, the festival revives the candlelight vigil, which will be held on Friday, October 13th. Precautions during the pandemic temporarily halted the vigil, and its return honors Raul Chavez, the late capitán of the Aztec dance collective Grupo Huitzilopotchli; the collective returns to perform and teach workshops at the DDM festival. Chavez was instrumental in bringing the traditions of Aztec dance and DDM to Colorado; he was present at the 2014 inaugural DDM celebration in Breckenridge and a mainstay at several DDM celebrations in Colorado until his death last year.

“The candlelight vigil was important to Raul for several reasons,” Dr. Fajardo says. “Not only does it honor those who have departed, it also lights the way for the souls believed to have returned at this time of year. It creates a sense of bonding among the living participants.”

Keep reading for information regarding the schedule of events. The schedule is also available at breckcreate.org.

Ongoing Art Exhibition

Stephanie Mercado: *The Seeds of Dreams*

Oct 6 – Nov 26 • Old Masonic Hall

The *Seeds of Dreams* is a tribute to the vibrant Latine communities of Summit County, Colorado. The exhibition shines a spotlight on the unwavering dedication and resilience of Latine workers quietly working behind the scenes to establish roots and harvest dreams. The time of year brings additional significance to *The Seeds of Dreams*, as DDM (typically observed November 1-2) celebrates not only the lives and legacies of those who have departed but also honors the presence of those who remain by our side. This tradition serves as a moment of

profound reflection, particularly for many Latine individuals who carry the weight of longing for the families they left behind, especially when circumstances impede their ability to travel freely between the United States and their homelands.

AirStage Art Installation

Evangelina Estes: *Mi Casa Es Su Casa*

Oct 13 – 14 • Ridge Street Arts Square

This immersive installation by local artist Evangelina Estes transforms Breck Create's retrofitted 1975 Airstream trailer into a traditional Mexican family kitchen. It includes depictions of dishes, games and traditions from different Latine cultures. *Mi Casa Es Su Casa* focuses on communication between children and parents and the stories that are passed down from generation to generation. In addition to the Arts District Campus, the AirStage will visit Summit County elementary schools in October, during Hispanic Heritage Month.

Opening Night, Friday, October 13th at Old Masonic Hall

5:30 p.m. • Doors open with live music ft. Javier De Los Santos

6:00 p.m. • Artist Talks with Stephanie Mercado + Evangelina Estes

7:00 p.m. • Grupo Huitzilopochli Aztec Dancers followed by Candlelight Vigil

The candlelight vigil ritual beckons departed spirits to return to Earth for a brief visit. It is a time of remembrance, sacred tradition, love and bringing communities together. Dr. Fajardo will speak on the ceremonial importance of DDM. Attendees will light candles to carry as Aztec dance collective Grupo Huitzilopochtli leads a procession through the Arts District Campus. Participants are welcome to bring pictures or tokens of loved ones with them for the procession. What follows is the traditional *danza* of Quetzalcóatl, god of air and wisdom, who appears most often as a plumed serpent. Quetzalcóatl symbolized death and resurrection to the Mayans and Aztecs, who linked him to dawn, the morning star and Venus. The ancient god was said to have resurrected humankind from the underworld with his own blood.

Saturday, October 14 on the Arts District Campus

Mexican Cultural Center Market

10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. • Ridge Street Arts Square

The MCC Market features traditional DDM gifts and ornaments as well as other traditional Mexican goods, including Pan de Muerto.

Workshop: Sugar Skulls

10:00 a.m. • 11:30 a.m. • 1:00 p.m. • Old Masonic Hall Upstairs Gallery + Ridge Street Arts Square

This workshop introduces the customs of DDM and the symbolism of the sugar skull. Participants will be taken through the sugar skull making process step by step, then create their very own skull art. All materials provided.

Workshop: Katrina Masks + Loteria Cards

10:00 a.m. • 11:30 a.m. • 1:00 p.m. • Randall Art Barn

Loteria is a game of chance that uses images on a deck of cards. Mask making is an ancient form of celebration and reverence in Mexico. Choose to make a Loteria Card or a Katrina mask inspired by printmaker Jose Posada's iconic 1913 character. All materials provided.

Workshop: Pan De Muerto

11:00 a.m. • 3:00 p.m. • Old Masonic Hall

In this workshop, participants make and learn the history behind Pan de Muerto, a sweet bread decorated with bone-shaped pieces.

Performance: Grupo Huitzilopochtli Dancers

12:30 p.m. Teaser • Blue River Plaza

2:00 p.m. Full Performance • Ridge Street Arts Square

Grupo Huitzilopochtli's Battle Dance is based on Aztec mythology and portrays two Aztec warriors. When one of the warriors perishes, his soul is greeted by another who leads him to his next life in the Aztec underworld of Mictlan, where the dead dwell. The sequence ends when the souls who reside in Mictlan perform the DDM dance.

Workshop: Grupo Huitzilopochtli Dance

3:00 p.m. • Ridge Street Arts Square

Learn the history and significance of the *danza* to DDM.

Breck Create would also like to thank the 2023 DDM sponsors, without whom this festival would not be possible: BGV Gives, US Bank Foundation, Pinnacle Gives, The Summit Foundation and Summit County Government.

About Breck Create Breck Create aims to build a dynamic, year-round creative community in Breckenridge. The organization's mission is to deliver inspiring creative experiences that enrich the quality of life for all residents and quality of place for visitors. Breck Create supports and serves artists, creatives, cultural enthusiasts, visitors and the community at large by providing a year-round schedule of performances, exhibitions, screenings, art classes and workshops as well as other engagement opportunities.

The organization maintains, manages and operates the Town of Breckenridge's exceptional cultural facilities and also hosts arts-based events in public gathering spaces throughout Breckenridge. Breck Create's core attractions are the Riverwalk Center—a 750-seat, heated, indoor performance venue—and a lively Arts District campus of renovated historic structures that now function as studio spaces for art classes and workshops. These structures also include affordable rentals for local artists and visiting artists-in-residence participants. The Breckenridge Arts District is a certified district within the [Colorado Creative Industries](#) Creative District program.

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