



VIVA LA VIDA

TRADITIONS  
& ACTIVITIES

Celebrating

EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

the Day of the Dead

holland area **arts** council

# Introducing EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

## The Day of the Dead



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The Day of the Dead is a Mexican and Mexican American holiday whose intricate history is intertwined with the history of Mexico and Mexican culture. The Day of the Dead is practiced on November 1st and 2nd, during which the graves of loved ones are decorated, special foods like mole and pan de muerto are made, ofrendas are built to honor the dead, and special festivals and processions are held.



Efrain Sandoval created a performance art presentation for the Holland Area's 2010 Viva la Vida! Festival.

The Day of the Dead has its origins in ancient Mesoamerican cultures that blended with those of the Spanish, who arrived in Mexico in the early 1500s. During the early twentieth century, Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada popularized the skeleton images associated with the holiday by his humorous drawings of calaveras, and thereby established a uniquely Mexican style of art. Later, the Chicano Movement embraced the Day of the Dead as a way to recover pre-Hispanic and Mexican identities. Today, the Day of the Dead continues to be celebrated by Mexicans, Mexican Americans as well as other Latino cultures across Central and North America.

### A Note on Terminology:

Mexicans and Mexican Americans use many different words to describe themselves. Each word has particular meanings for identity, culture, and politics. "Mexican" may refer to those who are citizens of Mexico, but it is also a word that U.S. born people of Mexican descent claim. "Mexican American" refers to people of Mexican descent who are citizens of the United States.

"Hispanic" and "Latino/Latina" are more general terms that refer to people in the United States who have ancestry in a Spanish speaking country. These terms are ethnic descriptions, not a "race" of people per se, and can be controversial because some view them as government imposed labels. "Chicano/Chicana" is a term for Mexican Americans that became popular during the Mexican American civil rights movement (aka the Chicano/a movement or "El movimiento"). Also, some Mexicans and Mexican Americans prefer to be described by the specific region that they are from. It is always best to ask a person how he or she wants to be identified, and to be aware of this complexity.



Photo at left is part of a photographic collection by Sharon Gutowski. Shown at the Holland Area Arts Council during the 2010 Viva La Vida Festival

There are many peoples and cultures throughout the world, and each one has its own ways of coping with death and dying. A theme common to many cultures across time is ritualistically honoring the dead. Rituals however, as a living part of culture, also change and adapt. Almost everybody has been a part of some kind of ritual. Your family might celebrate your birthday, or maybe you have been to a wedding or know someone who has graduated from high school or college. These are rituals that mark important parts of life: the day you were born, getting married, or completing your studies. Rituals exist for important moments both big and small, and we can create new ones.



Bringing Day of the Dead to Holland, Michigan

# EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

## A Local Celebration



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The cultural diversity of the west Michigan area is very special and certainly contributes to the quality of life for the members of our community.

Culture is more complex and dynamic than we are often taught to recognize in our daily lives and experiences. It is shared within and beyond communities of people regardless of the national boundaries that are drawn between them.

This is why, in 2010, Latin Americans United for Progress, the Holland Area Arts Council and the Holland Museum reached out to the artistic and cultural community to celebrate Viva la Vida!

Reinterpreting and creating Day of the Dead as a community festival in downtown Holland inspires people of many different cultures to participate and learn about

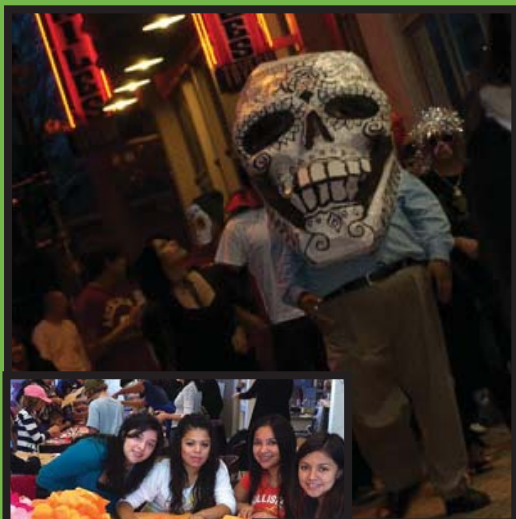


Photo credit: Jeff Raterink



### The Arts

Celebrating the Arts is central to Holland's recognition of El Dia de los Muertos. Every year the arts community joins in with expressions and interpretations of Day of the Dead through dance, music, poetry, installations, and exhibitions.

Workshops and classes are offered at the Holland Area Arts Council, the Holland Museum, the Herrick Library and other locations to encourage community members to learn about and experience the rich traditions of El Dia de los Muertos.

In this way, the crafts and traditions can be learned, reinterpreted and ultimately passed on for new generations.



Catrinatas created for 2014 exhibit by Carla and Ismael Sanchez

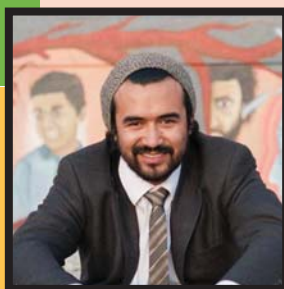


Photo at left are the winners of the "Frida Kahlo Look-alike contest" at the Holland Area Arts Council during the 2010 Viva La Vida Festival

### Frida Kahlo and Dia de los Muertos



Frida Kahlo was a Mexican artist whose paintings were influenced by the indigenous cultures of Mexico, as well as European influences. Her paintings were vibrant in color with vivid imagery and incorporated elements of realism, surrealism and symbolism.

Frida Kahlo found a kinship with the European artists who, influenced by Freud, were exploring their subconscious through dreams. Frida Kahlo was influenced by the art of both Paris and New York at that time but she remained deeply rooted in the mystical folk arts of Mexico. The folk arts of Mexico seem to acknowledge the bond and return the affection. Today, when the Day of the Dead draws near, Frida Kahlo is embraced. People wear Frida Kahlo charms and you will see Frida Kahlo - Day of the Dead figurines among the the sugar skulls, marigolds, dripping candles and dancing skeletons where ever Mexican people honor their remembered

# EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

## Calaveras



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Karla Lamb, as La Llorona, reading claveras at the Holland Community's 2011 "Viva la Vida" Festival

Calavera is Spanish for skeleton.

It can be used to describe an image of a skeleton used during Day of the Dead, or a humorous **"Conjuring" poem**. We are calling these conjuring poems, because the idea is to create such a strong sense of the person through the details in the poem, that they in a sense, come back. The magic of the words, the details of speech, physical description and humor, bring these characters to life.



Calavera Catrina  
José Guadalupe Posada (1852 - 1913)

Write the poem as if you are remembering a person after he or she has died. Use the form to poke loving fun at the person.

Some content provided by the MexicArte Museum in Austin, Texas

## The Importance of the Day of the Dead

Today, the Day of the Dead is a unique holiday whose complexities are parallel to the varied identities of the Mexicans and Mexican Americans who celebrate it. The holiday - with its roots in ancient Mesoamerican culture, its blending with Spanish-European religion, and its inspiration of a distinctively Mexican style of art - projects a healthy, humorous, and celebratory view of life and death as unique as the history from which it came.

During the early 1900s, nearly a hundred years after Mexico won its independence from Spain, the Mexican government began to encourage the celebration of the Day of the Dead as an official holiday. This was done as a way to unite a nation that was unsatisfied with its political leadership. Even though it did create a sense of Mexican identity amongst the people, towns and cities continued to celebrate the Day of the Dead with their own specific and varying customs.

## Posada and his Calaveras

José Guadalupe Posada worked as an illustrator for various newspapers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Drawing skeletal imagery from Day of the Dead, he created powerful calavera representations of people rich and poor, famous and infamous, young and old. He also used his art to make fun of many politicians. Posada's calaveras became widely popular across Mexico. He drew his inspiration from a tradition unique to Mexican culture. His humorous calaveras appealed to many people's dissatisfaction with the government while at the same time touching upon the universal idea of death. The popularization of this unique form of art in combination with Day of the Dead established the holiday as an integral part of the Mexican identity.



José Guadalupe Posada,

## Activity: Write a Calavera "Conjuring" Poem

A calavera poem is a form of satire. It is an imaginary obituary in which someone or something still living is poked fun at. They were very popular during the Mexican Revolution as a way to criticize the government. But for day of the Dead, our Calavera Conjuring Poems deal with death in a humorous manner and bring a loved one's memory to life.

Here is an example of a Calavera poem:

- a Catrina is a lady that lives next door
- a She yells and she screams and stomps on the floor
- b One day she stomped so hard that her hat fell down
- b I picked it up and looked at her with a frown
- c She was really a skeleton from her toes to her head
- c Don't be scared, one day you'll look like me, she said!



"Isabel" Paper Mache Catrina by  
Carla & Ismael Sanchez

Now it's your turn! Write your own calavera poem.



# EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

## Pan de Muerto



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This sugary, sweet bread is enjoyed by the families of the deceased during Dia de los Muertos, as well as placed on the altar. The Pan de Muerto is made into a loaf and extra dough is fashioned into decorations resembling bones. The bread is baked, glazed and decorated with colored sugar.

### Pan de Muerto Recipe

Also known as death bread or bread of the dead, pan de muerto is a soft sweet bread shaped into a round bun with bone shapes on top.

#### Ingredients

- 1/4 cup margarine
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup warm water
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 teaspoons active dry yeast
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons anise seed
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 teaspoons orange zest
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 2 tablespoons white sugar

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[www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)

### Directions

1. Heat the milk and the butter together in a medium saucepan, until the butter melts. Remove from the heat and add warm water. The mixture should be around 110 degrees F (43 degrees C).
2. In a large bowl combine 1 cup of flour, yeast salt, anise seed and 1/4 cup of the sugar. Beat in the warm milk mixture; then add the eggs and orange zest and beat until well combined. Stir 1/2 cup of flour and continue adding more flour until the dough is soft
3. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic.
4. Place the dough into a lightly greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap, let rise in warm place til doubled in size (about 1 to 2 hours). Punch the dough down, shape into large round loaf. Reserve enough dough to shape round knob and bone shapes on top. Place onto a baking sheet loosely cover with plastic wrap. Let rise in warm place for about 1 hour or until about doubled in size.
5. Bake in a preheated 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) oven for about 35 to 45 minutes. Remove from oven let cool slightly then brush with glaze.
6. To make glaze: In a small saucepan combine the 1/4 cup sugar, orange juice and orange zest. Bring to a boil over medium heat and boil for 2 minutes. Brush over top of bread while still warm. Sprinkle glazed bread with white sugar.



Pan de Muerto on display  
at the Arts Council's 2012  
Day of the Dead panel discussion



Isaias Quinametzin Leal plays ancient indigenous Mexican instruments at the Holland Area Arts Council and during the 2011 Vival La Vida Celebration

## Aztec Religious Beliefs on Life and Death

The Aztecs believed that life and death were the forces of the earth and a natural part of the cycle of regeneration. Because eating required killing the animal or plant that was to be consumed, death was taken into their bodies, carried inside them, and gave them life. The earth itself was a force of death to the Aztecs, constantly demanding to be fed by human life.

The Aztecs also believed that a person had three souls. Each one could go to an afterlife, become a divine force, or could even stay behind and give strength to its family. Bodies would die and go back to being part of the earth. A person's three souls, however, could exist in multiple planes at once. Part of a soul could go to an afterlife and part of it could stay behind to watch over loved ones. The Aztecs developed many rituals to honor the souls of the dead who stayed behind. Many of these rituals, such as leaving food for a dead relative, burning incense, and making an ofrenda/offering, are still a part of Day of the Dead today.

# EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

## Nichos & Sugar Skulls



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### Nichos

Nichos are made from mixed media and traditionally combine elements from Roman Catholicism, mestizo spirituality, and popular culture. Characteristically "nicho" objects have different names throughout Central and South America: they may be called retablo or by other local names. Also see article on Peruvian Retablos, a style that encompasses several different portable forms not discussed here.

In South America, it is common to see decorative boxes called "nichos" set upon tables and

pedestals to display religious icons. These boxes may serve as a religious altar (to mark a significant religious event) or to honor a patron saint.



Sugar Skull workshop at the Holland Area Arts Council  
Viva la Vida 2012

Nicho-making workshop at the Holland Arts Council's 2013  
Viva la Vida Festival

### Sugar Skulls

Sugar art was brought to the New World by Italian missionaries in the 17th century.

Mexico, abundant in sugar production and too poor to buy fancy imported European church decorations, learned quickly from the friars how to make sugar art for their religious festivals. Clay molded sugar figures of angels, sheep and sugar skulls go back to the Colonial Period 18th century. Sugar skulls represented a

departed soul, had the name written on the forehead and was placed on the home ofrenda or gravestone to honor the return of a particular spirit. Sugar skull art reflects the folk art style of big happy smiles, colorful icing and sparkly tin and glittery adornments. Sugar skulls are labor intensive and made in very small batches in the homes of sugar skull makers. These wonderful artisans are disappearing as fabricated and imported candy skulls take their place.

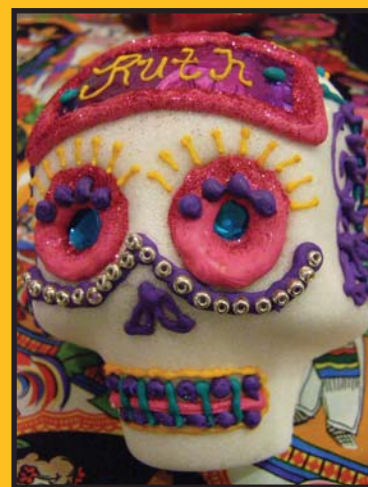


Photo Credit: Ketzie Chacon-Zylstra

## Create Sugar (cookie) Skulls

### INGREDIENTS:

#### COOKIES

- 1 Cup butter, softened
- 1 Cup granulated white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 egg
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3 cups all purpose flour

#### ICING

- 2/3 cup water
- 1/2 cup meringue powder
- 2 lbs powdered sugar
- Paste food coloring in a variety of colors



### DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350° F.

In the bowl of your mixer cream butter and sugar until smooth.

Beat in extracts and egg.

In a separate bowl combine baking powder with flour and add a little at a time to the wet ingredients. The dough will be very stiff. If it becomes too stiff for your mixer turn out the dough onto a countertop surface. Wet your hands and finish off kneading the dough by hand.

**DO NOT CHILL THE DOUGH.** Divide into workable batches, roll out onto a floured surface and cut. You want these cookies to be on the thicker side (closer to 1/4 inch rather than 1/8).

Bake at 350 for 6-8 minutes. Let cool on the cookie sheet until firm enough to transfer to a cooling rack.

**ICING:** Add all of the ingredients into a mixing bowl and mix on high for a minute or two, then scrape the sides of the bowl down to make sure everything is mixed in. Beat on high for another 7 to 8 minutes. Once the icing is mixed, pour it into a container and put the lid on to keep it moist. Because it has no fat in it, Royal Icing will dry out fast.



# EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

## Cempazuchitl



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### Paper Marigolds



Here is a simple to tutorial on how to make paper flowers, this is the same thing you may have learned in kindergarten. Its simple fan folding and cutting but the results are really very pretty. Marigolds come in different shades of yellow, orange, and gold so use what you like or try different colors for more variety.

Begin by cutting rectangles out of tissue paper. They should be twice as long as they are wide. Mine were roughly 3.5" x 7", but you can make them larger (as in the photo at the bottom). Stack 4 sheets together and begin fan folding, making 1/4-1/3" folds.

Gather the folds and twist a 7-8" length of wire around the center. I was able to find green floral wire at a craft store that bends very easily. If you can only locate plain wire 20 gauge is about right for this project. Once the wire is secure cut out a rounded shape on each side.

Then open up the folds on both sides of the wire. Begin pulling up each layer one at a time to create the petals. Shape them as you go along by gently twisting and turning the paper so it curls around itself. Once all the layers are separated I pull them all together from the bottom to shape the entire flower. You can also shape the wire stem or wrap it in green tissue paper if you like.

### Flowers for the Dead

It is believed that the scent of the cempazuchitl will make the returning souls feel welcomed and happy. Most of the flower types used during the celebration have a strong odor, are available during the fall, are durable and have a traditional meaning associated with death.



In some communities, the petals of the flower are used to build a path from the house's entry to the altar. Thus, the bright color of the cempasuchil and its strong aroma will guide the souls to their offering.

Known as Day of the Dead flowers, the cempasuchil are native to Mexico and Central America. The Aztecs named it zempoalxochitl which in Nahuatl means twenty flowers and used it in their funerary rituals.

Natural or paper cempasuchil are widely used in every part of Mexico on Day of the Dead. Arches, crosses and garlands made with the flowers are set on altars and tombstones.



Photo Credit: Ketzia Chacon-Zylstra

### Herbal Remedies

Since prehispanic times, *Tagetes erecta* has had medicinal purposes and it is thought to cure stomach ache, parasites, diarrhea, liver illnesses, vomiting, and toothache among other illnesses. The flowers are still used in many areas to cure these and other ailments. All of these illnesses are said to be cured when the petals of the flower are brewed as a tea or eaten, or by wearing the flowers in a pouch around the neck.

Even though the marigold is also known as the flower of the dead (flor de muertos), it is still useful to the living.

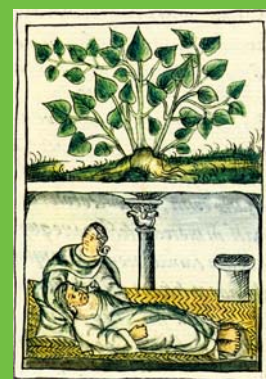


Photo at left is part of a photographic collection by Sharon Gutowski. Shown at the Holland Area Arts Council during the 2010 Viva La Vida Festival

# EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

## Contemporary Practices: Ofrendas

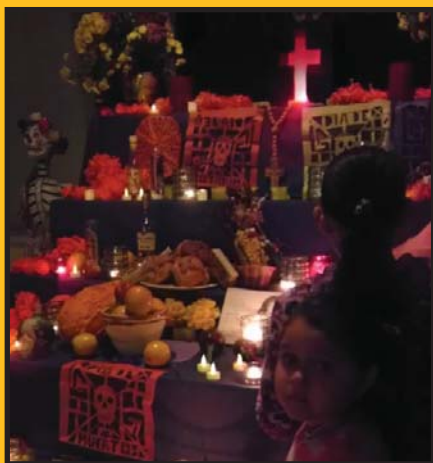


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Today Mexicans, Mexican Americans and others annually celebrate Day of the Dead. This holiday is part of the common cultural heritage of Mexicans and Mexican Americans that is not bound by the borders of nations, but moves with the human flow of people and their cultures. As a modern living tradition, Day of the Dead has many practices that vary depending on where in Mexico, the United States, and increasingly in places across the world such as Canada, it is taking place.

### Common Practices for Day of the Dead

Day of the Dead is annually celebrated on November 1st and 2nd. The first day, called "Día de los Angelitos" (Day of the little angels), is dedicated to the souls of deceased children, while November 2nd is set aside for



2013 Ofrenda Installation by Roli Mancera

the souls of adults. Before these days, families may clean their homes to prepare for the arrival of the souls of their loved ones. Many also visit cemeteries to decorate the



graves of the dead with their favorite items and flowers. Graves and ofrendas are decorated with papel picado, photographs, cherished objects, marigolds (cempasúchitl), and skeletons

made of paper or clay. Food and drink are placed on the ofrendas for the dead. It is believed the dead enjoy the tastes and smells of the food.

There are many important foods associated with Day of the Dead. In particular the main dish is mole, which is meat (usually chicken or pork) cooked with a sauce made from chilies, chocolate, peanuts, and other ingredients that vary by region.

Pumpkin candies, rice pudding, and tamales may also be offered. Bakeries produce special bread called pan de muerto in the shape of people or bones and decorated with pink sugar. Stores also sell skulls made of sugar or chocolate, adorned with names, for children and adults to eat.



Some content provided by the  
MexicArte Museum in Austin, Texas

### Make an Ofrenda

The Holland Area Arts Council is creating a Dia de los Muertos / Day Of the Dead "Ofrenda" for the Community in our gallery. We invite you to participate from October 15 through the 29, by bringing your personal contribution ( photos, symbolic or decorative objects) to create our community Ofrenda.

#### About the Ofrenda

The goal of constructing an Ofrenda, is to remember, to honor and to welcome back the soul of the deceased person. An altar may be dedicated to an individual or a group of people who have departed. Items on the altar should celebrate the spirit of the deceased in a way that encourages enjoyable memories.

Here is a list of the elements that are traditionally used in an Ofrenda and a brief description of their meaning. These are as well, some of the elements that we invite you to bring to the Holland Area Arts Council, to create our community Ofrenda:

- A copy of a PHOTO of a deceased person in your life. Size 4x6 or smaller.
- A copy of a PHOTO of someone you admire and would like to celebrate. Size 4x6 or smaller.
- Silk FLOWERS or silk flower PETALS—typically marigolds or other yellow or orange flowers. Known as Xempasuchitl, or the Flower of the Dead, these make a path to the altar for the deceased's soul. Museum will provide this item.
- CANDLES battery operated—to light the way to the altar for the deceased's soul.
- PAPEL PICADO, or cut tissue-paper banners—with images of skeletons and flowers. Museum will provide this item.
- FOODS beloved by the deceased (imitation or non perishable foods such as canned food).
- Representative OBJECTS that tell the story of the deceased, such as, personal objects, toys, trinkets, and items such as books or music that represent or were owned by the deceased.
- INCENSE or fragrant HERBS, in particular sage, sweetgrass or copal (traditional Mexican incense)—to purify the altar, represent spirit & guide the soul through scent. These elements will not be used in the Ofrenda.
- SALT. It symbolizes purification. The museum will provide this element.
- ICONS, retablos, rosaries or other religious symbols or objects as appropriate.
- Vessels containing WATER—representing the life force, and so the soul may also quench its thirst. The museum will provide this item.
- Figurines of Mexican SKELETONS or SKULLS—such as sugar skulls decorated with icing.
- PAN DE MUERTO –traditional Mexican bread baked for the occasion—Please visit our website to view instructions on how to make this bread

**Holland Area Arts Council 150 east 8th Street Holland, MI [hollandarts.org](http://hollandarts.org)**



# EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

## How to Create a Papier Mache Skull



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Create your own Day of the Dead skull to carry in the **Viva la Vida!** procession! This project uses mostly recycled materials. Creating this papier-mâché skull will take you a few days to make, so plan ahead if you want one in time for the **Viva la Vida!** Day of the Dead procession.

### You Will Need:

- Cardboard boxes (two or more)
- Scissors
- Old newspapers
- Papier-mâché (see the recipe)
- Masking tape
- Acrylic paints (white and black paints, and any other colors you might like)
- Sunlight (for faster drying)

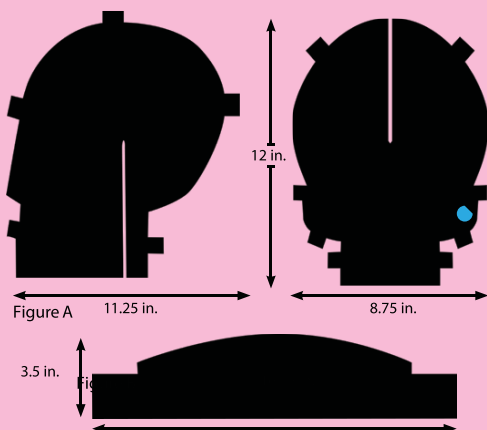
### Recipe for papier-mâché

#### Materials Needed:

- Flour
- Water

#### Instructions:

To make papier-mâché paste, simply mix together 1 part flour to 2 parts water. You will want it to be the consistency of thick glue, but you also want it to be runny and not thick like paste. Add more water or flour as necessary. Mix well by hand to remove any lumps.



Download and print these shapes at:  
[www.hollandarts.org/calavera.pdf](http://www.hollandarts.org/calavera.pdf)

### Making the Skull Shape

1. Draw and cut out a front and side view of your skull from the cardboard using the patterns (See Figure A and Figure B).
2. Cut a slit into the cutouts (See Figure A). Cut a slit going up mid way from the top into the front cutout of the skull.
3. Using the cut slits, slide one piece of cardboard into the other (See Figure C); use tape along the seams to make it sturdy.
4. Cut out the mouth of the skull and wrap it around the bottom.
5. Cut the rest of your cardboard into 1½ inch wide strips to wrap around skull.
6. Tape the strips from the front cutout to the side cutout all around the skull. The more strips you use, the more sturdy and round your skull will be (See Figure D).
7. Now cut your newspaper into 2" strips, dip it into the papier-mâché paste, and apply the strips in a criss-cross



Figure C



Figure D



Figure E



Figure F

### Making the Eyes and Cheeks

1. Roll up the newspaper into a ring shape for the eyes and nose and tape them to the skull.
2. Crunch newspaper up and put it beneath the eyes for cheeks.
3. Dip your newspaper strips in the papier-mâché paste and crisscross them over the eyes and cheeks.
4. Let it dry in the sun for another day.

### Painting Your Skull

1. Now paint your skull with white paint as a base coat and let it dry. You might want to put another layer of paint on it after the first layer dries.
2. Paint the inside of the eyes black.
3. Paint teeth on your skull.
4. Once everything dries, you can decorate your skull however you like! (See Figure F.)

# EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

## How to Create a Papel Picado



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### Papel Picado

The first colored papers reached Mexico via Spain from Asia in the 17th or 18th century. Since then Mexican artisans have found dozens of ways to use paper for decorations and objects. Papel picado is a form of folk art, which means that it is a popular traditional art form handed down from generation to generation. These delicate strings of paper can be seen hanging as banners in the streets during Day of the Dead and many other festivals.

#### Materials Needed:

- Three 8 1/2" by 11" sheets of colored tissue paper
- Thicker paper (loose-leaf or copy paper)
- Scissors
- A yard of string
- Glue stick
- Straight pins

#### Directions

1. Photocopy pattern on the righthand side of a sheet of paper (8 1/2" x 11"). (Image 1)
2. Cut page in half (5 1/2" x 8 1/2"). (Image 2)
3. Cut three sheets of tissue paper to 8 1/2" x 11".
4. Fold the three sheets of tissue paper in half lengthwise (5 1/2" x 8 1/2") and pin the pattern on top. (Image 3 and 4)
5. Carefully cut out your design. Make sure to leave a little space (about an inch) on the top of your design so that you can attach a string there. (Image 5)
6. Now remove the pins and unfold your paper carefully and lay the tissue paper out horizontally next to each other, 1" apart.
7. Lay your string horizontally across the top of the paper. (Image 6)
8. Fold the top of the paper over the string and glue it down so that it stays. (Image 7)
9. Lift up your banner by either end of the string and find a place to hang it! (Image 8)

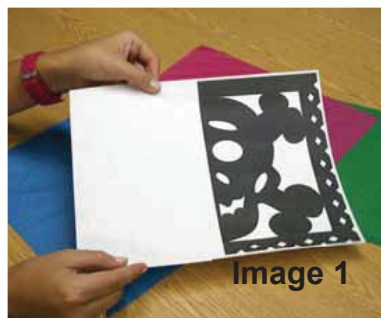


Image 1



Image 5



Image 2



Image 6



Image 3



Image 7



Image 4



Image 8





# EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

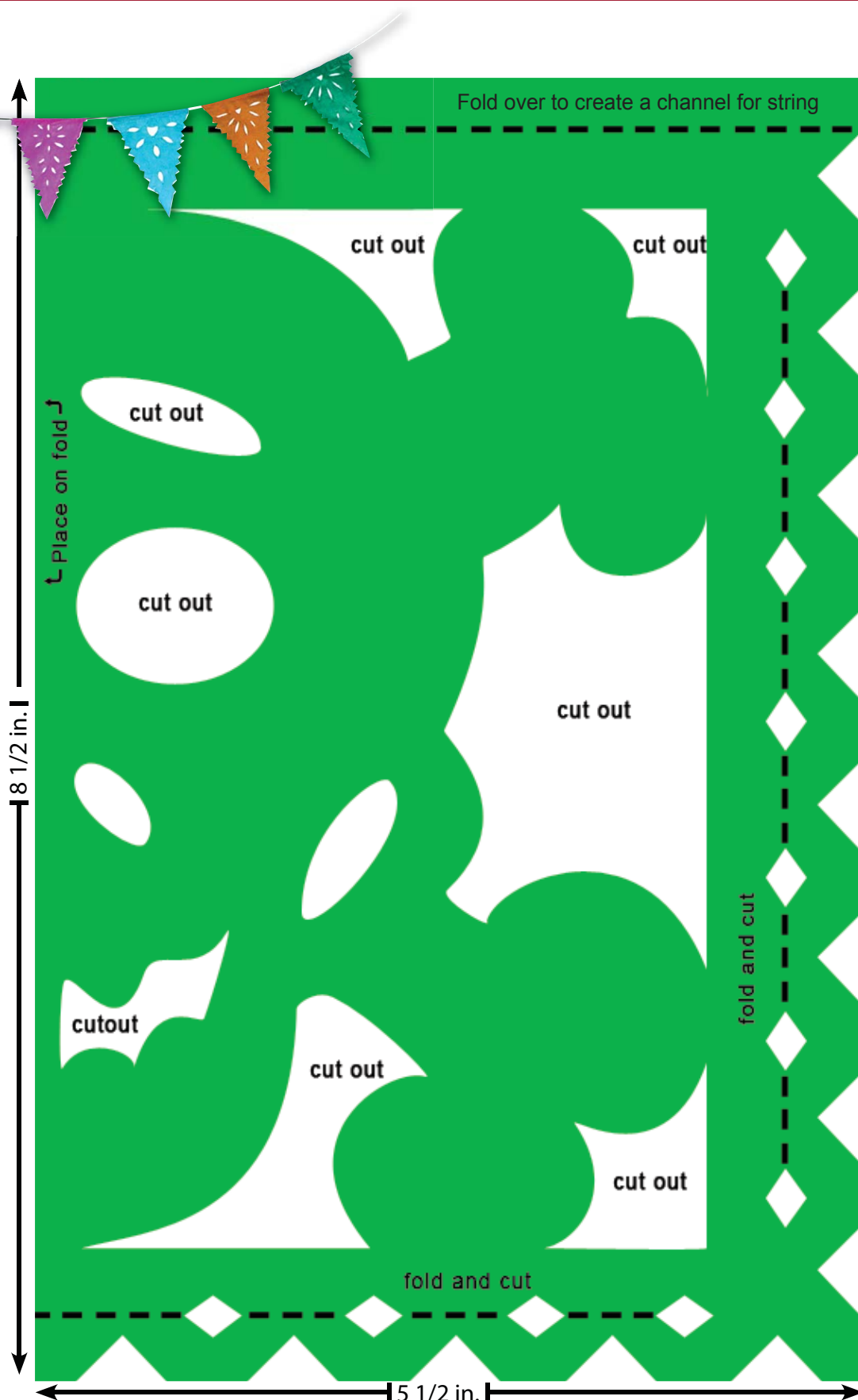
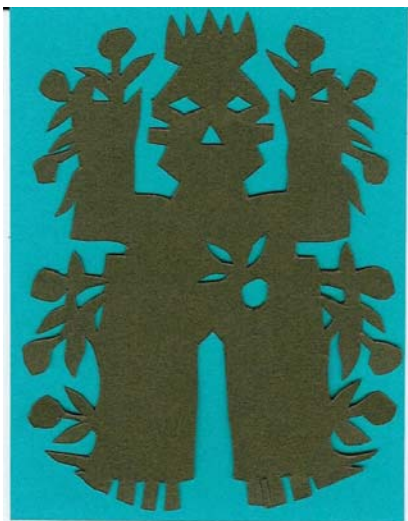
## Papel Picado pattern



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### History

When the Spaniards arrived in Mexico there was already a tradition of paper making that was called amatl in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs. The native peoples of Mexico produced a type of paper by mashing the pulp of the bark of fig and mulberry trees between rocks. Once dry the paper was then cut with knives made from obsidian. The paper cuts made from amatl were primarily of a ceremonial nature and included images of the numerous Aztec gods and goddesses.



# holland area **arts** council

150 east 8th street, holland, mi 49423 616-396-3278 hollandarts.org

Ours is a story that began 47 years ago with a handful of visionary artists who aspired to become the leading advocate for the arts in our Lakeshore community. For nearly a half century, **The Holland Area Arts Council** has inspired people of all ages to explore and experience their unique artistic expression, one that leads to discovering purpose and ultimate fulfillment in life. **The Holland Area Arts Council** is the only organization in the greater Holland area that offers hands-on art education, performance programs, art appreciation programs, and exhibitions all in one facility. It is the one organization of its kind with outreach programs for people who otherwise would not have access to these creative opportunities. And, finally, we have been our local artists' collective and most effective voice throughout the years.

Following its mission "to educate, engage and challenge the community through the Arts," the Holland Area Arts Council focuses on three main areas:

- Programming – Providing arts experiences through classes taught by highly experienced, degreed artists and educators, local, regional and international exhibitions of and outreach that brings free fine arts classes and projects to the community.
- Community – Advocating for the arts, serving as the region's re-granting coordinator for the State of Michigan, promoting and assisting in cultural celebrations, and establishing rich community partnerships
- Development – Growing the level of the community's commitment to the arts through Arts Council membership, Corporate and individual sponsorship, and active board leadership

## Board of Directors

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