

Sugar Skulls

August 18—December 13, 2017



Zarco Guerrero



Melody Smith



Marco Albarran

Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a vibrant and colorful holiday celebrated throughout Latin America, especially Mexico. Many customs of this holiday have historical ties to the ancient Aztecs as well as Catholicism brought to the region by Spanish missionaries. One decoration, the sugar skull, has become such a popular image that's its not uncommon to see them reproduced in commercial products across Mexico and the Southwest United States. Originally, these sugary treats were placed on a gravestone or altar to help guide that person's soul back to earth to celebrate the holiday with family and friends. Tempe Galleries thanks the participating artists in the exhibitions for sharing their own connections to *Día de los Muertos* and their hopes to see it continue to flourish as a much loved cultural tradition.

Zarco Guerrero, Mesa

Guerrero is best known as a mask-maker, but he is also a sculptor, muralist, performance artist, poet, musician and community activist. His travels to places such as Mexico, Brazil, Japan, China, to name a few, enabled him to study indigenous art forms and traditional mask-making practices. Guerrero reaches out to the community through performance education programs for inner city youth, correctional institutions and the behavior health care industry. He has dedicated his artistic endeavors to create positive social change. www.zarkmask.com

Melody Smith, Chandler

Before moving here 11 years ago, Smith earned her Bachelor of Arts from California State University at Northridge and worked as an art director in the design realm. Smith says that living in Los Angeles, teaching art and traveling has opened her eyes and senses to a wealth of diverse cultures and traditions. Over the years, she been especially attracted to design influences that feature vivid colors, pop art inspired graphics, urban graffiti and tattoos and especially, Mexican folk art and *Día de los Muertos* imagery.

Marco Albarran, Tempe

Albarran was born in Mexico and later grew up in Yuma. He received his Bachelor's degree in liberal arts and political science with an emphasis in Latin American Studies from Arizona State University. Some of Albarran's earliest childhood memories include stories and cultural traditions passed on to him from his grandmother, including *Día de los Muertos*. Today, as an artist, curator and community activist, Albarran is inspired by the holiday and thinks of it as both a cultural and artistic event.