

CATALOGUE
OCT 15 - NOV 8
2024

THEANNA.NSCAD.CA

XANDÚ EXHIBITION

Honouring our ancestors



Background Painting: by Pedro Hernandez Antonio

20
24

anna
Leonowens Gallery Systems

Treaty
Space
GALLERY

NSCAD
UNIVERSITY



Pedro Hernandez Antonio

"Artesanos Gubiñas". Acrylic on canvas, 2024.

Xandú

Honouring Our Ancestors Community Collaborative Project

**Pjila'si , Padiuxi , Wachiya,
Pee-piiltikweek , Ximopanōltih , Shé:kon,
Atelihai, Küey mi akun, Tansi, Siingaay' laa,
Komo mai, Bienvenidos/as, Bienvenue, Welcome**

A collaborative exhibition between Mi'kmaq and other First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Binnizá youth from Unión Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Xandú emerges from a shared dialogue about honouring our ancestors, the practices of remembrance, and the importance of community.

The exhibition showcases the results of a series of workshops where participants came together to use art and crafts as a powerful medium to reconnect with their deceased loved ones. Through the creation of collaborative artworks, Xandú reminds us that we are all part of something larger - an unbroken cycle of life, memory, and connection across generations and borders.

Each piece in the exhibition reflects the diverse yet universal ways we honour the past while nurturing our present communities, celebrating the interconnectedness of life, death, and cultural heritage.



**Joan Orozco
Santiago**

Día de Muertos, 2024.
Produced in Rancho
Gubiña, Mexico.



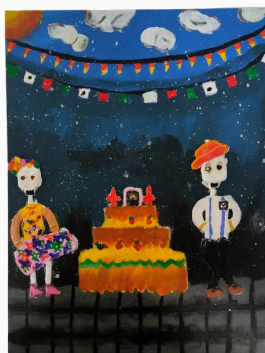
**Naomi Sánchez
López**

Mi Vida o la Muerte,
2024. Produced in
Rancho Gubiña,
Mexico.



**Grecia Paola
Jímenez Ruíz**

Mictlan, 2024.
Produced in Rancho
Gubiña, Mexico.



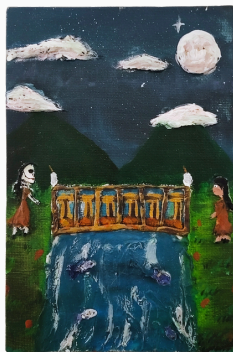
Ihker Orozco Cruz

Día de Difuntos, 2024.
Produced in Rancho
Gubiña, Mexico.



Ihker Orozco Cruz

Untitled, 2024.
Produced in Rancho
Gubiña, Mexico.



**Grecia Paola
Jiménez Ruíz**

Puente de la Vida,
2024. Produced in
Rancho Gubiña,
Mexico.



**Alfredo Saúl
Amador Fuentes**

Trascendiendo el
espíritu, 2024.
Produced in Rancho
Gubiña, Mexico.



**Joan Orozco
Santiago**

Smoke (Humo), 2024.
Produced in Rancho
Gubiña, Mexico.



**Joan Orozco
Santiago**

Día de Muertos, 2024.
Produced in Rancho
Gubiña, Mexico.



**Grecia Paola
Jiménez Ruíz**

Día de Muertos, 2024.
Produced in Rancho
Gubiña, Mexico.



**Pedro Hernández
Antonio**

Ricos o Pobres, 2024.
Produced in Rancho
Gubiña, Mexico.





Cellphilms

Cellphilm was produced by Elvia Orquídea Torres López in 2013 in the city of Chicapa de Castro, Mexico. Another, *Lucía y los Alebrijes*, was produced by José Correa Gámez and Tania Fuentes Villa at the Glasgow School of Art in 2012.



Meet our Workshop Facilitators



**Pedro Hernández
Antonio**

Visual Artist, Cultural Activist

Pedro Hernández Antonio is originally from Unión Hidalgo, Oaxaca, and is 35 years old. He has been working as an artist for 18 years, serving as a visual arts instructor through a project called "Picasso for Children."

Through this initiative, he has collaborated with various educational institutions in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec region, as well as government spaces, offering art workshops and related activities.

He considers himself an artisan at heart, as his extensive work in various disciplines such as painting, sculpture, muralism, and the restoration of old objects has made his contribution to folk art well-known in the community where he lives. Among his projects, he is particularly proud of rescuing traditional furniture, such as chests, and restoring religious images.

In 2015, driven by his love for comics and his personal collection, which he has been building since childhood, Pedro launched a reading project called "Heroes of Reading." The goal of the project was to visit various primary schools to share his passion for reading with students through this fascinating medium.

In 2018, Pedro shifted his focus to design and launched a handmade jewelry line called Bet's. This line has become increasingly popular among women in the Isthmus, as its designs are inspired by the region's gastronomy, textiles, flora, and fauna, creating pieces that highlight the grace, elegance, and beauty of women.

Pedro Hernández is an artisan, reading promoter, cultural and art educator, and an emerging creator who, deeply in love with his land, never ceases to find inspiration to create—whether on canvas, in clay, with recycled materials, or anything his hands can transform into art. Above all, he values the opportunity to convey a message, a proposal that encourages and motivates new generations to keep dreaming and creating with imagination and heart.



Tania Fuentes Villa

NSCAD Instructor

Tania Fuentes (she/her) is a Mexican Visual Communication Designer and art educator based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She holds a Bachelor's in Design from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Master's degrees in Art Education (NSCAD University) and Design and Animation (Glasgow School of Art), and a Certificate in Gallery and Studio Management from the Anna Leonowens Gallery.

With over a decade of experience, she has worked as an Art Director in Mexico City and co-founded her own design studio in 2017. Her expertise spans editorial design, photography, multimedia, and cultural heritage preservation.

She has published articles on cultural heritage preservation through design and participated in academic conferences at the Autonomous Metropolitan University, the National Institute of Anthropology and History, and The International Colour Association. Her recent research focuses on museums and immigrants in the Canadian context, exploring issues of representation, identity, belonging through community-based research methods and participatory methodologies.

Currently an instructor in NSCAD University's Design Department, Tania previously served as Digital Art Program Director at Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education (Tecnológico de Monterrey), where she also taught as a professor. Her work bridges traditional and digital design practices, supported by specialized training in illustration, composition, photography from UNAM, and extensive pedagogical development at Tecnológico de Monterrey.





Photo Series

A series of photos of artworks arranged on a wall, each capturing scenes and elements inspired by Día de Muertos.



Xandú

Honouring our ancestors

Marigolds

Marigolds, with their vibrant and fragrant flowers, are essential symbols of Día de Muertos. Often used to decorate altars and ofrendas, their scent is believed to guide the spirits of loved ones back to the world of the living. With their yellow and orange colors, they represent joy and the celebration of life. During the workshop, marigolds were made, which have become an important part of tributes to the deceased.



Image credit: Tania Fuentes Villa

Ofrenda Workshop

The altar set up during Xandú's final workshop reflects the deep tradition of Día de Muertos, where participants came together to create a collective ofrenda in honor of departed loved ones. Each element of the altar carries rich symbolism, representing the connection between the living and the dead. Vibrant flowers, lit candles and photographs of the deceased adorn the space, creating a welcoming and reverent atmosphere.

Participants had the opportunity to share their memories and write poetry, incorporating meaningful items into the altar, such as a loved one's favorite candy or soda, photos and even toys. These objects not only beautify the altar, but also express the love and memories that remain eternal in their hearts and thoughts.

This altar is a tangible expression of respect and gratitude and is part of the Xandú: Honoring Our Ancestors workshop series, a Land Connects Us project funded by the SSHRC, which seeks to strengthen community ties and celebrate the traditions that connect us to our ancestors.



Calavera Workshop

The workshop was taught by Tania Fuentes, who mixes ancestry and combines ancient Mesoamerican traditions with contemporary art. He explores the cyclical nature of life and death by creating skulls decorated with seeds.

The skull, or calavera, has been a powerful symbol shared among many indigenous Mexican cultures since pre-Hispanic times. Originally part of the Nahua culture (erroneously called Aztec), the tzompantli is a stand that displays skulls as offerings to the gods. This symbol evolved into the sugar skulls we know today. They represent not only the inevitability of death, but also the continuous cycle of life, death and rebirth.

In this hands-on session, participants create their own skull artworks using a variety of seeds, adding layers of meaning inspired by the rich symbolism of Día de Muertos. Seeds embody potential and new beginnings, symbolizing the continuation of life after death, and many indigenous Mexican cultures consider seeds to be sacred, linking the earthly and spiritual realms.



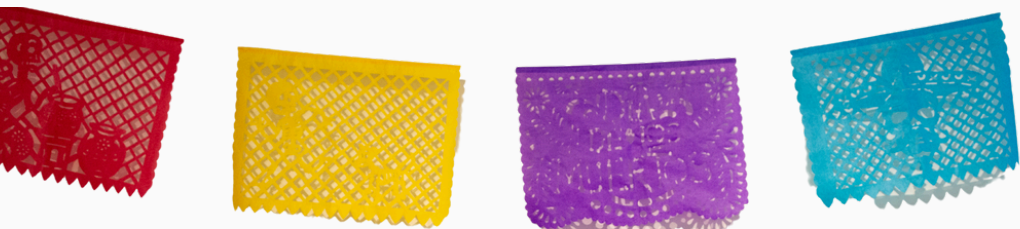




Calavera Workshop

Participants decorate skulls with seeds to commemorate Día de Muertos.





Additional Contributors

Thank you, Adrian Feng, Anissa Peralta, Emma Herman, Ivy, Sam Stephen, Judith Morris, and Mads Randall, for their support in organizing and installing the exhibition. Special thanks to Pedro Hernandez Antonio (Mexico) and Tania Fuentes Villa (Canada) for facilitating the two workshops, as well as to Natalie Laurin, Buffy Googoo, and Treaty Space Gallery for their support.

Catalog created by Anissa Peralta.



Tania Fuentes Villa
Pedro Hernandez Antonio
Sydney Wreaks
Emily Gillies
Natalie Laurin
Joshua Schwab Cartas



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