



CREATURES of a DREAM WORLD
cantigny.org/ALEBRIJES

“CREATURES OF A DREAM WORLD” COMES TO DUPAGE SUMMER 2022

Installation at Cantigny Park will feature 48 captivating “alebrijes,” some up to 14 feet tall, created by artists from Mexico City

Official public celebration of exhibit planned for June 12

March 16, 2022 — The partnership of **Cantigny Park**, the **DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau**, **Mexican Cultural Center DuPage** and the **City of West Chicago** hosts a five-month outdoor art exhibit featuring dozens of mythical animals inspired by Mexican folklore. **“Alebrijes: Creatures of a Dream World”** at Cantigny Park runs from Wednesday, June 1 – Sunday, Oct. 30, 2022. An official public celebration is planned for Sunday, June 12.

The word alebrijes (pronounced ah-leh-bree-hehs) refers to imaginary creatures that possess elements from different animals. They originated in the 1930s from the vivid dreams of Mexico City artist Pedro Linares. The artistic tradition of alebrijes gained popular exposure in the United States with “Coco,” the 2017 Disney/Pixar film.

At Cantigny, located 35 miles west of Chicago at 1S151 Winfield Rd. in Wheaton, visitors will discover whimsical alebrije sculptures of assorted sizes throughout the gardens and grounds. A few of the creatures may turn up in surprising places.

“‘Creatures of a Dream World’ will be a park-wide celebration of Mexican culture, and a must-see for families throughout the region,” said Timothy P. Knight, President and CEO of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation and Cantigny Park.

The Chicago-based McCormick Foundation, Cantigny’s parent organization, awarded a grant to the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage to help make the exhibit possible, along with sponsorship funding from the National Museum of Mexican Art in Pilsen. The DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau is working with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Illinois Office of Tourism) to secure additional resources and will commit marketing dollars to promote the event.

Six established artists from Mexico City – Perla Miriam Salgado Zamorano, Master Craftsman; Alejandro Camacho Barrera; Alberto Moreno Fernández; Roberto Carlos Martínez; Edgar Israel Camargo Reyes and Arturo Zárate Ortiz – were recruited by the Mexican Cultural Center and have signed on to create the alebrijes destined for Cantigny. The artisans belong to a collective that participates in the internationally known “La Noche de los Alebrijes,” a parade and festival in Mexico City held this time each year in celebration of “Día de los Muertos” (Day of the Dead).

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30 smaller creatures (about 5 feet long) will be crafted in Mexico and shipped to DuPage. However, 18 larger ones—up to 14 feet tall and 8 feet wide—are to be constructed and painted in local studios. The artists will be working in DuPage and staying at DuPage hotels from mid-April through early July.

The partners believe “Creatures of a Dream World” can deliver a boost to the local hospitality industry. Area hotels and restaurants took a hard hit from the pandemic and are still recovering.

“What a wonderful opportunity this is to celebrate DuPage County’s cultural diversity through art,” said Beth Marchetti, Executive Director of the DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau. “Like the Frida Kahlo exhibit in 2021, the alebrijes will appeal to residents, tourists and businesses. We can build on this in many positive ways.”

“As one of DuPage County’s more diverse communities, the City of West Chicago fully supports our region’s different cultures and is proud to be a sponsor of this event,” said Mayor Ruben Pineda, City of West Chicago. “This exhibit highlighting a special Mexican art form will be a memorable experience for people of all ages.”

Before and during the exhibit, public and educational programming throughout DuPage will be extensive, from studio demonstrations and talks by the artists to lectures about Mexican heritage and culture. In addition, Cantigny itself anticipates numerous special events, such as themed garden tours and dinners, concerts by Mexican musicians, and artistic workshops for children.

“We are excited to share this work with the community,” said Fernando Ramirez, President and Founder of Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, based in the City of West Chicago. “It’s gratifying to see our collaboration and partnership with Mexican artists lead to a major installation like this. People are going to love it, and they’re going to learn some fascinating things about Mexico’s cultural traditions.”

“We want this to be the area’s most accessible and memorable outdoor exhibit of the year,” said Matt LaFond, Executive Director of Cantigny Park. “I hope it brings a lot of first-time visitors to the park, especially families.”

Admission

“Alebrijes: Creatures of a Dream World” comes to Cantigny Park, 1S151 Winfield Rd., Wheaton, Ill., June 1-Oct. 30, 2022. Admission is included with Cantigny’s regular parking fee, currently \$5 per car (\$10 on summer weekends). From May through October, the Park is open daily from 7 a.m. to sunset. No advance registration or tickets required. For more information, visit Cantigny.org/Alebrijes.

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About Cantigny Park

Cantigny Park part of the Chicago-based Robert R. McCormick Foundation, is the 500-acre Wheaton (Ill.) estate of Robert R. McCormick (1880-1955), long-time editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune. It is home to the McCormick House, First Division Museum, display gardens, picnic grounds, walking trails, and a Visitors Center with a gift shop, theater, and food options. Hours, directions, and upcoming events are posted online at Cantigny.org.

About the DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau

(DCVB) is the official destination marketing organization for DuPage County, Illinois' second largest County, comprised of 38 communities. The DCVB works in partnership with community business and civic leaders to maximize travel and tourism opportunities which contribute to the economic vitality of the County and its residents. For more information, visit DiscoverDuPage.com.

About the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage

The Mexican Cultural Center DuPage encourages and promotes our heritage through cultural, ethnic, and civic activities designed to educate and inspire our Mexican community and the community at large. For more information, visit MCCDuPage.org.

About the City of West Chicago

The City of West Chicago is a community on the western edge of DuPage County that borders Illinois' Tri-City area, and is best known for its historical significance as the first Illinois community established by the railroads. Located along Illinois Route 59, West Chicago boasts open green spaces and connections to trails systems such as the Illinois Prairie Path as well as unique artistic features including a community art gallery and an annual art banner exhibit held in the historic downtown area. For more information, visit WestChicago.org.

Partner Media Contacts:

Cantigny Park

Jeff Reiter, 630.260.8218, jreiter@cantigny.org

DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau

Beth Marchetti, 630.575.8070, beth@DiscoverDuPage.com

Mexican Cultural Center DuPage

Sara Phalen, 815.751.0551, mccdupage@gmail.com

City of West Chicago

Daniel Peck, 630.293.2200, ext. 139, dpeck@westchicago.org

General Press Contact:

Carol Fox & Associates

Ann Fink, 773.969.5042 annf@carolfoxassociates.com

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