



CREATURES of a DREAM WORLD
cantigny.org/ALEBRIJES

“ALEBRIJES: CREATURES OF A DREAM WORLD” SET FOR JUNE OPENING

Must-see installation at Cantigny Park will feature 48 captivating sculptures created by artists from Mexico City

May 13, 2022 — The partnership of **Cantigny Park**, the **DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau**, **Mexican Cultural Center DuPage** and the **City of West Chicago** is hosting a five-month outdoor art exhibit featuring dozens of whimsical creature sculptures inspired by Mexican folklore. “**Alebrijes: Creatures of a Dream World**” at Cantigny Park runs from June 1 – October 30, 2022. A festive public celebration is scheduled for June 12.

Says Fernando Ramirez, President and Founder of Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, “This installation is a work of love and born from the passion for art and the beautiful cultural traditions of Mexico. Created entirely by hand, and staged in the exceptional setting of Cantigny Park, visitors will truly experience the magic that is alebrijes.”

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.

Some 48 alebrijes sculptures—some taller and wider than an SUV--began arriving at Cantigny on May 11. They were created by six artists from Mexico City who participate annually in the internationally known “La Noche de los Alebrijes,” a parade and festival in Mexico City for “Día de los Muertos” (Day of the Dead). The artists are currently on site and will stay in DuPage through early July, demonstrating their skills at the park and making appearances in the community.

The artists, ages 30 to 59, were recruited by the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage to create the alebrijes at Cantigny. They spent months designing and building their alebrijes, often working with partners in their communities. The artists include: Master Craftsman **Perla Miriam Salgado Zamorano**, who describes her work as “lively, colorful and different;” **Alejandro Camacho Barrera**, also a toymaker, who characterizes his style as “magical realism;” **Alberto Moreno Fernández**, who uses imagination and nature as major inspirations for his work; **Roberto Carlos Martínez**, who enjoys muralism and draws his inspiration from people, places and dreams; **Edgar Israel Camargo Reyes**, who is ever exploring new techniques in the cartoneria trade; and **Emmanuel Arturo Zárate Ortiz**, whose work is influenced by an appreciation of geometry and architecture.

“This installation is a source of pride for the artists, their families and the people of Mexico,” says Ramirez. “They are all very excited to be here in the U.S. to share their passion, their stories, and to connect with our community through art.”

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The exhibit is being supported before and during its run, by extensive public and educational programming throughout DuPage ranging 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. For more information visit Cantigny.org/Alebrijes.

The Chicago-based **McCormick Foundation**, Cantigny's parent organization, awarded a grant to the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage to help make "Alebrijos: Creatures of a Dream World" possible. Additional support is being provided by the **National Museum of Mexican Art** and **Mexico City**. With an event of such caliber, the **DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau** and the **Illinois Office of Tourism** are supporting its rollout and promotion with the intention to reach and welcome as many people as possible over the installation's five months.

Admission

"**Alebrijes: Creatures of a Dream World**" comes to Cantigny Park, 1S151 Winfield Rd., Wheaton, Ill., June 1 – October 30, 2022. Admission is included with Cantigny's regular parking fee (\$5 per car on weekdays; \$10 weekends). The park is open daily from 7 a.m. to sunset. For more information, visit Cantigny.org/Alebrijes.

About the Four Host Partners:

The four partners are pleased to host "**Alebrijes: Creatures of a Dream World**" in fulfillment of their shared desire to enhance awareness and appreciation of DuPage County's exciting destinations and rich cultural diversity:

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 promotes our Mexican heritage, culture and traditions through celebration, education and partnerships. 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.

Host 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

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General Media Contact:

Carol Fox & Associates

Ann Fink, 773.969.5042 annf@carolfoxassociates.com

For Downloadable Images and Additional Information: <https://tinyurl.com/Crea2022>