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**SOMArts Cultural Center Presents**  
**ILLUMINATIONS: DIA DE LOS MUERTOS 2011**

*12<sup>th</sup> Annual Day of the Dead exhibit, October 8 – November 5, 2011*

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*Exhibition and programming curated by René and Rio Yañez*

**San Francisco, CA, July 28, 2011** — El Día de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead, provides a way for people to embrace the beauty of life and to honor the spirits of the dead. Intricate, traditional altars and complex art installations are on display in *Illuminations: Dia de los Muertos 2011* at SOMArts Cultural Center. Visitors are invited to attend the opening reception on Friday, October 7 from 6PM to 9PM to enjoy music, interactive performance and the unveiling of over 30 altars and installations. The exhibition is open from Saturday, October 8 through Saturday, November 5 at SOMArts Cultural Center, 934 Brannan Street, San Francisco.

The theme “*Illuminations*” was chosen by curators René and Rio Yañez to symbolize a source of light for spiritual and intellectual reflection. This year’s exhibition is dedicated to community pillar and Mission District business owner Marta Sanchez and renowned artist Pablo Picasso. Each year, more than 80 Bay Area artists from a breadth of cultural backgrounds participate, examining local issues and global disasters such as 2011’s devastating earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown in Japan. The 30+ altars and installations range from deeply personal to political and many invite contribution or interaction from the viewer.

“*Illuminations* presents the old and the new side by side,” says curator René Yañez. “Traditional folk art altars will appear alongside high-tech, experimental installations using 3-D images and projections.”

Highlights of *Illuminations* include local artists Susana Aragon, Adrian Arias, Carla Oden, and Elizabeth Addison’s multimedia installations, which utilize the theme by incorporating light and projections in unique environmental spaces. Longtime contributing artist Victor Mario Zaballa will present a traditional Mexican Day of the Dead altar. Architect Nick Gomez will create a material aesthetic and layout for the installations, inspired by the theme.



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“We continue to examine the ways technology shapes how we celebrate Day of the Dead. Once again, our Flickr group enables us to accept digital photos as offerings to those who people want to honor,” says curator Rio Yañez. The public can upload their digital contributions to [flickr.com/groups/digitalofferings/](http://flickr.com/groups/digitalofferings/). Selected images will be printed and displayed as part of the exhibit.

*Illuminations* also features collaboration with actor and visual artist Herbert Siguenza of Culture Clash fame. Siguenza has been touring the U.S. in a one-person show called “A Weekend with Pablo Picasso.” In addition to contributing an altar, Siguenza will perform and paint as Picasso during the opening reception on Friday October 7, 2011.

This year’s Day of the Dead exhibition is supported by the San Francisco Arts Commission’s Arts and Education Program, by the Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, and by The San Francisco Foundation, who have generously provided funding.

#### **EXHIBITION CALENDAR LISTING**

**What:** *Illuminations: Día de los Muertos 2011*

**Where:** SOMArts Cultural Center Bay Gallery  
934 Brannan Street (between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets)  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**When:** October 8 – November 5

**Gallery Hours:** Tuesday – Friday, 12 – 7PM, Saturday 12 – 5PM

**Opening Reception:** Friday October 7, 6pm – 9pm; \$5 – \$10 sliding scale, [dayofthedead.eventbrite.com](http://dayofthedead.eventbrite.com)

**Closing Reception:** Saturday, November 5, 6pm – 9pm; \$5 – \$10 sliding scale, [muertos.eventbrite.com](http://muertos.eventbrite.com)

#### **ABOUT THE CURATORS**

René Yañez is an artist and a visual and performing arts curator and producer. A founder and former Artistic Director of Galería de la Raza, Yañez was one of the first curators to introduce the contemporary concept of Mexico’s Day of the Dead to the United States. Since the early 1970s, Yañez has been instrumental in establishing the Day of the Dead as an important cultural celebration and teaching others about those outside of the culture through public programming around the annual Day of the Dead exhibitions he curates.

Rio Yañez, son of René Yañez, was born and raised in San Francisco’s Mission District. He is a curator, photographer, and



**SOMArts**  
cultural center

graphic artist. As a curator he frequently collaborates with his father, and the pair have been developing exhibits together since 2005. Yañez is also a founding member of The Great Tortilla Conspiracy, a tortilla art collective.

### **ABOUT SOMARTS CULTURAL CENTER**

*Insurrection, Connection and Community through the Arts*

SOMArts (South of Market Arts, Resources, Technology, and Services) was founded in 1979 and operates the South of Market Cultural Center, one of four city-owned cultural facilities in San Francisco. SOMArts supports exhibitions, performances, classes and other collaborations that serve its mission: to promote and nurture art on the community level and foster an appreciation of and respect for all cultures.

For more information about upcoming events, space rentals and technical services, visit [somarts.org](http://somarts.org) or call 415-863-1414.

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