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Day of the Dead Altar Exhibit Honors Passed Loved Ones **FWMoA Commissions regional artist to create commemorative artwork**

October 1, 2012 (Fort Wayne, IN) -- The Fort Wayne Museum of Art is proud to present an exhibition celebrating traditional Mexican holiday **Día de los Muertos**, or **Day of the Dead**, with altars honoring deceased loved ones created by members of the community. Even if you're not familiar with the traditions of Día de los Muertos, you probably recognize its images—brightly decorated sugar skulls, dancing skeletons still wearing the bright clothes of their less ghostly pasts, and marigold-like flowers, called *cempasúchil*.

On display beginning **October 20 through November 4**, this home-grown exhibit will feature traditional Mexican altars with sugar skulls, colorful tissue paper cutouts, photos of deceased relatives and their personal effects to honor their lives. The Day of the Dead, an ancient religious celebration that originally honored children and the dead has evolved to feature a blend of Meso-American and Christian elements. The celebration is considered a festive time when family members remember and honor their dead and the continuity of life. The Museum is working with local artists and community groups to create both small and large altars for the exhibit, honoring the memories of our ancestors and other loved ones.

This year, FWMoA adopted its own tradition by commissioning fine artist and tattoo talent Ricco Diamante to create the first piece in FWMoA's Day of the Dead artwork collection. The artwork is a 4 x 5 foot painting based on *La Catrina Calavera*, the iconic Mexican character known for her elegance and good fortune, despite her status as a dead woman. She represents the notion that death finds us all, no matter our place in society. Diamante's painting puts a modern spin on this storied figure by showing *La Catrina* as a glamorous young woman in contemporary dress—complete with tattoos that help explain her place in Mexican culture through the use of symbol.

The FWMoA will be presenting two events related to this exhibition. **Day of the Dead Children's Day on October 20 from 11-4pm** will feature hands-on activities for youngsters to create Day of the Dead woodblock print rubbings. On **October 27 from 4-8pm is the Family Celebration**, featuring live mariachi, folkloric dancers, storytelling, Day of the Dead costumed characters, and food and drink from El Azteca. Both events are free.

About the Fort Wayne Museum of Art: Beginning with art classes in 1888 given by J. Ottis Adams and later William Forsyth, the Fort Wayne Museum of Art has evolved into a center for the visual arts community in Northeast Indiana. Regularly exhibiting regional and nationally acclaimed artists, the FWMoA also boasts an extensive permanent collection of American Art as well as prints and drawings from artists such as Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol. The Museum is committed to the collection, preservation, presentation and interpretation of American and related art to engage broad and diverse audiences throughout the community and region, and add value to their lives. The Fort Wayne Museum of Art is a funded partner of Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne.