



PRESS RELEASE
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Civil Rights Leaders Sylvia Rivera & Erica Garner
Honored with Day of the Dead Altars

MLK Holiday Weekend - January 12-14, 2018
Ashé Power House Theater
1731 Baronne St, New Orleans, LA 70113

New Orleans based Black and Latinx art alliance, Deep South by Suroeste, is presenting Day of the Dead altars to honor the legacy of civil rights leaders Sylvia Rivera and Erica Garner.

Sylvia Rivera (07.02.1951 – 02.19.2002) was an American gay liberation and transgender activist, and self-identified drag queen. She was a founding member of both the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance. Rivera co-founded the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), a group dedicated to helping homeless young drag queens and trans women of color.

Erica Garner (05.29.1990 – 12.30.2017) was an American activist who advocated for police reform, particularly in the use of force during arrests. Garner became involved in activism following the death of her father, Eric Garner, in 2014 after a New York City police officer placed him in an illegal chokehold during an arrest.

The altars are presented in conjunction with the 5th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. / César Chávez Commemorative Luncheon, held on January 12th from noon to 2:00pm at Ashé Power House Theater. The altars will be on display throughout the MLK Holiday Weekend. Contributing artists include:

Belinda Flores-Shinshillas
Rolando Palacio
Cynthia Ramirez

For viewing times and other information visit dsxso.weebly.com, ashe.org or call (504) 569-9070.

Deep South by Suroeste showcases the diverse talent and advocacy of Black and Latinx artists in New Orleans and beyond. The Rivera / Garner Day of the Dead Altars are presented with support from Ashé Cultural Arts Center, the Mexico Cultural Institute New Orleans, and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation. Organized by Bottletree. Deep South by Suroeste is an initiative of Charitable Film Network a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

About the Contributors:

BELINDA FLORES-SHINSHILLAS - Being born in a city as eclectic as Mexico City and later moving to New Orleans has greatly influenced and expressed in my Art. My work has been of a contemporary nature using the figure as the important element in the visual narrative, merging it with abstract concepts and techniques as a way to move through a space. All the elements become a metaphoric voice, capturing the human nature that is reflected while balancing between intimacy and distance.

Presently, I am developing two projects using portraiture. We're all Alike consists of a series of portraits intended to create a large-scale installation, and Decoding the Purity of an Icon is a series of acrylic/oil female portrait paintings on canvas.

I attempt to search for an intimate connection with the human soul. Let the most basic feelings emerge from the eyes of the people that surrounds me, which I know and sometimes just meet. Portraiture allows me to explore emotions, experiences, memories and expectations, the ethereal nature of the human soul in the sublime unknown.

My drawings and paintings are an extension of my identity, culture and the community I live in, using form and color as an idea, an attitude and an interpretation that questions the permanence of the world surrounding me. I seek a spiritual transformation through the use of different mediums, for a visual experience. This approach conveys a wide range of sensations and emotions that transport the observer from total excitement to an apparent serenity. For more information visit www.belindafineart.com

ROLANDO PALACIO was born in 1983 of Mexican immigrant parents. As a child his introduction to the arts begin through a summer youth program for migrant farm labor youth with the goal of attracting them to education rather than agricultural labor. In 2010, Palacio received his BFA from Michigan State University. Subsequent to that he attended the Art and Design Masters program at the University of Michigan where he received his MFA. He presently resides in the New Orleans area where he continues to photograph. For more information visit www.rolandopalacio.com.

CYNTHIA RAMIREZ is a multi-media artist who has exhibited her work in numerous local, national and international exhibitions. She received a B.F.A. in Painting and Printmaking from Virginia Commonwealth University (1986) and a M.F.A. in Painting and Printmaking from the University of New Orleans (1990). She is a Professor of Fine Art at Southern University at New Orleans and teaches visual art at NORDC. She has taught eight years in the Talented in the Visual Arts Program for the Orleans Parish Public Schools. She was Program Coordinator for the Art's Council of New Orleans' Urban Arts Training Program, a summer job program for youths creating public art in the New Orleans community. She was awarded an Adolph Gottlieb Emergency Assistance Grant and Joan Mitchell Assistance Grant 2006. She has created a Day of the Dead Altar at the Louisiana State Museum: Cabildo, the U.S Mint, The Ogden Museum of art (2012 -16) and the Jazz and Heritage Festival in New Orleans, LA in 2006-17. Her altar will be featured in the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival 2018 for the New Orleans Tri-centennial exhibition. She has served as a panelist for the Visual Artist Fellowship for the Louisiana Endowment for the arts and the National Endowment of the Arts Visual Art Grant panel for art education. She is a founding member of the Second Story Gallery Artist's Co-op at the New Orleans Healing Center. For more information contact cramirez@suno.edu.