



North Carolina Museum of Art

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MEDIA CONTACT

Karlie Marlowe | (919) 664-6750

karlie.marlowe@ncdcr.gov

North Carolina Museum of Art Unveils Downtown Durham Murals in Connection with *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism*

Additional murals installed across North Carolina in Morganton and Wilmington

Raleigh, N.C.—The Durham Convention Center just got a little more colorful. The North Carolina Museum of Art installed two murals on the convention center’s East Chapel Hill Street side in downtown Durham in celebration of special exhibition [Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism from the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection](#), opening October 26. Artists [Cecilia Lueza](#) and [Cornelio Campos](#), inspired by Kahlo and Rivera, painted the monumental murals. The project was in partnership with the [City of Durham’s Cultural and Public Art Program](#) and Spectra Venue Management.

“I am very excited that the NCMA’s exhibition is bringing all of these renowned Mexican artists to our state,” said Campos, the North Carolina artist behind the Rivera-inspired mural, which features calla lilies often seen in Rivera’s work. “It is an honor to be able to represent them through the mural, since I have a great personal connection with these artists, and to make our Mexican culture known through the medium of colorful paintings. They have greatly influenced my work by teaching me to focus proudly on demonstrating and representing my own Purepecha culture.”



(continued)

The murals were completed with help by students from the NCMA's Teen Arts Council, [El Pueblo](#), and [El Centro Hispano](#).

"We are proud to honor Durham's Hispanic heritage and creative community with these large-scale murals created by Latinx-identifying artists," said Stacey Poston, special project manager with the City of Durham. "With over 100,000 Durham visitors attending events at the Durham Convention Center yearly, these murals encourage visitors to connect, share experiences, and create conversations while visiting the core of downtown."

Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism showcases the couple's portraits, murals, politics, and personal lives. Kahlo is best known for her strikingly honest self-portraits, often depicting her dreams. Rivera worked as a large-scale muralist in Mexico and the United States, taking a larger look at history and cultural revolution. Both artists pursued their distinctive visions while forging the way for Mexican artists in the 20th century and beyond.

"These vibrant murals reflect the lasting legacies of two iconic Mexican artists, while spotlighting contemporary artists from our state and region," said Museum Director Valerie Hillings. "The Museum is committed to our local and statewide communities, and we are grateful for the support of the students and partners who engaged with this project in Durham and are taking it across North Carolina."



The finished murals, *I Am My Own Muse* by Lueza and *Juchari Xiranhua/Nuestras Raices/Our Roots* by Campos, will be unveiled Saturday, September 21, during the free CenterFest Arts Festival in downtown Durham. Visitors can drop by between 1 and 4 pm to have their portraits taken in front of the murals by local photographer [Dalvin Nichols](#), enjoy a family art-making activity creating Frida trading cards, and learn more about the exhibition.

"Durham Arts Council is delighted to include the introduction of these wonderful murals in the CenterFest Arts Festival," said Margaret DeMott, director of artist services at the Durham Arts Council.

Additional murals, in collaboration with local arts and student groups, are planned around the state. Locations include Morganton's [TOSS Studio](#) and in Wilmington through partnerships with Cape Fear Community College and [The International School at Gregory](#), with more planned.

"We are so honored to be in collaboration with the NCMA, creating inclusive public art to celebrate our biodiverse and culturally diverse region," said Kathryn Ervin of [TOSS Studio](#). "By honoring the perspectives and talents of the Hispanic community in North Carolina, the NCMA honors the rich

contributions and achievements of this group, even here, in rural Western Piedmont. Morganton today is 19.2% Hispanic, and as we seek to honor the voices of all our citizens, we must do so by harnessing the power of creativity. Our mural initiative with the NCMA will coincide with student programming to disseminate rich curricular material around conservation, ecology, and our diverse local culture through workshops and public engagement."

Additional student outreach efforts inspired by the exhibition include an artist residency with [Peter Marin](#) at middle and high schools in Raleigh, Garner, and Clinton. Marin will guide students in lessons about Mexican culture and traditions while creating a colorful *ofrenda*, or Día de los Muertos display. Marin will also teach two NCMA-sponsored college workshops on Mexican modernism at Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington and Southeast Community College in Whiteville.

Exhibition and related event tickets are on sale now. The exhibition is ticketed with [Scott Avett: INVISIBLE](#). Tickets and more information are available at ncartmuseum.org/frida.

About the Exhibition

Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism from the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection is organized by the Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). The exhibition is made possible, in part, by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources; the North Carolina Museum of Art Foundation, Inc.; and the William R. Kenan Jr. Endowment for Educational Exhibitions. Research for this exhibition was made possible by Ann and Jim Goodnight/The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fund for Curatorial and Conservation Research and Travel.

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Image captions (top to bottom):

Diego Rivera-inspired mural: *Juchari Xiranhua/Nuestras Raices/Our Roots* by Cornelio Campos. Photo by Craig Carter of Discover Durham.

Frida Kahlo-inspired mural: *I Am My Own Muse* by Cecilia Lueza, featuring Lueza and fellow artist Cornelio Campos.

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About the North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts. The North Carolina Museum of Art is led by Director Valerie Hillings, PhD. Located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh, the NCMA is the art museum of the State of North Carolina and an agency of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, serving under the leadership of Governor Roy Cooper and the direction of Secretary Susi Hamilton, DNCR.