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**Houston Arts Alliance’s Folklife + Traditional Arts
Presents**

Winter Celebrations

**A trio of installations featuring Houston traditions of celebrating
the feast day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Lunar New Year and the African-American trail riders**

HOUSTON, TX – Houston is a town where summer punishes and winter forgives. As a result, the winter months in Houston provide an extra opportunity to celebrate the season in special ways that express our diversity, our internationalism and our local heritage.

In response to this phenomena, Houston Arts Alliance’s Folklife + Traditional Arts program presents *Winter Celebrations*, a trio of installations, along with live performances and interactive events centered on the feast day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Lunar New Year and the African-American trail riders who help kick off the annual Livestock Show and Rodeo.

These distinctive traditions share more than a season — they are all public, participatory, festive events involving parade-like processional activities, music and dance, and fancy garb or costume. What’s not to love!

This upcoming December, January and February, all events associated with *Winter Celebrations* will take place at Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH), 3400 Main Street, Houston’s newest, innovative art space. All events are free and open to the public. They include:

December 2 - 8, 2015

Winter Celebrations: Observing the Feast Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe

Catholics the world over venerate the Virgin of Guadalupe, but She is especially revered by Mexicans. Her feast day on December 12 is celebrated in Houston in private homes, in neighborhood parishes and in a huge downtown procession that attracts scores of religious dance groups that come to honor Her. Programs and installation will explore the artful practices of devotion associated with this holiday.

❖ **Opening reception: December 3, 6 – 8 p.m. with food, drink, music and devotional dance**

MORE

January 13-19, 2016

Winter Celebrations: Exploring Lunar New Year

The Chinese and Vietnamese Lunar New Year is based on a lunar cycle that falls between January 21 and February 20 on the Gregorian calendar. Its celebration incites spectacular preparations, performances and displays at temples, businesses and personal residences throughout the city. A weeklong evocation of the spirit of this complex cultural event will be presented.

❖ **Opening reception: January 14, 6 – 8 p.m. with food, drink, lion dancing and more.**

Monday, January 18, 2016, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Winter Celebrations Family Day

A special celebration with mariachi music, devotional dance, zydeco, lion dancing, calligraphy and paper cutting demonstrations and more.

February 10-16, 2016

Winter Celebrations: Honoring Houston's African-American Trail Riders

Every year, as winter draws to a close, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo opens with more than a dozen trail ride associations traversing the region and meeting in downtown for the opening parade. This presentation will unpack the city's rural heritage, its role in the black cowboy story and the art of the ride.

❖ **Opening reception: February 11, 6 – 8 p.m. with food, drink and a zydeco dance.**

Bank of America is the lead presenting sponsor for the entire *Winter Celebrations* series and for the free Family Day on January 18, 2016. Additional support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Houston Endowment.

For more information, visit houstonartsalliance.com/folklife/

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About Houston Arts Alliance

Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) is a nonprofit, public-private initiative that invests in Houston's arts and cultural sector, advances Houston's reputation as an arts and culture destination, and works to elevate the quality of life for all Houstonians through arts and culture. As the city's designated local arts agency, HAA provides programs and services for the arts and cultural sector and awards approximately 225 grants annually to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and individual artists. The Alliance is the custodian of the city's art collection; takes permanent and temporary art to Houston's public spaces; presents free Folklife + Traditional Arts programming; nurtures up-and-coming arts organizations through its capacity building programs; connects the business community with the arts; convenes the field as necessary, and provides the latest information and research on cultural policy, economic development and Houston's folklife.

HAA's primary partner is the City of Houston. Approximately 55% of HAA's budget comes from Hotel Occupancy Tax and 30% from the City of Houston's Percent for Art Program, which supports commissions of new civic art projects as well as conservation of existing artworks. The remaining 15% of HAA's budget comes from private fundraising (grants/contributions/other revenue) for programs and special projects. HAA is committed to raising funds for only those projects and initiatives that the Arts Alliance is uniquely positioned to provide the community.

For more information, visit houstonartsalliance.com. For events in the region, visit Artshound.com.

About HAA's Folklife + Traditional Arts Program

Houston Arts Alliance Folklife + Traditional Arts Program focuses on promoting and presenting the lively cultural traditions of the nation's fourth largest city. The program works in diverse neighborhoods and communities to explore and highlight the contemporary traditions that make Houston one of the most vibrant urban landscapes in the United States. Program goals include research, documentation and public projects that explore the wide variety of established and emerging cultural communities that come together in the greater Houston area.