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

***Winter Celebrations Part Two:
Exploring Lunar New Year***

*An installation featuring Houston traditions of celebrating
the Lunar New Year in the region's Chinese and Vietnamese communities*

HOUSTON – Houston Arts Alliance's Folklife + Traditional Arts program presents an exhibition/installation focusing on the Lunar New Year. Unpacking the spectacle of this distinctive tradition, the installation will include objects, paper cutting, costumes, banners, calligraphy, instruments, audio and video to evoke the multisensory experience that is Lunar New Year as it is celebrated here in the Houston area.

The Lunar New Year most popular in Houston is based on the Chinese calendar and is celebrated by nationalities with strong cultural ties to China. In Houston that is mostly the Chinese and Vietnamese community. It is based on a lunar cycle that falls between January 21 and February 20 on the Gregorian calendar. Its commemoration involves weeks of preparation. The entire event heralds new beginnings and expresses great relief in moving on from the travails of the old year. Crowds gather at temples and community events to enjoy performances of the lion and dragon dances, fireworks and offerings. Families gather to experience the clamor of bells, the commotion of the crowds, the whisper of prayer, the smell and smoke of incense in the air. Displays are mounted in homes, businesses and religious institutions throughout the city.

The spirit of this complex cultural event will be evoked in a weeklong presentation at Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH), 3400 Main Street Houston, TX 77002. It will be open for public viewing from January 13 – 19, 2016; Monday – Thursday, noon to 6 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, noon to 7 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. **The opening reception will be Thursday, January 14, 2015, from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. with food, drink, lion dancing and more. Come early, wear red and snatch a celebratory shoe shine or a spiffy hair trim – while they last – to welcome in the new year with a new attitude!**

All activities are free and open to the public.

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, Southwest Airlines, the Houston Endowment, Sara and Bill Morgan and the Chinese Community Center.

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.