

Artwork Installation Commissioned by New Mexico Arts to Honor Victims of Gun Violence

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Commissioned by New Mexico Arts, the state's arts agency, as a result of an appropriation from the New Mexico legislature to honor victims of gun violence, internationally renowned artist Gordon Huether will be installing a new art piece titled "Luminaria" on the plaza of the Bernalillo County District Attorney's Office on Saturday, August 28.

"New Mexico Arts is honored to have facilitated such an important and moving project," said Michelle Laflamme-Childs, executive director of New Mexico Arts, a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. "Public art can be more than just something pretty to look at - it can prompt conversations about difficult topics, it can point to history or culture important to a community, and it can be a space for remembrance and healing. Huether's 'Luminaria' is all these things."

"Luminaria" is a reference to a significant tradition in New Mexico: brown paper bags with cut out patterns, weighted down by sand, and illuminated by candles from within. The work consists of three sculptures seven feet, eight feet, and nine feet in height, accompanied by three cylindrical concrete seating components to offer space for contemplation and reflection. Each sculpture's appearance was inspired by the shape of a barrel cactus and features eight long "petals," which start at the base and curve up to connect at the top.

"It is so important that victims' lives, cut short and much too soon, are commemorated in a thoughtful and sensitive manner, with a space that expresses love and honor for anyone to come for a moment of respite or remembrance," said Huether, who is scheduled to speak at the unveiling.

The art piece selection committee consisted of art community members, government representatives, and family members of gun violence victims. The piece resonated with the selection committee as it represents many items that are left during remembrance ceremonies, or descansos, placed at the sites of those who have died.

“The District Attorney’s Office is honored to host the Memorial to Victims of Gun Violence,” said Bernalillo County District Attorney Raul Torrez. “Our prosecutors, investigators, and advocates work tirelessly to help victims and their families rebuild their lives and fight for justice. While we are steadfast in our commitment to stamping out gun violence in our community, we can never forget the lives that have been lost and families who have been affected by these crimes.”

About New Mexico Arts

[New Mexico Arts](#), a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the state arts agency. New Mexico Arts administers the state’s One Percent for Public Art program, awards grants to nonprofit organizations for arts and cultural programs in their communities across the state, and provides technical assistance and educational opportunities for organizations, artists, and arts educators throughout New Mexico.

About Bernalillo County

Bernalillo County is 1,160 square miles and is New Mexico’s most populous county with more than 676,000 residents. Bernalillo County government provides a wide range of public services to residents who live in Albuquerque, Los Ranchos and Tijeras and the 111,000 residents who live outside the village and city limits in the unincorporated areas of the county. Bernalillo County employs approximately 2,500 people and has an annual operating budget and capital investments of more than \$650 million. Elected officials include five county commissioners, assessor, clerk, probate judge, sheriff, and treasurer.

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