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PRESS RELEASE:

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30th ANNUAL DAY OF THE DEAD ALTARS & EPHEMERA

September 28 - November 3, 2013

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 5, 2 – 6 PM

Pasadena, CA – This year The Folk Tree celebrates the 30th anniversary of its annual **Day of the Dead Altars & Ephemera** exhibition, on view from September 28 - November 3, 2013. The installation features traditional altars honoring loved ones who have passed, as well as installations dealing with broader contemporary issues and concepts about death. Also on view is a large selection of work in various media by local artists and Mexican folk art commemorating this major Mexican holiday, which falls on November 1 and 2. **The public is invited to a reception on Saturday, October 5 from 2 - 6 P.M.**

Ritualized worship of the dead has been practiced in Mexico since at least 1800 B.C. The modern observance is a combination of pre-Hispanic and Catholic influences. Day of the Dead participants prepare elaborate feasts and altars as offerings. A celebration of life and its aftermath, the holiday is a time of reflection and has inspired a rich folk art tradition.

Altars on view at The Folk Tree are often highly personal and include photographs and other mementos, letters, candles and offerings of food. In the past individuals have paid homage to deceased family members, pets and other animals, famous individuals, anonymous victims of tragedy and violence, as well as created altars dealing with social and environmental concerns. In addition to this year's traditional altars, there is also a tribute to James Dean by Matt DeHaven, an installation by Ulla Anobile commemorating older Finnish beliefs regarding ancestors and spirit worship, and an altar for rescue dogs by Johanna Hansen. The Folk Tree's exhibit would not be complete without Nancy Ann Jones' community altar. This artist has created an interactive altar every year since the exhibit's inception. Visitors are invited to write messages to their deceased loved ones, tie them to sticks and place them in a bed of sand. At the close of the show, Jones burns them in a ritual fire, thereby delivering them to the departed spirits.

Related work in a variety of media is on view by over 50 area artists, and featured work from Mexico includes pieces by Mexico City paper mache artist Joel Garcia and ceramic figures from Capula, which are hand built, painted, and glazed. Among the local artists represented are Joe Alvarez (paintings/prints), Cathy Ashworth (painting/mixed media), Nelda Costner (photography), Jesus Cruz (woodcuts), Sarah Hage (paper mache), Carlos Gutierrez, Rone Prinz and Amy Sweetman (jewelry).

Mexican folk art objects created for the Day of the Dead are sold in the streets throughout Mexico in the weeks preceding the holiday. Many examples of these items are available at The Folk Tree. They are often made of clay, paper maché, tin and sugar. Those forms most commonly found are skeletons and skulls, often decorated to include a person's name.

A time of celebration and contemplation, the appeal of the Day of the Dead holiday has widely spread outside its origins in Mexico. For its 30th consecutive year, The Folk Tree is pleased to participate in the observance of this rich tradition.