

Xólotl the Aztec God at History Colorado Museum

A monumental alebrije in the United States for the first time.



DENVER - *Alebrijes* are Mexico's version of the god-like creatures that have long been part of the collective imagination of cultures around the world. In Mexico, with its rich biodiversity, folk art and craftsmanship, *alebrijes* have found a unique home and distinct look. They are represented as colorful creatures with features such as wings, horns, tails and rooster feet. There are two ways fundamentally different of creating *alebrijes*. In the state of Oaxaca, they are normally carved from the copal tree, while in Mexico City these figures are created using the *cartonería* technique which consists of papier-mâché sculptures incorporating modeled cardboard, painted in the most daring colors and designs.

The monumental *alebrije* outside of Colorado History Museum is *Xólotl, the Dog God* and it showcases the mastery of the papier-mâché technique of its creator, Óscar Becerra, and it is his take on a mythological creature from the Aztec culture. The God *Xólotl* (pronounced Sholotel) is brother of *Quetzalcóatl*, and was charged with guarding the sun as it passed through the underworld. It is said he helped *Quetzalcóatl* in the creation of humankind. *Xólotl, Dios Perro*, is the artist's expression for the Aztec culture and is also a fantastic tool to stimulate the imagination.

Óscar Becerra is one of Mexico's greatest contemporary artists and creator of *Xólotl*, the God Dog and has dedicated over 10 years to the art of *cartonería*. Born in Mexico City, his high-skilled abilities are palpable on his art pieces and expertise on the aforementioned technique, granted him the opportunity to make the monumental *alebrije* for the Biennial of the Americas, in cooperation with the Consulate General of Mexico and the Mexican Cultural Center.

Becerra-Mora has participated actively with the Museum of Popular Art in Mexico City teaching workshops on different topics such as toys, judas (papier-mâché characters made to be burned), *alebrijes*, puppets and some other handcrafts, most of them related to the papier-mâché technique, although he does not limit to it.

This 14-feet tall by 13 feet-long art piece is the first monumental *alebrije* that has ever been for exhibition in the United States and was brought to be part of the 2013 Biennial of the Americas celebration. Such craft is an exceptional sculpture, which represents a great addition to the iconography of the world.

This art piece will be in exhibition until the middle of September in History Colorado Museum, located at 1200 Broadway Av, Denver CO 80203.

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