

Downtown Santa Barbara Celebrates the Dead with Día de los Muertos ‘Calenda’

Hundreds Gather for First-Ever Day of the Dead Community Procession Down State Street

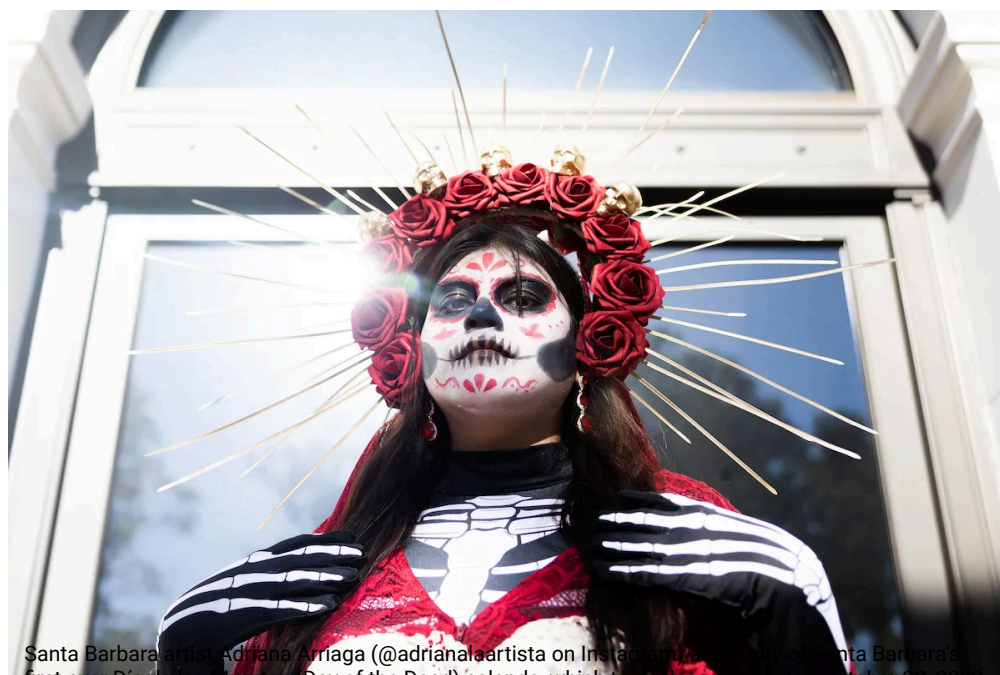
By **Ryan P. Cruz** | Photos by **Ingrid Bostrom**

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Downtown Santa Barbara was awash in color Sunday afternoon, with hundreds gathered in their brightest colors and sugar-skull face paint to honor the dead in the city’s first-ever Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) *calenda* — a Oaxacan-based tradition in which the community comes together to sing, dance, eat, and celebrate the dead with a procession through the streets.

The event was organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara in partnership with the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and featured performers from the Mixtec region of Oaxaca including music from Banda de Viento from San Jorge and “Danza de Diablos” dance group Agua Azul from Santiago Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca. The procession began on the front steps of the Museum of Art, with the bands, dancers in colorful costumes, and giant paper mâché *monos de calenda* leading the way down to the Arts Terrace at Paseo Nuevo, where the museum had a traditional altar of the dead, authentic Oaxacan cuisine, and a dance party with the group Los Hijos de San Juan Mixtepec.

The *calenda* was just one of many Día de los Muertos community events over the next few weeks, including a Día de Los Muertos Celebration at Ortega Park on Saturday, November 4, and the Día de Los Muertos Market and Craft Day in collaboration with the Mujeres Makers Market at El Presidio on Sunday, November 5.



Santa Barbara artist Adriana Arriaga (@adrianaartista on Instagram) poses for a photo during Santa Barbara’s first-ever Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) *calenda*, which took place on Sunday, October 22, 2023.
| Credit: Ingrid Bostrom