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MEChA honors 'Day of the Dead'

By Bryan Houston
Emerald Contributor

MEChA, the University's Chicano/Latino Student Union, began its celebration of Halloween on Sunday with an art exhibition by Mexican printmaker Jose Guadalupe Posada.

The exhibition of graphic art, located in EMU Room 167, features woodcuts celebrating the Mexican national holiday of Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). The art features the traditional image of skeletons in revelry. Originally, Posada's art was a criticism of the 19th-century government of Mexico.

Dia de los Muertos is a holiday indigenous to the peoples of Mexico and is a pre-Columbian tradition. These people did not fear death but looked at it as a

continuation of life. It is an annual ritual honoring death that begins Nov. 1 and includes food, drink, and offerings.

Marketplaces abound with toys, masks, and confections in the shape of skeletons, and in homes, memorial altars are made for the visiting spirits of the deceased.

Today, families and friends will honor and greet the spirits by cleaning and decorating the graves, putting out favorite foods and burning special candles and incense. A party atmosphere prevails with feasting, storytelling, and music.

According to MEChA Director Armando Morales, Dia de los Muertos is a tradition that currently is experiencing a resurgence of popularity in Mexico. Before the Mexico City

earthquake two years ago, the larger Mexican cities tried to reject the holiday and copy Halloween celebrations not indigenous to Mexico.

But now, the tradition is not only very strong there, but it also is very strong in U.S. Hispanic communities, especially in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Texas, Morales said. MEChA began celebrating the holiday in Eugene five years ago. The Incidental Fee Committee allocates the money for this event every year.

Founded in 1967 MEChA is one of three Hispanic organizations in Eugene, a city that has a Hispanic population of 5,000 to 7,000 people.

The celebration and art exhibition will continue through Tuesday. Admittance is free, and the public is invited.

Guatemalan speaks against regime

By Andrew LaMar
Emerald Reporter

Human rights abuses still abound in Guatemala, according to a former Guatemalan resident now in exile.

Francisco Cali, a 26-year-old who has lived outside his native country for the last five years, is one of five Guatemalans currently touring the United States to tell people about the injustices in his country. Cali has been in Eugene since Thursday giving speeches and interviews.

Cali said human rights abuses have advanced to a new level in Guatemala. Now political opponents are murdered and tortured under the "face of democracy," he said.

"I want to make people aware that there is no democracy in Guatemala," Cali said through an interpreter. The government represses peasants, Indians, unions and students, he said.

Bodies often appear on the

streets with their hands tied behind their backs, bullets through the back of their heads and obvious signs of torture, he said.

Although Cali said the number of murders have decreased from thousands to hundreds a month under the current regime, the murders are still politically motivated. The government, however, claims only common criminals are killed, he added.

Also, the government continues to force rural peasants to join the government military.

According to the Committee In Solidarity with the Central American People, more than 50,000 civilians were killed in Guatemala between 1980 and 1985.

In 1985, the military reinstituted democracy in Guatemala only as a means to control insurgency and respond to complaints about human rights abuses, Cali said. In reality, the government still is controlled by the military and only uses democracy as a mask to



Francisco Cali

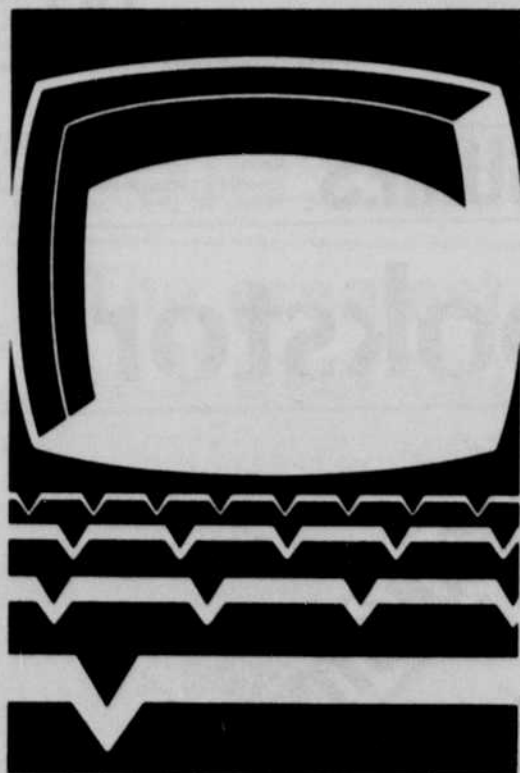
fool the world, he added.

Now the Guatemalan people live in fear of repression but continue to organize opposition to the government, he said.

"Our organization is starting to reorganize because it's not a democracy and the needs the people have are still alive in Guatemala," Cali said.

Cali began organizing peasants and Indians to fight against discrimination and injustice when he was 11 years old. He traveled the countryside with a theater group performing plays depicting government injustice.

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