Building communities and a sense of belonging united by cultural connections through the appreciation and creation of art
“Being part of these workshops and learning about the culture of our foods and our roots, is a way to leave a legacy to our children to value every food we eat and put on our table and the long journey it takes to be there. I am particularly thankful for the Salsa workshop, I learned that each ingredient carries culture, and a story. I was so happy to see many people who came to learn about our diverse cultures.”

-Yolanda Nicasio, Rose Park resident and Salsa award recipient October 2019

“I want to express my gratitude for the experience of blessing the seeds during the spring workshop. It’s a privilege to share my culture with others, specially in this country. I see myself, a woman, as a reflection of mother earth, how women are essential to everything. These workshops have been a blessing to remember and honor my grandparents. I know, they were there with me, guiding me, I felt it.”

-Xmal K’ulub -María Elena Lowe

“Being part of these workshops expressing freely as a woman my indigenous identity, my roots, in my indigenous language and wearing my indigenous clothes has helped me recover my self-esteem. These programs acknowledge and expose our ancestral cultural heritage, and knowing that someone has made this a priority is a great gift to us and to my family.”

-Rosita Mendez – Maya Tzeltal residente in Utah
Mission Statement:
To build communities and a sense of belonging united by cultural connections through the appreciation and creation of art.
Art in all its expressions is the pathway to reflect on our past and present to find commonalities among one another.

How we started:
In 2010, we saw how an exhibit of Mexican art at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts drew the entire community together in celebration and positive interaction during a difficult political time. We formed Artes de México en Utah to use the power of art to build bridges in our diverse community. We developed our programming in response to requests from the community for traveling exhibits, films, literature, and classes that teach cross-cultural competence. Our audiences are multigenerational. According to the 2017 census bureau, 37 million people identify as Mexican in the country.
Our values:

Multiculturalism is the core value of our programs. We reflect on historical and current perspectives that include the U.S. history and the parallels between Mexico/Latin America and the U.S.

Our community conversations, discussions and workshops provide inclusive and diverse perspectives of those identified as indigenous, mestizo and of African descendants born in Mexico, immigrants, those of Mexican/Latino heritage born in the U.S. and non-Latinos, to build understanding and cross-cultural competence.

We especially seek to help the Latino-Hispanic youth to connect with their roots and to be proud of being part of a multicultural heritage.

We are the voice and the perspectives of our community in everything we do. Our community helps us create the content of our programs by sharing peoples’ relevant oral histories and cultural knowledge. Thus, we stimulate the public to create their own art in response involving local visual artists, poets, writers, and filmmakers, as well as, university professors, teachers, community scholars and museums.

We acknowledge and share the relevance of our living traditions, practices and language. Through our programs, our audiences become aware that many of our ancient traditions are alive in our daily practices, and that they enrich the diversity of our state. We acknowledge the preservation of such practices with respect and honor.

Our programs focus on the interconnection between Nature-Culture-Sustainability. Our heritage - the cosmovision - is based on these three concepts that we must continue to preserve for the well-being of our planet.
“This Poetry Contest has been a venue for me to express how I feel as an immigrant to this country. My words not only reflect my feelings, but the feelings of many brothers and sisters. Thank you for this space, and for giving this opportunity to our community”

-Angeles Conejo, Sor Juana Prize winner

“AMU staff have gone above and beyond to support the success of the Sabores de Mi Patria workshops and other WCG projects and programs, showing their dedication to serving our shared audiences and their commitment to building positive, lasting relationships in our community. We look forward to our continued collaboration with AMU and enthusiastically support AMU’s programs and work.”

-Wasatch Community Gardens

“I also wanted to let you know that my 76 year-old father has enjoyed joining in all the way from his home in northern Vermont. These classes have opened his eyes and engaged his mind in ways I’ve never before witnessed.”

-Sonja E Lunde, Online community

“So wonderful. Thank you so much. There are times when I hear or read things that make me feel as though a shift has happened in my brain. This is one of those times.”

-Ora, Online community
Major Programs

In 2012 we launched the only state-wide contest for original literature in Spanish. It includes prizes for high school-aged and adult-heritage Spanish speakers and non-heritage speakers. We partner with the SLCC Community Writing Center, together we offer poetry workshops in Spanish. Every year we choose eight winners who then have the opportunity to perform at the Humanities Book Festival and at the Utah Arts Festival representing the voice of the Hispanic/Latino community.

“Origins” Our Visual Arts Contest

In 2018, we created a visual arts contest to identify and promote local artists in photography, sculpture, drawing, digital media and painting. For the last three years we have published a book that compiles these artworks and the poetry from the Sor Juana contest. This book is now part of the Utah Humanities Book Festival selection.
Offered in English and Spanish, these classes are focused on the history of Mexico and its connection to Utah, and the U.S. and world history. Topics from the establishment of Mesoamerica to contemporary art are covered. We reach seniors at senior centers, college students and adults, and many families with kids when we present them in community centers connected with our urban public schools (50% Latin Americans, mainly of lower income backgrounds).

Born from Corn – The Soul of the Americas

A core program of ours created in 2019. Offered to the community in collaboration with Wasatch Community Gardens where we involve students and families to learn about the cultural legacy of our native foods. Harvests create social and cultural connections based on the traditional and historic concept of the “Milpa”, a unique planting ecosystem that not only nourishes the land, but also the culture and the identity of the people that grow it. School and community gardens are the venues where we encompass culturally celebratory workshops to acknowledge our land, our indigenous people, and their ancestral living practices.
In 2018, we launched “Nuevas Voces” (New Voices), a 20-episode podcast in which we discuss Mexican and U.S. history, through art from multiple points of view: Anglo-American Utah born, Mexican immigrant, and Chicano (including personal experiences and family histories). This podcast is being offered for free on our website and also used in our classes as well as in schools.

FilMéxico

Two-day Mexican Independent Film event, with featured and short films, and filmmaker Q&A. This is Utah’s only annual Mexican film event which we co-founded in 2011 along with the Salt Lake Film Society. We are the main co-presenter every year.

Amigos y Libros book discussions

Every year we partner with “Amigos y Libros” (Friends and Books), the only Spanish language literacy club sponsored by the Salt Lake City Public Library.
We own three major exhibits depicting the art of Mexican lithographist José Guadalupe Posada, the paintings of José María Velasco, and the insightful photography of Agustín Casasola. For every exhibit we provide educational support for the presenters. Our exhibits have been presented at the Weber University, Moab Cultural Center, The Cultural Celebration Center in West Valley and Utah Valley University.

Community Festivals and Hands-on art workshops

We provide educational workshops in local public libraries, schools, museums and community festivals. Every workshop delves into the cultural meaning of traditional celebrations to acknowledge the source of such traditions and their relevance for the identity and integration of our communities.
Some of our major accomplishments

• Altars Exhibit, UMFA, 2019 community sponsor; Maya Exhibit, NHMU, 2018 artist representative; Frida Exhibit, UMFA, 2011 presenting sponsor.

• The only Spanish Poetry writing contest in Utah and published annually with the artworks from our Visual Arts Contest.

• Podcast about perspectives of the history of Mexico and USA.

• Born from Corn. Implemented by teachers, students and institutions for its unique perspective of Art-Nature-Culture-Sustainability of the native foods of the Americas.

• Presented at the 68th United Nations Conference for Building Inclusive and Sustainable Cities and Communities, 2019

• Represented the State of Utah at the Binational Convention of Mexicans in the USA, Embassy of Mexico in 2019 and 2020.

• Our director was recognized in the Utah 2020 Women Mural

Social impact since our creation

- 30 Partnerships
- 52,000 Donated volunteer hours
- 200 Workshops
- 100 Artist recognized
- >500,000 Reached online and in-person
- >$250,000 In kind donations from professionals
- 70% Hispanic
- 30% White and other Communities served
Community Engagement - Partnerships

- Weber State University
- Moab Cultural Center
- Utah Museum of Fine Arts
- Natural History Museum of Utah
- Salt Lake City Public Library
- Community Writing Center
- Utah Humanities
- The Nature Conservancy
- Wasatch Community Gardens
- Living Traditions festival
- Center for The Latin American Studies
- SL and Granite School Districts
- Salt Lake Film Society

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