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First Friday spotlight: Ice House exhibition highlights divine feminine across ages and cultures

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“From Artemis to Zorya: The Role of Feminine Divine Throughout History” is an exhibition presented at Historic Ice House in downtown Flagstaff with a focus on divine feminine presentations in the humanities across over 30 cultures. The visual art exhibition is accompanied by an evening of performances of various forms from 6 to 9 p.m. on First Friday, Sept. 5, at the Ice House.

The multifaceted exhibition is presented by Culture Connection AZ, an organization dedicated to providing community-centric programs, projects and events that build understanding and connectivity of a variety of cultures. With several forms of art coming together to celebrate the central theme of the feminine divine, Culture Connection AZ Executive Director Audra Travelbee said they've also partnered up with the Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival, the Flagstaff Dark Sky Coalition, Momentum Aerial and Torch Her Club to put on “From Artemis to Zorya.”

Travelbee said the visual artists in the exhibition were united in the overarching theme of exploring the feminine divine as an aspect of human evolution across cultures. She said that like all Culture Connection AZ exhibitions, the submissions are open to the public and aren't juried, so anyone who applied to exhibit their work was welcomed to join as part of this show.



“We really try to encourage emerging new artists to participate,” Travelbee said. “We really love that because it gives us a chance to provide space for them to kind of come out as an artist in a place that's really supportive and really encouraging -- because it can be really scary to put your art out there for the first time.”

Also, artists involved in this exhibition keep 100% of sales of their work, and Culture Connection AZ does not take any commission from the sales, or facilitate the sales.

Culture Connection AZ reached out to some of the art professors at

Northern Arizona University (NAU) to see if their students were interested in participating in the show, so Travelbee said there are a handful of student artists whose works are presented. The organization aims to be proactive about gathering participants from several backgrounds and cultures instead of allowing participants to come to them for everything. She noted that Culture Connection AZ reaches out to diversity council meetings as well as cultural clubs and meetings across town to garner participants for exhibitions like this one.

And partnerships like Flag Shakes and the fire poi came naturally, Travelbee explained.

“Shakespeare invokes a lot of goddesses and feminine deities in his works,” she said. “[And] there's a lot of goddesses and feminine deities that represent fire or they're the goddess of fire.”

She also said that she's very excited about the partnership Culture Connection AZ has with Momentum Aerial because "From Artemis to Zorya" is the first time the two organizations are working together for a project.

At Culture Connection AZ, the name of the game is making connections, so the organization spends hundreds of hours a year reaching out to people and establishing connections and partnerships like those that were established for this particular exhibition.

"It's not just visual art, but it's really all the different areas of the humanities; music, history, literature -- and the purpose behind that," Travelbee said. "A big part of our mission is to bring the humanities to the community in a way that's accessible."

Travelbee said that the humanities are often made available through institutions of higher education, and in other ways that may not be the most accessible. However, with "From Artemis to Zorya," and other events, Culture Connection AZ aims to bring the humanities to the public in an accessible and fun way.

"A big part of our mission is to fill that gap," she said. "We believe that if you have a community that doesn't engage with the humanities and that doesn't learn about the humanities, that there's a lot of really negative consequences to that."

From Artemis to Zorya

THE ROLE OF THE FEMININE DIVINE
THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Program

6:00 pm The Ice House	Momentum Aerial Nine performances representing feminine deities from around the world
6:30 pm Beaver Street Theater	Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival Scenes from some of Shakespeare's best-known works invoking feminine deities
7:00 pm The Ice House	Torch Her Club Fire poi performances honoring feminine deities from around the world
7:30 pm Beaver Street Theater	Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival Scenes from some of Shakespeare's best-known works invoking feminine deities
8:00 pm The Ice House	Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition Stargazing and storytelling

PRESENTED BY CULTURE CONNECTION AZ

Engaging with things like art, history and literature -- and with the humanities of other cultures as well -- it creates a community that's more compassionate, connected and informed, according to Travelbee.

The hope of this show and projects like it is for people to see the beauty in all the different representations in the different forms of art, as well as understand where they come from -- the influences behind them. Witnessing and appreciating the arts of different cultures in turn helps facilitate deeper understandings of those cultures, Travelbee said.

“Everybody involved with Culture Connection AZ really believes that we can't lose humanity,” she said. “If we lose humanities, we lose our humanity. There have to be opportunities in the community to engage with other cultures, to learn from them, to appreciate what they have to offer, to see different ways of things being done or things being thought about.”

She continued: “A community without empathy is not any kind of community I would want to live in.”

Culture Connection AZ is able to create connections to foster environments for the humanities to thrive in the community, like with “From Artemis to Zorya” with the help of a Beautification in the Arts grant from the City of Flagstaff, and the organization is eager to put the hard work of the community on display on Sept. 5.

“We have such a high caliber of artists that are in this show, and it's just so exciting,” Travelbee said. “There are so many talented people in our community and a lot of them fly under the radar most of the time, but this is an opportunity for them to really shine and show what they can do, so I really hope people come out and see it.”

Ash Lohmann has been a contributor to FlagLive! since 2021. An NAU graduate in English, she writes remotely from the Colorado Rockies. Lohmann's passions lie in music, poetry, roller skating and Flagstaff's vibrant arts scene.

Tags

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