

Hispanic Heritage Month is a cultural touchstone that has been celebrated in the United States for several decades, recognizing the importance and impact Hispanic Americans have had on history and culture. The term Hispanic refers to people who have ancestry from Spain or Latin American Spanish-speaking countries, and the month serves to honor and draw attention to the many contributions and advancements that Hispanic individuals have made to the greater national and global society.

Though Hispanic Heritage Month began as a celebration in the United States, on DeviantArt we have a bustling community of Hispanic artists from a variety of countries and backgrounds, and as such we want to share its origins, how Hispanic people continue to shape art and culture around the globe, and resources to learn more about Hispanic artists and culture. Though there is no way for us to encapsulate the full reach of Hispanic culture in a single journal, we hope that you join us in engaging with and learning about the impact that Hispanic people have had and continue to have.

The History of Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month began initially as Hispanic Heritage Week, established in 1968, and the week's starting date of September 15th was selected in recognition of the independence day of a number of Hispanic countries. Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua all declared their independence from Spain on September 15th. Mexico celebrates its independence on the 16th, Chile celebrates on the 18th, and Belize celebrates on the 21st.

In 1988, the initially week-long celebration was expanded to last for a full month instead of a week, retaining its initial start date of September 15th. Hispanic Heritage Month has been recognized as a federal observance period every year since then, and since its inception in 1968, every United States president has given an annual proclamation honoring the event.

Outside the United States, countries throughout Latin America also have a day of reflection and remembrance, primarily on October 12th, recognizing the far-reaching impacts of Spanish colonization. Some countries, like Colombia ([*Día de la Raza*](#)), Argentina ([*Día del Respeto a la Diversidad Cultural*](#)) and Belize ([*Pan American Day*](#)), use this day to commemorate the rich cultural diversity and heritage of their countries, and countries like Chile ([*Día del Encuentro de Dos Mundos*](#)), use this day to commemorate the discovery of the New World. Others, like Nicaragua ([*Día de la Resistencia Indígena. Negra y Popular*](#)), Venezuela ([*Día de la Resistencia Indígena*](#)) and Peru ([*Día de los Pueblos Originarios y el Diálogo Intercultural*](#)), use this day to celebrate indigenous empowerment and resistance.

Celebrating Art in the Hispanic Community

Some of the many creations and triumphs of Hispanic artists have shaped culture and artistic trends for generations. Art movements like muralism were led by Hispanic creators across the Americas, and genres of work like magic realism were championed by Latin American writers. Entire cultures throughout the Americas have survived and persisted in part due to the art that has sustained them.

We collaborated with [*LatinX in Animation*](#) (LXiA) to gain insight and perspective on the significance of Hispanic Heritage Month. In response, Magdiela Hermida Duhamel, founder and co-director of LXiA, said, "One of the oldest forms of human expression and social rebellion is art! Indigenous and African arts have survived in defiance of systemic efforts to suppress them." LXiA's co-founder and

co-director, Bryan Dimas, added, "Where possible our ancestors have passed down their stories and knowledge through art, from codices and tapestries to murals and architecture. Celebrating all of Hispanic heritage means protecting and uplifting aspects of our cultures and histories that survived over 500 years of colonization."

In addition, Jorge R. Gutiérrez, co-writer and director of *The Book of Life* and creator of *Maya and the Three*, added, "Hispanic Heritage Month is a really important month to celebrate the loving past, the vibrant present and the hopeful future of our various cultures and people. Nothing gives me more pride and joy than to showcase where we came from to our son. We are our *ancestros'* wildest dreams and we honor them and their legacy with our work."

Creators, Exhibits, Collections, and More

The Internet has aided in spreading further awareness of art by people of Hispanic and Latin American descent, and this is evident in the many projects, exhibits, and initiatives that use art as a means of expressing the many hopes and dreams of artists from various Hispanic and Latin American communities.

- [Documents of Latin American and Latino Art](#)
 - The International Center for the Arts of the Americas at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston hosts a trove of over 8,000 documents showcasing the development of the arts and artistic movements in Latin America, the Caribbean, and among U.S. Latino communities.
- [CROMA](#)
 - A digital exhibition of art created by artists throughout Ibero-America during the COVID-19 pandemic, organized by ArteLatAm, an organization promoting artists and artistic endeavors throughout the region.
- [Smithsonian American Art Museum Latinx Art Collection](#)
 - The Smithsonian has curated for online consumption several pieces of art from prominent Hispanic, Latin American and Latinx artists, drawing on a variety of mediums.
- [Museum of Latin American Art](#)
 - This Long Beach, California-based museum – the only one of its kind in the United States – has a large collection of modern and contemporary Latin American and Latino art, many of which are now [also available online](#).
- [Foto Féminas](#)
 - A platform for professional and emerging Latin American women photographers, this virtual community has several online galleries documenting life in the region and showcasing various interesting takes on the medium.
- [The Khipu Keepers](#)
 - Google, in partnership with the Museo de Arte de Lima in Peru, explores the ancient Inca method of record-keeping using knotted strings both in its ancient and modern forms.

Resources for Continued Education

The following resources are a starting point for continued education relating to Hispanic Heritage Month, both general and art-related. Delve into the information here and around the internet

regarding Hispanic and Latin American history, and if you have additional resources or interesting references you'd like to share, include them in a comment on the journal!

[National Hispanic Heritage Month](#)

The Library of Congress and a number of other U.S. government agencies and museums jointly host an official website for Hispanic Heritage Month, pointing to a selection of their online and offline collections and resources on Hispanic and Latino American history and culture.

[PBS Specials: Hispanic Heritage Month](#)

The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is making available throughout September and October a special collection of videos and other content that explores the history, culture and traditions of the various Hispanic and Latino communities living in the United States.

[Association of Latin American Art](#)

The non-profit Association of Latin American Art, which connects academics and scholars of Latin American art and culture from the United States and around the world, maintains an extensive collection of resources on Latin American art, from ancient traditions to modern and contemporary trends.

[University of Florida Latin American Traveling Suitcases](#)

The University of Florida's Center for Latin American Studies maintains a collection of traveling suitcases containing lessons on Latin American history, culture, geography and art, which it freely lends out to teachers who want to use them as educational tools.

[National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures](#)

The National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC) is the largest non-profit in the United States dedicated to promoting Latinx arts and culture, with various programs and projects that help further understanding between the U.S. and Latin America. In addition to these programs, NALAC also has a number of [grant programs](#) available for Latinx creatives to advance their craft.

[Smithsonian Latino Center](#)

Established in 1997, the Smithsonian Institution's center for Latino history and culture maintains a large and growing collection that documents the Latino story in the United States and celebrates their many contributions to science, culture, history and the arts.