

Time and space compliment the memories of our lives. Time travel is possible through the blood shared by our ancestors. What once was, remains. This piece reflects the migration of my family from Missouri, Mississippi, and Arkansas to Milwaukee and Chicago. It is meant to be felt as they may have on their journey. It is reflective of change of space and time as they leave something behind to gain something new. I pay homage to them and the understanding that they live through me and see what I see.



MEXICAN FOLKLORE TELLS THAT MONARCH BUTTERFLIES ARE THE DEAD SOULS THAT VISIT RELATIVES ON THE DAY OF DEAD CELEBRATION



HOPI KACHINA DOLL

Monarch butterflies are painted on the Hopi Kachina dolls and presented as gifts in hope for future abundance and wealth.



QUEERNESS IS AS NATURAL AS NATURE CAN GET. THIS BEAUTIFUL DIVERSITY IS THE TRUTH WE SEE IN MOTHER NATURE- THE TRUTH I SEE IN ME. WE SEE IT IN THE MONARCHS WHO PRACTICE HOMOSEXUALITY. THE MONARCHS WHO ARE SYMBOLS OF HOPE, RESILIENCE, & FREEDOM FOR UNDOCUQUEER FOLK. THE MONARCHS WHO SYMBOLIZE A SAFE SPACE FOR QUEER STUDENTS IN HIGHER ED. THE MONARCHS WHO TRANSFORM. LIKE ME. LIKE ME, WHO DID NOT KNOW I WAS A MONARCH BUT ALWAYS WAS ONE. LIKE ME, WHO HAD TO GROW, LEARN, DECONSTRUCT, RECONSTRUCT MYSELF. A TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS ACCEPTANCE OF MY QUEERNESS, OF MY MONARCH



MONARCH BUTTERFLIES ARE CONSIDERED PROLIFIC LIFE-GIVING INSECTS TO THE MAZAHUA AND OTOMI AGRICULTURE CULTURE



ZULEYMA MORALES
KEYANA ROBINSON
EYZEL TORRES



UIC HERITAGE GARDEN

Ambassadors of Nature

Monarch butterflies are one of the most identifiable species of butterfly across North America. With their vibrant orange and black patterns, they have been spotted for generations and studied for their uniqueness. They are considered ancestors across some communities. Their multigenerational migration is a tale that crosses through the Western and Northern parts of the US, with part of the population traveling to Mexico for the overwintering seasons and coming to the US and Canada during the Spring and Summer. These beautiful insects are ambassadors of nature as they welcome in a myriad of flowering plants throughout many types of gardens. However, over the past 20 years, we have seen a rapid decline of monarchs by about 80 percent. Unfortunately, they are only decreasing as of recently.

What is currently happening?

As of December 2014, a couple of months after monarchs were petitioned to be categorized under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared that the species “may warrant protection” which is to be reviewed within a year. After about 6 years of this review status pertaining to the monarch's position on the ESA, the Service finally announced in late 2020, that their protection was warranted, but didn't need immediate action.

Legislative and institutional processes do not happen quickly, and we can not let the rate of processes become a detriment to the existence of monarchs and their generational impact. The direct action and advocacy work we take part in now has repercussions that will impact more than just this one species of butterflies. Our actions affect the ecosystems we share, the food the Monarchs forage from and the homes they live and grow in. We are responsible for their decline and their foreshadowing extinction. Therefore, we must take action to not be part of this complacency. Organizations across North America and beyond have been advocating and spreading the word about monarch conversation and you can be part of this activism too. That is why we have created this Monarch Tool Kit in order to educate our communities and others alike in the importance of safeguarding and advocating for monarch and pollinator conservation all over the world!

Why is this happening?

Their main sources of sustenance and pollination, such as milkweed and various flowers, are being torn down and eradicated to open up land for industrial and agricultural purposes. As much as 11 million acres have been desolated for these purposes over a span of 20 years, as of August 2020. With most of their migration path traveling through the US's Midwest, the increased use of herbicides and pesticides have undermined monarch's existence. They have swept hundreds of acres of milkweed, the only type of plant monarch eggs are laid on and which the caterpillars live off of. This not only impacts monarchs and their cultural significance, but it changes the projection of our ecosystems impacting current and future generations of all species. That is why we, as a society, need to step up and make a change in monarch conservation.

How does Climate Change Affect Monarchs?

The issue of climate change is upon us. Scientists for many decades have done extensive research that highlights these effects through the exploration of climate change. Climate change is described as the change in average environmental conditions over a long period of time such as temperature, rising sea levels, rain/snow precipitation and so much more. These detrimental effects can also be accredited to human actions, which include burning fossil fuels, releasing greenhouse gases, cutting down forests to clear for construction and agricultural practices, to name only a few. These vast environmental changes sweeping the natural world are hurting many different types of ecosystems and biomes alike, forcing people to find new places to live and survive, and threatening migration patterns/habitats across species. We ask the questions and hope the materials provided here form part of a larger conversation of action and change: What does it mean to be in solidarity across species? What concrete actions can we take as individuals, as communities, as organized groups? How do we shift narratives to bring into focus collective actions of survival and interdependence, care and (bio)diversity, to truly create welcoming communities for all?

