



FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

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significance of preserving the textile heritage of Guatemala.

In most Guatemalan textiles collections, cortes are not well represented, as compared with huipiles. A large collection of cortes, such as the one found in the Ixchel Museum, is a unique record of the Maya weaving tradition.

Cortes are made with a long piece of cloth worn wrapped or gathered around the waist. They are plain, with stripes or ikat designs. Their width ranges between 1-1 1/2 yards, with a length of 7-9 yards. The oldest cortes usually are woven with cotton threads, and many are dyed with indigo. Modern cortes, dyed with commercial dyes, are woven of rayon, cotton and metallic fibers. In some communities it is traditional to use an embroidered seam (randa) to join the weft edges or to add other pieces to achieve the length needed.

IXCHEL AWARDED U.S. AMBASSADOR'S GRANT

BY HOLLY NOTTEBOHM

"The award recognizes the professionalism of the Museum and the cultural significance of preserving the textile heritage of Guatemala."

TOP: The Rabin Ahaw for 2013, with members of *cofradía* from San Miguel Chicaj

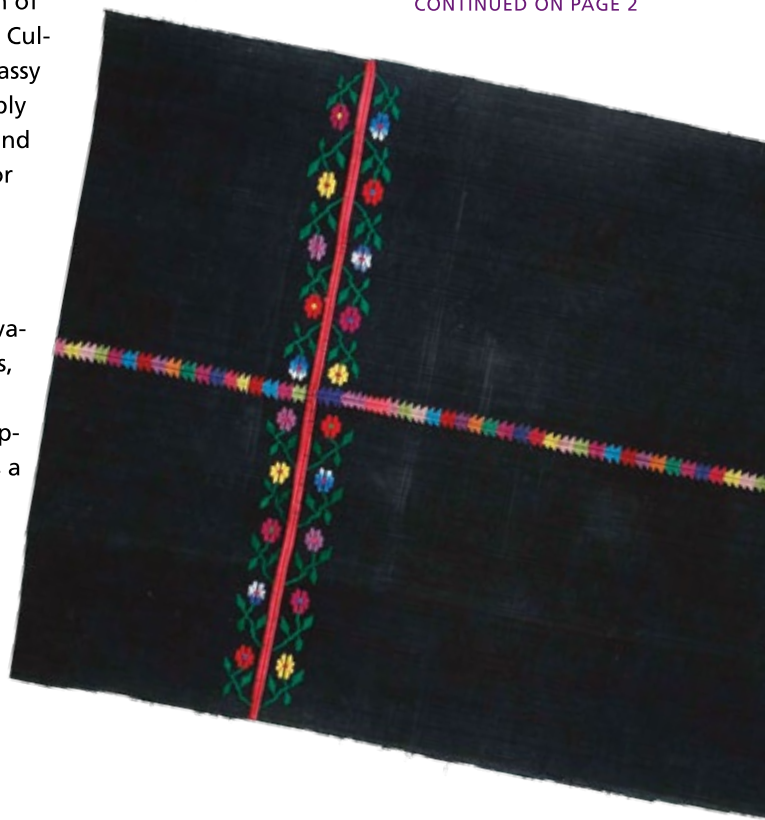
RIGHT: An elaborate, new-style skirt from Nahualá with embroidered flowers along one of the *randas*.

In July, the Museum received a US \$35,000 grant from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation to conserve, store and digitize the museum's collection of skirts—633 cortes. Kathleen Guerra, Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala, encouraged us to apply to this annual global competition, and Rosario Miralbés de Polanco, Curator Emeritus of the Museum, wrote the grant application.

Initiated by Congress in 2001, the Ambassador's Fund supports preservation of cultural sites, cultural objects, and forms of traditional cultural expression in more than 100 developing countries around the world. It is a highly competitive grant; in Guatemala, there are usually five or more proposals submitted each year, with only one funded. The award recognizes the professionalism of the Museum and the cultural

Currently, the cortes are folded and piled on shelves in the collection room. Folding and pressure can break threads over time.

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THE MUSEUM

The Museo Ixchel is located on 6a Calle final, zona 10, on the grounds of the Universidad Francisco Marroquín in Guatemala City. The museum is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, and from 9am to 1pm on Saturday. Admission is Q35 for adults, Q15 for students and Q8 for schoolchildren. For further information on library access and holiday closings and more, please visit museoixchel.org or telephone 502 2331 3622

RIGHT: School children visit Museo Ixchel. In the background is a ceremonial huipil from Santa Maria de Jesus (1930s/40s)

✚ The Ixchel Museum was awarded a prestigious grant from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation. Grant funding will be used to conserve, correctly store and digitize the museum's collection of 633 cortes (skirts). (See *main article*.)

✚ Grants received from the Swiss *Fondation Carene* have allowed Rosario Miralbés de Polanco to conserve the Museum's collection. Results can be seen on the foundation's website: www.fondationcarene.org/projects-2/. Museo Ixchel's is the second project: after scrolling down, click on 'Project follow up' for photos of our team at work.

✚ A map of the ceremonial huipiles of Guatemala, companion piece to the previously published map of daily huipiles, is now available--and is 'must reading' for all those interested in Guatemalan textiles.

✚ The 2014 Museo Ixchel calendar features ceremonial huipiles.

✚ Visits of schoolchildren to the museum increased dramatically this year (by 56%), and Director of Education Lorena Bianchi created two new origami workshops for the kids. Origami is the traditional Japanese art of paper folding, and the museum has designed

origami paper with textile designs for this purpose. In one workshop, children fold paper to make figures of children; in the other, they make small birds.

✚ Fund raising events: In September, the museum offered a concert by soprano Karen Rademann and Mexican tenor Edgar Gutierrez. In November, the Gala Dinner featured Gaby Moreno, the Guatemalan singer who has become a sensation and is nominated for Latin Grammy awards.

✚ Finally, in more good news, the museum has been selected by XNOX/BAM as the venue for their annual art exhibit and auction of work of young Latin American artists.



AMBASSADOR'S GRANT CONTINUED

Also, in order to access a corte for an exhibit or for research, many other textiles often must be moved, and pieces are contaminated as a result.

With the Ambassador's Grant, the cortes will be conserved, their provenance checked and documented, and they will be photographed and digitized, so they can be seen by scholars around the world. Then they will be stored carefully, rolled on muslin lined tubes, and hung from specially designed racks in the collection room.

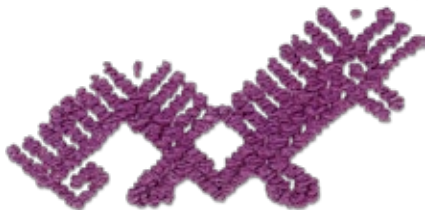
This important grant is the fourth in a line of critical conservation grants awarded to the museum. In 2000, the museum won a grant from the Getty Grant Program in Los Angeles to conserve and store huipiles in its collection. In 2010, the museum won a grant from the Swiss *Fondation Carene* to

conserve and store 400 su't. In 2011, *Fondation Carene*, pleased with the work accomplished, awarded the museum a second grant to complete conservation and storage of the remaining 500 su't. Now, the collection of cortes will be assessed, recorded and stored.

As Rosario explains, without adequate documentation, a collection has less intellectual value. It is important to catalogue objects and obtain as much information about them as possible, and to store the Museum collection in such a way that it can be accessed easily. Then, the museum is able to share information with academics and the general public, and enrich appreciation of the collection for everyone.

The Ixchel Museum is immensely grateful to have been awarded the 2013 Ambassador's Grant.





FOIM SUPPORTS RANGE OF TEXTILES EXHIBITS



BY YOLANDA ALCORTA

LEFT: A ceremonial huipil from Santa Lucía Uatlán (1930s), FOIM Collection

RIGHT: Entrance to the Toronto exhibit, with a full size huipil for a statue of the virgin from San Pedro Sacatepéquez (1930s), FOIM Collection



Maya textiles have multi-faceted appeal—weavers see the skill of warps, wefts, and dyeing, anthropologists see the functional utility of a s'ut, immigrants see the cultural identity of a home village—and some simply admire the pure beauty of colors and designs.

A goal of Friends of the Ixchel Museum is to foster appreciation of Maya textiles by audiences outside Guatemala through exhibits. We can highlight examples of this work from this past year on a spectrum: the significant *Ancestry & Artistry* exhibit at the National Textile Museum in Toronto, our FOIM display at the Washington, D.C. *Guatefest*, and support for a small private show in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Toronto: Covered in our last issue, this museum exhibit met with great success; it has been held over through January 2014. Visit their website www.textilemuseum.ca for more context and additional images, which include FOIM textile loans. Notice how the "Wall of Huipiles" (illustrated) uses multiple flat pieces, easily hung for an enticing display of variety. You may also be interested in a July interview with the exhibit curator posted on <http://hyemusings.blogspot.com>.

Washington, D.C. Metro: In March, FOIM models wearing trajes from our collection greeted guests at a gala event at the Organi-

zation for American States. We also spent an afternoon with the Hajji Baba Society at the Textile Museum in April with Washingtonians who love textiles. The lecture/exhibit focused on the Museo Ixchel, with a special presentation Director Maria Renée Aguilar. FOIM board member Yolanda Alcorta spoke about the evolution of Guatemalan textiles in the 20th and 21st centuries, and master weaver, Sheba Velasquez, Ixil Maya, demonstrated a technique called 'marcador' from San Antonio Aguas Calientes (Sacatepéquez), which imitates needlepoint designs using supplementary weft brocade rather than embroidery.

GuateFest, an annual event held in Arlington, Virginia in June and in Langley Park, Maryland in September, is close to the heart of the Guatemalan community, who live and work in the area. This year's combined attendance reached over 8,000 people. Activities included local and Guatemalan rock music groups, *Marimba Pequeña Internacional*, folk dance groups and 'typical' food. FOIM provided children's activities highlighting the Central American ceramic exhibit currently on display at the National Museum of the American Indian, a table top textile exhibit and a live weaving demonstration.

Lucerne: This town-hall gallery exhibit featured private textiles and photographs loaned by a couple that resided in Guatemala in the 1970's. FOIM board member Monika Snodgrass made connections for a speaker and mannequins. Monika also provided DVDs and publications, including our popular *Mapa de Huipiles*.

Exhibits can range from choice museum-quality pieces displayed as 'art' to mannequin displays of full costumes, to a few simple wall-mounted flat pieces illustrating a textile theme. Our capacity to mount full exhibits is limited, but our ability to support your efforts is broader. If you are creating a special display or planning an event that would benefit from our support, please enquire via foiminfo@gmail.com – we may be able to help!



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IXCHEL PUBLICATIONS

Three of the Ixchel's most appealing publications will now be available through the U.S.-based Friends of the Ixchel Museum, eliminating the complications of ordering from the museum itself. *Rostros de la Guatemala Idigena, Images of Indigenous Guatemala* by Anne Girard is \$35, *Bordados: Stitches That Unite Cultures*, the lavishly-detailed catalogue for last year's embroidery exhibition is \$30, and both the *Maya Ceremonial Huipiles of Guatemala* and *Maya Huipiles of Guatemala* folded maps will be \$15 each, plus shipping and handling. **To order, please send your request to foiminfo@gmail.com**

Would you prefer to receive your newsletter via the Internet? If so, please send us an email at foiminfo@gmail.com, so that we can put you on our internet list.

FOIM EXHIBIT AT LA ART SHOW

FOIM will exhibit textiles from its collection at the LA Art Show, in collaboration with the *Ruta Maya* Foundation, the Paiz Foundation, and the Maya Museum Foundation. The venue will be the Los Angeles Convention Center/South Hall J and K, from January

16-19, 2014. The exhibit will feature Pre-Columbian objects, historic Maya textiles, and contemporary Guatemalan art. The LA Art Show is a preeminent exhibition of traditional and contemporary arts in the United States. We hope you can attend the show!

Our growth is only possible through your generosity! Join Us Now!



FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

PO Box 30, Princeton, NJ 08542 USA

Members receive free entrance to exhibitions of FOIM in the U.S. and to the Museo Ixchel in Guatemala City and discounts on purchases in the Museum Shop.

Benefactor	\$1,000	Contributor	\$100
Patron	\$500	Family	\$50
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Checks should be made payable to Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc.

Please mail this form with your donation.

For more information e-mail foiminfo@gmail.com

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