

FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

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December 1993

ANDRES CURRUCHICH FIRST FOLK PAINTER OF COMALAPA



New Cofrade Receiving the Image of Saint Francis. Andrés Curruchich.
Oil on canvas. 38.5 x 46.5 cms. Ixchel Museum Collection

Andrés Curruchich, from the Kaqchikel community of Comalapa, and Juan Sisay, from the Tz'utujil community of Santiago Atitlán, are the two founders of Guatemala's twentieth century school of folk painting.

Andrés Curruchich's work has inspired three generations of Comalapa artists and his oil paintings of the daily and ceremonial life of Comalapa are found today in both public and private collections.

In 1979 Gustavo Stahl donated his collection of 48 Curruchich oil paintings to the Ixchel Museum. This year's museum calendar

honors that generous donation and the artistry of Andrés Curruchich by publishing thirteen of his works.

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Andrés Curruchich was born in Comalapa in 1891. His father, Evaristo Curruchich, a farmer, died when he was a small child; his mother, Socorro Cúmez, was a spinner and weaver. To earn a living as a widow, she became a hog butcher; later she married Manuel Bal, who taught the boy to farm and raise animals.

(Continued on page 2)

IN THE MUSEUM

INAUGURATION

November 17th is the inauguration of the new Ixchel Museum. Firecrackers and tissue paper globos will celebrate the culmination of more than five years of planning, work, and fund-raising, and two and a half years of construction. The building is spectacular with its facades of woven brick and its entrance of a brickwork Mayan arch set in a glass wall.

The permanent museum gallery will show the history of Mayan dress in four exhibits covering approximately the Prehispanic, Colonial, Republican and Modern eras. The opening exhibit, titled "Industrialization and Mayan Weaving," spans the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th when the initial effects of industrialization were felt on the Mayan textiles.

Special showcases have been designed to display and preserve these particularly delicate and beautiful textiles. Funds for the construction of this section of the permanent gallery were given by an anonymous donor. The mounting of the exhibit has been sponsored by TACASA, the Guatemalan affiliate of Philip Morris Companies, Inc.

The Carmen G. Pettersen Gallery will have Carmen Pettersen's watercolors of Mayan costumes on permanent exhibit. These paintings are reproduced in the book "Maya of Guatemala", the sale of which has endowed the Ixchel Museum and made possible the construction of the new museum.

MEXICAN SCHOLARSHIP

Soledad Icu, Ixchel Museum Registrar, has won a Mexican government scholarship to study the planning and mounting of museum exhibits in Mexico City for eight weeks.

COFRADIA VIDEO PRESENTED

The video "Mayan *Cofradia* Fiesta," funded by Friends of the Ixchel Museum, was presented in English and Spanish July 28th at the Ixchel Museum and August 19th at the Universidad del Valle.

(from page 1. **ANDRES CURRUCHICH**)

His reputation spread to the neighboring towns of San Martín Jilotepeque, Santa Apolonia, San José Poaquil, Tecpán, and Santa Cruz Balanyá, where he was asked to repaint religious images.

He married Cipriana Telón, with whom he had five children. His main occupations were farming, white washing walls, and repairing religious images. His work with the images made him realize his skill with a paint brush and led him to paint the traditions of his village. Curruchich began painting on wooden blocks and gourds; later he painted on cotton cloth, preparing his own palette from vegetable and mineral dyes. In 1930 he sold his first painting at the August Fair in Guatemala City, then, in the 1940's, a priest from Comalapa began to promote his work.

In the 1950's Gustavo Stahl sponsored national and international shows of his paintings. His first exhibit was held in the Arcada Gallery in Guatemala City in 1951 and, several years later, he exhibited in San Francisco, Dallas, Springfield, New York and Detroit. The



A Mayan corbelled arch rendered in brick.
The entrance to the new Ixchel Museum

NEW ADDRESS

Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena
6a. Calle final, Zona 10
Campus Universidad Francisco Marroquín.

Guatemalan Government recognized his talent by awarding him the *Orden del Quetzal*.

When Andrés Curruchich died in 1969, he had more than ten followers. Among these were his son, Vicente Curruchiche, Francisco Telón and Santiago Tuctuc. To honor his work, the Instituto Nacional de Comalapa, a public secondary school, was named "Andrés Curruchich" in 1975. In 1985, the Ixchel Museum placed a commemorative plaque at the house where he lived in Comalapa.

Also in 1985, his son Vicente, along with other artists, established the "Andrés Curruchich" group of painters and, several years ago, following the death of her father, Vicente's daughter María Elena committed herself to painting, thus preserving the artistic traditions begun by her grandfather.

From the 1994 Ixchel Museum calendar.
Written by Linda Asturias de Barrios and María Elena Curruchiche.



Looking out the Window.

Santiago Sacatepéquez. Ixchel Museum Photo Archive

FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

THREADS FOR THE WEAVERS

Friends of the Ixchel Museum voted funds to supply Mayan weavers with the best quality cotton thread at wholesale prices. The project has been designed by Ixchel Museum Curator Rosario Miralbes de Polanco.

VIDEO ON THE HISTORY OF MAYAN CLOTHING

Friends of the Ixchel Museum is funding "The History of Maya Textiles", a documentary video to introduce the permanent exhibit. Dr. Linda Asturias de Barrios has written the script and Samuel Franco is producing the video.

COFRADIA EXHIBIT

In June of 1994 the *Cofradía* Exhibit will open at the Siouxland Heritage Museums in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. From there it will travel to the Nicolaysen Art Museum and Discovery Center in Casper, Wyoming, and in February of 1995, it will open at the Museum of Man in San Diego, California. Copies of the "Mayan *Cofradía* Fiesta" video and catalogue made for this exhibit are available from Friends of the Ixchel Museum.

AUDIOVISUAL EQUIPMENT

Special donations in honor of Baysis Hempstead were given for audiovisual equipment. Two 34" TV monitors, VHS cassette players and speakers for video presentations in the new Baysis Hempstead Audiovisual Room were approved.

BOARD MEETING

At the April 22, 1993, annual meeting of the Board of Directors of Friends of the Ixchel Museum three new directors were elected: Marta Stroock, Ana Maria Zaugg and Cynthia Hammett. The new officers are: President - Suzanne Davis; Vice-President - Holly Nottebohm; Treasurer - Scott Hand; Secretary - Edna Poll.



Andrés Curruchich.

Photo by Joya Hairs. Ixchel Museum Photo Archive

DONATIONS TO FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc., is an American foundation that funds projects to bring the museum's research and exhibits to the attention of Americans. The foundation's aims are to bring Guatemalan textile exhibits to the United States and to translate the museum's research monographs into English.

You can become a supporter of the Ixchel Museum's work by contributing to Friends of the Ixchel Museum. Friends of the Ixchel Museum is incorporated under the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law of the State of New York and has qualified under the rules of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as an organization to which donations may be made which are deductible by the donor for U.S. general income tax purposes. Checks drawn to the name of Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc., may be mailed to:

Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc.
P.O. Box 27283
Los Angeles, CA 90027

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Harvesting Corn. Andrés Curruchich.
Oil on Canvas. 37.5 x 45.5 cm. Ixchel Museum Collection