



# FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

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types of specialized textiles (cintas, s'uts and ofrendas) and or jewelry to indicate membership and participation in *cofradías*. The manner in which some of these ceremonial huipiles are worn can indicate the position of the individual in the *cofradía* hierarchy. Three different adjectives can be used to describe these garments: ceremonial, *cofradía* and *sobre huipil*.

We have tried to show the finest and oldest huipiles available. When we felt that the Museo Ixchel collection did not have an example that met these criteria, we used three pieces from a private collection. While our first map identified 117 unique daily

## CEREMONIAL HUIPILES OF GUATEMALA

BY RAYMOND SENUK

**"This publication  
is meant to be  
a companion map  
to the Maya  
Huipiles of  
Guatemala"**

Ceremonial huipiles and vintage  
(1930s) photographs of these  
textiles being worn.

Top left: Quetzaltenango  
Bottom right: San Juan Sacatepéquez  
Vintage photographs courtesy  
of the Middle American Research  
Institute - Tulane University

In March of this year at our Annual Board Meeting, one of our members, Ana Smith, suggested that we consider doing another map of huipiles similar to the previously published *Maya Huipiles of Guatemala*. This time we would include only ceremonial huipiles. Our only caveat was that we produce this new map in less than a year. I am happy to report that we will meet that goal.

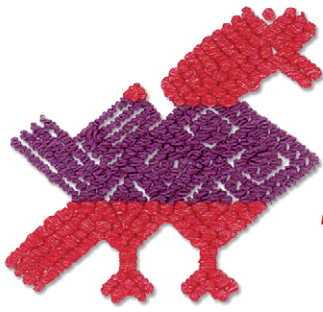
In our first map, we focused on huipiles used in daily life. In a few cases, some examples are no longer worn regularly, if at all, but for the most part they represent examples that can be seen in communities today. It was meant to be a representative sample.

In this publication, we are focusing on those textiles specifically woven for and used by women, while participating in the ceremonial life of communities. Almost exclusively they are reserved for use by female members of *cofradías*. Many communities that have *cofradías* do not weave special huipiles for ceremonies but instead use a well-made huipil and augment it with other

huipiles, this work shows the 53 unique examples of ceremonial huipiles used now or in the past among the Maya peoples of Guatemala. This publication is meant to be a companion map to the *Maya Huipiles of Guatemala* in which we discussed connections to pre-Columbian textile traditions, weaving techniques and types of looms used.

Our June 2013 newsletter will highlight this new publication in a special article. If you are interested in purchasing the publication when it becomes available, please send us an email at [foiminfo@gmail.com](mailto:foiminfo@gmail.com).





# 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](http://museoixchel.org) or telephone 502 2331 3622**

Left: Contemporary textiles from Joyabaj that shows the influence of pre-Columbian motifs from shell ornaments and a Maya vase.  
Right: Interior of the renovated Museum Store

On August 23 there was a benefit concert for the Museo Ixchel held on the campus of Francisco Marroquín University (UFM). It was well attended and raised funds for the museum. The same evening the museum was opened to the public to view the new installation of Gallery 1, which highlights the antecedents of the Maya textile tradition from pre-Columbian times. The Ruta Maya Foundation lent 32 pre-Columbian ceramic pieces (molds, stamps and painted cylindrical vessels) that show design elements employed or images of the Maya wearing textiles. Juxtaposed with these objects were textiles from the museum collection that show the continuity of usage to the present. This project was funded by the Friends of the Ixchel Museum.

The museum store was redesigned and enlarged. Glass partitions were installed allowing for more light. The store is more visible and better integrated into the first floor space.

Our acquisition budget for textiles is extremely limited, and we very much depend on donations. We received an extraordinary gift of six men's cofradía shirts from Almolonga from Licenciado Juan Jose Falla Sanchez. The earliest piece dates to the late nineteenth century, while the most recent is from the 1940s. This gift significantly strengthens the collection in this area.

Over the last two years we have received two grants from the Carène Fondation of Zermatt, Switzerland. These grants were awarded to catalogue, photograph and conserve the museum's holding of over 1000 s'utes and servilletas. Our research area now has a digital microscope to enable high-resolution fiber analysis and maintain this as a digital image. We were able to upgrade the collection room and exhibition cases with digital hygrometers to more accurately measure humidity and temperature. Specialized hand-held vacuums were purchased to properly clean the collection before pieces were moved into new state-of-the-art textile storage systems.

Textiles present the registrar and curators with problems not normally present with other kinds of materials. Before anything goes into the storage room, it needs to be in a freezer for two weeks to ensure that it is free of insects (eggs and larva). One of our local companies, Tiendas SuperMax donated a standing 16 cubic foot freezer for this need.

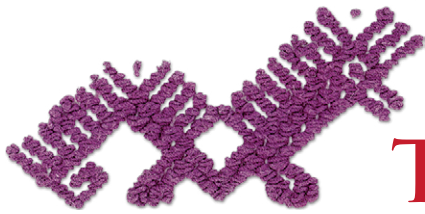
A fundraising luncheon was held in May at the Tea Room of the Aurora Zoo. It featured a fashion show of clothing incorporating Guatemalan textiles in their design.

Every month the marketing department at the museum publishes a calendar of upcoming events for the coming month. If anyone

is interested in receiving this, please send us an email at [foiminfo@gmail.com](mailto:foiminfo@gmail.com) with your email address, and we will add you to the list. Just in case you have a visit planned to Guatemala, you will know what is happening at your museum.







# TRADITION AND CHANGE



and not as finely woven than in the 1920's example. The big difference comes in the proportions of the colors and the threads employed in the base cloth and the supplementary weft patterning. In the 1920s era s'ut, red is the pre-dominate color to the point that we would describe the yellow and purple warp stripes as accent colors. In the contemporary s'ut, the proportion of the colors is more or less equal. I would argue that the balanced proportions of the three colors only exist in these contemporary s'utes because of what it is, a ceremonial head s'ut and the prescription of what they should look like. If one looks at other contemporary textiles from San Juan Sacatepéquez: daily huipiles, sashes and utility cloths, the red would be an accent color with the yellow and purple (sometimes blue is substituted) being the overwhelming colors of choice. The threads are remarkable in the older s'ut. The purple cotton is dyed with murex (a secretion from a warm water mollusk). Murex for the most part disappeared from use by the end of the 1930s. All the other brocade threads are silk floss imported from China. In the contemporary versions, the threads are mercerized cottons and acrylics reflecting availability and cost. It is interesting to see how availability of materials and tradition work together to manage change over time.



From left to right  
Cofrades wearing s'utes

© Anne Girard 2011

Cofrade wearing a s'ut (1930s)

courtesy of MARI - Tulane University

S'ut (1920s) FOIM Collection donated by

Guillermo and Sylvia Sanchez

Why look at this piece? It is a man's ceremonial head cloth from San Juan Sacatepéquez dating to the 1920s (possibly the early 1930s). It is a great example to talk about because it illustrates how much change there has been in San Juan over almost 100 years and in other ways so little. When we compare it to the contemporary examples worn by these cofrades captured in Anne Girard's photo, all the differences fall within the prescription of what a man's cofradia s'ut should look like. In many ways it is almost exactly the same today. Stability in a changing world!

The format is identical - two backstrap woven panels that are mirror images of each other joined by a randa. The iconography is similar, while the brocaded animals are much larger

## IN MEMORY OF JOAN CHATFIELD-TAYLOR

It is with great sadness we write that Joan Chatfield-Taylor died on October 19th. Joan was the editor of this bulletin for the last five years and an enthusiastic member of Friends of the Ixchel Museum. A graduate of Garrison Forest School and Smith College, Joan worked as an editor at The San Francisco Chronicle until she retired to become a free lance writer for publications including Town and Country, Architectural Digest and the NY Times travel section. She was the author of six books including two on the San Francisco Opera.

Joan initially came to Guatemala to visit friends and to go on photographic trips. She enjoyed writing about the museum and the weavers for "Friends", and we will miss her talent, her artistic flair, her wry sense of humor and love of fun.





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## IXCHEL PUBLICATIONS



Three of the Ixchel's most appealing publications will now be available through the American-based Friends of the Ixchel Museum, eliminating the complications of ordering from the museum itself. *Rostros de la Guatemala Indigena*, *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 the folded version of the new Huipiles map will be \$15, 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.

## IN MEMORY OF ROBERT J. SHARER

It is with sadness that we report the passing of Robert J. Sharer, a noted Maya archaeologist and scholar and the husband of our past president of FOIM, Loa Traxler. For those wishing to send a card, Loa's address is 47 Morgan Hollow Way, Landenberg PA 19350. Bob's wish was to see all the archaeological research from his many projects through to publication, and any gifts or donations should be directed to a special fund being established at the Penn Museum to provide support for this work.

berg PA 19350. Bob's wish was to see all the archaeological research from his many projects through to publication, and any gifts or donations should be directed to a special fund being established at the Penn Museum to provide support for this work.

**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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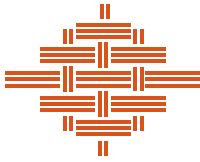
Checks should be made payable to Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc.

**Please mail this form with your donation.**

For more information e-mail foiminfo@gmail.com

Friends of the Ixchel Museum is an American foundation and donations are deductible by the donor for U.S. general income tax purposes.





# FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

Supporting The Textile Arts of Guatemala

PO Box 30,  
Princeton, NJ  
08542 USA  
foiminfo@gmail.com

December 1, 2012

Dear Friends of the Ixchel Museum,

We are coming to the end of a successful year at the Museo Ixchel. We have consistently tried to bring enthusiastic, talented new employees into the museum. I believe we have succeeded and are positioned well for the future. Much of this success is due to the hard and dedicated work of Jessica Hodgson de Kaehler, the President of the Asociación de los Amigos (Guatemala) and María Renée Díaz de Aguilar, the Director of the Museo Ixchel.

The collections are being maintained at standards equal to the best museums in the world. We continually upgrade our permanent exhibits to make them more educational and attractive to our visitors. We are moving toward changing our special exhibitions more regularly. We are recognized as being one of the most professionally run museums in Guatemala. This enables us to successfully generate grants from funding agencies worldwide. This is due in no small part to your support. Many of these projects that I have reported on over the last few years have been possible only through your generous support. I assure you that your contributions do matter.

Here are just a few notes on 2012 projects funded by our US Friends. The lead article in this newsletter is previewing the Ceremonial Huipiles of Guatemala, which will be available early next year. This project spurred our thinking on what should be our next special exhibition. It will be a follow up exhibit on Ceremonial/Cofradía huipiles. We plan to open the show, hopefully in 2013, with a bilingual exhibition catalogue available. We will expand from the map and show how some of the textile traditions have evolved since the 19th century.

In December the Museo Ixchel will participate in a special exhibit of Guatemalan culture at the Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. Because of the paperwork difficulty and expense of shipping textiles from the museum collection outside of Guatemala, we plan to use the Friends's collection, which does not have the same constraints. We have also been approached by the Textile Museum of Canada to support a Maya textile exhibit planned for 2013. We remain committed to our educational goals outside of Guatemala.

I want to thank you for your generosity this last year in supporting the Friends of the Ixchel Museum Foundation. Our work continues only because of your financial support. So I encourage you to continue your membership and to think about donating at a higher level. I would like to make an end-of-year appeal for your support. The successes at the museum can only continue with your support. I encourage your generosity and assure you that we will put your donations to good use. We need your support to continue the work of the museum and helping to preserve the weaving traditions of Guatemala.

Raymond E. Senuk

President, Friends of the Ixchel Museum