



FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

VOLUME EIGHTEEN • NUMBER ONE • JUNE 2007



ANNE GIRARD: A NATIONAL TREASURE



Above: Anne Girard de Marroquín with one of her antique cameras.

Top: Church of San Andrés Xecul.

Photo A. Girard 2006.

Not many people visit the remote village of San Andrés Xecul in the Guatemalan highlands. But there, last November, was Anne Girard de Marroquín dressed in her blue jeans and photographer's jacket and carrying two cameras up the steep roads. She was doing her favorite job. As Director of the Ixchel Museum's Photo Archive, she takes pictures of the traditional costumes of the Maya to document them for posterity. Since the indigenous people are wearing their costumes less and changing the designs more, that work is high priority and urgent.

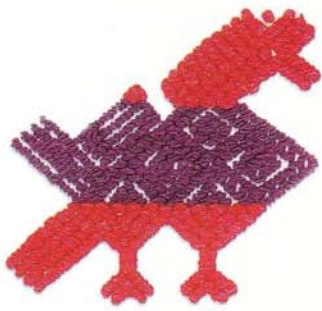
"I took about 400 photos in San Andrés," Anne says, noting that the neckline of the town's huipil is embroidered in pink, purple, yellow and green, with designs of rabbits, birds and jaguars. "We previously had absolutely no photos of San Andrés in the archive. I was able to take pictures of the only cofradía as it came out of the church. The sobrehuipil is

similar to that of San Cristóbal Totonicapán. I took pictures also of the costumes of women from other towns who were at the festival and the people were friendly and easy to photograph."

It is not always easy. When Anne went to Rabinal, the crowds were too thick to allow good photographs. In Patzún, a friend's wallet was stolen. In San Francisco el Alto, three women grabbed Anne's cameras and tried to make off with them. And in Nebaj, she was pushed by the crowd and one of her cameras was actually stolen. Not to mention the towns like San Pedro Carchá, San Juan Chamelco and especially Santiago Atitlán where the people simply do not like to be photographed.

Though truly modest and soft-spoken, Anne is not easily dissuaded. She has a true photographer's tenacity and the training to go with it. Born in Martigny, Switzerland, she specialized in photography

...continued on back.



THE MUSEUM



Top Award. Guatemala's Ministry of Culture honored the Ixchel Museum for its key role in conserving the nation's textile heritage. President Oscar Berger presented the medal—the Orden Nacional del Patrimonio Cultural de Guatemala—to the museum's president, Rosemary de Barillas, at a ceremony in the National Palace on December 14th.

Dream gift. The museum is thrilled to have received a wonderful gift from the Pieters family—that of the beautiful textile collection of doña Matilde de Pieters and her mother doña Paquita de Gueroult. The gift, which has been on loan to the museum, includes extraordinary pieces and was made by Christina de LaVerney, who is doña Matilde's daughter.

Voices of Authority. Barbara Knoke de Arathoon, Director of Research and Exhibits, and Rosario de Polanco, Curator Emeritus, have written an article on Maya Dress and Fashion in Guatemala for the authoritative Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion, scheduled to be published in 2010.

Education News. Children's weaving revitalization programs have been launched by Education Director Fabiana de Sáenz in the towns of Mixco and Santiago Sacatepéquez. Both are funded by the Daniele Agostino Derossi Foundation. Fabiana is also working on a similar project in Santa Avelina, funded by Helps International.

Noted. An interchange between the 5th graders of San Antonio Palopó and the 5th graders of Hawthorn School in Salt Lake City is being coordinated by the Gateway Museum and the Ixchel Museum, whose Fabiana de Sáenz is in charge of the project.... In February, when the International Map Collectors' Society held its yearly meeting in Guatemala, the Ixchel Museum stirred much talk by mounting a stunning exhibition of textiles that included map imagery.... At the Third International Bird Watching Encounter, held in February in Alta Verapaz, Barbara Knoke de Arathoon fascinated attendees with a talk on the images of birds in Maya dress.

Ixchel Museum is awarded the Orden Nacional del Patrimonio Cultural de Guatemala



Display for the International Map Collectors Society Conference.
Photo A. Girard 2007.



A NATIONAL TREASURE (CONTINUED)

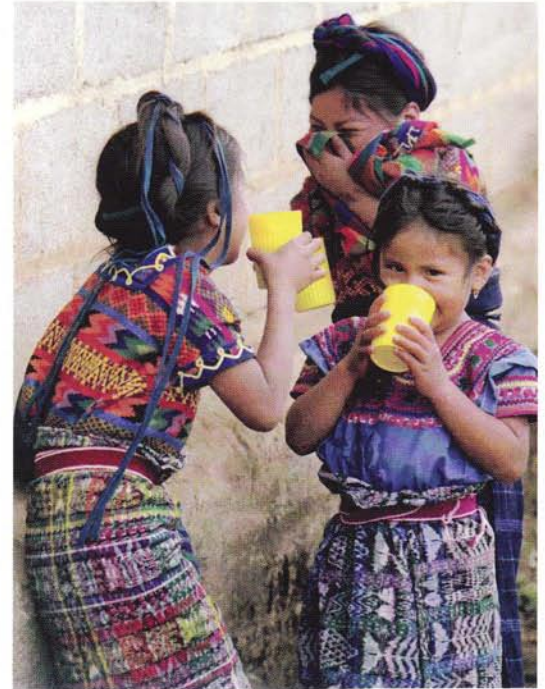
She is the person most responsible for the vibrant, multicolored image of the Ixchel Museum

her last three years of school. She worked in a color photo lab and came to Guatemala twice for short visits at the invitation of her uncle, Rafael Girard, a famous anthropologist sent by the Swiss government to study the Miskito Indians of Honduras. He retired in Guatemala.

Anne liked Guatemala, its climate and people. She returned for a third visit and settled in the capital in 1976. After marrying, she had two daughters and opened a photographic studio. Soon she was collecting old photos and, at every opportunity, taking pictures. "I would go out with three or four cameras around my neck to photograph. It was very safe." In 1997 Anne came to the Ixchel Museum to take charge of all things photographic.

She found a jumble of photographs awaiting reorganization. The photo archive of the museum was then in a metal filing cabinet and consisted mainly of 10,000 slides organized by village. There were also slides that well-known photographers like John Willemssen and Ricardo Mata had donated to the museum and a collection of black and white 19th century photographs, plus photographs of textile collections in other museums and myriad color photographs taken in the field.

Anne's first step was to identify and file all the slides and photographs and to request acid-free materials for proper storage. Some slides had to have their frames changed or be cleaned of mold. The workload increased in 1999 when the museum won a grant from the Getty Foundation to conserve the huipiles in the collection. Anne meticulously photographed the 3,000 huipiles to document them. A subsequent grant from the Finnish government caused her to photograph the more than 500 woolen garments in



Top: Girls giggling. Santiago Sacatepéquez. Photo A. Girard 1982.

Bottom: Anne Girard de Marroquín at the Ruinas de Gumarcaaj, Quiché. Photo 1982.

the collection. She has catalogued some 10,000 photographs taken in the field—but still has about 4,000 more recent pictures to go.

She has accomplished miracles. Anne has digitized the photographs of the huipil collection. She has photographed and digitized the 61 watercolors by Carmen Pettersen, which document the indigenous costumes. She has made a start on digitalizing old photographs. She takes pictures of all the museum's public functions. She creates the museum's annual calendar. Anne Girard, in short, is the person most responsible for the vibrant, multicolored image of the Ixchel Museum.

And when the opportunity strikes, she goes out in the field. "There are so many beautiful weaving villages to visit," she says wistfully. Her next field trip will be to San Juan Atitán, a trip sponsored by the Daniele Agostini Derossi Foundation. Barbara Knoke de Arathoon, the museum director of Research and Exhibits, will go with her. Their goal is to document the town's dress, which is worn by both men and women, but which is changing rapidly in color and pattern; oddly enough, the traditional red and white stripes are giving way to heavy turquoise brocade.

The Ixchel Museum's photo archive is inarguably the visual record of the weaving tradition in Guatemala. It is quite simply a national treasure. Is it too much to suggest that the unpretentious, dedicated Anne Girard may herself also be a national treasure?





FRIENDS OF IXCHEL

DONATIONS

Please help Friends of the Ixchel Museum sponsor weaving projects, fund traveling textile exhibits, translate textile research, and support projects to enrich the Ixchel Museum.

Checks payable to:
Friends of the Ixchel
Museum, Inc.
PO Box 545
Blue Bell, PA 19422

The Friends of the Ixchel Museum continues its outreach efforts joining forces with organizations that support and promote the cultural heritage of Guatemala and the Maya. In September of last year we helped sponsor El Gran Día Chapin held in Gaithersburg, Maryland, near Washington DC. The event brought together Guatemalans from near and far for a day of family celebration. Among the crowd, numerous young men and women took home color prints from the Maya de Guatemala by Carmen Petersen. These images of traditional costumes decorate their US homes and remind them of their town or region in Guatemala. Plan to join us for this year's event on Saturday, September 22, 2007. (For more information go to www.grandiachapin.org)

Continuing the fall calendar, FOIM members sold traditional Guatemalan textiles and crafts in the All Roads Art Market held in October at the National Geographic Society in Washington. These sales help raise funds for the educational programs at the Ixchel Museum. This annual market is a part of the All Roads Film and Photography Festival, which features the work of artists from under-represented communities all over the world.

The annual board meeting of FOIM was held in Guatemala City in early February. During the two-day meeting the board met with the Asociación and the Fundación of the Ixchel Museum. Barbara Knoke de Arathoon, Director of Research and Exhibits, and her staff presented projects for funding from FOIM. The board voted to fund the following projects for 2007:

- Field research in embroidery and the design of a future embroidery exhibit.
- Several children's education projects and plans to remodel the children's museum
- Support for the photo archives including computer and software upgrades and conservation of color slides.



This spring our new board member Juana Velasco joined former board presidents Emilie de Brigard and Yolanda Alcorta in attendance at the Textile Museum's annual gala in Washington DC. The group conversed with the curators of the Textile Museum, opening doors for future collaboration with their counterparts at the Ixchel Museum.

In April, FOIM participated at the 25th Annual Maya Weekend at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia.

FOIM again displayed traditional huipiles and publications of the Ixchel Museum, as well as a variety of textiles, Pro-teje products and Guatemalan crafts for sale.

Future projects: Planning is underway to apply to the International Folk Art Market in Santa Fe, New Mexico to have a booth at the July, 2008 market. If accepted, FOIM will present for sale a collection of textiles, feature a master weaver and showcase folk art by selected artisans from Guatemala.

Top: Former FOIM president Emilie de Brigard with board member Juana Velasco. Photo Christine M. Kline 2007.
Left: Girls from San Andrés Xecul. Photo A. Girard 2006.

