



FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

VOLUME TWENTY TWO • NUMBER TWO • NOVEMBER 2010



MUSEUM NEWS

Navajo weaver B.Y. Begay, left, taught Guatemalan weavers Alberta Tista and Ana María Chaliá the techniques of the upright loom.

The Ixchel Museum has been a busy place during the last few months, thanks to interesting temporary exhibits, important visitors, continuing improvements and very large groups of children visiting from different villages.

✦ An exhibit of 23 Navajo rugs from the Kennedy Museum of Art of the Ohio University opened in August for a six-week run sponsored by the United States Embassy in Guatemala. The rugs on display, part of the Kennedy Museum's important collection of Southwest Native American Textiles, inspired a number of activities at the Ixchel.

✦ As part of the exhibit, Navajo weaver B.Y. Begay came to share weaving techniques with two master weavers of Guatemala, Alberta Tista from Baja Verapaz and Ana María Chaliá from San Martín Jilotepeque.

✦ In the same spirit of sharing the textile traditions of the Americas, an exhibit of colorful, felt-applique Inuit textiles opened in October, under the sponsorship of the Canadian Embassy.

✦ Edward Pauley, director of the Kennedy Museum, gave a talk on strengthening museums, emphasizing the importance of fundraising and volunteers. Representatives of all the museums in Guatemala City and others from outside the capital attended his presentation.

✦ An exhibit of ten serigraphs by Carlos Mérida, an artist of Maya and Zapotec heritage, came from his work, *Trajes de Guatemala*. Each work is a brilliantly-colored portrayal of a stylized figure in the traje of a given region, surrounded by motifs of flowers and plants, birds and geometric shapes. The showing of his work was accompanied by appropriate textiles and by lectures on both the artist and the textiles.

✦ Rosario Miralbés de Polanco, curator emeritus, was given a grant by the German Exchange Program for Academics, to study and curate the textile collection of Carlos Elmenhorst at the Museum für Völkerkunde in Hamburg, one of Europe's largest ethnology museums. Her work was preparation for a Guatemala exhibit that opened November 7.

✦ Large groups of children continue to visit the Ixchel Museum, including a group of 300 from San Miguel Petapa and 150 from Pantaleón.



A Navajo pictorial rug was one of the highlights of the recent exhibit.

Continued inside



THE MUSEUM Continued



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 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and from 9 am to 1 pm 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

Above: School children, in groups as large as 300, have been visiting the museum

Right: The work of Guatemalan artist Carlos Mérida depicting Guatemalan costume and traditional motifs, was featured in a recent exhibit.

✚ The Ixchel also provided textiles from the Atitlán region for an exhibit at the Casa MIMA, an 18th-century house-turned-museum in downtown Guatemala City. Ixchel textiles were also exhibited at the Eskala mall in honor of Independence Day.

✚ The museum continues to research the country's traditional textiles. In November, Anne Girard de Marroquín, director of the Ixchel's photo archive, and her team went to the highlands of San Marcos to expand the museum's heretofore small number of photographs of this area. FOIM funded the trip.

✚ Anne Girard de Marroquín has resigned as director of the Ixchel's photo archive. Since 1997, Anne has worked tirelessly to catalogue and protect thousands of photographs, creating an accessible archive of Guatemala's textiles. As a photographer, she has visited villages all over the country, dealing with mountainous roads, thefts and



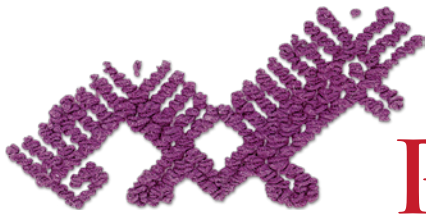
villagers who were sometimes unwilling to be photographed, in order to record the rapidly-changing textiles and costumes of the country.

She has also been responsible for the handsome calendars issued each year by the museum. The most recent one for 2011 is based on the theme of su'ts, the woven cloths worn with flair by both men and women.

✚ María Fernanda García, a young photographer and graphic artist, will be the new director of the photo archive.



Photo: Anne Girard de Marroquín



PRESIDENT'S LETTER



photographs and samples of contemporary textiles. This year the target area is a group of communities in San Marcos. The museum continues to work with hotels, malls, banks and other public spaces to provide small displays of Maya costume and culture. We believe this is an important outreach to help educate the general public about a significant art form and a part of their heritage.

"...we are challenged to do more to preserve and encourage the cultural tradition of weaving in Guatemala."

Dear Friends of the Ixchel Museum,

The Museo Ixchel del Traje Indigena in Guatemala and our Friends organization have seen many projects to come to fruition this past year, thanks to your contributions. The publication of *Embroidery – Stitches That Unite Culture*, published in May, was celebrated as the museum's most elaborate and informative catalogue to date. The permanent exhibition space has been getting a face lift gallery by gallery with colorful paint, new label copy and rotation of textiles. The new exhibits are smaller in scale and change every few months, keeping the museum experience fresh for visitors. The current show *Maya Clothing Visited In The Paintings of Carlos Mérida* exhibits the folios of Maya costumes done by Mérida in the 1940s with historic pieces from the museum collection. In August, the US Embassy chose the Museo Ixchel as the venue for a traveling exhibit of Navajo Textiles. An *Exposition of Inuit Art* is currently on exhibit and is sponsored by the Canadian Embassy.

We continue to fund outreach programs to the community. The education department works with indigenous communities to provide weaving workshops for children. Each year field research trips to indigenous communities evaluate the current state of weaving, recording new and traditional designs. Our staff returns with transcripts of interviews,

Last summer saw the worst rainy season in Guatemala in seventy years. The suffering in indigenous communities has been horrific, due to mudslides and washed-out roads. The world economy has kept tourists away, damaging one of the country's most important industries. While the museum and our work is not directly affected by these events, we are challenged to do more to preserve and encourage the cultural tradition of weaving in 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 giving level. For those of you who have received our bulletin gratis or have let your memberships lapsed, please consider giving this year. We need your support to continue the work of the museum and helping to preserve the weaving traditions of Guatemala.

Thank you and best wishes for the holiday season,

Raymond E. Senuk
President, Friends of the Ixchel Museum

Above: The museum has been brightened, literally, by new paint, signage and exhibits



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REMEMBERING SYLVIA

Sylvia Leonowens, one of the founders of the Ixchel Museum, died on October 11, 2010. In the 1950s, Sylvia was a member of the Tikal Association, a group of women studying the treasures that were then being discovered in the jungles of the Petén. She and a few others felt that textiles were not being given sufficient attention and formed a specialized committee within the Tikal Association.

She was the daughter of Carmen Pettersen, whose meticulous watercolor depictions of Guatemalans in traditional traje line the walls of the museum and appear on the nation's postal stamps. Her daughter shared her fascination with the Maya weaving skills and began buying textiles from around the country, with the idea of opening a museum. Using her own money and donations from others she amassed a collection of some 2000 pieces. These she donated to the museum when, in 1976, it set up its first premises in a rented building in a residential neighborhood of Guatemala City.

Mrs. Leonowens remained an ardent supporter of the museum for her entire life. Among her many support activities, she and her family opened up the family's Finca Zapote each year for a picnic benefiting the Ixchel. For many of the people who attend, it is a rare opportunity to enjoy one of the country's largest and most beautiful private gardens.

She is survived by her husband, Louis, six children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The family has requested that memorial donations be directed to her beloved Ixchel Museum.



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



FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

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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.

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