

## FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

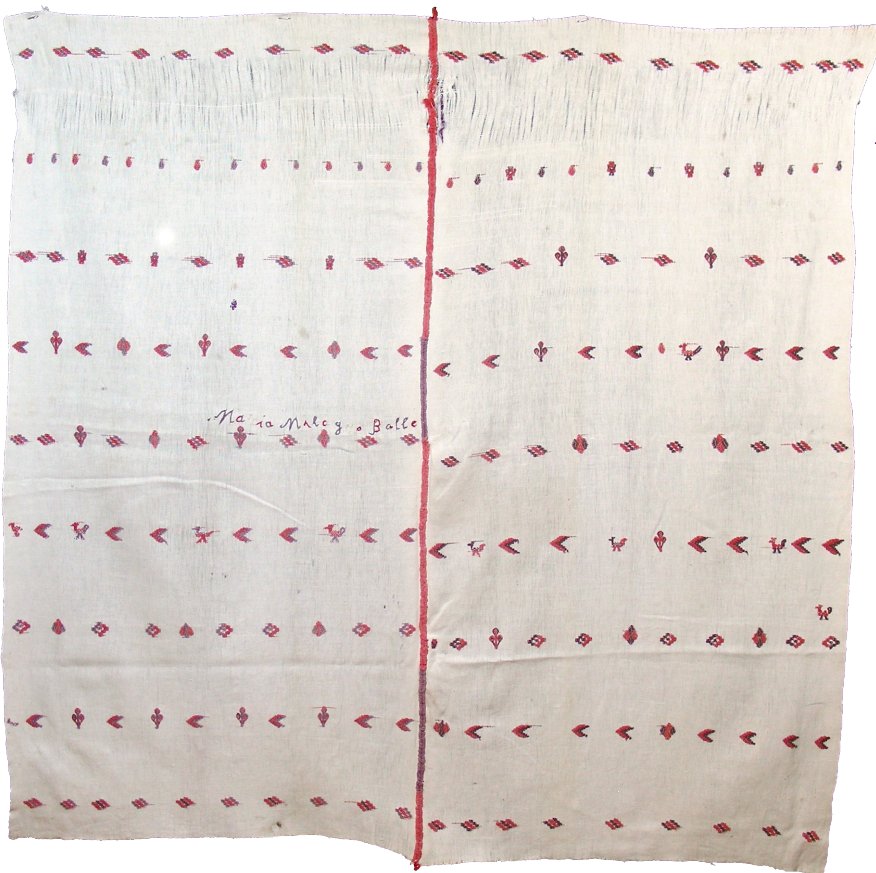
Supporting The Textile Arts of Guatemala

NEWSLETTER Volume Thirty Four • Number Two

# FALL 2023

# A TALE OF TWO THREADS

by Raymond Senuk

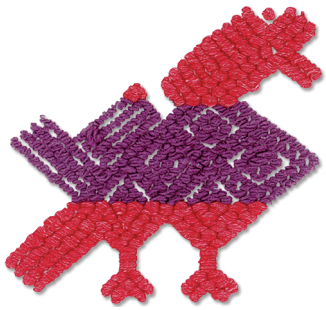


Our target textile for this article is a ceremonial *servilleta* or *tzute* from San Juan Alotenango, a good-sized community just southwest of Antigua.

San Juan Alotenango is an indigenous Kaqchiquel town, which once had a flourishing textile tradition that is not particularly well represented in museum and private collections. The textile was acquired at a for-sale museum called *Museo Casa del Tejido Antiguo* formerly located in Antigua but currently in San Antonio Aguas Calientes. The shop tends to have strength in its holdings from nearby communities.

I went to the museum with a friend who was in Guatemala to buy textiles for his online business. I did not expect to find anything that would be remotely interesting. I was proved wrong! There in this pile of textiles was this *servilleta/tzute* (I am not sure of its ethnographic use, hence my hesitancy on what to call it). It is an early 20th century textile, woven in two four-selvaged panels, finished on the loom, and joined by an embroidered *randa*. All the brocaded elements and *randa* are done in two colors: purple and red. The base cloth is white and the brocade is of small zoomorphic, phytomorphic, and geometric elements. The red thread is dyed with alizarin, the first red that was available to indigenous weavers in Guatemala for cotton. It is a synthetic dye for madder.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



# IN THE MUSEUM



On October 19th-21st, the Universidad de San Luis (San Luis Potosí, Mexico), will host the second Encuentro Textil de las Américas. As you may remember, the first Encuentro was a virtual event held at the Museo Ixchel in Guatemala in 2021. This time, we are one of the main organizers and our curator, Violeta Gutiérrez, will speak on ***“Techniques and Technology in Guatemalan Textiles,”*** based on field research from FOIM-sponsored projects. There will be participants from all over the Americas, with 39 conferences over the three-day event. In September, Violeta will also give a talk on “Reading *Huipils*” for the Museo Textil de Oaxaca via a virtual event (archived on our website).

We sponsored an educational field trip to learn about the Corpus Christi celebration in Patzún. All the spots were filled, and we even had a waitlist! There is growing interest for first-hand learning about textiles and traditions.

At the Museo, the galleries are booked with back-to-back events through the year end. The Fundación Margarita Tejada held their yearly art sale with hundreds of people in attendance

— and practically all the art sold in one night. Renowned artist Enrique Cay will also have a much-anticipated show. The new lighting system and our large spaces have made the Museo Ixchel a much sought-after venue for all sorts of events.

Companies are also requesting our Extramuros exhibits to enhance their spaces and have their clients learn more about the rich textile tradition in Guatemala.

Lastly, we have partnered with Casa Popenoe to deliver a course in conservation techniques.

Left: Example of an Extramuros pop-up  
Right: The Tejada annual art sale



[museoixchel.org](http://museoixchel.org)  
telephone 502 2331 3622  
facebook.com/  
MuseoIxchelDelTrajeIndigena/  
instagram.com/museo.ixchel



# Join Us!

Friends of the Ixchel members receive free entrance to FOIM exhibits in the U.S. Also entrance to the Museo Ixchel in Guatemala, with discounts on select purchases in its shop.

Custodia	\$5,000	Faja	\$100
Huipil Ceremonial	\$1,000	Cinta Seda	\$50
Huipil	\$500	Cinta	\$25
Corte	\$250		

For more information e-mail [foiminfo@gmail.com](mailto:foiminfo@gmail.com) or visit [ixchelfriends.org](http://ixchelfriends.org) and [Instagram.com/ixchelfriends\\_textiles](https://www.instagram.com/ixchelfriends_textiles)

Friends of the Ixchel Museum is an American 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation and donations are deductible by the donor for U.S. general income tax purposes.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

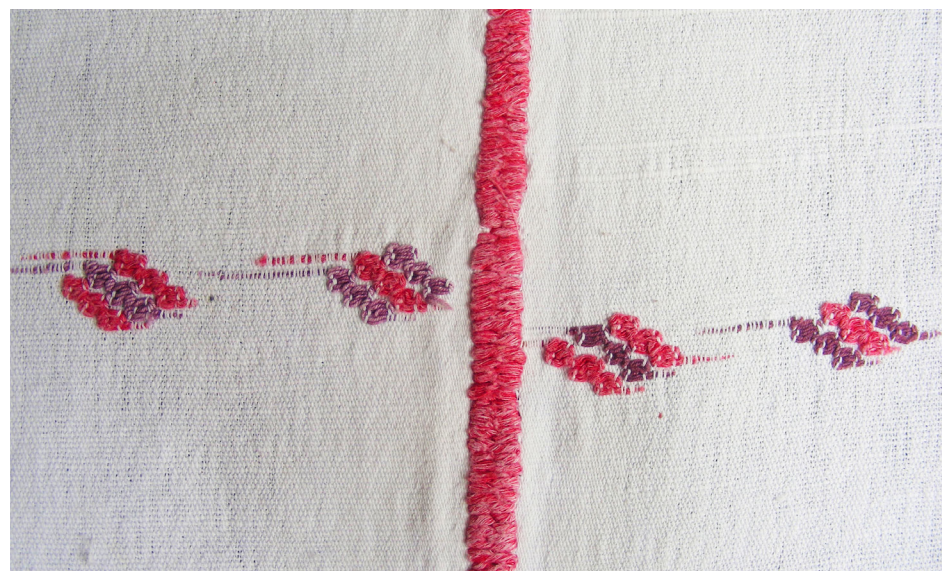
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check Enclosed of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Interested in Volunteering

Checks should be made payable to Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc.  
Please mail this form with your donation to

15 Roszel Road, Suite 10 Princeton, NJ 08540 USA



## A Tale Of Two Threads

### CONTINUED

Now for the tale of two threads – the purple is actually two different purple threads. One is imported from the west coast of Mexico as a pre-dyed thread made from secretions from a single-valve mollusk locally called *púrpura* or *morado de concha* (in the past I have referred to it as murex). It is a very fast dye that has a variegated quality. The other purple is the first commercially pre-dyed thread imported to Guatemala called *morado de carrizo* and is constant in color and darker. Both are plied threads while the red is on Cantel threads. The fact that there are two different purple threads used in the textile is unremarkable. What is remarkable is that the panel on the left is only dyed with *púrpura*, yet on the right only *morado de carrizo* is used. Various explanations are possible — they did not have enough *púrpura* for both panels

and rather than mix and match, chose to keep each thread isolated to a separate panel. In 45 years of collecting, I had never seen this kind of exactness. [See the detailed photo above of two brocaded elements on each side of the *randa*.]

What has all this told us? *Púrpura* disappeared from the repertoire of Kaqchiquel weaving in the 1920s and *morado de carrizo* was introduced in the 1920s. Alizarin disappeared in the 1930s. This puts this textile firmly in the 1920s. Another unusual, but not unheard of, element is that it is inscribed with presumably the owner's name – María Milagro Balle. It amazes me that one can still find a 100-year-old textile in close to pristine condition today in Guatemala that did not come out of a private collection. Where has it been hiding!?







It was 4:30AM July 13th, our rented van was fully packed, and the Weaving for the Future Cooperativa members were on the road to Kent, Ohio for our first WARP (Weave A Real Peace) meeting!

Thanks to support from both FOIM and WARP, seven Co-op members were going to make a presentation, set up a vendor table, and participate in the “fashion show” (and other live action) over the three-day conference – ***“Threads of Connection: Exploring the Local to Global Textile Community”***. We arrived that Thursday afternoon, set up our table, and settled in at the dorms at Kent State University – a short walk from the Center for Visual Arts that includes a state-of-the-art weaving studio! We spent three days demonstrating backstrap loom

# WEAVING CO-OP IN WARP SPEED

By Yolanda Alcorta

weaving, connecting with fellow weavers and textile enthusiasts, learning about textile projects in Cleveland, the Kent State Art Studio Program, going to a Laser fabric-cutting workshop and visiting the Cleveland Museum of Art. From the Welcome Circle to the Live Auction, we each connected with people

very interested in the Guatemalan textile tradition because they had been there, had long-standing relationships there, or sold items made in Guatemala.

Jenny Juárez, our project coordinator, and her sister Ashely received scholarships to the conference, and were asked to talk about their journey as weavers along with their fellow recipients. Jenny spoke about how weaving is part of her identity as a Maya-Mam young woman raised in the US, and Ashley shared how weaving has helped her conquer her learning disability as she prepares to attend college. As a group, we developed and presented “Visiting the Textile Tradition of Concepción Chiquirichapa” that you may access on the WARP website ([weavearealpeace.org](http://weavearealpeace.org)). We also made a splash at the fashion show, each wearing her favorite *indumentaria* representing 7 different communities. In the vendor area, there were at least 6 with Guatemalan products... none with duplicates! A fellow vendor who creates home and





## Are you on Instagram?

If so, please consider applying to FOIM's First Instagram Challenge!

We seek to engage contemporary artists who are working primarily in fiber arts that celebrate the rich heritage of Guatemalan textile traditions. Consider the example (left) by Board member Anne Lamborn – and find additional information on our website.

### Connect with us at

@ixchelfriends\_textiles and share the Call for Art with your followers.



wearable items from *cortes* has recently donated several *huipils* and shawls to our West Coast Board members for their community and school exhibit collection. We also met a weaver from Bhutan who weaves on a vertical backstrap loom using silk threads! Jenny fulfilled a longtime dream by bidding on and winning a kimono at the live auction. The whole meeting was infused with a collaborative spirit, a love of textiles and a push to create and maintain community. Our conversation in the van was – how do we get to Colorado next year?

The 2024 meeting is in Golden, Colorado from May 16-18. And note that some sessions and an auction will be available on-line. WARP is a wonderful organization that FOIM may partner with in the future.



## Traje is on-Trend: Barbie in Traje!

Queens, NY Shop



Left: WARP Conference, 2023

Top: *Land And Sky* by Anne Lamborn (hand-dyed cotton with eclectic fibers, 9'x5', 2018)



## Bay Area Gathering Showcases Textiles

In May of this year, on behalf of the Friends of the Ixchel Museum, board members Susan Hurst and Anne Lamborn presented an overview of traditional Maya textiles to a gathering of San Francisco Bay Area families with children adopted from Guatemala. Textiles were displayed and their importance to Maya culture, history and identity was discussed. Several young Guatemalan/American women in the group brought the beauty and significance of the textiles to life by modeling *indumentaria* from the FOIM collection while taking great pleasure and pride in connecting to their birth culture. We look forward to supporting similar events in other locations.

## Bequest From Leslie Grace Estate

We are surprised and delighted to acknowledge a significant bequest from the estate of Leslie Grace. She was a longtime member of the FOIM, and thus receiving this newsletter. Her early interests led to the 1962 establishment of “La Tienda Folk Art Gallery” in Seattle, WA. Filled with handmade textiles, arts and crafts from all over the world, it celebrated what she called

“the beauty of the hand”. The store was sold in 1995, and she continued to consult, teach, travel and collect textiles. Her textiles were frequently donated to various museums, most recently the Mingei International Museum in San Diego, CA. It was her greatest wish that her life work be preserved, documented, and shared with a global audience.



**Friends of the Ixchel Museum**  
15 Roszel Road, Suite 10  
Princeton, NJ 08540 USA  
foiminfo@gmail.com ixchelfriends.org

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### President

Ana-María V. Zaugg  
*Plymouth Meeting, PA*

#### Vice-President

Yolanda Alcorta | *Washington, D.C.*

#### Secretary

Susan M. de Riojas | *Guatemala*

#### Treasurer (Acting)

Loa P. Traxler | *Albuquerque, NM*

#### Board

Chase Davis | *Philadelphia, PA*

Shannon Davis | *Philadelphia, PA*

Emilie de Brigard | *Higganum, CT*

Amy DiPlacido | *San Francisco, CA*

Elisa María Dyer de Fitzpatrick *Guatemala*

Maya Fledderjohn | *Guatemala*

Susan Hurst | *San Rafael, CA*

Luciana Jabur | *Lawrence, KS*

Anne Lamborn | *Los Gatos, CA*

Carlos Nottebohm | *Gladwyne, PA*

Raymond Senuk | *St. Louis, MO*

Monika Snodgrass | *France*

#### Emeritus

Margot Blum Schevill | *Berkeley, CA*