

FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

Supporting The Textile Arts of Guatemala

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FALL 2024

INSIGNIA CLOTHS FROM SAN PEDRO SACATEPEQUEZ

by Raymond E. Senuk

Let me begin by describing the two textiles before you. Each is made up of a single panel with all selvages finished on a backstrap or stick loom.

Each panel was made into a tube by joining the two sides with a *randa*. What are they? They are ceremonial textiles that are placed around the pole that holds the insignia or *escudo* (shield) that *alcaldes* and *mayordomos* carry during *cofradía* ceremonies. Traditionally, this is a sign of respect for the *escudo*, which requires a ceremonial cloth between it and the human carrying it. I direct you to Krystyna Deuss' book on *cofradía* (2018) for photos of men from San Pedro Sacatepéquez carrying *escudos*. Interestingly, you cannot see the insignia cloths because of the multitudinous ribbons hanging from the *escudos*.

How rare are these? Exceedingly rare! I know of no collection, museum or private, that has one in their collection. Yes, there is a photo of one in Krystyna's book, but I am the source. The first time I knew of their existence was 2015, when I had the opportunity to purchase a number of them. Having seen them, I then searched through my collection looking specifically at one-paneled textiles. I think I found two. Both are the right size but no longer have a *randa* joining the two sides. But when held up to the light they have the telltale holes in the side panels indicating they were once tubes. My hypothesis is that having all selvages finished on the loom made them more saleable as a flat piece. I have no one to query on this.

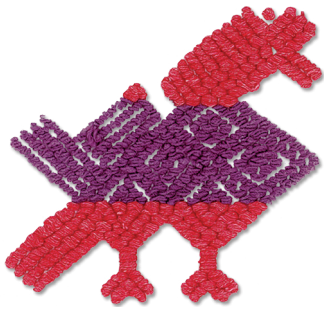
My obsession has always been to see what the textile tells me. This is done through analysis of threads, dyes, iconography, pro-



Insignia cloth dated 1944 with inscription

portions, and other attributes. I have chosen these two textiles for comparison. One is woven on a white base cloth and the other is a dated (1944) textile on indigo base cloth. Let us start with the example on white. There are only two brocade threads: murex or purpura, a shellfish dyestuff, which disappeared in San Pedro after 1926, and alizarin which was the only dyestuff available to Guatemala for dyeing cotton red. Alizarin appeared early in Guatemala in the 1880s/90s. Based on these two threads and the iconographic elements this insignia cloth dates from the

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IN THE MUSEUM



✚ **The Heart of the Museum** | Violeta Gutiérrez, Curator of the Museum, hosted a lecture in the collection room focused on the appropriate storage systems for the textiles that make up the museum's collection.

✚ **Female Voices in the Guatemalan Mayan Textile Tradition**
In honor of International Women's Day, an open discussion was held between three great women who preserve the textile tradition in different ways. Violeta Gutiérrez (Museum Curator) with Laura Cotí (Vice Minister of Cultural and Natural Heritage), Angélica Serech (Textile Artist), and Martín Fernández-Ordoñez, (Art Historian and Popenoe House Curator). *(Photo top right)*

✚ **Exclusive Collection of Established and Emerging Artists**
During International Museum Month in May, there was an exceptional art exhibition in the Museum's galleries. Guided tours were held so that visitors could learn more about Guatemalan and International art.

✚ **Intentional Design** | Design students from different schools and others dedicated to fashion were invited to participate

in the workshop given by the renowned designer Juan Pablo Socarrás who, together with artisans, gave a memorable workshop on ethics in the production of collections.

✚ **Family Day** | On June 1st, families enjoyed learning about the wealth of textiles and enjoyed a fabulous marimba concert, an entrepreneurs' bazaar, training workshops, and various activities that marked a fun celebration at the Museum.

✚ **Documenting Textile Techniques** | Audiovisual documentation of five traditional and contemporary Mayan textile production techniques from Guatemala are now available on the Museo Ixchel's YouTube channel thanks to the generous support of Friends of the Ixchel Museum for this project.

✚ **Volunteer Support** | A group of professionals in different academic fields joined the museum's volunteer project and were trained for their roles in different areas that support the Technical Department. *(Photo top left)*



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Insignia cloth detail late 19th/early 20th century

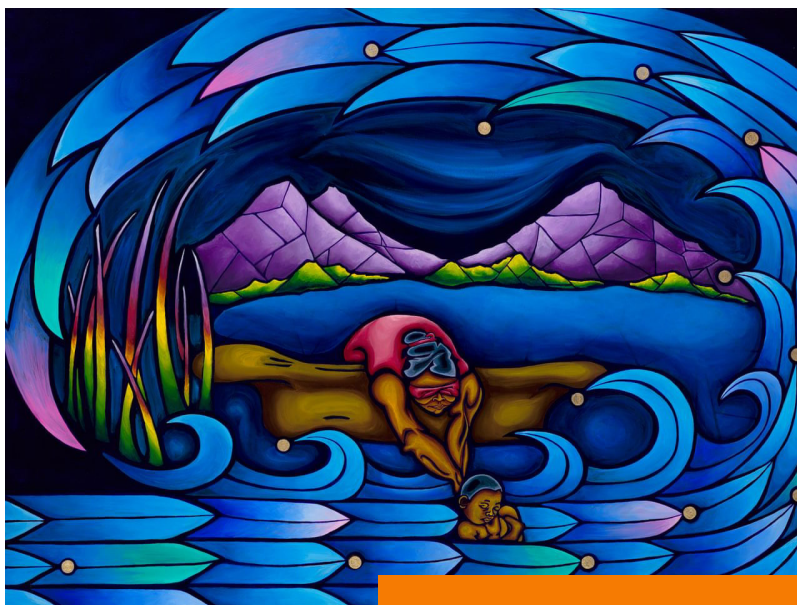
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last decade of the 19th century or the first decade of the 20th.

Dated textiles are important as an anchor to analyze threads, dyes, and iconography as comparison points in time. The insignia cloth dated 1944 has a fairly long inscription in red thread that is pre-dyed with Congo Red. It reads: "Pedro Escobar Camel estuvo de mayordomo y del Santísimo y entrego el 8 de Junio 1944 Recuerdo." It is a remembrance of Pedro Escobar Camel's

service to the *cofradía* and community. The thread that appears steel gray was originally a pre-dyed purple that was not fast. There are accents of yellow and red in the brocaded animal figures. One can see how threads and iconography change over time.

Deuss, K. (2018) *Cofradías: Customs and Costumes among the Guatemalan Maya*, Guatemala Maya Centre.



Virtual Exhibit Showcases Contemporary Art Inspired by Textile Heritage from Guatemala

by Luciana Jabur

The virtual exhibit for our Instagram 2023 Call for Artists is now available. It features over 90 art pieces by creators from across generations and continents, all of whom draw inspiration from the weaving and textile heritage of Guatemala. This digital showcase explores how these traditions contribute to the arts, serving as a bridge for personal narratives, addressing social change, and functioning as aesthetic art forms through their techniques, colors, and patterns.

As you explore the exhibit, you'll gain insights into the unique ways artists incorporate rich Maya traditions into their works across a variety of mediums. Each piece offers a distinct per-

spective on how the textile heritage resonates in deeply personal and diverse ways, as reflected in the artists' testimonials. For instance, Minnesota painter Zamara Cuyún grew up in a family originally from Salcajá, Quetzaltenango, which was involved in creating and distributing traditional Maya *cortes* (jaspé woven skirts); she draws inspiration from vibrant indigenous textiles in her use of color and design (above right). Similarly, Nicaraguan-Guatemalan artist Rosana Lagos, known for her collection of hand-painted ostrich eggs, has expressed her passion, saying, "*Tengo tantas obras inspiradas en tejidos típicos; es que los amo*" (I have so many pieces inspired by traditional textiles; I simply love them).

Explore the full virtual exhibit at
[instagram.com/ixchelfriends_textiles](https://www.instagram.com/ixchelfriends_textiles)
 or [ixchelfriends.org](https://www.ixchelfriends.org)

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
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Corte	\$250		



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.

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

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 Checks should be made payable to Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc.
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 15 Roszel Road, Suite 10 Princeton, NJ 08540 USA

Teamwork Makes the Educational Dream Work!

by Kim Pivaral

The educational team at the museum has launched an exciting new project that has our galleries and workshop buzzing with the energy of elementary, middle school and high school students learning about the role traditional textiles plays in their lives.

The collaborative project between the Ixchel Museum and Banco Industrial (BI) focuses on providing a learning experience that:

- brings to life the stories found in textiles
- builds connection and appreciation for the rich cultural heritage that the collection represents
- fosters new relationships between the museum and kids across Guatemala
- offers students a weaving workshop as well as a class in financial planning.



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How? The team designed take-home workbooks for students to use before and after their visit. These workbooks are important learning tools purposefully aligned with key competency strands within the National Curriculum. The generous support of BI allowed the team to order 9,000 workbooks to give to all students who visit. Just last week, the Vice-Minister of Education stopped by the museum to see the project in action with a group of students from Comalapa. We are so proud of the amazing students that have benefited from this initiative and are looking forward to welcoming more as the project grows.

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