

FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

Supporting The Textile Arts of Guatemala

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ENTREPRENEURS, WEAVERS AND TRADITION-BEARERS, The Weaving for the Future Cooperative of the FOIM

by Yolanda Alcorta

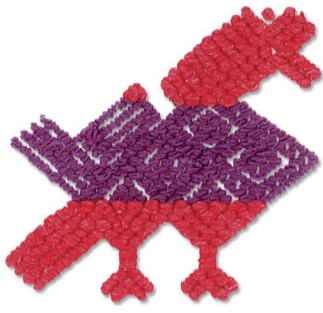
Left: Sánchez Cabrera Family weaving at the Fiesta DC, Washington DC

Right: Angélica López NMAI Art Market 2024 Featuring her framed textiles with Adriel López, maker of friendship bracelets

On Friday evening December 6 at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington DC, our two most entrepreneurial backstrap loom weavers were set up and ready for the preview reception of the 2024 Native Art Market.

They were among the 40 Native American artists selected – and, based on last year, anticipated both a fruitful show and the opportunity to share their Maya textile tradition. This year Angélica López focused on framed weavings which feature the dynamic colors and simple linear and geometric shapes that define the Maya cosmovision. Her striking and decorative weavings are favorites among young buyers. Angélica loves how the long striped warp transforms into a work of art as she weaves. In addition to selling her work at juried art shows with the Cooperative, she now has an online custom business. Florinda López is exploring upcycling gently-used *jaspé cortes* (traditional skirts) to design useful items from this fabric woven on a floor loom. This year she surprised us all with gorgeous *jaspé* men's ties! In addition to Cooperative events, she makes custom *huipiles* by weaving, embroidering and beading them in the latest fashion trends for the US Guatemalan community, now 1 million strong.

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IN THE MUSEUM

by Maya Fledderjohn

✦ Banco Industrial, our largest corporate donor, renewed and expanded its project *Viaje a la Tradición Textil*. This enables 1,500 children from 15 different communities to visit our Museum and learn more about their cultural heritage. During this year, we have already received visits from four schools and three universities. Banco Industrial and the Museo Ixchel share the belief in the opportunities that education provides -- and they have been, for the second consecutive year, a most valuable partner. Their commitment, however, does not stop with schoolchildren. They also host corporate events in our venue and sponsor weavers who come to share their knowledge and skills, additionally finding prospective markets for their products through networking events like *Expandiendo Horizontes: Encuentro de Saberes*. Hopefully this will create substantial strategic alliances with the fashion industry.

✦ The Museum's galleries hosted two photographic exhibits: one with Jorge Aramburú and the other with Jorge Chavarría, who in addition mounted a portrait studio during the exhibit. Meanwhile, our team of volunteers and interns is strong, supporting conservation, education and visitor guide needs. The college interns include students of anthropology, international relations and design.

✦ On February 13th, the museum bestowed the distinguished *Orden del Rupan Plato* on Holly Nottebohm, our long-time powerhouse and supporter. As I said in my speech "Since her arrival in Guatemala, Holly has dedicated herself to exalting the culture of our country, to teaching us to value what is ours, and to rescue the Mayan textile tradition and show it to the world."

✦ Soon it will be Guatemala's turn to host *Encuentro Textiles de las Américas*, a rotating event which we host with support from the FOIM. This year it will be an in-person event held October 22-25. A field trip with participants might take place in Palín or Xenacoj. Details to follow with a probable date of October 24th. Applications are now open for academic proposals.



Top & Center: Participants and panelists at the *Encuentro de Saberes*, March.

Bottom: *Viaje a la Tradición Textil* opening, *Baile de Toritos* (by a Sumpango youth group).



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During Hispanic Heritage month in the Fall, the Cooperative members did what they do best -- demonstrating backstrap loom weaving and interpreting this tradition for diverse audiences at a variety of annual events (GuateFest, Feria del Barrio, Fiesta DC). Victoria Cabrera Sánchez, our youngest weaver (now 13), and her mother Julia Sánchez were a big hit at both Fiesta DC and Philadelphia's Feria del Barrio. They were accompanied by family members playing the traditional *marimba de tecomates* (gourds) and *maracas* (gourd rattles), thus adding a festive musical dimension.

In May, Jenny Juárez organized our weaving demonstrations at schools such as Sidwell Friends School (DC). We always count on her to draw in the students and clearly explain the intricate process of backstrap loom weaving. She also made our participation in WARP's annual meeting (Golden, CO) work seamlessly...even coordinating the development of a wonderful new banner. Jenny continues to develop her weaving skills and has also created a sideline business.

Holly Nottebohm Awarded the Rupan Plato

by Ana-María Zaugg

On February 13th, the Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena awarded its highest honor, **El Orden del Rupan Plato**, to Holly Nottebohm for her many achievements on their behalf. Her impact on the museum and on the FOIM has been incalculable. The event was festive, well-attended, and the laudatory speeches many. Jennifer Leonowens summarized "Your passion for the Guatemalan culture and textiles is truly inspiring, and your ability to rally support from the community nothing short of extraordinary".

Newly-married, Holly moved to Guatemala in 1963, taught at the Colegio Americano, and began raising a family. Introduced to the museum by Baysis Hempstead, she assessed the many needs, and soon decided that fund-raising would be her best value-add. And she was magnificent! Every speech praised not only her concrete results, but also the charm and infectious persistence with which she pursued donors. Standouts among many triumphs included: the conservation of 2,000 pieces from the collection, the Children's Area, the Cantel Gallery, the Caniz Gallery, and the Elevator. "Thanks to her tenacity, tireless enthusiasm, and dedication, the Museum is what it is today" said Marianne Wittkowsky de Echeverría. "She has been the engine behind programs in conservation, research, education and dissemination. She worked on the English translations for textile research

Even earlier in 2024, we participated in CultureFest: Celebrating Women Artists at the Penn Museum (Philadelphia). Julia took time from demonstrating weaving to visit the museum collection with Bill Wierzbowski, Keeper of Collections, American Section. She was thrilled to identify and study some traditional patterns she had not seen since she was a teenager in Guatemala. In addition, she was able to clarify some information about the textiles from the makers' point of view for the curator. This exchange of information is a trend in museums, and the Cooperative's weavers have a wealth of information to share! FOIM is delighted to be the bridge that facilitates these connections.

Looking forward, in 2025 they will continue to share their Maya textile tradition with schools, community events and exhibits. Keep an eye out for FOIM's upcoming exhibit at the Peto Museum (NJ) featuring some of our best textiles. Meet our Weaving for the Future demonstrators personally at the opening exhibit (planned for September)...or make sure to visit some time before December!



Left to Right: Jennifer Leonowens and Maya Fledderjohn with Holly Nottebohm

publications...and educational materials eventually translated into Quiché and Katchiquel." All of this while serving on the Junta Directiva in Guatemala and providing news and materials to FOIM in the US.

Holly was personally responsible for recruiting many of our FOIM directors, several of which still serve on the Board today and/or went to Guatemala for the ceremony. For years, Holly was THE link between the FOIM and the Museo - a true and active "dual member". We always felt informed and involved with the many projects that were underway. We remain grateful for Holly's initiative and guidance for so many years - and if ever an honor was well-deserved, this is it!

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 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.

Please mail this form with your donation to

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MARGOT HELMUTH BLUM SCHEVILL 1931 - 2024

by Raymond Senuk

Margot Blum Schevill died peacefully with family in Berkeley, California in January of 2024 at the age of 92. She was a friend and fellow scholar of Guatemalan textiles for over 40 years. I first met her on one of her summer road trips to the Greater Bay Area (probably 1982 or 83). She stayed a night at my house in St. Louis and of course we talked textiles and looked at my pieces. She did fieldwork in 1978 in San Antonio Aguas Calientes for her Masters in Anthropology at Brown University. I have included a picture of her from that period in San Antonio. Although it is not a very good photo, it shows her with her weaving mentor and dressed in *traje*.

Margot documented the Eisen collection housed at the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology at UC Berkeley, and hers is the definitive work on the



collection. She wrote numerous other books on Guatemalan textiles, curated many exhibits, and is considered to be an expert in the field. She continued to travel to Guatemala well into her 80s and served for many years on the Board of the Friends of the Ixchel Museum.

San Francisco Chronicle Obituary here: [legacy.co/3XyW4dh](https://www.legacy.com/3XyW4dh)



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