



THE MUSEUM

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

In its continuing educational role, Museo Ixchel publishes children's books on textiles. *Una Historia que Contar* by Fabiana Saenz has been available in Spanish for a few years. Now it has been translated into English with the title *A Story to Tell*, and is available in the museum store. Sara Colianni funded the translation, and the publication of 500 copies was made possible by generous grandparents in honor of their five grandchildren.

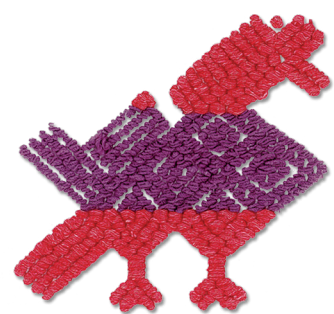
Our never-ending project—the cataloging, photographing and proper storage of the textile collection—has reached another milestone. A year ago, Museo Ixchel was awarded an Ambassador's Grant from the U.S. Embassy. We are proud to report that documentation of 633 *cortes* (skirts) has been completed and a final presentation was made to the Embassy. In conjunction with this project, the grant funded field research to study the state of treadle/foot loom production in Guatemala. Six major weaving centers were visited and documented.

RIGHT: *Una Historia que Contar* by Fabiana Saenz

Outreach educational programs are a core part of the museum's mission. To this end, Rosario Miralbé Polanco coordinated a week-long workshop at Rafael Landívar University on the conservation of textiles. Kennis Kim, conservation specialist from the University of Ottawa, directed the workshop.

Hideo Kojima, an expert in natural dyes and Maya textile specialist, brought six textile specialists from Japan for a tour of the museum and to consult on selected pieces from the collection.

In November, the annual Fundraising Gala honored Friends of the Ixchel Museum for support of the museum over 30 years. We should all be very proud of this recognition!



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FLAVIA DEROSI ROBINSON

Flavia Derossi Robinson passed away in Italy on the 7th of August. Her foundation, The Daniele Agostino Derossi Foundation, funded by her Italian father's achievements and structured as an American foundation by her husband Marshall Robinson, gave generously to women in Latin America. She was a warm friend of museum ever since her visit in 1998, when she funded the showroom and warehouse for ProTeje. Since then, her foundation has supported museum research trips, rural education programs and the publishing of Anne Girard's book of photographs. We will miss her.

WOULD YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE OUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE?—

Please email foiminfo@gmail.com to be put on our mailing list and receive our bulletins in your inbox.

PLEASE VISIT IXCHELFRIENDS.ORG — For information on how you can donate, see the most recent bulletin, and access more in-depth information about indigenous Mayan textiles!



FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

VOLUME TWENTY FIVE • NUMBER TWO • NOVEMBER 2014



FIELD TRIPS AND COFRADÍAS

"Cofradías are religious co-fraternities ... chosen by their peers to act as caretakers of the ritual and civic life of the community."

TOP LEFT: *Cofradía* procession Santiago Sacatepéquez.

TOP RIGHT: *Cofradía* members from Nebaj venerating the feast day of the Assumption of Mary, August 15, 2014.

For the past six years, Friends of the Ixchel Museum has funded two or three research field trips annually. The purpose of these trips is threefold: (1) to visit communities that are not well represented in the photo archive, (2) to gather information about the current state of weaving in each community and (3) to purchase representative contemporary textiles for the museum collection. Each year, field notes are consolidated into a summary report made available to scholars and researchers.

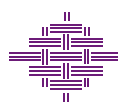
Last year, the museum decided to focus these field trips by visiting communities on dates when *cofradías* are active, ceremonial textiles are in use and the entire community is involved in town festivities. Staff suggested visiting three towns on the feast day of their patron saint. These days are a time

of celebration, renewal and continuity, when the old teach and remember the past and the young learn and participate in the ritual life of the community.

A short introduction to *cofradías* is in order: *Cofradías* are religious co-fraternities of men and women chosen by their peers to act as caretakers of the ritual and civic life of the community. The honor of serving in a *cofradía* carries with it serious responsibilities and investment of both money and time. The *cofradía* is a 'cargo' or redistributive system in which *cofradía* members house saints in their homes and assume the duty of caring for them by providing flowers, candles and food. The members' homes in effect become mini-churches where neighbors come to pray and venerate the saints. The feast day is when the

CONTINUED INSIDE

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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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Checks should be made payable to Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc.

Please mail this form with your donation.

For more information e-mail foiminfo@gmail.com

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.

BE A FRIEND OF THE FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL



As our President's letter makes clear, we are always keen to receive cash donations. But there are other ways to help us honor Mayan textiles by sharing our knowledge and their beauty.

Do think about volunteering your time to ad hoc projects? We are an all-volunteer Board and have a list of

great ideas that we often don't have time to implement. You may also have some great ideas to contribute. Check out the masthead for Board members near you (it's always easier to work together) and let us hear from you. Some of the projects we have on the back burner may require your legal skills, your interest in children adopted from Guatemala, or your connection to organizations that might want to put on an exhibit. On the front burner is the launching of a weaving cooperative in the Washington, DC area as well as community events in all areas of the US. Reach us or any of the board members via foiminfo@gmail.com



FIELD TRIPS AND COFRADÍAS CONTINUED FROM FRONT

saint is venerated by the entire community and thus is an appropriate focus of field research.

On June 24 and 25, the research team of Violeta Gutiérrez (team leader and museum registrar), Armando Mazarriegos (photo archivist and photographer) and Lucia Jiménez (anthropologist and curator in charge of ethnological collections at the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology) traveled to Santiago Sacatepéquez. Santiago is a small town relatively close to Guatemala City and La Antigua Guatemala, with which it shares the same feast day honoring Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala. Santiago Sacatepéquez is a traditional Kaqchiquel speaking community accustomed to visitors.

What happens on the two feast days? When one walks through the central plaza and surrounding streets, the usual market vendors are selling vegetables, fruits and all manner of household wares, but on these days the streets are alive with food vendors, arcades with games of chance and amuse-

ment park rides. The town is preparing for celebration, both civic and religious.

Santiago, the patron saint, is almost always depicted riding a white horse. For the year leading up to the feast day, he has been resident in the homes of different *cofradía* members, and on this morning Santiago is carried ceremonially to the church. High mass is said and his exit from the church is triumphant. Then he is carried through the streets on a wooden litter high above the surrounding crowds. The community wears its best and most elaborate clothing reserved for these special days, making the event an excellent opportunity to document ceremonial dress. Streets are decorated with carpets (*alfombras*) of flowers and pine needles and the smoke of burning incense is heavy in the air. Eventually, the procession makes its way to the new *cofradía* house where the image of Santiago will reside for the next year, venerated in a more modest way than on this feast day. Interestingly, a *cofradía* from San Pedro

“Field trips offer us a glimpse into the state of ritual life in contemporary Mayan communities, and underscore the importance of continuing research and associated documentation.”

Sacatepéquez: Guatemala came to Santiago to help celebrate the day. They arrived in full ceremonial attire. The tradition of the San Pedro *cofradía* is for the senior member to wear her *huipil*, while other women members drape their *huipiles* over their shoulders as shawls. These feast days bring communities together in common celebration.

In the case of Santiago Sacatepéquez, the town name reveals the identity of its patron saint. Other towns do not include their saint's name, but are known only by place name. Sacapulas, a small town strategically located at one of the few bridges that cross the Chicoy River in the department of Quiché, is a village known by place name. The research team visited Sacapulas on August 2 and 3, in order to be present for the feast day of its patron saint, Santo Domingo de Guzmán.

Upon arrival, the team determined that a single *cofradía* remains active in Sacapulas and that the same individual has housed the statues of the saints in his home for five

years. Typically, this venue would change throughout the year, rotating between each member's home. And while there is a close relationship between the Catholic Church and the *cofradías* in many communities, the opposite can also be true. The relationship often depends upon the parish priest; the *cofradía* may be banned from the church and from using church facilities. When this occurs, it can cause confusion for townspeople, who feel torn between their allegiance to the *cofradía* or to the parish priest. On August 3, the church in Sacapulas was guarded so that the *cofradía* could not enter. The *cofradía* was limited to circling one square block, after which it returned to the same house from which they left.

Nonetheless, the community was invited to venerate the saints at the *cofradía* house and partake in a ritual meal. The three statues under *cofradía* care were displayed prominently on an altar with candles and flowers.

BOTTOM LEFT: A woman from Nebaj in full ceremonial attire.

TOP LEFT TO RIGHT:

1. Inside the *cofradía* house of Santiago with senior members of the *cofradía*.
2. High mass for the feast of Santiago. June 25.
3. Nebaj – Offerings at the *cofradía* altar.
4. Sacapulas – *Cofradía* altar with offerings for Santo Domingo de Guzmán.
5. Santiago Sacatepéquez – Images of *cofradía* *huipil* leaving the church in procession.
6. Statue of Santo Domingo in procession surrounded by the silver clad posts of the *anda* (float).

The center statue, of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, is the single statue carried in procession. The *anda* (litter) on which the saint is borne is heavily laden with silver decoration, and the saint wears many silver necklaces. Unfortunately, the future of this *cofradía* is in doubt; this is due partly to its relationship with the church, but also to lack of interest on the part of the next generation.

For its third field trip on August 15 and 16, the team visited Nebaj, also located in the department of Quiché. Nebaj's full name is Santa María Nebaj, and the town celebrates its patron saint on the day of the Assumption of Mary (*Virgen de la Asunción*). The traditional *cofradía* *huipil* was worn by all women members of the *cofradía*, while men wore the traditional red jacket of the *cofrades* (individual members). Inside the church, the *andas* (litters) with the adorned statues of all the active *cofradías* in Nebaj were on display. As well as processions, ritual meals and ritual imbibing, there were traditional dances

and "convite" dances (modern dances with almost any character represented—pop stars, cartoon characters, Greek warriors, etc.). In "convite" dances, participants pay huge fees to the community in order to participate.

Field trips offer us a glimpse into the state of ritual life in contemporary Mayan communities, and underscore the importance of continuing research and associated documentation. Each community preserves its traditions in a unique way. What may be important or significant in one town is not necessarily observed in a neighboring town. If in some cases we are documenting disappearing traditions, we are surely documenting changing traditions in every community.

Thanks to the Museo Ixchel and Armando Mazarriegos for permitting use of field trip photos.

