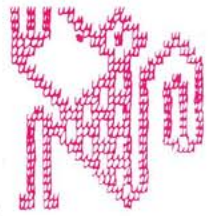


# FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM



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## Mayan Threads at the Mingei



Cover photograph from the Mingei program  
Photo by Rolando Rosito.

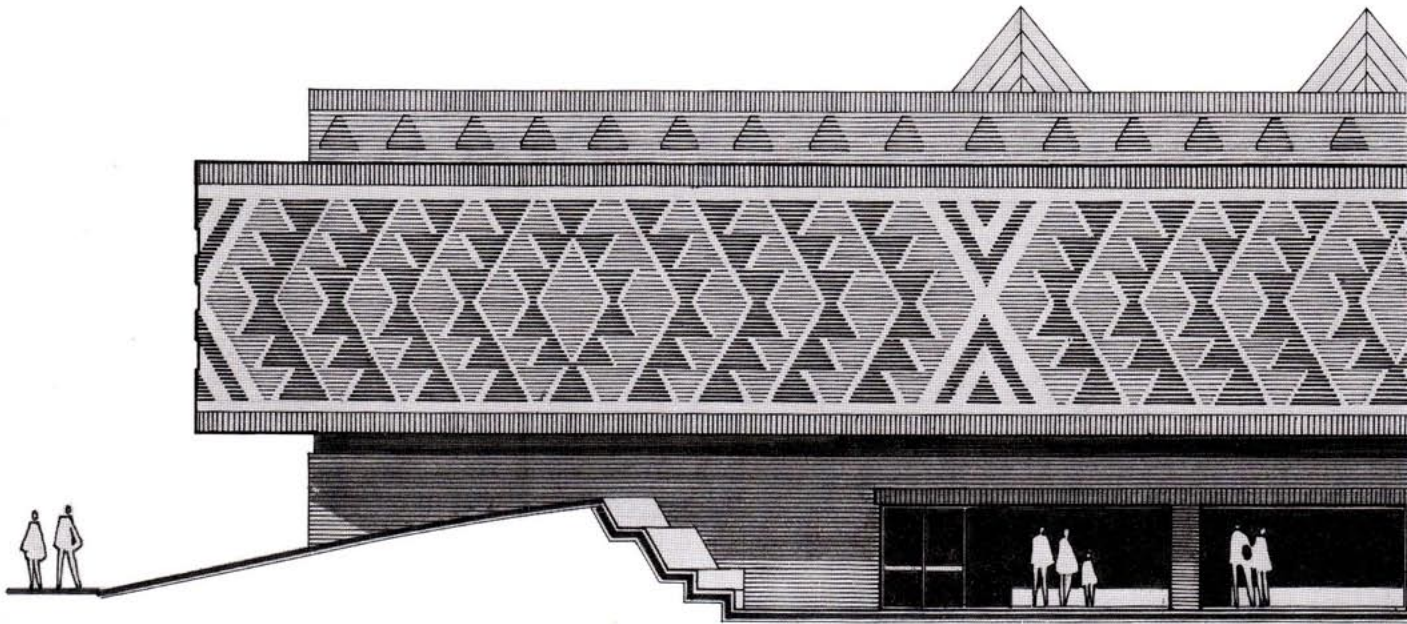
Over 150 of the Ixchel Museum's finest textiles are on exhibit at the Mingei Museum in La Jolla, California, until July 29. Friends of the Ixchel Museum funded the exhibit, which opened March 9.

Martha Longenecker, Director of the Mingei, and Baysis Hempstead, President of the Friends of the Ixchel Museum, were the driving forces behind the show. Rosario Polanco, the Ixchel's Acting Curator, documented the pieces in Guatemala and supervised the mounting of the exhibit in La Jolla. Rafaela Godínez, an expert weaver from San Antonio Aguas Calientes, was invited to weave at the exhibit opening.

Arranged by ethnic group, the textiles are exhibited as woven art rather than as ethnic clothing. Enlarged photographs of Tikal's main plaza and of the Atitlán volcanoes at sunset are on two walls, and on another, color transparencies of weaving details are brightly backlit. A large screen alternates the video "Guatemala and its Textile Traditions" with Rolando Rosito's color slides of Indians in their native costumes.

"You can imagine," says Baysis Hempstead, "that the opening, with bright lights on the weavings, was glorious. Everyone was delighted with the mounting, color, and variety of textiles...There were so many people, perhaps 200 to 300, and they clustered around Rafaela, who was a sensation...The caterer arrived with *rellenitos de frijol*, *chilitos rellenos*, and *rellenitos de carne*, and then the marimba started playing and everyone applauded and all was well..."





## A NEW BUILDING FOR THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

The Ixchel Museum rents a house in Zone 10 of Guatemala City. The building is inadequate in exhibition and storage space, as well as in temperature and humidity controls. The goal of the Ixchel Museum is to build its own museum.

The Francisco Marroquin University has given the Ixchel a site in the cultural center, where the Popul Vuh Museum and the University auditorium will be built. Four architects from the Marroquin School of Architecture--Adolfo Lau, Peter Gieseemann, Agosto de León, and Victor Cohen--have designed a museum (see drawing above), in collaboration with textile experts.

Because conservation and storage of textiles is a specialized field, the U.S. Information Service arranged for a textile conservationist from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City to come as a consultant. The Abegg Foundation of Switzerland also sent a textile expert, and both met with the museum architects.

## Projects Supported by Friends of the Museum

### Cofradía Exhibit

Friends of the Ixchel Museum would like to create an exhibit of the textiles used by the Indian Cofradías (religious brotherhoods) that could be sent abroad. These organizations were introduced by the Spanish in the 16th century as a method of propagating Catholicism among the Maya. Approximately 1000 have survived into the 20th century in Guatemala, and their ritual costumes are some of the finest examples of the weaver's art. These costumes and the way of life they represent are rapidly vanishing. For example, in Santa María de Jesús there are 18 cofradías, nine of men and nine of women. Currently, there are only eight *tenanzas* (the chiefs of the women's cofradías), only seven of whom possess the *sobrehuipil*, the ceremonial overblouse.

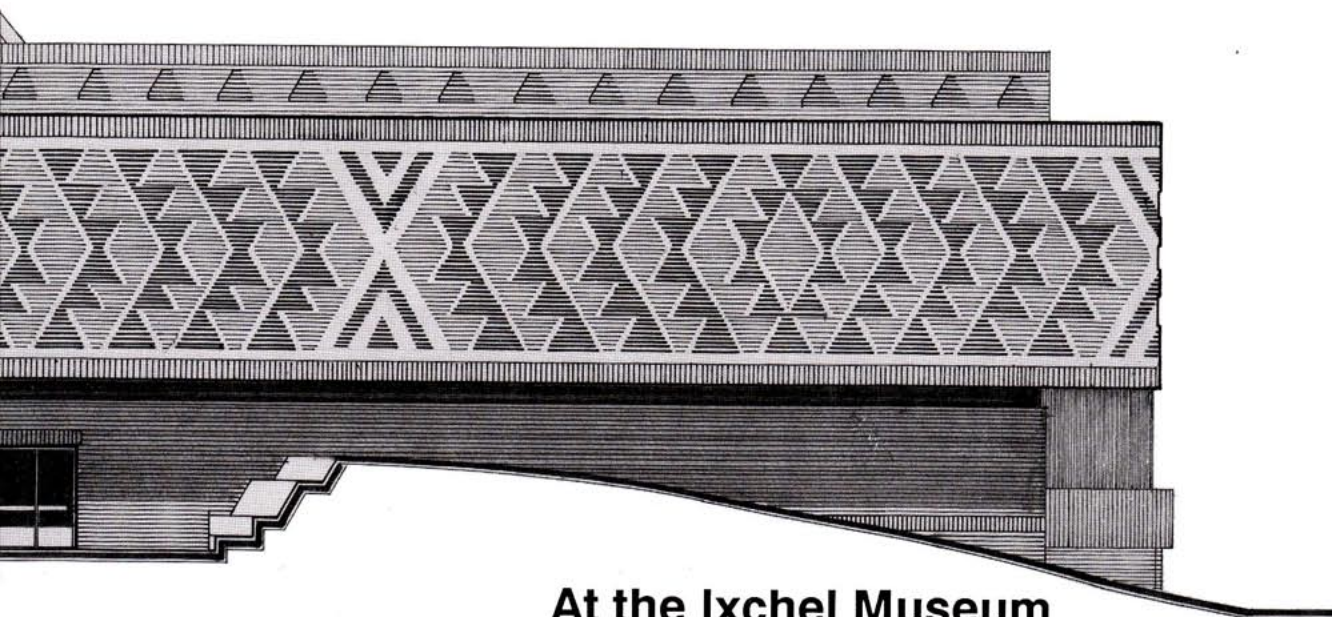
The proposal for the traveling exhibit has been written up and the costs have been estimated by Rosario Polanco, the Museum's Acting Curator; funding is being sought.

### English Translations of Research Monographs

Every Ixchel Museum regional exhibit is accompanied by a research monograph published in Spanish. This anthropologic research is the most valuable work the museum does: the careful documentation of weaving techniques and designs unique to distant areas of Guatemala, within their cultural context. For example, the Sololá book focused on the *tzute*, a part of the ceremonial costume, as an indicator of rank within the political-religious hierarchy; the theme of the Colotenango monograph is seasonal migration of agricultural workers and its influence on the regional textiles.

Friends of the Ixchel Museum has established a revolving fund to print English translations of the monographs. The Comalapa, Sololá, and Colotenango monographs are now available in English; the translation of the Santa María de Jesús monograph will be available soon.





## At the Ixchel Museum

### Zunil Exhibit

"The Valley of Zunil and its Surroundings," this year's standing exhibit, is devoted to four neighboring towns of the Quiché ethnic group: Santa Catarina Zunil, Almolonga, Cantel, and Quetzaltenango.

In one room on the first floor, mannequins of women draw water in front of a large photograph at dawn; in another, mannequins wearing costumes from Zunil, Almolonga, Cantel, and Quetzaltenango buy and sell their wares at the Zunil market. Particularly fine Almolonga textiles from the turn of the century are displayed in the main hall.

On the second floor, mannequins embroider intricate huipiles in Cantel, worship the Virgin of the Rosary in Quetzaltenango, and sit leisurely at home in Zunil.

### Board Meeting and Election of Officers

The annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc., was held in Guatemala City, April 25, 1990. A slate of officers was proposed and elected, and the board for the next two-year term is:

Mrs. Lucie G. Hempstead,  
Honorary Chairman of the Board  
Mr. Joseph J. Borgatti, President  
Mrs. Lois Stratton, Vice-President  
Mr. Scott M. Hand, Treasurer  
Mrs. Edna Glee Poll, Secretary  
Mrs. Charles H. Davis  
Mr. Phillip Herrera  
Mrs. Johann D. Nottebohm  
Mrs. Mary E. Roche  
Mrs. Charles L. Stillman

### Donations to Friends of the Ixchel Museum

Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc., is an American foundation which funds projects that bring the ongoing museum research and exhibits to the attention of Americans. The foundation's aims are to bring Guatemalan textiles exhibits to the United States and to translate the museum research monographs into English.

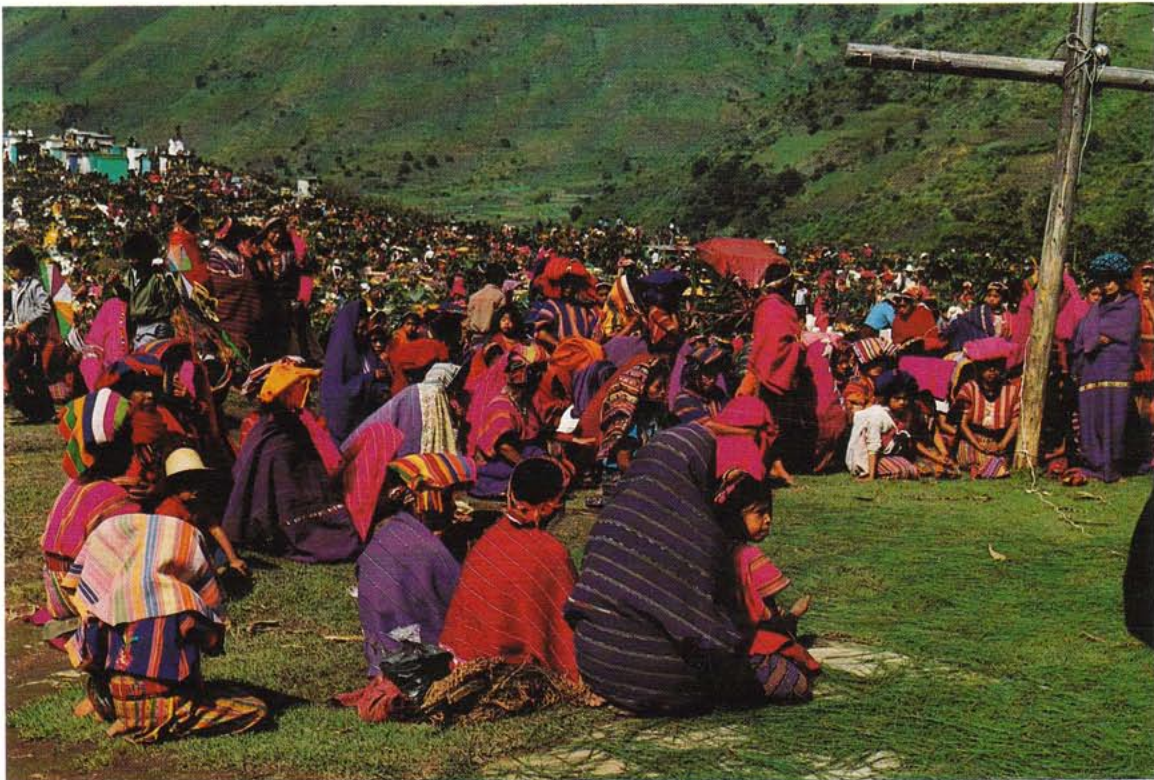
You can become a supporter of the Ixchel Museum's work by contributing to Friends of the Ixchel Museum. Friends of the Ixchel Museum is incorporated under the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law of the State of New York and has received a ruling from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service that it qualifies as an organization to which donations may be made which are deductible by the donor for U.S. Federal income tax purposes.

Checks drawn to the name of the Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc., may be mailed to:

Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc.  
P.O. Box 340  
Peck Slip Station  
New York, NY 10272



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THE COLORS OF ZUNIL: This photograph; taken near the cemetery at Zunil, captures the brilliance of the textiles against the vivid green backdrop of the landscape. Photo by Rosario Miralbés de Polanco.