

 **SUMMER 2023** 

# LATIN AMERICAN ART PATRONS



## SAVE THE DATE

### ***Popol Vuh and the Maya Art of Storytelling***

**TMA Exhibit opens on Thursday, May 4**

Enjoy an artist talk with Justin Favela, a family fiesta, live marimba music by Amilcar Guevara and Homero Cerón, art and gallery activities and more!

*The sacred story known as the Popol Vuh describes a K'iche Maya vision of the origins of the world and the actions and exploits of two heroic twin brothers who descend to the underworld to conquer Death. One of the most important recorded stories of the Indigenous Americas, the Popol Vuh has inspired countless artists of the 20th and 21st centuries, among them the Guatemalan modern artist Carlos Mérida, who created a series of images inspired by the Popol Vuh now in the TMA permanent collection.*

### **Special Curator Tour for LAAP Members**

May 11 at 11:30 am

followed by no-host lunch at La Cocina

**RSVP by May 10th to:**

**Kathi Sanders**

**kathisandersarizona@gmail.com**

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

## SUE ERICKSON NIELAND



Spring is springing, the season of amarillo is upon us, and after a cool winter the thermometer has already hit 99 degrees! It's difficult for snowbirds to leave Tucson in April when the desert is at its most beautiful but . . . returning to Michigan means returning to family!

LAAP has had a tremendous year of programming including lectures, gallery tours, parties, and travel! I was fortunate to be among those who spent a few days exploring northern Chihuahua in February. We learned so much about its history, culture, fauna, flora, and geology not to mention experiencing the “Miracle of Mata Ortiz” and the spectacular work of the region's potters.

My letter is all about thanks because it takes the efforts of many to make our events possible! Thanks to our hard-working board:

David Andres, Stevie Mack, Nancy McCluskey-Moore, Kathi Sanders and Donna Whitman. Your commitment to LAAP and TMA is matched only by your creativity and energy!

Thanks to our retiring Board members who among them have provided decades of service and thousands of volunteer hours: Irene Bucher, Marletta Wagner, Rebekah Chapman, and Susan Casteloes. Irene has graciously hosted parties and staffed fundraisers through the years; Marletta became our “institutional memory,” Rebekah has been our treasurer for many years, and Susan took our membership rolls from the Stone Age to the digital age. You all will be missed but we hope to see you at future events.

Thanks for “agreeing to serve” to our new Board members: Kathleen Collins, Diane Dale, Alex Macías, and Sharon Oliver. We will introduce them to our membership at future events and in our newsletter.

Thanks to Kristopher Driggers, conservateur extraordinaire! Your knowledge, insights, and cheerful spirit have made my presidency a pleasure!

Thanks to Cassandra Prescott and her family for elegantly hosting our Annual Meeting in their art-filled home on a gorgeous day in the desert!

And finally, thanks to our members at all levels: Benefactor, Patron, Family, and Individual: your dues are the backbone of our fundraising!

We're excited about our schedule of events for the fall and winter and will try a few things that have not been done before. We encourage you to join us by renewing your membership in June!

Hasta luego,

Sue



*LAAP members and their guests enjoyed gathering at the beautiful home of Cassandra Prescott and her family to meet friends old and new and dine on a delicious catered Mexican lunch. The Board for 2023-24 was elected and retiring Board members thanked for their service.*

# LETTER FROM THE CURATOR



Dear LAAP Members,

What a fantastic start to the year we have had as Latin American and Latinx art lovers in Tucson!

Of course, our trip to Mata Ortiz, Chihuahua was a highlight: Not only did we witness firsthand the fluid work of the town's ceramic artists (and learn more than many of us thought possible about the geology of our region), but we also made friends with Latin American art enthusiasts as well. Just a few weeks before the trip, curator Victoria Lyall taught us about La Malinche, the young

Indigenous woman at the heart of Mexico's conquest-period history, and reminded us that artists lead the way in contending with the past. And before that still, a visit to Galería Mitotera and Pidgin Palace Arts introduced us to Melo Dominguez and Melissa Brown-Dominguez, who are doing the crucial work of supporting artists and building community.



*LAAP members toured the Casa de Rasquache exhibition at Pidgin Palace Arts and enjoyed lunch at American Eat Company.*

Of course, all of these programs are made possible thanks to the work of our organization's indefatigable Board. This season brings the retirement of four longtime Board members and supporters: Irene Bucher, Rebekah Chapman, Susan Casteloes, Marletta Wagner. Each of them has given their skills to LAAP for many years, and we are lucky to have benefitted from their ideas and their service. Speaking personally, it has been a joy to work with each of them – and I am happy that we will still see them at future LAAP events.

In case you haven't been to a recent program, not to worry: There is much more to come for Latin American art at TMA in the next few months!

An important Maya story is the subject of a new exhibition opening on May 4th: *Popol Vuh and the Maya Art of Storytelling*. Join us for the opening that evening, when artist Justin Favela will be performing a family fiesta sure to be of interest to many of our members (plus, there will be a Oaxacan food truck at the Museum that night!). Then, come back to TMA on May 11th for a special LAAP tour, where I'll dig deeper into the show and the Popol Vuh's meanings.

As always, thank you for your support of Latin American Art at TMA. I look forward to seeing you at one of our programs soon!

Kristopher Driggers

Associate Curator, Bernard and Jeanette Schmidt Curator of Latin American Art

## ON THE ROAD AGAIN: LAAP TRIP TO MATA ORTIZ

On February 24 through 29th, LAAP took its first post-Covid road trip, led by South of the Border Tours. It was a fantastic journey into the high Chihuahuan Desert Plateau to the village of Juan Mata Ortiz to visit some of the finest potters in Mexico. Our first stop was Dragoon and the Amerind Museum. We received a welcome from Eric Kaldahl who explained the museum's history. After touring the museum, we dined on a delicious lunch prepared by the tour company. We then departed for the border. After we passed immigration and customs, we proceeded to the Hotel Hacienda Nuevo Casas Grandes where we checked in and ate dinner.



*Our trip began with a visit to the Amerind Museum followed by lunch on the patio.*

The next day, we went to Paquimé, a UNESCO Heritage Site, and walked around the ruins accompanied by our tour guide, Jesús García, Cultural Conservation Research Associate with the Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum. Unfortunately, due to roof leaks, the Cultures of the North Museum was closed for repairs. However, the ruins alone were fascinating. Fred Nials, a geomorphologist who specializes in the stratigraphy of archeological sites, provided valuable information about how to “read the land” at the site and the surrounding terrain.



*We walked the ruins of Paquimé, where magnificent pottery was produced in the 1200-1450 periods. It was the discovery of pottery from Paquimé that inspired the revival of pottery in the 20th century now known now as Mata Ortiz pottery.*

Then we went to the home of Juan Quezada for a lecture on paint pigments and a pot firing. His family members were very welcoming and eager to explain their craft. Quezada spent decades perfecting the techniques of preparing the clay, shaping and painting pots and then firing them. He not only shared his knowledge (did you know a brush made with a child’s hair is the best way to apply pigments?) with his extended family, but also with members of his community.



*Dirt from a local site is immersed in water and strained several times to create malleable clay. The bottom of the pot is shaped using a plaster mold, then the sides are shaped by hand. Pigments are then painted onto the air-dried pot.*



*The exterior of a metal “kiln”, which looks like a large upside-down bucket, is layered with pine and cottonwood. The wood is then set on fire using diesel fuel as an accelerant. Once the wood has turned to ash and the metal container cooled, it is removed to reveal the fired pots.*

We explored the town of Mata Ortiz, visiting the galleries and homes of local pottery artisans and buying beautiful examples of their craft. Tired, and with lighter wallets, we returned to the hotel for dinner.

Our plans for the third day crashed into a major weather change – high winds and much cooler temperatures. After all, this was the day Tijuana had a snow storm! However, our tour company was resourceful. Jesús provided a lecture on how lassos used for ranch work and rodeo performances are made. It was a fascinating presentation and a wonderful indoor activity. We then had a delicious lunch catered by the staff of Restaurant Malmedy and another demonstration of how Mata Ortiz pots are created. We drove around Nuevo Casa Grandes, seeing the homes, churches and orchards owned by the Mormons who moved there in 1885. After returning to the hotel to freshen up, we had our farewell dinner at Restaurant Malmedy with Belgian chef Phillippe Gentes.

On the last day, we returned to Tucson via Agua Prieta, enjoying a fabulous lunch at perhaps the best taquería in Mexico, Los Apson, owned by the Mexican band of the same name. All in all, it was a great trip – we came, we saw, we learned and we brought home wonderful pottery – who could ask for more?



## FUTURE LAAP/TMA EVENTS

**May through October – Donate items for the LAAP booth at the TMA Artisan Market in November.** Kathi Sanders will arrange to pick up donations through the summer. Please contact her by email: [kathisandersarizona@gmail.com](mailto:kathisandersarizona@gmail.com) or phone: 404.313.2021

**September – (date to be determined) Museum of Contemporary Art Visit  
Sonoran Quipu by Cecilia Vicuña**

This exhibit features a sprawling sculpture made from natural and human debris into a living installation.

**October – (date to be determined) Curator tour at TMA  
CUMBI: Textiles, Society and Memory in Andean South America**

In Inka culture, the Quechua word cumbi described exquisite textiles that were among the finest works ever produced in South America.



These elaborate, tapestry-woven designs were made to be worn by an emperor. This exhibit takes a new look at 2,000 years of art in Andean tradition, showing ancient textiles alongside the work of contemporary Latin American and Latinx artists inspired by ancestral weaving.

**October 27 – Howl at TMA**

In celebration of Halloween, enjoy interactive art, music, performances, drinks, and experiences from

6:00 to 9:00 pm! Tickets are \$35 for members and available at [tucsonmuseumofart.org/howl](http://tucsonmuseumofart.org/howl).

**November 17 through 19 – LAAP Booth at the Artisan Market**

Volunteers will be needed to help staff our booth. Whether you are selling or shopping, be sure to visit the LAAP booth and discover items you *MUST* add to your collection!

**December 3 – Holiday Baking Class at La Estrella Bakery**

The class, featuring cookies from Mexico, South America and/or Central America, will be led by sisters Etecia and Isabella. *Limited to 14 participants.*





# WHAT TO SEE THIS SUMMER

While the life in the desert may be slower during the summer, there are still plenty of exhibits for Latin American art lovers to see. Time to “hit the road!”

## The Desert Caballeros Museum in Wickenburg

**Artesanía del Pueblo: Mexican Folk Art** is open to the public through October 1, 2023.

The exhibit is a journey into diverse, colorful art from various regions of Mexico. Items are made for utilitarian or decorative purposes or created for celebrations, festivities, or religious rites.

## Phoenix Art Museum

**Juan Francisco Elso: Por América** (located in the Steele Gallery) is open through September 17, 2023. The exhibit investigates the brief yet significant career of the late Juan Francisco Elso, a member of the first generation of artists born and raised in post-revolutionary Cuba.

**Migration Stories: Arizona Collects Cuban Art** (in the first floor Katz Wing), features contemporary artworks that explore the complex histories of Cuban exile.

**Mission and Legacy: Friends of Mexican Art’s Enduring Impact in the Valley and Beyond**, (in James K. Ballinger Gallery) celebrates the enduring influence of Friends of Mexican Art on the PhxArt Collection through outstanding works by the most renowned Mexican artists of the 20th and 21st centuries.

## ASU Art Museum

**A pattern, a trace, a portrait: Four Artists from CALA Alliance’s Residency Program** open through June 18, 2023. The exhibit showcases new and existing work by Carolina Aranibar-Fernández, Diana Calderón, Estrella Esquilín and Sam Frésquez. These regional Latinx artists each present discrete installations that weave together universal themes of memory, loss and grief while highlighting issues related to place and the destruction of our natural environment.

## New Mexico Museum of Art (in Santa Fe)

**Manuel Carrillo: Mexican Modernist.** Mexican photographer Manuel Carrillo (1906-1989) turned to the camera fairly late in life, joining the Club Fotográfico de México at the age of 49. He quickly found his voice by making images of everyday life throughout Mexico, celebrating local culture and the human spirit.

## Museum of International Folk Art (in Santa Fe)

**La Cartonería Mexicana (The Mexican Art of Paper and Paste).** Mexican cartonería uses simple materials of paste, cardboard, and paper to create a diverse array of subjects such as piñatas, dolls, Day of the Dead skeletons, and fantastical animals called alebrijes. The first exhibition to focus exclusively on a Mexican folk art tradition in many years, La Cartonería Mexicana includes more than 100 historic sculptures from the Museum of International Folk Art’s Permanent Collection, and many have never been displayed.

# NOTA BENE

## LAAP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Sharon Oliver  
Kristopher Driggers, Curator

### **Cover images (left to right)**

*Maya, Vessel with Supernatural Beings (Wayo'ob), 600 – 900 A.D., Guatemala, Clay, polychrome slip. Collection of the Tucson Museum of Art. Museum Purchase. 1980.12.*

*Detail of Justin Favela, Estampas del Popol Vuh after Carlos Mérida. Photo of Michael Palma Mir, Museo del Barrio.*

*Photo of Justin Favela by Mikayla Whitmore.*

*Carlos Mérida, Plate nine from Popol Vuh portfolio, 1943, color lithograph. Collection of the Tucson Museum of Art. Gift of Amy Adams. 2021.5.2.9.*