



IDB Cultural Center
Inter-American Development Bank
1300 New York Avenue, N. W.
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Information Bulletin No. 84

At the Gates of Paradise: *Art of the Guaraní of Paraguay*



open September 8, 2005 to January 20, 2006

On the cover, from top left:

Reflejos de la esencia Aché (Reflections of the Aché People), n/a.

Photo by Bjarne Fostervold, photographer, b. Cochabamba, Bolivia, 1958

94 x 125 cms

Private collection

Gargoyle (architectural decoration), first half of the 18th century

Carved stone

h: 35 cm; w: 50 cm; d: 70 cm

Property of the National Secretariat of Tourism, Collection of the Lythic Museum of the Jesuit Mission of the Guaraní of the Holy Trinity, Paraguay

Photo: Juan Carlos Meza

Aché Family (Familia Aché), n/a.

Cedar wood

Female: h: 2 m; d: 23 cm; w: 25 cm;

male: h: 1.50 m; d: 25 cm; w: 34 cm;

girl: h: 92 cm; d: 18 cm; w: 20 cm;

boy: h: 80 cm; d: 15 cm; w: 24 cm

Private collection of Ysanne Gayet, Areguá, Paraguay

Photo: Juan Carlos Meza

Tatarendy'y or Ava Kue Chiripa Altar, 1995

By the Ethnic group Ava Guaraní (Tupi Guaraní)

Various types of wood

Altar: h: 2 m; w: 20 cm; l: 1.45 m; Batea: 27 cm; w: 28 cm; l: 2.41 m

Property of the Guido Boggiani Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum, San Lorenzo, Paraguay

Photo: Juan Carlos Meza

**The Cultural Center
of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**

announces the opening of the

**At the Gates of Paradise:
*Art of the Guaraní of Paraguay***

from September 8, 2005 to January 20, 2006

Rev. Bartomeu Melià, Jesuit Priest

“The Land without Evil is still a land. Hence it is not a paradise that will be found later, in another life. When the Guaraní mythically project this land, they do not see it as an Eden. They always see it as a land in this life. It is a land that is not up above but within the horizontal dimension. This is very important because we are beginning dialogue with a conception that is beyond other conceptions. Inasmuch as it is Earth, it tends to be good. The Guaraní have an aesthetic view of Earth. For the Guaraní, the Earth is a beautiful body on which trees are like long hair, the skin is sometimes shining, sparkling, and manifestations of soil erosion are diseases. This is within the conception that we call mythic, but for them it is a very real conception.”

Washington, D.C., September 1, 2005

The exhibit ***At the Gates of Paradise: Art of the Guaraní of Paraguay*** unites a number of artistic expressions of the *Guaraní* Indians of Paraguay, from the colonial period to the present. The objects include 65 pieces including statuary, both sacred and secular, photographs, videos, and contemporary art. All of the art works allow for a better understanding of the *Guaraní* culture that transmits knowledge fundamentally through an oral tradition, but has also come to assimilate a number of influences, modifying them to their own needs. The exhibition will open at the Art Gallery of the Cultural Center of the Inter-American Development Bank on September 8, 2005.

The Curator of the exhibit is Félix Ángel, General Coordinator and Curator of the IDB Cultural Center. He was assisted by Oscar Centurión Frontanilla, a Paraguayan citizen, and Cultural Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The objects were selected from the collections of the National Museum of Fine Arts in Asunción; the Center for Visual Arts/Museo del Barro, in Asunción; the Lythic Museum of the Jesuit Mission of the Guaraní of the Holy Trinity, in Trinidad; the Archaeological and Ethnographic Guido Boggiani Museum, in San Lorenzo; Asociación Faro para las Artes in Asunción; the private collection of Ysanne Gayet, in Areguá; photographers Juan Aníbal Britos Basualde and Bjarne Fostervold, and contemporary artists Marité Zaldívar and Lucy Yegros.

In her introduction to the catalogue, Mirna Liévano de Márques, IDB External Relations Advisor, expresses that “It is a great honor for the Cultural Center of the Office of External Relations of the Inter-American Development Bank to present the exhibition, “At the Gates of Paradise: Art of the Guaraní of Paraguay,” as a homage by the Bank to the indigenous communities of this South American country.

“Exploring Guaraní culture (or the portion of it that still reaches us) is a necessary and beneficial exercise because it helps us understand the perception of reality that determines—both in the Guaraní and in ourselves—our vision of the past, and also our image and expectations for the future. The IDB seeks to understand not only the needs, but also the aspirations of communities. The challenge must be not to eliminate cultural differences but to reconcile them.”

In previous years, the IDB Cultural Center has organized exhibitions focusing on the indigenous communities of Bolivia, Peru, and Guatemala; others have examined how indigenous cultures have shaped the identity of many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The theme and focus of the present exhibit also offers an appropriate occasion for the Cultural Center to pay tribute and express its deep gratitude to the President of the IDB, Enrique V. Iglesias who, thirteen years ago, conceived the idea of creating the Cultural Center amid widespread skepticism. The catalogue also contains a summary of the many achievements of the Cultural Center, which confirms just how right President Iglesias was when he decided that culture is an integral element in the process of development.

“It is not just some of us, but all of us who must learn to live in harmony with others, with nature, and with the customs of others in order to make material progress and prevent our differences from interfering with the common good”, Mrs. Liévano continues to say. “That is how we will achieve this *land without evil* that the Guaraní have always sought to protect, which all of us very much need to discover and for which President Iglesias has labored in imagining and in building.”

Three scholars long associated with the study of the Guaraní have contributed with essays for the catalogue: Reverend Bartomeu Meliá, a Jesuit priest originally from Porreres (in the Balearic Islands), has lived in Paraguay since 1954, and specializes in anthropological, linguistic and philosophical studies on the Guaraní culture. Margarita Miró Ibars, born in Paraguay, has participated in a number of government initiatives aimed at helping the Guaraní to develop and sustain their culture and way of life; and Ticio Escobar, also from Paraguay, a lawyer and art

critic, founder of the Indigenous Museum of Paraguay and founding member of the Commission of Solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples.

The IDB Cultural Center would like to thank all persons and institutions in Paraguay who helped make this exhibition possible, especially: Her Excellency Leila Rachid Cowles, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Asunción, Paraguay; Orlando Ferreira Caballero, Alternate Executive Director for Paraguay at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); His Excellency James Spalding, Ambassador of Paraguay to the White House, Washington, DC; Sofia López Garelli, Minister, Embassy of Paraguay, Washington DC; Alejandra Artigas and Tania Plate, Cultural Officers, Cultural Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asunción; Ministry of Education and Culture, and National Secretariat of Tourism, Asunción. The Cultural Center is also grateful to Alvaro Cubillos, IDB Representative in Asunción; and to Marta Maldonado de Corvalán, EXR Officer at the IDB Representation in Asunción.

A private reception will be hosted by the Cultural Center in the days to follow. A number of special guests have confirmed their attendance including: Enrique V. Iglesias, President of the IDB; Leila Rachid Cowles, Paraguay's Minister of Foreign Affairs; Orlando Ferreira Caballero, Alternate Executive Director for Paraguay at the IDB; Ambassador of Paraguay, James Spalding; and Ambassador Manuel María Cáceres Cardozo, Permanent, Representative of Paraguay to the Organization of American States.

Selection of works in the exhibition



Indigenous Couple, n/a.

Wood and traditional ornaments
of the Guaraní people

Female: h: 88 cm; w: 19 cm; d: 19 cm;

male: h: 1 m; w: 27 cm; d: 17 cm

Private collection of Ysanne Gayet,

Areguá, Paraguay

Photo: Juan Carlos Meza



Ao Ñe'é (The Language of Clothes), 2002

by Marité Zaldívar

b. Paraguay 1955

(María Teresa Carolina Zaldívar Rolón)

Carved *porongos* (gourds) and *caraguata* fabric

h: 1.25 m; w: 39 cm; d: 25cm

Private collection

Photo: Juan Carlos Meza



Apyka (Seat), 1990

Lucy Yegros (M. M. Luciana Yegros)

b. Asunción, Paraguay 1940

Mixed media on wood

h: 41 cm; w: 89 cm; d: 60 cm

Private Collection, Asunción, Paraguay

Photo: Juan Carlos Meza



Reflejos de la esencia Aché (Reflexions of the Aché People), n/a

by Bjarne Fostervold, photographer,

b. Cochabamba, Bolivia 1958

photograph

94 x 115 1/2 cms

Private collection

Exhibition

The exhibition will run from September 8, 2005 to January 20, 2006. A free bilingual brochure in English and Spanish will be available to the public. Photographs of the artworks on exhibit are available upon request. For photographs, please call 202 623 1213.

The Art Gallery is open five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., free of charge.

For guided tours of groups of ten or more (in English and Spanish) and for additional information about the IDB Cultural Center and its programs, please call (202) 623-3774.



The IDB Cultural Center is located at 1300 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. The nearest Metro station is Metro Center (13th Street exit). All the events are free of charge.

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