



IDB Cultural Center
Inter-American Development Bank
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Information Bulletin No. 92

Guatemala

Past and Future



Computer-reconstructed and digitally configured panoramic view of the **City of Tikal**,
which is part of an interactive project created by Studio ©, S.A.

Photo: Courtesy of Studio ©, S.A.

Washington, D.C.
Open February 7 to May 4, 2007

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

announces the opening of the

Guatemala Past and Future

Open February 7 to May 4, 2007

An exhibition honoring Guatemala and its capital city, Site of the 48th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The **Past** makes reference to the Mayan traditions. The **Future** is represented by digital renderings of ancient Mayan cities, the Central Corridor Project and the Center for Art and Technology, as conceived by Oscar-nominated Carlos Argüello (*The Chronicles of Narnia*).

The exhibit is complemented with a section on the Petén region and a digitally restored version of the "Canvas of Quauhquechollan," a painting executed by Indians in the early period of the Spanish conquest of Guatemala.

Washington, D.C., February 2, 2007

An exhibition organized by the IDB Cultural Center in homage to Guatemala – site of the 48th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Inter-American Development Bank – with an optimistic view toward the future while learning lessons from the past, will open at the IDB Cultural Center (CCN) gallery on February 7, 2007. The opportunity is propitious for the IDB to offer a tribute to the Maya Nation, recognizing its significant cultural legacy, and for young Guatemalans who must now take up their country's hopes, and goals, to meet their expectations.

Guatemala: Past and Future comprises six modules organized in chronological order. The first module focuses on the legacy of the Mayas, a people who have lived in Mesoamerica for thousands of years and reached spectacular magnificence around 900 AD. The evidence of Mayan culture is found in many discovered cities, mainly in what is today Guatemala, Southern Mexico, Honduras and Belize. At the pinnacle of Mayan development, they produced wonderful artifacts now in the possession of Guatemalan museums and institutions worldwide, including Washington's Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and Dumbarton Oaks.

The second module illustrates the restoration of the *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan*, rendered digitally by Studio ©, S.A. According to experts, this important painting, which dates back to the conquest of Mesoamerica by the Spaniards, was made between 1526 and 1527. Initially it was believed that the work – now at the Casa del Alfeñique Museum in Puebla, Mexico – described the conquest of central Mexico; but in 2004, thanks to studies done by the Dutch researcher Florine Asselbergs, it was established that in fact it was about the conquest of Guatemala and other Central American lands. Digital restoration makes it possible to see what the original canvas was like, and provides an excellent demonstration of how technology can help us understand the past. In the exhibit, a printed reproduction of the digitally restored canvas near its original size has been included as well as an interactive program that viewers can explore with the help of a computer.

The exhibition's third module centers on the work of Carlos Mérida (1891-1984), who is unquestionably the most important precursor of modern art in Guatemala, and one of the most outstanding Latin American artists of the first half of the twentieth century. His works in the show are inspired in the *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the Mayas, and were loaned by the Organization of American States Art Museum of the Americas.

The fourth module is devoted to the Petén region of Guatemala, which is regarded as an invaluable natural and cultural resource. In recent decades the region of Petén has been subjected to conditions highly unfavorable to its preservation and utilization, but fortunately that situation is now being reversed, thanks to the implementation of measures aimed at preserving its sustainability. The IDB has worked with Guatemalan authorities to ensure the sustainable development of the region.

The fifth module highlights the Art and Technology Center in Guatemala, an initiative spearheaded by Carlos Argüello, creator of Studio ©, S.A. in association with the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). The primary aim of this center is to incorporate technology as a training tool for young people to further progress and development in Guatemala.

The exhibition concludes with one of the most important components of the exhibit. The sixth module features various interactive digital displays prepared by Studio ©, S.A. which make it possible to appreciate what a Mayan city in pre-Columbian times looked like at its zenith. Recreated with examples of existing architectural ruins, the display also includes the restoration of the Palace of the Captain General, in the Old Capital of Guatemala (known as Antigua Guatemala). Last but not least, videos propose actions to mitigate social problems affecting

Guatemala today. Technology offers alternatives for progress, including the urban renovation of the Central Corridor, planned for the year 2020.

The Curator of the exhibit is Félix Ángel, General Coordinator and Curator of the IDB Cultural Center. The exhibit has been organized with the advice and cooperation of Eduardo Cofiño, Special Advisor for the President of Guatemala on the Sustainable Development of the Petén Region; and Carlos Argüello, Founder and Director, Studio ©, S.A.

The IDB Cultural Center would like to thank the other persons and institutions that contributed to make this exhibition possible. In Guatemala City: Ervin Salvador López Aguilar, General Director, Office of Cultural and Natural Patrimony; Angel Arturo González, Manager of the Permanent Cultural Program of the Paiz Foundation; Claudia Monzón Sosa de Jiménez, Director of the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology; José Mario Maza P., Director of the Carlos Mérida National Museum of Modern Art; artist Elmar Rojas, Founder and Director of the Elmar Rojas Cultural Center; and Studio ©, S.A. staff. Special thanks go to Phillippe Dewez, IDB Representative in Guatemala, and the staff under his leadership. In Washington, D.C.: Alexandra Hill, Fundación C.A. (Studio ©, S.A.). In Los Angeles: Rafael Negrón (Studio ©, S.A.). Hewlett Packard is providing the technology for the interactive projects.

The IDB Cultural Center is proud to present this exhibition of the remarkable achievements of Guatemalan culture. The delegation coming from Guatemala includes by Hugo Beteta, IDB Governor representing Guatemala at the Board of Governors of the IDB and Minister of Finance of Guatemala; Manuel Salazar, Minister of Culture of Guatemala; Eduardo Cofiño, Special Advisor for the President of Guatemala on the Sustainable Development of the Petén Region; Carlos Argüello, Studio ©, S.A. and 10 children who are trained to use this technology and will demonstrate how these interactive projects work. From the IDB, Nelly Lacayo-Anderson, Alternate Executive Director for Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua; as well Luis Alberto Moreno, President of the IDB will preside at the opening to inaugurate the exhibit, along with members of the Guatemala diaspora and representatives of the cultural institutions of the City of Washington.

Selection of works in the exhibition



Estampas del Popol Vuh

from the portfolio of ten lithographs executed in Paris in 1943, by Guatemalan modernist forerunner Carlos Mérida, inspired by the Mayan Sacred Book. Collection of the Art Museum of the Americas, OAS. Reproduction authorized by the Art Museum of the Americas of the OAS, Washington, D.C. Photo: Willie Heinz, IDB

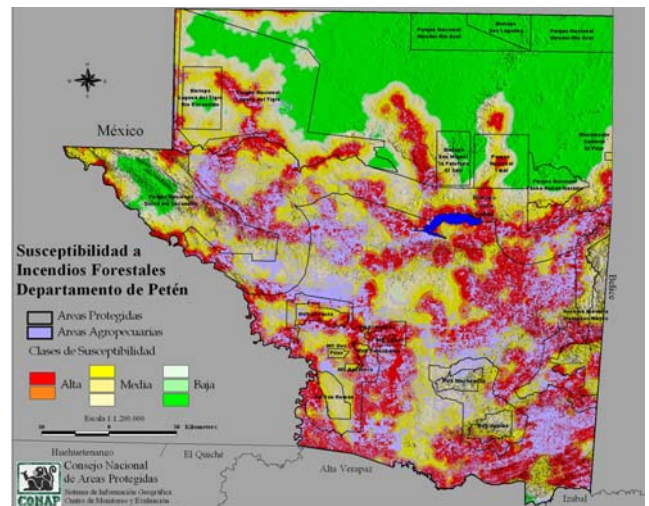


Digitally restored version of the ***Canvas of Quahuquechollan***

The computer generated restoration was carried out by Studio ©, S.A., under the direction of the Francisco Marroquín, University in Mexico. The original canvas is in the collection of the Casa del Alfeñique Museum in Puebla, Mexico. Photo: Courtesy of Studio ©, S.A.



Digitally-created aerial view of the **Guatemala Art and Technology Center, ARTEC** in Guatemala. Photo: Courtesy of Studio ©, S.A.



Graph No. 2 **Susceptibility to Forest Fires in Petén**

Protected areas, areas for agriculture and cattle, and high, medium and low levels of susceptibility. Photo: Courtesy of Mr. Eduardo Cofiño

Exhibition

The exhibition will run from February 7 to May 4, 2007. A free, full-color 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 group tours 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.

The Cultural Center home page is located at: www.iadb.org/cultural

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