

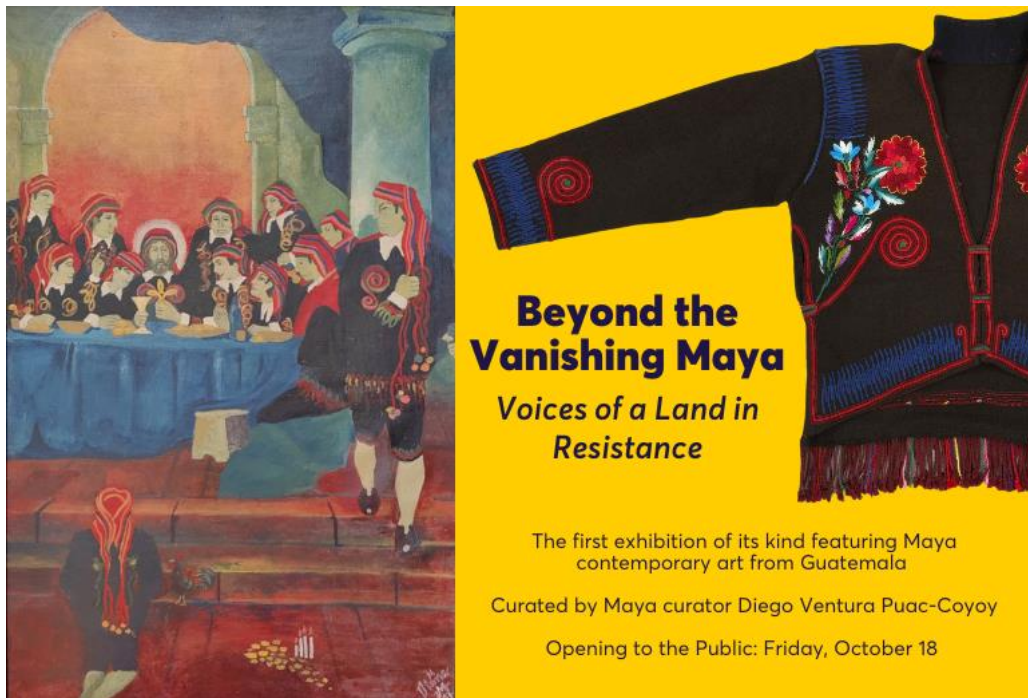
textile museum

OF CANADA

MEDIA RELEASE

September 24, 2024

Textile Museum of Canada Presents Groundbreaking Maya Exhibition Unique Curatorial Approach Unveils Maya Art Through Indigenous Lens



Toronto, ON.... The Textile Museum of Canada will debut *Beyond the Vanishing Maya: Voices of a Land in Resistance*, an unprecedented exhibition curated by Maya curator and ajq'ij (spiritual leader) Diego Ventura Puac-Coyoy. This exhibition celebrates the richness of Maya art while upending colonial narratives and challenging the museum world to rethink portrayals of Indigenous art. Press are invited to cover the October 17 opening event, featuring a performance by Ventura Puac-Coyoy from the Gardiner Museum to the Textile Museum.

DATE: October 17, 2024

LOCATION: The Textile Museum of Canada, 55 Centre Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2H5

This first-of-its-kind exhibition in Canada marks a powerful shift in museology by anchoring its curatorship in Maya culture, language and identity as well as spirituality and ritual. The

curatorial process has been one of deep collaboration between the Textile Museum's Artistic Director and Chief Curator Armando Perla and Maya Curator Diego Ventura Puac-Coyoy, who worked extensively together to foster collaboration with Indigenous communities in Canada and Guatemala and consulted with community elders – something that is reflected in the exhibition's political and spiritual depth.

“This is a historical exhibition and a first step for the Museum to become a door for IBPOC curators, artists and community members with direct ties to our collection to show their work,” says Armando Perla. “It allows them to decide how to care for and display their belongings while also telling their stories in their own terms,” they added.

Beyond the Vanishing Maya not only presents Maya culture through an Indigenous lens but challenges institutions to rethink their collections and colonial hierarchies imposed by European art history. This exceptional curatorial process has also shone a light on the Textile Museum's own collection, highlighting the need for the community to lead the conversation around the long-term care and return of their belongings.

The exhibition features artworks by Maya artists both within and outside the Ventura Puac-Coyoy Collection, placing them in dialogue with textile, painting, ceramic, sculpture, poetry, music, fashion and other art forms. Visitors to *Beyond the Vanishing Maya* will experience a powerful representation of Maya art never before seen on Turtle Island — challenging the way we view art in museums and inspiring everyone to shift their perspectives on representations of Maya art.

The opening procession for *Beyond the Vanishing Maya* will start at the Gardiner Museum at 5:30PM on October 17, 2024, leading to the Textile Museum for a reception. Press are invited to capture this unique moment, with opportunities for interviews and footage throughout the day of the opening. Ventura Puac-Coyoy and Perla are also available for interviews ahead of and after the opening on October 17.

We will also offer press an exclusive tour with curators Perla and Ventura at 10am, please RSVP to marketing@textilemuseum.ca if you would like to attend.

About the Curator

Diego Ventura Puac lives and works between Chichicastenango and Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. Ajq'ij, curator, and artist, he belongs to the Mayan K'iche nation. Co-founder of Espacio/C art+memory. Co-editor and curatorial assistant of the Imago-mundi Guatemala collection. Curator/committee of selection from the MARTE Museum of El Salvador auction (2016), selected along with others Central American curators for the TEOR/ética

curatorial studies program in Costa Rica (2018) and has collaborated in the production of texts for the cataloging of the auction of the MAC Panama Museum of Contemporary Art (2019 and 2020). Curator of the exhibition Before Being We Were from the Paiz Foundation, with the Ventura Puac-Coyoy Collection and the collection of the Paiz Foundation (2020). He currently works as an advisor external of the Visual Arts program of the International Baccalaureate in establishments private in Guatemala.

In 2022, with the support of TEOR/ética (Costa Rica) and DAAD Berlin (Germany), he edited and published the book Strong Wind, which is the first volume of essays that record visions of knowledge and science of indigenous peoples expressed in art and thought. Since 2015 he has been curator of the Ventura Puac-Coyoy Collection, the first collection in the region of visual arts formed and financed by an indigenous family. He is also a member of the 2022-2023 editorial board of Terremoto magazine in Mexico. He is also the visual arts manager at the El Sótano Xela gallery and bookstore. Received the award of the Golden Button of the Municipality of Quetzaltenango as a Distinguished Citizen for his contributions to art and culture in December 2022. Received the Award from the indigenous brotherhood oldest in Quetzaltenango, the Niño del Santísimo Cultural Award in 2023. He was member of the qualifying jury of the fund and artistic residency for community projects of the New Factory, 2023 edition. In 2022 and 2023, he was part of the Indigenous Mayor's Office of Chichicastenango as U'rox aj' kam.

About the Textile Museum of Canada

The Textile Museum of Canada aims to inspire understanding of the human experience through textiles. We are the only museum in Canada delivering programs and exhibitions dedicated solely to textile arts. The Museum ignites creativity, inspires wonder, and sparks conversation through the stories held within our global collection of textiles and active engagement with contemporary art practices.

For more information, visit: textilemuseum.ca, @textilemuseumofcanada, and #TMCtoronto, on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Media Inquiries

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