



NMSU Library News Release

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TO: University Communications

Maya Weaving Displayed at NMSU Library

A new exhibit entitled “Mayas of Mexico and Guatemala: Weaving, Resistance and Identity” is now on display at both the New Library and the Branson Library of the New Mexico State University Library. The library displays were created to coincide with two current exhibits on the Maya at the University Museum. They may be viewed in the lobbies of the libraries during regular library hours.

In addition to materials from the NMSU Library collections, the exhibit incorporates books, weavings and original drawings from the campus community and the public. Alexandra Nason Hall, a community supporter of Latin American Studies at NMSU, loaned Guatemalan weavings and books from her private collection. Professor Christine Eber contributed weavings from the Tsobol Antzetik women’s cooperative in San Pedro Chenalho’, Chiapas. Selina Farmer, a Native American artist and participant in the NMSU “Bridges” program, loaned the original drawings for the Words of Hope/Symbols of Tradition mural, now on display at the University Museum.

Taken together, these materials illustrate the living traditions of the Maya people, their spiritual and historical connections with the ancient Maya, and their modern struggles for political, economic, and cultural survival. In the 1500’s, Spanish soldiers and priests destroyed most written documents of Maya history. Despite this tragic loss and continuing assaults on their lives and traditions, contemporary Maya people have developed many strategies to record and pass on their history.

The library exhibit focuses on one of the Maya people’s most successful cultural survival strategies — the revitalization of backstrap weaving. While working on backstrap looms, weavers act much like Maya scribes of the past, encoding their people’s history and beliefs about the cosmos into their designs. At the same time as they preserve valued traditions, weavers also show their capacity to adapt their weaving processes and products to global markets.

The library exhibit illustrates and provides resources to explore these interrelated processes as well as the history of the Maya people’s struggles to survive dramatic economic and political changes. For more information, please contact Latin American Specialist Molly Molloy at 646-6931. For library hours, please call 646-4749.

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