

MAYA

The exhibition focuses on two aspects of Maya culture: the great cultural diversity on the one hand and the ability to adapt and transform Maya culture to different habitats and external conditions on the other. In this way, the exhibition aims to illustrate the connection between cultural diversity and the diversity of environmental conditions under which Maya culture existed. The exhibition aims to achieve this by presenting the latest research findings on Maya settlement patterns, urbanization, agriculture, social structure, and religion.

In contrast to many other exhibitions, it is precisely the diversity of Maya cultural forms of expression that is presented. This means that the focus will not only be on the classical Maya of the lowlands, but also on the diverse manifestations in the highlands of Guatemala and on the Pacific coast, which have been intensively researched in recent years.

It shows what influences the Maya culture on the Pacific coast, first the influences of the Olmec culture and then of Teotihuacan. Using the example of Kaminaljuyu and the Nebaj region, the importance of trade and control of resources such as obsidian and jade for the cultural history of the Guatemalan highlands is illustrated. The development of cities and the concept of low-density cities and high-density rural regions provide the framework for the presentation of the Maya lowlands. The exhibition is based on 200 objects by the National Museum of Archeology and Ethnology of Guatemala (MUNAE), conveys transversal themes through graphics, photos, films and media stations, and covers the following topics:

- Agriculture as the basis for cultural development, cultural diversity, use of tropical forest resources, population density in the lowlands, everyday rural life.
- Development of cities, architecture, urbanism and settlements in the tropical lowlands.
- The importance of religion, creation mythology, the corn god and Jun Ajpu as models for real behavior, rituals and sacred places in the landscape.
- The political order of the Maya lowlands, kingship, relations between Maya cities, wars, the diplomacy of the royal dynasty, the importance of trade with the highlands.
- Climate change and wars as triggers for the collapse; the different developments in the lowlands and the highlands during the post-classical period after the Spanish invasion in the 16th century.

For a long time, the most important culture of the American continent was almost unknown in the consciousness of Europe. It is only in recent decades that archaeologists, historians and researchers of script have rediscovered this seemingly exotic high culture, which has left hundreds of cities in the rainforests of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. Totally independent of developments in other parts of the world, the Maya made amazing cultural achievements: they invented a precise calendar, they learned to live in harmony with the tropical forest, and developed a fascinating and only now deciphered hieroglyphic script. How have humans managed to feed a large population without destroying the tropical rainforest? How did people live in the cities, in the countryside, and in the magnificent royal courts? What happened to the Maya after the cities were abandoned in the 9th century? The visitor is invited to discover what parallels there are between the so far away Maya world and our own.

KEY OBJECTS



FRAGMENTO ESTELA 1, AGUATECA

This hieroglyphic inscription is part of a larger inscription on stele 1 of Aguateca. The inscription indicates the day of the accession to the throne of ruler 4, whose name was K'awiil Chan K'inich. The enthronement took place on the day 13 Kaban 0 Mol, June 23rd 741 AD. The king bears the titles "captor of the ruler of Cancuen" and "he who made two captives". He also calls himself "divine king of Mutul". On the stele the king was depicted at the celebration at the end of a calendar period, during which he sacrificed blood or incense. The small dots at the top right still belong to the representation of the buried sacrifice.

PLACA DE JADE, NEBAJ

Nebaj seems to have been one of the most important Maya sites in the highlands of Guatemala during the late classical period (600 to 900 AD). Its rulers had access to important luxury goods such as jade, as many jade artifacts from grave finds show. This plaque is an excellent example of what a Maya ruler would have looked like. He wears an elaborate headdress crowned by the head of a supernatural being with long feathers—probably a Quetzal bird—as well as bracelets, earrings and a chest pectoral made of precious materials such as the jade the plaque is made of.



MÁSCARA DE PIEDRA VERDE, LA DEMOCRACIA

La Democracia is a small town on the Pacific coast of Guatemala. Here, the so-called Monte Alto culture developed in the late pre-classic period, from which this impressive jade mask probably also originates. The eyes of the approximately life-size mask are pierced. This could indicate that the mask was actually worn. But it could also be that the mask adorned a mummy bundle or was placed on the face of a dead person. The holes in the ears indicate that it was fitted with earrings or other ear jewelry.



VASIJA EFIGIE ROSTRO DE ANCIANA, AGUATECA

This vessel has the shape of a very fine and realistic portrait of an old man. The wrinkles of his face and the short blunt teeth make his appearance particularly authentic. The artist shows great skill and powers of observation in the realization of this work. The age of the man, together with his ear jewelry and the simple scarf, which is knotted as a headdress, indicate that it is the Old God or God N, who is repeatedly depicted throughout the Maya region.



ESTELA DE MACHAQUILA

This impressive stele 8 from the city of Machaquila depicts the king Jun Tzak To'k' in his full vestment. The stele was erected on December 24, 825 to celebrate two important calendar periods. The king holds a scepter in the form of the god K'awiil in his left hand. On his head he wears an elaborate headdress consisting of a stylized water snake, a water lily, and a fish. A pearl-decorated pectoral adorns his upper body. Finally, the clothing consists of a loincloth and a skirt made of jaguar fur. The king is standing on a hieroglyph, which indicates the place name of Machaquila.



INCENSARIO, FLORES

This simply decorated incense burner represents the god of war and fire of the Maya, known as 'The Jaguar God of the Underworld'. He can be seen in the lower part of the incense burner with his face to the viewer. Below his eyes and above his nose runs a ribbon, which is one of his most important attributes. The ears on his sides and the small cones on both sides of his mouth may remind of a jaguar. As a god of fire, he seems to be adequately represented on an incense burner, as it was used for burning incense and other precious offerings.



INCENSARIO ESTUCADO, KAMINALJUYU

This elaborately modelled incense burner seems to represent an ancient god. His wrinkles, prominent nose, cross-eyed eyes, and hump seem to identify him with an aspect of the sun god K'inich Ajaw, but the presence of a flower in the center of his headdress could also be interpreted as a reference to the ancient creator god Itzamnaaj. In any case, it clearly shows that the Maya of the highlands in the early classical period (250 to 600 AD) worshipped and represented the same gods as the lowland Maya. Both regions were obviously in close contact.



EXHIBITION DETAILS

ARCHITECTURE & CONTENT

- **Size** min. 600–1,000m². **Ceiling height** min. 3 m.
- **Number of objects** app. 200 original objects. Venue to provide facility reports. Final loans dependent on approved facility reports.
- **Exhibition furniture** All 5 cubes, vitrine 'ball game', vitrine 'Teobert Maler', and scientific table included. Benches/seating not included.
- **Display cases** 11 showcases + 1 highlight vitrine per cube which have their own lighting and internal environmental controls. Normal museum gallery environmental conditions required at venue.
- **Graphics** Photos, textiles, and graphic panels including all texts, which can be adapted for two languages.
- **Interactives** 5. All 3 screens and computers included. 2 games included (Ixchel makes cacao, true/false game)
- **Films** 3 screens for films (San Bartolo, Maya Gastronomy, Textiles), Introduction Movie projected on wall; Multivision Show by Maya Photographer Martin Engelmann, projection with 3 projectors. Venue to provide projector incl. media player and speakers for introduction movie and 3 projectors incl. media player and speakers for multi-vision show.
- **All audio/visual material** are available in two languages.
- **Hands-on** 2 to 3 hands-on per cube included.
- **Lighting** All showcases are equipped with light.
- **Catalogue/Book** Yes.

LOGISTICS

- **Insurance and shipping.**
- **Installation and dismantling crew** from *MuseumsPartner* plus couriers from the lending museum, including travel and accommodation.

TOUR

- The exhibition is available for tour starting **December 2022**.

PUBLICATION

- A **catalogue** is available on consignment. Venues can also produce their own with supplied content from our partners.

MARKETING MATERIAL

- **High resolution images** of the key images, objects and the exhibition are available to the venue at no cost. All final graphic representations by venue are to be approved by *MuseumsPartner* to ensure adherence to proper citing of partners and lenders.

ADDITIONAL COSTS FOR HOST VENUE

- Marketing and promotion
- Merchandise
- Maintenance during display period
- Gallery lighting, walls, wall painting
- Operational costs—ticketing, security, programming, etc.

ABOUT THE TEAM



This exhibition is supported by the Ministry of Culture and Sport, Patrimonio Cultural y Natural Guatemala. The exhibition was **curated by Prof.Dr.Dr.h.c. Nikolai Grube** from the University of Bonn.



The National Museum of Archeology and Ethnology of Guatemala is dedicated to the conservation and exhibition of goods and artifacts belonging to the cultural and historical heritage of Guatemala. It has over 3,000 m² of exhibition space and over 1,500 m² dedicated to the research and restoration of a collection of over 20,000 archaeological artifacts and 5,000 ethnological pieces.



In cooperation with international museums, *MuseumsPartner* has conceived a range of travelling exhibitions that are informative and engaging for a multitude of audiences and easy to adapt to different spaces. We offer these exhibitions under a turnkey contract which ensures that our clients are guaranteed a secure investment customized for their own institution without any surprises. Drawing on our extensive experience in fine art transport, we provide full services to our partners and offer project management, logistics and financial management.

For bookings and further info museumpartner.com or contact us

exhibitions@museumpartner.com

+43.512.562800