

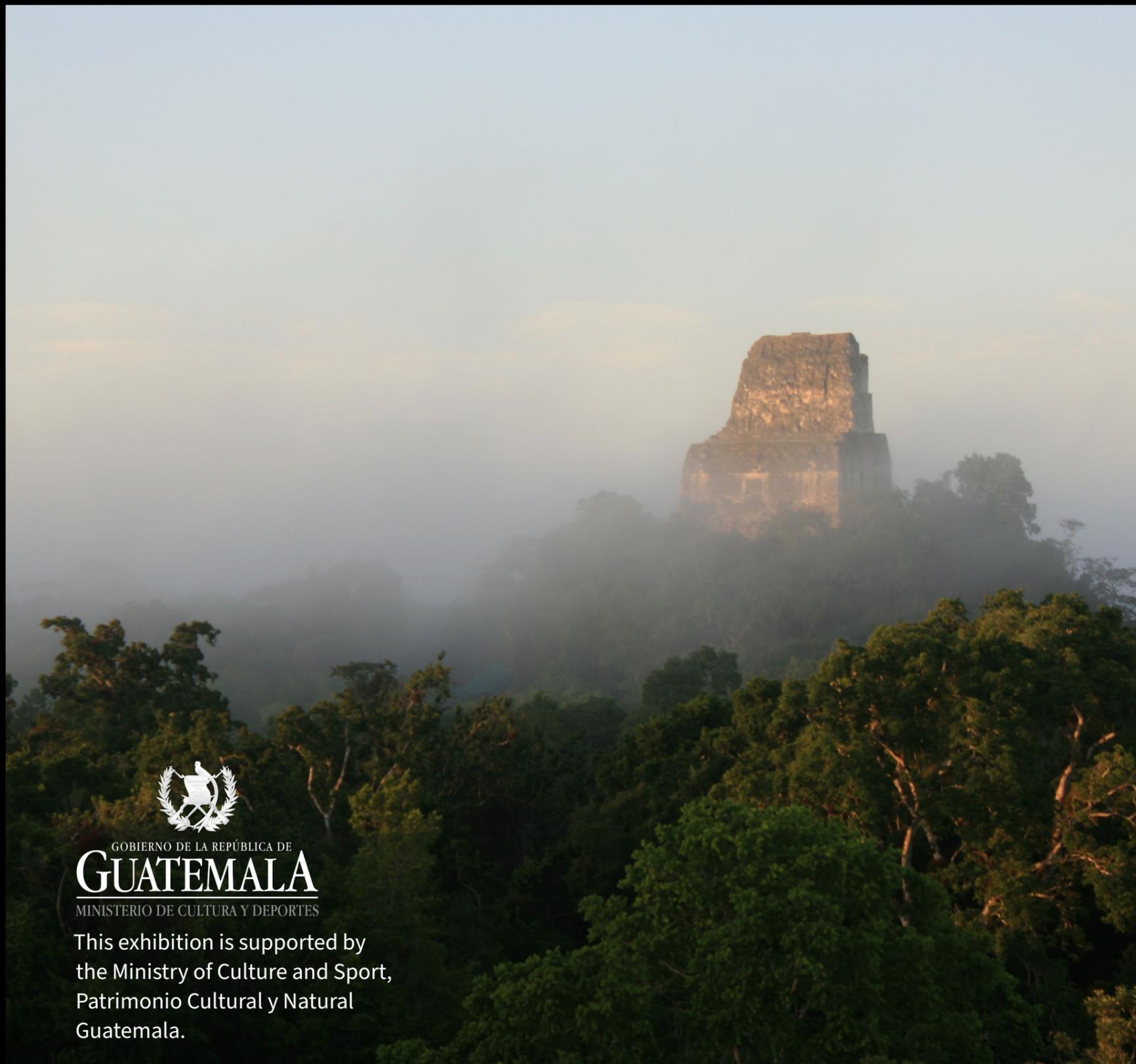


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MAYA

THE EXHIBITION

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GOBIERNO DE LA REPÚBLICA DE
GUATEMALA
MINISTERIO DE CULTURA Y DEPORTES

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Guatemala.

IMAGES

MuseumsPartner
Jorge Perez de Lara

M A Y A

Welcome to a new view of the Maya people.

In 600 AD, this civilization was the world's most advanced, outshining any in Europe. Open and adaptive, they live on, evolving with modern life.

Let's hear their stories and explore their world through objects never before seen outside Guatemala.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Maya civilization has a history 5,000 years old and still alive today. **1**

Maya culture was open and inclusive of other neighboring cultures which led to its longevity. **2**

At the height of Maya culture, around 600 AD, it was the greatest civilization in the world. **3**

At that time the population density was the greatest in the world, despite creating stone cities in the jungle. **4**

It was a sophisticated, advanced agricultural society that relied on complex water and land management. **5**

Maya understanding of science, astronomy and mathematics was equal to or greater than other world cultures at the time. **6**

Maya civilization has a close relationship with the environment, expressed through their great understanding of science, medicine, and agriculture. **7**

Modern technology such as LIDAR is helping archaeologists make new discoveries in the tropical rainforests of Central America. **8**



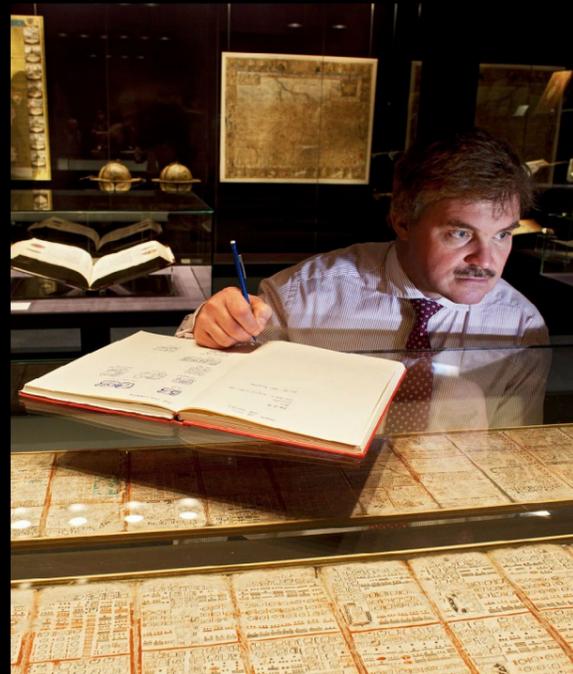
Almost no other ancient society is associated with adjectives like ‘mysterious’ and ‘lost’ as often as the Maya civilization. The abandonment of large cities in the lowlands of Guatemala, Mexico, Belize and Honduras is one of the great mysteries of archaeology. However, the downfall of the big cities, with their high temples, royal palaces, public squares and wide ceremonial roads, does not mean the end of Maya culture. On the contrary, this led to the development of new forms of cultural expression.

The exhibition focuses on the continuity of the Maya culture from its classical peak to the present. It aims to show that the modern indigenous populations in Guatemala, Southern Mexico and Belize maintain a cultural continuity from pre-Hispanic times to today. The exhibition focuses on the relations of the Maya with their world and their environment.

For the first time, an exhibition takes a look at all social groups and daily life in the rainforest. This cultural-ecological perspective towards the Maya civilization is mirrored in the exhibition concept, which includes both artifacts and current interdisciplinary research. This way, the visitor will gain a holistic perspective of the Maya civilization in relation to nature and the environment.

ABOUT NIKOLAI GRUBE

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Nikolai Grube is a professor of anthropology of the Americas at the University of Bonn. He has been closely associated with several archeological projects in the Maya area and is director of the excavation of Uxul in Campeche, Mexico.





ARCHITECTURE & CONTENT

- **Size** 7,500 to 14,000 sq ft (700–1400 m²)
- **Number of objects** Approx. 300 original objects, including nine stelas, 17 stone blocks and stone panels, two fragments of Stelas and 4 altars. Venue to provide Facility Reports. Final loans dependent on approved Facility Reports.
- **Exhibition furniture** All immersive structures including pyramid structures recreating the original Maya architecture such as 4 triangular structures for the ‘Maya arch’.
- **Display cases** Approx. 45, come with the exhibition and have their own lighting and internal environmental controls. Normal museum gallery environmental conditions required at venue.
- **Graphics** Photos, graphic panels including all texts, which can be adapted for two languages.
- **Interactives** 5 interactives plus 16 touchable replicas. All furniture, displays and control systems included.
- **Films** 10. All Projectors, speaker systems, media players and control systems included.
- **Sound** 4 different ambient sounds.
- **All audio/visual material** are available in two languages.
- **Carpet** Custom designed carpet with printed graphics especially designed for each thematic area.
- **Lighting** All showcases are equipped with light.
- **Catalogue/Book** Yes.

LOGISTICS

Included in the all-inclusive exhibition fee

- **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.

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.

ADDITIONAL COSTS FOR HOST VENUE

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

FLOORPLAN AND KEY FACTS



Introduction Meet the Maya **01**
 Tropical Rainforest **02**
 Maya Agriculture **03**

Garden Cities **04**
 Gods and Goddesses **05**
 Maya Script **06**

Kings and Queens **07**
 Gaming with the Gods **08**
 Maya Politics **09**

The Great Collapse **10**
 The Big Transformation **11**
 Kawinaq We Are Still Here **12**

The exhibition shows when and the reasons why the Maya settled in the jungle and built their cities there. It also reveals how a large population could survive for hundreds of years in the jungle and why ultimately the Maya abandoned their cities and transformed their society.



OBJECT LOANS

Over 300 artifacts primarily dating from 200 through 900 AD. Most objects have never travelled to North America. The lending institutions have one of the most important Maya collections in the world: The National Museum of Guatemala and La Ruta Maya Foundation.

SECTION 1 MEET THE MAYA

The intro gallery focuses closely on 23 El Peru figurines; miniature statues highlighting the Maya king and queen and their court welcome the visitor. Projection mapping and holographic smoke effects will create an engaging introduction presented around 3 Maya incense burners.

The Maya lived at least 5,000 years ago, in the south of Mexico and parts of Central America. Their accomplishments mystify us. How did they grow such large cities in densely forested terrain? They built immense stone structures with no pack animals or carts to carry heavy loads. They grew enough food to feed huge populations, in spite of poor soil. They mastered writing, math, and astronomy.

Aided by contemporary LIDAR technology, archaeologists are uncovering the secrets buried in the jungle. While our research is young, the culture is timeless. Today, more than six million Maya are keeping it alive.

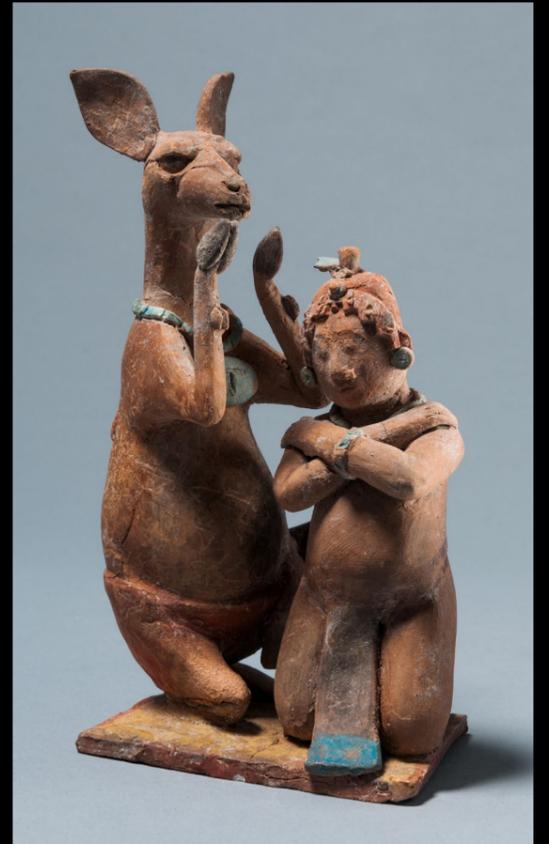


MAIN MESSAGES

- The Maya have a ...
- ... shared ideology, set of religious beliefs, cosmology and calendar.
 - ... common way of living based on maize agriculture.
 - ... closely connected languages.

AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- Introductory video.
- Tree resin (copal) to touch and smell.
- Digital smoke effect on incense burners.



KEY OBJECTS
El Peru figurines
(23 objects) ●

Leaving the first gallery, the visitor is immersed into a tropical rainforest environment of the Maya jungle, nature, animals, mountains and caves.

The gallery features a fragment of what is known as the Sistine Chapel fresco of the Maya: a fragment of the San Bartolo mural, along with a complete reproduction. The creation story it conveys is presented in a compelling multi-screen video presentation narrated by a contemporary Maya woman.

The Maya lived deep in the tropical rainforest, yet the rainforest also lived deep within them. The jungle's diversity provided food, shelter, and the basics of life. But its plants and animals were also spiritual counterparts of the humans who shared their world.



MAIN MESSAGES

- Maya perceived themselves as part of the natural environment, expressed through their religion and great understanding of science, medicine, astronomy and agriculture.
- The animals and birds of the jungle were expressed through Maya religion.
- Cacao has Maya origins.

AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- San Bartolo multi-panel video—made by *MUNAE* explains the archaeological site of San Bartolo and shows the excavation works.
- Soundscape of the tropical rainforest.



KEY OBJECT

Plate with jungle motives

The gallery features objects displayed dramatically in Maya pyramid architecture as this area highlights the production of food, agriculture, hunting, domesticated plants, maize. This section includes a child-friendly interactive element on making cocoa.

How did the Maya produce so much nutritionally rich food in such challenging soil? Over centuries, these master gardeners developed advanced methods that elude us today. They grew maize (*corn*), beans, and squash in small urban plots. Planting luxury crops such as cacao for trade, they also grew their economy.

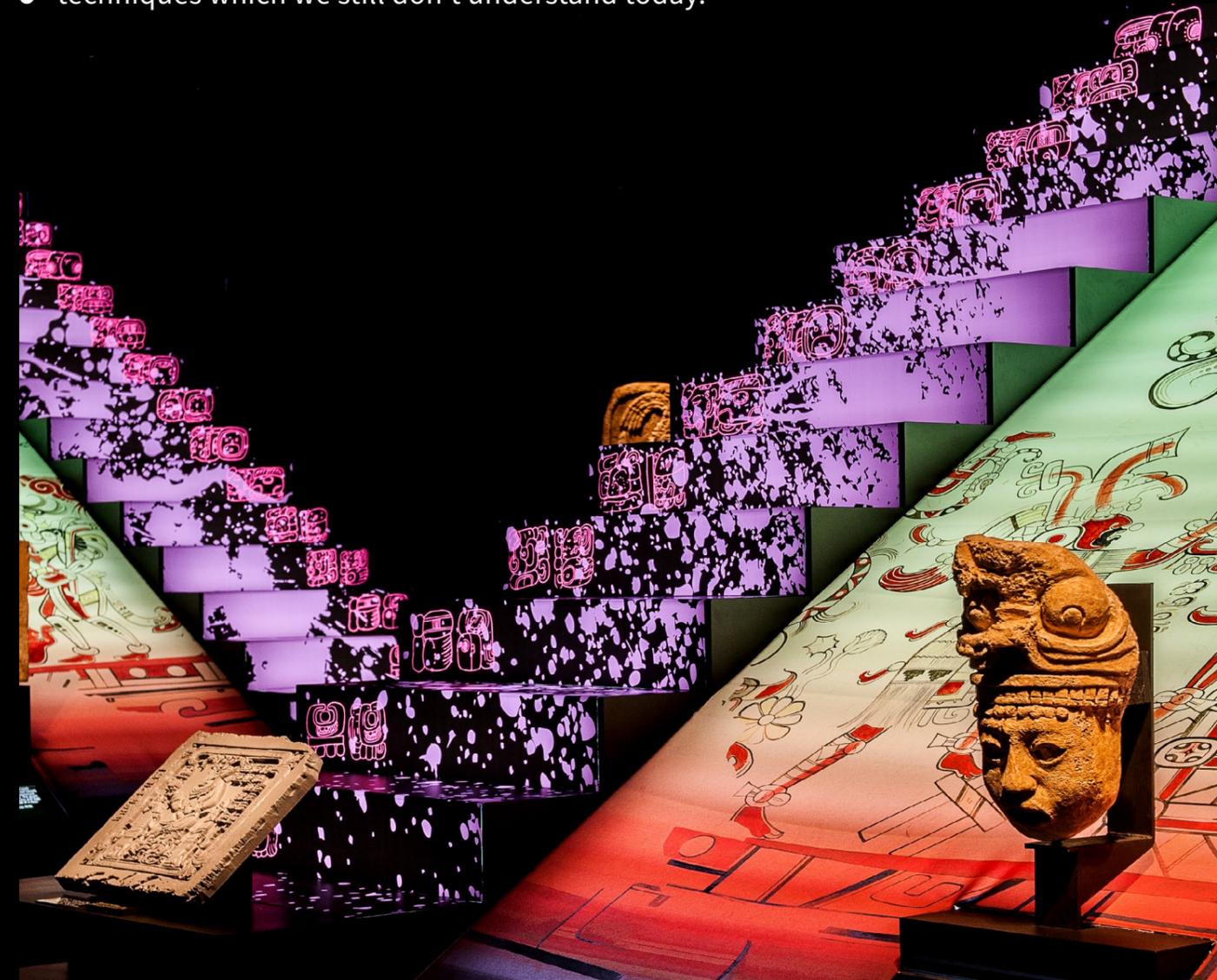
AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- Multitouch Tabel with a 65" capacitive display explains the importance of Tikal
- Video: A present from the Maize God
- Video: "A Day in Uxul"
- Soundscape of the Rainforest in Yucatan



MAIN MESSAGES

- The peasant origins of Maya society.
- The roots of Maya culture date back to 2000 BC.
- Small groups of farmers cultivated a trinity of vegetables, corn, beans and squash plants, in modest fields in the tropical rainforest.
- The Maya farmers used farming and irrigation techniques which we still don't understand today.



KEY OBJECTS

- Stucco heads from Cancuen

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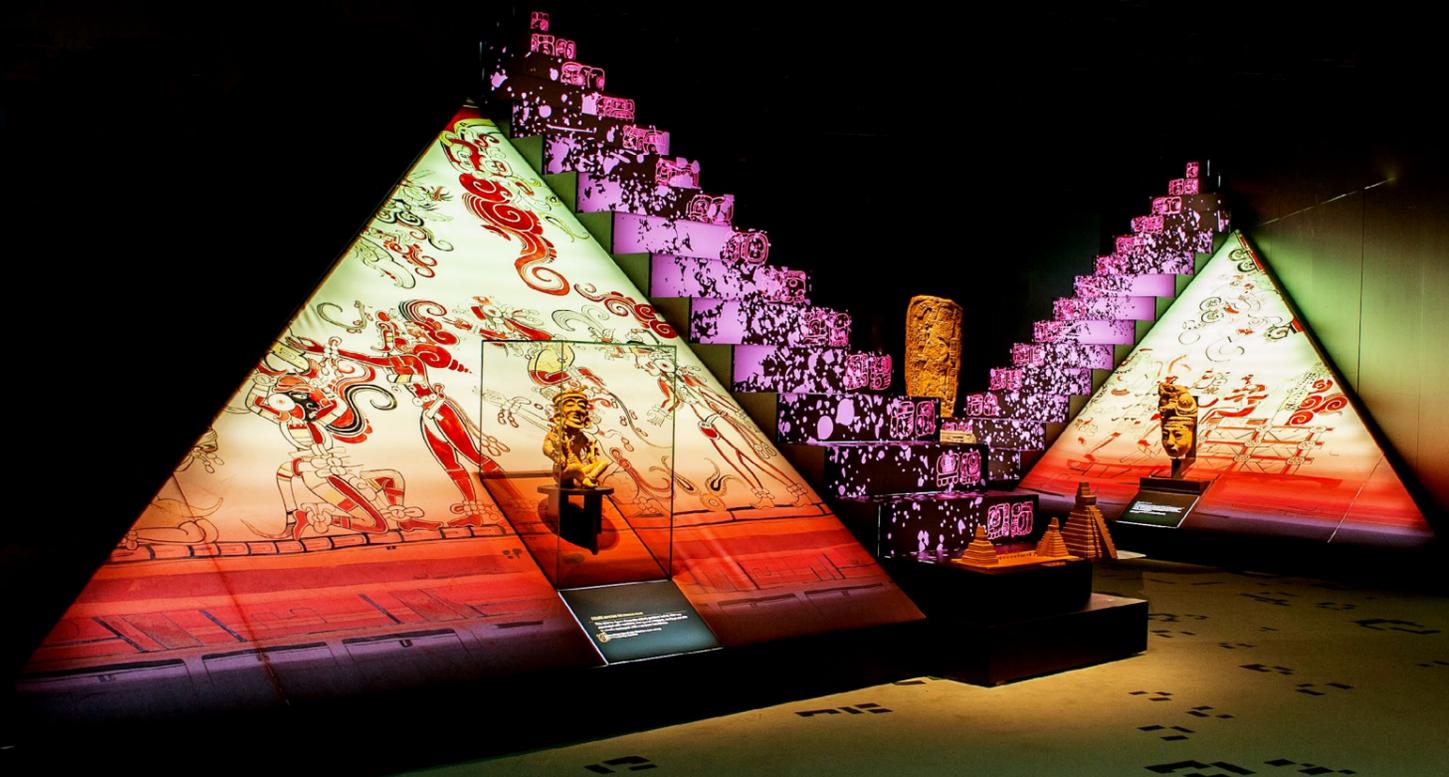
KEY OBJECT

Cancuen Panel 3



AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- San Bartolo multi-panel video—made by *MUNAE* explains the archaeological site of San Bartolo and shows the excavation works.
- Soundscape of the tropical rainforest.



SECTION 5 GODS AND GODDESSES

The exhibition architecture and environment changes at this point to reflect Maya temple architecture. This area features rituals, offerings, deities, and music as it relates to the gods.

Gods were everywhere. The Maya worshiped roughly 8,000 gods, who could change gender and multiply. Any animal could take divine form. The king, part human and part deity himself, could send out his soul to communicate with the spirit world and ask the gods for help.



AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- Ambient audio of rituals

MAIN MESSAGES

- The power of kings and queens and how they manifested themselves as deities.
- Maya religion did not have priests.
- Political power of the Maya state was based on the 'divine king', who ...
 - ... acted as mediator between humans and gods.
 - ... was kept alive in monuments and buildings and was included in political decisions even after his death.



KEY OBJECTS

- Burial cache 15 of jade, shells, obsidian
- Mosaic of a death god

This section introduces visitors to Maya languages, writing and calendar. In addition to objects illustrating these themes, there are 3 interactives illustrating the Maya calendar and Maya hieroglyphs. Visitors can enter their birth date and receive the Maya calendar equivalent via email.

Script, a gift from Maya creator god Itzamnaaj, was a powerful technology. Kings used the written word to document their authority.

Astronomers mapped time itself. Hieroglyphs were used for 2,500 years, but their meaning was lost when Spanish missionaries burned Maya codices (books). Scholars cracked the code only 30 years ago.

KEY OBJECTS

- Naranjo Stela 8 with Interpretation ●
- La Corona hieroglyphic stairway 2 ●



MAIN MESSAGES

Introduction to Maya Languages

- How we can we read Maya writing?
- 36 languages spoken in 16th century, 30 still spoken today.
- Up to 40 percent of current population of Guatemala speaks a Maya language.
- Any concepts can be translated into Maya (math, science, etc.).

Maya Writing

- Development of written system.
- How does system function?
- Interpreting glyphs.

The Maya Calendar

- How was the ancient calendar used?
- How to read the Maya calendar.
- Audio of spoken Maya languages.

AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- Interactive “Maya Calendar”
- Interactive “Maya Birthday”
- Interactive “Maya Hieroglyphs”



Dramatic Maya architecture provides the setting for objects that illustrate the Maya king as maize god, and illustrates the divine legitimization of power, and luxury of the royal court.

Royals were more than human. After taking the throne, kings and queens became half god, dressing in luxurious clothes and jewelry that set them apart from the common people. They were members of huge dynasties, some claiming they could trace their ancestors back 100,000 years.



MAIN MESSAGES

- Maya people believed that the gods created humans from maize (*corn*).
- Maya royalty expressed in material culture and luxury.

AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- Hands on models (3D-prints of actual objects).
- Jade hands-on element.
- Video: Interview with a Maya about Maya artifacts.



KEY OBJECTS

- Jade plaque with representation of the god Yaxjal Chahk
- Fragment of Stela 7

At the end of the long series of temple gateways, visitors view in the distance three objects in an environment related to the Maya Ballgame. Visitors can play an Augmented Reality Ballgame.

The Ball Game was part sport and part ritual —not unlike football or baseball today. Teams represented their cities as spectators cheered from the sides. Players wore padding to protect their knees, shins, and hands from being injured by the heavy ball.

MAIN MESSAGES

- The Maya ballgame was played with a rubber ball on large stone courts in cities.
- It was not a game for entertainment or competition per se, but a religious or ritual event.
- Decapitation of participants is regarded by archaeologists today as a myth.



AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

Hands on rubber ball for visitors to lift (heavy) ●

KEY OBJECTS

- La Amelia Stela 1
- Yoke Cancuen
- Ballcourt Marker

Moving into dramatically lit galleries, visitors will encounter the political issues at the height of the Maya civilization.

This area also features Maya queens and other historical individuals, plus the conflict between the superpowers Tikal and Calakmu. Stela 31 is animated via projection mapping on its surface.

Maya politics were subject to the same forces that countries face today. Cities grew into kingdoms that competed for resources. Some rulers formed strategic alliances, but others warred. Many cities fell. Two in particular rose to heights never before seen. And then an era ended.



MAIN MESSAGES

- The Maya were never politically united but comprised of 30–40 city-states that were regularly in conflict.
- Conflicts between the royal houses led to societal problems.
- Clashes within the Maya civilization resulted from competition for ...
 - ... important natural resources, such as land and water.
 - ... commercial routes.
 - ... prestige objects.
 - ... recognition and titles.

AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- Video: Interview with a Maya about Maya artifacts.



KEY OBJECT

Naranjo Stela 24 with interpretation ●

The transitional section features objects from the later stages of the Maya civilization before the Spanish conquest. Prolonged warfare destroyed a social structure that had been effective for millennia. The system of government, once so stable, began to fail. With the slaughter of royal dynasties, entire cities collapsed. Some kings survived, but the people questioned their power.

After all, once god-like rulers could no longer even provide the basics of life. Around 800 AD, climate change brought long periods of drought. Farmers had no water for crops and the population, formerly so well nourished, suffered famine. People migrated to more fertile lands and the jungle reclaimed those massive cities of stone.



MAIN MESSAGES

- The abandonment of Maya cities began with the collapse of the institution of the sacred kings resulting from ...
- ... the breakdown of the established political networks.
- ... increased competition and internal warfare between the different parts of Maya society.
- ... corresponding breakdown of water and food producing infrastructure.
- ... drought and famine exacerbated the societal problems.
- ... collapse was not the end of the Maya.

AV ELEMENT

- Video: Interview with a Maya about Maya artifacts.



KEY OBJECTS

- Seibal Stela 3 ●
- Golden earrings ●

The final exhibition section features objects from the Maya after the abandonment of their cities, experimenting with new forms of art and new materials.

Although their cities were lost to the jungle, the Maya themselves did not disappear. Instead, they adapted to a new way of life in the highlands of Guatemala and the Yucatán peninsula. Here they prospered by trading peacefully and sharing the bounty.

MAIN MESSAGES

- The Maya transitioned from a political economy to a strong market economy.
- The population centers moved to the Yucatan and highlands of modern Guatemala.
- Maya culture continues to this day via ...
 - ... identity.
 - ... languages.
 - ... traditional social and religious institutions.

KEY OBJECTS

- Tumbaga medallion
- Madrid Codex (reproduction)



The final exhibition section provides a wrap up of the exhibition and inspiration for the visitor. While much has been discovered in the past 20 years, many mysteries of the Maya remain unsolved.

Since those first cities in the jungle, the Maya have faced numerous challenges. They have been displaced by forces of nature, politics, and industry. However, their culture lives on. Contemporary Maya speak 30 languages, all with a common root.

These Maya plant the heirloom seeds that sustained their ancestors. They create art, music, and literature. They take part in the rituals that are sacred to their faith. “Kawinaq: We are still there.”



MAIN MESSAGES

- Maya culture is still alive today in Guatemala, Belize and parts of Mexico, in addition to population groups that have migrated around the world.
- Archeologists and scientists are still making new discoveries with the aid of modern research, technology and data analysis.
- It is a race against looters to preserve the ancient cultural remains.
- Modern technology such as LIDAR is helping archeologists make new discoveries in the tropical rainforests of Central America.
- Much of the Maya hieroglyphs have not been translated and are still being deciphered.



AV & INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

- Interactive map of spoken Maya languages today.
- Videos: Maya Gastronomy, Market in Guatemala, Maya Politics and Business.
- Sound: Marimba sound.



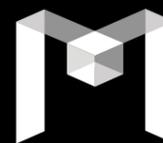
MUSEO NACIONAL DE
ARQUEOLOGÍA Y
ETNOLOGÍA



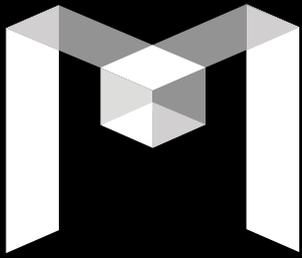
The museum is dedicated to the conservation and exhibition of goods and artifacts belonging to the cultural and historical heritage of Guatemala. It has over 3,000 m² of exhibition space and over 1,500 m² dedicated to the research and restoration of a collection of over 20,000 archaeological artifacts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



La Ruta Maya Foundation is the only private organization in the region that aims to recover archaeological objects that left the country illegally in past decades, with the purposes of repatriation to Guatemala. It is responsible for the custody and management of more than 3,000 Pre-Columbian objects, duly registered at the Registro de Bienes Culturales (IDAEH) as National Cultural Heritage, with the objective of custody, protection, conservation, research, and exhibition to the public for educational purposes.



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.



CONTACT

Peter Elsaesser

elsaesser@museumspartner.com

+43.664.2100673

Marie Eckert

eckert@museumspartner.com

+43.699.19292255