



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 25, 2007

Exhibition of Mayan Arte Naïf of Guatemala to Appear at Rutgers, New Brunswick

Visiting Mayan artist Felipe Ujpan Mendoza to explore themes of daily life, music, and festival celebrations through his paintings

New Brunswick, NJ – The Center for Latino Arts and Culture at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, presents “Mayan Arte Naïf of Guatemala,” on display September 10 through 28, 2007 at the Asian American Cultural Center, located at 49 Joyce Kilmer Avenue on the Livingston Campus in Piscataway, NJ.

This is the first U.S. exhibition to feature the collective work of contemporary Mayan artists from San Juan La Laguna of Lake Atitlan, located in the Central Highlands of Guatemala. The exhibition features 20 original oil paintings by artists Felipe Ujpan, Antonio Coché Mendoza, Diego Isaías Hernández, Angelina Quic Ixtamer, Antonio Vásquez Yojcom, and Catarina Méndez Pantzay.

The general style of the paintings produced by the Atitlan artists fits into the established genre of *arte naïf*—a term that designates painting that is at once ingenuous, spontaneous, imaginative and simple. In recent years, Mayan *arte naïf* has begun to garner international attention as an important expressive outlet for depicting indigenous customs and traditions - some of which are disappearing with time.

“For many Mayan artists, painting serves as a channel for narrating historical memory, and for this reason, *arte naïf* painters often see their work in terms of fulfilling a moral responsibility to preserve the memory of the rituals and customs that their ancestors practiced,” says exhibition curator Richard Morgan. “As cultural transmitters, the artists often depict scenes and customs from the past that may not necessarily be prevalent in contemporary everyday life. Other times, one might find paintings that depict Mayan folk tales – many of which are unfamiliar to younger generations.”

Guatemalan artist Felipe Ujpan, whose work is featured in the exhibition, will be honored at a free, public reception at the Asian American Cultural Center on Friday, September 14 from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. Mr. Ujpan Mendoza will be participating in a two-week residency program that includes public talks, demonstrations, and workshops.

The exhibition is curated by independent scholar Richard Morgan and produced by the Rutgers Center for Latino Arts and Culture in collaboration with the Asian American Cultural Center. The exhibition and residency is made possible through the support of the Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic and Public Partnerships in the Arts and Humanities.

The Asian American Cultural Center (AACC) is open Monday through Thursday, from 9 am to 4 pm; Fridays from 9 am to 8 pm and Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm. The AACC is located at 49 Joyce Kilmer Avenue on the Livingston Campus in Piscataway, NJ.

No tickets are required. To schedule a special group or school tour, please contact the Center for Latino Arts and Culture by calling 732-932-1263.