









Prologue

Anthropologist Arturo Warman once said that as a plant, corn was the invention of the people, that nature could not preserve it without the participation of men: "Corn is reinvented daily by peasants. They invent it with their work, their knowledge, their respect and veneration, with their passion, with their life that revolves around this plant. They invent it with their stubborn persistence."

In Yucatan, despite environmental conditions that were perhaps little favourable for agriculture, they were able to generate technologies adequate to take full advantage of the available resources. Our *milpa* is an agricultural and cultural system that has functioned as a cornerstone of Maya life in the peninsula. In addition to being a multiple cropping, the *milpa* has dictated the daily rhythm of many families and has contributed to providing continuity to ancestral knowledge and practices, and to the maintenance of the linguistic wealth.

It is curious, or alarming, that immersed in our current urban environment, we know little of this cultural system; we know so little about the food it has given us, with its rewards. That is why, from our respective trenches, we step closer to the *milpa* in an attempt to understand its complexity.

We cannot, nor do we intend to, compete with those who know better what the *milpa* is, that is to say, those who work and live

the *milpa* every day. Neither have we intended to occupy the place of those who have studied the *milpa* from biological, economic and social perspectives. Instead, we ask for help and learn from those experts who are everyday taking care of their *milpas*, who eat from those *milpas*; who worry about the conservation of the seeds that are ours because they have been selected here, here they have been adapted and cultivated; those whose concern and occupation is the preservation of our environment and the betterment of our quality of life; those who have dedicated their life to understanding this cultural system. We also wish to know, we also wish to understand.

Today, through the temporary exhibition *Tiempos de Milpa*, we wish to share our fascination and awaken the interest among our Yucatecan, Mexican, and foreign visitors, to take a step closer to the Maya *milpa* in an ethical and responsible manner. We wish to continue these efforts.

May this be a small contribution towards raising awareness of the importance, complexity and implications of cultivating *milpa* today.

Erica Beatriz Millet Corona Secretaria de la Cultura y las Artes del Estado de Yucatán



Milpa Times

Through time and from different perspectives, the *milpa* has defined the cultural configuration of Mexico. It was the system of agricultural production on which great civilizations of the pre-Hispanic world were settled, and up to the present, it is the main resource for obtaining food in many indigenous communities in the country.

In the Yucatán Peninsula environmental conditions are unfavorable for agriculture; however, its inhabitants were able to generate technologies suitable for the optimal use of available resources and, for more than 3,500 years, the *milpa* has sustained the Maya people.

With the exhibition *Milpa* Times the *Gran Museo del Mundo Maya de Mérida* seeks to highlight the biocultural wealth of the Maya *milpa*. It is an invitation to explore the paths and times of the *milperos* in their everyday life.

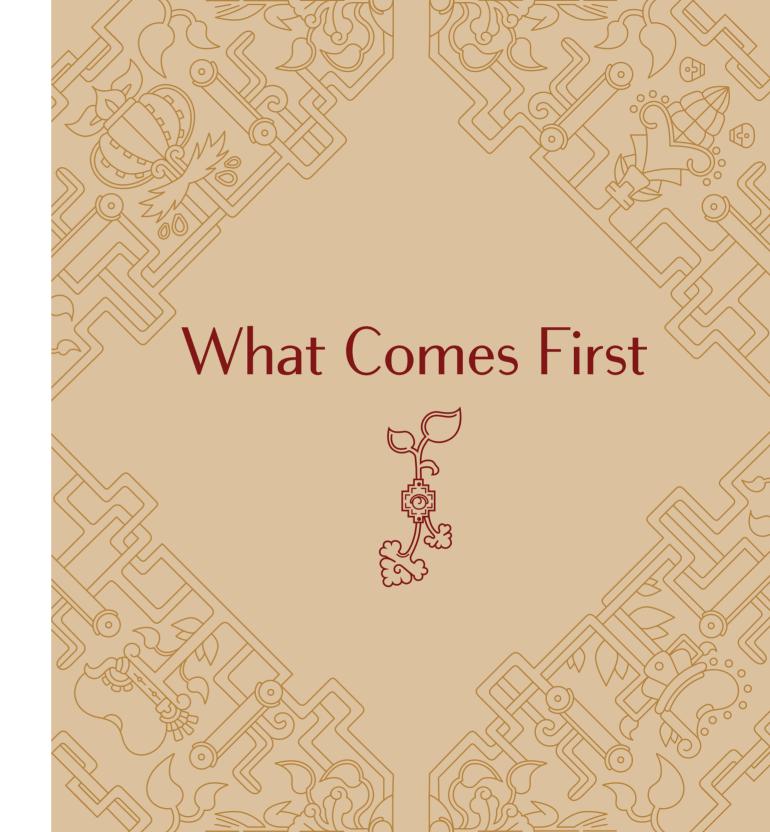
The paths lead to the space - daily and sacred - of the house, the backyard, the forest, the *milpa* and the cosmos. The times are about the ripening and preparation of the foods; mythical times of the sacred corn; times for observing nature; ritual times and cycles of the crops; historical times of persistence and change; current times to listen and take action; times to restore equilibrium.

It is time to make milpa.





Transgenic Corn Marco Palma Carved stone and appliqué, 2008 Museo Fernando García Ponce



Word has it that the *Dziú* bird rescued the corn seed from the fire and that different local animals, such as the raccoon, the wild boar and the *Toh* bird saved the seeds of many other plants.

The Maya peasants planted again each seed in their houseyards and in their *milpas*. Very attentive to the characteristics of the soil and the climate of the Peninsula, and taking care of the growth of plants, they gradually learned the perfect time and the optimum place to cultivate each species, and how they could coexist. With this knowledge, each seed is strategically planted expecting a good harvest.

The Maya *milpa* became a space of multiple crops, where several plants grow in the same grounds, helping each other by exchanging nutrients to flourish. In addition to corn, beans and pumpkin -the triad of the *milpa*-, several species are planted nearby.

The fruits of the Maya *milpa* have lived together since they were seeds, they grew up together. Therefore, at times you might hear them say: "I know you pip before you were a pumpkin!"







Variety of Species in the *Milpa* and Houseyard

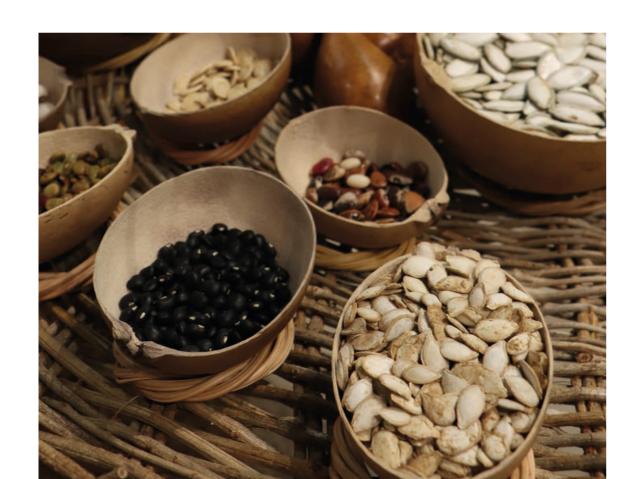
Corn, in its different types and varieties, is the main product of the *milpa*; however, it is not the only food the *milpa* grower gets from it. Different plants associated or interspersed with corn are planted in sections apart within the area of the *milpa*, which are known in Maya as *pet pach* and usually allocated for vegetables and tubers in the *milpa*. Also, the houseyard, placed under the care of women, is another strategic space to cultivate vegetables and fruit, medicinal, ornamental and timber-yielding species that complement the food and economy of *milpa* grower families. The *milpa* and the houseyard may be defined as polyculture, home to a wide variety of plant species.

Harvest from the *milpa* and the houseyard Reyes Joaquín Maldonado Gamboa and Mauro Pech Plaster cast and acrylic paint, 2019



Diversity of Seeds

The seeds are the beginning of a biocultural wealth that defines the *milpa*. Behind each one there is a millennial process of selection and adaptation of plants to environmental conditions in the Yucatan peninsula. The *milpero* sows the corn with its *xaak*, a mixture that can include pumpkin seeds, beans, small kidney beans, *espelón* and lentils; in the same hole, they will germinate and grow together, associated with corn. Other areas of the *milpa* and houseyard are intended to sow the seeds of small kidney beans, pumpkins, *jicamas*, melons, watermelons, tomatoes, peppers, etc., to form a range of crops including over 30 vegetable species and around 90 varieties.







Corns

The domestication of corn began in Mesoamerica -in the basin of the Lerma River and Santiago in the West Center of Mexico- 9,000 years ago, from a kind of wild grass: the *teocintle*. Its great capacity to adapt to climate and soils, and peasant management, led to different kinds and many local varieties with specific characteristics according to the ecological region and cultural needs.

In the *milpas* and houseyards of Yucatán 3 native types of corn are cultivated, with at least 43 variants and short, medium and long term cycles of maturation, ranging from 60 to 120 days. In Maya they are known as *nal t'eel* (4 premature varieties), *xnuuk nal* (12 intermediate and late varieties) and *ts'i'it bakal* (16 intermediate and late varieties). There are variants as a result of a crossbreed called *xmejen nal* (11 premature and intermediate varieties).



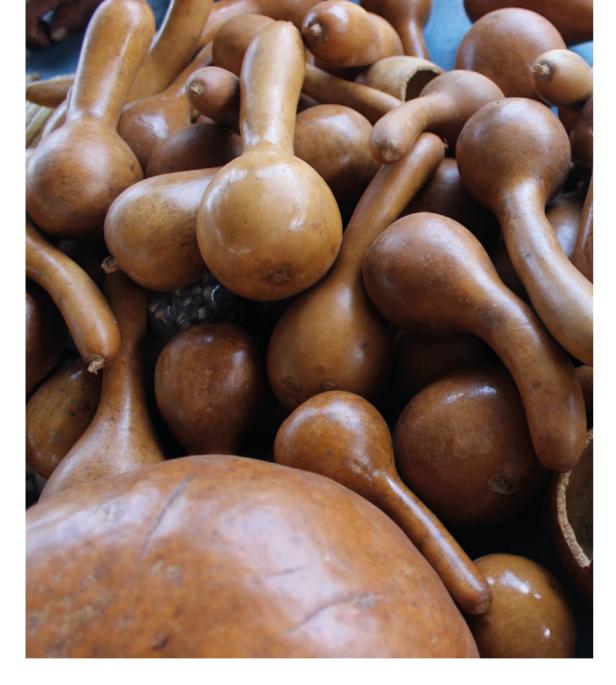
Exchange and Preservation of Seeds

The seed fairs are organized since 2002 under the initiative of groups of *milperos*, aware of the risk of progressive extinction that the varieties of regional local seeds face, caused both by environmental factors and the acceptance of transgenic crops. They are men and women committed to the preservation, production and exchange of seeds which support the biocultural diversity of the Maya *milpa*; the guardians of the ancient legacy that the "grandparents" have inherited to the present.

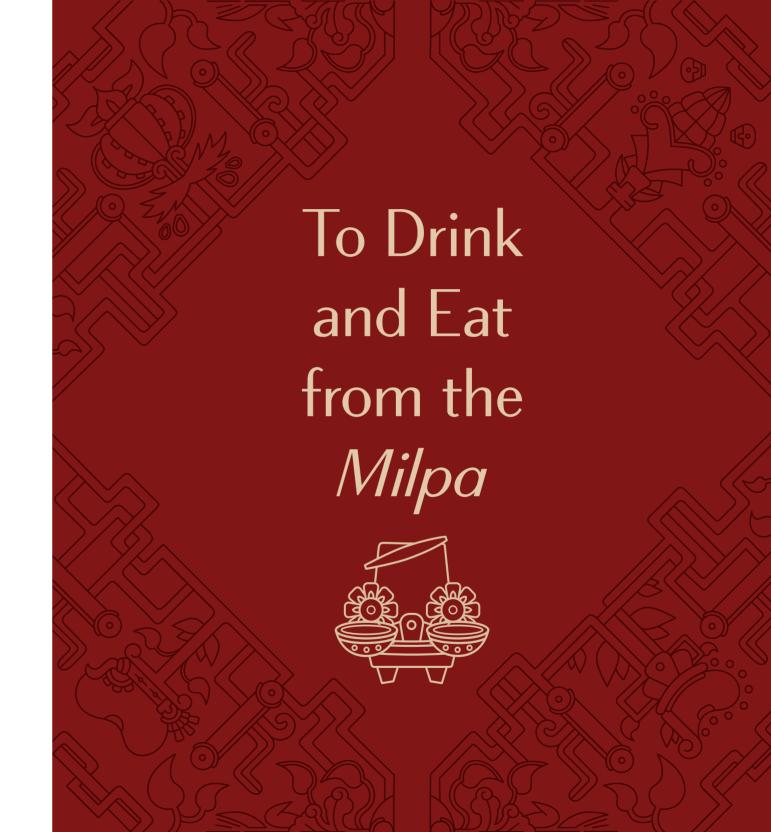
Celebration of the Seeds Poster

Acrylic paint and various native seeds, 2019 Misioneros A.C. and Guardianes de Semillas del Sur de Yucatán





Xtuucho'ob
Gourd variety (Lagenaria siceraria)
used as rattles for children



Just as seeds have optimal planting times and each variety has a particular maturation time, the fruits of the crops have their preparation times. The products of the *milpa* and the houseyard: legumes, tubers, vegetables, fruits, honey, and some animals, are combined and used cleverly to make tasty drinks and meals always based on corn.

The corn is transformed: it is de-kernelled, cooked as *nixtamal* and grinded to be ready to become a *tortilla*, *atole*, *pozole* and other forms of everyday or ceremonial consumption for families.

Women prepare the daily food, but men are involved in some tasks, like de-kernelling or making the *pib* (underground oven). Preparation times also create spaces for family life, to exchange stories and knowledge between generations.

Although the current diet is not based exclusively on the products of the milpa and houseyard, they are the sustenance in difficult times and can guarantee food sovereignty for a family.







Descendants Óscar Góngora Digital photography 2019

The Grinding

The grinding is part of the process developed in Mesoamerica for nutritiously exploiting corn. In the *Popol Vuh*, the mother goddess, *Xmucané*, grinds corn kernel, yellow and white, to nourish the meat of the first human beings; this way, grinding acquired a vital connotation, associated with female work.

Over the years, the tools used to grind have changed. The *metates* –stones for grinding- originated in pre-Hispanic times and continued to be indispensable in the household during the Colonial period and the 19th century. In recent decades, manual and electric grinders gradually substituted the ancestral grinding stones. However, it is still an essential activity in the daily life of the Maya communities.

Corn Grinders
Pedro Guerra Jordán
ca. 1890
Fototeca "Pedro Guerra", UADY





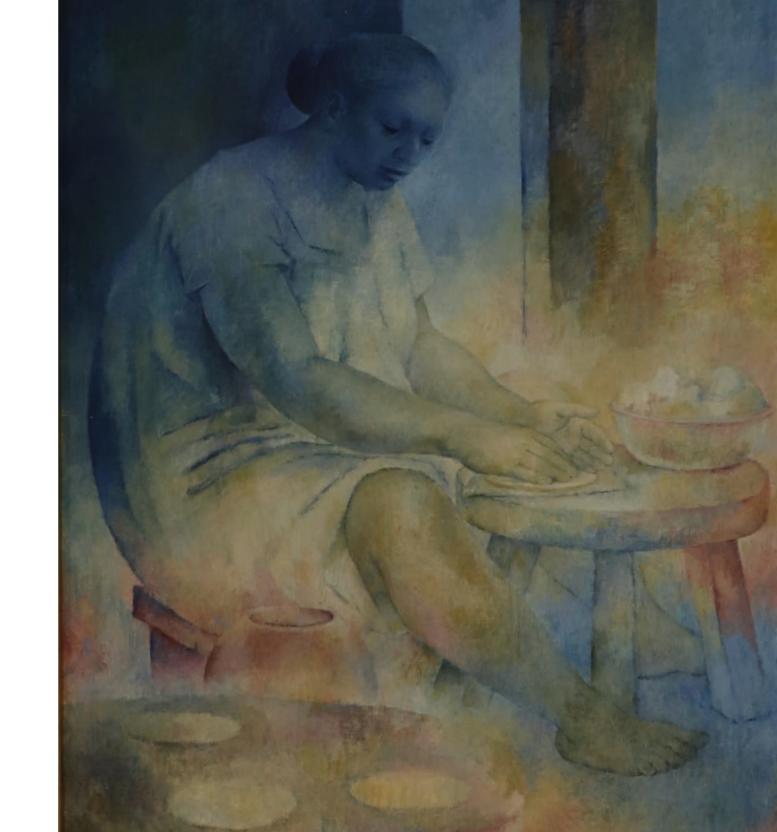
Human Movements in Danger of Extinction

The National Institute of Movement Issues (INAMM) investigates the body movements of daily activities of the indigenous communities of México – which are being lost because of the socio-economic and cultural effects of the neoliberal model. For example, the movements for de-kernelling, hand grinding, dissolving the dough of the *pozole* and making *tortillas* in Yucatán. Their projects aim to contribute to preserve a corporal heritage.





Handgrinding the corn. *Juuch*'
Movement donated by Cecilia Tun Che and Valeriana Moo Kauil
Mahas, Yucatán
INAMM



The *Tortilla* Maker
Fernando Castro Pacheco
Oil on canvas, 1975
Museo Fernando García Ponce

The Hearth

The hearth is a millenary legacy, the old enclosure of the tamed fire, whose origins are lost in time. You only need 3 stones and wood to make it. It can be permanent in the kitchen for everyday food preparation or improvised in the field and in the *milpa* during ceremonies of petition for rains and gratitude for harvests. Since childhood, the hearth is closely linked to the Maya women and their traditional role of nurturing and providing food for all members of the *milpa* grower family.





The *nixtamal* is a food process originated in Mesoamerica which modifies the chemical composition of corn, improving significantly its nutritional value, which is key to its optimal use. The procedure is simple, and it is done on a daily basis in the domestic environment of Maya communities; it consists of cooking the corn kernels in water with lime. When cooked, you let the grains settle several hours to be strained and washed later, eliminating the skins and lime residues. This way, the corn, already cooked, is ready to be milled and transformed into the dough used for making *tortillas*, *tamales*, *atoles* and multiple foods and beverages.



Bakche'
Tool made out of deer horns or wood which is used to take out the corn from its husk

een a xíixt u xiix le xi'imo', xiixel xi'im xeen a xíixtej

Maya tongue twister
Clean the corn residues



Mé x icoDesign by Cristina Paoli

I Am Yours Even If You Don't Want To

I turned myself into a corn to be nearby you.
How much I enjoy being like this!
First, you take my skin off,
you caress my belly and de-kernel me.
After you make me nixtamal,
you wash me, you drain me,
you grind me,
you soak me, you knead me, and you spread me.
Although you pat my face or dilute my body,
I will be in your core even if you don't want to.

Isaac Carrillo Can 2010

Nalchajen ut**i**a'a**l i**n wantal naats' tech. ¡U jeta'an ki'il in wanil heila'e'! ya wo ko'on ti ken. bejla'e'! ♦ ka p'o'iken. ka ja'ats'iken, ka juch'i ken, ka ch'u**li**ken, ka ya ach'tiken ka xit'iken.

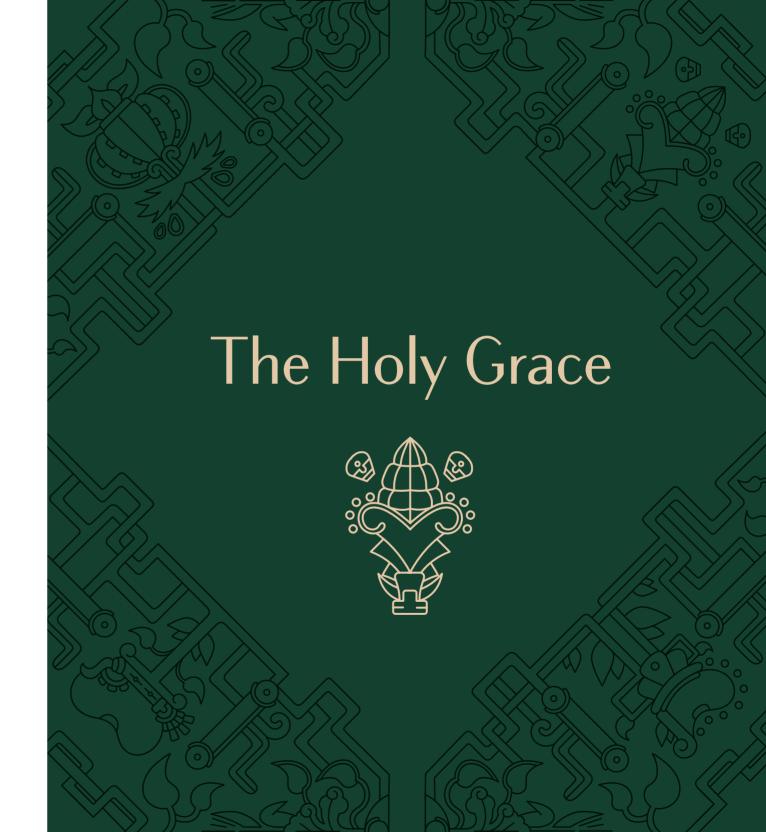
Kex ka a pak'acht in wich wa ka puk' in wiinkilale, ta jobnel

kinwantal kex ma' a k'áati'.



This illustration of Diego Rivera is inserted in the post-revolutionary nationalist artistic canon; it portrays a Maya maternity, or Yucatecan *mestiza*, waiting in a corn mill. In the window shop some posters with the phrase "Viva Felipe Carrillo", in allusion to the Socialist Governor of Yucatán, stand out.

Book illustrated by Diego Rivera Stuart Chase. *Mexico. A Study of Two Americas.* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1931



The ancient Maya symbolically associated agricultural work with the creative power of the gods, and conceived the universe as a squared space, similar to the *milpa*.

As it is told in the *Popol Vuh*, man was created with dough of white and yellow corn. Thereby, the sacred corn occupied a central place in the Maya cosmogony and was considered the vital essence of humanity; the sustenance of men and gods who, through the ritual blood offered in sacrifice, were nourished from the same holy grace.

The sacredness of the corn was such that it became deified and portrayed as a young and beautiful God, symbol of society and civilization. The iconography in the codices and pottery, as well as the colonial literary sources, are testimonies which allow us to appreciate part of the cosmogonical vision of the ancient Maya, which is enriched and updated in the myths, beliefs and the practices of the contemporary Maya.







A view of Maya cosmogony is reflected in the pages of this book, work of the distinguished Alfredo Barrera Vásquez, specialized in Maya culture, and renowned painter, Fernando Castro Pacheco. The engravings illustrating the verses of the poem stand out for their color and vigorous stroke, evoking Maya deities, the forest, the sacred corn and the *milpa*.

Cross. Poem in Five Cardinal Points Mérida, Yucatán, Estudios Bassó, 1976 Sedeculta/Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica y Literaria de Yucatán



The descendent god is identified as the god of corn and associated with death and sacrifice. This figure is frequent in the Maya iconography of Yucatán.

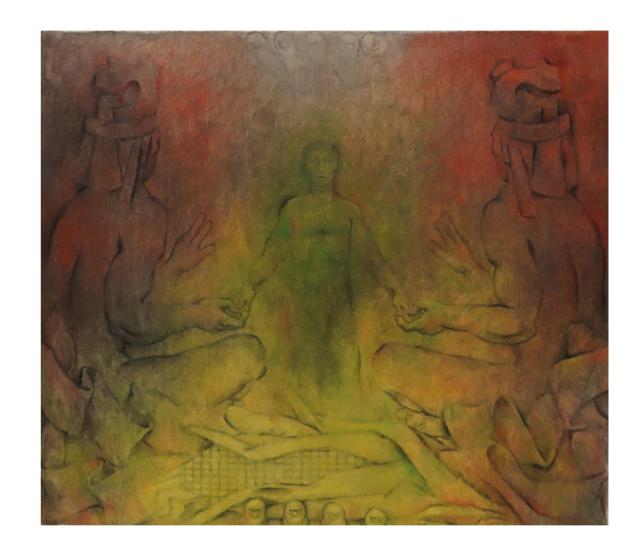
Chen Mul Censer
Patricia Martín Morales
Taller Los Ceibos, Muna, Yucatán
Baked clay and natural pigments, 2019



The God of corn with its body decorated in red, symbol of the vital blood, receives an offering of *tamales* and a gourd with water, and looks at a kneeling woman prepared to receive the gifts. At the top, also with a red body, the consort Goddess floats. The *yuya* bird is depicted moving and building its nest, an element that indicates rain or drought.

Mural Fragment of San Bartolo, Guatemala Late Preclassic period

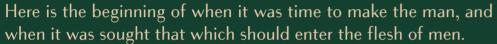
The creation of man, recounted in the *Popol Vuh*, is the subject of the murals of the main staircase of the Government Palace of Yucatán. In the centre of the composition, the Man of Corn emerges from a corncob before the eyes of the Heart of the Earth and the Heart of Heaven. The preparatory sketches show the artist's research process.



Study for a mural
Fernando Castro Pacheco
Oil on canvas, 1970
Fundación Casa Estudio Fernando Castro Pacheco



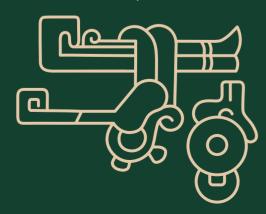
The Creation of Man

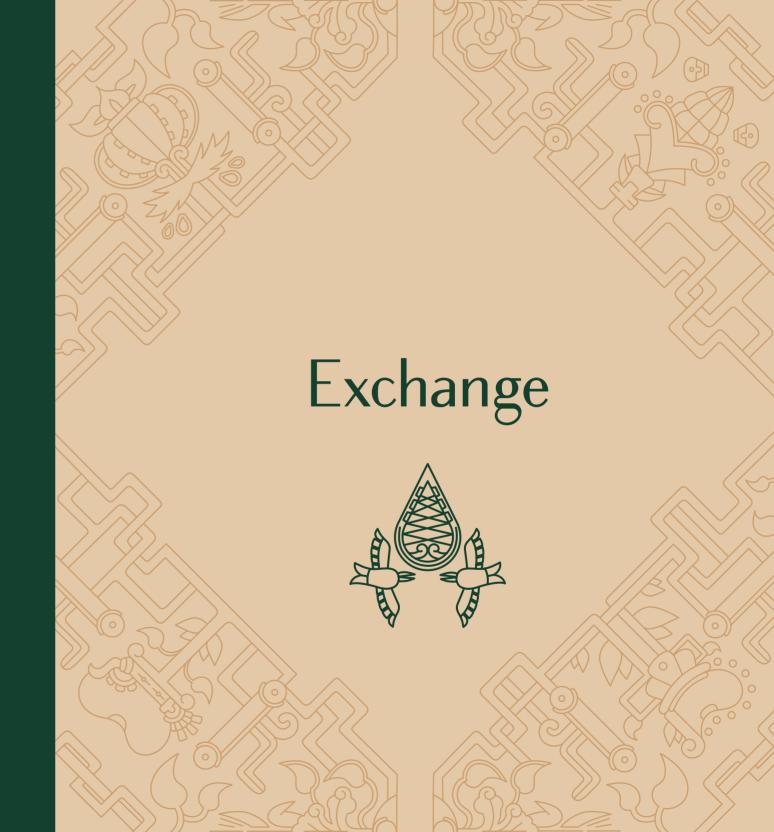


The Forefathers, the Creators and Makers, which are called *Tepeu* and *Gucumatz* said: "now is the time to wake up, time for the work to be completed and that the ones that will sustain and nourish us appear, the enlightened children, the civilized vassals; that man appears, mankind on the Earth's surface."

Then, they had a conversation about the creation of our first mother and father. White and yellow corn became their flesh; their arms and legs were made of corn dough. Only corn dough entered the flesh of our parents, the four men that were created.

The *Popol Vuh*





For the Maya peasant, the forest is a sacred space that integrates plants, trees, animals, forces and beings that inhabit it. When entering, he does so cautiously because it does not belong to him. To make his way, cultivate it and extract resources when necessary, he establishes a continuous exchange with the *yumtsilo'ob* or "lords" who guard it. To make *milpa*, he borrows it.

When choosing, preparing, and cultivating the land, he makes offerings and ceremonies of request and gratitude to the gods, since everything in nature belongs to them. These ceremonial practices are based on ancient beliefs and are still held in many communities.

The forest, with its wild plants and animals, has its own rhythm. The *milpero* establishes a negotiation to balance the human tasks and the crop cycles. The respect for the forest, the ancient knowledge of plant management passed through generations, and the contemporary observation of the changing environment combine in the pursuit of a productive *milpa*.





Yuumtsilo'ob Guardians of the Forest



Custodians of the forest and the trees



Keepers of the *milpas*. They protect them from theft or animals





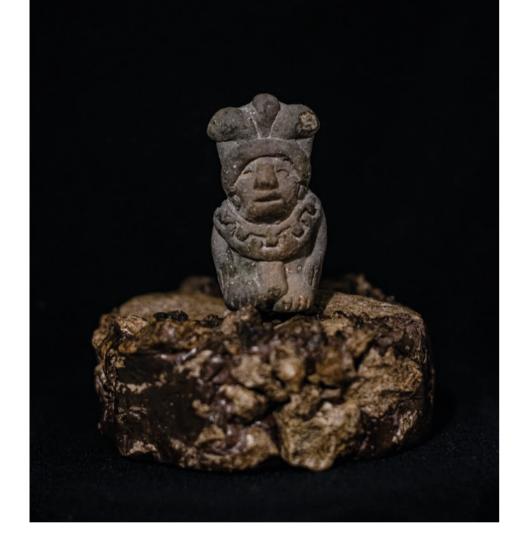












The *aluxes* are mischievous creatures that inhabit the forest. They like to scare with noises those who walk by and to hide the belongings of the peasants while resting. Positioned in the four corners and in the center of the *milpa*, they protect it and block the passage to strangers throwing stones at them and punishing with disease whoever takes the harvest without permission.

Alux. Jkalankool (Milpa Keeper) Reyes Joaquín Maldonado Gamboa Clay, stone, concrete, soil and mineral pigments, 2019



The *jmeen* is the man who intercedes between the *milperos* and deities so the *milpas* are successful. He has the ancestral knowledge of the forest and the creatures that inhabit it; he is in charge of holding the rituals to ask permission to make the *milpa*, imploring the arrival of rains, and to thank for the fruits obtained from the land.

Imeen suitTraditional garment Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo Museo de Arte Popular de Yucatán

Process of the Maya Milpa

The traditional Maya *milpa* system, known as "slashing, cleaning and burning", includes the following activities:

Selection and Preparation of the Field



XIMBAL K'AAX
or "Forest Stroll"
You search and select the field to make the *milpa*.

JOLCH'AK or Breaching
To open a gap around the selected field with a hoe or machete.





WE'P'IS K'ÁAX
or Measurement of the Field

With a rope of 20 meters, you measure the number of ropes that the *milpa* will have. Each cord has a surface of 400 m², and its angles are marked with boundary stones piled together.



KOOL or Clearing the Field

Depending on the antiquity of the forest, they cut bushes, vines, herbs and shrubs; trees of the selected field are cut down and also the remains. The cutting of trees is made at the height of the waist, which encourages the regeneration of the vegetation. Those that are useful as food, forage, or building material remain uncut.



In some cases, the *milpa* is protected with a fence of trunks, branches and hedges to protect it from herd and other animals.



MÍIS PAACH KOOL or Boundaries

A path around the prepared field is cleared, in order to prevent fire from spreading outside the field.

TÓOK or Burning

In a controlled manner, they set fire to the dry vegetation of the *milpa* field before the rainy season starts, between March and May.

Sowing, Care and **4**Harvest of the Crops

PAAK'AL or Sowing

As the *milpa* is a polyculture, besides corn, seeds of other associated crops are planted, interspersed or assembled together in the *pet patch* (space inside the *milpa* where they grow tubers or vegetables), at different times, between April and September.





CH'A'ACHÁAK or Request for Rains

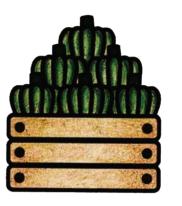
It is a propitiatory ceremony led by a *jmeen* in which the gods, the Christian Saints and supernatural beings are notified that the seeds have been planted and now their intervention is required so that it rains and harvests are successful.

PÁAK KOOL or Weeding

All the vegetation growing in sown fields, which competes with corn during its growth phase, is removed.

WAATS' or Folding

Corn reeds are bent to protect corn from the attacks of animals and prevent they rot in the rain.

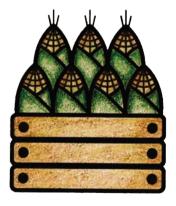


JO'OLCHE' YEETEL PÍIBIL NAL WÁAJ or U JAANLIL-KOOL

It is a ceremony of gratitude for the ripening of the corn. Individually, the milpa growers offer corn baked underground, *pibinalo'ob*, to all the deities and supernatural beings involved.

100CH or Harvest

The mature fruits of the *milpa* are collected. It starts in June and it can be extended until May, due to the diversity of seeds that are sown, and their respective cycles of maturation. This also helps for food to be available throughout the year.



The Maya Milpa. Silvia Terán y Christian Rasmussen. UNAM-CEPHCIS/UNO. 2009

With Boots and Cap

The traditional dress of the Maya peasants during the Colonial era and the 19th century was made with natural materials such as *manta* -coarse cotton cloth-, beef or deer hide and henequen fibers. Today, there is not a special outfit to work the *milpa*, but, essentially, the tasks and instruments that the *milpa* growers use remain the same as those of their parents and grandparents. Although plastic has been introduced and they have adapted to the materials that they have on hand, the *machete*, the hoe and the *xuul* (planting tool), among others, remain persistently as basic tools for the *milpa*.



Miis ch'ilib
Broom used to clear and sweep
the boundaries of the milpa
before the burning



Chúuj
Gourd to carry and drink water





Artist Fernando Castro Pacheco made the sketches for the choreography of the ballet "Peasant Life", of Gustavo Río, inspired by the work of the *milpa* workers.

Peasant Life Watercolor on paper, 1938 Escuela Superior de Artes de Yucatán/Dirección de Investigación











A working day in the *milpa*Black and white photography on cotton paper
ca. 1940
Colección Mena Brito
Sedeculta / Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica y Literaria de Yucatán



The Burning

From an economic and biological perspective, the burning is crucial for the milpa in Yucatán. It thins out the land, lets the sun enter and cleans insects and weeds. In addition, by clearing and burning, the fertility which is in the vegetation is added to the ground. The ash of the plants contains lime, magnesium, iron and other minerals that make as fertilizer. The heat of the burning dilates the porous slab, making it sweat and gather the necessary moisture so the scarce soil absorbs it and the seeds can germinate.



Fragments of Slashing, Clearing and Burning

Art installation with soil, stones, ashes, coil, wood, bones, shells, glass and henequen trunks, 2019



The Burning
Pim Schalkwijk
Digital photography
2019



Sowing
Miguel Cetina Muñoz
Digital photography
2011



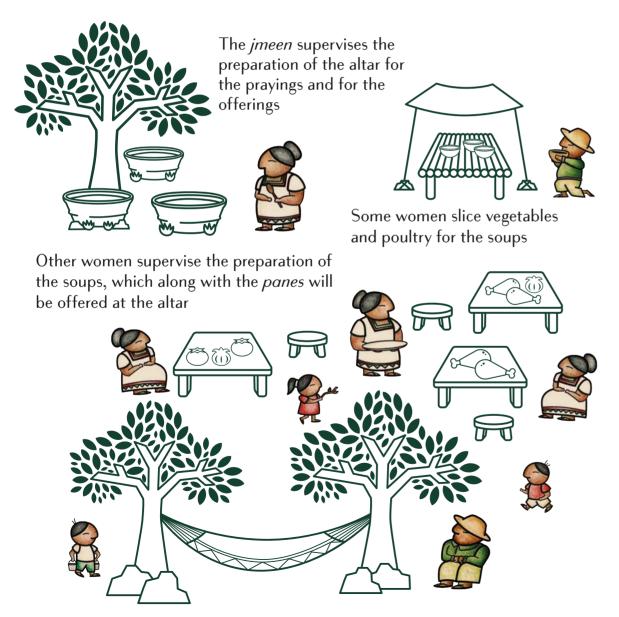
Ch'a'a cháak

The annual ceremony requesting rain seeks to ensure the water needed for the crops falls down. It has pre-Hispanic origins and lasts several days. It makes the distress for the outcome of harvests collective and communally relieves that stress. It is presided by a *jmeen*, who, before the altar, invokes the gods of rain and calls the winds to participate in the offerings presented, requesting their intervention to achieve the harvest. Traditionally only men participate. At the altar, which arches simulate the celestial vault, the sacred foods and beverages are placed: the *balché* (wine of the bark soaked in pure water and fermented with honey); the "breads" (made with layers of thick corn dough and ground pumpkin seed); the *saka*' and the soups, among others. Around the legs of the table, the kids imitate the sound of toads, associated with water in Maya culture.

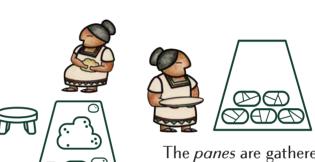


A Ceremony to Give Thanks for the Harvest

The whole process is a celebration and gathering of the community. Everyone is involved and participates doing a specific chore, chatting and socializing. The *jmeen* prays and asks for protection and blessings for the field, the family and the community. At the end, once the gods have received the offerings, the food is distributed among the people and they enjoy the feast together.



* The Maya agricultural ceremonies of the Yucatán Peninsula coincide in their cosmogonical meaning. However, differences and particularities in the way they are celebrated can be appreciated in each community.



Women shape the corn

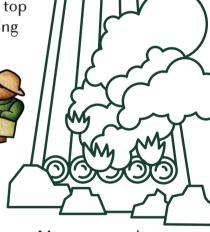
dough to prepare thick

tortillas for the panes

The *panes* are gathered on top of metal sheets before going into the oven



Men add pumpkin seed paste to each layer of dough, they pile them and wrap them with banana leaves



Men prepare the undergorund oven



Children play while they wait and also help carrying leaves for the food and for the oven

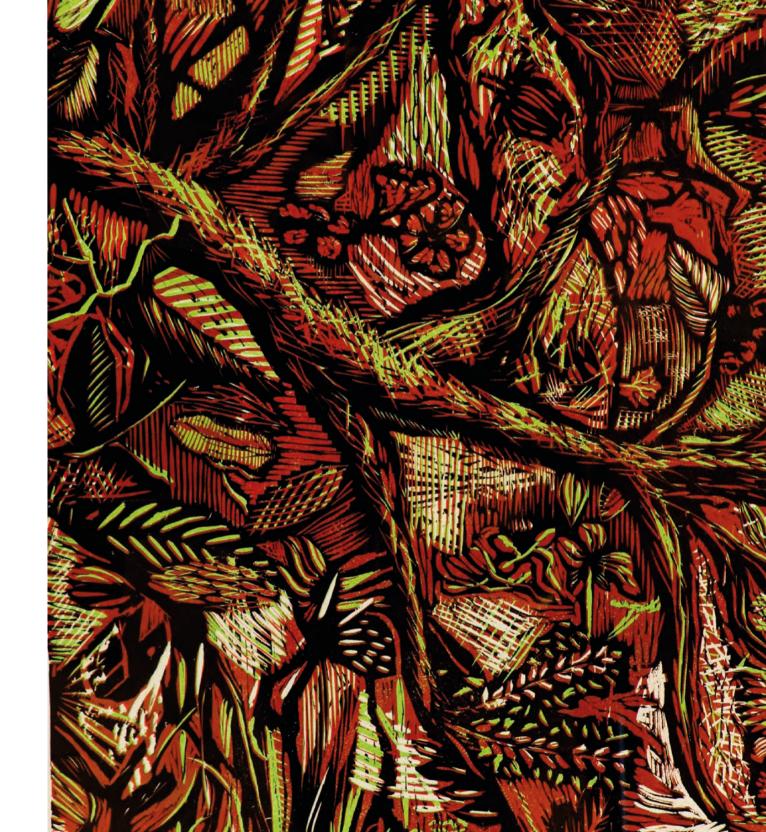


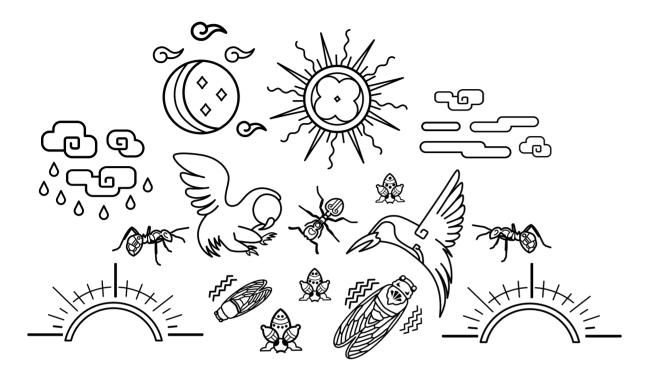
The Rest of the Forest

When one stops cultivating the field, it rests and the forest recovers. As vegetation, fauna an melliferous plants restore themselves -biodiversity-, it contributes to the cleaning of the atmosphere. This regeneration is what years later will give fertility to the *milpa* that will be cultivated in the same field, in which productivity depends on the rains, as well as the minerals and energy that accumulate in the soil and the vegetation during the rest.

The forest also becomes a space that provides resources for peasant families, where they go to perform activities such as hunting, beekeeping and the collection of firewood and plant species for construction and medicinal uses.

To Bloom Mauricio Collí Tun Xilography, 2019





Observe the Surroundings

The *xokk'iin* is a method that registers the behavior of nature and interprets it to generate an annual weather forecast. It observes the blooming of plants, the sound of trees, and the behavior of insects, the singing of the birds, the cloud shapes and the direction of the winds, among others. As more elements are registered, the more accurate the prognosis will be. Although observation in January is key, it continues the rest of the year. Elements such as the nests of the *yuya* bird in the spring or the sound of the *ja'abin* tree are indicators of rainfall or drought. They allow the *milpa* grower to manage to adjust his activities, for example, when to burn, or the type of seed he will sow.

Bifurcated Path



In 1848, in the middle of the Caste War, when the Maya were ahead and about to enter the city of Mérida, they had to retreat. The rainy season had begun, so they needed to return to their communities to plant and work their *milpas* to assure annual food for their families. This episode, a sort of truce with the enemy to be able to plant, reflects the importance of the *milpa* as sustenance of the Maya people. However, besides being a crop, the Maya *milpa* has always been a cultural system organizing family life.

Since colonial times, the Maya peasants faced different conditions, impositions, and changes which affected the *milpa*. They had to adapt or resist them. Today, although the *milpa* does not represent the economic sustenance for many families, who have had to diversify their activities for income, and despite the migration and the reduction of land to cultivate, the *milpa* persists.





Saint John the Baptist and the Virgin of Izamal

During the Colonial era and the 19th century, the locust plagues were a serious threat to the subsistence of the Yucatecan society. The loss of the *milpa* crops, caused by the insect attack, originated the rising prices of corn, famine and death. In light of that crisis, authorities of the time begged for God's help by way of the Saints and their images. At the end of the 16th century, Saint John the Baptist was elected patron saint against pests, and in 1769, the Virgin of Izamal was moved to Mérida to make the *novenas* and prayers in order to exterminate locusts which devastated the *milpas* and forests in the province.

Virgin of Izamal R. Caballero Lithography on paper 19th Century Gran Museo del Mundo Maya de Mérida



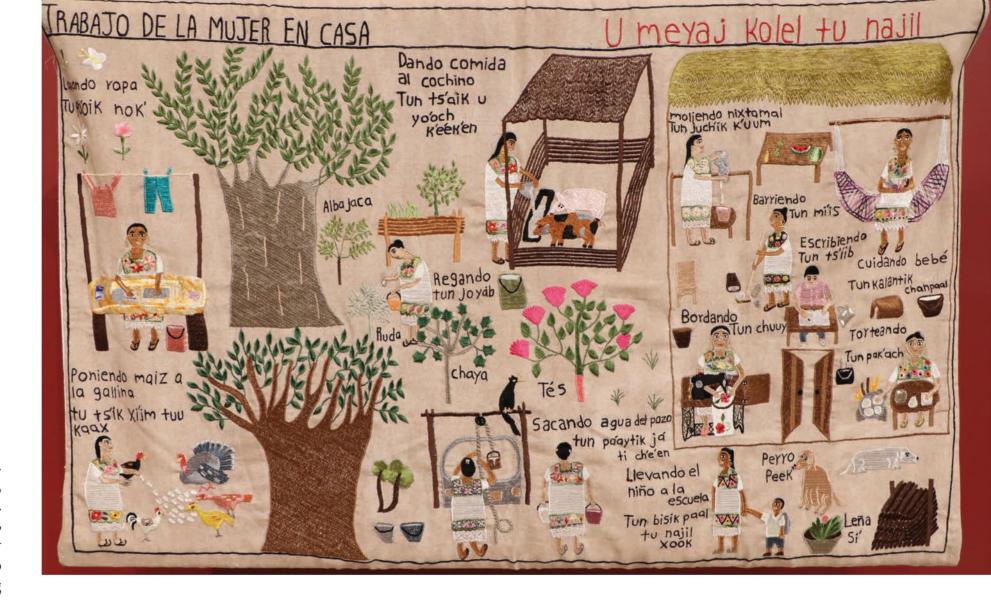


Saint John the Baptist
Polychrome woodcarved figure
19-20th Century
Baca, Yucatán
Familia Medina Arceo / Proyecto Acervos Familiares

Milpa, Houseyard and Family

The *milpa* has been a central concept of family life. It has favored the maintenance of Maya language, family coexistence and lessons about the environment. The houseyard and the living quarters are the spaces in which families converge. There, women and other members carry out everyday chores according to each family's needs: from food preparation, breeding poultry and other animals, growing vegetables, to meliponiculture. It is also a space of interaction where knowledge is transmitted to the younger generations. From where *milpa* growers come and go, children who go to school, those who work far, or migrants.

Today, daily activities ruled by the *milpa* are combined with other activities to generate an income: elaboration of handicrafts, small trade and wage labor.



Women's Work at Home. *U meyaj ko'olel tu najil*

Design: Laureano Canul Couoh.

Embroidery: Jacinta Noh Pech y Anacleta Canul Noh

Project "Sanamente Maya-Utzil Kuxtal".

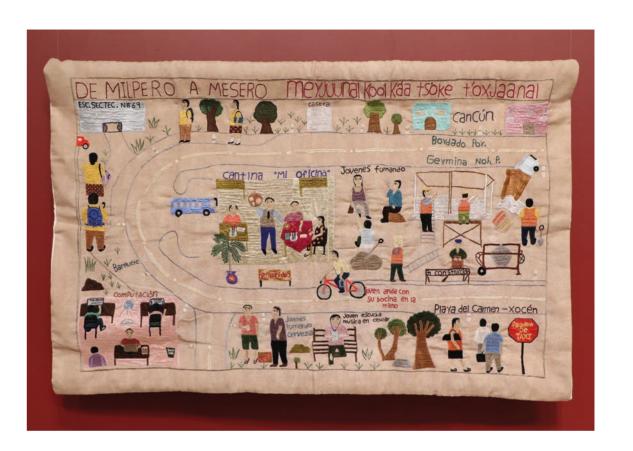
Christian Rasmussen and World Diabetes Foundation, 2017

Christian Rasmussen Collection



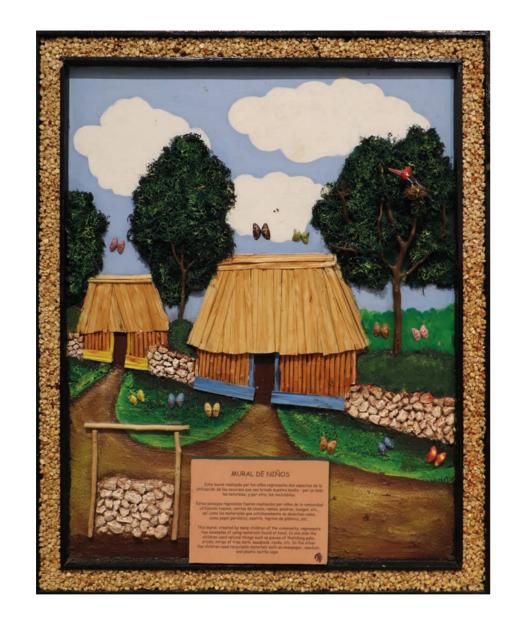


Design: Laureano Canul Couoh Embroidery: Jacinta Noh Pech y Anacleta Canul Noh Project "Sanamente Maya-Utzil Kuxtal" Christian Rasmussen and World Diabetes Foundation, 2017 Christian Rasmussen Collection



From Milpa Grower to Waiter Ti' kolnáalile' máan meseroil

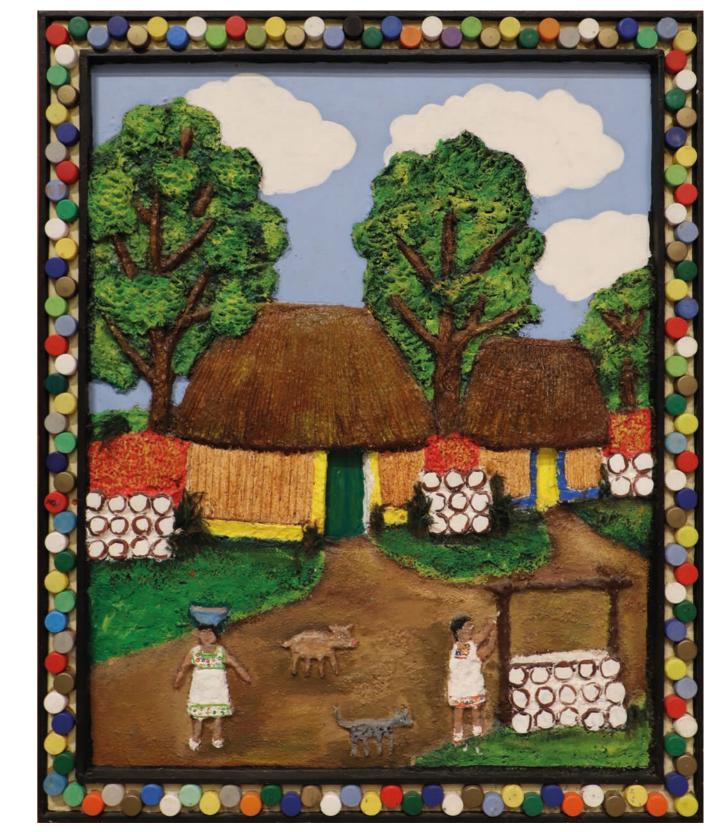
Design: Laureano Canul Couoh Embroidery: Jacinta Noh Pech y Anacleta Canul Noh Project "Sanamente Maya-Utzil Kuxtal" Christian Rasmussen and World Diabetes Foundation, 2017 Christian Rasmussen Collection



Mural of the Children

Made by children of the community of Yaxunah, Yucatán
Mixed media, 2010

Museo Comunitario de Yaxunah



Milpa Times

These are ripening times, of food preparation.

These are mythical times of the sacred corn.

These are the forest times: of observation, rituals and farming seasons.

These are historic times, of persistence.

These are the current daily times: times of change.

These are times of listening and action, to restore the balance;

It is time to make *milpa*. 1



What does it mean to make *milpa?*

What are the changes, strategies and searches?



Which paths has the *milpa* taken today?



Ts'ook u ts'a'abal to'on le lu'uma This Land Was Given to Us Ángel A. Avilés Canul Oil panting on barrels, 2019

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