Elizabeth and Harold Hinds

Latin American Folk Art
From the Collection of Elizabeth and Harold Hinds

Imholte Hall, University of Minnesota-Morris
Huichol yarn art. This piece depicts a ceiba tree with a bird. Beside it a man shoots a bow and arrow. Other insect-like forms fly about. These hallucinatory images are traditional for the Huicholes, who used peyote to bring on visions. Originally a traditional art form, yarn paintings became popular as tourist art. This piece was purchased at Tlaquepaque, a town just outside of Guadalajara, in the 1970’s. The story on the back reads:

Los Huicholes no conocían el maíz en tiempos antiguos. Una vez un niño se enteró de que había gente allende las montañas “que tienen algo que llaman maíz,” y fue en su busaca. En camino se encontró con un grupo de hombres que le dijeron que (h)iba a comprar maíz y el, confiando, les acompañó. Lo que no sabía es que esa gente eran en realidad hormigas (los insectos en esta ilustración). La Gente Hormiga que ro(b)e todo lo que encuentra. Al llegar la madrugada se despertó. Bajo un gran pino y descubrió que le habían roído (robado) toda la ropa, el cabello e inclusive las cejas, y que solamente le quedaban el arco y las flechas. Oyó que un pájaro se pasaba en un árbol, y le apuntó con una flecha, pues tenía hambre. El pájaro le reveló que era Tatey Kukurú Uimári, Nuestra Madre Paloma Muchacha, la Madre del Maíz. Le dijo que siguiera a su casa, donde le daría maíz.

Translation: The Huichol people didn’t know about maize in ancient times. Once a boy learned that there were people over in the mountains “that had something they called maize,” and he went to look for them. In the road he encountered a group of men that told him that they were going to buy maize and he, confidant, went with them. What he didn’t know is that these people in reality were insects (the insects in the illustration). The insect people steal everything that they find. In the morning he woke up. Under a large pine tree he discovered that he had been robbed of all his clothing, hair, and even his eyebrows, and they only left him a bow and arrows. He heard a bird passing the tree, and he pointed the arrow, since he was hungry. The bird revealed to him that it was Tatey Kukurú Uimári, Our Mother Dove Girl, the Mother of Maize. It told him to follow it to its house, where it gave him maize.
This Huichol yarn art picture illustrates, among other figures, an ear of corn, a bird, and the sun. Many of these figures are shown in Lake Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico. Purchased in the 1970’s at Tlaquepaque.

The story on the back is missing but a short note states: “The priest and the woman(?) took offerings to the god. They are at Lake Chapala (Jalisco). One of the offerings is corn.”

Huichol yarn art with a seated figure beating a drum. Purchased in the 1970’s.

Only a portion of the story on the back remains: “…mardaskame agita sus muwieris. Bajo los muwieris…alimentos son: una milpa, una mata de calabaza, dos…das sobre el fuego. Estos son los elementos mas…the fiesta de la calabaza.”

Translation: “…mardaskame beats his drum. Under the drum are: a milpa (corn patch), a squash plant, two…over the fire. Those are the most…elements of the fiesta of the squash.”
Molcajete and Pestle (basalt mortar/grinding bowl and pestle), Central Mexico, collected in Morelos in the 1970s.

This ceramic figure represents a pre-Columbian corn god. It is a 1970’s reproduction and was purchased at a FONART store. Note that it holds corn cobs in its hands and has corn cobs in its headdress.
Bowl from San Antón, a town now part of Cuernavaca, Mexico, locally known for its waterfall and its pottery. Bought in 1983.

Photo cube with photos of El Santo, Mexico’s most famous masked, professional wrestler. His real name was Rodolfo Guzmán Huerta and he became a legend as a wrestler, folk hero, actor, and a symbol of justice. Mexican television ran a telenovela (soap opera) on him in the 1950’s - 1980’s. He also starred in a comic book. The panels of this cube are typical Mexican metal-framed glassware, but the photos are recent. Purchased after 2000 in Minneapolis.

Ex voto painting on tin of the crucifixion of Christ. The painting depicts people burning in hell on either side of the cross, with Adam and Eve centered on the lower edge. This painting likely dates to the 19th century. Such paintings were often hung on church walls. This one was bought in the early 1970’s.
Ex voto painting on tin, collected in Guanajuato, Mexico in the 1970’s. The painting depicts a near drowning, when a baby fell into a bathtub. Ex voto paintings typically illustrate a dangerous situation in which harm was averted by a timely prayer to the Virgin or a saint. The supplicant usually made a vow to the interceding saint. Later, the vow was fulfilled, often by a pilgrimage to a holy site.

At the pilgrimage site, painters could be hired to help fulfill the vow by creating a painting of the episode. This one includes the baby’s mother and the saint, as well as the baby and the tub. The inscription is typical, another means of telling the inspirational story: “El niño…se cayó en una tina con agua, su mamá la Sra. M. del…lo sacó casi ahogada, lo encomendó a Sr. San Antonio de Boyé, quien lo volvió a la vida y en acción de gracias dedica el presente recuerdo. Cadereyla, Qto., enero…” (Translation: The child fell into a tub of water, its mother, Señora M. del…removed him almost drowned, she appealed to the saint Señor San Antonio de Boyé, who brought him back to life and in an act of grace dedicated this remembrance).

Pottery cross/bell of unknown origin, possibly from Baja California. The cross/bell holds ritual and religious symbolism. Each arm of the cross contains a clapper; when the cross is held by its center, toggling it back and forth causes the bell to ring. Acquired in the 1950’s.
Cross from Bolivia, purchased at a Latin American Studies Association convention in the 1980’s. The Latin letters, INRI, stand for “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” From top to bottom, on the vertical portion of the cross, is the head of Jesus, the Sacred Heart, and a wine chalice topped by a communion wafer. Symbolically, the body of Christ becomes the cross. The symbolism, with roots in the 16th century, made the religious significance understandable to illiterate indigenous people. The rooster at the bottom represents the cock which crowed after St. Peter denied Jesus three times. A ladder to the left side illustrates how the body of Christ was removed. On the right are a spear, which was thrust into the side of Jesus, and a sponge which was used to apply vinegar to Jesus’ lips. Immediately below the letters INRI are the keys of St. Peter. At the end of each arm of the cross, on the left a hammer and on the right pliers, represent the instruments of the passion/torture. The cross stands on a stepped pyramid, representative of pre-Columbian pyramids with temples at the top.

Wood/bark carving of a small house next to a cliff. This represents a campesino house near the cliffs of Tepoztlán, Mexico. There is a small cottage industry at Tepoztlán, making these diminutive depictions, always of a building against a cliff. Each one is varied, depicting different buildings, with the bark naturally imitating the unique forms of the Tepoztlán cliffs. They are sold, not only in Tepoztlán, but also in other parts of the state of Morelos. Purchased in the 1970’s.

Photo cube, acquired after 2000 at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts gift shop. All the scenes depicted are self-portraits of the famous Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo. The top scene shows her as a deer (buck) with her own, human head. The arrows in the side of the deer are typical of the injuries shown in many of her self-portraits, for she was severely injured when young, and suffered throughout her life. Another portrait shows her with a monkey, symbolizing her sexuality, and in yet another she paints a skull and crossbones on her forehead with the title, “Pensando en la Muerte” (Thinking about Death).
Five miniature painted clay nesting bowls. Miniatures are common in Mexican folk art and are often used as children’s toys. Acquired in the 1970’s in Cuernavaca or Mexico City (below, left).

Two miniature woven baskets, acquired in the 1970’s, probably in Cuernavaca or Mexico City (above, right).

Hand-carved wooden jar-form box. The box was lacquered, then the design was carved into the lacquer. The top and sides are carved on two planes in bas relief. Acquired in the 1970’s. This typical art form of Central Mexico was disappearing at the time.

Tiny jar with hanging cups and tiny plates used as children’s toys. Acquired in the 1970’s, with origin in Michoacán, Mexico, where pottery typically used these colors and shapes.
Cazuela (bean pot or casserole) purchased at auction in the 1980’s, in Morris, Minnesota. It likely originated near the U.S.-Mexican border (below, left).

Salt and pepper shakers bought at auction in Minnesota in the 1990’s. Carved in the tradition of wooden bas relief typical of Central Mexico. These must have sat in a Minnesota window for years, for one side has faded from the sun (above, right).

Winnowing basket from highland Colombia. This is a utilitarian object that was actually used. Purchased in 1969 or 1970.
Wooden tray with ceramic tiles. Acquired in Puebla, a city renowned for its blue and white Talavera tiles. The Spanish Talavera tile art form came to Mexico in the 16th century and was often used in churches and church domes, as well as in domestic applications. The colors in these tiles are more modern. The wooden portion of the tray is an imitation of Spanish colonial furniture designs. Purchased in 1974.

Tonalá toucan from near Guadalajara, Mexico. Tonalá is a town noted for this distinctive pottery style and design. Purchased in 1974 (below, left).

Tonalá owl (below, right).
Tonalá bowl. Purchased in the 1970’s (below, right).

Yellow wool rebozo (shawl) purchased in Cuernavaca, Mexico, but made in Oaxaca, Mexico. Note its delicate weaving and fringe. Purchased in 1983.

Wool, hand-knit hat from the Toluca basin in Mexico. Its origin is in a village known for its wool products. Acquired in the 1970’s.

Antique lacquer box from Olinalá, Mexico. This traditional style of lacquer work began in the 16th century, and was promoted by Vasco de Quiroga, bishop of Michoacán, Mexico during the colonial period. Other painting styles on lacquer are found in other nearby villages. This box was purchased at the (in)famous Thieves Market in Mexico City in 1965.
Man’s ruana (poncho-like garment) acquired in Bogotá, Colombia in 1969. It has a slit in the center to pull over the head. This ruana is reversible. Women’s ruanas have a different type of slit and are worn differently.

San Antón bowl. It has been used as a flower pot. From a town now a part of Cuernavaca, Mexico, locally known for its pottery.

Six assorted plates, probably from the U.S.-Mexican border. Two have zig-zag borders painted in cream and blue, with a sketchy bird in the center. These are of traditional Mexican type. The other plates were probably made for the tourist trade. They include two octagonal dark brown plates with houses, one blue plate with houses, and one dark brown plate with vague flower shapes. All were probably collected at the U.S. border in the 1950’s, by Edith Furby, and inherited by her granddaughter, Elizabeth Hinds.
Pottery jaguar (tigre) from Nicaragua, bought in the U.S. after the year 2000 (below, left).

Pottery lidded jar purchased at an auction in Morris, Minnesota in the 1980's. The design contains pre-Columbian symbolism, with sprouting corn seeds (above, right).

Typical Mexican scenes painted by a Canadian-Mexican artist, J. Domínguez, living in Taxco, Mexico. Her husband was a silversmith in this town, known for its silver mines and silver jewelry. Bought in the 1970's.
Carved and lacquered wooden vase acquired at a Mexico City market in 1965 (below, left).

Fique basketwork coasters, bought in Bogotá, Colombia, 1969-70. Basketry using traditional fique fibers was modified by using a metal frame covered with the fibers. This item is an example of the handicrafts (artesanías) promoted by American Peace Corps workers of the time. A number of such items were designed with the tourist market in mind (above, right).

Olinalá lacquer box purchased in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The lacquer style used here is a more modern form of the art work. Purchased in the 1970’s or 80’s.
Women’s typical huipil decoration, sewn onto a blouse, from Oaxaca, Mexico. The style is traditional and all hand-sewn. It was purchased in Cuernavaca in the 1970’s (below, left).

Necklaces made of dyed macaroni were purchased in Cuernavaca, Mexico in the 1970’s. Children would often sell these on the street to tourists. These necklaces cost one peso per string (about 12 cents U.S.) in the 1970’s (above, right).

Child’s blouse, probably made for tourists, acquired in Cuernavaca, Mexico in the 1970’s.

Necklace made of seeds, known as “lágrimas de San Pedro” (tears of St. Peter). These are traditional in Latin America (at least in Mexico and Colombia), where Catholicism is strong. They are often made into rosaries. Bought in Mexico in 1983 (right).

Bracelet made of Mexican coins and received as a gift around 1957-60. The large coin is worth 5 centavos and bears the date of 1951; the smaller coins are each one centavo and date from the 1950’s (left).
Hand-blown glasses from Guadalajara, Mexico, bought in the 1980’s.

Pottery candelabra purchased at a FONART store (Fomento Nacional de Artesanías, National Promotion of Handicrafts — a government-run store that began in the 1960’s). This style is typical in Mexico for its representation of the Tree of Life. It has religious significance: this one has doves, but more elaborate ones often depict Adam and Eve at the base of the tree. It was bought in the 1970’s in Cuernavaca or Mexico City (right).

Antique matchbox acquired at the Thieves Market in Mexico City. This one has a printed illustration of a steam locomotive and the words “La Central.” The illustrations on items such as matchboxes were not considered to be worthwhile art until the 1960’s, when this lost art form was rediscovered (above, left).
Wooden mask purchased at a public market in Taxco, Mexico. The mask is not a tourist item, but was worn in traditional public dances. It represents a pig and is unfinished, as it had not yet been painted. Bought in the 1970’s (below, left).

Wooden mask purchased at a public market in Taxco, Mexico. This is a child’s mask and represents the devil. Note that its eyes have glass marbles inserted into them. Bought in the 1970’s (above, right).

Straw mask purchased at a public market in Mexico City. The mask dates to the 1970’s.
Tinware painted with the Virgin and Child. The original tinwork frame surrounds it, but the original glass door covering it is missing. It was purchased at an antique store in Guanajuato and probably dates to the 19th century.

Mask purchased at a public market in Taxco, Mexico. This particular mask represents El Moro (The Moor) and was often used in the dance of the Christians versus the Moors, thus has religious and historical significance. Bought in the 1970’s (right).

Ceramic pig mask purchased at a public market in Taxco, Mexico in the 1970’s (below, left).
Cromofantasías, by Guillermo Zubieta Vigil, Impresión y Encuadración Creaciones Lunic (no date), features two artworks donated by Harold Hinds. These include the cover photo “Paternidad” (paternity) and “Revolucionario” (Revolutionary). Guillermo Zubieta and his brother Carlos were pioneers in the Mexican photo mural and comic book industries. Guillermo wrote the script for El Payo, a Mexican western comic book. Inside the cover, Guillermo has hand written the words: Julio 1983, dedico estes cromofantasies al señor Harold E. Hinds J. con toda mi admiración. Guillermo (July 1983, I dedicate these cromofantasies to Harold E. Hinds, Jr., with all my admiration. Guillermo).
Each of these five jars is a tiny piñata made of clay and would have been filled with candy to break at a birthday party or other celebration. They were purchased at a traditional market in Cuernavaca, Mexico in the 1970’s.

Molinillo from Colombia. Molinillos are wooden utensils with a series of loose rings used as chocolate beaters to make hot chocolate frothy.

Maracas were collected by Harold Hinds’ grandparents, Earl and Mae Hinds, in Cuba in the 1950’s (below, left).

Castanets were collected by Harold Hinds’ grandparents in Cuba in the 1950’s (above, right).
Pottery ash tray from the Auto Hotel Ritz, Acapulco, Mexico. This was a hotel geared to middle-class Mexican guests. 1970’s (below, left).

This ash tray (above, right), shaped like a sombrero, reads “Recuerdo de Cuernavaca” (souvenir of Cuernavaca). 1970’s.

The scene in this art form is quite popular in Mexico. Calaveras (skeletons) are typically illustrated in paintings and scenes from real life. In this scene, three skeletons are playing billiards with skulls as balls. This particular piece is a more modern form of the art. It was purchased in a small shop in the Zona Rosa (a tourist district) in Mexico City in the 1980’s.
A woman’s reversible ruana from Colombia, woven in non-traditional colors. The colors on this particular piece are more typical of the 1960’s. Women’s ruanas differed from men’s in that they were slit all the way down the front, so that the panel on one side hung down in front, while the other panel was flipped over the shoulder.

This green embroidered scarf comes from the Otavalo indigenous market in Ecuador. Purchased in the 1970’s.
This ceramic statue of the Virgin Mother and Christ Child is from the state of Guerrero, Mexico, but was purchased in a FONART store in Mexico City. The decoration is typical of Guerrero pottery, but has been applied to a new art form. Bought in the 1970's.

Wooden box purchased during the Sandinista Revolution (1979) in Nicaragua. On the top are the images of Sandino (a previous revolutionary who fought against the regime and from whom the Sandinistas took their name), and another revolutionary hero, Carlos Fonseca. The sign on the left front of the box reads: "Solo los obreros y campesinos irán hasta el final. Solo su fuerza organizada logrará el triunfo" (Only the workers and peasants will go to the finish. Only their organized force will achieve triumph). The other sign on the right reads: "... no por alcanzar una mezquina migaja sino una profunda transformación social" (not to achieve a miserable crumb, but a profound social transformation).
2 carved wooden bowls, painted with flowers, Mexico.

Imholte Hall, Second Floor Walls

Bark paintings are a popular art form in Mexico. “Amate” is derived from the Nahuatl word “amatl,” meaning the bark from a certain tree, upon which these paintings were made. Bark paintings originated with the Aztecs, but had disappeared before the 20th century. At the time of the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, the art was revived. In the first modern bark paintings, ceramic artists transferred their paintings to bark. Later, the subjects and painting style became more elaborate. This scene shows a village church with two towers; angels and a personified moon in the sky; and people, perhaps going to the church. Note that the painting is signed. This piece was purchased in a FONART store around 1983.
Poster of the History of Mexican Comic Book Art

Cuban Poster with Tango Dancers “Tangos: El exilio de Gardel,” 1986
From the film: Argentino en Colores, Director Fernando Solanes
With: Marle La Foret, Miguel Angel Sola, Felippe Leotard, Marina Vlady