

Endangered Threads Documentary Surveys 100 Years of Maya Weaving

Endangered Threads Documentaries, an educational nonprofit, has released *A Century of Color: Maya Weaving & Textiles*, a 53-minute, bilingual documentary funded by the Agostino Derossi Foundation of New York City and a large group of supporters. WARP member Kathleen Mossman Vitale and her husband Paul G. Vitale founded Endangered Threads Documentaries to produce and promote educational documentaries recording indigenous art forms such as weaving, especially those in imminent threat of disappearing due to global economic expansion and the resulting homogenization of cultures.

A Century of Color: Maya Weaving & Textiles surveys 100 years of continuity and change in Maya weaving and textiles of Guatemala. The documentary begins with the 1902 Gustavus Eisen collection of photographs and textiles at the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, and continues through the century with stunning examples of blouses, skirts, belts, hair ribbons, men's wear, ikat and embroidery. The Hearst's collection of Maya textiles is one of the best in the nation, with documented examples from the late 19th and early 20th century from the Eisen and other major collections.

With stunning footage of today's Maya, the documentary highlights continuity and change over the century, and introduces the viewer to the effects of cultural changes brought about by the recent 36-year Civil War; introduction of Spanish language in rural schools; penetration of television broadcasting; expansion of tourism and artisan organizations; modernization of the role of women; pressure from a globalized world economy; and importation of vast quantities of cheap, new, and used clothing.

Margot Blum Schevill and Kathleen Mossman Vitale co-wrote the script for the production, which took four years to complete. Schevill is a textile scholar, anthropologist and exhibition curator from Berkeley. Her most recent books are *The Maya Textile Tradition* with photography by Jeffrey Jay Foxx, and *Maya Textiles of Guatemala: The Gustavus A. Eisen Collection, 1902*. Currently, she is editor of *Volume II, Latin American & the Caribbean, Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress & Fashion*, and is curating the exhibit *Traje de la Vida* at UC/Berkeley's Hearst Museum, which will open in September 2008.

Vitale, an award winning journalist, photographer and editor, began producing documentaries in 1998. She lived in Latin America for 13 years, including two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Her documentaries include *CS Price: Modernist Painter in Search of Spirit*, and *Blossoms from the Mud: The Art of Wang Gongyi* (English & French). She co-wrote, filmed, and edited *Splendor in the Highlands: Maya Weavers of Guatemala*.

Copies of the ETD documentaries are available for \$20, plus \$5 shipping, through the Endangered Thread's website, www.endangeredthreads.com.