

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 9th, 2019

CORAL GABLES MUSEUM TO OPEN THE EXHIBITION
RETRA-TABLOS
NOVEMBER 1ST, 2019 AT THE COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM



Students holding the weavings made by Guatemalan artisans out of the students' original drawings.

Coral Gables, FL— October 9th, 2019 - The Coral Gables Museum and Oolite Arts are pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition [*Retra-Tablos: Reclaiming Culture and Ancient Textile Art*](#) that will be on view at the Museum's Community Meeting Room from November 1st to November 17, 2019. The project was conceived by Aurora Molina and Alina Rodriguez, recipients of the *Oolite Arts Creator Awards 2018*.

Reclaiming Traditional Textile Arts from Guatemala

Retra-Tablos gathers a group of portraits by seventeen artists, ages 6 to 12. Every image narrates an immigrant child's story embedded in their Mayan ancestry, legend, folklore, and his/her assimilation as recent migrant, or as a child of immigrant parents.



By combining Mayan deities, symbols, Catholic iconography, and American pop culture, the works relate to the aesthetics of the Catholic “retablos” tradition. A retablo is a framed votive painting that forms part of the Catholic altar. Its iconography was often adopted by the peoples colonized by Spaniards and turned into bright, vibrant folk art of their own.

Also on view in the gallery are backstrap woven and embroidered replicas of the young artists’ drawings created by artisans from the collective of women weavers Trama Textiles, in Guatemala.

A Year of Collaborations

Retra-Tablos is the product of a year-long arts-in-education program. For this project, Molina and Rodriguez worked with immigrant children from The Guatemalan-Maya Center in Lake Worth, Florida, in coordination with its school director, Xiomara Guerra. By collecting and documenting the cultural narratives of Mayan children and highlighting the textile arts and huipiles of Guatemala, **Retra-Tablos** also pays homage to the memory of Policarpia Gaspar, co-founder of the center. Mrs. Gaspar was a Guatemalan civil war exile who devoted her life to helping refugee children and families. She passed away on this May, 2019 after a lifetime of social work.

Artist Aurora Molina has also joined efforts with Americans for Immigrant Justice and Bernice Steinbaum Gallery to present a quilt in process titled *Sew America (So America Cares): Immigration Quilt*. The quilt raises awareness on the current state of immigration and shines light on the increase of child death, deportation and detention. Each appliqued panel by artists, teachers, children and adults is rendered in textiles and feature the silhouetted face of a deported child in the US. The quilt will continue to grow as more artists and individuals contribute to making more panels.

In addition, Sharon Smith, composer with La Chance Music has produced a musical piece with a video production by Director Fina Torres and Producer Esther Levin with Jacaranda Producciones exclusively to complement the show. The project documentation video is produced by Damian Rojo.

Activities at the Coral Gables Museum

The **Grand Opening of *Retra Tablos*, on Friday, November 1st, 6-10pm** will be in conjunction with *Coral Gables Gallery Night*. It will include interactive presentations on backstrap weaving and a curator’s walk through of the exhibition. There will be live

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music by students of the University of Miami's Frost School of Music and a cash bar. This event is brought to you by the Coral Gables Museum on the First Friday of every month.

Admission is free!

More activities related to the show will be offered during the Museum's **Family Day, on Saturday, November 9, 2019, 2-5 pm**. Come and learn about the backstrap weaving textile arts of Guatemala; create paper embroidery; make simple weavings; and be creative using Mayan patterns on coloring book pages to make a self-portrait. There will be live marimba musical performances by students from Miami-Dade County Public Schools and more! Admission is also free.

For more information on Family Day: education@coralgablesmuseum.org

For more information on the artists:

Aurora Molina

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Alina Rodriguez

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About the Coral Gables Museum:

The Coral Gables Museum fosters an appreciation for the Civic Arts in Coral Gables. It explores and celebrates the history, vision, urban and environmental design, and cultural landscape of the City Beautiful within a broad audience that goes from children, families, and community members to national and international visitors. The museum optimizes its mission by cultivating effective partnerships, and providing programming that includes exhibitions, educational programs, lectures, tours, publications and special events.

About Oolite Arts:

Oolite is both a community and a resource, providing artists with the free studio space, exhibition opportunities, direct support and programming they need to advance their careers. We also offer programming to the surrounding neighborhood and the wider community to help them better understand, and create, contemporary art.

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Retra-Tablos is funded by The Ellies, Miami’s visual arts awards, presented by Oolite Arts.

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