Dancing with Devils: Latin American Masks Traditions

Appreciation Guide

Leonardo Carrizo, *Untitled* (2017), Tungurahua, Ecuador, Digital Photograph

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Acknowledgments

Many Thanks to Our Exhibit Collaborators and Co-Sponsors

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Special Acknowledgment to Dr. Mark Gordon

In 2020, Ohio State alumnus and Professor Emeritus of Art at Barton College Mark Gordon entrusted his collection of devil masks to CLAS for safekeeping by the Kawsay Ukhunchay Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Cultural Artifacts Research Collection. Select masks from this donated collection are featured in this exhibit. Professor Gordon retired from Barton College in 2020.

Additional Acknowledgments

Our special gratitude goes to Mark Gordon, Michelle Wibbelsman, Megan Hasting, Terrell Morgan, Leonardo Carrizo, Pamela Espinosa de los Monteros, and our dedicated team of *kawsay waqaychaqkuna* graduate and undergraduate student curators/researchers: Amanda Tobin Ripley, Tamryn McDermott, Alice Cheng, Victor Vimos, Shima Karimi, Cameron Logar, Anaís Fernandez Castro, Julia Allwein, and Francesca Napoli as well as Brandon D'Souza. Many thanks to the team of K'acha Willaykuna Co-PIs who contributed to this exhibition in important ways: Michelle Wibbelsman, Richard Finlay Fletcher, Pamela Espinosa de los Monteros, Eric Johnson, Megan Hasting, Elvia Andia, Guisela LaTorre, and Alcira Dueñas. And finally, we are indebted to Scott Jones, Director of the Barnett Center for Integrated Arts and Enterprise for inviting this exhibition into the space of the Collaboratory.

Further appreciation for the online exhibit produced by the K’acha Willaykuna Knowledge Equity Working Group and University Libraries goes to Leonardo Carrizo, Pamela Espinosa de los Monteros, Stephanie Porrata, Ken Aschliman, Justin Luna, the University Libraries Marketing and Communications Department and Lakewood Public Library.

And all our gratitude to the communities of Tungipamba and Píllaro, Ecuador and to our featured artists Italo Espín Haro and Fernando Endara!

Dancing with Devils:Latin American Masks Traditions

presents a collection of Latin American festival masks from Ohio State's Center for Latin American Studies Kawsay Ukhunchay Andean & Amazonian Indigenous Art & Cultural Artifacts Research Collection along with documentary photographs of the Diablada de Píllaro (Devils Dance of Píllaro, Ecuador) taken by photojournalist Leonardo Carrizo (Ohio State University School of Communications).

Diablada festivals are among the most widely recognized celebrations in Latin America. These celebrations feature several masked characters, most noticeably the *diablos* (devils).

Leonardo Carrizo, *Untitled* (2017), Tungurahua, Ecuador, Digital Photograph

Festive devils dance, play, laugh at authority, provoke, and taunt spectators as multifaceted and resilient masked figures of Latin America's past and present.

Photographer Leonardo Carrizo showcases photographs of the Diablada de Píllaro, a six-day festival in the Ecuadorian province of Tungurahua. The photo exhibit narrates the participation of the Tunguipamba community in the Diablada de Píllaro of Ecuador.

Each photograph recounts different aspects of the Diablada, documenting from start to finish, the communities' procession from their village of Tunguipamba to the center of Píllaro, including the transformation of individuals into traditional festival characters.

Leonardo Carrizo, *Los Diablos* (2017), Tungurahua, Ecuador, Digital Photograph

Leonardo Carrizo, *Diablos interacting with the public* (2017), Tungurahua, Ecuador, Digital Photograph

The Diablada celebration includes music, dancing on the street, processions, and performances by traditional masked characters such as:

- the *diablos* (devils): the devils perform the roll of scaring people with their masks made of papier-mâché, animal horns and animal fangs, transgressing, provoking the public and also clearing the street for the line dancers.
- *bailarines de línea* (line dancers): recognized by their metal mesh masks which depict fine, delicate features such as light skin, ruby lips and blue eyes meant to personify European landowners.
- *guarichas*: female characters traditionally performed only by men.

Together, the Andean dramas with masked actors are occasions to act out historically inscribed ethnic and gender relations as well as opportunities to reinterpret social roles and ponder stereotypes. In the photograph above, for example, the *diablo* character can tease and poke fun at a police officer, transgressing social and political boundaries that exist during the rest of the year.

Leonardo Carrizo, *Untitled* (2017),Tungurahua, Ecuador, Digital Photograph

Carrizo's photographs document the procession of a traditional *partida* (group) from the Tunguipamba community in Ecuador as they travel together into the center of Píllaro. The performers will conduct on average two processions and performances per day for six days in a row!

Leonardo Carrizo, *Untitled* (2017), Tungurahua, Ecuador, Digital Photograph

Exhibited alongside Carrizo's photographs are a selection of original *diablada* masks worn in Latin American festivals. They were entrusted to the Kawsay Ukhunchay Andean and Amazonian Art and Cultural Artifacts Research Collection for safekeeping by Ohio State University alumnus Mark Gordon in 2020.

In 1987, Gordon conducted field research on Caribbean mask-making traditions while pursuing a Masters of Fine Arts degree. For 100 days Gordon traveled throughout Venezuela, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, documenting traditional horned paper masks used in Carnival, Independence Day, and regional festivals. Gordon's research was inspired by the zoomorphic images embodied in horned masks.

Student curator Brandon D'Souza working with the donated masks upon arrival in 2020

To prepare the masks for exhibition, student curators of the collection (*kawsay waqaychaqkuna*, those who care and preserve the collection with *cariño,* affection), cleaned and restored the masks, and conducted additional research, delving into Gordon's archives and comparing his notes with English- and Spanish-language texts about Latin American festival masks to provide additional context for viewers.

Kawsay waqaychaqkuna student curators preparing to install the *diablo* masks
Photo credit: Leonardo Carrizo

Devil Masks

The *diabladas* of the Andes have both European and pre-Columbian South American connections and origins, both conceptually and in design. We find *diablos* in diverse representations throughout Latin America.

This griffin head mask with cow's teeth by Felix ”El Pescador” Vásquez from Playa de Ponce, Puerto Rico, captures elements of the Christian devil and also suggests references to Indigenous and Afro-Latino beliefs.

The figure of the *supay* in the Andes conjures a spirit reminiscent of the Devil or Tio of the tin and silver mines in Bolivia to whom miners would provide offerings in exchange for profit, success and protection.

Leonardo Carrizo, *Griffin head mask* (2020), Digital Photograph

> It is impossible to understand the masks as static objects, they must be 'in motion', within a context of human relationships,

- Manuel Vargas, in *Masks of the Bolivian Andes*

Manuel "El Mocho" Sanoja, *Diablito* mask, installation photo Photo credit: Anna Truax

El Diablito

This enormous mask affectionately named “little devil” protects the mask wearer’s anonymity in the Afro-Latino traditions of Corpus Christi maintained for generations in San Francisco de Paula de Yare, Venezuela. This particular "*diablito,*" an unfinished yellow, red and green mask with seashell teeth, was made by Manuel "El Mocho" Sanoja. The history of these masks dates back to 18th century Spainish traditions of *gigantones* (giants) and *tarascas* (from the Greek word to scare or frighten).

Contemporary Venezuelan masks from this region often resemble bovines. A mask with four horns symbolically represents the highest level of dignity among the devils. Three-horned devils are assistants. And masks with two horns are for common devils.

El Vejigante

Miguel "El Chino" Caraballo, *Vejigante* mask Photo credit: Tamryn McDermott

Songs and poems about the chastising, multicolored *vegigante* abound.

Vejigante está pintao
De amarillo y colorao.
No me pegues, desgraciao,
O te mando a raspar pegao

The terrifying masked carnival figure of the *vejigante* threatens passersby with inflated cow bladders (*vejigas hinchadas*), frightening and whipping children especially, and chasing cats and dogs. The *vejigante* sometimes emits horrible cries or bellows like a raging bull!

These cardboard masks from Playa de Ponce in Puerto Rico resemble animal faces with impressive horns that often branch out in various directions.

The *vejigante* mask featured here was made by Miguel “El Chino” Caraballo.

El Tiburón

Niaguatá is in a coastal region of Venezuela. The population of Niaguatá preserves one of the richest cultural traditions of the nation. This creative "*tiburón*" (hammerhead shark painted with swirls) mask by José Betancourt captures the marine fauna of this coastal zone and includes traditional multicolor ribbons. It still represents a *diablo* nonetheless, showing the variety of shapes and creative interpretations the devils masks can take.

Masked dancers often donned bells or jingles and carried whips (*fuetes*) as symbols of power. Curiously, the “devils” also carried Christian crosses around their necks as symbols of faith and devotion to the Sacrament and celebration of the triumph of Christianity over evil.

José Betancourt, *Tiburón* mask
Photo credit: Tamryn McDermott

Manuel “El Mocho” Sanoja with unfinished *diablito mask*, San Francisco de Paula de Yare, Venezuela, 1987
Photo credit: Mark Gordon

A wide variety of materials are used in maskmaking: wood; clay; stone; leather (tanned hides as well as alligator and snakeskins); cloth; feathers; gourds; metal (copper, silver, gold, window screen, tin cans—the Dominican hojalata), aluminum foil; rope (raffia, jute, sisal); plaster; papier mache, cardboard; tree bark. At times, a mask will incorporate exotica such as turquoise, jade, onyx, horn, amber, ribbons, bells, mirrors, hair, lacquer, shells, copper, silver, gold, or even dried grasshoppers.

Iselsa Suárez Ramírez with unfinished diablo mask, Cabral, Dominican Republic, 1987
Photo credit: Mark Gordon

Manuel Jesús Jiménez with unfinished *diablo* mask, Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic, 1987

Photo credit: Mark Gordon

Leonardo Carrizo, *Bailarines de línea* (2017), Tungurahua, Ecuador, Digital Photograph

This exhibition invites audiences to explore the rich mask-making traditions of Latin America, consider the unique cultural and religious syncretisms behind these traditions, and reflect on diverse cultural understandings of the world and meaning- making practices. *Dancing with Devils: Latin American Masks Traditions* prompts questions around performance, transatlantic cultural heritage, cultural understandings and colonial misunderstandings, and mask as metaphor.

Leonardo Carrizo, *Diablos interacting with the public* (2017), Tungurahua, Ecuador, Digital Photographs

Background on the Exhibition

In March 2020, the *Dancing with Devils: Latin American Mask Traditions* exhibit, scheduled for debut at Thompson Library at Ohio State and the Lakewood Public Library in Cleveland, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Curators quickly pivoted to create an online exhibition, hosted on the University Libraries website.

In 2022, the Barnett Center for Integrated Arts and Enterprise opened its space to bring a physical exhibition of *Dancing with Devils: Latin American Masks Traditions* to fruition for a broad in-person public. The K'acha Willaykuna Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Humanities grant supported through the Global Arts and Humanities Discovery Theme made the international artists residencies possible. And the Center for Latin American Studies and Department of Spanish and Portuguese supported programming.

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a devastating toll on Latin America and the world. At certain times countries like Brazil and Peru had the highest levels of confirmed cases and deaths globally. Areas of Ecuador such as Guayaquil and Quito also suffered devastating losses. Please keep these global communities in mind as you engage with this exhibit.

Documentation process for photographing a *Diablo* mask
Photo credit: Tamryn McDermott

About the Artists

Leonardo Carrizo

Leonardo Carrizo (born Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1976) is a multimedia journalism lecturer at The Ohio State University and a Columbus-based multimedia photojournalist. He specializes in visual storytelling documenting the human condition as it relates to traditions, culture, and labor. He has traveled extensively throughout Ecuador documenting its people and culture, culminating in two previous exhibitions: *The Face of Chagas Disease* (Ecuador, 2009) and *Labor and Life* (Columbus, Ohio, 2018). He also teaches visual storytelling workshops and lectures on several photographic related topics. In addition, Leonardo teaches photography abroad to high school students. Learn more about this artist at www.leonardocarrizo.com.

About the Artists

Italo Espín
Plastic Artist and Cultural Manager
from Píllaro, Ecuador

Artist Statement:
Since I was a child I have delighted in drawing on every blackboard, notebook, or desk that crossed my path. In my teenage years I embarked on my academic training in art at the University School of Plastic Arts – connected to the Arts College of the Central University of Ecuador, where I obtained my Bachelor's degree in Plastic Arts with a specialization in Painting and Ceramics. I continued my training in the College of Arts of the Central University of Ecuador and at the School of Design at the Pontificia Universidad Católica of Ecuador in Ambato. In my professional life, I became Director of Culture of the Municipality of Píllaro, where I developed an extensive career in cultural management for the benefit of the community.

After experimenting with different expressive forms and themes throughout my academic and professional career, my work settled on the affirmation of identity, based on my deep attachment to my native land. This is how I became a scholar of one of the most important cultural manifestations of the country, which is the Diablada Pillareña (CULTURAL HERITAGE OF ECUADOR). My work uncouples the constructive and functional processes of the devil's mask of Píllaro, projecting it in its own artistic vision, setting aside the artisanal process in order focus on plastic, symbolic and conceptual dimensions that affirm elements of identity in the character to the work through the combination of features, shapes and colors, and the execution of different artistic techniques.

Check out Italo's YouTube channel with Spanish-language activities here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYcWFqSOXlbFxYmeMlGYGZA

About the Artists

Fernando Endara

Diablo de Píllaro, musician, educator, literary critic and cultural manager. Degree in Social Communication. Master in Anthropology. Professor at the Universidad Tecnológica Indoamérica in the city of Ambato (Ecuador).

Leonardo Carrizo, 2017, Digital Photograph

Artist Statement:

I have been a dancer in the Andean festival tradition of the "Diablada Pillareña" since I was 13 years old. During the last 8 years I have been involved in community cultural management projects and focusing on giving visibility to and providing analysis of the living culture of communities invested in the organizing the annual *diablada* festival.

Recently I have carried out research on the changes in the Diablada Pillareña over the last 30 years (1990-2020), in the context of the debates over festival patrimony. Aside from teaching at the University, I carry out projects, talks and workshops focused on the analysis and interpretation of the Diablada Pillareña festivals from an autoethnographic perspective.

About K'acha Willaykuna Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Humanities Collaboration

K’acha Willaykuna Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Humanities Collaboration is an interdisciplinary collaboration that affirms Ohio State’s commitment to the study of and critical engagement with Indigenous cultures of Abiayala (the Indigenous denominator for the American continent in its entirety). This initiative is funded through the Global Arts and Humanities Discovery Theme.

K’acha Willaykuna centers around a fundamental appreciation of material cultural production, oral traditions and performance practices as key sites of Andean and Amazonian Indigenous knowledge, memory and meaning making.

The project is guided by principles of ethical intellectual and creative intercultural exchange, knowledge equity and attention to issues of cultural and ethnic representation, participation and involvement.

K’acha Willaykuna addresses five key areas to enrich and amplify the impact of initiatives at Ohio State, while contributing to new institutional pathways of mobility for inclusion of Indigenous partners:

- Indigenous artist and artisan short-term residencies and consultancies
- Teaching collaborations and teaching clusters, curriculum development and student engagement
- Indigenous arts and humanities legacy preservation, knowledge equity and digital humanities

- Graduate and undergraduate research and student engagement
- Outreach and public engagement

Detail of Sungui - Yacu Mama ceramic figurine by Rosa Dagua Photo credit: Tamryn McDermott

About Kawsay Ukhunchay Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Cultural Artifacts Research Collection

Kawsay Ukhunchay is a unique teaching, research, and community outreach resource managed and maintained by an interdisciplinary team of undergraduate and graduate student *kawsay waqaychaqkuna* (those who safeguard, keep and preserve with cariño and care), working under faculty supervision.

Together we foster an environment of collaborative research and inquiry as an emergent community of intellectual and creative exchange in dialogue with Indigenous artists and based on faculty-student, grad-undergrad, and peer-peer mentoring.

Our mission is to work with educators, students and Indigenous artists to create accessible learning (and unlearning) spaces for engaging with Andean and Amazonian Indigenous knowledges.

Our endeavor as a team revolves around making the collection more visible and accessible, useful for classroom use, a resource for research, teaching and community engagement, and above all a vehicle for presenting new ways of engaging with indigenous cultural knowledges and practices.

We collaborate with over 20 departments, centers, units and programs on campus as well as foundations and projects beyond Ohio State.

Detail of Coati Mundi (*cucuchu*) ceramic figurine by Apacha Vargas
Photo credit: Tamryn McDermott

Online Exhibition Resources

University Libraries Online Exhibit:
https://library.osu.edu/site/dancingwithdevils/

Barnett Center for Integrated Arts and Enterprise Exhibition Homepage:
https://barnettcenter.osu.edu/

K'acha Willaykuna Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Humanities Collaboration:
https://globalartsandhumanities.osu.edu/research/kacha-willaykuna

Kawsay Ukhunchay Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Cultural Artifacts Research Collection Homepage:
https://u.osu.edu/aaac/

Kawsay Ukhunchay Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Cultural Artifacts Research Collection Instagram:
https://www.instagram.com/kawsay_ukhunchay/

University Libraries Online Exhibition Artist Talk with Leonardo Carrizo and Fernando Endara:
https://globalartsandhumanities.osu.edu/news/artists-talk-dancing-devils- latin-american-mask-traditions-recording-and-transcript

Video on the history of the Diablada de Píllaro including its origins, traditional festival characters, and artisans of the *diablo* masks:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UxNEwsAiaI

Bibliographical Resources

Featured resources by exhibit artists, curators, and collaborators:

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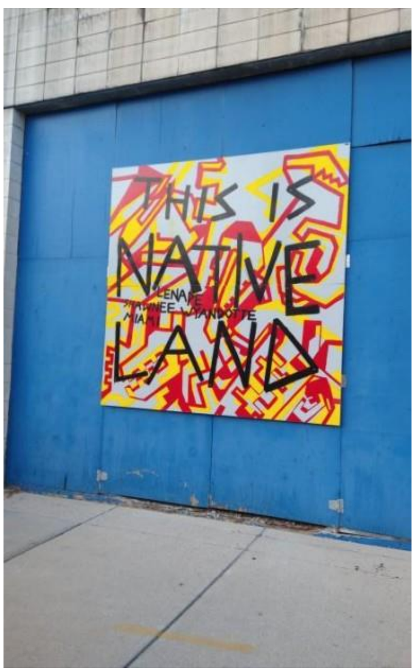
Our Land Acknowledgment

Jallp'anchikta Yupaychasqanchikmanta. This is Native Land.

The Ohio State University is situated on the ancestral homelands of the Shawnee, Lenape, Miami, Wyandotte, Potawatomi, Peoria, Ojibwe, Seneca, and Cherokee peoples. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory, and we honor and respect the 45 Indigenous Nations that continue to connect with this land today, and more broadly the native peoples of Abiayala—the American continent in its entirety.

Indigenous relationships to land are not merely historical or possible to abbreviate. We hope to expand settler recognition of Indigenous personhood by extending the voices of individual Natives who explore their connection to land and space through many mediums.



Arvcúken Noquisi (Myskoke Creek & Cherokee), *This is Native Land* (2020)
Installed along High Street and 10th Ave, Columbus, Ohio

Artist Statement:

Arvcúken ᏧᏆᏌᏝ ᏃᏈᏏ cvhocefkv tos. Mv nak-vhakv momet heleswv en hecatskes os. Heyv ekvnv este-cate os.

Space is made of shapes and layers. *Cufe momet Yvhv-lanuce ehakes*. Shapes connect to other shapes, layers dance with other layers. Cufe and Yvhv-lanuce hide in the patterns of space.

Existence becomes interpretive, elusive.

This is Native land. The ancestral history and knowledge of the Indigenous people forced away from their connection to this land are obscured by colonial narratives and control of space. The Ohio State University sits on land taken from the Shawnee, Lenape, Miami, Wyandotte, Potawatomi, Peoria, Ojibwe, Seneca, and Cherokee peoples –- all removed from Ohio by the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

The tribes named in this mural are those originally referenced in the 2019 OSU Multicultural Center Land Acknowledgement (updated in 2020 by Melissa Beard-Jacob). Many of the tribes listed above had already been displaced from original homelands and pushed further west into Ohio by white settlers.

Heleswv vhayis. What is elusive hides behind what can never be ignored again. This is a demand.

Acknowledgments

Exhibition curators with photojournalist Leonardo Carrizo after the All-Faculty Preview on September 9, 2022
Photo credit: Anna Truax

Dancing with Devils: Latin American Masks Traditions was curated by:

Pamela Espinosa de los Monteros
Latin American Studies Librarian

Leonardo Carrizo
Multimedia Journalism Lecturer

Dr. Michelle Wibbelsman
Associate Professor of Latin American Indigenous Cultures

Kawsay wakaychaqkuna
Student curators/researchers of the Kawsay Ukhunchay Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Cultural Artifacts Research Collection