

MADE IN MEXICO

THE REBOZO IN ART, CULTURE & FASHION

- Fashion and Textile Museum announces the first-ever exhibition on the rebozo – the classic Mexican shawl made famous in 20th century culture by artist Frida Kahlo.
- Explores the key role textiles have played in promoting Mexican culture worldwide from the 17th century to the present day.
- Features major loans from: the Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico City; the Museum of Textiles, Oaxaca; and, rebozos from private collections that have never been shown in public before.
- Contemporary Mexican and UK artists, photographers, fashion and textile designers – including Francisco Toledo, Graciela Iturbide, Carla Fernandez, Zandra Rhodes and Kaffe Fassett – present new work created in response to the rebozo and Mexican textiles.
- Exhibition dates **6 June – 30 August 2014**

‘MADE IN MEXICO’ highlights the art of the rebozo – the classic shawl woven in Mexico – from the 17th century to the present day.

Throughout its history, the rebozo has been appropriated by revolutionaries, artists, writers and collectors who have helped to shape the garment into a symbol of Mexican culture and identity. In Castilian, the word rebozo suggests the act of covering or protecting yourself. It is referred to in literature of the 16th century: in 1555 by the grammarian Alonso Molina and in 1572 by the Fraile Diego Durán. The most famous proponent was artist Frida Kahlo (1907–54) whose embracing of traditional costume was a political statement of solidarity with the labourers of her country. Still woven using traditional techniques, the rebozo remains an important emblem of contemporary Mexican life and it is celebrated for the indigenous craft skills involved in its production.

The origins of the rebozo lie in the early colonial period of Mexico, which influenced the artisans of the country to emulate the highly prized embroidered shawls and mantillas of the Spanish. This shawl became a central element of the China Poblana, the traditional women’s outfit of Mexico. The rebozo has since become an integral part of daily life and represents the journey from birth to death, being used as both a baby carrier as well as a shroud. Most Mexican women today own at least one rebozo.

The exhibition is presented in sections which explore: the history of Mexican textiles; key personalities associated with the rebozo – from Frida Kahlo to Grammy award-winning musician Lila Downs; how the rebozo is used and worn; weaving techniques; and, the rebozo in contemporary art and fashion.

Historic rebozos from the Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico City will be reunited with an important loan from the British Museum, originally part of the Robert Everts Collection. Everts (1875–1942), a diplomat in Mexico at the turn of the 20th century, was one of the first people to identify the importance of the rebozo in Mexican art and design. Also featured is a selection of rebozos once owned by Ruth D. Lechuga (1920–2004), whose collection of Mexican popular arts is travelling to the UK for the first time.

Frida Kahlo's key role in promoting the rebozo through her portraiture and beliefs is explored in a section of Mexican dress curated by renowned Mexican anthropologist Marta Turok. A parallel is drawn with 21st century musician Lila Downs, who promotes Mexican textiles through her art and performance in the same way.

Photographs by contemporary artists Graciela Iturbide, Antonio Turok and Lourdes Almeida document the rebozo in the context of Mexican life, art and fashion. While an installation by artist Mauricio Cervantes explores the 'aroma de luto' rebozo and its use as a death shroud.

MADE IN MEXICO features over 50 new works from painters, conceptual artists, fashion designers and textile artists invited to present their response to the rebozo. Mexican artists whose work will be shown include Francisco Toledo, Pedro Diego Alvarado, Sergio Hernandez, Guillermo Olguin, Mauricio Cervantes, Demian Flores, Eloy Tarcisio, Rodrigo Pimentel, Armando Salas Portugal and Pablo Aguinaca plus fashion designers Carla Fernandez, Lydia Lavin, Carmen Rion and Beatriz Russek. UK artists who have created pieces inspired by Mexico include Barbara Rae RA, Kaffe Fassett, Zandra Rhodes, Andrew Logan, Alison Willoughby, Wallace#Sewell and Mary Restieaux.

The exhibition also explores the current resurgence of craft skills through a cultural exchange programme to design rebozos for the 21st century with University of the Arts London and Universidad Iberoamericana.

Head of the Fashion and Textile Museum, Celia Joicey says

'This important exhibition powerfully demonstrates the vibrancy of textiles in historic and contemporary Mexico. We are delighted to be showing the work of leading Mexican artists, designers and museums, in the only UK building designed by Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta.'

Director of the Franz Mayer Museum, Hector Rivero Borrell says

'The rebozo is a crucial symbol of Mexican life and identity. We are happy to be collaborating with the UK to highlight the beauty of Mexican textiles and to inspire future generations with their skilled craftsmanship.'

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Notes to editors

1. 'MADE IN MEXICO The Rebozo in Art, Culture & Fashion' is organised by the Fashion and Textile Museum and is at the Museum 6 June to 30 August 2014. The exhibition travels to the Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico City in spring 2015.
2. The exhibition is curated by Hilary Simon in collaboration with Dennis Nothdruff, Curator of the Fashion and Textile Museum.
3. Exhibition opening times: Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–6pm; Thursday until 8pm; last admission 45 minutes before closing. Ticket prices: £8.80 adults, £6.60 concessions and £5.50 students, inclusive of 10% donation; free entry for under 12s.

4. Booking information: online or call 0844 248 5076
5. The Fashion and Textile Museum is the only museum in the UK solely dedicated to showcasing developments in contemporary fashion, as well as providing inspiration, support and training for those working in the industry. Founded by iconic British designer Zandra Rhodes, the museum is part of Newham College London – one of Europe’s largest further education colleges. The Museum is located in the only building in Europe designed by award-winning Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta (1931–2011).
6. The Fashion and Textile Museum is at 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF. For further information about FTM and its activities visit www.ftmlondon.org
7. The exhibition is made possible with thanks in particular to the Anglo Mexican Foundation and the Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico City, Mexico’s leading museum of decorative arts (franzmayer.org).

Press Images

A selection of press images is illustrated below. Exclusive images available on request.



Frida, San Angel 1941
Nickolas Muray, 1941



Lila Downs wearing rebozo
Antonio Turok, 2013



Juanita Esquivel-Masahua
Lourdes Almeida, 2000

Exhibition supporters and partners

