




Jorge Ubico was the authoritarian ruler from 1931 to 1944. A general in the Guatemalan army, he was elected to the presidency in an election where he was the only candidate. He continued his predecessor's policies of giving massive concessions to the United Fruit Company and supporting their harsh labor practices.

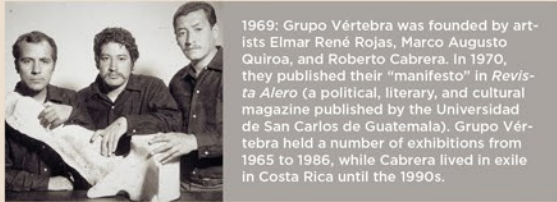


In 1944, Juan José Arévalo became president following the overthrow of dictator Jorge Ubico, introducing social-democratic reforms, including setting up a social security system and redistributing land to landless peasants.

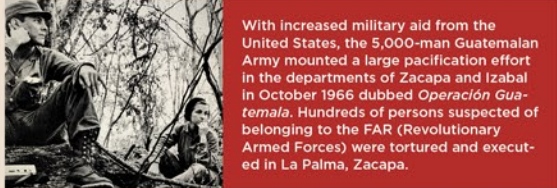


1964: Galería D5 was founded by artists Luis Díaz and Daniel Schärer.

"With the birth of the D5 Gallery, which lasted for months, and even years on the tight-rope of non-profits, a nucleus of artists and collectors, intellectuals and amateurs was forged, which finally had a meeting point where conscious and serious art is the main character (...)" - El Imparcial, July 27, 1968.



1969: Grupo Vértice was founded by artists Elmer René Rojas, Marco Augusto Quiroa, and Roberto Cabrera. In 1970, they published their "manifiesto" in *Revista Alero* (a political, literary, and cultural magazine published by the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala). Grupo Vértice held a number of exhibitions from 1965 to 1980, while Cabrera lived in exile in Costa Rica until the 1990s.



With increased military aid from the United States, the 5,000-man Guatemalan Army mounted a large pacification effort in the departments of Zacapa and Izabal in October 1966 dubbed *Operación Guatemala*. Hundreds of persons suspected of belonging to the FAR (Revolutionary Armed Forces) were tortured and executed in La Palma, Zacapa.



Terremoto causó graves daños en todo el país




In March 1978, Romeo Lucas García was elected president. Nearly 100 people were killed by the army during a peaceful demonstration in May of 1978 in Panzós, Alta Verapaz.




In 1976, a strong earthquake (7.5 in magnitude, Richter scale) killed 27,000 people and rendered homeless more than a million.



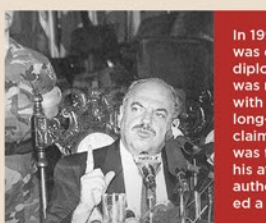
In 1981, around 11,000 people were killed by death squads and soldiers in response to growing anti-government guerrilla activity.



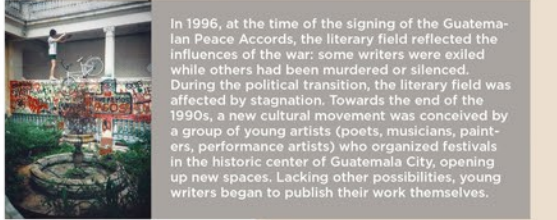
In 1982, in Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, the army brutally abused and massacred 250 Maya villagers, mostly the elderly, women, and children, after first bombing the village from the air and with mortars.



In 1985, Marco Vinicio Cereto Arévalo was elected president and the Guatemalan Christian Democratic Party won legislative elections under a new constitution.




In 1991, Jorge Serrano Elías was elected president. The diplomatic relationship was restored with Belize, with whom Guatemala had long-standing territorial claims. In 1993, Serrano was forced to resign after his attempt to impose an authoritarian regime ignited a wave of protests.




In 1996, at the time of the signing of the Guatemalan Peace Accords, the literary field reflected the influences of the war: some writers were exiled while others had been murdered or silenced. During the political transition, the literary field was affected by stagnation. Towards the end of the 1990s, a new cultural movement was conceived by a group of young artists (poets, musicians, painters, performance artists) who organized festivals in the historic center of Guatemala City, opening up new spaces. Lacking other possibilities, young writers began to publish their work themselves.



By 1994, peace talks had begun between the government and rebels of the Guatemalan Revolutionary National Unity. That year, right-wing parties won a majority in legislative elections.



In 1995, rebels declared a ceasefire; the UN and U.S. criticized Guatemala for widespread human rights abuses.



In 1996, Alvaro Arzu was elected president. He conducted a purge of senior military officers and signed the peace agreement with rebels after 36 years of civil war.



On April 28, 1998, Bishop Juan Gerardi, a human rights campaigner, was murdered two days after the presentation of a groundbreaking church-sponsored report implicating the responsibility of military in the murders and disappearances of some 200,000 civilians.



In 1999, a UN-backed commission stated that security forces were behind 93% of all human rights atrocities committed during the civil war. Senior officials had overseen 626 massacres in Maya villages, which claimed over 200,000 lives in 30 years.



Local contemporary artists have been participating in renowned international art venues such as the Venice Biennale for the last 15 years.



2000: *Octubreazul* (Blue October) was the result of previous, collective experiences that were embraced by spaces like the Casa Bizarra, where rock musicians came together with artists, writers, and poets, and the work of *Equipo de Arte Urbano* (Urban Art Team). This team participated in the first editions of the Festival del Centro Histórico as an independent group convoking the sector of young artists.



Vivir aquí, 2000. Exhibition. Contemporary artists reflected on the meaning of living in Guatemala. Regina José Galindo's response was to inject herself with 10mm of Valium, falling asleep in order to show the impossibility of living in such a violent country.



In 1951, Colonel Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán became president, continuing Arévalo's reforms.




Diego Rivera's *Gloriosa Victoria* depicts the 1954 U.S. government engineered coup d'état against Jacobo Arbenz. Depicted at the center is the U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, shaking hands with Castillo Armas.



In 1954, president Arbenz was toppled by U.S.-backed forces led by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas. This military opposition was armed, trained, and organized by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The directors of United Fruit Company (UFCO) had convinced the Truman and Eisenhower administrations that Colonel Arbenz intended to align Guatemala with the Soviet Bloc. UFCO was the largest Guatemalan landowner and employer, and the Arbenz government's land reform included the expropriation of 40% of UFCO land.



Guatemala is known as the birthplace of chocolate, with the Maya worshipping the cacao tree and calling chocolate the "food of the gods." A mealing stone was used to grind the cacao down into an edible form. They liked it bitter and spicy, adding chilies and coriander to the fermented cacao pulp mixture and drinking up for health and vitality. In this Maya vase, a segment of the Popol Vuh (the sacred Maya book) is depicted: After the beleaguering by the Lords of the Otherworld, Prince Hun Hunahpu's head is hung in a cacao tree.



The Mexico-Guatemala border is the primary source of military grade weaponry used by the Mexican drug cartels. Mexico does not have sufficient resources to patrol the border with only 125 officers to monitor the entire 577-mile border, as they have been concentrating their efforts on fighting the cartels in the North.



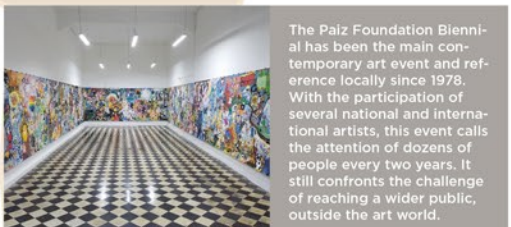
Along the border between Mexico and Guatemala today, migration plays a key role in shaping border dynamics, along with associated factors such as safety, violence, and human rights. Continuous changes characterize the border dynamics between Mexico and Guatemala, re-configuring identities and deepening inequality. Migration flows are increasingly intense. These travelers are heading for the U.S.




Espacio Colloquia was founded in 1997 by renowned photographer Luis González-Palma. Its focus on education and debate gave rise to a productive exchange among local and international artists. Aníbal López, Regina José Galindo, and Darío Escobar have since received international recognition. Artists like Tania Bruguera, Cecilia Paredez, and Santiago Sierra showed their work in Guatemala while curators such as Santiago Olmo, Gerardo Mosquera, and Virginia Pérez-Raton offered conferences and workshops. It closed its doors in 2002.




In December 2004, the UN mission setup to monitor post-civil war peace processes ended. However, the UN claims that Guatemala still suffers from crime, social injustice, and human rights violations.



The Paiz Foundation Biennial has been the main conference locally since 1978. With the participation of several national and international artists, this event calls the attention of dozens of people every two years. It still confronts the challenge of reaching a wider public, outside the art world.



In July 2007, Amnesty International urged the government to ratify the UN-backed International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) as a first step towards tackling the culture of impunity claimed to have contributed to Guatemala's soaring murder rate.



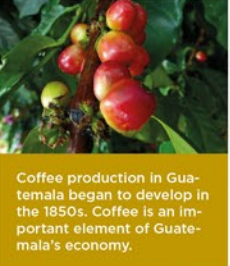
In November 2007, Alvaro Colom of center-left National Unity of Hope Party won presidential elections with nearly 53% of the vote.



In October 2008, former President Alfonso Portillo was extradited from Mexico to face corruption charges linked to the disappearance of \$15 million earmarked for the Guatemalan defense department.



In May 2009, President Colom denied his involvement in the murder of a prominent lawyer who, in a video made before his death, claimed Colom and others were out to kill him. A UN probe cleared Mr. Colom.



Coffee production in Guatemala began to develop in the 1850s. Coffee is an important element of Guatemala's economy.



Chicken bus (*camioneta*) is a colloquial English name for a colorful, modified, and decorated bus that transports goods and people between communities. The base vehicle is usually a retired North American school bus on a light or medium truck chassis. The word "chicken" refers both to the fact that the buses are often crammed with passengers, not unlike a truckload of chickens, and that Central Americans occasionally transport live animals on such buses.

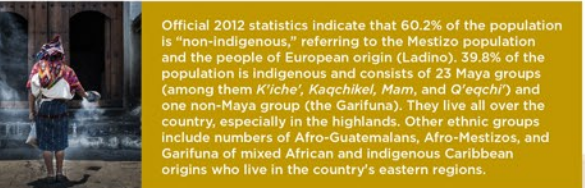


Proyecto Ultravioleta was a multifaceted platform for experimentation in contemporary art, founded in 2009. It was an initiative dedicated to the production of art exhibitions, multidisciplinary projects, discussion forums, concerts, happenings, public interventions, as well as a platform for inter-mediation between other local and foreign projects.



In 2012 NúMu, Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, opened in a former eggstand (6.5 x 8.2 ft). The irony—an extremely small, unusually egg-shaped contemporary art museum—has become a statement against traditional art institutions and museums in general. The museum has remained very active with both local and international artists' shows and interventions. NúMu will be open to the public at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) from September 2017 to February 2018. A replica of the egg-shaped museum will travel around 3,000 miles over two weeks.

In October 2010, the U.S. apologized for deliberately infecting hundreds of Guatemalans with gonorrhea and syphilis as part of medical tests in the 1940s. President Colom described the tests as a "crime against humanity."



Official 2017 statistics indicate that 60.2% of the population is "non-indigenous," referring to the Mestizo population and the people of European origin (Ladino). 39.8% of the population is indigenous and consists of 23 Maya groups (among them K'iche', Q'eqchi', Mam, and C'eqchi') and one non-Maya group (the Garifuna). They live all over the country, especially in the highlands. Other ethnic groups include numbers of Afro-Guatemalans, Afro-Mestizos, and Garifuna of mixed African and indigenous Caribbean origins who live in the country's eastern regions.



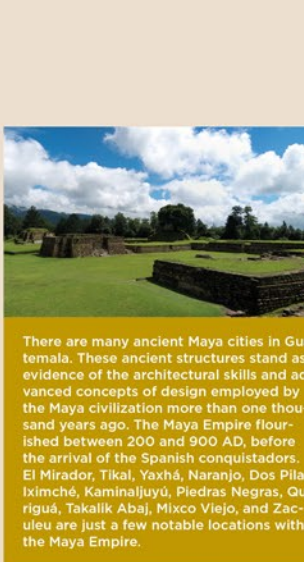
A number of politicians in the administration of President Pérez Molina, including Vice-President Roxana Baldetti, were accused of setting up a customs corruption ring with the help of high-ranking officials in the tax and customs administration. In September 2015, Pérez Molina, a former military officer, resigned after thousands demonstrated for several weeks.



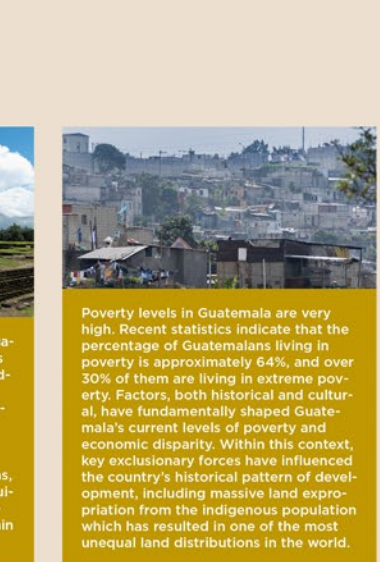
The landscape is predominantly mountainous and heavily forested, with narrow coastal plains and tropical, humid lowlands blanketed in rainforest.




In January 2016, the conservative party candidate Jimmy Morales, a former comedian, took office as president.




There are many ancient Maya cities in Guatemala. These ancient structures stand as evidence of the architectural skills and advanced concepts of design employed by the Maya civilization more than one thousand years ago. The Maya Empire flourished between 200 and 900 AD, before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors. El Mirador, Tikal, Yaxhá, Naranjo, Dos Pilas, Iximché, Kaminaljuyu, Piedras Negras, Quirigua, Takalik Abaj, Mixco Viejo, and Zaculeu are just a few notable locations within the Maya Empire.




Poverty levels in Guatemala are very high. Recent statistics indicate that the percentage of Guatemalans living in poverty is approximately 64%, and over 50% of them are living in extreme poverty. Factors, both historical and cultural, have fundamentally shaped Guatemala's current levels of poverty and economic disparity. Within this context, key exclusionary forces have influenced the country's historical pattern of development, including massive land expropriation from the indigenous population which has resulted in one of the most unequal land distributions in the world.



The *Día de todos los Santos* (Day of All Saints), celebrated on November 1st, is a time when the worlds of the living and the dead are believed to mesh together and spirits return to Earth from heaven. To celebrate the *Día de todos los Santos*, Guatemalans across the country pay visits to cemeteries and prepare a special dish called *fiambre* (a cold meat and legume salad). The kite festival of *San Isidro* and *Sumpango*—both in the Sacatepéquez region—are about honoring the dead and communicating with them.



A string of volcanoes rises above the southern highlands along the Pacific, four of which are still active. The region is sustained by rivers flowing into both the Pacific and the Caribbean.



Guatemala is the third largest country in Central America and shares borders to the North and West with Mexico, to the Southeast with El Salvador and Honduras, to the Northeast with Belize and the Caribbean Sea, and to the South with the Pacific Ocean. It has an area of 108,890 square kilometers (42,043 square miles), slightly smaller than the state of Tennessee. Because of its consistently temperate climate, Guatemala has been called the "land of Eternal Spring." Crops such as coffee, sugar, bananas, and cocoa are grown for both local consumption and export.

GUATEMALA: HISTORY, CULTURE, LANDSCAPE (1960 - PRESENT)

KEY HISTORICAL EVENTS

CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE

CULTURE AND LANDSCAPE