

KITES (barriletes) – A GUATEMALA TRADITION

Create a colorful kite commemorating a loved one who has passed.

Work with a frame and tissue paper to make a (geometric) design.

Consider applying (radial) symmetry as well as detailed decorations.

You may choose colors according to their traditional Maya symbolism:

Red: East; fire; energy; love; clarification; protection; activator and catalyzer

Black: West; earth; strong and powerful; cut negative energy

White: North; air; purification; health; tranquility; vision and perception

Yellow: South; energy of life; health; protection; force (strength) for life.

Green: Hope; opportunities; success; abundance; nature

Turquoise: Center

Light Blue: Mind; dreams; hope; attract money, happiness, and traveling

Blue: Fortune

Purple: Healing; cleanses and opens paths

Pink: Sublime love; tranquility

Leave your kite on the shelf for museum staff to add to the ceiling installation or take it to enjoy at home.



Flying kites for the Day of the Dead is a tradition practiced by many Maya communities in the central highlands of Guatemala over the last two centuries. Smaller kites decorate graves in the cemeteries as a means to communicate with the ancestors; listening to the sound of the wind in the tissue paper of the kites allows the families to maintain peaceful quiet. For the kite festival in the town of Sumpango, groups of friends come together to create the giant kites (*barriletes gigantes*) - up to 26 feet in diameter. What originally started as folkloristic craft is now often considered a form of artistic expression as the giant kites are becoming a means of political and social expression.

To learn more about the *barriletes gigantes* (giant kites) read *Wings of Resistance: Giant Kites of Guatemala*, watch a video, and find the location of the kite festival on the map of Guatemala.

As a courtesy please respect the space and clean up after your visit. Please note that art supplies are only to be used in the Art Lab and are not allowed in the galleries.