

## COMMUNITY INSTALLATION: HOW DO YOU KEEP TRADITIONS ALIVE?



Keeping traditions connects us to our culture and ancestry.

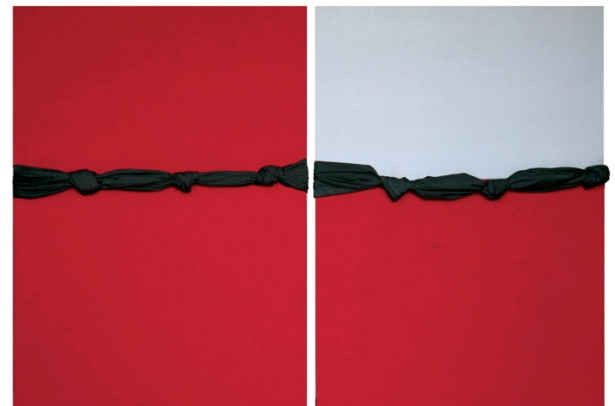
Choose a strip of fabric and a marker, then share about a meaningful tradition you keep in your life.

Leave the ends of the fabric strip blank to allow space to knot to an adjoining piece of fabric without covering your writing.

This installation - and the overall look of the Art Lab - is inspired by the rich Maya tradition of weaving and the art of Antonio Pichillá (Guatemala, 1982), which uses sacred and ritual elements (candles, baskets, stones, threads) to show an intercultural abstraction of traditional symbols.

For the Maya, black, white, red and yellow are the cardinal colors and the colors of the sacred corn. According to their creation myth, Maya are made of the four types of corn: white for the bones, yellow for the flesh, red for the blood, and black for the hair and eyes.

The knot, according to Maya shamanic practices, signifies the connection and tension between beings and their beginnings.



Antonio Pichillá, *The Knot*, 2016; varieties of corn; Antonio Pichillá, *Nudo*, 2012

*Everything is amorphous, confusing. I restlessly look for a bond that integrates with the environment as something inaccurate, not codified. I struggle to give form to these transitory states. B'atz is the name of a day in the Maya calendar that means the beginning and the end, to roll and unroll, to tie and untie. The knot is the bond between beings and their beginnings; it is the union that allows to continue on a certain path. The knot is the articulation between kinfolk and/or enemies which maintains a structure and at the same time creates tension between them. This bond between two or more systems also represents a closure, a forced enclosure that grasps through the ropes and that hinders that liberation of a determined gesture: the knot in the throat that submerges the voice. We are beginning a new era of Maya worldview that is associated with important events. Departing from an interdisciplinary investigation, anthropological approximately ten years, in the city as in the rural areas, I began to work in the reengagement of images, forms, codes, moorings, baskets, chests, Quipos, candles, Maya ceremonies, with meanings charged of deep energetic presence that mark the passage of time. I believe in artistic expression as a product of the everyday. I situate myself within this perspective, materializing through ephemeral objects, like a candle that is lit, is consumed and finished. That action indicates time. I propose to reprise ritual elements like candles, bundles or baskets, incense, flowers, and of course, energy, to create art objects. I am interested in constructing, intervening, withering the visible through the occult; from the private to the public. - Antonio Pichillá*

Works by Antonio Pichillá are currently on view in *Guatemala from 33,000 km* at Westmont Ridley-Tree Museum of Art, 955 La Paz Rd., Montecito, CA 93108 |