



ENDURING SPIRIT

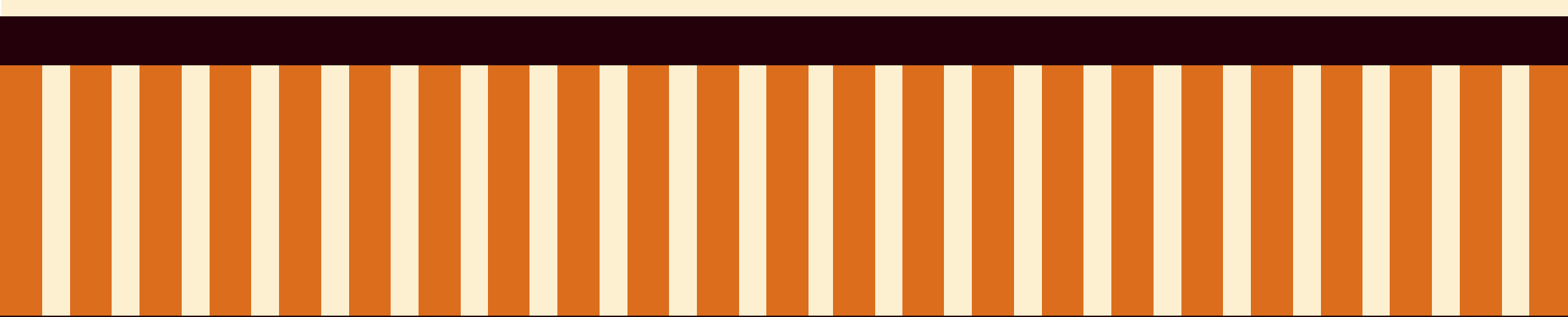
PHIL BORGES: PHOTOGRAPHER

For over 25 years Phil Borges has been visiting and documenting indigenous and tribal cultures around the world. Currently Phil is developing “Bridges to Understanding”, an on-line classroom project connecting children from indigenous and tribal cultures with their contemporaries in North America for the purpose of exploring and honoring cultural diversity.

Photographs by Phil Borges have been collected and exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide. His award winning books have been published in four languages and in 1998 he was presented the Photo Media Magazine "Photoperson of the Year" award. Phil teaches and lectures internationally and is co-founder of Blue Earth Alliance, a non-profit organization that sponsors photographic projects focusing on endangered cultures and threatened environments.

The photographs displayed in this exhibition are from the book, “Enduring Spirit”.

For more information about Phil Borges please visit his website at www.philborges.com



THE HUICHOL

THE ETERNAL PILGRIMS

The Huicholes are one of the most ancient native communities of Mexico; the last keepers of a series of myths and rituals that have subsisted more than 500 years of western colonization.

Their actual population is 30,000 people, distributed over a surface 400,000 hectares, in the high mountains of the Sierra Madre, between the states of Jalisco, Nayarit and Durango. Every year they perform pilgrimages to their sacred places, leaving several offers to the deities while asking them for what is indispensable to their survival: rain.

Their most important goal is the expedition to Wirikuta, a journey of more than 600 kilometers to the distant desert of Real Catorce, in the region of San Luis Potosí. The land, considered sacred, is where Jikuri is born, the God of Peyote, a cactacea plant that has medicinal properties. Marakamé is the Shaman of the community, “the one who knows”, and is responsible for selecting the path that lead towards Wirikuta and who cures the sick through medicinal powers.

Currently, these types of rituals, as well as the Huichol culture itself, are under great difficulties. Their geographical marginalization, which for some time protected them from external influences, represents today a great risk for their capacity to survive. A lot of them have to migrate to big cities where they work under bad conditions in the tobacco plantations. They normally lead an unstable life and are often victims of alcoholism.

However, there are a lot of Huicholes that try to remain in their homes and confront the new challenges that globalization creates. They are the ones facing the uncertainty that modern life creates and continue with the hope of conserving their traditional way of life. The survival of their culture depends on them.

Photographer: Ms. Yamilé Barceló

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OUSMAN SOW

Ousmane Sow was born in Dakar, Senegal in West Africa in 1935, but he did not make sculpture his full-time profession until the age of fifty. While living in France for 20 years, he worked primarily as a physiotherapist, and sculpted in his spare time. Upon returning to Senegal, Ousmane built his own sculpture studio and began to create the first of a series of massive life-size sculptures.

Only 12 years after his first exhibition in Dakar in 1987, Ousmane Sow's work was shown in Paris in 1999 at a major outdoor exhibition on the "Pont des Arts", which was attended by more than three million visitors.

Sow has created several series depicting indigenous groups from every corner of the African continent, including *The Nuba* of Sudan, *The Masai* of Kenya, *The Zulus* of southern Africa and *The Peul* of West Africa. He has also drawn from other sources based on the stories of indigenous peoples; in the 35-piece *The Battle of Little Big Horn*, he depicts Native Americans, soldiers and horses struggling on the battlefield of Texas.

Ousmane Sow's sculptures are created to be seen not as individual pieces, but in a collective group, a community, or a tribe — interacting in their natural environment — men, women, children, cattle, horses.

Sow normally works only with natural materials, creating his own medium from the African soil, sand, clay and vegetation around him, making a secret mixture of ingredients. He then applies this mixture to a metal framework, adding straw and jute.

His sculptures are usually displayed in a natural environment as well, rather than in a museum; in Dakar they were grouped on the sandy beach facing the ocean; in Paris, on a bridge over the River Seine. At the United Nations, a retrospective of his work had been planned for 2002 to be shown outdoors in the UN garden. Following September 11, the exhibition had to be cancelled for security reasons; the solitary bronze *Standing Wrestler*, is the first work by Sow to be shown in the Western hemisphere.

[“With his sculptures, Ousman Sow has captured the Africa of bronze and gold, proud and heroic, that comes to life under a beating sun.”](#)

[—Emmanuel Daydé, Paris](#)



THE NUBA PEOPLE

“THE STANDING WRESTLER”, FROM THE NUBA SERIES BY OUSMAN SOW

In the remote mountainous region of Kordofan, in the south of Sudan, the Nuba are an indigenous African group who have survived the centuries and still live with their ancient rites and ceremonies today.

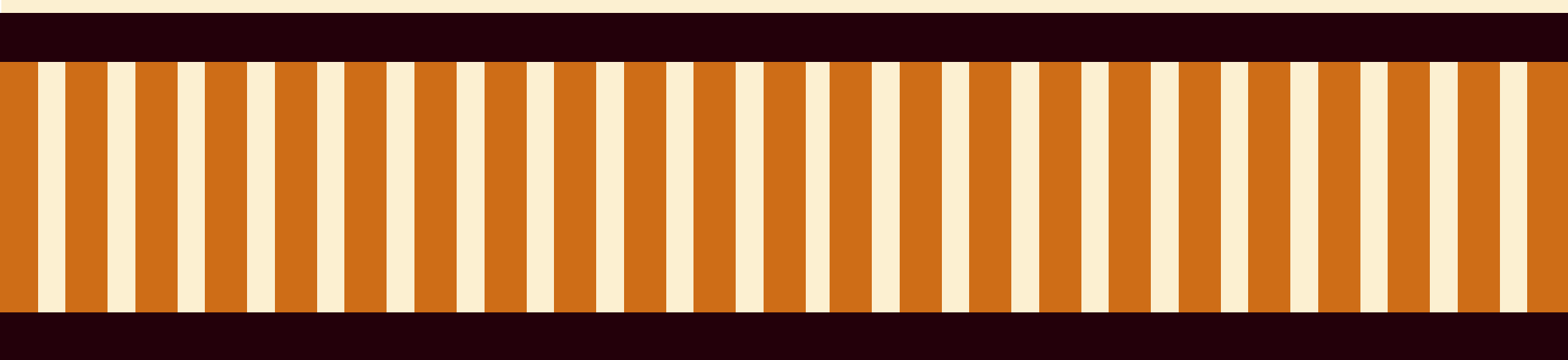
Sport is one of the essential aspects of the Nuba tradition, taking the form of one-to-one-combat and wrestling with the baton. Every year, the men of this indigenous group reenact an ancient ritual of ceremonial combat, which serves as a joyous occasion for the entire community; people from remote villages travel for miles each year to assist in the combat ceremonies.

The traditional ceremonial practices of the Nuba are used to summon the spirits of the ancestors, in order to ensure rain and a bountiful harvest. The ritualized combat also serves as a show of manly strength and athletic prowess, but also as part of a courting ritual.

The men smear their bodies with black or red earth, and various ornaments; as part of the ceremony, they dance in the arena, imitating the movements of a bull. The mask has been skillfully painted on the wrestler's face to frighten his opponents. Here it is etched in green acid in the very flesh of the bronze; the actual Nuba war paint is made from charcoal dust and crushed shell.

After the combat, the young unmarried women from the tribe dance the “myertum”, the “dance of love”, moving closer and closer to the victorious wrestlers, who sit in a circle their eyes lowered. In this ceremony, it is the women who choose the men they desire most to be their partners. This ritual is the reverse of Western cultures, but is practiced by many other traditional indigenous African groups, such as the Toureg in northern Africa.

The Nuba women play essentially an equal role to that of the men, though the various rites and body decoration are different for men and for women. In the Nuba tribe, the women are the only ones who can wear tattoos or permanent body scarification. The men paint their bodies with clay and earth for the rituals, which are later washed away, leaving the male body in its natural state, except during times of ceremony.





AFRICAN CANVAS

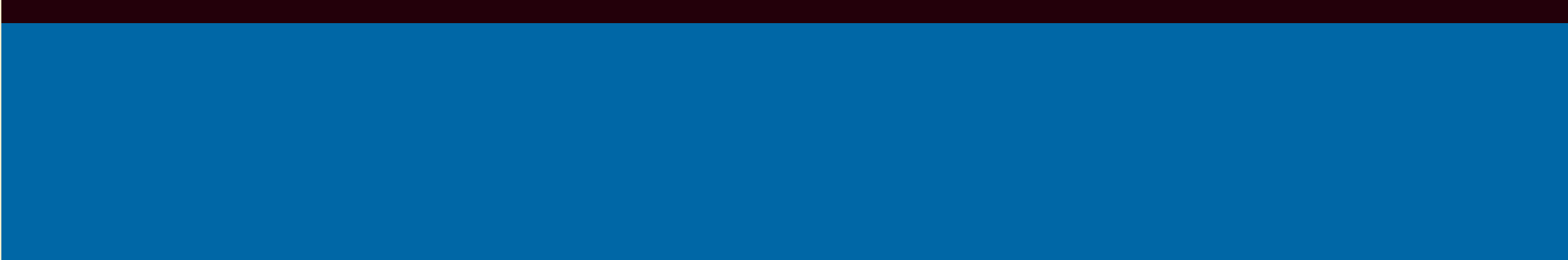
DECORATIVE WALL PAINTING IN RURAL WEST AFRICA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Both interior and exterior wall painting and mural decoration is found on both sides of the Senegal River Valley, as well as rural areas of Ghana and Nigeria. Adobe construction is the norm in the hot and dry climate of these villages place bordering the Sahara desert. The Soninke women of southern Mauritania, the Nanki women of Ghana, plaster and paint their homes every year at the end of the rainy season. Though much of the work is done by several women working together, individual artists also create innovative free-hand designs.

The Ndebele women of southern Africa use a more rigid geometric pattern in their exterior wall painting, but with a striking color palette. Black is the most frequently used of all the colors, made from a combination of soot and dark soil. In the past, women travelled long distances to obtain natural pigments from clay desposits; in recent years, the increased availability of acrylic paints has influenced the Ndebele color palette. The acrylics last for several seasons while natural pigments must be reapplied after the rains.

Through the decorative painting of their homes, African women employ a wide range of artistic expressions, embracing and reinterpreting their cultural legacies. In the process, they continue passing these arts on to the next generation.

**Photographs by Margaret Courtney-Clarke
from the Schomburg Centre for Research in Black Culture, New York
Exhibition: The Art of African Women**





TOTEM RYTHMS

"STORY POLES" BY NATIVE AMERICANS

"Totem Rhythms" is an Outreach Project with Native Americans from various Native Nations across North America. The vision is to capture and preserve the history of Native People onto Totems or "Story Poles".

During the Forum this year, Totem Rhythms will be creating a special Story Pole with participation from visitors and indigenous peoples at the UN Headquarters.

The totems on display at the United Nations were created by:

Thunder Mountain Nation, Saltsburg, Pennsylvania

The Eastern Delaware Nation, Wylsung, PA

Totem Rhythms is a collaborative project with Survivors Art Foundation, and Cheyney University, the oldest historically Black University in America founded in 1837 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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MEXICO

TRADITIONAL GARMENTS

(from left to right)

Efrén Nava Vega

Overcoat, 1996

Gualupita, Estado de México

Natural wool: colored with natural dyes,
woven on a pedal loom and cadejeada

Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.

María Meza Girón

Huipil and Petticoat, 2000

Tenejapa, Chiapas

Cotton: woven on a backstrap loom,
brocade made on wool dyed with natural colors

Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.

Marta Jiménez Santís

Ceremonial Huipil, 1996

Magdalenas, Chiapas

Cotton: woven on a backstrap loom and
brocaded on wool colored with natural dyes

Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.



These items are on loan from the exhibition:

“Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art”, originally displayed at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, New York and the United Nations Headquarters.

Sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN and Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.






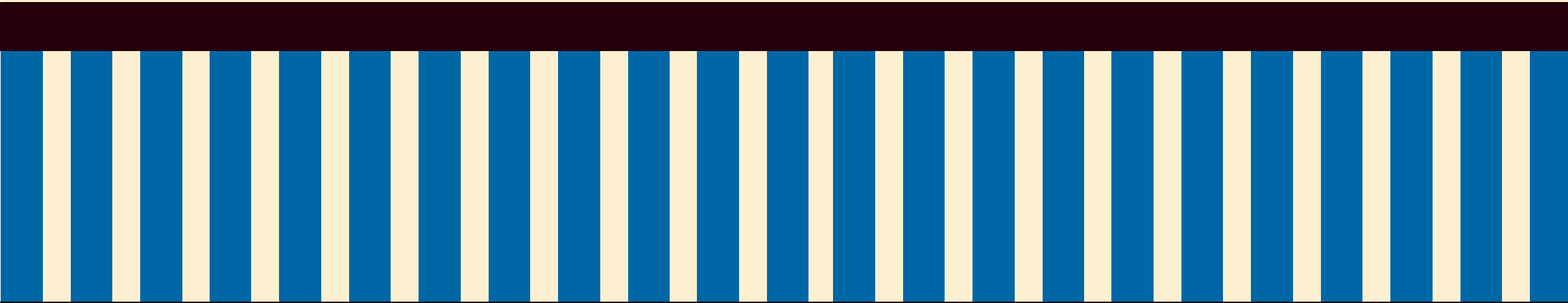
SKA-NI-KWAT: "ONE MIND"

LORNA THOMAS-HILL AND SAMUEL THOMAS
IROQUOIS NATION, CANADA

The Ska-Ni-Kwat project was designed to incorporate the traditional Iroquois teachings of sharing, working together, love and compassion for one another and Peace. The project to-date has had the involvement of over 900 people from 25 countries around the world, coming together collectively of one mind in the creation of two complete full-length Iroquois outfits. In a larger context, the overall project demonstrates that it is possible for all people of all nations to come together "of one mind".

Lorna Thomas-Hill and Samuel Thomas are a mother and son collaboration team. They are enrolled members of the Lower Cayuga Band of the Iroquois Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve, Canada. Over the past 25 years they have presented lectures, demonstrations and taught workshop in museums and universities across the United States and Canada. They have been active in the ongoing research, revitalization, and continuance of Iroquois embossed (three dimensional) beadwork. Of the more than 850 indigenous nations to North America this technique is exclusive to the Iroquois People.

Lorna and Samuel approach their work incorporating both traditional Iroquois design and symbolisms and traditional Iroquoian teachings. Their works are in museums and galleries around the world and they have produced outfits for both stage and film.





WOMEN WHO CARRIES THE SACRED HOOP

IN MEMORY OF INGRID WASHINAWATOK EL-ISSA (1957-1999)

BY DANA TIGER CREE/SEMINOLE/CHEROKEE
NATIVE AMERICAN, USA

Ingrid Washinawatok El-Issa, a member of the Menominee Nation, was an activist, writer, spokeswoman, educator and a director of a philanthropic foundation who devoted her life to the cause of Indigenous Peoples around the world. In February 1999, Ingrid went to visit the Uw'a Indians of Colombia — Lahe'ena'a Gay and Terrence Freitas — in order to establish an Indigenous education program there. As Ingrid and her companions were leaving to return home, they were kidnapped and killed by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

“Native peoples have an opportunity to provide leadership in breaking down the monopoly of the controlling nations and to push the United Nations towards truly becoming a forum for all the peoples of the world, a forum with an identity transcending the boundaries set by lines drawn on maps.”

Ingrid Washinawatok El-Issa (O'Peqtaw-Metamoh — Flying Eagle Woman),
Menominee (New York City Law Review, Vol.3 No.1)





CARIBBEAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

TAINO PEOPLE

The Taino People are the Indigenous Peoples of the Greater Antillian Islands in the Caribbean. The Taino, along with their relatives — the Island Carib and Arawak Peoples — were the first Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere to be called "Indians" by Christopher Columbus in 1492.

Like many Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, the Taino have contributed an incredible legacy to the world community and today many words from their ancient language are still used within the English and Spanish languages such as canoe, tobacco, hurricane, barbeque, maize, savanna, iguana etc. Although there have been many changes in the Caribbean over the past 500 years, the Taino, Island Carib and Arawak peoples are still actively promoting their cultural heritage and asserting their human rights today.

Photographs by Holger Thoss & Roberto Mucaro Borrero

Contributor: United Confederation of Taino People

For further information: <http://www.uctp.org/>

