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Global Textile Exhibit Opens at Kent State University
Creations from fiber artisans from around the world are now on display at KSU's Downtown Gallery.

KENT, OHIO: *Threads of Connection: Recent Fiber Works by Members of Weave a Real Peace (WARP)* opens May 19 at [KSU's downtown gallery](#). The exhibit showcases a diverse range of fabric art creations and traditions from Argentina, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Laos, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Uganda, and the United States. [WARP](#), which organized the exhibit, is a global community of individuals and organizations who value the social, cultural, and economic importance of textile arts.

One work featured in the exhibition is a hand-woven, hand-embroidered traditional blouse known in Spanish as a *huipil* (wee-peeel). Worn today among Guatemalan women, huipiles are integral to the identity of the indigenous Maya of the region; colors and embroidery used for huipiles are specific to different regions and represent the worldview of the indigenous Maya.

The [Patzún huipil](#) featured in the exhibit is designed by [Florinda Queche Sir](#), an indigenous Maya woman who is a client of [Handmade by Friendship Bridge®](#), a nonprofit that helps low-income rural Guatemalans grow their businesses and support themselves, despite high poverty rates in their home country. The huipil includes embroidery of leaves, ferns, trees, and other plants to symbolize the Maya's interconnectedness with nature. The town's name, Patzún, meaning Place of Sunflowers, was derived from Maya who speak the K'aqchikel language, and the reason for flowers in the design. Other shapes in the embroidery represent volcanoes, present in Guatemala's landscape; the Guatemalan currency, *cuartilla*; and the broken chains of slavery. The latter symbolizes what has been called the Ten Years of Spring, highlighting the years of representative democracy in Guatemala from 1930 until the end of the civil war in 1996.

WARP member and Handmade by Friendship Bridge® supporter, Elizabeth “Betty” Toguchi, purchased the same huipil for display in her home. “I want the wonderful weaving talents of our artisans to be recognized,” she said. “My main goal is to feature these huipiles as art created by skilled artists.”

Threads of Connection will run from May 19-July 15 at the KSU Downtown Gallery, 141 East Main St., Kent. Gallery hours: Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Sunday. Free admission. A reception will take place July 14, 5 to 7 p.m., in conjunction with [WARP’s annual member’s meeting](#), held July 13-16 on Kent State’s campus.

The Patzún huipil and other Handmade by Friendship Bridge® products can be purchased directly at <https://www.handmadebyfriendshipbridge.org> to support the Guatemalan artisans who make them.

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