



# AMERIND NOTEBOOK

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# Connecting People, Tradition, and History



ABOVE LEFT: Artwork by Michael Chiago. MIDDLE: Artwork by Maria Arvayo. RIGHT: Photo courtesy of Jeff Maltzman.



## AMERIND NOTEBOOK

### *Amerind Notebook*

Volume 13, Issue 1, Spring 2024

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### MISSION STATEMENT

The Amerind Museum seeks to foster and promote knowledge and understanding of the Native Peoples of the Americas through research, education, conservation, and community engagement.

### RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS LAND

Amerind is located in southern Arizona on lands where O'odham, Apache, Hiaki (Yaqui), Hopi, and A:shiwi (Zuni) families lived for untold generations, and whose wisdom and traditions live on today in vibrant communities. We are grateful for all that these communities, rich in history, have to teach us.

### FUTURE ISSUES DELIVERY PREFERENCE

If you would like to receive future editions of the *Amerind Notebook* electronically, please let us know via email [amerind@amerind.org](mailto:amerind@amerind.org) or by calling us at (520) 586-3666.

COVER: Photo courtesy of Jeff Maltzman. OPPOSITE PAGE (HAWK): Photo courtesy of GoatOGRAPHER (Kerry Whelan).

Dear Friends:

The spring wildflowers are blooming at Amerind's front gate, and the migratory turkey vultures are back in their favorite cottonwood tree. Since we opened the new trail system, Amerind has welcomed over 7,500 guests to our campus. Be sure to catch April's issue of *Arizona Highways* for a feature length article on Amerind's newest attraction. In this issue we consider the people who made the hiking trail system grand opening memorable.

Also in this issue, you will learn about Amerind's latest publication *Ancient Mesoamerican Population History: Urbanism, Social Complexity, and Change*. Drs. Adrian S. Z. Chase, Arlen F. Chase, and Diane Z. Chase convened over a dozen scholars. Their research focused on changing population sizes in ancient Mesoamerican communities. The last major book on this topic was published in the 1990s. These scholars incorporate astonishing new techniques and massive amounts of new information. This book, supported by Amerind's community, will be a vital reference for years to come.

You will also read about a remarkable research collective called the Coalition for Archaeological Synthesis.

Amerind hosted a group of international researchers from the Coalition last fall. Their mission is to use the deep history of humankind to better understand how human societies have governed themselves, and how different ways of governing are connected to human well-being. Their work aims to learn from our global ancestors—lessons that might benefit us today and our descendants tomorrow.

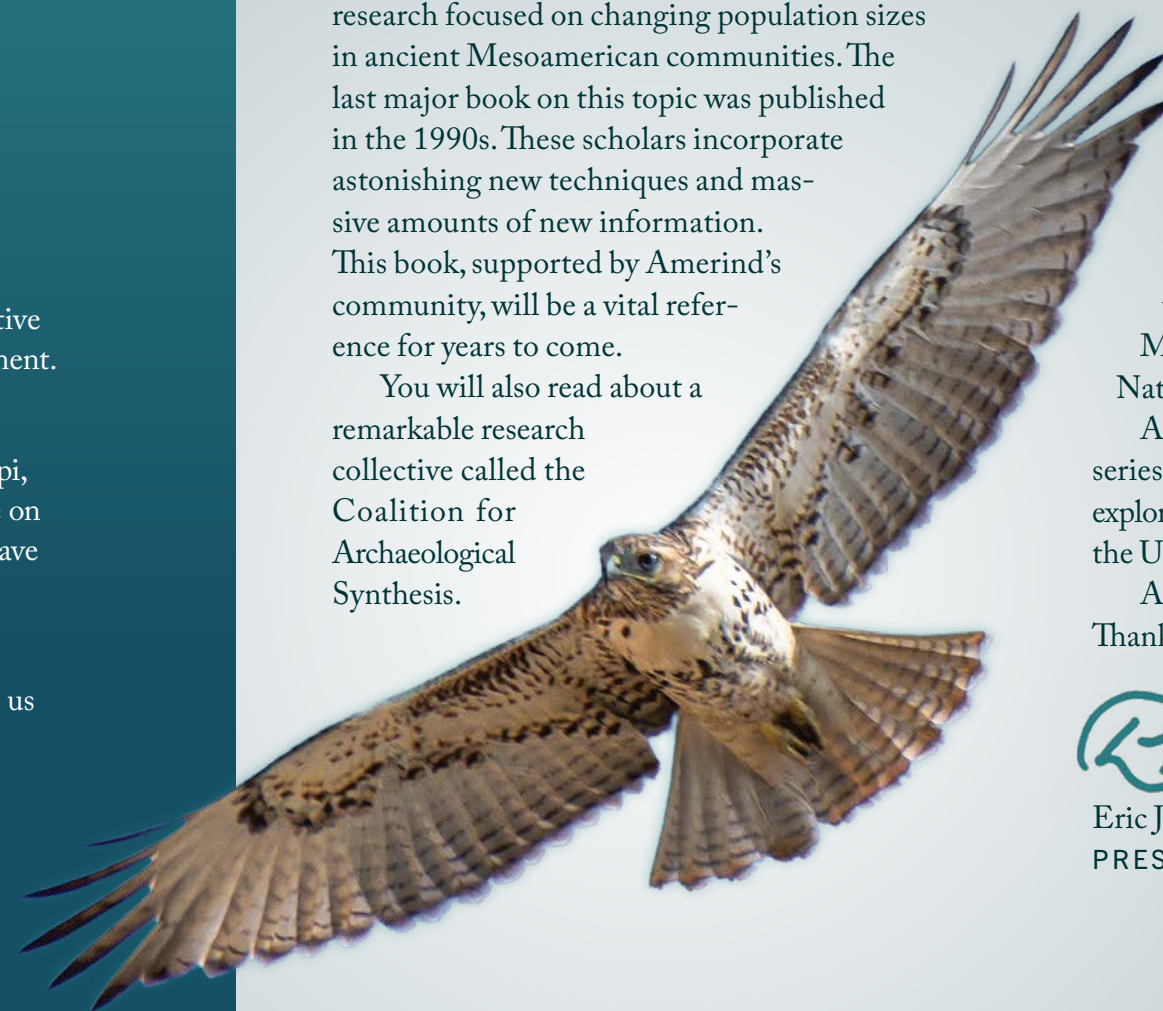
You will also learn more about Amerind's Emerging Artists in Residence Program. Amerind was pleased to welcome the third artist supported by this new program—photographer Ryan Moreno Si'al of the Tohono O'odham Nation. This article will give you a sneak peek at Ryan's work.

Please don't miss the beautiful artworks now on exhibit. Tohono O'odham water colorist Michael Chiago's paintings are complemented by the photographs of the late Bernard Siquieros. Peruvian potter Lucho Soler draws on the traditions of two continents in his contemporary work. Pascua Yaqui landscape painter Maria Arvayo shares her vision of the Texas Canyon Nature Preserve at Amerind.

Also in this issue, Bob Vint continues his educational series on Amerind's architectural treasures. Here Bob explores the origins of Amerind's construction style from the US Southwest to southern Spain.

Amerind can only do its work with your support. Thank you! We hope to see you soon!

Eric J. Kaldahl, PhD  
PRESIDENT & CEO







# ANCIENT MESOAMERICAN POPULATION HISTORY: Urbanism, Social Complexity, and Change

BY ADRIAN S.Z. CHASE, ARLEN F. CHASE, AND DIANE Z. CHASE

In April 2022 we were honored to hold an in-person seminar at the Amerind Foundation to cover a topic of importance to Mesoamerican archaeology (and, indeed, to other fields, as well)—reconstructing ancient population histories. Nearly forty years have passed since this subject was addressed by Mesoamerican scholars. Over that period, a massive amount of new archaeological data relevant to settlement patterns has been generated, including data from a new remote sensing technology—lidar. This technology offers a view of ancient landscapes much broader than previously available.

Participants in the Amerind session *Ancient Mesoamerican Population History* were tasked with examining

their archaeological data through the lens of lidar (if available) and with the methodological advances that current archaeological research and techniques had wrought. The ability to hold face-to-face discussions at the Amerind in a welcoming and convivial environment after the COVID pandemic was key to bringing the resultant book to fruition and to a needed collaboration on best practices in the reconstruction of ancient population histories.

*Ancient Mesoamerican Population History: Urbanism, Social Complexity, and Change*, published by the University of Arizona Press in spring 2024, covers a broad range of settlements in Mesoamerica. The book is organized into

five sections. The opening section, “The Present,” examines the context and history of archaeological population reconstructions in Mesoamerica, including varied past approaches and their limitations.

The second section, “Urban Considerations,” brings together new research addressing ancient populations. It includes new archaeological research on the large Preclassic and Early Classic (300 BCE – 550 CE) city of Kaminaljuyu located under modern-day Guatemala City, methodologies for determining population numbers and densities at the ancient Late Classic (550–900 CE) metropolis of Caracol, Belize, and new population estimates for the northern lowland Late Classic city of Coba.

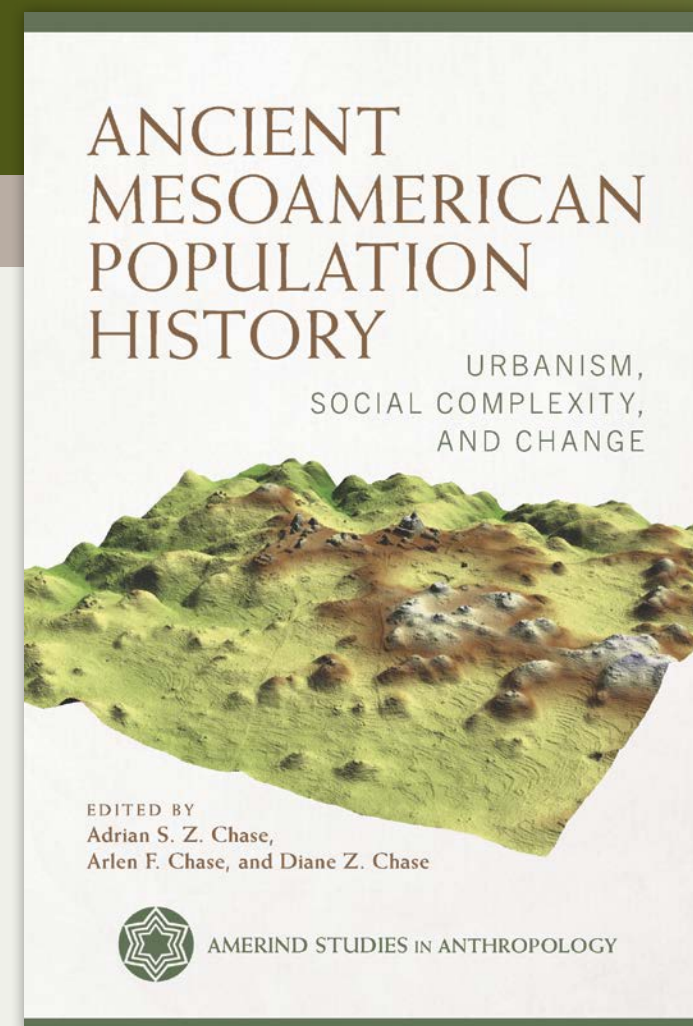
The third section, “Maya Regional Considerations,” examines diverse settlement patterns and histories in the northwest Yucatán of Mexico, in the Rio Bec region of the central Yucatán Peninsula, in the western city of Palenque and its surrounding area, and for the entire central Petén of Guatemala. The fourth section, “Central Mexican Regional Considerations,” provides new and updated population histories for the Basin of Mexico, for the Valley of Oaxaca, and for the Mexican Gulf Lowlands.

Two final chapters are in a section entitled “The Future.” The first focuses on the future of settlement archaeology and issues that still need to be addressed; the second places Mesoamerican settlement archaeology into the realm of urban science, showcasing how archaeological analyses can address issues of contemporary concern.

Taken as a whole, the book—and the research contained within it—provides new population history data for Mesoamerican cities and regions, outlines the complexity and variation among these ancient urban centers, and establishes a path for future work dealing with settlement studies in Mesoamerica.



The central architectural complex of Caana at Caracol, Belize. Lidar enabled the surrounding settlement and terracing located beneath the tree canopy to be fully documented, superseding 20 years of traditional settlement mapping. *Photograph courtesy of the Caracol Archaeological Project.*



ABOVE: Cover of the new Amerind publication. *Courtesy of the University of Arizona Press.* BELOW: Participants in the *Ancient Mesoamerican Population History* Amerind session (from left to right): Christopher Pool, Scott Hutson, José Lobo, Adrian Chase, Arlen Chase, Diane Chase, M. Charlotte Arnauld, Gary Feinman, Travis Stanton (not shown: Barbara Arroyo, Marcello Canuto, L.J. Gorenflo, Rodrigo Liendo). *Photograph courtesy of Eric J. Kaldahl.*







# CfAS AND AMERIND MUSEUM HOST DESIGN WORKSHOP ON GOVERNANCE, WELL-BEING, AND SUSTAINABILITY

BY KEITH KINTIGH AND GARY FEINMAN

Amerind Museum recently hosted a five-day “design workshop” for the Coalition for Archaeological Synthesis (CfAS). Participants focused on rethinking how governance is conceptualized in archaeology and on how different forms of governance relate to long-term societal well-being and sustainability, as evidenced by diverse archaeological cases.

As the name suggests, a design workshop is intended as the first stage of a larger research effort. In a design workshop, a small group explores a research question and designs a project that synthesizes information across many different societies to address that question in ways that contribute to scientific understandings of important social processes and yield outcomes with contemporary relevance.

The October 10–15, 2023, workshop held on the Amerind campus was led by Dr. Gary Feinman, and included 10 archaeologists and a political scientist from the US, Canada, and the UK. The group developed a focused problem statement that conceptualized governance for middle range and complex societies on a continuum from authoritarian (centralized power arrangements) to democratic (distributed power arrangement). This contrast was examined along two dimensions: concentrated vs. distributed decision-making

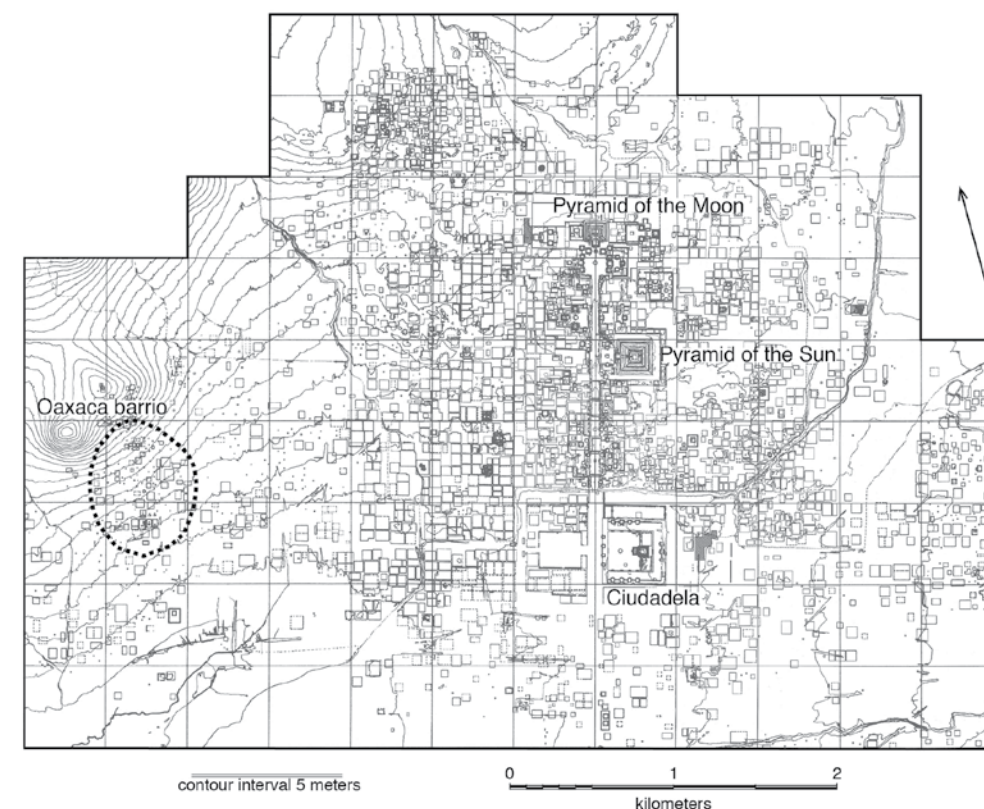
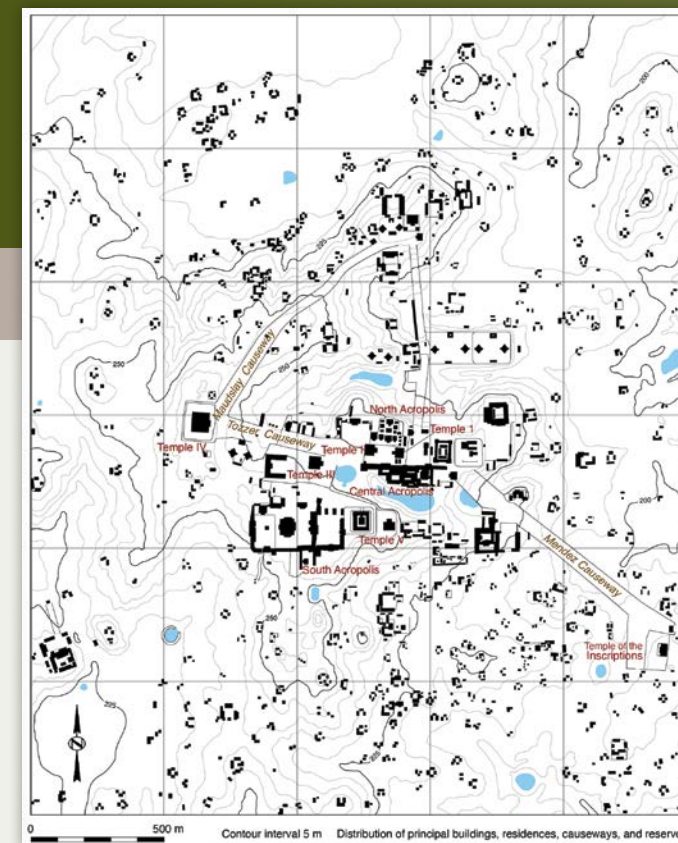
and population inclusion. From that base, they developed archaeological indicators for variability in governance, well-being and sustainability designed for comparative, cross-cultural applicability.

They selected a pilot sample of about 50 archaeological cases in which the indicators for governance, well-being, and sustainability could be coded by the workshop participants or their close colleagues. That sample is quite diverse, including Monte Albán (Oaxaca, Mexico), Tikal (Maya region of Mesoamerica), Teotihuacán (central Mexico), Ankor (Cambodia), Mohenjo-daro (Sindh, Pakistan), Shandong (China), Chaco and Snaketown (US Southwest), and Cahokia (US Midwest) among others. This array of cases will be expanded even further in the next stage of the research.

Following from this working group meeting, a larger group of participants will meet two or three times over a period of two years. The expanded working group will complete coding and analysis of the expanded sets of cases, prepare scientific publications, and develop public policy recommendations based on the results of the research. When we study the deep past, we tend to know outcomes, something harder to judge for contemporary cases. But investigating how variance in governance related to relative well-being and sustainability across

so many archaeological and historical cases should provide an empirical foundation for meeting challenges of cooperation looking forward.

The Amerind Museum’s facilities, setting, and hospitality were most conducive to a productive workshop. Drawing on recent research and with a marvelous group of highly collaborative and enthusiastic participants, the workshop was a great success.



## MORE ABOUT CfAS | Jeffrey Altschul and Keith Kintigh, Co-founders of CfAS

Archaeology, as the only science that examines human behavior from a long-term perspective, offers a unique perspective on issues confronting contemporary society—climate change, migration, inequality, biodiversity, among many other issues. The Coalition for Archaeological Synthesis (CfAS), a worldwide union of 65 partner organizations and 650 individual scholars, is committed to expanding knowledge of the past to shape a more secure and just future. As a founding partner, Amerind has provided crucial support to the Coalition. Amerind has already hosted a CfAS design workshop on human migration, another on governance and sustainability, and will host our 2024 workshop on urban adaptations to environmental change.

UPPER RIGHT: Tikal, in the Maya region of Mesoamerica, is an example of centralized governance. The Central Acropolis was a highly elaborate residence or palace. It sits at the center of the site and its most monumental complex of buildings. The nearby North Acropolis housed the burials of Tikal’s rulers. At Tikal, accessways led like spokes to this central hub of monumental buildings directly associated with the site’s dynasts. ABOVE: In contrast, there is no definitive palace at Teotihuacán, an enormous prehispanic city in the Basin of Mexico with distributed governance. The most central and monumental structures were temples, not palaces. Accessways at Teotihuacán were based on a grid system that facilitated movement across the site. Maps were adapted and prepared by Linda M. Nicholas.





# ARTIST RYAN MORENO SI'AL

Amerind's Artists in Residence Program

BY RYAN MORENO SI'AL AND MARIA MARTINEZ



Art is prevalent in every aspect of Indigenous heritage, from the deep to the more recent past, from a Mexican-style ceramic spindle whorl to a Tlingit-carved horn spoon. Advancing Indigenous cultural continuity and healing through the arts is a responsibility we advocate for and support.

Current museum acquisition practices are focused more than ever on contemporary Indigenous art in addition to historical/ethnographic and archaeological heritage. While this trend is not

new, Amerind has been deeply engaged in this endeavor, and through the generous support of our donors we have realized our new Emerging Artists in Residence Program. New generations of artists receive the support and funding that allows them to explore and create new art forms, strengthen existing talents, and exhibit their work at Amerind.

Since 2022, three artists have had residencies at Amerind's Texas Canyon home. Derrick J. Gonzales, a visual artist and muralist from the Tohono O'odham Nation and Manny Loley, a Diné poet and PhD Candidate in English and Literary Arts at the University of Denver, CO, were the first two artists in the program. The third, Ryan Moreno Si'al, a Tohono O'odham visual artist, became a resident artist at Amerind in late 2023.

After recently taking a class at Pima Community College, Ryan captured, through his photography, the beauty, complexity, and simplicity of built environments of Sells, AZ, and the Tucson, AZ, area. His black-and-white and color photography portrays the phantasm of emptiness and abandoned spaces that evokes a sense of past human presence and what was called home. They speak to a human presence that is individualistic and imaginative yet permits self-interpretation reflecting on the environments and the stories that empty and abandoned spaces once held. Ryan, as a Tohono O'odham artist, brings a unique perspective to his work, and a depth of phantasm to visual narrative.



TOP RIGHT: Portrait of Ryan Moreno Si'al, Amerind's most recent Artist in Residence. MIDDLE RIGHT: *School House*. BOTTOM RIGHT: *Puncture*. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: *Untitled*. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: *Rez Chairs*. Photos courtesy of Ryan Moreno Si'al.







# ARCHITECTURE OF THE AMERIND

## Part 2: Space, Form, and the *Mudéjar* Style

BY ROBERT VINT, ARCHITECT ~ SPECIAL TO THE AMERIND

Architectural space is defined by form and materials, which imbue the space created with character and qualities. In this regard, the architecture of Amerind excels. Merritt Starkweather designed a masterful sequence of functional and embracing spaces, set into the desert landscape. The materials and workmanship that create those spaces give them a powerful regional character. They are of this place, of its history and culture—and more. The triple-thick clay brick walls with hand-applied plaster, hand-adzed heavy timber ceiling beams and trusses, terra-cotta roof tiles, iron-oxide-stained concrete floors, ornate wooden doors and shutters, create a sense of time and permanence, of continuity with the past, when southeastern Arizona was considered part of *La Nueva España*.

Stylistically, Amerind's architecture may be classified as Spanish Colonial Revival, or even California Mission Revival, owing to its clay tile roofs and salmon pink masonry walls

(similar to those found at The Arizona Inn in Tucson, also a Starkweather design). Yet in form and substance, Starkweather's design for Amerind goes beyond this, revealing deeper roots reaching back to the culture of Spain before 1492.

In fact, the architecture of the Amerind can be traced specifically to Islamic Spain. Its roots are found in the Alhambra and Albayzín of Granada, in Sevilla and Córdoba. It was from the Arabs that Spain adopted the *patio* (courtyard) around which homes were built to protect the privacy of those within. The Fulton House—the first building at Amerind, dating to 1930—was built around such a courtyard, with a fountain at the center. Thick masonry walls, arches, and fountains were part and parcel of the Muslim period in Spain, which lasted from 711, the year of the Muslim invasion lead by Tariq (who gave his name to Gibraltar—"The Rock of Tariq") until 1492, the year of the *Reconquista*. The art-historical term for this influence that persisted in Spain following the reconquest is *Mudéjar*, signifying the essence of Muslim culture that was

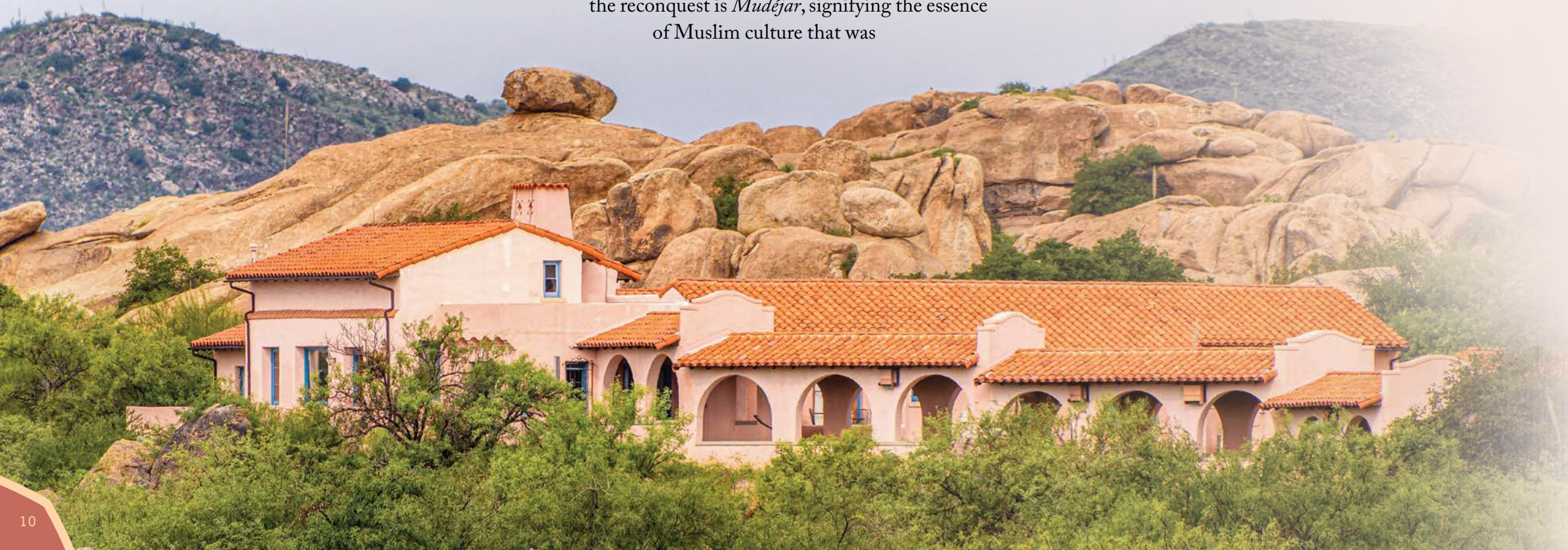
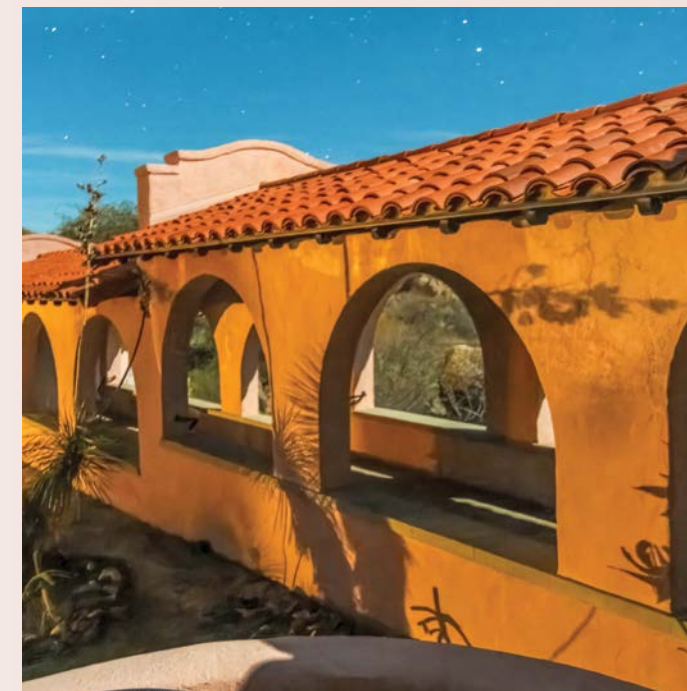
internalized in Spain over eight centuries of Muslim rule. That influence was in turn transplanted to Mexico (i.e. New Spain).

Among the aspects of Islamic influence found at Amerind are clay tile roofs, thick arched walls, courtyards, and fountains (an essential part of daily Muslim rituals of cleansing and ablution). Other expressions can be found in geometric patterning wood doors, shutters and grillwork throughout the interior. Under Islam, the depiction of life-forms was prohibited, since only Allah could create life forms. Hence, Islamic artists excelled at geometric design. Even the ubiquitous corbel (*zapata* in Spanish), those carved wood brackets supporting roof beams, is a *Mudéjar* element, brought from Arabia.

Thus, the architecture of the Amerind shows that globalization, with ideas and people spreading out around the world, is nothing new.



Various design elements throughout the Amerind campus can be traced to influences from Islamic Spain. TOP: Fountain in the front patio of the Fulton house, photo courtesy of Eric J. Kaldahl. ABOVE: Carved wood brackets supporting roof beams within Amerind's interiors, photo courtesy of Bill Steen. BELOW AND LEFT: Arched windows along the exterior of the Fulton House, photos courtesy of Kerry Whelan.







# Texas Canyon Nature Preserve TRAIL SYSTEM GRAND OPENING

October 7, 2023

BY ERIC J. KALDAHL

Leland Thomas (Tohono O'odham) raised his voice, opening Amerind's trail system with traditional O'odham songs. Three hundred people rose to greet the morning and walk the Texas Canyon formation—an ever-changing natural sculpture garden 50 million years in the making.

We were honored to have with us Board Member Chris Hard to celebrate his father's legacy. Chris' late father Michael Hard served on Amerind's Board of Directors. Michael challenged Amerind to find new ways of sharing its remarkable landscape with a wider audience.

We honored the work of Sirena Rana, owner of Trails Inspire, LLC, who spent countless hours walking every corner of

Amerind's property. Sirena is the genius behind the trail system layout.

We were honored to have with us Angelina Saraficio (Tohono O'odham). Angie is a teacher and elder who translated all the trail names into O'odham. Angie's family, including her late mother Matilda Saraficio and sisters, have taught many Amerind guests about plants used by O'odham basket weavers. With the new trails, O'odham weavers will have easier access to these important plants.

The public enjoyed talks by Jefford Francisco (Tohono O'odham), who shared stories of culturally important birds in the canyon. Dr. Lyn Loveless (retired, College of Wooster) is an extensively published botanist who has studied Amerind's plants

for over a decade. She taught the public more about Amerind's plant communities. Jesús Garcia (Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum and Mission Gardens) spoke about the ethnobotany of local plants. Dr. Maria Martinez (Amerind Associate Curator) led museum tours, Willie Adams (Fulton great-grandson) led tours through the Fulton family home, and Amerind's maintenance team took people for wagon rides through the boulders.

This event was made possible by Amerind's community, who contributed a quarter million dollars to the trails project. Many of those donors are reading this newsletter right now. To all of you—thank you!

Thanks to you—the new trails will be enjoyed for years to come.



TOP: Ribbon Cutting (left to right) Chris Hard, Sirena Rana, Angelina Saraficio, photo by Gary Smith. ABOVE: Leland Thomas (Tohono O'odham) opens the trail system ribbon cutting ceremony with traditional O'odham songs. BELOW: Family of deer spotted in the Texas Canyon Nature Preserve. LEFT: Hikers enjoying one of the newly-opened trails during the Texas Canyon Nature Preserve Trail System Grand Opening. Photos by Kerry Whelan.







# A SPECIAL NOTE OF THANKS

- Several dreams were realized in 2023 with you by our side, such as:
- **Connecting nearly 20,000 community members** in person and online with art and cultural learning experiences through our museum, programming, and outdoor events.
  - **Opening a NEW attraction at Amerind** with an 8-mile trail system among the striking boulders of the Texas Canyon Nature Preserve. Built by philanthropy, the new trails are already bringing 20% more visitors to our rural museum campus since the October 7 grand opening,
  - Providing **115 Indigenous artists** and **58 scholars in anthropology** with opportunities to share art, tradition, history, research, and cultural learning with thousands of audience members.
  - **Growing artist and scholar opportunities** further with the *Emerging Artists in Residence* program and intensive planning for the newly launched *Indigenous Studies* seminar program.
  - Totally changing Amerind's future with community members **exceeding Amerind's wildest dreams** and goals with our \$4M multi-year capital campaign, completed December 31. Look for additional details to come as we continue showing you the impact of your remarkable support.



**YOUR GENEROSITY**  
connects us all with tradition  
and history, while preserving and  
expanding on our historic and  
breathtaking museum campus.  
Thank you so much for investing  
in our mission.



Mary Wise poses with one of the two new planters.

Two beautiful, agave-shaped planters now grace the front of the Art Museum at Amerind, thanks to a generous donation from Concrete Design, Inc. (CDI) in Tucson. CDI personnel delivered and installed the planters that now contain desert flowers and cacti. We thank Nathan Hartzell, president and owner of CDI, the people at CDI who worked on this project, and Mary Wise, retired Amerind staff member who made this happen. Check out the planters the next time you visit Amerind.

BELOW LEFT: Photo courtesy of Gary Smith. BELOW MIDDLE: Photo courtesy of Bill Steen. BELOW RIGHT: Photo courtesy of Jeff Maltzman







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## YOUR HOME FOR DISCOVERY, ARTIST OPPORTUNITIES, NATURE, AND CONNECTION

Your commitment to Amerind and our mission is behind every discovery, creative expression, and learning opportunity shared in the *Amerind Notebook*. With our wonderfully curious community, there are Amerind experiences for every interest and background—a welcoming place for all. You continue strengthening the pillars of our complex work in research, arts, nature, and historic preservation with your memberships and charitable giving. With you, we are discovering ever more potential among the collections and extraordinary people who find a home at Amerind.



Photo courtesy of Gary Smith

**THANK YOU** *for creating lasting differences and renewed purpose for our beloved museum and thriving campus community.*

