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ORDER TWO:
LA TARDE DE QUETZALCOATL

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Aileen De La Ree Valencia is a designer, maker, and artist whose practice is rooted in empathy, intentionality, pluralism, and a respect for humanity's, and, consequently, design's, evolving and imperfect nature. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Design from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 2020 and a Master of Fine Arts in Furniture Design from the Savannah College of Art and Design in 2025.

Committed to expanding beyond the constraints of a singular narrative, she explores the nuances of her own culture to contribute to a landscape of diverse perspectives. Aileen approaches each design with a meticulous eye for detail, infusing every aspect of her work with a human touch and deep intentionality. Her practice is an ongoing exploration of how art and design can not only reflect but also shape a more inclusive, compassionate, and multifaceted world.

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary design practices lean towards a standard of Western ideals and norms, concealing or omitting the aesthetics and design practices of cultures around the world. Speculative design, the practice of imagining alternative realities within the realm of physical possibility, offers an opportunity to envision a world where Mesoamerican influences are held in equal regard to Western design practices. Inspired by Afrofuturism, Mexofuturism explores a divergent history where Mesoamerican and European cultures co evolved instead of the historically accurate version where European culture dominated and suppressed culture at the point of colonization.

La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl tells a slice-of-life story through a daybed, dining collection, and a set of tapestries meant to illustrate the tradition of la comida y siesta, a pillar of Mexican culture even 500 years after colonization. The story shows elements of fabrication, aesthetic, and cultural nuances that might have been different if Spanish contact with Mesoamerica had been a collaboration of cultures instead of a colonization. These pieces will draw from Mesoamerican codices, art, and architecture as well as European culture and design practices to project an imagined reality where design embraces diverse cultural influences, challenging the Western narrative default and illustrating that while there is much to gain from European design practices, we might be narrowing our playground by adhering to the sensibilities of the West. Through thoughtful material selection and aesthetic inspiration, this collection, existing in a speculative world, serves as a tangible exploration of what could have transpired had cultural exchange been equitable.

Keywords: ***Furniture Design; Mexofuturism; Speculative Design; Decolonization***

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LA TARDE DE QUETZALCOATL

La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl is a collection of furniture found in a present-day home, but in a slightly different reality. This reality is based on the question:

"What might furniture look like today if 500 years ago, European and Mesoamerican cultures were held in equal regard upon initial contact?"

The body of work uses speculative design and Mexofuturism to frame further conversations about the accepted standards in furniture design and project a future that embraces pluralism over a single narrative of what is considered "good design."

The Investigation section outlines the philosophies and world-building strategies employed to craft the narrative of La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl. The Visual and Material Inspiration highlights the application of the philosophies to the collection of furniture. Finally a short summary of the resulting work based on the philosophies. Through speculative design and Mexofuturism, one is invited to reimagine a familiar moment, subtly altered by centuries of different cultural values, material prioritization, and aesthetic sensibilities. In doing so, the collection opens the conversation to how present-day designers can change the prioritized narrative to one that embraces pluralism and diversity instead of homogeny, which is ever present in the current design zeitgeist.

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Investigation

Evidence of Western Dominance

Design theorist Tony Fry argues that over the past 500 years, colonization enabled philosophies from the Global North, often synonymous with "Western" or "Eurocentric," to dominate globally [1]. Despite its origins being a plural collective of cultures, anything "other" than Eurocentric and Western philosophies is, in the eyes of Western culture, referred to as The Global South. Much like "Eurocentric" no longer only references European culture, often including the United States of America, and certainly does not embody the diverse values and cultures of the European continent, Western and South are decoupled from actual geography and refer to the evolution, spread, and adoption of the values and philosophies that began with Eurocentrism [1]. For the rest of this paper, I will be using the terms "Western" and "South or non-Western" to describe the culture seen as the standard and anything "other."

A Google search of "Most Famous Chairs" yields 68 unique designs, only seven of which originate outside the West. Even among those, two show clear Western influence, while the rest are the result of anonymous artisans from longstanding traditional crafts from non-Western cultures. This is evidence of skewed representation, considering the fact that 88% of the global population lives outside the West [2]. The fact that the five designs from non-Western cultures are from long-lasting artisan traditions raises a critical observation of the expectations of non-Western design. The prevalent narrative often portrays design from the Global South as primitive, frozen in time, and static. Mexican anthropologist Federico Navarrete Linares critiques this bias, noting how Western narratives often equate cultural distance with temporal regression, imagining non-Western societies as relics of the past [3].

In Western cultures, innovation is celebrated as this natural part of seeing humanity move forward. A culture obsessed with progress, coupled with the bias that Southern cultures are frozen in time, results in the harmful conclusion that in order to advance, the West must impose their culture to develop countries in their image [4].

It is evident that the current design landscape is heavily influenced by the Western default, and notable examples of chairs from other cultures date back to a time before Western dominance. The one-size-fits-all narrative suggesting that Western ideas are the only path to progress needs to be consciously challenged. The South's cultures should not be treated as a theme or aesthetic pitstop in trends when there is an abundant source of material to innovate with, blend, and explore within the specifications of their cultures.

Pluralism

Pluralism, at its core, is the idea that multiple things exist and can be true at once. To put it simply, it is a term that offers a more nuanced definition of diversity. It extends past the notion of cultural, ethnic, and religious differences associated with diversity in our culture. Pluralism can be applied to social, political, philosophical, economic, and various other elements from and outside of our built world. In this way, pluralism can be thought of as the multiplicity of whole entire worlds, or as the Zapatistas, a far-left revolutionary group from Chiapas, Mexico, would say, a world where many worlds fit." [5]

In Design for the Pluriverse, Arturo Escobar explains that current global crises stem from what sociologist John Law calls the "One-World World"—a worldview that assumes Western modernity is the only viable model. Western practices on their own are not inherently more or less problematic than the practices and standards of other communities and cultures; the issue arises from the idea and expectation that Western practices and philosophies are the universal truth and should be applied broadly at the expense of other world-making practices. Escobar states next, "The diversity of the world is infinite; succinctly, the world is made up of multiple worlds, multiple ontologies or reals that are far from being exhausted by the Eurocentric experience or being reducible to it" [6]. However, recognizing alternatives is difficult due to what Escobar calls the "sociology of absences"—the belief that what does not exist is not credible. Standard design practices and design thinking strategies often shown in schools as being "the way" of working often reinforce this absence, limiting our ability to imagine other worlds. As Escobar notes, changing this wilL require a radical reorientation of the rationalist and modernist frameworks through which design operates. One powerful way of reorienting opinion is through a type of conceptual art/design called speculative design [7].

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Speculative Design

While pluralism acknowledges multiple realities, speculative design offers a way to materialize a vision of possible realities. In Speculative Everything, Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby describe speculative design as a method to challenge dominant narratives through fiction. It doesn't aim to predict the future but instead opens space for alternatives by "acting on people's imaginations rather than the material world" [8]. Though ambiguous, fiction offers a powerful platform for introducing radical ideas in non-threatening ways. While radical ideas might be shot down or scoffed at in rooms where laws are made, conceptual design can circulate in public discourse more freely than policy proposals. This camouflaged idea can work to subtly reshape how people perceive the present. Dunne and Raby describe the constraints of possible futures for speculative design with the Probable/Plausible/Possible/Preferable diagram. The cones radiating from the present moment symbolize all of the possible futures, within which are the probable, plausible, and possible, ascending in size in this order [9]. Often, as described in the earlier section with the sociology of absence, the cone, labeled preferable, overlapping with the probable and plausible, is what we tend to expect to come next. Breaking away from these cones seems impossible, but it is not, according to speculative design. While this story respects the PPPP framework by staying within what is physically possible but outside of "preferable," there is a bit of divergence by deciding to change a historical event instead of moving from the present point forward. This modification to Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby's speculative design, closely aligns with an art movement called Afrofuturism.

Mexofuturism

In the Introduction of Afrofuturism: a History of Black Futures, written by Dr. Kevin M. Strait, Afrofuturism is described as "a way for writers and artists to explore how technology, fantasy, and ideas about the future could advance black life." Dr. Strait summarizes the intent of this style of art, "It seeks to weave together contemporary notions of freedom with both past experiences and future possibilities." In contrast to speculative design, which focuses more on the future from the present moment forward, Afrofuturism introduces more chronological flexibility when engaging with these hypothetical worlds.

He explains the benefit of altering a moment in history by saying, "Reimagining the Black experience of the past provides new templates for reimagining Black futures to come–while also informing Black life in the present" [10].

Similar explorations of a Mexican futurism, or Mexofuturism, are just beginning to emerge. In "Mexafuturismo," Alberto Chimal proposes that, much like the Afrofuturism movement, Mexican artists should find, collect, amplify, and add new media that engage with the racism within Mexico and question why the nation often excludes its Indigenous people and roots [11]. Mixe activist and linguist, Yásnaya Elena A. Gil's essay "A Dystopic Mesoamerica" critiques how colonization erased Indigenous futures by controlling historical narratives [12]. It is well known that at the point of colonization, the voices of history favored the Spanish and choked out the Indigenous voices. While efforts have been made to preserve Indigenous voices through their existing ancestors, remaining codices, and even attempting to compile every existing evidence of the colonization from the Indigenous perspective with books such as Broken Spears by Miguel León-Portilla, ultimately, the suppression of Indigenous voices persists. The destruction of texts, art, religion, and imposed practices gave us a fragmented picture of the past. Twentieth-century archaeologist Pablo Martínez del Río stated, "The story of Indian Mexico must be written with soft chalk, easily erased and corrected" [13]. Each discovery adds to a fragmented picture and can change the entire landscape of what is known at any moment.

Mexofuturism gives Mexican artists and designers a way to engage with erased or fragmented identities. It responds to the question posed by Mark Dery to the author Chimal from earlier about whether communities whose histories have been erased can imagine their futures. Chimal answers, "Yes, of course: One only needs the understanding of their own exploitation and marginalization that is present, and the impulse to re-imagine one's own potential" [11].

While considering the terms Mexofuturism and Mesofuturism, the topic of mestizaje came to mind. Literally translated, mestizaje is "of mixed race." While there are still many Indigenous communities today that practice their traditions, many Mexicans do not fully identify with or know about their Indigenous ancestry. Due to mestizaje, others may also feel connected in part to their Spanish or European ancestry. In fact, one of the crowning principles of the Mexican independence was the idea that most of the population was mixed and did away with the caste system in order to unite against the Spanish. While this history holds its own problematic connotations with a desire for proximity to whiteness, the general sense of being a country of mixed-race individuals holds true. This body of work comes from a place of not fully identifying with or knowing about my Indigenous ancestry. However, the hope is to add to many bodies of work from Mexican and other Latin-American people from across this spectrum to imagine what our cultures would have looked like in a different context, to offer more variety to the future.

Philosophy and framework conclusion

We do not have very many templates for how a society is to blend with another ethically and peacefully. So, while it is true that a very peaceful merging of cultures would have been unlikely to the point of impossible due to the cultural values of the Spanish to spread Christianity and exploration as a means of resource exploitation, the purpose of this story is to show an alternative narrative to help shape the future of globalization. To shift the way we design from one that predominantly worships the West, their aesthetics, and their ideals for one that looks to evolve together into something interesting and new not simply in look but in function. Furniture has the powerful ability to reflect our relationships with each other, ourselves, and societal values.

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Visual and Material Inspiration

Figure 1: Richard Lee Gutherie, "Plate 46," The Codex Borgia, 1993.

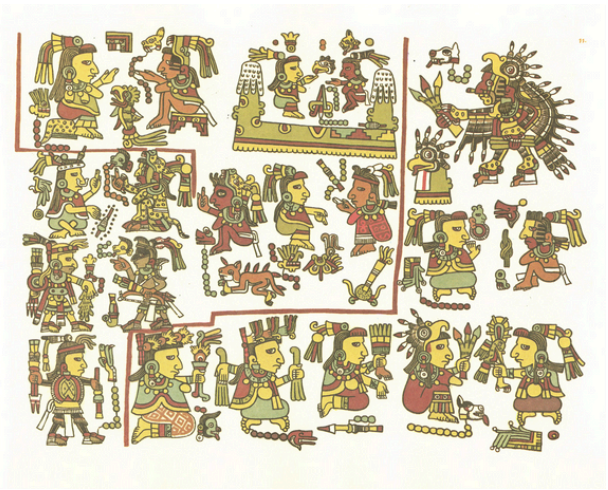

Figure 2: Zelia Nuttall, "Plate 78," The Codex Nuttall, 1975.

Pre-Colonial Codices

Codices are pictorial manuscripts that represent religious and historical knowledge of the Mesoamerican cultures. These texts were painted with natural pigments and feature a distinct and dense visual language. Though once abundant, the majority of these texts were destroyed in the early stages of colonization due to the Spanish's objective to oppress any representation of the "heathen religions" of the Indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica [14]. Sources differ, but today there are between 12-15 of these original pre-colonial manuscripts. Mesoamerican codices are often named after the collector, politician, scholar, or institution that acquired them after they were stolen from their native land.

Scholars Jansen and Pérez Jiménez propose renaming them using Indigenous languages and subject context to better reflect their content, origins, and cultural significance. In this text, I use the Indigenous names proposed by Jansen and Pérez Jiménez to honor the manuscripts' origins because, in this alternate universe, the texts retain their original Indigenous names. While we will never know their proper names, we can imagine the world where they carry meaningful, culturally relevant names rather than the names of their captors [15].

Codex Yoalli Ehēcatl: Known as the Codex Borgia, this manuscript was once part of Cardinal Stefano Borgia's collection. It depicts ritual scenes, including human figures turning into "bodies of darkness" wearing Wind God masks. The name Yoalli Ehēcatl, meaning "night and wind" in Nahuatl, was chosen by Jansen and Pérez Jiménez to reflect the codex's metaphoric imagery. Its intricate visual language inspired the illustrations for La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl [16]. Codex Tonindeye: Known as the Codex Zouche-Nuttall, this manuscript includes a Mixtec king's biography and various dynastic histories. Jansen and Pérez Jiménez renamed it Tonindeye, meaning "lineage history" in the Mixtec language. It includes rich representations of ceremonial clothing, which informed design elements in the collection [17].

Materials

In addition to the codices, the resulting works from La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl gives Indigenous cultures their voice by prioritizing materials native to Mesoamerica throughout this collection. Fiber and dye are treated with methods in line with historical practices, while other materials are used in experimental ways to explore what design innovation might look like under equitable cultural exchange. Additionally, the representation through geographically available materials aligns with the values of a culture that sought harmony with the natural world.

Tezontle: This red volcanic rock has strong tradition in pre-Hispanic and colonial architecture. In the 16th-18th century, the Spanish went as far as to dub it the "divine material" due to its versatility as a building material and for coloring stucco walls. By the 19th century, It faded from use due to resource depletion [19]. Its deep hue and cultural legacy within both the pre-hispanic and colonial landscape made it a fitting element in this collection, where it is repurposed as a pigment and aggregate in concrete.

Achiote and Añil (Indigo): Dyeing fabric with natural materials remains a vibrant tradition in Indigenous communities across Mexico.. Añil, or indigo, has been used since pre-colonial times and continues to be an important part of artisan cultures in Mexico. In an interview for the Forbes Pigment Collection, Zapotec weaver Porfirio Gutiérrez expressed concern about the future of this craft: "We don't know how long this tradition is going to last because of today's fast-moving technology and the [embrace of mass production] in our community. We're teaching our young people how to use natural dyes, which we hope means it'll last a long time; but we don't know what's going to happen in the future" [20]. His work, now part of the Forbes Pigment Collection, has already sparked meaningful conversations among visitors. The use of natural dyes in this speculative world aspires to do the same, inviting us to consider: why not color our homes with the beauty already present in nature the way we used to? Achiote, the seed of an evergreen shrub native to Central America, adds an earthy orange hue. While its pre-Hispanic use is not well documented, it became common in colonial times as a food coloring [21]. Today, Indigenous fiber artisans like Bulmaro Perez incorporate achiote in their natural dye palettes, and its unique tone has gained popularity among fabric dyers worldwide.

Ichcatl (White Cotton): Gossypium hirsutum is a species of cotton native to Mesoamerica. There are a few varieties of colors, but white cotton is known in Nahuatl as Ichcatl. The use of cotton in Mesoamerican culture ranged broadly.

Cotton cloth was produced for a variety of purposes, including religious offerings; awnings or decorative hangings for temples, palaces and marketplaces; rich adornments for deities; marriage payments; gifts for special ritual and social events, such as the dedication of a youth to the calpulli school, the potlatch-like exchanges by merchants at their flamboyant feasts, or politically-inspired exchanges among powerful rulers; household utility items, such as tortilla covers; a warrior's battle armor; and finally, wrappings for mummy bundles prepared, usually, for cremation. Certain white cotton mantas (quachtli) served money functions in the economy, circulating as a medium of exchange, and serving payment and standard of value functions as well. And, of course, the predominant use of textiles was as clothing, whether plain or exquisitely decorated cloaks, shifts, skirts and loincloths. (Berdan) [22]

With such dominant use, it stands to reason that naturally dyed fabric would have become the textile of choice for home upholstery. Another motivating factor for the usage of cotton in this collection, in addition to being widely used and available, is that natural dyes do not successfully dye synthetic fabrics. In the universe of La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl, the desire to continue with the traditional practice of natural dyes steered this collection to 100% cotton upholstery.

Sisal (Agave Fiber): Agave fiber, also known as sisal, is a natural fiber harvested from the agave cactus or maguey in Spanish. Mexican artist Fernando Laposse, in collaboration with community members in Tonahuixtla, developed a new way of using sisal as a design element in his work. One of the motivations for this project was to avoid exploiting Indigenous practices in the world of high design, which has increasingly become standard practice. Instead, he sought to invent a new usage altogether and explore the bounds of the material with the communities that cultivate the material as equal participants [23]. This type of exploration is the exact type of innovation that La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl would see through its evolution, so I have decided to use a sisal rope in the collection as a nod to Laposse's endeavor.

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THE WORKS OF
LA TARDE DE QUETZALCOATL

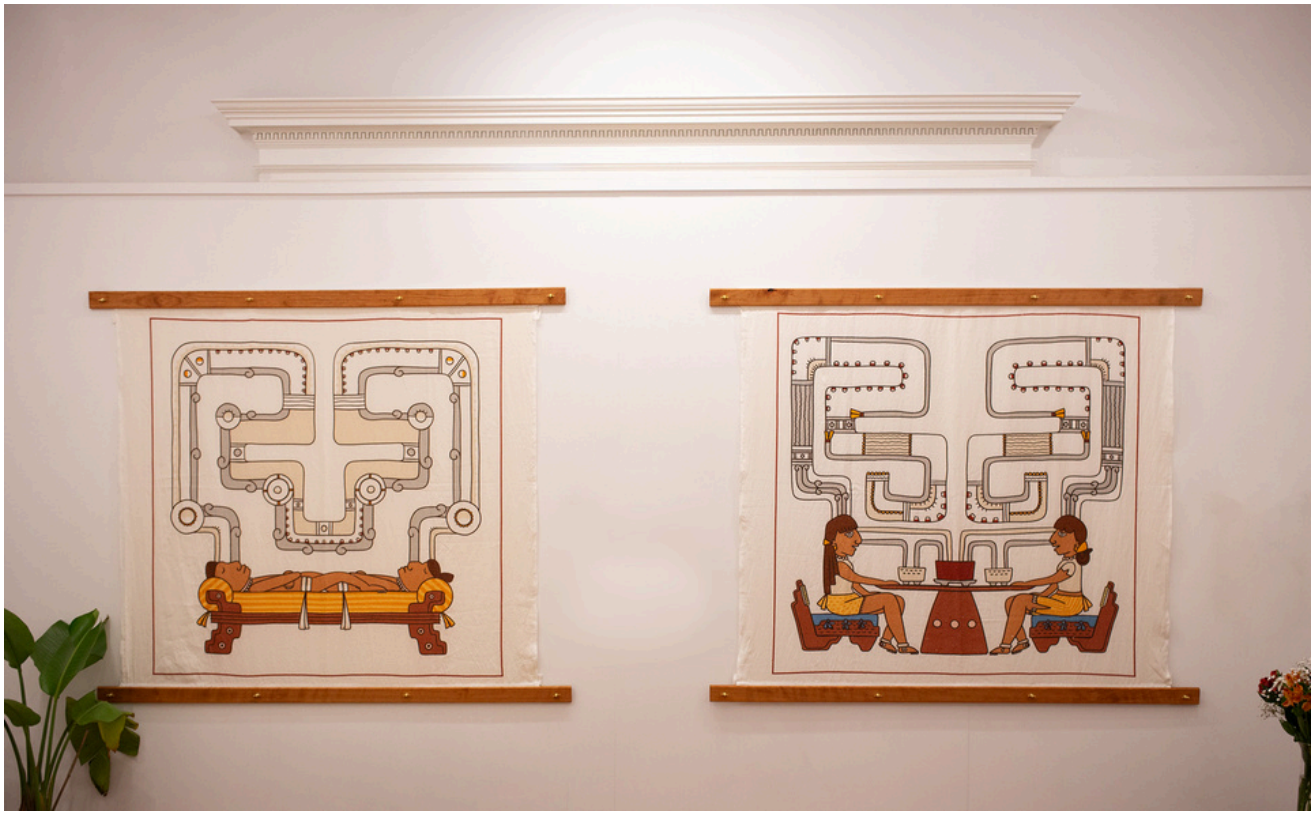

Figure 3: The Rituals

La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl **shown in these illustrations in a modernized style of the Codex Yoalli Ehēcatl is a speculative furniture collection that imagines a present-day Mexican home shaped by the equitable fusion of Mesoamerican and Spanish cultures, had colonization unfolded through collaboration instead of colonization. Through a narrative shaped by domestic objects, the collection explores a world where Indigenous aesthetics and functionality remained central to daily life. The narrative unfolds across two everyday rituals:** ***la comida*** **(the meal) and** ***la siesta*** **(the nap), reimagined through pieces designed to center community and rest.**

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La Comida

Figure 4: La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl Table and Chairs

There is little to no evidence of furniture specifically made for dining in Mesoamerican culture. In fact, there is not much evidence of anything beyond the humble petate or petlatl in Nahuatl. The petate is a multifunctional mat made from woven palm. This woven mat was their bed, table, lounger, and was even used for burials. It was suitable even for their society's royalty, as can be seen in an image from the Codex Mendoza featuring Emperor Moctezuma sitting on a petate in his palace [24].

Figure 5: Unknown Indigenous painter, Detail of spread showing Moctezuma's palace, Codex Mendoza, 1542,

Many Indigenous communities still eat this way, or have only begun using dining chairs and tables in recent generations. Dining furniture in Mexico is based on Western ideas of posture and dining etiquette, but considering the Indigenous communities were eating on the floor, this collection looks to bring furniture to dining, but at a height that might have been more comfortable or familiar to the Indigenous people. Non-Western cultures worldwide continue to eat on the ground, and some have even developed furniture for this posture. East Asian cultures, such as Japan, already have furniture for this lower seating. Therefore, the collection used existing low seating to inform the ergonomics

Figure 6: Maguey Chairs

The Maguey Chair and Coatl Bench stand at just eleven inches tall and are designed for a low dining experience that facilitates sobremesa, the originally Spanish post-meal tradition of lingering at the dining table for conversation. Their silhouettes and carved perimeter details echo the stepped throne forms found in Mesoamerican codices, especially the Codex Yoalli Ehēcatl, with leg motifs inspired by the architecture of the pyramids. The woven backrest draws from mid-century European rattan designs. The sisal woven backrest takes from the material inspiration highlighted in the Visual and Material Inspiration section and additionally creates a tactile, layered texture language inspired by the codices.

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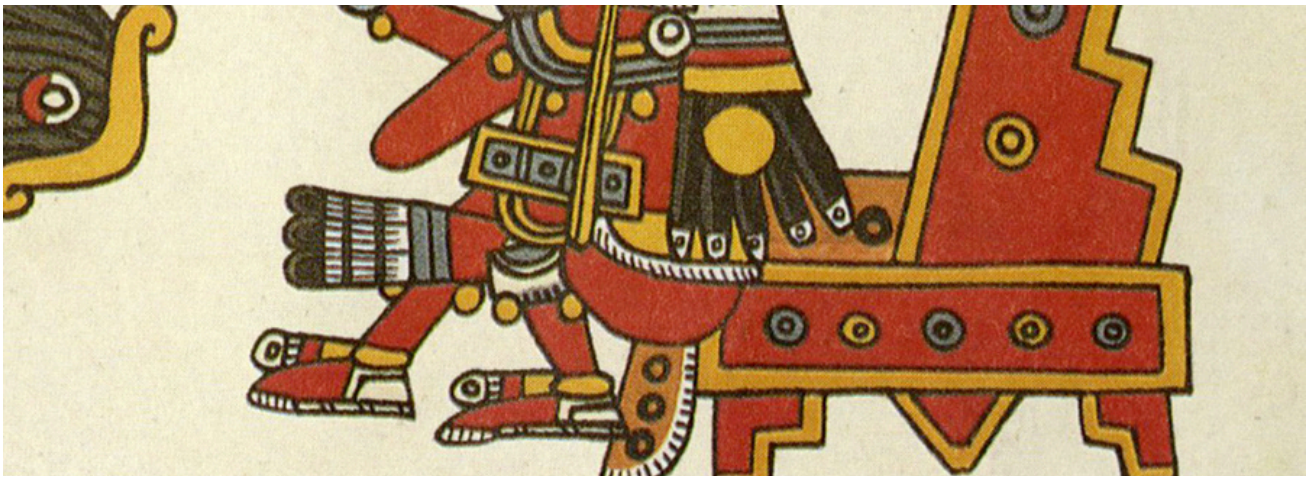

Figure 7: Richard Lee Gutherie, Close up of Plate 13, The Codex Borgia, 1993.

Figure 8: Rotating tray

The Yaqui word Yoemia has several meanings: citizen, humanity, son or daughter of man, the Yaqui people, and family. The multiple definitions of the word reflect how one of Mexico's Indigenous cultures perceives the multifaceted roles of community members within their world. Large and symmetrical, it removes hierarchical seating and re-centers dining as a collective experience. The pedestal base, inspired by the pyramid architecture, features terracotta-red half-spheres referencing the Sonoran landscape that is home to the Yaqui people. At the center of the tabletop on the revolving tray, supported by half spheres echoing those adorning the pedestal, sits a comal from the Citlaltépetl volcano. A comal is a flat griddle pan and a crucial Mexican utensil dating back to pre-hispanic times. It is used for roasting ingredients such as tomatoes and peppers as well as cooking and heating tortillas, all of which are essential elements of many Mexican meals.

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La Siesta

Figure 9: The Achiote Day Bed

Many hot-climate cultures embrace a midday break, and la siesta, introduced formally by the Spanish but likely already a part of pre-colonial life due to the local weather, is one such tradition. La siesta prioritizes rest, the daily enjoyable moments, and grounding rituals over the relentless adherence to capitalistic values. In the 21st century, this facet of the day faces the threat of extinction, overshadowed by the growing influence of Western glorification of capitalism and the dominance of hyper-productivity. In La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl, this element of Spanish culture remains a fixed and vital pillar of daily life, preserving a balance between work and rest.

The Achiote Daybed and Ehēcatl rug is designed for this nap ritual. Much like the Maguey chair, the stepping motifs in this design are greatly influenced by the stepped thrones depicted in the Codex Yoalli Ehēcatl. While the steps in the codex feature sharp edges, the Achiote daybed introduces softer curves to evoke a sense of comfort and leisure. The arms and legs of the daybed are adorned with circular medallions, inspired by the round adornments seen in the Codex Yoalli Ehēcatl. This interpretation incorporates tezontle, as discussed in the Visual and Material Inspiration portion of this paper, to bring the medallion motif to life. The bed sits atop four legs that give it the feeling of sitting atop a grand and mighty lion. This abstraction of zoomorphic legs traces back to Ancient Egypt and evolved through European artistic traditions. Jaguar pelts are often depicted on clothing and stools throughout various codices. It would stand to reason that the tradition of zoomorphic legs would translate to a feline-inspired furniture piece in La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl.

A horizontal stretcher, breaking up the central legs and inspired by depictions of seating elements in the codices, introduces the collection's first textural detail. Stripes can be seen as a recurring motif in the Codex Yoalli Ehēcatl. This piece translates this element from illustration into a three-dimensional texture that wraps around the center, framing the mattress.

Finally, the Ehēcatl rug. Ehēcatl, meaning "wind" in Nahuatl, symbolizes a gentle breeze that would enhance the bliss of a mid-day nap. The design draws inspiration from the Codex Yoalli Ehēcatl, formally abstracted into this minimal composition that frames the Achiote daybed in plush wool.

Features and Design Elements Across the Collection

The upholstery, inspired by depictions of attire in the Codex Tonindeye, features cushions that tie into place, serving functionally as well as aesthetically. The depiction of attire have ornamentation and tasseling that I was looking to extend to the collection. This is why each cushion has intentional and decorative elements for tying down the upholstery to the frame. Each ribbon is sewn with raw edges to have an organic frayed texture.

Figure 10: La Tarde de Quetzalcoatl Collection

The cushion chosen for the upholstery is soft enough to provide comfort for an extended sobremesa but not so soft that it becomes difficult to get out of the seat. The Achiote daybed features a much softer cushion to provide a soft enveloping cushion for the purpose of a nap. For the chair, bench, and daybed, the frame on which the upholstery sits is a solid cherry frame with jute webbing to provide springy comfort. This element is an excellent example of European furniture technology and fabrication techniques. In the story of evolution, I imagine something with this level of comfort efficiency would have gotten absorbed into Mesoamerican furniture-making processes, enhancing local materials in much the same way they did in Europe in the 18th century at the peak of upholstery in France. The upholstery fabric is 100% cotton corduroy, chosen for its tactile stripe and ability to break up visual monotony. Alternating striped panels mimic an over-under weave, and hand-dyed gradients celebrate the inconsistencies of natural dye processes, turning imperfections into design features.

Figure 11: Jute Webbing

Drawing from the stepped throne motifs of the Codex Yoalli Ehēcatl, the furniture frames feature offset carved lines treated with soft chamfers. A distinctive gouged texture, created with a ball-gouge on an angle grinder, adds a layered, tessellated surface that evokes the dense visual richness of Mesoamerican sculpture and codices. These carvings, inspired by the architectural landscape and geometric patterns evident in Mesoamerican art and architecture, create a tactile tapestry that brings historical texture traditions into contemporary form.

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Conclusion

This body of work intentionally distances itself from contemporary Mesoamerican and Indigenous cultures, whose traditions remain vibrant today. Due to time and resource limitations, I chose not to engage with living cultures or even the religious content found within the codices since I would not have the ability to do so ethically or collaboratively. Instead, I focused on historical perspectives, as I cannot authentically represent experiences I haven't lived. My position, as a Mexican raised outside of Mexico, affords me a unique perspective on cultural blending.This project is really just a beginning. Its themes have infinite potential for reinterpretation, beyond myself and beyond Mexico.

Future versions could incorporate more sustainable materials; though I avoided harmful adhesives, the current cushions are synthetic due to limited access to eco-friendly options. Ideally, natural latex and biodegradable batting would replace them. Most importantly, future iterations should involve collaboration with artists and scholars from across Mexico's diverse identities, especially those with deeper ties to Mesoamerican cultures. My experience is just one of many Mexican narratives, and a richer, more inclusive vision will emerge through shared storytelling.

I hope this story inspires artists from Mexico and around the world to question the colonization of their homelands and fight to reclaim forgotten values, materials, and aesthetics combining them with those of their neighbors to build something entirely new. The human experience is diverse and often contradictory, yet it also has the potential for harmony.

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