

Beaded Art by Jose Reanda from Santiago Atitlán



We are very pleased to be able to offer a limited collection of exquisite beaded pins and other artwork made by one of the most renowned Mayan artisans from the Mayan village of Santiago Atitlán, Jose Reanda.

Santiago Atitlán is a town situated on Lago de Atitlán, at an elevation of 5,105 feet (1,556 m). The town sits on a bay of Lago Atitlan between two volcanoes, Volcano San Pedro rises to 9,337 ft (2,846 m) west of town and Volcano Toliman rises to 10,315 ft (3,144 m) southeast of town. In pre-Columbian times its name was Chuitinamitand it was the capital of the Tz'utujil people, whose indigenous residents make up most of today's population.

Guatemalans are well known for their exquisite textile weaving, yet it wasn't until just 30 years ago that an American woman brought a bead loom to the small village of Santiago de Atitlan and introduced the art of weaving hand-beaded jewelry. The local artisans soon learned to apply their weaving skills and extraordinary sense of color to this new type of artistry. Today, beading has revolutionized the lives of many people in this area and is now an important artisan industry in Santiago Atitlán.

Santiago Atitlán was the site of considerable state-sponsored violence during the country's civil war which ran from 1960 until 1996. 40,000 to 50,000 people disappeared during the war and approximately 200,000 were killed throughout the country. These were very difficult times for the indigenous peoples of Guatemala and particularly those living around Lake Atitlán. It was into this environment that Jose Reanda was born during the 1960's.

His family has a long history as highly skilled artists. Jose's mother was so well known and respected that her likeness is on the 25 Centavo coins in Guatemala today.



Jose began learning to weave, under his mother's tutelage, when he was 13 years old. In his late teens he began weaving with beads and later became a founding "beader" in Santiago. He taught the art to others and is considered one of the driving forces behind this growing cottage industry. Skilled beaders are able to earn about 3 times more than they would by doing day labor work in neighboring and the effects on family health, education and so much more has been huge.

Jose's work is unique and represents some of the finest bead work anywhere in the world. Each piece can take from one day to one week to create and no two are identical.

We offer a limited selection of his pins and several other pieces for your consideration. We will be offering other pieces as they become available to us. Everyone who has seen these unique pieces in person is completely blown away with their vibrant colors and beauty. We know you will love yours – they always generate many comments!

To view the collection of Mayan Bead Art – [Click Here](#)