

BCA Presents “The Magic of Oaxaca” January 15th – *Jim Hoff*

The Border Community Alliance (BCA) is pleased to kick off its 2019 season of Borderland Forums with a celebration of the “Magic of Oaxaca,” a free event to be held at the Green Valley West Recreation Center, 9:30 am to 11:30 am on Tuesday, January 15th.

The presenter, Porfirio Gutiérrez, is a proud descendant of many generations of Zapotec weavers from Teotitlán del Valle in Oaxaca, Mexico. For over 2000 years, this town has been a wellspring of Zapotec textile arts and culture.

As a child, Gutiérrez showed exceptional talent for color and design. At age 12, His father, who was already a master weaver, saw his potential and took every opportunity to help him develop and refine his artistic skills as a weaver. As Porfirio’s talent grew, his appreciation for his Zapotec heritage and traditional arts deepened. Stories told by his elders about cultural rituals, ceremonies and the Zapotec way of life in the past, have all given a more profound understanding of his identity, and have influenced his personal expression through art.

When Gutiérrez eventually settled in California, the artistic roots that were deep set in Oaxaca soon expanded to include influences from life in urban America. Gutiérrez’s transition from weaving the traditional designs of his ancestors to his work today is more of a melding than a departure. Old materials and cultural themes merged with broad stroked, liberated design. There is no mistaking where he has come from artistically, and yet there is a progressive reinvention of the original elements of his culture through the lens of modern America.

His work has now been shown in eight countries on four continents. While primarily an artist, Gutiérrez also lectures on Zapotec weaving and natural dyes at universities, arts foundations, and museums. The story of his art has been told in publications, and videos televised on PBS, Univision, as well as a documentary funded by the Smithsonian Institute’s NMAI. In 2015 Gutierrez was chosen by the Smithsonian Institute to be one of only four artists in the Western hemisphere to participate in their prestigious Artist In Leadership Program. Many other accolades fill his CV. Gutiérrez continues to be a tireless advocate, educator and ethnic ambassador for traditional Zapotec arts and culture.

During Mr. Gutiérrez’s presentation, you will have an opportunity to learn more about the history of Zapotec weaving, especially how natural dyes are produced from the native flora and fauna of Oaxaca and how the indigenous traditions of the Zapotec have been preserved and expanded over the generations.

After the presentation, a selection of Mr. Gutiérrez’s exquisite weavings will be available for sale. In addition, attendees will be able to learn more about upcoming Borderlands Forum educational programs and the many Cross Border Tours that have been the hallmark of BCA since its founding. Of special interest to attendees will be the planned Cross Border Tour of Oaxaca itself, which is scheduled for later in 2019.

The program is free, but registration is recommended. To register, please visit BCA’s website at www.bordercommunityalliance.org or call (520) 398-3229.