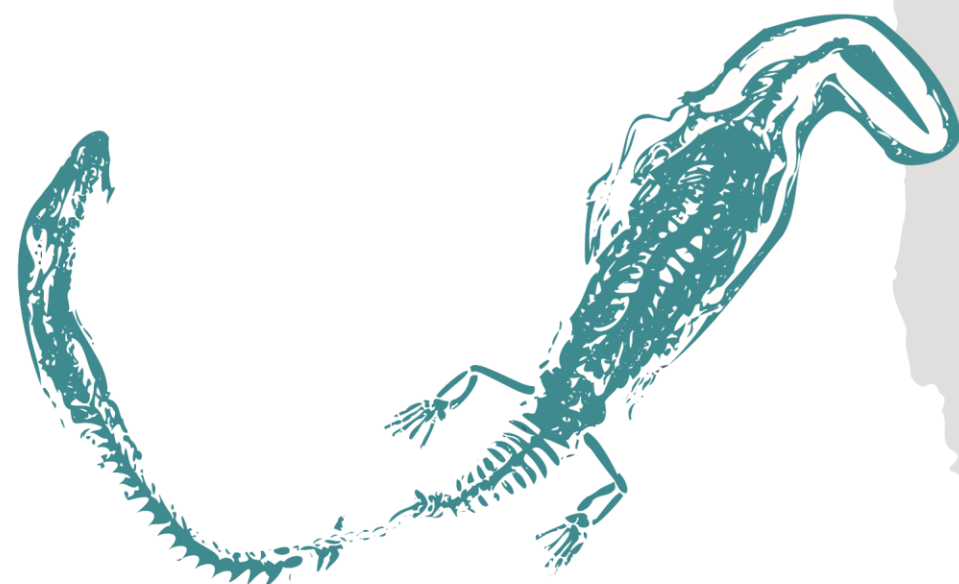


BURKE MUSEUM
A JOURNEY THROUGH
LATIN AMERICA

Created By
Cristal Seda Santiago



ARTS AND CULTURES

Welcome to the *Culture is Living* gallery at the Burke Museum! This gallery challenges traditional museum authority by highlighting the expertise and knowledge of communities. We believe that cultural belongings are not just pieces to be tucked away on shelves, but rather they are alive, embodying the knowledge, language, and stories of people and cultures. That's why we want to spotlight a variety of pieces from different parts of Latin America that showcase the rich diversity of crafts, traditions, and childhood stories that have been passed down through the generations. From vibrant textiles to intricately crafted pottery and beyond, each piece in this gallery has a story to tell.



Balero-Tarascan Uruapan

Balero, also known as cup-and-ball, is a traditional children's toy made of wood. It is popular in many Latin American countries. The toy has a small ball attached to a string and one or two cups or a spike. The player tries to catch the ball in the cup. The balero game has been a beloved toy in Latin America for generations and continues to be enjoyed by children today.

El Cafetero Muñeco Colombia

This doll is a hand-crafted figure that depicts a Guambiano or Paez (Nasa) native coffee bean seller, like the many local sellers in Colombia. The doll is made of clay and the face, hands, and feet are painted on. The doll wears clothes often worn by the Guambiano or Nasa, such as a fique (felt hat), shawl, and alpargatas (sandals).

"Muñeco really reminds me of how local everything feels in Colombia. When you drive down the road, for example, you see merchants selling arepas or fruit, and that's what I love about Colombia." -Catalina Nieto



Kichwa (Loom)

Peguche, Ecuador



This loom is the first traditional floor loom ever built in the United States by the Asociacion Artesanal Kurypachamama, a group of weavers from Peguche, Ecuador. This traditional Kichwa (Quechua) floor loom is a masterpiece; the loom incorporates some very old parts from Ecuador, and recycled pieces of wood from packing crates and pallets. The weavers named the loom Tahoma (Mt. Rainier) after where it was constructed.

The community of Peguche, located near Otavalo in Imbabura Province, Ecuador, has a rich history of weaving that dates back to pre-Inca times. Otavalo is known for its skilled weavers who produce beautiful textiles such as blankets, ponchos, sweaters, and purses with traditional designs. The entire family is usually involved in the textile manufacturing process, with women doing the spinning and dyeing, and men weaving on the floor looms. These textiles are an important part of the local culture and economy and can be found in Otavalo's vibrant market.

La Mujer de Maíz- Zapotec **Teotitlan del Valle, Oaxaca State**

Pastora Gutiérrez Reyes.

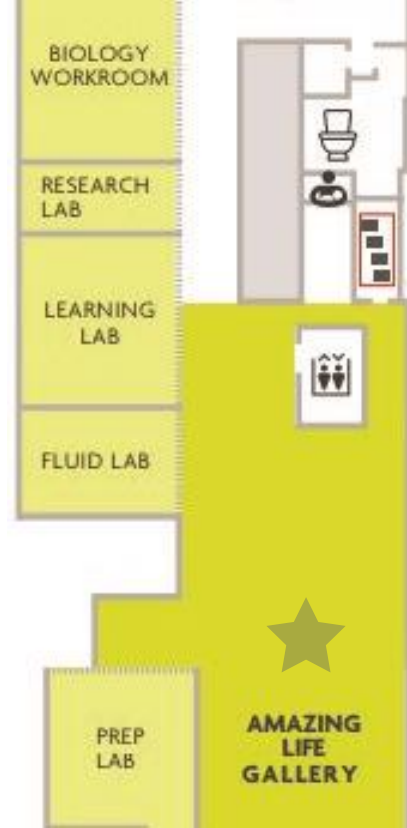
This wool rug is a stunning example of traditional Zapotec weaving. It was created using a pedal floor loom and natural dyes, which is what makes it so special. The design depicts a female figure transforming into a corn plant, with roots extending into the ground. It's called '*La Mujer del Maíz (Corn Woman)*' and was handmade by Pastora Gutiérrez Reyes.

Zapotec textiles are truly unique and beautiful. They use traditional techniques, such as hand dyeing, and often feature designs inspired by nature and Zapotec stories. These textiles have great cultural significance and are a source of pride for the Zapotec people. It's amazing how this tradition has been passed down through generations and continues to thrive today.



BIOLOGY

Welcome to the *Amazing Life* Gallery, where you can explore the wonders of the natural world and how its creatures interact with their surroundings. At the Burke, we're lucky to have some fantastic researchers who've traveled to Latin America to study fascinating creatures like fruit bats! If you're interested in the unique wildlife found in Central and South America's vast landscapes and the Earth's unmatched tropical waters, we have some incredible specimens on display. Come and discover the beauty and diversity of life on our planet.



Bats

Dr. Sharlene Santana, the Curator of Mammals, focuses her research on tropical bats from Panama, Costa Rica and Venezuela. She is a Venezuelan biologist that studies their behavior, diet, anatomy, and how they function. The result? A burst of diversification within one species. Bats are remarkable creatures that have been able to adapt and populate most habitats, except for the poles, and can consume foods that range from insects and fruits to nectar and blood.

Santana and her team use a bite force transducer setup to measure the strength of a bat's bite, which roughly determines the kinds and hardness of foods it can eat. They catch bats in the field and expose them to the bite force transducer, which they bite eagerly. By gathering bite force information across many species and diets, they can determine how evolution has shaped the anatomy of bat skulls and jaw muscles as they specialized on different diets.

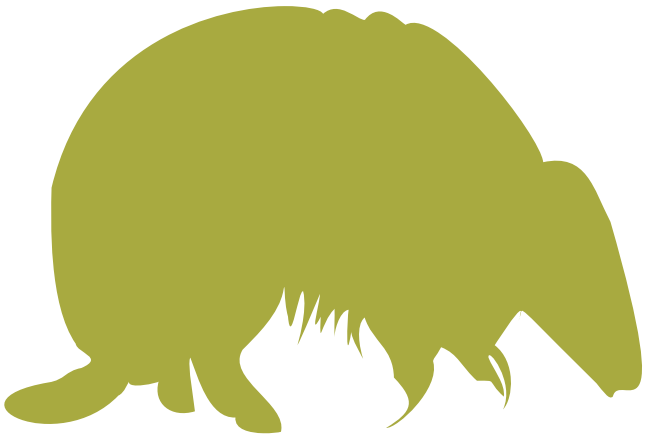
You can interact with the many bat skulls and their models in the *Amazing Life* Gallery!

Force transducer setup used to measure the bite force of bats.

Image Source: Burke Museum



Andean Hairy Armadillo



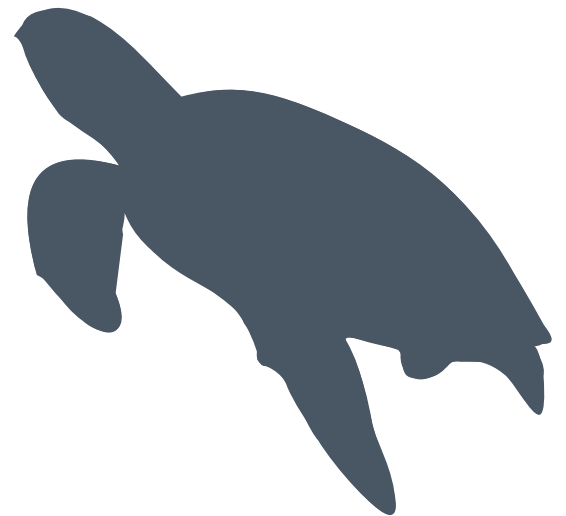
Armadillo means little armored one in Spanish. They roll into a ball in order to protect themselves from predators. Here at the Burke, we have a few of these little armored ones on display!

The Andean hairy armadillo is found mainly in Bolivia, in the region of the Puna, but they live throughout Bolivia and northern Chile. The hairy armadillo gets their name from having hair covering all of their ventral side and legs.

However, humans pose a significant threat to this species as they are hunted for their shell, body parts, and even considered pests. With their habitat shrinking due to deforestation and road construction, the survival of these armadillos is in danger. Although efforts have been made to regulate their trade, demand for their products remains high.

Hawksbill and Green Sea Turtles

In the Caribbean, we can appreciate a variety of colorful and beautiful wildlife, including sea turtles. Here at the Burke, we have two gorgeous hawksbill specimens on display along with a giant skull of a green sea turtle. These two creatures are endangered and protected, and they usually live in tropical and subtropical areas and nest on surrounding sandy beaches. Puerto Rico is one of the nesting sites that reside within U.S. territory, and they can often be seen swimming around the shallow waters if you are lucky.



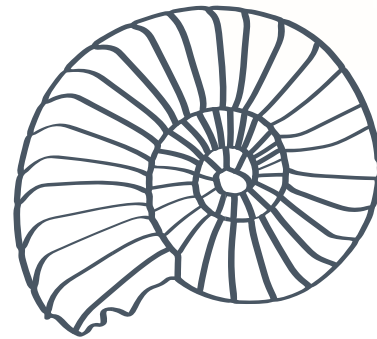
"I always found joy when I catch a sea turtle swimming near me at the beach in Puerto Rico, especially when it pokes its head out of the water! It reminds me of the great beauty that exists within our oceans and how crucial it is to protect their environment." - Cristal Seda-Santiago.

PALEONTOLOGY

The Burke is home to a diverse range of ancient specimens, including our ammonites and *Mesosaurus* at the west wall. Here in the *Fossils Uncovered* Gallery we feature a wide variety of fossils from different eras in Earth's history. You'll have the opportunity to see and learn about ancient creatures that once roamed the Earth.

Ammonites

Did you know that two of our ammonites come all the way from Argentina? Our paleontology collection is fortunate to have several ammonites from Argentina because a researcher once visited that country to collect them. They are truly fascinating creatures that survived for hundreds of millions of years and came in various sizes.



If you head over to the eastern wall near the elevator, you'll get to touch a real fossil of a giant ammonite! It's an exciting opportunity to experience the size and texture of these incredible ancient creatures.



Mesosaurus

We also have a *Mesosaurus*! This was a type of reptile that lived during the early Permian period (between 286 and 258 million years ago). Fossils of *Mesosaurus* have been found in South America and Africa, which is how we know these two great continents were once connected as Pangaea. A fun fact is that in Uruguay and Brazil, scientists found fossils of *Mesosaurus* embryos that were in the advanced stage of development. These fossils are the earliest record of amniotic fetuses ever found, which is cool! We used to think that the oldest amniotic fetuses were from later in time in

the Triassic period. However, now we know that the *Mesosaurus* had this reproductive strategy millions of years earlier.

