



The



Atitlán



Project

ROAR + RABBIT
Diego Olivero
+
west elm

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 The
 Atitlán 
 Project

On the shores of beautiful Lake Atitlán in Guatemala lies the small town of Santa Catarina Palopó. Within only 8 square kilometers live 6,000 people, most of whom are under the age of 30. There are no longer enough traditional jobs in agriculture and fishing to sustain the families of this community, and 78% of the inhabitants live in poverty.

Painting Change

Thanks to the vision of Guatemalan journalist Harris Whitbeck; designer Diego Olivero of Meso Goods; and community leaders, Santa Catarina Palopó is now being transformed, house by colorful house, with paint. Taking inspiration from the vibrant *huipils*, or traditional tunics worn by the women, artisans created a palette and design vocabulary of Mayan-style symbols representing butterflies, waves, volcanoes, corn, flowers and El Quetzal, the national bird. Each family then chooses their own colors and symbols from the palette for their homes.

The goal is to paint 850 houses this year, or 70% of all homes. The hope is that this brilliant transformation of Santa Catarina Palopó will bring together the community, spur tourism and become an engine for the development of local businesses and artisans, ultimately becoming a cultural destination.



West Elm will donate supplies to help reach the goal of 850 houses in 2019—70% of all houses in Santa Catarina Palopó.



Source: Pintando el Cambio



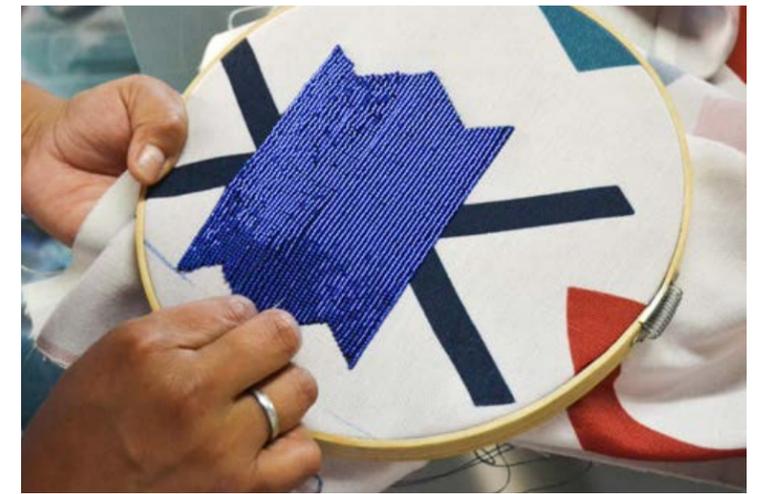
Clockwise from left:

- Thousands of clear sequins were hand stitched by native artisans onto a chair's upholstery.
- Artisans in front of houses that have already been painted in Santa Catarina Palopó.
- Hand-spun yarns were used for the hand embroidery on the chairs.
- The original painting by Mitzie Wong of Roar + Rabbit used for one chair design.

The West Elm Collaboration



The Atitlan Project represents a fruitful interweaving of West Elm collaborators. We've been working with Diego Olivero and Meso Goods since 2013, collaborating on hand-crafted products such as beaded pouches, pillows and rugs, providing work for Guatemalan artisans. Our other frequent collaborators, Mitzie Wong and Wendy Wurtzburger of Roar + Rabbit™, traveled to Guatemala with Diego and were captivated by these houses and the region and wanted to get involved.



West Elm has committed \$100,000 to helping the Lake Atitlán community paint an additional 200–300 houses, so that more than two-thirds of the village will be completed by the end of 2019. Working together with Diego Olivero and Roar + Rabbit, we developed a collection of limited-edition products inspired by the patterns and colors of the houses. Half of the retail price for items in this collection, as well as all the proceeds of a special auction featuring one-of-a-kind, hand-embroidered and beaded chairs, will be donated to Santa Catarina Palopó and the Atitlán painting project.



Mitzie Wong and Wendy Wurtzburger of Roar + Rabbit™



Diego Olivero of Meso Goods



Clockwise from left:

- Each chair is a work of art, with intricate, unique embellishments done by hand.
- The fabrics have been beautifully ornamented with hand-beading and embroidery.
- Hand tufting fabric for the Shaggy Waves chair.
- A Guatemalan artisan in front of a painted house.
- Hand weaving the fabric for the Huipile ottoman, inspired by traditional tunics.

The Auction

Fourteen artfully hand-embroidered and hand-beaded, one-of-a-kind chairs and ottomans will be auctioned off to the public, with all proceeds benefiting the Atitlán Project. West Elm collaborators Mitzie Wong and Wendy Wurtzburger of Roar + Rabbit™, along with Diego Olivero of Meso Goods, designed the seating, using fabrics hand-embellished by Guatemalan artisans and then hand-upholstered on

our Roar + Rabbit Swivel Chairs at our Sutter Street factory in North Carolina.

All 14 chairs and ottomans will be auctioned online on **Paddle8.com** from May 6–22. They'll debut at A/D/O, a creative design space in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, from May 7–8. Our Chelsea, NY, store will highlight the Atitlán Project and products as part of NYCxDESIGN Week from May 13–22.



Schedule of Events

May 6–22

Our 14 one-of-a-kind hand-crafted chairs and ottomans are auctioned on Paddle8.com.

May 7–8

The chairs and ottomans are on display at A/D/O design space, 29 Norman Avenue, Brooklyn.

May 7
6:30–8:30 pm

Panel discussion at A/D/O on “Crafting a Brighter Future: The Power of Social Design,” with Diego Olivero, Mitzie Wong & Wendy Wurtzburger from Roar + Rabbit™, Harris Whitbeck and Rebecca Van Bergen, founder and CEO of Nest.

May 13–22

West Elm Chelsea store highlights the Atitlán Project as part of NYCxDESIGN Week, 112 W. 18th St., NY



**The
Atitlán
Project**



Lake Atitlán

Hand Embellishment	50 Hours of Handwork	3 Artisans
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Shaggy Waves Navy

Wool Weaving	30 Hours of Handwork	4 Artisans
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Hillside

Head Beading & Embroidery	100 Hours of Handwork	2 Artisans
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Striped Collage

Hand Beading & Pedal Loom	100 Hours of Handwork	10 Artisans
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Shapes Collage

Hand Beading & Embellishment	100 Hours of Handwork	3 Artisans
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Shaggy Waves Natural

Wool Weaving	30 Hours of Handwork	4 Artisans
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Villa

Hand Embellishment	80 Hours of Handwork	3 Artisans
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Waves

Hand Sequined Embellishment	80 Hours of Production	3 Artisans
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West Elm / Roar + Rabbit™ One-of-a-Kind Swivel Chairs

Eight of the 11 one-of-a-kind chairs that will be auctioned. Taking inspiration from the rich heritage of handcrafts, intricate textiles and design motifs in Guatemala, Wendy Wurtzburger and Mitzie Wong of Roar + Rabbit™, along with Diego Olivero of Meso Goods, designed these fabrics, which were then hand embroidered and embellished by Guatemalan artisans, and hand upholstered onto their chairs for West Elm.

West Elm / Roar + Rabbit™ One-of-a-Kind Ottomans

Two of the three one-of-a-kind ottomans that will be auctioned. Taking inspiration from the rich heritage of handcrafts, intricate textiles and design motifs in Guatemala, Wendy Wurtzburger and Mitzie Wong of Roar + Rabbit™, along with Diego Olivero of Meso Goods, designed these fabrics, which were then hand embroidered and embellished by Guatemalan artisans, and hand upholstered onto their West Elm ottomans.



Striped Collage

Hand Beading & Pedal Loom	40 Hours of Handwork	11 Artisans
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Huipile

Backstrap Loom	40 Hours of Handwork	5 Artisans
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