

PRESS RELEASE

December 9, 2025

For more information, contact:

Jonah Gabriel Haas

Director of Marketing & Communications

Jhaas@sbnature2.org

805-682-4711 ext. 117

Unraveling Color: Master Multidisciplinary Textile Artist Porfirio Gutiérrez Leads Rare Programs at SB Museum

- Internationally renowned Zapotec-American multidisciplinary textile artist **Porfirio Gutiérrez** will appear at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in January for two connected public programs.
- **January 9:** A talk exploring ancestral knowledge, natural materials, and the cultural & scientific significance of cochineal, accompanied by a display and sale of the artist's woven work.
- **January 24–25:** A two-day intensive natural dye workshop offering 11 hours of hands-on instruction in traditional cochineal dyeing techniques.
- Both events are supported by the Christel Bejenke Fund and offer a rare opportunity to learn directly from an internationally recognized artist whose work is held by major museums and institutions.

Santa Barbara, CA (December 2025) — This January, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History is pleased to host acclaimed Zapotec-American multidisciplinary textile artist Porfirio Gutiérrez for a two-part experience exploring the ancestral knowledge, natural materials, and contemporary innovation behind his celebrated work. Supported by the Christel Bejenke Fund, these programs invite the public into a rare engagement with one of today's leading voices in Indigenous textile arts and natural dye traditions.

Gutiérrez is internationally recognized for revitalizing traditional Zapotec weaving and expanding its creative vocabulary. His work is held in the collections of Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, the Tucson Museum of Art, and Harvard Art Museums' Forbes Pigment Collection. His artistry and cultural advocacy have been featured in *The New York Times*, ARTnews, PBS, the BBC, Vogue, and *Artforum*.

The Museum's January offerings begin with Ancestral Materials & Modernism, an evening talk on Friday, January 9 from 6:00–7:30 PM in Fleischmann Auditorium. Gutiérrez will guide audiences through the cultural lineage of natural materials, the science and spirit behind cochineal red, and the ways in which ancestral knowledge can speak to the complexities of modern life. Attendees will also enjoy a special display of his functional woven works such as centerpieces, rugs, and wall hangings, with select pieces available for purchase. Tickets are \$10, [RSVP required](#), and doors open at 5:30 PM.

This introductory evening sets the stage for an immersive opportunity later in the month: an Intensive Natural Dye Weekend, held January 24–25 from 10:00 AM–4:00 PM in the Museum's beautiful oak woodland location alongside Mission Creek. Participants ages 16 and up will receive 11 hours of hands-on instruction in the traditional use of cochineal dye, learning how to mordant wool, grind the insect pigment, prepare dye vats, and create their own cochineal-dyed wool scarf to take home. Gutiérrez will also share the deeper cultural significance of cochineal—once associated with gods,



ritual, and medicine in Mesoamerican societies—offering insight grounded in his lineage from the Zapotec civilization that helped develop this globally influential dye.

The workshop requires [advance registration](#), with tuition set at \$300 general / \$280 for Museum Members. Participants should dress comfortably for outdoor work and bring lunch, water, and a notebook. Gutiérrez is bilingual and ready to support Spanish-speaking attendees by request.

Together, the January 9 talk and January 24–25 workshop form an exceptional opportunity to explore Indigenous knowledge systems, the natural world, and the artistic innovations of a contemporary master.

For more information or to register, please visit sbnature.org or contact Kperry@sbnature2.org

###

About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature. Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being *naturally different*. For more information, visit sbnature.org.

SANTA BARBARA
MUSEUM
of
NATURAL
HISTORY



Image 1 Caption: Multidisciplinary textile artist Porfirio Gutiérrez



Image 2 Caption: Porfirio Gutiérrez. Photo by Luiz Garvan



Image 3 Caption: Grinding pigment from cochineal insects. Photo by Liz Fish



Image 4 Caption: Dyed cochineal red threads. Photo by Liz Fish

SANTA BARBARA
MUSEUM
of
NATURAL
HISTORY



Image 5 Caption: *"Ball Court"* by Porfirio Gutiérrez, 2025, cochineal insects, pomegranate, and Pericon on wool yarn, photo by Volume Gallery