



Silvia Piza-Tandlich Building Awareness One Stitch at a Time



I live in the Central Range mountains of Costa Rica, where I work in my small community-based gallery. Over the years, I've developed a profound liking and respect for Indigenous people and their art, which I find is always contemporary. I use my art as a means to highlight their culture and raise awareness about their vicissitudes.

After more than 30 years as a schoolteacher and contemporary Costa Rican textile artist, I try to compensate for what the national education system doesn't provide students while empowering them with skills and ideas to bring creativity into their everyday lives.

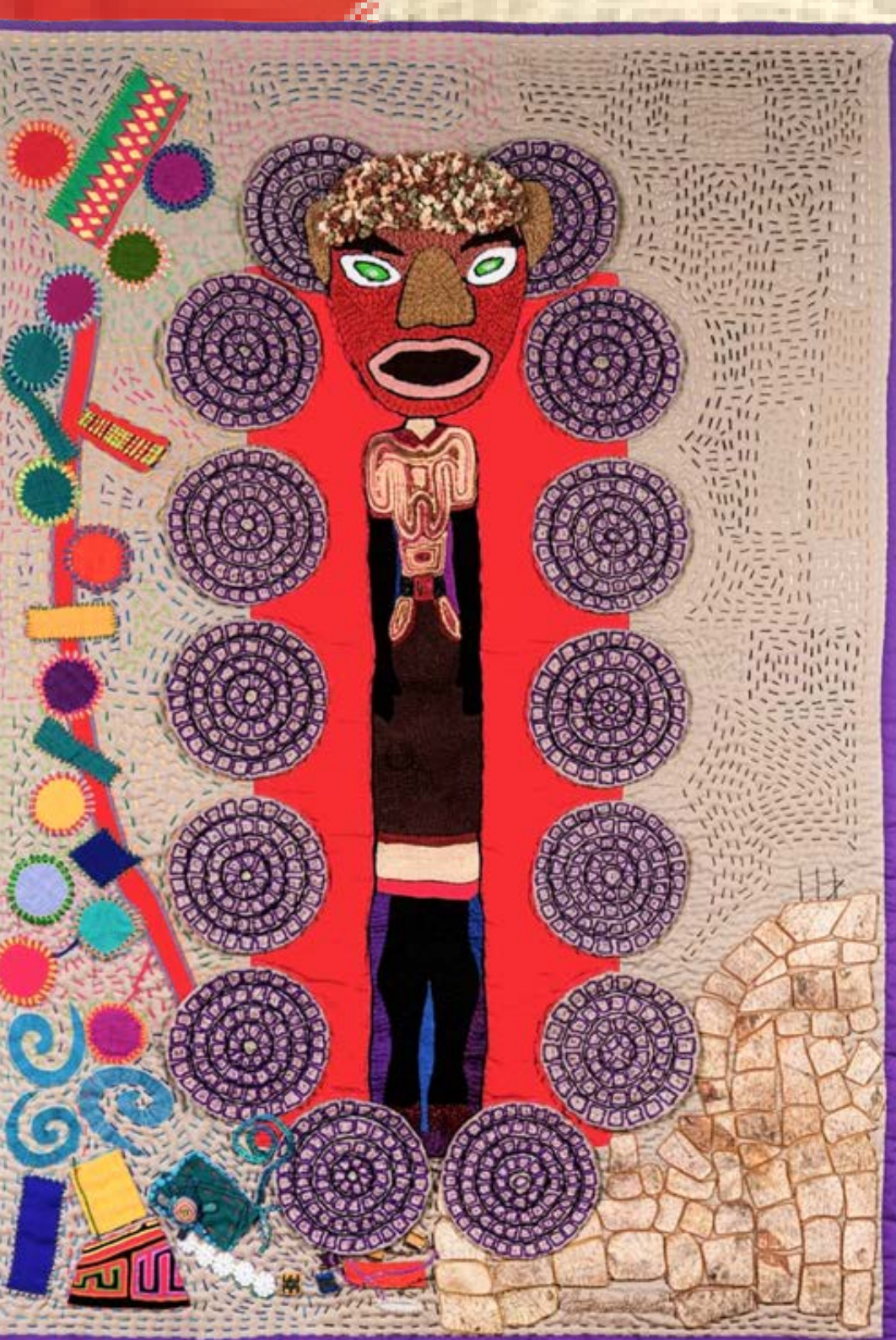
In 2001, I started my gallery project, Galería Octágono, a community-based art project in the northern mountains of Heredia, Costa Rica, featuring traditional bed quilts, wall quilts, and art quilts, as well as an assortment of small quilted items, which are its most important components. These textile arts showcase the Cerro Danta Women's Collective, an initiative that provides women and their children with income and educational opportunities by incorporating art into their routines.

In today's world, many people have lost patience for traditional ways of living; however, I strive to emphasize them in my work. My strictly handmade textile art, made with recycled and organic materials whenever possible, captures visual narratives inspired by Costa Rican Indigenous themes.

As we look at these textiles, let's remember the Indigenous groups who inspire them. These traditions and their strength are important to our shared history. By recognizing inherited historical challenges and altering the inherited perspective to a more "we rather than me or you" narrative, the hope is to build what perhaps should have been built from the start: mutual respect for all cultures.

Currently, Latin America has approximately 200 Indigenous cultures that continue to be harassed, threatened, or completely wiped out by many problems (that emphasize the "me or you" narrative) —lack of acceptance of their language; lack of water or food; the mining industry; sexual crimes; land usurpation; environmental problems; and more.

I hope to call attention to the resilience of these groups which, century after century, decade after decade, year after year, have been fighting to maintain their traditions and culture alive, as their existence has been threatened since 1492. If more people become aware of the immense impact of losing cultural biodiversity, we will have gained in making our future still human and still protected by those closest to Nature.



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Environmental pages: <https://www.facebook.com/redprotejo>

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Recent publication: "Thoughts on being a Latina textile artist". Edition No. 44, yearbook Zeszyty Artystyczne: TEXTILE ART In the face of contemporary times. Magdalena Abakanowicz Artistic University, Poznań, Poland. 2023.
INTERVIEW "Behind the thread the face". Argentina, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1uocY8543w>

"Honor the sacred. Honor the Earth, our Mother. Honor the Elders. Honor all with whom we share the Earth: Four-leggeds, two-leggeds, winged ones, Swimmers, crawlers, plant and rock people. Walk in balance and beauty."
- Native American Elder

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