Review

Exhibit reveals Guatemalan folk art

By Shannon O'Neill
Entertainment editor

The arts of Guatemala -- I didn't know what to expect. I wasn't sure where Guatemala was, and I kept thinking about kumquats. But I was drawn in by the striking colors of the exhibit.

The Guatemalan Folk Art Exhibit opened Wednesday in the Creighton Art Gallery of the Fine Arts Building. The opening will be held tomorrow afternoon at 4 p.m. when collector Richard Flamer will present a slide lecture illustrating how these beautiful pieces of art are an integral part of everyday life for the Indians of Guatemala. A reception will follow, John Thein said.

Thein, Associate Professor of Art, said Flamer became fascinated by the arts of Guatemala while he was looking for rare books in Central America.

The art of the Guatemalan Indians is an indigenous talent, Thein said. It seems to be more of a craft than a higher art. Although it is part of their ordinary life. It is fascinating and exotic to us, he said.

The wooden figures present great contrast. Some are so basic they barely illustrate the animals they represent while others are so perfectly detailed that they leap out at you as if they were real. A third type combines vivid colors and exaggerated features to create an almost comical effect. The carvings allow us to experience life from a Guatemalan perspective and see how the view the world around them.

The real beauty of the Guatemalan art lies in the weavings...mixtures of golden yellow, maroon, purple and green blend contrasting, shocking colors with eye-pleasing arrangements. Mixtures of golden yellow, maroon, purple, and green are woven into intricate patterns. Textile details are repeated and stitches are overlapped and layered creating a geometric pattern. The extreme needed to create a work of art makes a strong statement about the Indians of Guatemala.

The Guatemalan Folk Art Exhibit will attract many fans with its captivating colors, sadly some people may take a quick glance. But by taking the time to look a little closer, examining the variations in style and the intricate patterns, one can glimpse with fascination into the lives of these people.