

Press release

EXPLORING THE KNOTTED ACCOUNTING SYSTEM: *KHIPUS, NUESTRA HISTORIA EN NUDOS*, THE NEW EXHIBITION AT LIMA ART MUSEUM

- The museum is set to gradually reopen its services starting November 5th. During this first stage, opening days will be three days a week and limited to the first floor temporary exhibition galleries.
- *Khipus, Our history in knots* begins November 5th through April 25th, 2021.
- The most ambitious exhibition dedicated to exploring the nature and significance of *khipus*, the knotted string system used to record accounting and narrative information in the Andes.
- Tickets will be available for purchase starting October 29th via JOINNUS.

[Lima, October 30th, 2020] On November 5th, the Lima Art Museum (MALI) begins a safe reopening of its services, incorporating adequate biosecurity measures due to the current sanitary circumstances, in order to continue to offer an artistic experience that contributes to the emotional well-being of its visitors, and presents the exhibition ***Khipus, Nuestra historia en nudos*** (*Khipus: Our History in Knots*), that is open to visitors starting on November 5th.

Until April 25th, 2021, the show will host an important selection of *khipus* belonging to different public collections and recent archaeological projects. The exhibition includes information on archaeological findings and documentary sources, as well as novel digital media, which together allow to explore the structure, function and importance of these portable archives and ‘texts’ from the pre-Hispanic period up to present times. Far from a mere accounting tool, *Khipus* contributed to the consolidation of the Incan Empire and the administration of the territories that comprised the Tawantinsuyo. Furthermore, as a ‘computer program’, *Khipus* is a wordless and paperless writing form that combines tactile and visual experience to code and decode meaning. The task of “reading” and writing *khipus* was assigned to the *khipukamayoc*, authentic operators and safekeepers of ‘grammar’ in a world where information had already become an authentic source of power. Originally assimilated by the Spanish conquerors, and especially the church, the suspicion soon spread that *khipus*, being a secret language, could engender sedition and they were slowly eliminated from public use. The exhibition gathers a variety of the most important surviving *khipus* and brings them within our reach.

Khipus, Our history in knots offers a dynamic, entertaining and accessible experience to the different audiences keen on learning more about the dormant meaning in the strings and knots. The show begins with an introductory section dedicated to the history of the *khipus*, followed by a detailed unfolding of its structure and organization, highlighting the multiple elements that comprise it. Many cases from Incan *khipus* archives are likewise included, such as Pachacamac, Puruchuco, Armatambo, Inkawasi, Huacones and Laguna de los Cóndores, all which illustrate the varied applications that these complex transmission objects had across the different regions of the Tawantinsuyo.

The tour also includes a section centered on the survival of *khipus* during the Colonial and Republican periods, showcasing a group of six *khipus* exemplars from the Radicati Collection, a patrimony collected by historian Carlo Radicati di Primeglio, a pioneer in the study of *khipus*. The Radicati Collection of *Khipus* has been housed at MALI as an extended loan since 2016.

The show brings together exceptional cases such as the Manga *khipu*-table (Áncash), which reveals the syncretism between *khipus* and the ecclesiastic-colonial registry system; the XIX



century demographic khipus documented in the Ttio community in Cuzco, as well as the use of khipus in Rapaz and Tupicocha, two contemporary communities located in the highlands of Lima.

The exhibition ends with a selection of works from contemporary artists such as Cecilia Vicuña and Eduardo Eielson that spark a discussion surrounding *khipus* as a source of inspiration and creativity, as well as reflecting on the handling of information and the impact of technological innovation in the organization of our lives, identities and memory.

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[Download the image kit here](#)

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Circulation is appreciated.