



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

Edward L. Mattil collection

Nathan Sowry

2019

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	Edward L. Mattil collection
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.381
Date:	1973 - 1977
Extent:	1 Linear foot 67 photocopies 22 color transparencies 316 slides (photographs) 1 Sound cassette
Creator:	Mattil, Edward L.
Language:	English
Summary:	This collection consists of 316 35mm color slides, 67 color photocopies, 12 exhibition labels, 2 catalog booklets, and 1 audio cassette representing the lives, culture, and arts of the Guna peoples of the Guna Yala Indigenous Territory (formerly San Blas), Panama. The photographs were taken by Edward L. Mattil during visits between 1973 and 1977, and depict Guna people in their daily lives, as well as a wide variety of mola textiles that they had made.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was donated by Edward L. and Betty Mattil in 2008.

Separated Materials

A number of Guna objects, including approximately 40 molas, were collected by Edward L. Mattil, and also donated to the NMAI in 2008. These objects were assigned object numbers: 26/6725-26/6728, 26/6732-26/6760, 26/6773-26/6794.

Processing Information

Processed by Nathan Sowry, Reference Archivist, in 2019.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Edward L. Mattil collection, NMAI.AC.381; National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

Edward L. Mattil received his B.S., M.A., and Ed.D. degrees from Penn State University. Passionate about the arts of every culture, he later taught art education at Penn State as well as at St. Cloud State University and North Texas State University. He also served as the editor of the *Everyday Art* magazine from 1957 until 1984.

He took these photographs and collected the associated objects while visiting the Guna Yala Indigenous Territory (formerly San Blas), Panama, between 1973 and 1977.

Scope and Contents

The Edward L. Mattil collection consists of 316 35mm color slides, 67 color photocopies, 12 exhibition labels, 2 catalog booklets, and 1 audio cassette representing the lives, culture, and arts of the Guna peoples of the Guna Yala Indigenous Territory (formerly San Blas), Panama. The photographs were taken by Edward L. Mattil during visits between 1973 and 1977, and depict Guna people in their daily lives, as well as a wide variety of mola textiles that they had made.

Notable images include villagers fishing, harvesting coconuts, erecting house structures, images of children, and numerous photographs of Guna women creating molas. Also included in this collection are Mattil's exhibition labels which provide greater context to his photographs, as well as a 1974 publication by Mattil titled "The Cuna Mola."

Arrangement

The materials in this collection are organized into folders.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Kuna (Cuna)

Cultures:

Kuna (Cuna)

Geographic Names:

San Blas Islands (Panama)