

Adriaan Bronkhorst
The Drugs Peace Institute
Utrecht, Holland

October 23, 2018

Dear Mr. Bronkhorst,

I am writing to The Drugs Pacifists Committee, recommending the Centro Indigena Huichol A.C. and its founder Susana Eger Valadez to receive nomination for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize.

Serendipitously, I met Susana and Mariano Valadez in 1987 while traveling with my sister in Western Mexico. On the plane from our home in Oregon, I told my sister that one of the things I wanted to do was to see more Huichol art. My undergraduate degree, a Bachelor of Fine Arts in textiles. In 1972 I spent a semester studying art history of Mexico while living in Guadalajara. However, I was not exposed to any Huichol art until I came back to the U.S. At the end of our stay in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, my sister and I traveled to Tepic to find a museum which reportedly housed a large collection of art of the Huichol. The sign on the door of the museum stated the collection was on loan to a museum in Puerto Vallarta! Later the same day, we met a man who when learning of our interest in the Huichol, invited us to join him the next day on a journey to meet Susana and Mariano Valadez in Santiago, Nayarit.

Early the next morning, we traveled by local bus to Santiago where we were welcomed to The Huichol Center for Cultural Survival and home of Susana and Mariano Valadez. By 1987, Susana had been working toward cultural preservation of the Huichol for well over 10 years. We spent the day with Susana and Mariano learning about the multifaceted focus of the Huichol Center. We were deeply moved by the hard work, dedication, commitment and understanding Susana communicated about the scope of their work. We learned of her efforts to collect and preserve embroidery and weaving patterns, imagery used in the yarn paintings as well as beadwork. Susana established workshops where the artists could produce beautiful crafts for sale as well as their own use. Susana and Mariano shared a vision where the people could eventually become economically self-reliant rather than being forced to work in the tobacco and sugar cane harvest where the Huichol faced discrimination and abuse. Susana and Mariano shared a clear intention to improve the health of the people through access to medical care as well as sustainable food systems and a school for the children teaching cultural practices and language of the Huichol.

By 1987, Susana had documented and photographed patterns of daily life, celebrations and rituals of the Huichol. She was working on illustrations of native plants and recording their uses for healing. The Center provided healthcare and food for Huichol traveling from the Sierra Madre mountains through Santiago to the coast. Meeting Susana and Mariano was more than I could ever imagine when I shared my hopes with my sister to see more Huichol art. For me, it was a awe inspired day.

August 2018, I attended a presentation Susana gave in San Francisco, CA. In the 31 years since meeting Susana, the vision she hoped to manifest has expanded and is now fully in process. Susana continues to be diligent, creative and faithful to her original vision. Susana is a woman of peace and a peace maker both within the tribe and through her efforts to communicate cultural understanding between the Huichol the Mexican people and the world. With highest appreciation for the work of The Centro Indigena Huichol A.C. and Susana Valadez, I recommend their selection for the nomination of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Sincerely,



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