

**Maria Rogal, Associate Professor of Graphic Design, produces work that depicts everyday life, highlights diversity, and explores how culture and identity are manifested in the environment.** For her most recent project, the 2006 Wixárika Calendar, she worked “shoulder-to-shoulder,” as they say in Mexico, with the faculty of the indigenous school, Centro Educativo Tatuutsi Maxakwaxi, Professor Sarah Corona of the University of Guadalajara, and her students, Cassie McDaniel and Avery Smith, making it a truly collaborative project.

The Wixárika (pronounced Vi-ra-rika) are one of 62 indigenous groups within Mexico. Haven’t heard of them? Neither have many Mexicans! The Wixárika, or Huichol, communities are geographically isolated in the mountains of central Mexico. Urban migration has brought them into closer contact with Westerners who have little knowledge of their cultural beliefs and practices.



The calendar incorporates the Wixárika concept of the passage of time, which is based largely on nature’s continuous cycle of renewal, and the traditional Western concept of time, which is based on the Roman calendar. These two concepts are united in a visually exciting, interactive circular calendar.

**Rogal’s guiding philosophy is that design can change global perspectives and empower marginalized peoples.** To that end, the calendar was donated to schools in Mexico to help educate children and communities about the unique group living in their own country.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, while on a Fulbright Scholarship, Rogal is teaching a course, Design for Social Good, at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán in Mexico. She and her students are working on



projects with the state organization that promotes Maya culture, INDEMAYA. These projects will directly benefit Maya people in both Mexico and the United States. Rogal describes this as an excellent foundation for her creative research project that explores perceptions of Mexico, as well as the lived realities of Mexican peoples. We can only wait to see what wonderful projects will result.

# Maria Rogal

design can change global perspectives and empower

