

In June 2008, I went to the Sunday market in Chinchero accompanied by Lida, my friend María Callañaupa's daughter. We didn't talk much. As we walked past the vendors, she smiled and took time to greet seemingly *every one* in Spanish or in Runasimi (Quechua).

*"Buenos días, tía." "Allillanchu, mamay." "Good morning, auntie." "Are you feeling well, dear mom?"*

A few days earlier, I had met her aunt Hilda, her grandmother Victoria, her Uncle Delfin, and of course, her mom. I wondered how it was possible that an entire community could be her family. Lida reassured me that in fact they were her aunts, and moms, and uncles. "That's how we address each other," said María when I asked her back at home. Still, I sensed that there was more, and I wanted to understand.

In the next days in the village, I experienced the community as a family. Aunts, and moms, and uncles came to María's home to help to cook, look for a strayed animal, wash the yarn for dyeing, prepare a weaving piece, repair a wall, or to confide their family troubles in her.

*This was the community where we learned to dye, twist yarn, warp, and weave this past summer.*

For many of us, this was our first time outside of the United States, and every one of us shaped our own intercultural experience, involvement, and relationships with the weavers. Immersed in the language of weaving, the idea of being in an "exotic culture" faded. There were difficult moments, just as there are in our own comfort zones, but the community made us feel that it was all right: we belonged with them, we were learning with them.

*We dedicate this exhibit to our beloved weaving community of Chinchero and Cusco. They became our aunts and moms who, in just a few days, taught us what they have been learning all their lives.*

With deep gratitude, our intention is to share their home with you. If you have the privilege to visit a culture other than your own, we invite you to let go of your own terms, and participate in their practices whenever possible. Feeling that you are part of a community is more rewarding than merely sightseeing and staying outside—being "the other." The genius of the human being is expansive, and it is there for your awe and embrace.

Tatiana Calixto

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