



Circular platform with an Aztec sculpture at the center of the room.

THE MEXICAN ROOM *in the* BRITISH MUSEUM

The British Museum opened a permanent room in November 1994 to show its seven million annual visitors a collection of pieces from ancient Mexico. The 200 pieces from six different pre-Columbian cultures are housed in the Mexican Room, located on the ground

floor at the end of the King's Library.


The hall is divided in two. The main space holds pieces from the Olmec, Teotihuacan, Huastec and Aztec cultures that flourished between 2000 B.C. and the sixteenth century A.D., distributed in four different geometric figures. A pyramid holds female Huastec figures; a cylinder, the Aztec pieces; a stele greets the visitor with a serpent of fire; and a metal box, semi-suspended from the ceiling holds the jewels of the collection: ritual objects of turquoise mosaic illuminated with a complex fiber optic

system. The pyramid and cylindrical platforms support the large pieces of the collection, accentuating their scale and expressiveness.

The gallery, separated from the main space by a portico, exhibits five lintels from Yaxchilán, masterpieces of Mayan sculpture, placed on a red stucco wall built with Renaissance techniques.

Showcases on the other three sides of the room exhibit pieces which need special security and isolated conditions. Showcase bases, floors and walls are all made from ochre-colored stone, creating visual continuity which opens up the

space. As a whole, this sort of stone sanctuary evokes the spirit of ancient Mesoamerican architecture.

The Mexican Room is the result of the joint efforts of the National Council for Culture and the Arts of Mexico and several Mexican businessmen who funded part of the work. The exhibit was designed by the renowned Mexican architect Teodoro González de León, in collaboration with architect Ernesto Betancourt, the museologist Miguel Cervantes and the British Museum's specialized team of experts, who all worked together to open this window on the wonderful world of ancient Mexico. 

This stone sanctuary evokes the spirit of ancient Mesoamerican architecture.

The right side of the room.



Huastec sculptures on a platform.

