

# Anahuacalli

## THE DIEGO RIVERA MUSEUM

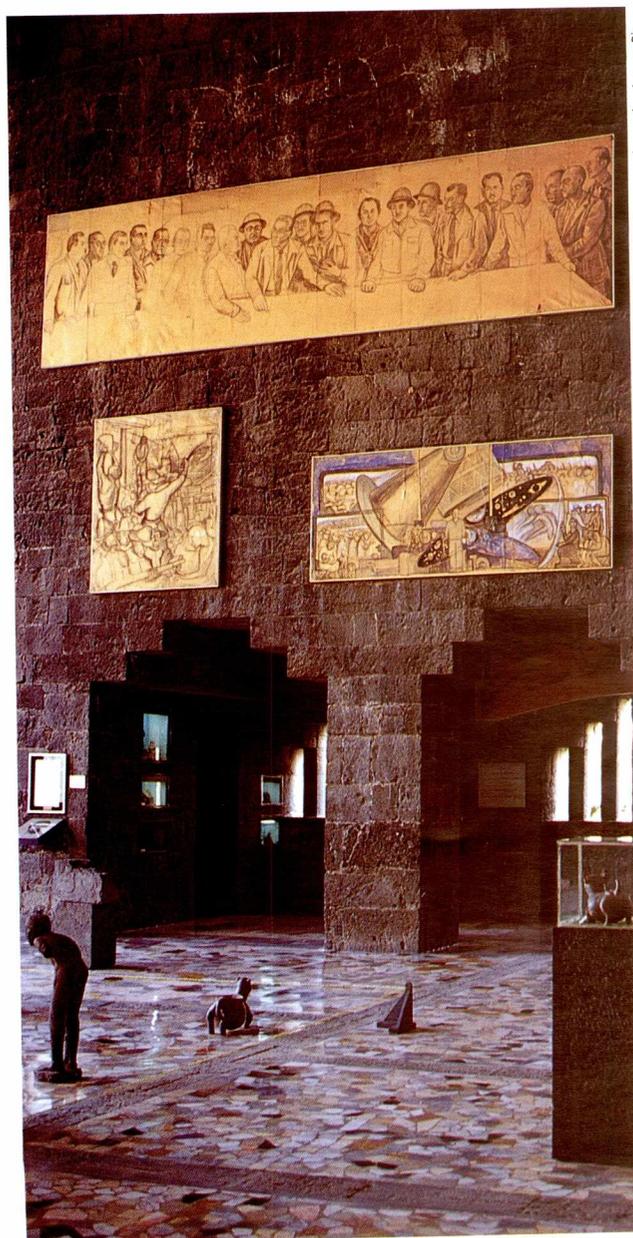
Located on a huge lot of igneous rock from the eruption of the volcano Xitle, the Anahuacalli Museum is the creation of painter Diego Rivera. Its form is reminiscent of a Mesoamerican pyramid, dominated by elements of pre-Hispanic architecture, mainly from the Mayan and Toltec cultures, with its sloping walls, serpentine columns and rhomboidal doors. Rivera decorated the ceilings with original hand-painted tiles depicting Nahuatl mythology.

Conceived and designed to house the enormous collection of pre-Hispanic art which he accumulated during his life, Diego himself began the construction. But since he died before its completion, architects Juan O'Gorman, Heriberto Pagelson and Ruth Rivera, one of Diego's daughters, were left to finish the building, respecting the original project.

Inaugurated in 1964, Anahuacalli has 23 halls covering three floors, where almost 2,000 of the more than 59,000 pieces of pre-Hispanic art in Rivera's entire collection are exhibited.

On the first floor there are pieces from the Aztec, Tlatilco and Teotihuacan cultures: clay objects for domestic use in high relief with hand painted decoration, dancing figurines of baked clay, receptacles hollowed out of stone and alabaster, small incense burners, jade masks and clay miniatures with different motifs. Outstanding among the figures are Xiloen, the goddess of corn; Ehécatl, the god of the wind; Tláloc, the god of water; and Huehuetéotl, the god of fire.

The second floor was planned as Diego's studio. That explains the huge quadrangle illuminated by a large win-



Photos by Arturo Plera

Diego's sketches for some of his murals are on exhibit.



Zoomorphic figures abound in pre-Hispanic art.



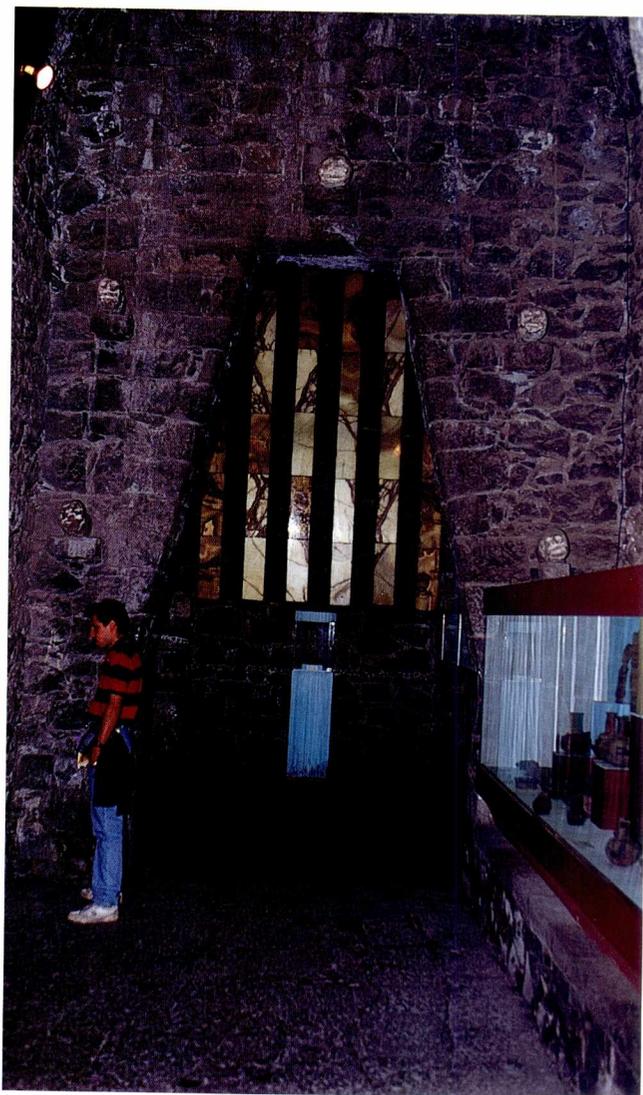
Stone pieces come from different states and regions.



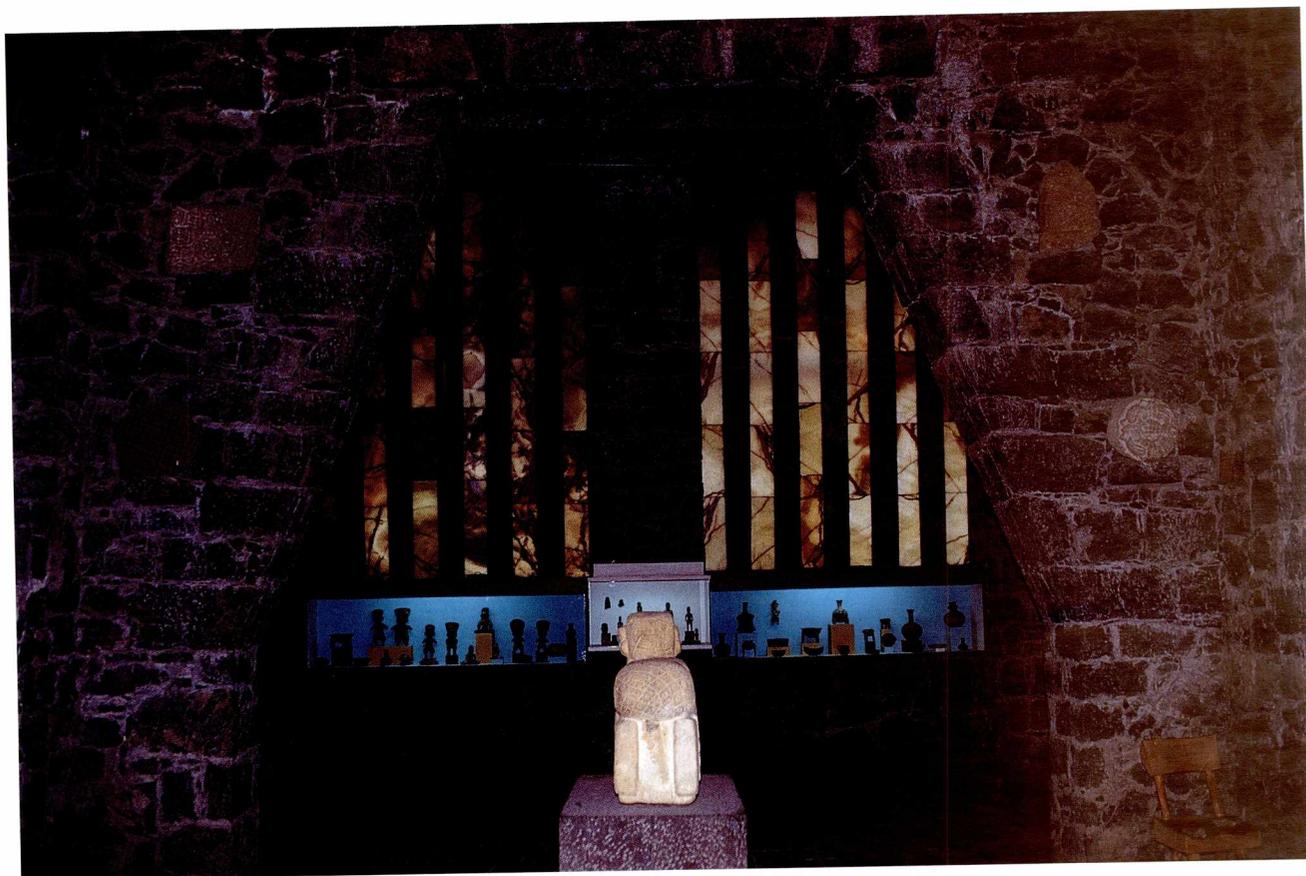
Huehuetéotl, god of fire, is represented in various shapes and sizes.

dow where some of his tools and sketches, including his first drawing, made when he was three, are exhibited. On the huge walls are both the complete study for his first mural, *Creation*, painted in the amphitheatre of Mexico City's National Preparatory School in 1922 and compositions and studies for the Rockefeller mural in New York—since destroyed—and the great *Mural of Peace* in the Palace of Fine Arts, also in Mexico City.

In this same hall we can enjoy groups of figures representing musicians, scenes from everyday life and animals from the states of Guerrero, Jalisco, Nayarit and Colima. An individual showcase at the center of the hall catches the eye. It shows a pre-Columbian “ball game” in clay. This



The museum's design is reminiscent of a Mesoamerican pyramid.



The first floor shows figures from the Aztec, Tlatilco and Teotihuacan cultures.

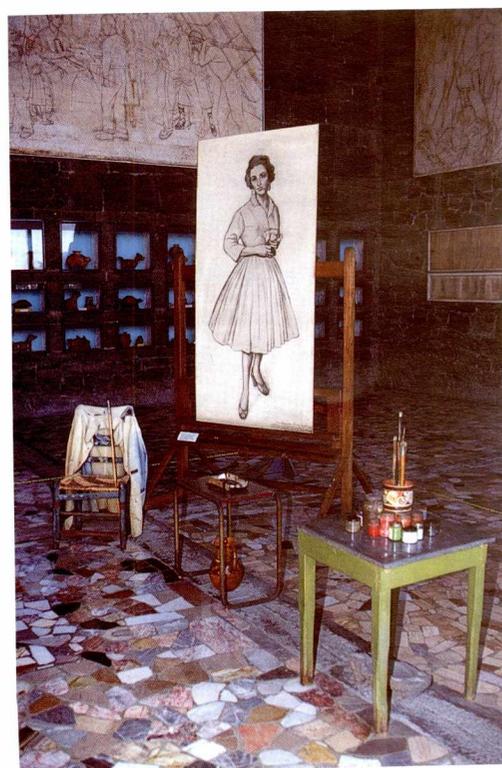
unique piece illustrates the movement of the players as well as the admiring poses of the spectators.

The collection also contains incomparable figures of athletes, porters and children from Colima, Nayarit and Jalisco, amazing for their artistic value as well as their size.

The third and top floor exhibits stone pieces from the Zapotec and Mixtec cultures in the form of palms, yokes, rings and axes, polished ceramic vessels, hollowed-out perfume vials, some in the form of birds, and funeral urns.

Visitors to this original museum may finish their tour out on the rooftop terrace decorated with pre-Hispanic motifs, enjoying a view of Mexico City. [W](#)

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Diego's last —unfinished— portrait.