

# Voices of Mexico

MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Leonora  
Carrington

CISAN • UNAM

Proposition 187  
Frida Kahlo



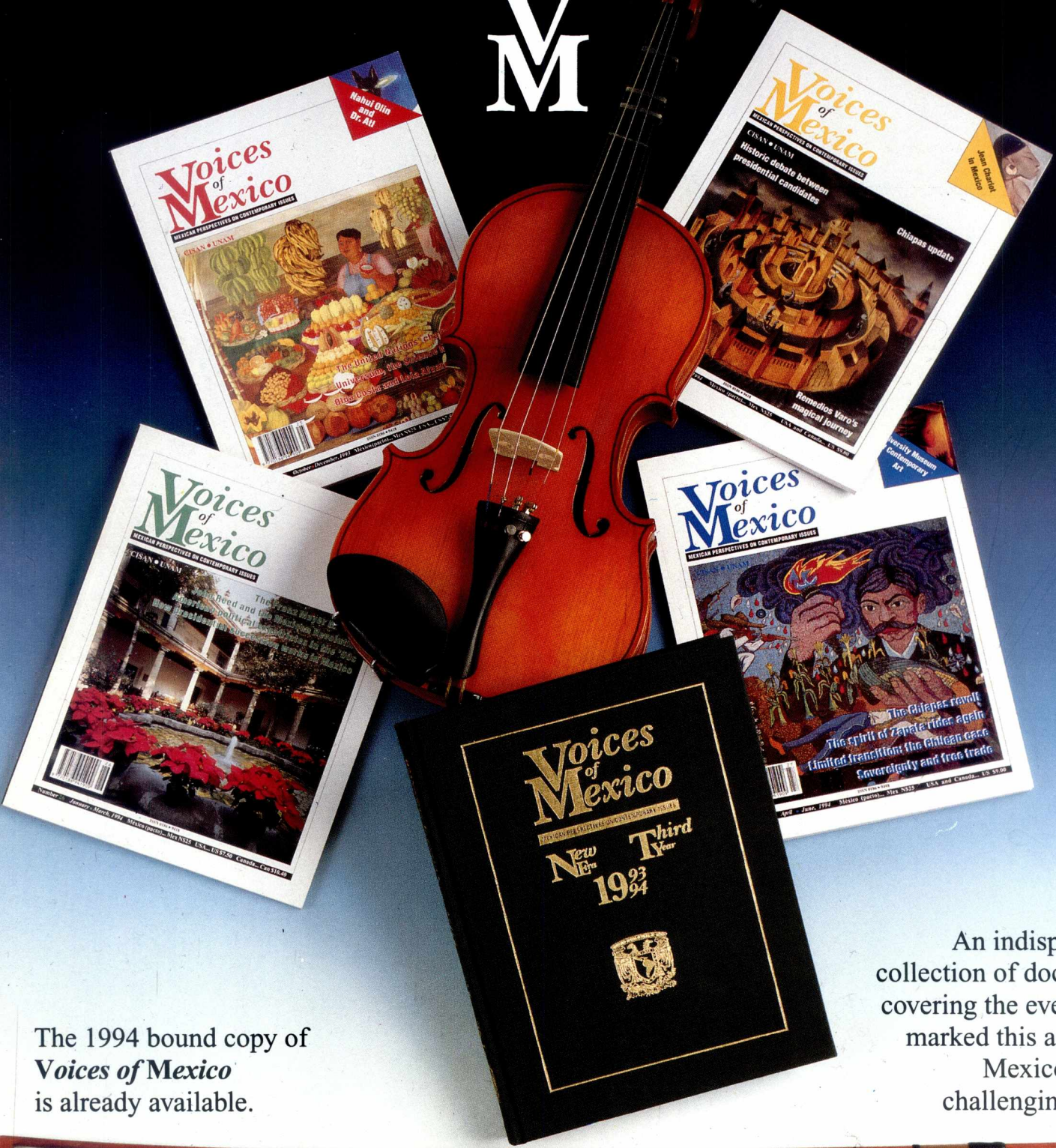
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# Voices of Mexico

MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

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MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Number 30 January • March, 1995

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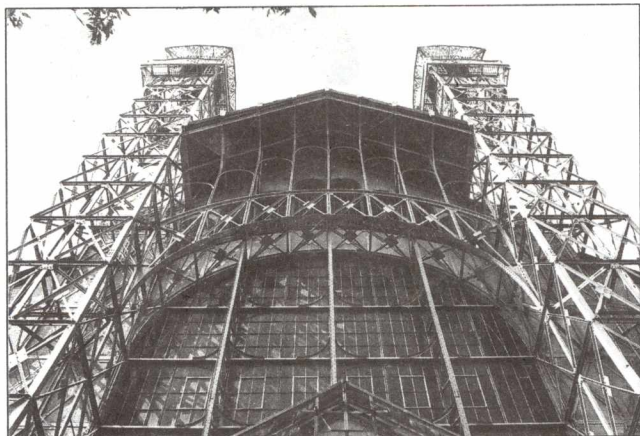
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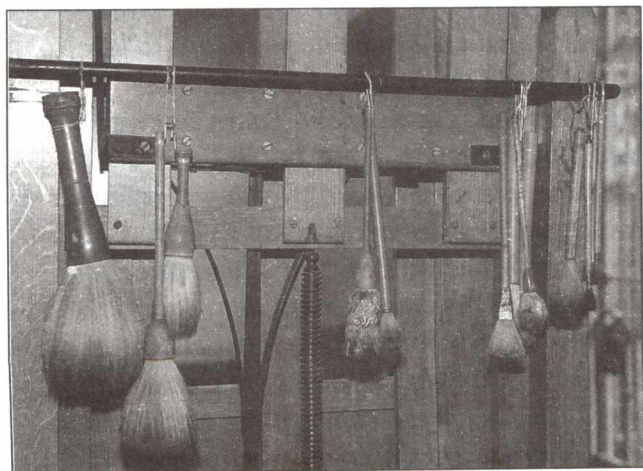


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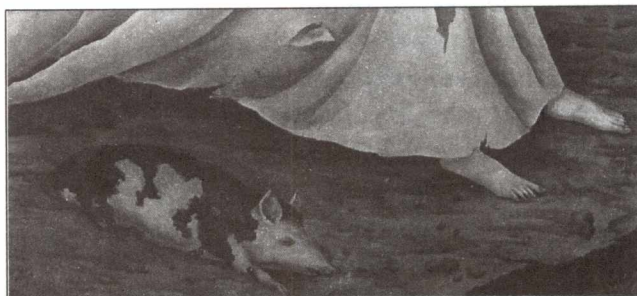


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Cover: *Frida Kahlo, My Nanny and Me, oil on lamina, 1937 (The Dolores Olmedo Museum Collection).*

# Our voice

**M**exico has always been in favor of non-intervention and the self-determination of peoples. We respect the United States' right to establish their own immigration policy. Nevertheless, the approval of Proposition 187 in the state of California is quite worrisome in light of the xenophobia it has generated against Mexicans.

One year ago the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect, increasing commercial relations between our countries. It would be regrettable if that which has been obtained through so much effort were to collapse due to border problems which can be resolved without fomenting racism.

The wave of violence manifested itself once again with the assassination of a first-class political leader. José Francisco Ruiz Massieu had become secretary general of his party,

the PRI, and as a distinguished intellectual wanted to advance towards democracy through the education of the people and the holding of impeccable elections.

He wrote several books on the new politics and democracy, and in *Voices of Mexico* No. 27 (April-June 1994) he wrote an important article for us on the democratic transition experienced by Chile and Spain after those countries suffered the dictatorships of Pinochet and Franco, respectively.

While Diana Laura Riojas is no longer physically with us, her memory remains. Faced with the assassination of her husband, Luis Donaldo Colosio, she showed a great strength of spirit. One of our best poets wrote that Luis Donaldo had so many reasons to love her; and so did the people of Mexico. The admiration and respect Diana Laura inspired in us will always remain in our hearts.

Mexico, a strong country which has suffered great tragedies over the course of its history, will go forward through the pursuit of education for the people and the most modern democracy.

In this issue we publish the letter sent to us by the leader of Canada's Progressive Conservative Party, Jean J. Charest, commenting on the article "From Mulroney to Chrétien: more of the

same?" by Thomas Legler, published in our July-September 1994 issue. The diversity of ideas we are glad to present in these pages is the equivalent for our magazine of the academic freedom that exists in our university.

This issue features the Dolores Olmedo Museum, as well as the Frida Kahlo Museum. The works of Kahlo—wife of the great muralist Diego Rivera—are currently fetching very high prices in modern art galleries. The public appreciates the artistic power which allowed Frida to overcome her serious physical disabilities.

The National University of Mexico organized a series of lectures on the importance of books as a key vehicle for world culture. We publish the comments of one participant in the event held at the Mexico City building known as the Mining Palace.

We also publish an article regarding atomic energy, a source of power which can be of the greatest use to humanity; as was pointed out when the force of atomic fission was discovered, this is the energy which nourishes suns. This power must be used only for peaceful purposes, and never as part of the brutality of war, as occurred in the horrifying massacres of innocents at Hiroshima and

Nagasaki. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, negotiated here in Mexico, commits the nations of this Indo-Latin continent to using atomic energy exclusively for peaceful ends.

Miguel León Portilla, who served as our UNESCO representative, is one of Mexico's most capable linguists, devoted to studying and disseminating the thought of our indigenous, pre-Conquest societies, through languages which are still used in Mexico's Indian communities. It is extraordinary to witness the profundity of indigenous thought, a few examples of which León Portilla provides in his article for this issue.

In "Mexico City in the work of its writers," Vicente Quirarte tells us about Mexican wordsmiths who have spoken of our capital city as part of the literary movement which has placed a number of our writers among Latin America's "greats."

José Agustín Arrieta (1803-1874) was a distinguished costumbrista painter whose art reflected 19th-century society in the city of Puebla. Still-lives in oil were among the key elements of his extensive work ✕

**Hugo B. Margáin.**  
Editorial Director

# Your voice

**T**homas Legler's report in your July-September issue ("From Mulroney to Chrétien: more of the same?") contains several errors about the Progressive Conservative record.

Did "conditions for ordinary Canadians decline dramatically," as Legler claims? Hardly. The number of people with jobs climbed by almost 1.5 million, a gain of some 13 per cent. This was one of the strongest rates of job creation in the OECD in this period. After taxes and after inflation, average per capita personal disposable income climbed by almost \$1,000 per person between 1984 and 1993. The poverty rate fell from 18.7 per cent to 16.8 per cent. The average hourly wage rose slightly in real terms. Per capita national wealth grew by 11 per cent in real terms.

Far from being "excessive," interest rates fell sharply, reaching their lowest levels in a quarter century while my party was in office.

For example, the prime business lending rate fell from 13 per cent in September 1984 to 5.75 per cent in October 1993. There were similar declines for mortgage and other consumer rates. Low mortgage rates helped almost one million more families become homeowners. This was a gain of about 17 per cent in the number of owner-occupied dwellings.

Real growth of the economy totalled 22 per cent during the PC mandate. Over the long term, the prospects for growth and job creation are better when business equips itself for the future. Annual levels of investment in new machinery and equipment doubled in real terms. These are not signs of "economic deterioration."

No mention is made of key measures taken to improve conditions and opportunities for less-

advantaged Canadians. For example, the new Child Tax Benefit put more funds into the hands of those families most in need. And job training, not passive income support, became a key focus of the Unemployment Insurance program.

While the economy did have problems between 1990 and 1992, it rebounded in 1993, a year when Canada had the second strongest growth rate of any G-7 nation. It is continuing to have a strong performance in 1994, largely because the policies the PC government put in place are working.

If the Liberals are continuing our policies, then perhaps they have come to recognize a simple, basic reality. Government cannot, and does not, create lasting jobs and wealth. Prosperity has to be earned in the marketplace, by the private sector. The best way for the state to help create jobs and prosperity is to create the conditions for the private sector to thrive.

**Jean J. Charest, P.C., M.P.**  
**Leader of the Progressive Conservative  
 Party of Canada.**



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L' hon. JEAN J. CHAREST, C.P.  
 Député de Sherbrooke  
 M.P. for Sherbrooke

**Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur  
 Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada**



I was very flattered to learn that the Honorable Jean Charest, leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, had taken the time to personally respond to the article that I had written. Mr. Charest is entirely correct in insisting that the readership of *Voices of Mexico* get both sides of the story. And credit should be given where it is due; the Child Tax Benefit introduced by the Conservatives, for instance, was a commendable measure.

On the other hand, Mr. Charest's assertion that my piece "contains several errors about the Progressive Conservative record" is incorrect. Where we differ is in our contending interpretations of events since 1984, when his government took office. The reader can decide for himself which interpretation is more accurate. And the reader should not think that I speak only for myself; while Mr. Charest paints a rosy picture of "conditions for ordinary Canadians" during his government's term in office, Canada's other major political parties, the numerous member organizations of the Action Canada Network, and the country's labor unions would offer equally critical interpretations of his government's record.

Antipoverty groups across the country, for example, would just love to take issue with the statistics he offers.

Mr. Charest does not mention that income inequality rose during his government's tenure or that despite his government's "successful" job creation efforts Canada's unemployment rate rose to over eleven percent. Unemployment statistics do not even cover the host of Canadians who simply gave up looking for work after lengthy, fruitless searches. Free trade, high interest rates, and an overvalued Canadian dollar helped shave some 400-500,000 permanent manufacturing jobs from the workforce during the period 1989-1993. As for my generation, the "Generation X-ers" (twenty-somethings), when they refer to "double-digit" unemployment, they mean twenty percent or more.

The fact remains, if ordinary Canadians benefitted so strongly from his government's performance, then why did they almost vote his party out of existence in last year's federal elections?

*Thomas Legler*  
**PhD. Candidate Political Science York  
University Former Fellow at CISAN.**

# México **INTERNACIONAL**

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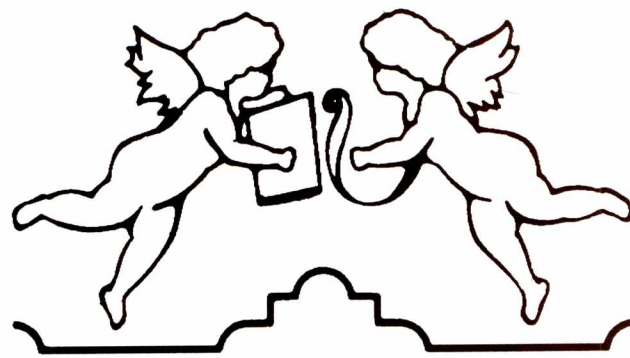
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## México **INTERNACIONAL**

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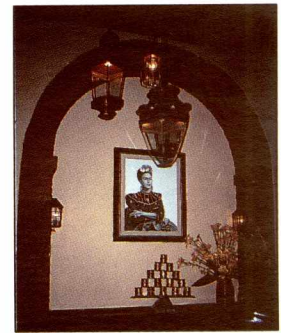
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# The restoration of Xochimilco

**X**ochimilco, or “place of flowers” to the Nahuatl Indians who settled there in 500 A.D., was always considered a sacred, special place, and its significance has continued through the post-Columbian era. But over the past 40 years, the urban pressures put on Xochimilco’s “floating gardens” by the sprawling Federal District (the “DF” —Mexico City and its surroundings) have threatened to turn them into an environmental catastrophe —Mexico’s version of the Love Canal.

Government officials say only firm resolve, unprecedented cooperation between locals and a maze of DF agencies, as well as a huge chunk of public money, saved Xochimilco from the sad fate of its American counterpart. The reborn Xochimilco appears to literally be a love canal, replete with newly thriving agricultural, tourist and environmental zones. The latter zone, known as the Ecological Park, is the jewel of the three-year, 250-million-dollar Environmental Restoration Project completed last summer.

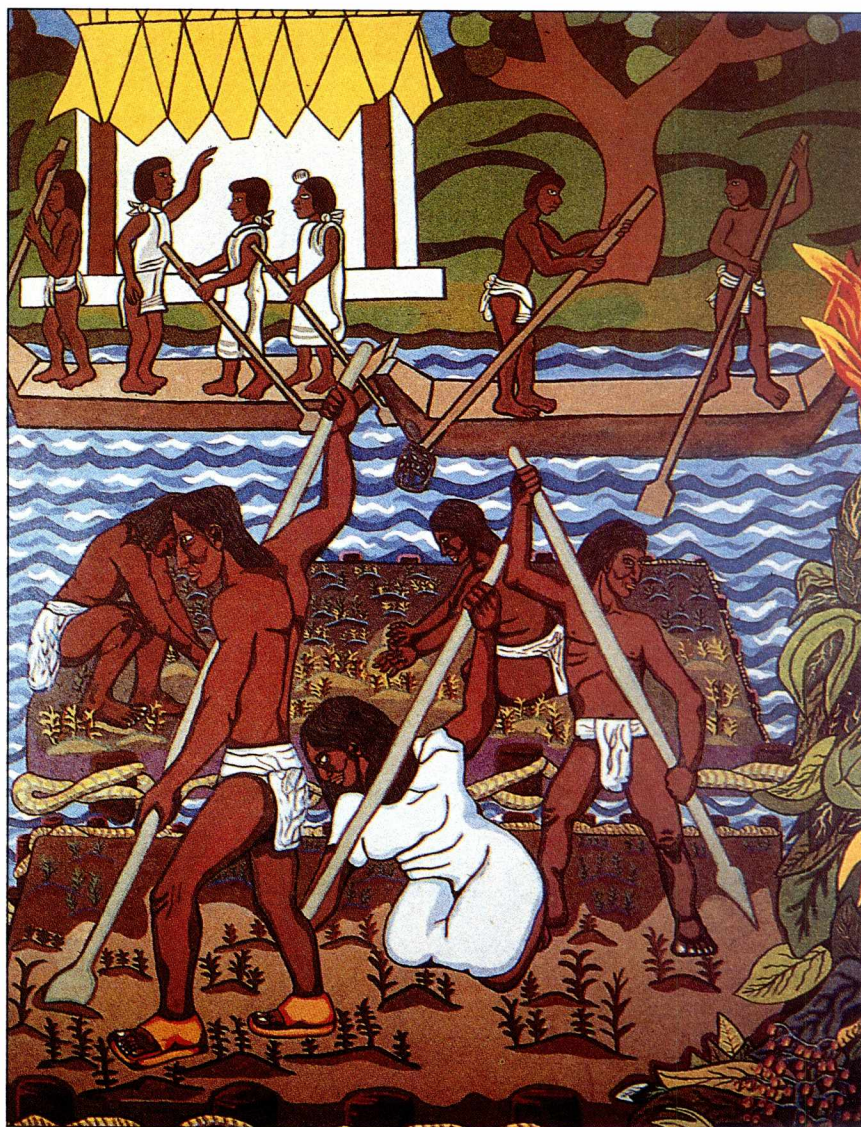
But as the park celebrated its one-year anniversary on June 5, 1994, questions concerning Xochimilco’s ecological and socio-economic sustainability in the face of continuous urban assaults proliferate like lily pads on canal waters.

Erwin Stephan-Otto, Director of the Xochimilco Ecological Park, wears the harried, tired look of a father raising a needy year-old infant. And, running the 465-acre park with no telephone or fax service at its HQ

on the busy Periférico Sur avenue doesn’t help much. Still, Stephan-Otto is pleased with the park’s progress and sees it as a symbol of Xochimilco’s rebirth.

“With very little publicity, half a million people have visited the park during our first year,” says Stephan-Otto, who expects the number to climb to 800,000 next year. “More people are beginning to realize the miracle we’ve achieved here —a balance between nature and modern civilization, which had been lost.”

Miracle or not, everyone agrees that after years when its health was neglected and its resources abused, Xochimilco was a mess. Juan Gil Elizondo, Xochimilco’s representative in the DF municipal government, says



Arnold Belkin, Nelhuayotl Xochitl (mural detail).



Flowers and vegetables are grown using the chinampa ("floating garden") system.

only three to four thousand people a week visited Xochimilco during the dark years of the late 1980s. Thanks to dark, polluted waters, terrible odors due to clogged drainage and encroaching urban development, Xochimilco's once-flourishing community was in danger of following the path to obsolescence of many preceding indigenous empires.

According to Francisco Villalpando, a professor specializing in the art and culture of Xochimilco, its decline began in the early 1950s, and continued for nearly 40 years during a period of industrial development and explosive population growth in Mexico City. The government's policy of taking clean water from Xochimilco's canals and underground aquifers, in order to meet the city's growing demands, devastated its environment. Even today, Xochimilco and other *delegaciones* (sub-municipalities) in the south of the DF, such as Tlalpan, supply 60 percent of Mexico City's drinking water.

Stephan-Otto claims the extraction of clean water from Xochimilco was only part of the problem. He says the urbanization of Tlalpan and other southern areas

sullied water flowing from nearby mountain streams into such Xochimilco rivers as the San Buenaventura. Urban sprawl was polluting clean water even before it could be piped out. And internal forces such as collapsing ground—surface levels had sunk 14 meters by 1990—exacerbated the problem, causing flooding and a breakdown of the drainage system.

Finally, during his 1988 election campaign, Carlos Salinas de Gortari promised quick action to cure Xochimilco's ills. In November 1989, less than a year after his inauguration as president, he approved the Xochimilco Environmental Restoration Project, as part of his 1991-1994 National Development Plan. Like the United States twenty years earlier, Mexico's economic development had come full circle, in an attempt to protect the resources that modern society requires.

Stephan-Otto notes that Mexico has had environmental protection laws on the books since the early 1970s, the same period that nations such as the U.S. enacted similar laws. "In Mexico, however, you must distinguish between a legal right to certain

protections and the obligation (which we lack) to carry out those laws. For twenty years environmental protection was a right, but only on paper," he notes. "Moreover, you have to see the context, that most countries with environmental laws have fully developed economies. We don't."

The tide began to turn in the mid-80s, when Mexico City received international notoriety for its out-of-control smog and population growth. Salinas, who was recently named International Ecologist of the Year by the U.S.-based National Wildlife Federation, has continued to stress the importance of environmental aspects of growth and development.

He hasn't had much choice, considering that 99 percent of lakes and 75 percent of forests in the Valley of Mexico have already disappeared.

But it is Xochimilco that forms the centerpiece of Mexico's embryonic environmentally sensitive attitude—an outlook which seeks to balance the needs of a massive urban populace with preservation of fertile, productive lands. In Xochimilco's case it was more like an emergency room rescue, with three years of major surgery for the patient.

The slow road to recovery began in 1991 when the 2,000-acre restoration project—which now includes a sports/recreation complex, a nursery and a livestock farm—got underway. Work was divided into four areas: hydrological/drainage, agricultural, archeological and historical.

The hydrological work was the most critical, since Xochimilco's polluted waters were the root of the problem. Stephan-Otto says that although the canals were always richly muddied with nutrients, not crystal-clear as some claim, contamination had reached extremely hazardous levels.

Hydraulic improvement centered on construction of approximately 125,000 feet of drainage canals to



Typical flat-bottomed boat, when they still were decorated with flowers, used to carry visitors.

keep residual water from mixing with fresh. The used water is treated at an experimental, third-stage treatment plant, then three new pumping stations send it back into the canals and springs. In addition, the capacity of the two existing treatment plants was enhanced by 560 gallons per second.

The hydraulic work also included construction of three small lakes, increasing storage capacity by 40 percent and thereby helping control flooding in one of the rainiest parts of Mexico City. Xochimilco's major canals were also cleaned out, and a regular maintenance program put in place.

Equally important to the restoration project has been the DF government's agreement to decrease the amount of fresh water it extracts and to protect the *chinampas* (man-made islands) from urban development. The result, along with the hydraulic work, has been an increase in agricultural production and the reclamation of over 3,000 acres of *chinampas*.

Sixty percent of the canals in the *chinampa* zone have been cleaned

out, allowing the basic, man-powered boats that transport residents, farmers and their harvests to navigate the waters. Some zones are unofficial wildlife refuges, off-limits to tourist boats in order to protect the hundreds of bird and animal species that are returning to Xochimilco.

Once a huge but shallow lake, second in surface area only to Texcoco, Xochimilco is defined by the maze of canals that were formed by the construction of *chinampas*. These three-foot-deep, square plots of land, first built by the Nahuas, created the concept of the lake-city for which Xochimilco is famous. Over centuries, the *chinampas* became a flori/horticultural heaven, an important supplier of Mexico's flowers and vegetables, as well as a unique cultural and social attraction.

Isaías Roldán's family was the last of many generations to farm a *chinampa* plot in the *ejido* (communal farm) that has given way to the modern Ecological Park. They now run a juice stand in the new art and flower market opposite the park and

across the Periférico avenue. The 2,400-stall market was built to provide job opportunities for some of the 2,800 *ejidatarios* (*ejido* members) like Roldán, whose farm plots were expropriated by the restoration project.

But 13 months after opening, most of the market stalls remain unoccupied, while merchants there are suffering from a dearth of customers. Many, including Roldán, blame low sales on a lack of publicity and information. "We're affected more, because a lot of merchants also have spaces at Nativitas [Xochimilco's main market], so if they don't sell here, they sell there. We don't have that luxury."

Patricia López is one of those merchants who run shops in both markets. She says a lack of customers at the new market has made her reduce flower prices by 3 to 5 pesos each. She adds that because of poor publicity—there are not even billboards or street signs to identify the market—few shoppers are taking advantage of the cheaper prices.

As for the 2,800 *ejido* members whose 2,000 acres were taken,

Stephan-Otto says all were compensated fairly. In addition to payment for their plots and compensation for being uprooted, many, like Roldán, were offered spaces in the new market or jobs at the park, which currently employs 220 former *ejidatarios*. Total monetary compensation paid to each displaced farmer was 16,660 dollars, coming to 18 percent of the project's overall cost.

Stephan-Otto claims it was this "detail" which kept the private sector from investing in the costly restoration project. Public/private partnerships in infrastructure projects have become a trademark of Salinas' modernization

policies. But the importance of fiscal responsibility has influenced the park's development and operation.

Remarkably, in its first year of existence, the ecological park has achieved 100 percent economic self-sufficiency, according to Stephan-Otto. It receives no government subsidies, relying solely on concessions, facility rentals and park admissions to meet its operating budget.

As head of the Ecological Park Foundation, Stephan-Otto is also actively seeking donations and grants for badly needed capital improvements. The flat, windy landscape that flanks the park's two lakes is mostly barren,

even though more than a million trees and flowering plants were planted during construction. He points out that better soil, stronger tree specimens, new attractions and exhibits and more publicity are necessary for the park to succeed as a research and tourist center.

The Xochimilco project's director admits that the ecological park, and the work of restoration as a whole, need plenty of nourishment and attention if the area is to fully recover its grandeur and greatness. Still, he is happy that the project—like a child learning to walk—is moving one step at a time ❧

*Colin Jones.*



*Beautiful view of one of the canals, bordered by ahuejotes, a common Xochimilco tree.*

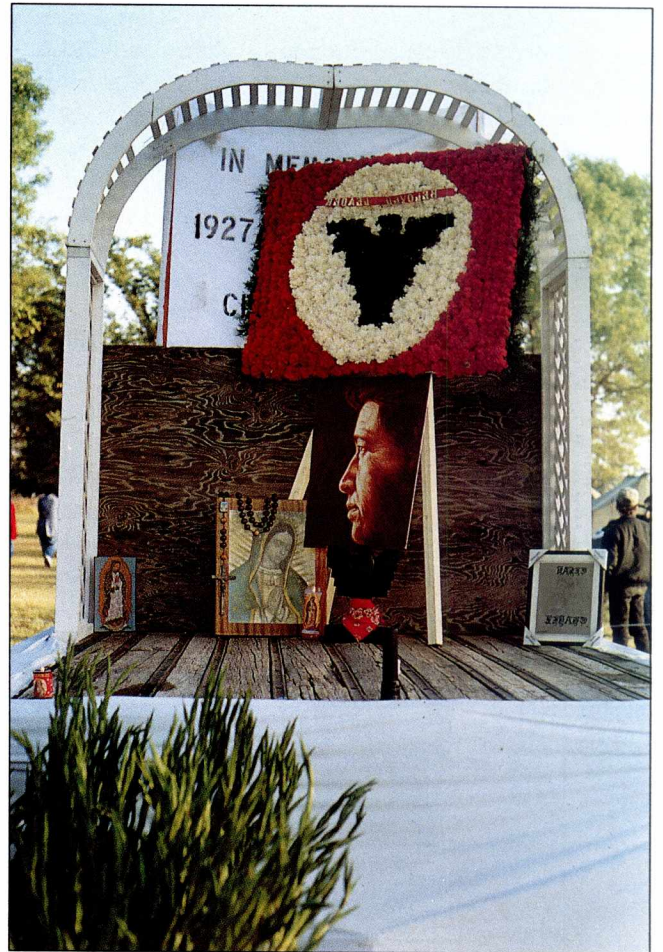
# The Chicano experience

Votive installation after the death of migrant farmworkers' leader Cesar Chavez. The *altar de muertos* is a recurrent motif in both Mexican and Chicano folklore. Here objects and images believed to be needed by the soul in the afterlife are arranged ceremonially together with flower offerings and pictures of the deceased.

Chicano filmmaking is strongly represented by Teatro Campesino director Luis Valdez, known for his movies *Zoot Suit* and *La Bamba* and shown here wearing a red windbreaker while overseeing the filming of Cesar Chavez's funeral march.

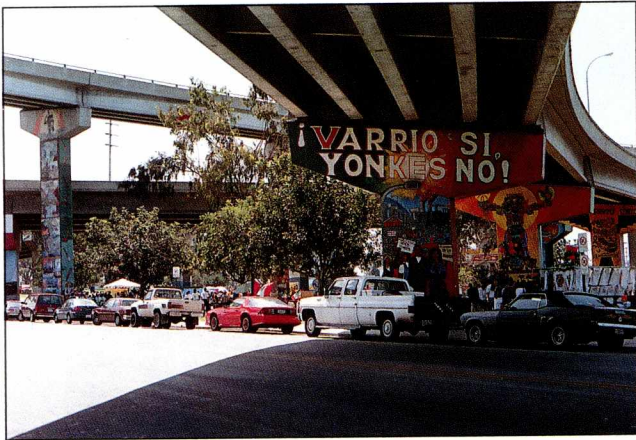
Migrant workers from Mexico find support and representation under the banners of the United Farm Workers union. In a bitter struggle that continues to this day, agricultural workers demand better pay and safe working conditions.

The ceremonies of pre-Columbian America are reenacted, in an effort to strengthen an identity felt to be weakened after migration to the U.S. Here a *conchero* in full regalia blows his conch shell in morning worship of the rising sun.





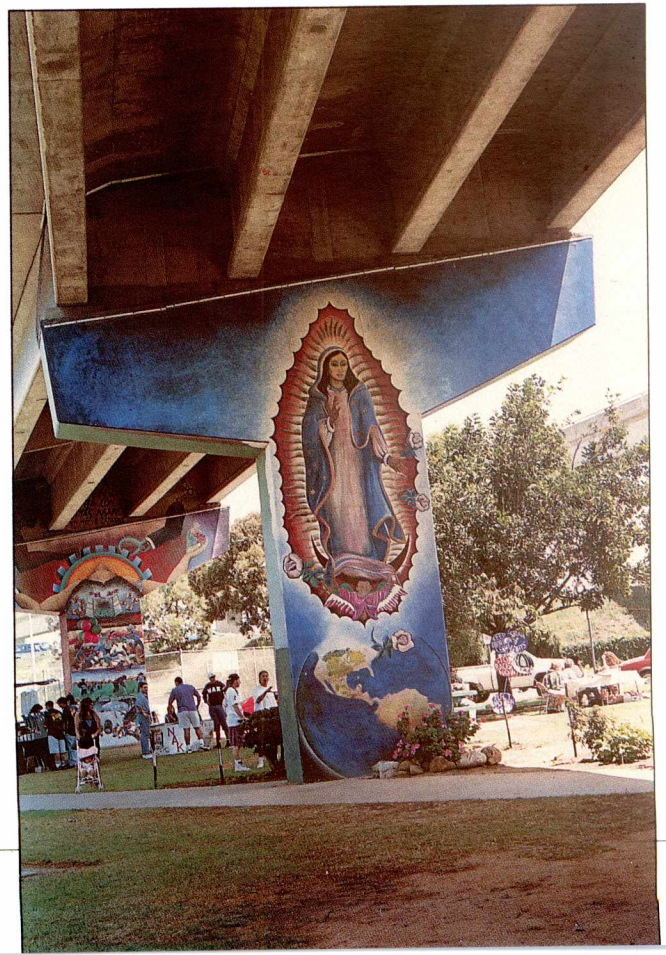
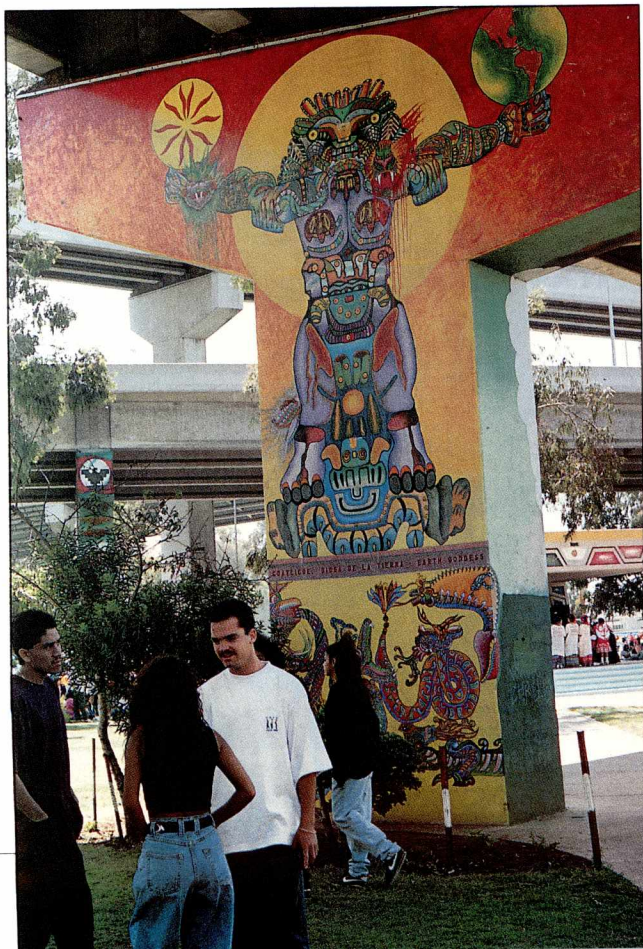
# A Chicano park



Barrio Logan is an ethnic stronghold in San Diego, one of California's most beautiful cities. Its Mexican community reclaimed unused land under the ultra-modern Coronado Bridge, in order to build a monument to an ancient culture. The project was endangered for a time by the city's plans to build a police station on the site, in an attempt to curb violence and gang wars. Mexican Americans fought the plan, winning a haven where, under the shade of trees and ornamented concrete structures, one can admire artists' skill while enjoying a peaceful Sunday at the Chicano Park ✕

*Blanca Muñoz.*

*Photographs were taken in conjunction with Antonio Juárez.*





**"CASTE" PAINTINGS ARE A VERY VALUABLE**

**PORTRAYAL OF MEXICAN SOCIAL LIFE**

**DURING THE 18TH CENTURY.**

**THE SPLENDOR OF MEXICO IS THE RESULT**

**OF THIS COMBINATION OF CULTURES.**

From Spaniard and Indian, Mestizo or Cholo ♦ From Spaniard and Mestizo, Castizo or Quadroon ♦ From Castizo and Spanish woman, Creole Spaniard ♦ From Black and Spanish woman, Mulatto ♦ From Mulatto and Spanish woman, Morisco ♦ From Morisco and Spanish woman, Albina ♦ From Spaniard and Albino woman, Black Torna-atrás ♦ From Torna-atrás and Indian woman, Lobo or Zambo ♦ From Indian and Lobo woman, Chino ♦ From Chino and Indian woman, Zambaiga ♦ From Chino and Zambaigo woman, Cambujo ♦ From Chino and Cambujo woman, Genízara ♦ From Chino and Genízaro woman, Albarazado ♦ From Albarazado and Black woman, Calpamula ♦ From Albarazado and Calpamula, Jíbaro ♦ From Jíbaro and Albarazada, Tente en el aire ♦ Mecos, whose numerous castes are all alike

# Nativism as a diplomatic problem: Proposition 187

Barbara A. Driscoll\*

**T**he results of the vote on Proposition 187 in California were announced about a week ago and to the surprise of many, the measure was strongly approved by the California electorate. As just about everybody must know, this infamous referendum,

now state law, is allegedly intended as a strategy to limit the state's financial responsibility toward undocumented immigrants and their families.

Of course, the debate inside California and throughout the United States, as well as Mexico, that the Proposition generated about undocumented immigrants and their role in society, went far beyond the parameters laid out in the proposition itself. Indeed, few observers would deny that

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Herón Alemán / Imagenlatina.

*Is this really the way to "save" California?*

“We hope SOS doesn't bring us  
back to the wild, wild west”

### The Editors.

the public discussion about Prop 187 and undocumented immigrants assumed a life of its own, spurring a generalized and polarized debate about immigration itself. If the Save Our State movement intended to do just that, the result was a disagreeable and unnecessary division of public opinion about the role of immigrants.

But that was probably the purpose behind the Proposition. Governor Pete Wilson and other prominent supporters admitted on more than one occasion that even in the best of circumstances most of the measures included in Prop 187 would be difficult to enforce, and would probably be found unconstitutional by state and federal courts.<sup>1</sup>

The clause that would deny public education to children of undocumented immigrants has already been covered by a 1982 Supreme Court decision based on a case emanating from Texas. Moreover, restricting the access of undocumented immigrants to public health facilities would not affect emergency room services, and might create public health problems by denying preventive medicine to many individuals who routinely work with food.

Further, teachers and some medical personnel have already indicated that they will refuse to collaborate in enforcing the law. Indeed, even a cursory analysis of the proposition reflects a poorly-designed strategy to deal with undocumented immigration, based on faulty reasoning and misrepresented information.<sup>2</sup> In fact, as these lines are being written, Prop 187 has been placed on hold by temporary restraining orders issued by state and federal courts, whose ultimate decisions we can only surmise. But, if the principle proponents of Prop 187 knew that the referendum would probably not survive the courts, we can only conclude that Wilson and his supporters intended something other than prompt enforcement of the law in California. At the very least, they must have anticipated that the referendum would

<sup>1</sup> Editorial, *New York Times*, October 25, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> See the article by Cardinal Roger Mahony, archbishop of Los Angeles, published in the *Los Angeles Times* (October 25, 1994) regarding the deleterious effects of the law on the children of California.

spark an emotional and complicated dialogue within the state and probably outside.

Although Prop 187 seems to many Latinos and liberals to be an outrage, it is entirely consistent with California politics. While many still think of California as a golden land of opportunity, and in many ways it is, ironically the state has a long history of ambivalent treatment toward the very immigrants that helped create its wealth.

In the late nineteenth century, the infamous xenophobic campaign in California against Chinese immigrants led to outright national exclusion of immigration from China.<sup>3</sup> About fifty years later, forced repatriations of Mexican immigrants from some parts of the United States during the early days of the Depression originated in the Los Angeles area.<sup>4</sup>

In this sense, Proposition 187 is not an aberration in the state's history, but merely a more inflammatory expression of latent nativism toward a growing and increasingly heterogeneous undocumented immigrant population. Wilson and the authors of Proposition 187 were surely aware of the theme of nativism in California politics, and framed the initiative within parameters that would be consistent with it.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, although ostensibly California Republicans tried to use the measure to force the federal government to assume the financial responsibility for implications of national immigration policy (namely, undocumented immigration), the result seems to be an attempt by the state of California to direct its own immigration policy.

“Mexican workers have  
contributed to the richness of  
California's economy”

### The Editors.

<sup>3</sup> Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> See Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican-Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressure, 1929-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974) for a well-documented treatment of repatriations in Los Angeles.

<sup>5</sup> See Tyler Anbinder *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) for an analysis of the historical impact of immigration on domestic American politics.

It was not, for example, until Governor Wilson really developed his critique of undocumented immigrants and until the approval of Prop 187 seemed a real possibility that the Clinton administration was forced to take more dramatic steps to control extralegal immigration at the Mexican border. These measures, most notably Operation Guardian, seemed to legitimate the claims of the Wilson campaign that undocumented immigration from Mexico was harmful to the state.

We shouldn't forget, though, that President Clinton has tried to address the myriad of challenges presented by undocumented immigration nationally. However, his approach was far less inflammatory. A special commission, presided over by ex-Congresswoman

“Hasn't the United States  
always been a melting pot?”

### The Editors.

Barbara Jordan of Texas, was charged to study the phenomenon of undocumented immigration and develop recommendations; the commission's final report was delivered at the end of September of 1994.<sup>6</sup> While the recommendations are strong and do not meet with everyone's approval, they do represent a more politically accepted strategy to address the problem.

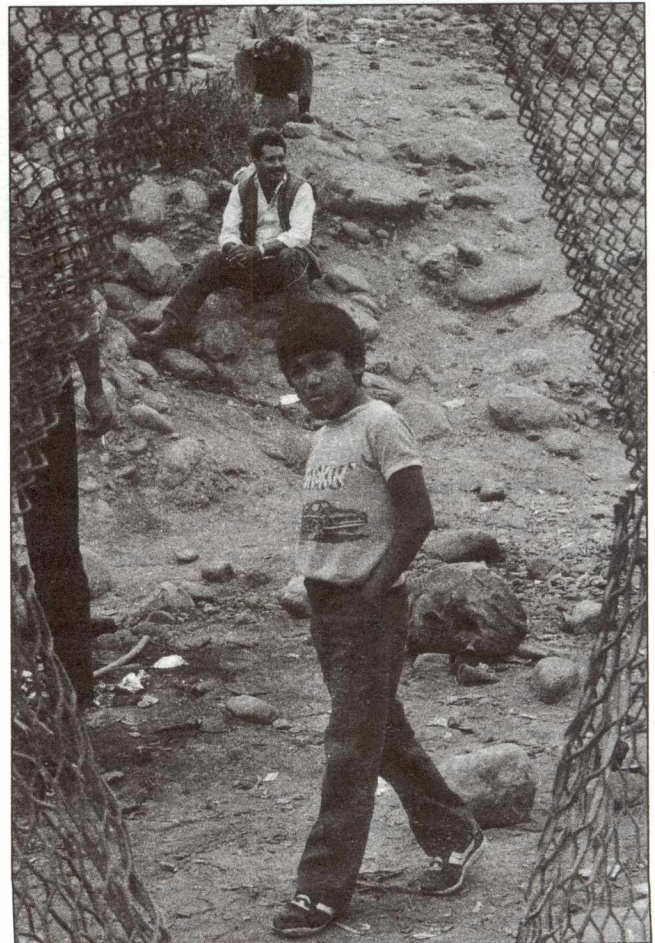
It follows that we must not consider Proposition 187 in too isolated a fashion. In spite of the fact that Wilson and other supporters have protested that Proposition 187 is strictly a state concern, its implications clearly reach beyond California. Therein lies part of the danger it poses; the overt political goal was to communicate to the federal government that the state government felt besieged by national immigration policy, but a deliberate secondary effect was to spawn an emotional and potentially destructive debate about the role of immigration.

Moreover, the fact that immigrants are the primary concern of the Proposition *ipso facto* thrusts it into the international arena. Harold Ezell, an ex-director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and one of Prop 187's authors, publicly declared that it was a strictly

internal state matter and that the Mexican government had no business expressing its opinion.<sup>7</sup>

While it is true that many nationalities are represented in California's undocumented immigrant population, especially Asians, their respective governments are so distant as to limit their ability to react. However, the proximity of Mexico, together with the intense and intertwined relationship of the two countries' border regions, as well as the recently signed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), thrust Save Our State, Proposition 187 and the attendant debate literally into

<sup>7</sup> Carlos Elizondo Mayer-Serra argued (Reforma, October 28, 1994) that the Mexican government did, indeed, have the right to publicly criticize Prop 187, not only due to the diplomatic reasons mentioned above, but also within a broad conceptualization of national sovereignty. That is, Mexican immigrants living in California, regardless of their legal status, fall within a political definition of national sovereignty. Although obviously too complicated an issue to discuss here, such a concept must be mentioned.



Heron Alemán / Imagenlatina.

Restricting health facilities might create public health problems.

<sup>6</sup> New York Times, October 1, 1994.

## The image of Mexicans in the USA

In November, UNAM's Center for Research on North America (CISAN) sponsored the lecture "Proposition 187 in the State of California," given by Raúl Izaguirre, Director of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR).

NCLR has carried out studies on changes in the image of Mexicans presented over the last fifty years, which led to the conclusion that the communications media has significantly contributed to the worsening of this image.

According to the council's data, in the 1950s the presence of Latinos presented in an agreeable way was 3 percent (in contrast to 1 percent for blacks, who made up a larger segment of the population than Latinos). In the 90s, blacks' presence rose to 17 percent while that of Latinos—generally presented as criminals and unsuccessful people—fell to 1 percent.

Izaguirre notes that what has occurred is that blacks' voice and demands have been louder and more forceful. "Rejection of blacks has been principally on the basis of skin color, whereas with Mexicans the differences have to do with skin color, culture and language. Among minorities, Mexicans are almost at the top of the list in terms of bad image."

A survey of Anglo-Saxon Americans showed that, when asked reasons for non-acceptance of Latinos, and Mexicans in particular, the most common answer was that they are "lazy and un-American." Nevertheless, a number of studies have demonstrated that among minority groups, Mexicans often work the longest hours and avoid committing acts of rebellion against the government. Many Mexican immigrants feel the U.S. has provided them with a higher standard of living than they could have obtained in their own country.

Mónica Ching  
Assistant Editor.

Mexico's political face. Mexican society and government could not simply ignore a movement and political strategy so obviously designed to hamper the lives of Mexican immigrants living in California.

Most importantly, under universally accepted international law, the Mexican government has the right, indeed the obligation, to extend consular protection to all its citizens living outside the country regardless of their legal status.<sup>8</sup> Since Proposition 187 would greatly complicate the lives and status of all Mexican immigrants living in California, the consuls would automatically become involved. While the national policy of the Mexican government in the past has been less than assertive regarding undocumented immigration, the responsibility of the local consuls is well defined, and remains that of extending diplomatic protection to Mexican nationals.

<sup>8</sup> See Remedios Gómez Arnau, *México y la protección de sus nacionales en los Estados Unidos* (Mexico City: CISEUA, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1990).

“Arnold Schwarzenegger strikes again, now supporting SOS. Has he forgotten he's an immigrant himself?”

The Editors.

While many have criticized the performance of the Mexican consuls in California, perhaps justifiably, we must recognize that the conditions surrounding Proposition 187 present an unusual challenge for local foreign relations officials. Not only have they had to confront the stringent requirements of Prop 187, but they have also had to confront a wave of prejudice, and even racism, generated by the referendum which transcends the usual diplomatic boundaries.

At first, President Carlos Salinas, some high officials of the Foreign Relations Ministry and others tried to argue in Mexico and in the United States that Proposition 187 was a direct violation of human rights.<sup>9</sup> While a valid argument and, from a Mexican perspective, a compelling one, such a posture about the human rights implications of an allegedly domestic measure in the United States did not, and would never find acceptance among the American public. Some would even interpret such a criticism as intervention in internal U.S. affairs.

Then, while some in the Mexican government continued to advocate an argument about human rights violation, others modified their stand to frame the implications of Proposition 187 within a context of the intensifying commercial relationship spawned by NAFTA. Some editorials began to point out that the discrimination against individuals of Mexican origin that would inevitably result from implementation of the proposition was entirely inconsistent with the spirit of NAFTA.

The debate in Mexico then took root at the border, and developed into the organization of boycotts, aimed essentially at stopping Mexican shoppers from going to the United States. Based on the premise that U.S. merchants would have to be shown the extent of their interdependence with Mexico, the boycotts in California and Texas demonstrated binational solidarity and a high level of interest in Mexico.<sup>10</sup> Although not entirely successful, *Operación Dignidad* nonetheless served as a demonstration that at least some sectors of Mexican society were concerned about the plight of Mexican immigrants in California.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, during the two weeks prior to the elections, all sectors of the Mexican media became obsessed with Proposition 187 and information about it was issued every day. Editorials appeared in all the major newspapers, many by individuals not particularly knowledgeable about the United States or its political system. Somehow this nativistic movement in California sparked an interest

among the Mexican public about the United States, heretofore unparalleled, with the possible exception of NAFTA. Proposition 187 has also generated a discussion in Mexico about the possibility of allowing double citizenship for Mexican immigrants living in the United States. Under present regulations, Mexicans automatically lose their citizenship if they seek that for another country. But permitting those eligible to seek United States citizenship to do so without losing their Mexican citizenship would enable them to participate in U.S. politics by voting.

Moreover, in the context of an analysis of Proposition 187 and Save Our State, we should mention the binational study approved earlier in 1994 by the U.S. State Department and Mexico's Foreign Relations Ministry. This is the first

*“ Save our state? Not quite! Just take a look at countries where inequality—which promises to be the No. 1 result of Prop 187—prevails. A low educational level means marginalizing part of the population, which materially and spiritually impoverished the people ”*

### The Editors.

official binational study of immigration ever undertaken, and comes at a critical juncture in the political debate about immigration in the United States. Although the final results will not be released for some time, we can expect that binational cooperation aimed at a comprehensive understanding of undocumented immigration could produce a paradigm useful in bilateral talks.

The potential of the binational study on undocumented immigration contrasts with the dangerous precedent established by Proposition 187. Instead of examining the consequences of undocumented immigration in an open and unbiased manner, the assumptions behind the proposition inevitably led to a mean-spirited political debate, which is already resulting in incidents of discrimination against persons “suspected” of being undocumented.

Because the constitutionality of the initiative is not well defined, and the courts have not yet had time to examine it, ambiguity is leaving the way open for some to enforce the new state law as they see fit. Of course, individuals perceived as being undocumented Mexicans are suffering the consequences. Is this really the way to “save” California? ❧

<sup>9</sup> An article in *La Jornada* (October 28, 1994) discusses the insistence of the Catholic Church in Mexico that undocumented immigrants be treated justly.

<sup>10</sup> *La Jornada*, October 28, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> *El Financiero*, October 28, 1994.

# What's the difference?

*L.F. Valero\**

It happened at the end of the harvest season. The season that seemed to go on forever, with 4 a.m. wakenings by Mom, the groggy and hurried tortilla-making and packing of lunches for the whole family, then gulping down breakfast. The family of six would pile into Pop's old truck, three kids in the back, Mom and Pop and the baby up front.

Adela dreaded these rides to work because it was always foggy and cold in the valley. But even though she dreamt of being able to sleep in like some kids she knew, she thought to herself that the stars and silent purple-black sky were so beautiful. Adela was twelve and the oldest. Riding along in the back of the Ford with her brother and sister, she would huddle with them close to the cab, trying to keep away from the cold rushing wind. Most of the time they would lie on the floor, under an old blanket, three little bodies scrunched together trying to get warm.

She didn't know which she hated more—the bitter morning cold or working beneath the fruit trees before sunrise. It was so dark they used the truck's headlights to work by, while hundreds of mosquitoes attacked them. (Not all romantic like those pictures she saw later about working in the countryside.)

Those days seemed never-ending. Maybe it was only a nightmare—day after day went by painfully melting

into one long purple torture. She thought purple was the color that belonged to this season, purple sky in the morning that brightened to a clear amethyst, changing finally to blue. Then the color of the fruit itself, purple so deep it was nearly black, unripe fruit with greenish tinges of purple, and all of the shades in between: yellow-pink, pink-red, red-purple. These colors weren't in the boxes of crayons she had seen, not even the one with sixty-four colors. But Adela promised herself that anyway she would make a painting of the fruit in the fields one day.

Picking plums hurt. Stooping and kneeling for hours on the rocky dirt clods, picking up the fruit, bruising and cutting knees and hands despite the home-made kneepads and cheap cotton gloves. Salty streams of sweat

burning your eyes, while your mouth and throat went dry from the dust and the heat after the sun came out.

They worked all day in the orchards. On most days the temperature would reach over 100 degrees. Arms and backs aching from lugging the five-gallon cans of plums down the long rows to empty into huge wooden bins, Adela's family worked until they had filled many of the huge boxes. Near the end of every day, she would pick even faster, trying to reach that last bin, only to be confronted by yet another empty one. How many were filled that long summer?

The pickers didn't even have a place to go to the bathroom, and this humiliated all the people who worked in the fields. They'd asked the boss for a portable toilet, but he said they just had to go relieve



*Everyone knew they wouldn't be back for the next harvest.*

\* Chicana writer and former farmworker from Northern California.



themselves in the field. One time she saw the owner of the orchard sitting in his shiny new white truck watching her through binoculars as she peed behind a tree. Her gut filled with embarrassment and bile. Plus she was having her period and that was hard enough to get used to; so was having bad cramps while working so hard. What she didn't need was that creepy boss watching. But she already knew better than to complain: it would just bring trouble to her family.

Was it only a few weeks ago that the girl in the neighboring row was killed? Adela saw it happen and wished it were nothing but a sad and scary dream, but it was real, a girl about her age lay on the ground. The forklift driver had accidentally dropped a full bin of plums on top of her as she knelt working. Adela thought she looked like a plum that had been stepped on, bruised and still, with a little trickle of blood that came out of her mouth. The driver said he was hurrying and didn't see her working there, then he ran away and never came back. The boss said he was real sorry, but on account of the family being illegal, there wasn't much he could do —after all they didn't want to get deported, did they?

On the last day of the harvest, after paychecks had been cashed and the grocery store bill was settled, there was a party down by the river where the labor camp was. All the grown-ups had beer. A few of the men even had their guns stashed in their waistbands. The kids had ice cream and water pistols. Even though it was a party, there was a feeling of disappointment and anger. If you could see that feeling, Adela thought, it would be a long snake, slithering around ankles, wrapping itself around you and squeezing until

you couldn't breathe, just squeezing all the life out of you; it wasn't much use fighting it.

Each year it was the same, so much work for so little money. Too many kids to feed and clothe, and always new ones on the way. People exchanged bitter stories of being cheated by the boss and how the boss's wife sold cold sodas at three times their real price, and the ledgers at the grocery stores which seemed to magically inflate the amount due every payday. Too much beer, disappointment and frustration sometimes led to bloody fights among some of the men.

Every year there was sadness for people you would probably not see again, like the family of the dead girl. On the day of the party they packed their belongings into their battered station wagon and drove away. Everyone knew they wouldn't be back for the next harvest.

That evening on the ride home, Pop was driving and singing some Mexican songs, when Mom interrupted him: "*Mira José!*" She pointed to the driveway of one of the local ranchers. It was a long tree-lined road with some little columns at the entrance gate. On top of the columns were statues of sleeping Mexicans wearing big sombreros. Pop pulled over to the side of the road.

There was no one around and he and Mom got out of the truck; they didn't say a word. They walked over to the statues with a crowbar and a hammer from under the seat of the Ford, and then they smashed the statues to bits. It only took a minute.

When they got home they explained to the children why they had smashed those statues. "They think they can get away with saying that Mexicans are lazy and no-good people who take siestas all the time."

The next day, the local police were asking all around about who broke the statues. All the ranchers' kids were talking about what happened; some said that it was probably troublemakers from that United Farm Workers union, that's what their folks said. Adela laughed inside knowing that they were scared of the union, even though she didn't know exactly what it was, but she knew it was supposed to protect the people working in the fields, like her family. The secret smiles on her friends' faces made her feel really proud of her parents.

A few weeks later, she and her family were visiting her aunt and uncle. They lived in a nice house in a bigger town, where her Tío Mateo worked as a garbageman. Adela hated these visits because she thought her uncle and aunt were stuck up.

Then she saw it. They had a new statue on their front lawn: a black man in a servant's uniform, holding a lantern. It was one of those "on the old plantation" kind of things.

She started to get a stomach ache, remembering the way her uncle talked bad about black people. She went to the truck, got the hammer and went and busted the statue into pieces. Little bits of it stuck in her hair. Her cousins started yelling at her when they saw the broken statue: "We're telling, ooh you're in big trouble now."

She couldn't figure it out. Because what happened was Mom and Pop got really mad at her and spanked her in front of all her cousins and told her to apologize. "I'm not sorry I broke that statue —what's the difference between that and the sleeping Mexicans?" she asked. All Pop said was "*Ay, pero m'hija* it's just different." She just couldn't figure it out. The stomach ache wouldn't go away for days **M**

# Brief balance-sheet of the Salinas years

**T**he six-year presidential term has come to an end. More criticism than recognition is to be heard. "Much has been done and much remains to be done," said President Salinas in his Sixth Report to the Nation.

The tragic year of 1994 brought an avalanche of crises, key among them the outbreak of war in Chiapas and the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, presidential candidate of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Chiapas was one of the first topics the president analyzed in his report: "The armed conflict which arose in the Chiapas jungle has singular features.... This is a geographically isolated area, with approximately 70 thousand inhabitants dispersed in small communities... neighboring a region where Central American guerrilla movements have operated for 35 years.... There are long-standing inequalities, the rule of local *caciques* [old-style rural bosses], old tensions which have incubated over the course of years, perhaps centuries, neglect, wrongs and mistreatment toward the Indians....

"Shortfalls, rigidities and fractures can be invoked as social causes of the conflict, but they are not sufficient to explain the movement.... Together with these factors there was the work of an armed and trained group, with local and outside leaders and a clear political project antagonistic to the institutional project.... Poverty in itself does not explain armed violence.

"It is important to note that this was the first armed rising to occur after the end of the Cold War.... Nevertheless, it was not devoid of clear international

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*On November 1<sup>st</sup>, President Carlos Salinas presented the sixth and final report of his government to the nation. More than an annual report, he drew a balance-sheet of his six-year term in which he put forward his own view of the Chiapas events.*

intentions. It was launched on the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) —which had sparked debates that captured world attention— went into effect. It occurred after the five hundredth anniversary of the encounter between two worlds, an event which, in the Old World, brought new interest in Indian issues. Lastly, it shielded itself behind the most popular and noble name associated with social struggles in Mexico: Zapatismo.

"Strikingly designed and with a publicity strategy that broadened its impact, the armed group sought to link itself rapidly with the mass media both inside and outside the country, as well as with urban social movements, particularly in the capital, where it initially met with a certain acceptance.

"The government's response had to be different —different from the way similar situations had been handled in other countries and different from the way they had been dealt with in Mexico in the past.

"First, in a period of a few days, the Mexican army defeated the attack on its installations, dispersed the contingents located in the main towns, forced the armed group [in his speech Salinas never used the term Zapatista Army of National Liberation] to retreat to the jungle, surrounded it and contained the danger. It is the constitutional obligation of the government to uphold internal public peace and ensure that it is respected.

"From that moment on, we decided not to opt for pursuing the group within jungle territory in order to annihilate it; this would have damaged the life of local communities and been incompatible with our values.

"Moreover, it would have meant giving in to the armed group's provocation, which sought widespread violence so this would bring discredit to our armed forces, rejection by society in the rest of the country, the international isolation of Mexico and a scenario of political tension which would jeopardize the federal elections."

Ending his comments on this issue with the promise that through the end of his term he would continue to seek peace with dignity for this area in Chiapas, he continued to address the topic of violence: the kidnappings of businessmen and the assassinations of Luis Donaldo Colosio and PRI Secretary General Francisco Ruiz Massieu.

As President Salinas defended his programs and actions over the course of two hours and forty-five minutes, his report was the object of the greatest number so far of queries and protests from legislators from the opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). As Sergio Sarmiento noted (*Reforma*, November 1), "It is relatively easy to criticize a government for not having resolved an age-old problem [poverty], but it is more difficult to understand what could have occurred if economic reforms had not been undertaken.... The country's economy would have gone bust in 1994, as it did in 1982."

During the Salinas years, the elimination of inflation meant relative economic and social stability, taking into account the fact that the economic crisis is international. The following is a synthesis of the successes and failures of Carlos Salinas de Gortari's administration.

### Main achievements

*Macroeconomics.* The groundwork was laid for future economic growth and social development:

- Inflation was defeated. In February 1988 the annual inflation rate reached a historic high of 180 percent, while in 1993 it had fallen to 8 percent, and the 1994 rate is not expected to exceed 7 percent.
- Low-income sectors were provided with basic infrastructure through the National Solidarity Program, which is based on the concept that the government provides the resources and the people provide the manpower.
- Public finances were straightened out. The debt—which currently stands at 17 percent of gross domestic product, in contrast with 50 percent in 1988—was renegotiated and the fiscal deficit eliminated. One of the most critical moments of his administration, Salinas said, occurred in 1990 when Mexico was on the point of suspending payments on the foreign debt.
- Economic statism was overcome. Sixty-seven percent of state-owned enterprises were privatized and key infrastructural projects were carried out through private concessionaires.
- Progress was made in deregulating the economy. New financial intermediaries were created and foreign banks were authorized to operate in Mexico.
- Exports were diversified. The transition was made from an economy that depended on petroleum resources to the push for diversified, competitive private industry.
- Foreign investment increased. Between 1989 and July 1994 it rose to almost 50 billion dollars.

*Globalization.* Mexican society became more mature in its attitude to other countries, developing a more positive and competitive outlook. This led to Mexico joining the international economic system and participating in key

international forums, such as OECD. The North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect, and similar treaties were signed with Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Bolivia.

*Church-state relations.* "Juridical personality" was granted to 4,500 churches and religious associations, at the same time as the secular character of education was maintained. Diplomatic relations were established with the Vatican.

*Democracy.* Opposition victories were recognized in several state elections. For the first time, a debate was held between the candidates for the presidency.

*Dialogue with the guerrilla movement.* Instead of prolonging the Chiapas conflict, a ceasefire was unilaterally declared ten days after the outbreak of the rebellion, leading to an early dialogue. This set an important precedent internationally.

### Key unresolved problems...

*Poverty and the marginalization of Indians and peasants.* Our millionaires are multiplying, but so is the number of poor people. The Indian population remains in a state of neglect and oppression. The stated objective of economic growth remained unfulfilled, as did the job creation required to prevent the emigration of "braceros."

*Corruption and impunity.* One of society's main grievances has to do with the alarming lack of public security. Mexico has some of the most advanced laws in the world, but those who break them, especially powerful people, often go unpunished or receive only a slap on the wrist. Still unresolved are the murders of Cardinal Posadas, Colosio and Ruiz Massieu. During Salinas' six-year term almost 300 members of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) were also assassinated, and kidnapping mushroomed into a profitable enterprise.

*Presidentialism.* Much remains to be done in order to achieve the indispensable balance between the executive, legislative and judicial branches, for federalism and municipal autonomy to be respected and the country's political life democratized. While he was still a candidate, President Ernesto Zedillo committed himself to these goals.

*Electoral reform.* Still pending are separation between the PRI and the government, measures to ensure more equitable competition between political parties, and granting Mexico City's inhabitants the right to elect their own governor.

*Education and the environment.* These issues are crucial for achieving Mexico's growth expectations. An ignorant people lives in the shadows and a people without resources finds itself buried alive ❧

Marybel Toro Gayol  
Managing Editor.

# Mexico's savings problem

Declan Hayes\*

**A**lmost \$45 billion in funds left Mexico during the 1980s—a colossal amount, almost all of which has yet to be repatriated. Recent political uncertainty has caused this financial hemorrhage to accelerate. If president-elect Ernesto Zedillo is to build on the successes of his predecessor, he must give high priority to addressing the Mexican savings problem.

Each sector of society must contribute to increasing net savings rates. For example, policies to allow Mexico's hard-pressed middle income groups to plan their life savings, both for their own benefit and for the greater benefit of Mexico, are sorely needed. In particular, educational and pension funding must be reformed—these are vital factors in the promotion of savings amongst comparable groups in other countries. The United States, traditionally regarded as a low-savings society, is an example. U.S. citizens are heavily invested in mortgaging their properties, educating their children and financing their own retirement. All of these microeconomic actions help make the U.S. the financial powerhouse that it is. All of these sectors are underdeveloped in Mexico—to the detriment of all Mexicans.

Pension funds, for example—since they require no intergenerational transfer of funds—are a key component of a nation's savings and are among the world's most important financial instruments. Preferential tax treatment has made them one of the best savings vehicles for companies and employees alike. Their long-term portfolio-planning horizons, resulting from their illiquidity and relatively low insolvency risk, make them vital in stabilizing a nation's capital markets—and stabilizing Mexico's financial markets is a key governmental objective.

Indeed, pension funds' hedging demands have led to a growth of new products on the international scene. The continuing growth (both in popularity and importance) of zero coupon bonds, collateralized mortgage obligations, guaranteed investment contracts and interest rate futures contracts is largely due to pension funds' involvement in capital markets. The popularity of the recently introduced Retirement Pension Scheme (*Sistema de Ahorro para el*

*Retiro, SAR*) has shown that Mexican workers are amenable to reforms in this important form of saving, demonstrating that they could also significantly deepen national Mexican markets as well.

Deepening Mexico's markets is vital if the savings problem is to be solved. Further, because it runs along one of the tectonic plate lines, virtually the entire western portion of Mexico is highly susceptible to earthquakes which occur with greater frequency and violence than in the (much better prepared) California earthquake belt of the U.S. This vulnerable region is also one of the fastest growing in Mexico, and the country's relatively low risk-management consciousness complicates normal insurance practice. New Mexican tariff rates, which will raise insurance premiums in high-risk areas by several hundred percent, went into effect in October 1993, and Mexico's underdeveloped markets

“Coffee policies provide an interesting and important example of Mexico's strategic short-sightedness; precious metals provide another”

disallow the option of effective reinsurance. In other words, a repeat of the 1985 earthquake could do untold harm to the government's economic policies—unless the net savings outflow is reversed.

Although—thanks in large part to NAFTA-induced U.S. competition—the general Mexican insurance industry is being rapidly modernized, it still has a long way to go. Though premium per capita is only \$44—compared to \$1,200 in the U.S. and \$1,800 in Canada, Mexican premiums are growing at 50 percent a year. So are legal settlements; thus there is a growing need for liability coverage which, again, is possible only with increased savings.

As the smoldering strife in Chiapas amply illustrates, Mexico's lower income groups must be given the opportunity to take part in the process of economic growth as a whole and the savings process in particular. The

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economic and savings benefits of giving them increased access to land, with improved property rights, secure tenancy rights and increased access to credit (by allowing the formal savings sector to absorb the informal sector) must be stressed to the incoming government.

The best-known example of integrating formal and informal financial sectors is the Grameen Bank project of Bangladesh, replicated in part by the Massachusetts-based "Acción International" group throughout Latin America and by the government-backed Solidarity program in Mexico. ADMIC, Acción International's Mexican affiliate, provides over 20 million pesos (equivalent to over 6 million dollars) in credit annually. It is funded by a letter of guarantee signed by Acción, which is backed by a U.S. dollar deposit in an American bank. ADMIC presents this letter of guarantee to Nacional Financiera (Nafin), the Mexican government-run development bank. Nafin, by extending a line of credit up to ten times the amount of guarantee to ADMIC, thereby acts as a "second-tier" bank for Acción.

Acción-ADMIC and similar groups, such as the *Fundación Los Emprendedores* and *Finca*—which also operate in Mexico—have somewhat different methodologies, each catering to a different niche in the micro-enterprise lending market. However, all three overcome the usual development aid pitfalls by insisting on proper incentives for loan repayment and charging market-based interest rates on their loans. All encourage their clients to save.

Larger institutions are now beginning to take notice and to lend their expertise to these projects. *Finca*, for example, now receives UN funding as well as practical help from the Agency for International Development, the Ford Foundation, Citibank and the Chase Manhattan Bank. By helping to merge the formal and informal financial sectors, all of these institutions can do much to solve Mexico's savings problem.

Proper financial planning can help the rural sector as well. Agriculture adds almost \$20 billion in value to the economy—more than in any country in the European Union, with the exception of France. Given that only 12 percent of Mexico's land is under cultivation, it is easy to see the possibilities for bringing more land into cultivation and increasing yield per acre. On the other hand, Venezuela's current economic quagmire illustrates the social cost of failure to implement the reforms necessary to give more people a long-term stake in the financial well-being of their country.

In other words, microeconomic reform must stress the importance of the life cycle in individuals' savings plans. Macroeconomic reform must complement the microeconomic, and it must be recognized that increased savings is dependent upon economic growth and the

distribution thereof. Macroeconomic reform must augment the objectives of a country's citizenry and institutions—financial institutions in particular.

Mexico's financial institutions must, like their competitors in the developed world, be given the legal latitude to effectively contribute to solving the nation's financial problems. To avail itself of the opportunities which both NAFTA and GATT present, Mexico must abandon the constricting mercantilist capitalism which it inherited from Spain and, like modern Spain, embrace—as far as is practicable—the new commercial paradigm which is evolving in today's post-Communist world.

In conjunction with the government, the nation's financial institutions must lead this change. As the countries bordering Germany did with the *Deutschmark*, Mexico must recognize that the U.S. dollar is going to remain the dominant coinage of the Americas for the foreseeable future, and act accordingly. Specifically, in order to satisfy the needs of both its domestic and overseas investors, the *Bolsa* (stock exchange) must— independently of Mexican monetary policy—be allowed to develop new products, denominated and settled in U.S. dollars. This will necessitate greater cooperation with U.S. counterparts and, as in so many other areas, will mean importing the expertise of the U.S. and other nations which have legitimate business interests in Mexico.

“High capital costs continue to deter Mexicans from saving and investing in their own country”

Other countries—not least of them the U.S. itself—have done well over time by importing required expertise. The Netherlands, sole partner of Germany in the hard-bloc core of the European Union, is an excellent example of a country which has used its economic and geographical links to a neighboring great power to telling effect for the good of all its citizenry, while retaining its cultural sovereignty. Indeed, because of its close links with Germany, the Netherlands has Europe's healthiest economy—in better shape even than that of Germany herself.

On the other hand, as the case of coffee exemplifies, Mexico has lost heavily from not integrating more fully with her neighbors, the U.S. in particular. Though coffee prices soared on the international markets this year, Mexico, the world's fourth largest coffee producer, did not benefit from these changes. Production has fallen to 5.3 million bags (a bag holds 132 pounds of coffee) and growers' incomes have fallen to a third of 1989 levels—a factor relevant in understanding the Chiapas fracas.





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# The book and universal culture

In the beginning, say the ancient scriptures, was the word, the verb. Man created alphabets. The alphabet has rooted the sound of the word in a symbol: the letter. Our alphabet comes from the Rome of 650 A.D. When the Columns of Hercules collapsed, signalling the end of the ancient world, the phrase *non plus ultra* (nothing over there) was used. Spain minted a coin called the *columnaria*, which pictured the two columns,

removed the negative and left *plus ultra* (beyond). Latin is that concrete.

When Columbus came to the Caribbean, the Spanish language was heard for the first time when Rodrigo de Triana yelled "*tierra*" and immediately absorbed the Caribbean word *canoa* (canoe). Syncretism began as the mixture of languages.

The classic Greek tragedies arrived in the New World, among them the works of Aeschylus. Prometheus stole

the fire of intelligence, the fire of immortality. "Why have you given fire to men, since they are beings for only a day?," the Oceanides asked Prometheus when he was chained to a rock. Prometheus answered: "Because of my love for them, I gave them numbers, eminent science and also 'the way of arranging letters'."

Thus, the birth of writing is described. The first part of this work refers to the theft of the gods' fire. In the second part Prometheus is chained because of the theft. The third part of the trilogy, *Prometheus Liberated*, is lost forever. This makes the tragedy more dramatic.

We study classical Greek thought in books such as Plato's dialogues and the works of Aristotle, which are part of our European cultural heritage. This is the great influence of





## Civilization and culture

What made Athens create our civilization? What led Athens to create art and literature, tragedy, philosophy, science and democracy in such a short period of time? The clash of cultures. This collision makes people realize that their behavior and customs are not "natural," that they are not the only ones possible, neither decreed by the gods nor inherent in human nature.

Before the works of Homer existed in written form there were books, but they were not popular and were not freely distributed on the market. What books existed were a great rarity and were not copied or commercially distributed. Instead they were kept in a sacred place under the care of priests.

Homer became not only the bible (*biblion*) of Athens but the first instrument of education, the first ABC, the first spelling book, the first novel. And it made the Athenians enlightened people.

Our civilization really is based on books: the sense of tradition and originality, seriousness and the sense of intellectual responsibility, the unprecedented power of the imagination and creativity, the concept of freedom and the characteristic urge to preserve it—all this is based on our love of books.

Karl Popper.

books through time. It is a voice that speaks to us as we read, bringing to life ancient voices; it is the greatest inheritance of mankind.

The European *plus ultra* is found in the great indigenous societies of America. The *Popol Vuh* tells the story of man's creation: when man did not exist, the world was cold, empty, quiet; it lived in silence. When the gods made man, words joined thought and were heard for the first time. What came first, according to this admirable book, was the word which was capable of expressing thought.

"Why did you give mortal men the knowledge of fire, immortality stolen from the gods?", the Oceanides asked Prometheus. "For the love of men; because they were wretched without knowing and listened without understanding, I gave them the light of intelligence." "How dare you, they being mortals?", the Oceanides persisted. Prometheus answered, "I took away their fear of death and implanted in their hearts blind hope."

This comes to us from distant centuries. Thanks to books we may hear Prometheus and Aristotle, learn about pure and impure forms of government, and hear Polybius, who united the pure forms in order to accomplish the balance of power.

Today we speak of human rights. One of the most important is the inviolability of the home. Let us see how this is formulated in the *fuero* (municipal charter) of Sobrarbe, Spain: "I am the king, when I am in my home."

Aragon had no hereditary monarchy; instead, the king was elected. The men would meet and proclaim: "We, who are worth as much as you and together more than you, make you king under the laws of Aragon." An indispensable balance to all government, this comes to us with the culture preserved in ancient texts.

In Mexico, on one of the sides of Xochicalco's truncated pyramid there is a glyphic description of an astronomers' convention held during the pre-Hispanic epoch. It was attended by Maya, Mixtecs, Zapotecs, Toltecs and tribes from the Gulf area.

When they met, they were concerned with about how to count the years. After studying the problem they made the necessary corrections to the calendar. In one of the reliefs, a hand holds back an incorrect date that had come forward too soon. The other hand is taking another date and placing it over the previous one, in order to obtain the correct date.

This occurred in the year 650, whereas the Gregorian correction

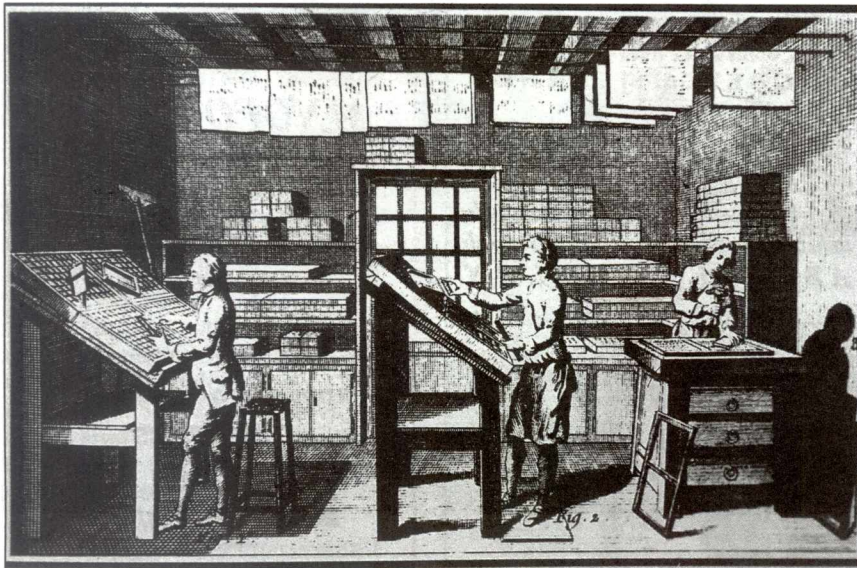
took place in Europe in 1582, more than nine centuries after the correction at Xochicalco.

Our ancestors also created the *nemoteni* days—non-existent days similar to our current leap years. The remarkable advancement of pre-Hispanic Mexico is clear.

The Maya came up with the concept of zero, an abstraction which is difficult to achieve; they also conceived of negative numbers. This goes together with other Mesoamerican accomplishments such as the architecture of Tenochtitlan, unique in its beauty, which the Spaniards viewed with astonishment.

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún translated the Náhuatl language using the Roman alphabet, in place of ideograms or hieroglyphics. He wrote the *Historia general de la Nueva España* (General History of New Spain) after listening to "informants," the old witnesses of the past, who related the life the indigenous peoples had before the Spaniards' arrival. Sahagún recorded these accounts in valuable texts.

Molina's *Vocabulario* is another fundamental text. Known erroneously as an "incunabulum" (a book printed from movable type before the 16th century), it was printed in 1575. (The true incunabula were printed in the 15th century, from Gutenberg until



*The culture has been preserved through ancient texts.*

1499.) From 1500 onward, each book indicated its birthplace: the place of its edition. The *Vocabulario* translated part of the Spanish language into Nahuatl and vice versa, becoming an indispensable tool for evangelization.

For reasons of petty self-interest, the Spanish colonists questioned whether Indians had souls. Charles V was consulted on this delicate topic, and he in turn passed the issue along to the Vatican. Pope Paul III gave his answer in the papal bull "Sublimis Deus" in 1537. This document states that both conquistadors and conquered are sons of God, therefore free and equal, and must be respected. They are compatible within the new laws.

Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, in his seven Treatises, distinguished himself for his defense of the Indians and succeeded in influencing legislation. The Sublimis Deus bull resounded throughout the world—there are no superior races—and proclaimed the basic equality of the human race.

The influence of the liberation movements' ideology throughout the world was a key antecedent to our independence. Texts by precursors to the French Revolution were read on the sly in New Spain, given that they were prohibited. They arrived in parts, hidden

between tobacco leaves, and when the loose pages of famous works were gathered together they were sometimes incomplete; the arrival of the next shipment was anxiously awaited.

Censorship was applied to the works of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, and others. The lesson is clear: prohibition is not possible in the world of ideas. No one can stop the winged voice from a book that "speaks into our ear," as Germán de Arciniegas said. A voice that speaks to us and inspires the desire for freedom.

Angel María Garibay was dedicated to investigating pre-Colonial philosophy, poetry and literature. Nezahualcóyotl asked himself: What is knowledge, who is the teacher, how can we describe culture? And in line with ancient ways of thinking he answered: "It is a light that guides and demands; a light that struggles against the shadows of ignorance."

He who does not have the light of knowledge lives in the shadows; that is to say, he does not live. But this light must be cultivated. It is found in universities, in books, in the written word. Since it is a guiding light, it demands, scolds, warns, and appeals to all of us who have access to the alphabet. Our duty is to transmit it to the ignorant, to those who live in the shadows.

*Mestizaje* (the mixture of races and cultures), said José Vasconcelos, is not only in the blood; it is also in the spirit. Mexico is a mestizo country and the light of knowledge must be given to all. This is stressed by the motto of the National University of Mexico: "*Por mi raza hablará el espíritu*" (The spirit will speak for my race)—the spirit's values will speak for my mestizo race. We must strive to make culture what Nezahualcóyotl desired: a light that guides and demands

Hugo B. Margáin  
Editorial Director.



*Books are the greatest inheritance of mankind.*

# The indigenous voices of Mexico

Miguel León-Portilla\*

**T**oday voices of Mexico still resound, as it has been for thousands of years, in many indigenous languages.<sup>1</sup> Mexico ranks first in the world in terms of the number of people speaking Spanish. But it is equally true that more than ten million Mexicans maintain their ancestral native tongues.

A treasure-trove of literary testimonies of “the ancient word” exist in Nahuatl (the Aztec language), Maya, Mixtec, Zapotec, Otomí and other tongues, notwithstanding the great losses which accompanied the Conquest. The few extant native hieroglyphic books, called *códices*, convey something of the ancient beliefs, annals, calendrical records, worldview and wisdom. The inscriptions on stone monuments or ceramics also inform us what happened in a remote past, where humans and gods interacted.

Yes, much was burnt or destroyed in other ways, to be lost forever. At least some humanistic-minded Spaniards — mainly friars who became interested in the natives’ culture in order to accommodate it to the Christian faith— devoted themselves to investigating what were called “the antiquities of the Indians.”

<sup>1</sup> In Mexico the word *indigenous* is usually used instead of *Indian*, which is often considered to have pejorative connotations. (Editor’s note.)

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Thus, expressions of the ancient word in several indigenous tongues were transferred from the oral tradition and glyphic and painted books into alphabetic writing. Poetry, narrative, speeches of the elders, prayers, songs, stories and so on were thereby preserved.

In the case of the Nahuatl language, an incredibly rich “literature” from the pre-Hispanic tradition as well as from Colonial years was rescued from oblivion. In our own century people like the renowned scholar Angel María Garibay (1892-1967) —as well as many others (myself among them) who have followed in his footsteps— have dedicated themselves to studying the universe of indigenous expressions.

More recently, some people of native lineage have also begun to take part in this effort, as well as composing new forms of literature in their own languages. Thus both the ancient and the new word in Mexico’s native tongues enrich a country that now recognizes itself as multilingual and multicultural. A recent amendment to Article IV of the Mexican Constitution acknowledges this.

I will give a few examples here of this literature in Nahuatl, a language still spoken by more than one and a half million people. First I will present my translation of some poems from ancient times and then of two contemporary expressions of the new voices.



Indigenous boy from the mountains north of Puebla.

**The ancient voices**

Let us listen to what the wise ruler of Texcoco, Nezahualcōyotl (1402-1472) expressed regarding the evanescence of all that exists on the earth. His is a keen awareness of time, *cahuil*, "that which leaves us."

I, Nezahualcōyotl, ask this:

Is it true that one really lives on the earth?

Not forever on earth,  
only a little while here.

Though it be jade it falls apart,  
though it be gold it wears away,  
though it be quetzal plumage it is  
torn asunder.

Not forever on earth,  
only a little while here,

If jade and gold fall apart and  
wear away, then faces and hearts,  
more fragile, will have to die and be  
erased like paintings.

I comprehend the secret,  
the hidden:

Oh my lords!

Thus we are,

We are mortal,

Men through and through,

We all will have to go away,

We all will have to die on earth.

Like a painting,

We will be erased.

Like a flower,

We will dry up

Here on earth.

Like plumed vestments of the  
precious bird,

That precious bird with the

agile neck,

We will come to an end...

Think on this, my lords,

Eagles and ocelots,

Though you be of jade,

Though you be of gold,

You also will go there,

To the place of the fleshless.

We will have to disappear,

No one can remain.

At last Nezahualcōyotl found an answer to his questioning. He held that he had unveiled the meaning of flower and song, the Nahuatl metaphor for art and symbolism.

At last my heart knows it:

I hear a song,

I contemplate a flower...

May they never fade!

When the heart at last has found  
its way, it seeks out the flowers and  
songs that never perish.

Nezahualcōyotl is anxious to find  
the flowers and songs that will not  
come to an end.

He believes that those whose  
hearts have discovered flowers and  
songs can indeed approach the mystery  
that surrounds the Giver of Life.

*Tloque Nahuaque*, the Lord of the  
Near and Close, also has a book of  
paintings. In it, with flowers and  
songs, he draws and colors whatever  
exists on earth.

With flowers You write,

Oh Giver of Life.

With songs You give color,

With songs You shade

Those who must live on the earth.

Later, You will destroy eagles  
and ocelots;

We live only in Your book  
of paintings,

Here, on the earth.

With black ink You will blot out

All that was friendship,

Brotherhood, nobility.

You give color

To those who must live on  
the earth.

We live only in Your book  
of paintings,

Here on the earth.

The faces and hearts of men on  
earth are close and yet far from the  
Giver of Life. Nezahualcōyotl's  
thought, immersed in mystery, reaches  
out toward Him but expresses the  
impossibility of unveiling the mystery.

The ancient manuscripts contain  
numerous poems, hymns and songs of  
authors who for us remain  
anonymous. Friendship is a recurring  
theme in several of them. Let us enjoy  
their message:

Let us have friends here!

It is the time to know each  
others' faces.

Only with flowers

Can our song enrapture.

We will have gone to His house,  
But our word

Shall live here on earth.

We will go, leaving behind

Our grief, our song.

For this will be known,

The song shall remain real.

We will have gone to His house,  
But our word

Shall live here on earth.

The "Song of Brotherhood"

expresses a yearning to find a way to  
befriend the community and all  
humankind. With necklaces made of  
macaw feathers, with circlets of song,  
the poet encompasses those who are his  
friends, trying to give them whatever  
he has. A singer believes that this is the  
most he can do while on earth, until the  
day comes when all will have to go to  
the region of mystery:

I am come, oh my friends,

With necklaces I entwine you,

With feathers of the macaw I  
adorn you,

A precious bird, I dress  
with feathers,

I paint with gold,

I embrace humankind.

With trembling quetzal feathers,

With circlets of song,

I give myself to the community.

I will carry you with me to

the palace

Where we all,

Someday,

All must betake ourselves,

To the region of the dead.

Our life has only been lent to us!

Friendship is indeed a consolation  
to humans on earth. As a garland of  
flowers it can entwine us.

**The new voices**

Women and men who have kept alive  
their culture and language are  
conscious that they possess a legacy  
that must be maintained. To foster it,  
and to let their people and others

know what they think and want, they are creating a new literature, a new word. A Nahuatl friend of mine, Natalio Hernández Xocoyotzin, has conveyed this insight in a marvelous way:

Sometimes I feel  
That we, the Indians, are waiting  
For the arrival of a Man  
Who can achieve all,  
Knows everything,  
Is ready to help us,  
Will answer our problems.

But, this Man  
Who can achieve all,  
Knows everything,  
Will never arrive  
Because he is in ourselves,  
Walks along with us.  
He has been asleep,  
But now he is awakening.

The one who is awakening now must be on the alert, since some people do not think very highly of the indigenous cultural heritage. Thus it is a must to let them know that the Nahuatl and many others have made a decision as to the future of their languages and cultures. These are the words of another contemporary Nahuatl writer, Joel Martínez Hernández:

Some non-Indians say  
We Nahuatl-speaking people  
will disappear,  
We Nahuatl people will vanish;  
That our language no more will  
be heard,  
Our language no more will  
be used.  
Non-Indians rejoice at this,  
Non-Indians are looking for this.  
Why is it thus,  
That they are looking for  
our destruction?

It is not necessary to think  
very much,  
Four hundred years have taught us  
What the non-Indian wants.  
The non-Indian covets our lands,  
He wants to have our forests,  
He is looking for our rivers;  
He wants to take advantage  
Of our work.  
The non-Indian wants

To take us into the large towns...  
So that we become his servants.  
That is why he wants us  
To abandon our communal lands,  
Our own forms of work...,  
Our own language.

Where is our home?  
How many are we?  
We the Nahuatl-speaking people,  
We are not just in one place,  
We exist here and there,  
We have our homes

In sixteen different  
Mexican states...  
We, the Nahuatl-speaking people,  
Still live and move around  
Everywhere in Mexico...  
Now we can say  
That even if the non-Indian  
May want us to vanish,  
We, the Nahuatl-speaking people  
We will not disappear,  
We will speak our language,  
We will preserve our own ways  
of existence! ✕



*They possess a legacy that must be maintained.*

# Mexico City in the work of its writers

Vicente Quirarte\*

“Streets are the soul of a city; offerings of neighbors, whose facades are their countenance, and they have the heavens for their roof.” While this might seem to be a poem, it is urbanist Louis Kahn’s definition of a city.

There is a parallelism here. The urbanist and the poet are professional observers of the city, especially of its streets. The historian Lewis Mumford succeeded in developing both disciplines in his famous *The City Through History*. The city is a mystery to be deciphered. Thus we call the street an artery, because it carries the blood and energy of the metropolis—that is to say, of its people.

Since the 15th century, when Mexico City—then capital of the great Aztec empire—was called Tenochtitlán, poets have praised its grandeur. As did the citizens of Rome, Aztecs thought their city had been built for eternity. But it was in the 19th century when the city lost its allegorical character and became an active protagonist.

The best 19th-century chronicler of Mexico’s urban landscape expressed himself not in words but with images. His name was Casimiro Castro, and he was the main artist of *México y sus alrededores* (Mexico City and Its Surroundings). Foreign artists emphasized the monumental character of the metropolis and

introduced human figures only to add local color, whereas for Castro the street and its people are part of a single representation. The city is not only its buildings, but also its people; the two elements are interwoven in a unique tapestry.

In a work painted by Juan O’Gorman in 1949, you can see the city where my parents lived, walked, fell in love and conceived me.

When I was born, it had been ten years since Efraín Huerta published *Los hombres del alba* (Men of the Dawn), the first poetry book entirely dedicated to Mexico City. The metropolis had gone beyond its traditional ways to become part of the postwar world economy. It seemed a smiling and placid city that only flirted with progress but it provided stories that could happen only in a great metropolis.

It is the city where we can laugh about Cantinflas’ satires in his film *Gran Hotel*, but also where Huerta’s vagabonds “have a mad dog for a heart.” In his book *Nueva grandeza mexicana* (New Grandeur of Mexico), Salvador Novo discovers that in this city, in 1946, “if one lives there many years, he will get to know only a few places.” José Chávez Morado’s contemporary engraving *The Capital Becomes a Great City* warns us about the dangers of a megalopolis. We suffered the consequences of this transformation during the earthquakes of September 1985.

What tools can be used to explain a city’s influence on writers? Again, I

will use a painting: *Early Sunday Morning* by the American artist Edward Hopper. The city has awakened. At dawn, the only living creatures are the buildings and the sun casting its shadows, modifying depths, colors and forms. The city is an architectural landscape; the painter, like the writer, reveals the internal codes that daily spectators overlook.

Like most of poets of my generation, I don’t believe in the idea of the city as an asphalt jungle. On the contrary, I think that as the city grows in size and dangers, we learn more about life and fraternity. The clearest example of this was seen during the 1985 earthquakes, when grass-roots efforts overwhelmed the authority of a government that thinks itself almighty.

To illustrate this feeling of fraternity, allow me to present one of my very first poems. I was then around twenty years old and immensely admired Spider Man. I believed that I myself was Spider Man and not Peter Parker. Like him, I was lonely and rejected by women, and loved walking around the city at night, challenging crime. Yet I was always safe, since drunkards, teenagers and superheroes have a special halo that protects them. Since then, I have not stopped exploring the city, both as a poet and as a literary critic.

The poem I wrote is entitled *Elogio de la calle* (In Praise of the Street). It was translated by Alicia Gaspar de Alba, then a student (and now perhaps a Ph.D.) who was a member of Ricardo Aguilar’s creative

\* Director of Publications, UNAM.

writing class at the University of Texas at El Paso:

To leave the theater  
After having murdered misery  
In a perfect crime,  
And among the multitude to feel  
That all men are Chaplin  
And to see Catherine Deneuve in  
all women.

To wield the eyes like scissors,  
Cut down black buildings  
Against the cobalt sky,  
Collapse a Cadillac's tires  
And await its furious owner,  
While little by little tearing out  
the leaves

Of a Walt Whitman book,  
Watching the pages dance with  
the autumn leavings  
Upon the dark river of the street;  
To snatch the guitars away from  
blind musicians,  
Make a bonfire with all of them  
And hear the concert of creaking  
strings and wood.

At last to throw our being  
Weary of existence into the  
chance hotel,  
And at the surrender of sinews  
and eyelids

To remember you still  
And to love you even after  
the battle  
Although tomorrow upon  
awakening again  
We ask ourselves, City, what  
the hell

Are we here for.

The writer is the emotive cartographer of the city. His mission is to record the different transformations that take place within it. When the novelist transforms urban space into an autonomous reality, not limiting himself to the stage for his representation, an epiphany arises between the reader and the text, forcing us to contemplate that fragment of the city with a different vision.

I use the theological term "epiphany" on purpose, for this magic and close encounter with the soul of

the city could only be compared to communicating with something divine. This occurs in the poem "Working Girls," included in Carl Sandburg's *Chicago Poems*, in Walt Whitman's Manhattan or in Victor Hugo's Paris in *Les Misérables* or Nôtre Dame de Paris.

As Kevin Lynch points out, a street, a piazza, a bridge—urban landmarks that give identity to the users of the city—can become more alive than real people. *Plaza de Santo Domingo* is the narrative cycle where Manuel Capetillo explores the oldest and most traditional piazza in Mexico City. In his short story "Parque Hondo," José Emilio Pacheco uses a familiar site to build a metaphor about the loss of innocence, or paradise lost.

Carlos Fuentes is the author of the most important novel about Mexico City, *La región más transparente* (The Clearest Region). But he has also written several short stories where fantasy and reality are mixed. From the first pages of his short novel *Aura*, he forces his reader to simultaneously see the past and present. With the eye of a film maker, Fuentes shows us a new dimension of Donceles Street:

*You will be surprised that someone lives in Donceles. You've always believed that no one lives in this part of the city. Walking slowly, trying to find Number 1815 in this conglomerate of old Colonial palaces, turned into workshops, shoestores and soda fountains. The numbers have been adulterated: the old tile numbered 47 has now become 924; as you look up, you can see the second floor. There, nothing changes. The juke-boxes don't disturb the peace, the mercury bulbs do not give off lighting, the cheap windows do not decorate that second facade of the buildings. The unity of volcanic rock, the niches with their mutilated saints, crowned by doves, the elaborate stonework of Mexican baroque....*

A few days ago, as I approached one of the old buildings in the

downtown sector, I discovered they had closed an old and very traditional restaurant where I used to go with my father when I was a child. I instantly remembered a poem written by the American poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. It is a love story I will always associate with the city and especially with this restaurant. Let me tell you why.

This restaurant was frequently visited by Salomón de la Selva, a poet from Honduras. He lived, wrote and loved—to use Stendahl's expression—in the first half of this century, and above all his virtues and achievements, he loved and was loved by the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. In homage to that love and to the poet, she wrote a poem whose Spanish title is "Recuerdo" (Remembrance). We could say that every poem is a remembrance of having been in the timeless heaven of lovers. I will quote the poem because Millay establishes a love triangle between a man, a woman and a city, that territory which becomes the shield and the stage for lovers:

We were very tired, we were very merry—  
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.  
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable—  
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,  
We lay on a hill-top underneath the moon;  
And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry—  
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry;  
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,  
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere;  
And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,  
And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold.

We were very tired, we were  
very merry,  
We had gone back and forth all  
night on the ferry.  
We hailed, "Good morrow,  
mother!" to a shawl-covered head,  
And bought a morning paper,  
which neither of us read;  
And she wept, "God bless you!"  
for the apples and pears,

And we gave her all our money  
but our subway fares.

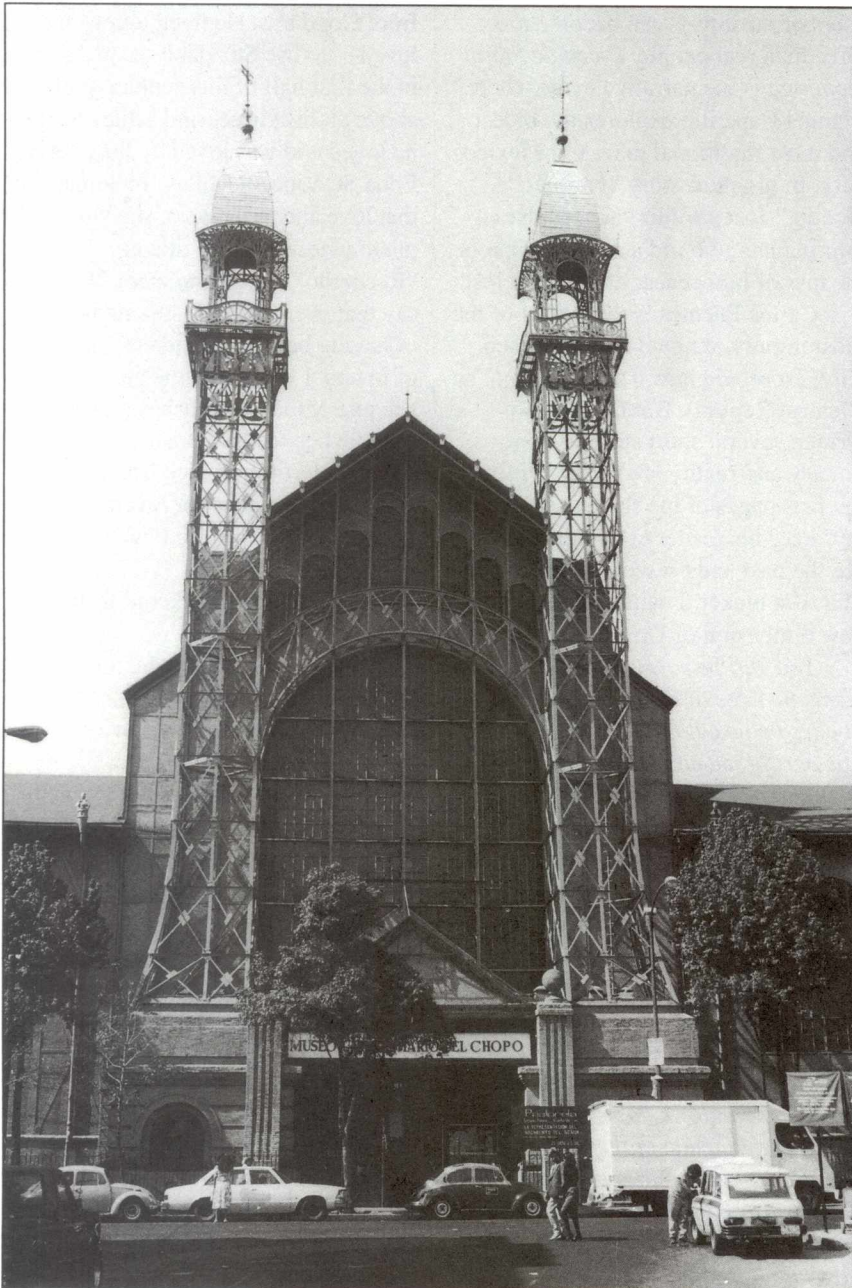
In the same way in which a corner  
or a restaurant may become part of our  
intimate city, there are buildings that  
witness our daily and ignored  
odysseys. One of the places that may  
be used as a symbol is the hotel. "The  
old Hotel named the Earth," sings the  
Italian author Claudio Bagglioni.

Every city is full of those places where  
we can glimpse our ephemeral stay on  
Earth. Thinking about that, I wrote a  
poem which was translated into  
English by Reginald Gibbons:

#### *A Woman and a Man*

A woman and a man can,  
for example,  
Go into a hotel (that hidden temple  
That will appear if you only  
invoke it)  
And love each other in broad  
daylight.  
But a woman and a man should go  
Beforehand to a movie even if  
they never notice  
What's happening on screen  
And he stares at the peach down  
on her cheek  
And she squeezes his thigh when  
she's frightened.  
Or a woman and a man can  
Go out for a walk and his  
hand seems  
An extension of her waist—or  
vice versa—  
And then the rhythm  
Of the woman's stride slows  
(Because the only thing like this  
Is the sailing of a deep-water ship  
On certain days in spring)  
Or pay for the coffee that's  
already cold  
When their eyes and hands have  
said yes a thousand times.  
And without even touching,  
fixing themselves up or speaking  
A man and a woman can, finally,  
Go into a hotel and give each  
other their bodies,  
Leave the window open so that  
The hot breeze from the parks  
comes in, and the memory  
Of those leaving the movie theater,  
Of the clinking of spoons  
against cups,  
Of the weak voice that is saying,  
"Yes, that way."

In his book *Image of the City*,  
Kevin Lynch talks about the main  
elements that give us the right to the  
city. As noted before, buildings are



Arturo Píera.

*The old Natural History Museum, now El Chopo.*



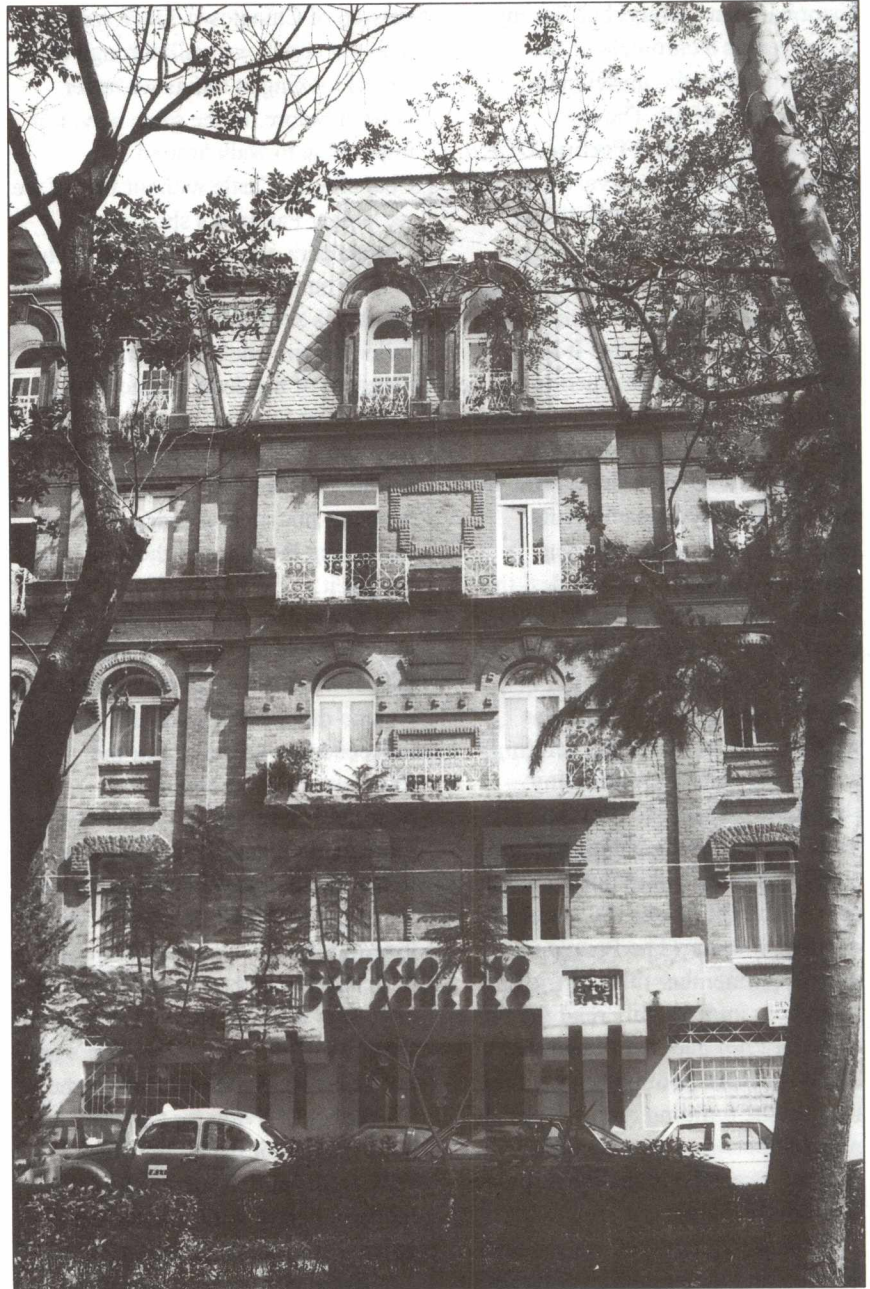
elements of the urban image as a whole. Traditionally, Mexico City has treasured its architecture, from the expression, attributed to Alexander von Humboldt, that it is the "City of Palaces," to the poem where the Renaissance poet Bernardo de Balbuena praises the beauty and harmony of Colonial architecture. Let me tell you about a modern experience of this relationship between man and the architectural landscape.

In 1975, our National University of Mexico organized a short story contest. The only theme was the old Natural History Museum. I stood in an abandoned, bizarre and beautiful building located in one of the city's most popular old neighborhoods.

The reason was that our university was reconstructing the building, and wanted people to grasp its feeling once again. Its enigmatic, mainly glass and steel architecture, and the many visits we made to this place when we were children, made the building a treasure for my generation. The university not only offered three first prizes, but also the opportunity of having a story published. You can imagine the interest that provoked among writers.

With different styles and narrative perspectives, writers talked about their relation with the building. Fantasy, humor, historical reconstruction showed how a building may be transformed in the mind of a user of the city, and may become as alive as a tree or an animal, to mention other creatures of our urban space that are part of our literature.

I won the third prize. In order to write my version of the building, I started a research project related more to the historical background than the artistic work. I learned about the process of the building's construction; I was lucky enough to get in touch with relatives of its former owners. By reading newspapers of that time, I reconstructed the celebrations of our



*Historic building Rio de Janeiro.*

first Independence Centennial, the occasion when the building was inaugurated. Following the painter Claude Monet's lesson on the Rouen Cathedral, I visited the building at different hours of the day. It is only on a few occasions such as those that I have so enjoyed the projective and imaginative process which comes before the slow, ungrateful

and sometimes fruitless process of writing.

I had all the elements for reconstruction. The problem was how to carry it through. How to turn the building into a protagonist, instead of using it as a decoration. Finally, I wrote three short stories that took place on three different dates in Mexico City. The first may be more

historical than literary, but it is my favorite. It is a chronicle of the inauguration of the museum on September 4, 1910. The main character is President Porfirio Díaz, although his name is never mentioned. Everything he sees and feels and smells is caused by the building.

Another historic building in our city is the one called Edificio Río de Janeiro in Colonia Roma. It is a massive red-brick construction whose strange appearance led neighborhood people to call it the House of the Witches. I lived there for several years and had the privilege of having neighbors such as the poet and translator Guillermo Fernández, the young Colombian author Eduardo García Aguilar and the diplomat and novelist Sergio Pitol.

We all knew that Pitol was writing a novel about the building, and it was a strange and funny sensation listening to him type all night long, shaping characters and situations born within our common space. The result was the novel *El desfile del amor* (The Parade of Love). I remember that some of the neighbors immediately read the book to see if Pitol had mentioned them. They were disappointed, for a simple reason: the building recreated by the novelist becomes part of literary fiction; its aesthetic reality surpasses immediate reality.

Nature imitates art. As we have seen before, writers discover different aspects in familiar sites. It is not the same to say "This story takes place in a city called X" as to describe, recreate and authenticate the space in which characters are developed. It is not enough to name a street. Our artistic duty is to make the reader feel the smell and the personality of that street.

This is what happens in Rafael Bernal's thriller *El complot mongol* (The Mongol Plot). The action takes place on Dolores Street, our small

version of Chinatown. Once we have read the novel, we walk through those streets looking at things we never noticed before. In the same way, it is impossible to walk around Chapultepec Castle without fear, if we remember Pacheco's short story "Tenga para que se entretenga" (This Is for Your Entertainment), where the ghost of a soldier of Maximilian's so-called empire takes children to the kingdom of the dead. In Pacheco's work, as in Fuentes', horror stories are a symbol of history and its weight. In Fuentes' "Chac-Mol," a stone idol becomes human and ends up killing and taking the place of the man who bought it.

The writer who talks about the city talks with the city. He makes it talk. His literary obligation is not to be a name-dropper but to obtain the independence of the city or the fragments he talks about. The metropolis must be a living entity, more than a stage. This act of magical transformation is achieved by James Joyce in the Dublin of *Ulysses*. A new kind of Ulysses, a modern man who does not live in the city but lives the city; he is the city. He is "The Man of the Crowd" of Edgar Allan Poe's tale, but he is also Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Wakefield," living for ten years in a hotel in front of the house where his wife awaits him. René Albérès, a modern literary critic, has written about this symbolical reading:

*Every action has a meaning. For the artist and for God, everyday familiar reality is an allegorical poem. Every man lives, day by day, an Odyssey, on his way to the office or the bar. Life is not what it seems to be. It is not the daily mediocrity of an insignificant being, for in those mediocrities, art may find the invisible map of an epic poem.*

The unsung saga of the common man is illustrated in Carlos Valdés' short story "La calle aún es nuestra" (The

Street Is Still Ours). Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are personified by two vagabonds who walk under the rain, just to recover the dignity of their existence. With that same pride, Bartleby, Herman Melville's unforgettable character, lives in his office in the desert of Wall Street. With that same rebellious spirit, Gavroche, the little boy from *Les Misérables*, vindicates the right of humble people to take over the streets.

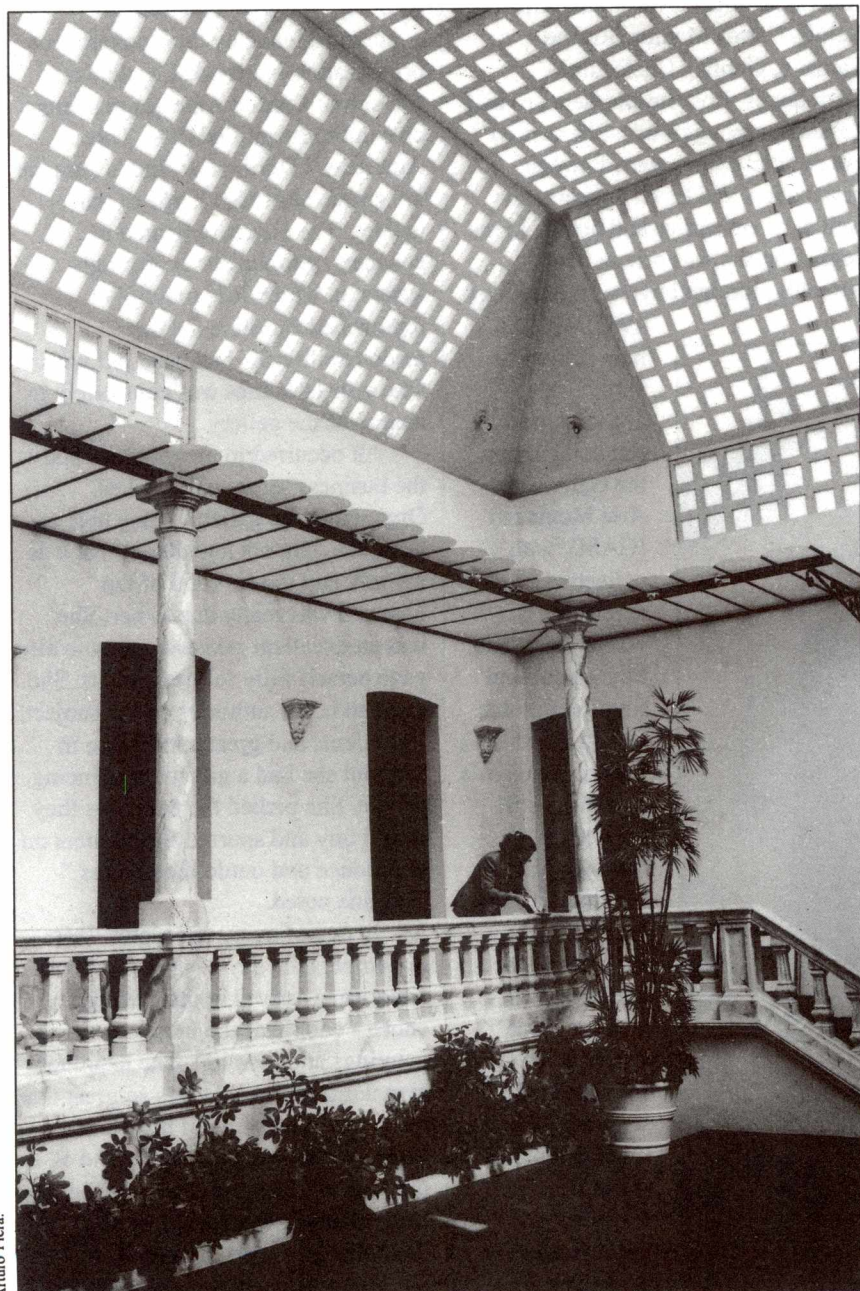
In one of his short stories, the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges talks about a city under siege. The enemy outside threatens to kill everyone in the city except for one person. The chosen one is a poet, because he is the one who will tell the story. Remember the last words pronounced by Ishmael, the narrator voice in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*: "And I only escaped to tell thee" (Job).

Every man is part of the city, but the writer is its memory. His work may not be important for societies worried about economic growth and global war. But his writings are a testimony to the greatest virtues and defects mankind displays. We writers may have doubts about ourselves, but never about the benefits of thought and sensibility. If we did, it would be like rejecting rain because it makes us wet. Allow me, then, to finish with a poem where the rain, the city and my little niece are three figures making up a single feminine power:

#### A Portrait of the Rain

The rain is like a little girl walking barefoot down the street. She may be slow, like a sugar cube dissolving in your mouth, and then she becomes a friend of the open window. At times she is angry and turns the city into a kingdom of umbrellas. But the rain is always a little girl who retires, exhausted, to her kingdom, while the sun opens its fan, and gently crowns the high clouds to watch over her slumber ❧

# Gallery of Mexican Art



Arturo Píera.

The gallery has a beautiful patio.

In the early the 1930s, Carolina and Inés Amor decided to give Mexico City an indispensable tool for promoting the fine arts in what was, at that time, an unusual way.

They created a space where artists not only showed their art, but could also sell directly to people who liked their work. It was a place which gave Mexico City a modern, cosmopolitan air, offering domestic and international collectors the work of Mexico's artistic vanguard.

The Gallery of Mexican Art was founded in 1935 by Carolina Amor, who worked for the publicity department at the Palace of Fine Arts before opening the gallery. That job had allowed her to form close ties with the artists of the day and to learn about their needs.

In an interview, "Carito"—as she was called by her friends—recalled a statement by the then director of the Palace of Fine Arts, dismissing young artists who did not follow prevailing trends: "Experimental theater is a diversion for a small minority, chamber music a product of the court and easel painting a decoration for the salons of the rich."

At that point Carolina felt her work in that institution had come to an end, and she decided to resign. She decided to open a gallery, based on a broader vision, in the basement of her own house, which her father had used as his studio.

At that time, the concept of the gallery *per se* did not exist. The only thing approaching it was Alberto Misrachi's bookstore, which had an area reserved for the sale of paintings.

In 1932, the master lithographer Emilio Amero opened a place to sell pictures, but he had to close after a showing of small sculptures which no one bought. A decoration store located in the center of the city also exhibited foreign and Mexican paintings, with similar results.

To steal attention away from the mural painters of the day was no small feat. The art themes of the 1920s and '30s centered on nationalist ideas. Scenes of the Revolution were recreated far and wide on the walls of the city's most important buildings. Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco painted key buildings such as the Palace of Fine Arts, the San Ildefonso Preparatory School, the National Palace and

Chapultepec Castle. Their revolutionary cause received full support from the government.

With great enthusiasm and perfect organization, Carolina laid the groundwork for opening a new space to exhibit art. Her idea was to invite not only famous artists, but also painters who were still unknown: Agustín Lazo, Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, Miguel Covarrubias, Angélica Beloff, Carlos Medina, Rufino Tamayo, Germán Cueto, Julio Castellanos, Roberto Montenegro and Tamariz, among others. She carried out publicity campaigns through newspapers and travel agencies as well as at embassies and hotels. In the beginning she was oriented to attracting foreign buyers. In March of

1935, with the help of friends and acquaintances, she inaugurated the Galería de Arte Mexicano (GAM), with a collective exposition of watercolors, oils, lithographs and small sculptures.

In those days Rufino Tamayo's work was still viewed as "strange" in Mexico. Seeking greater acceptance, he decided to move to New York, where he lived for some time with his wife Olga. Before his departure, Carolina enthusiastically organized an individual showing for him.

She looked for a larger and more central location for this event, which turned out to be quite a happening. This was not the last time Tamayo showed his work at the GAM —after achieving success in the United States he was again invited, but this time at the gallery's new address on General Prim Street.

Six months after the gallery's opening, Margaret Naumberg —commissioned by the Rockefeller organization— invited Carolina on a trip across Central America to present an exhibition entitled "The Three Americas." During Carolina's absence her sister Inés took charge of the gallery. The sisters remained in constant communication through letters, in which Inés playfully reproached Carolina for the responsibility she had been left with. One year later Inés was completely in charge of the gallery.

"It occurred to me that Inés had the business sense that I lacked. Organizing the gallery, being able to bring the painters together —that was my job. But the survival of the business was really due to her. She was an excellent saleswoman who also gave herself fully to Mexican art. She came to be an authority on the subject. Her clients had great confidence in her, and she had a gift for convincing people. She picked the paintings they would buy and spurred the painters on to produce and outdo themselves," Carolina noted.

In one of many anecdotes, Inés remembers the day a pair of Americans arrived at the gallery, chose a couple of the most expensive paintings and then left. The happiness at making such a sale was so great that the painter and some of his friends tossed the money into the air and as the bills fell like rain, the couple came back to the gallery to collect an umbrella they had left behind.

From its opening until today the GAM has had four different directors. In the course of its fruitful and



Arturo Píera.

Entrance to the Gallery of Mexican Art.



Arturo Píera.

Alejandra Yturbe (standing) and Mariana Pérez Amor (seated).

interesting history it has promoted the work of artists belonging to several different generations: Carlos Mérida, Francisco Zúñiga, Raúl Anguiano, Olga Costa, Juan Soriano, Helen Escobedo, Rafael Coronel, Leonora Carrington and many others.

One of the priceless treasures which the GAM preserves is an archive going back to the period when it opened, which is maintained and updated by the gallery's current directors. This archive contains pamphlets, catalogues, newspaper articles, photographs and details about the organization of each exhibition—not one is missing. Anyone interested in writing the biography of a painter from the last seven decades is likely to find unique information in the GAM archives.

Today there are many galleries throughout Mexico. Some open without knowledge or experience in the art business, and therefore have to close in short order, causing a loss of prestige for the artists they promoted. Others, with a purely commercial orientation, lack both the interest and talent necessary to sustain a gallery and support artists.

The GAM has maintained the same level of care and professionalism since its foundation. Today it is located at Gobernador Rafael Rebollar No. 43 in Mexico City's Colonia San Miguel

Chapultepec. It is run by Alejandra Yturbe and Inés' daughter Mariana Pérez Amor. They have intuitively preserved the principles inherited from the legendary Amor sisters.

History seems to repeat itself. Inés left them in charge of

the gallery and after two years decided not to return, with the difference that they could close the gallery if they wished. Their commitment led them to continue. Since her childhood, Mariana was acquainted with famous figures from the art world. She remembers trips with her mother to New York and Europe, where they were received by friends of Inés, all of them extraordinary people from the artistic community. Alejandra had experience in administrative work at the gallery. They both decided to push forward and confront whatever problems might lie ahead.

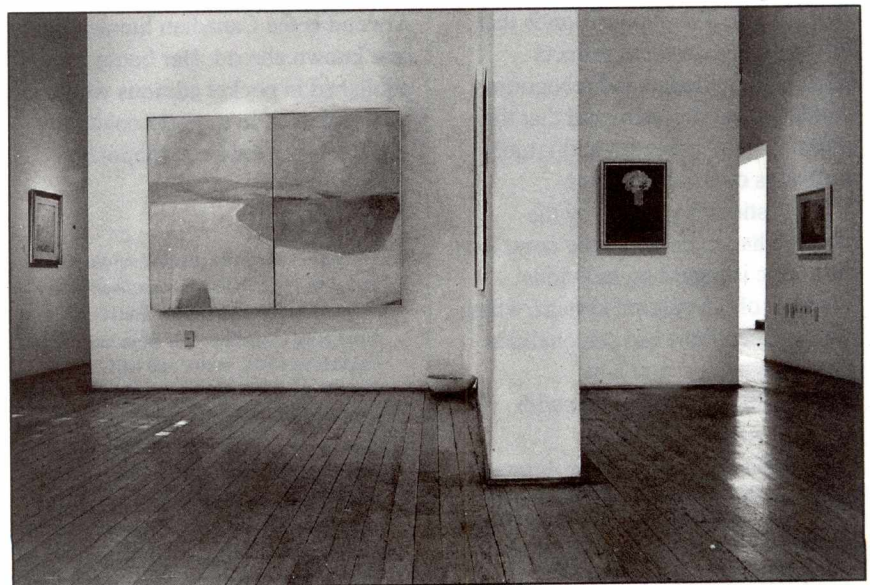
Replacing Inés—who had been a sort of mother, fairy godmother, patron and adviser to many of the artists—did not work out for some who had been around since the beginning. But the new administration also provided a youthful, invigorating new vision to the GAM.

In the book *Historia y testimonios, Galería de Arte Mexicano* by Delmari Romero Keith (Mexico City, 1985), Mariana said: "This work carries heavy emotional baggage; you must work at all hours with very sensitive, emotion-filled people."

For Alejandra, the gallery works "because there is an almost perfect order, which was established many years ago. I think a business sometimes needs order more than intelligence."

The evolution of the GAM reflects, in part, the transformations the fine arts have gone through in Mexico—above all the avant-garde. In contrast to the pattern of Inés Amor's day, 80 percent of buyers are now Mexican and 20 percent are foreigners. ❧

Mónica Ching  
Assistant Editor.



Arturo Píera.

In contrast with its beginnings, the gallery's buyers are now basically Mexican.

# Atwood's Surfacing and Canadian cultural identity

Graciela Martínez-Zalce\*

**T**hroughout their cultural history Canadians have defined themselves in the negative: in the case of Francophones, in opposition to Anglophones; in the case of Anglo culture, in contradistinction to the culture of the U.S., given that there is no language barrier between the two.

Part of the document *Linking Artists and Audiences*<sup>1</sup> deals with how much Canadians know about their own culture. The supposition is that cultural consciousness reflects citizens' knowledge and recognition of their cultural system and that this consciousness precedes and largely motivates cultural behavior.

Questions addressed by the research had to do with how conscious the public is regarding individual elements of the cultural system; which events, disciplines and personalities were seen as key; and how consciousness varied in line with

differences between various disciplines and sectors of art and culture.

A key indicator chosen for the research was how much Canadians really know about their culture, in terms of the individuals responsible for cultural production.<sup>2</sup> During the first phase of the study, subjects were asked about the individuals; in the second they were asked about these individuals' activity.<sup>3</sup>

There is little doubt that Margaret Atwood is the Canadian literary figure best known abroad. Her books are published in pocket editions which can be found even in airport bookstores, and she is the only contemporary

Canadian writer who has had more than one book translated into Spanish.<sup>4</sup>

The above-mentioned survey reflected this. While the Quebecois playwright and novelist Michel Tremblay had greater name recognition, fewer people were able to link him with a specific activity. Of the figures mentioned in the survey, Atwood had the highest level of recognition and accurate identification.<sup>5</sup>

Margaret Atwood was born in Ottawa in 1939, moving with her family to Sault St. Marie in 1945 and, one year later, to Toronto. As the daughter of an entomologist whose specialty was forest insects, she became familiar with the forests of northern Ontario and Quebec. After graduating from the University of Toronto, she carried out post-graduate studies at Radcliffe in 1962. She has been a university professor and an editor, and since the late 1960s has published a constant stream of poetry, narrative and criticism. Her books have been given Canada's most prestigious awards.

Her work is haunted by three concerns: being a writer, a woman and a Canadian. The first implies an ethical responsibility, since a person who writes transmits culture, and his or her work must undergo a transformation from fascination with language to a commitment to things as they are.

The second has to do with a certain degree of alienation. One observes this in the female characters

<sup>1</sup> Frank Graves (coord.), *Linking Artists and Audiences*. Ottawa, Communications Canada, Ministry of Supply and Services, 1989. I refer here to Chapter 2, "Awareness and Knowledge of Canadian Culture."

\* Researcher at CISAN, UNAM.

<sup>2</sup> The survey involved reading subjects the names of 14 individuals associated with a range of cultural activities. Twelve of these were Canadian, half from the English-speaking sector and half French-speakers. The recognition level was generally moderate. It was highest in regard to performers, especially musicians, and much less for visual artists. It should be noted that the fact that people recognized names did not imply that they were familiar with the given individual's work.

<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the second phase questions were more specific: what does the given person do and is he or she Canadian?

<sup>4</sup> An edition of *El huevo de Barba Azul* (Bluebeard's Egg) has been published by Alcor, and *El cuento de la criada* (The Handmaid's Tale) has been published by Seix Barral. Both translations were done in Spain.

<sup>5</sup> The survey had the following finding regarding writers: 48.9% of those surveyed recognized Margaret Atwood's name (50.4% recognized Tremblay's); of these, 78.1% knew she was a writer (only 45.1% knew that Tremblay is); 93.1% knew she is Canadian. The reliability average for Atwood was 29.4%, as against 16.6% for Tremblay.

who develop as professionals in a consumer society and find themselves in a process of reaffirmation punctuated by ruptures in cultural, as well as personal and intimate, matters.

Alienation is present in the third concern as well, which involves belonging to a two-headed nation, divided into two cultures, expressing itself in two languages which produce, not a duet, but two monologues of the deaf. These three preoccupations give rise to the author's concern for discovering a common mythology, a base which can be shared.

In 1971 Atwood published her second novel, *Surfacing*, as well as her book of criticism, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. In the latter she expounds a thesis which has been the subject of considerable discussion and controversy: that underlying Canadian literature is a feeling of defeat deriving from cultural colonialism; and that the Canadian literary tradition has therefore reflected strong feelings of collective fear. This fear is related to the threat to the survival of that which is Canadian as a distinct and unique cultural expression.

Both texts reveal the need to search for identity. When superimposed, the themes dealt with in each flow into the other, although the means of concretizing them are quite different.

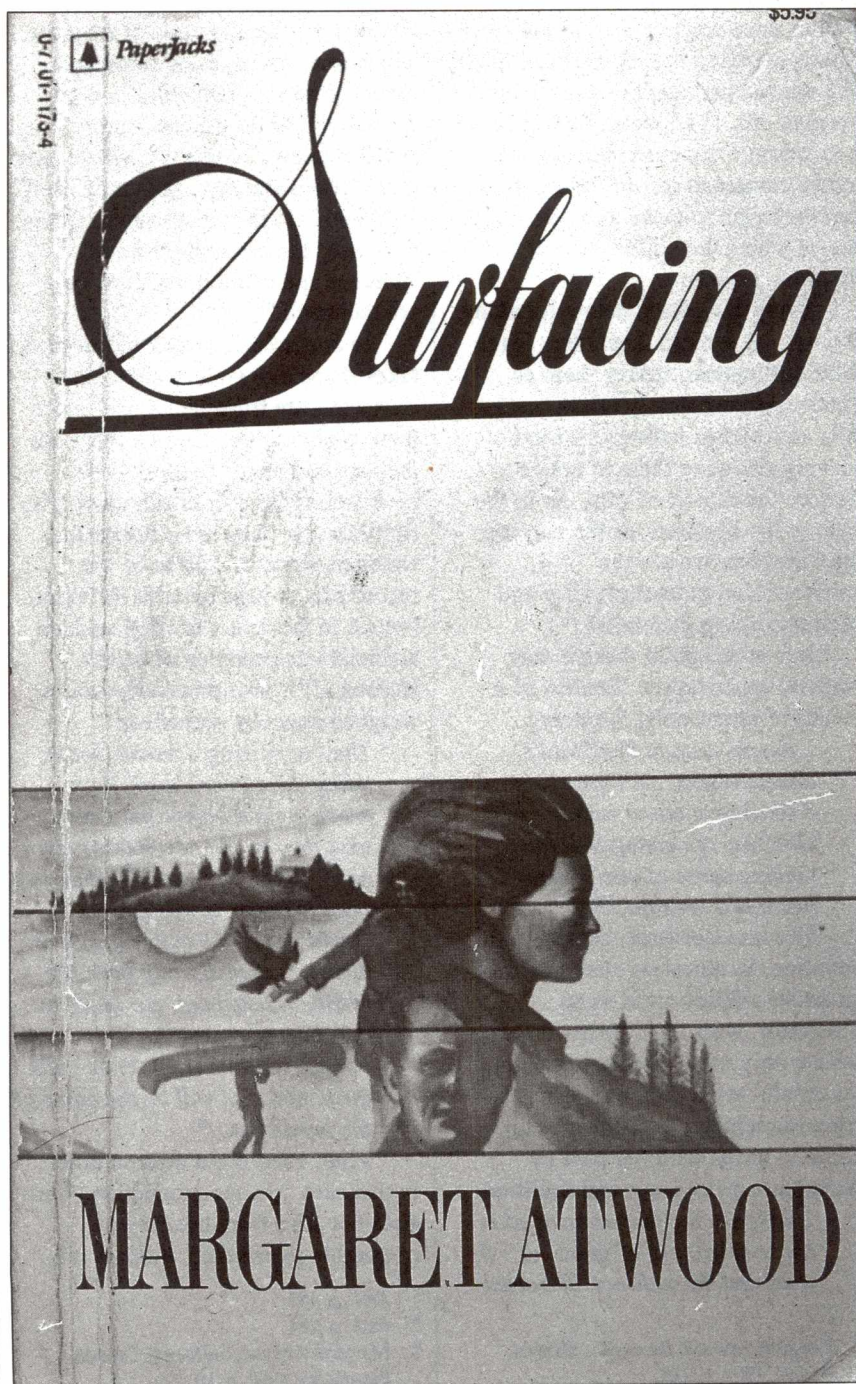
*Surfacing* is the story of an initiation rite, the search for identity through the recovery of memory. The novel's female narrator/protagonist is a character with no name, an unnamed "I" who, in the course of a voyage both physical and symbolic, finds herself—through confronting others as well as her own past.

The narrator is a young woman who earns her living modestly as an illustrator of children's books. These books imitate the European mythical tradition, inhabited by fantastical beings (fairies, elves) which have turned into commonplaces for what

adults believe children's imagination to be. Thus, her work consists of illustrating a double falsehood: a literature which is translated and then imposed on its readers. She lives in the city with a ceramic artist. Their relationship is ambiguous; for reasons which remain unknown to us

they find it impossible to make a commitment to each other.

The novel's action is detonated by a piece of news: the narrator's father, who lives in the northern forests in a French-speaking area, has disappeared. Faced with the task of putting the family's possessions in



order, she decides to go with her companion, Joe, as well as a couple they have recently befriended, David and Anna, who have a car.

The circumstances in which she must return imply a certain failure; the very fact of having to go home implies a defeat. It is doubly difficult to do so without being married (which would mean the disapproval of her parents as well as their neighbors), without having acquired the status expected of any woman her age. For her traveling companions, in contrast, the trip is like a vacation. They even take along a movie camera to record the sights. In fact they plan to make an experimental movie which they intend to call *Random Samples*.

Everything they encounter along the way, as well as when they reach their destination, strikes them as exotic. As completely urban beings, they experience nature as a kind of scenery allowing them to create a fiction: the fiction of film. As in the case of the illustrations the narrator does at work, we see the confrontation between reality and pseudo-art as a falsehood.

It is at this point that we may begin to superimpose *Survival* as a means of interpreting *Surfacing*.

*...the solution to the Child's dilemma was often seen to involve a coming to terms with the past. One way of coming to terms, making sense of one's roots, is to become a creator....*<sup>6</sup>

The narrator finds herself in this situation. In narrating she is doubly an artist: a failed artist as an illustrator, working to order on texts whose only value is commercial; a successful artist as she relates a situation which will allow her to come to terms with her past by reevaluating her roots and tradition.

*...there are two factors involved in the production of a "great art": the artist and the audience. The artist*

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Survival*.... Canada, Anansi, 1991, p. 181.

*acts as vision or tongue, giving shape to patterns in which the audience may then recognize itself, for better or worse: "identify" itself. ...the artist is both representative man and leader; in his work is made visible all that is best and worst in a society. He is us.*<sup>7</sup>

Thus the narrator, as she tells the story of this trip in search of her identity, of a recuperation of memory which includes ancestral times and mythic spaces, is doing this not only for herself but for the community. Yet Atwood notes that this is possible only to the extent that the community itself is receptive to the artist's work. If it is not, then "as artists, deprived of audience and cultural tradition, they are mutilated."<sup>8</sup>

In *Surfacing* this lack of tradition takes shape as a vicious circle: the characters are frustrated artists, since there is no tradition to back them up; they are bad artists because their motivations are artificial, hollow. The film *Random Samples* is the perfect example, since it seeks to be the record of a voyage towards the exotic (which in fact is not exotic); such an artificial interpretation of reality, starting off from a preconception, is weighed down by prejudices.

*They're making a movie. Joe is doing the camera work, he's never done it before but David says they're the new Renaissance Men, you teach yourself what you need to learn. It was mostly David's idea, he calls himself the director: they already have the credits worked out. He wants to get shots of things they come across, random samples he calls them, and that will be the name of the movie too....*<sup>9</sup>

Thus, even if not done to order, in this case, too, the production of art does not arise from the need to respond to experience. Instead, it is

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing*. Canada, Paperjacks, 1990, p. 10.

something pre-fabricated and therefore doomed to frustration.<sup>10</sup>

The only valid effort is thereby the narration itself. This is in line with another of the aspects Atwood notes in her essay, when she explains that those who write about the impossibility of creating in an insensitive and therefore hostile environment are in fact already engaged in creating. In describing things and herself, the narrator is shaping an identity. The product of this act is a novel which falls within a tradition that, while recent, is nevertheless genuine and thereby implies a cultural identity one can join.

This tradition, which Atwood describes in *Survival*, shows up in other aspects of her novel *Surfacing*. One example is the connection established between the characters and nature.<sup>11</sup> Atwood maintains that the portrayal of nature as a monster is a constant in Canadian literature. In *Surfacing* this aspect is related to issues of mental health.

The narrator goes crazy when she comes in contact with the forest and the lake. The solitude implied by the inevitable confrontation with her self causes her to become almost paranoid. When she tries to find out about her father's disappearance, what is ever-present is the specter of the kind of madness caused by spending long periods in isolation during the winter. Nature turns menacing.

This link to nature is also present in the two most significant events that befall a human being: birth and death. The narrator—whose relation to maternity is rather tortuous, since throughout the book she is conflicted about having had an abortion<sup>12</sup>—can resolve this conflict only insofar as

<sup>10</sup> In fact, the movie is never completed, since the narrator throws the film into a lake in a fit of rage.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter Two, "Nature the Monster."

<sup>12</sup> The conflict is a two-way one, since it is also present in her relationship with her mother; that is, when she finds herself in the role of daughter.



she reconciles herself with nature, with the forest and the lake, and ceases to think, believe and feel that the city represents a better way of life.

Death takes shape in the figure of the father, corresponding to what Atwood calls the tradition of futile heroes, unconvincing martyrs and other sad ends, where death is referred to as a casual incident.<sup>13</sup> The father suffers death by water, as he is anchored to the bottom of the lake by the weight of a camera. Why this happened is never resolved; the novel never makes clear what he was doing there. This is a death which seems useless, but which does have a purpose: it is the means by which the narrator acquires an identity of her own.

But human beings do not appear only as victims of nature; nature is also the victim of human beings. This is a highly significant aspect of the novel, since this is where we most clearly observe the definition, through opposition, of the point made at the beginning of the text.

The characters' destination is an area inhabited by French Canadians. The narrator recalls her childhood among them as well as the fact that her family was different and, to a degree, discriminated against—they were regarded as strange. So they are the others, the Anglos who left the city in search of a healthier life, one which would be closer to nature. The daily life of her childhood is described through this relation, which defined her family as exceptional or different.

Language plays a crucial role in demarcating this difference. Language is the immediate expression of a culture and world-view:

*There are no dirty words any more, they've been neutered, now they're only parts of speech; but I recall the feeling, puzzled, baffled, when I found out some words were dirty and the rest were clean. The bad ones in*

*French are the religious ones, the worst ones in any language were what they were most afraid of and in English it was the body, that was even scarier than God.... I learned about religion the way most children then learned about sex....<sup>14</sup>*

Those who most violently assault nature are tourists from the south. The rivers are drained and the trees chopped down for them, so they may take over the land and spread death: they come to hunt and fish. The narrator describes these predators in their motor boat, adorned with their flag: they are Americans. ("Bloody fascist pig Yanks," David calls them.<sup>15</sup>) She recognizes them because they leave traces of their passage through the woods: animals killed for no reason except the pleasure of hunting down a victim. They represent another kind of otherness: the lack of respect for a nature which does not belong to them but of which they feel themselves to be owners, since in the final analysis everything exists for their satisfaction. A paradox is that the Americans turn out to be Americanized Canadians.


*It doesn't matter what country they're from, my head said, they're still Americans, they're what's in store for us, what we are turning into. They spread themselves like a virus, they get into the brain and take over the cells and the cells change from inside and the ones that have the disease can't tell the difference.... If you look like them and talk like them and think like them then you are them, I was saying, you speak their language, a language is everything you do.<sup>16</sup>*

Thus annihilation is another form of otherness. At the first level, in relation to nature; at a deeper level, in relation to identity. This is a whole;

absorbing an alien world-view means death in every sense: killing nature, ceasing to be oneself, making others' values one's own, losing respect for oneself and that which surrounds one.

It is from this angle of vision that *Surfacing's* narrator finds herself once again, in harmony with the environment. In the novel, acquiring identity is associated with recovering memory, with submerging in the landscape, in family roots and personal history, to come back to the surface accepting life. The narrator reconciles herself with the past in order to face the present. This is acquiring an identity, building through recovering.

In her novel, Atwood thereby proposes creativity as a means of forging identity. If there is no long-standing tradition, then roots must be strengthened so they will eventually become firm. In the novel's deliberately open ending, the narrator finds herself amidst a nature which demands nothing of her. "The lake is quiet, the trees surround me, asking and giving nothing."<sup>17</sup> The choice is made; she will stay in the forest and give birth to her child there. For her, reconciliation with motherhood also means reconciliation with nature, which has no reason to be hostile if one joins together with it.

Reflecting themes that preoccupied Atwood in the 1970s, both *Surfacing* and *Survival* hit the nail on the head: from different angles, they raised questions about Canada's cultural identity. The forms differ, but the conclusion is the same: traditions are forged through what they produce. Conscious of her responsibility towards her cultural community, in these two texts Atwood showed two ways in which Canadians can affirm themselves, no longer through opposition but in a positive way: through creation 

<sup>13</sup> See the book's eighth chapter, "The Casual Incident of Death."

<sup>14</sup> *Surfacing*, p. 49.

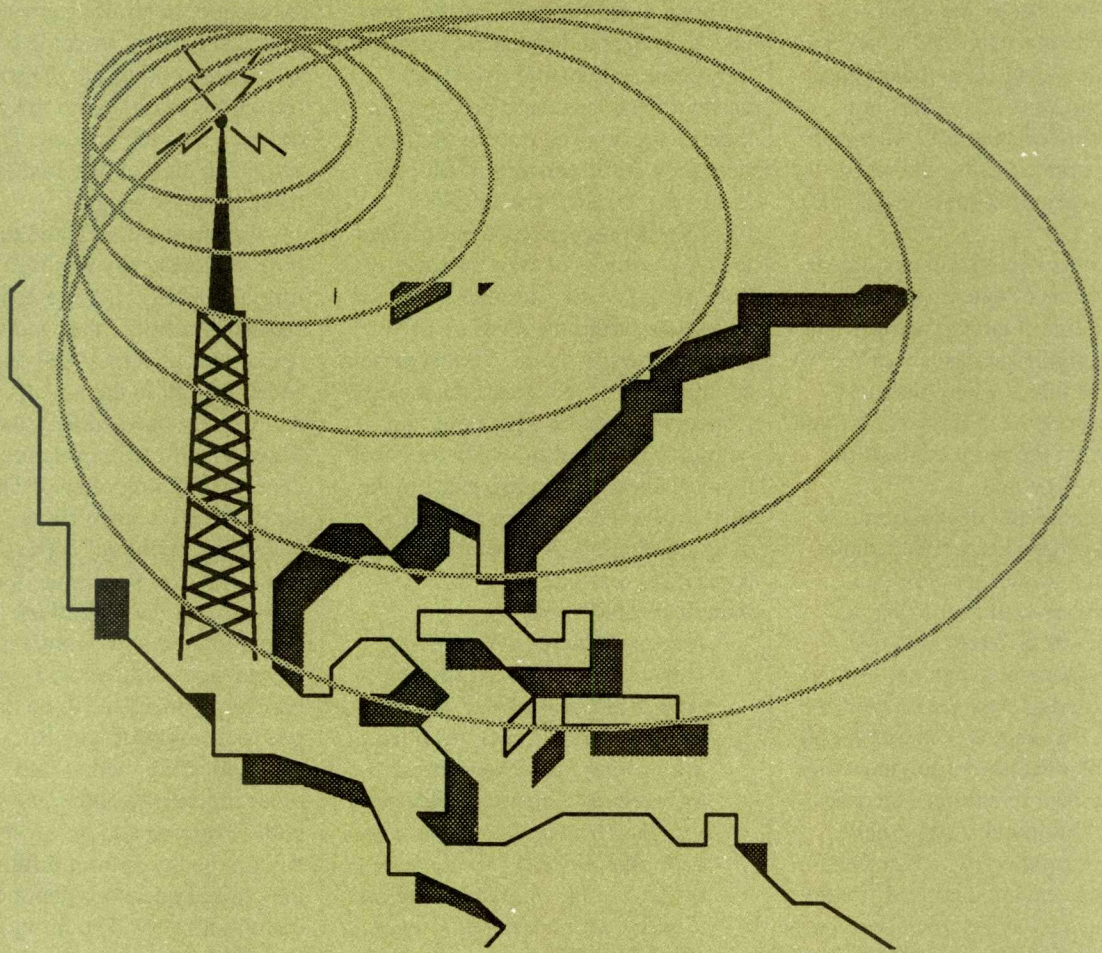
<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.



Las ondas no necesitan visa,  
por eso traspasamos las fronteras.



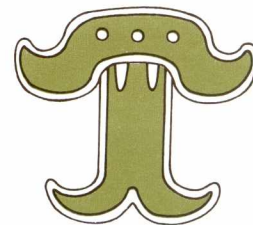
**XEPPM, Onda Corta**

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Largo alcance de México al mundo

Cultura con imaginación

# The Dolores Olmedo Patiño Museum



**T**he world's largest collection of the works of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo can be seen in the beautiful Dolores Olmedo Patiño Museum, which opened its doors to the public on September 17, 1994. In an area of more than 100,000 square feet, architecture and landscape work together to frame this great national treasure, donated by Dolores Olmedo.

The museum is located in Xochimilco, where even today flowers

and vegetables are grown using the *chinampa* ("floating garden") system. In the Aztec era, these were small plots of land situated in the lakes of the Valley of Mexico. They were built upon a structure called *tepechtle* or *chinámil*, made of cane or branches covered by soil, giving the impression of floating gardens.

The property where the museum is located has had many names: in the pre-Hispanic epoch it was called Tzonmolco (hill that breaks off); later

it was called Coatlán (place of serpents—which are the museum's emblem today); and was eventually named La Noria (The Well). Dolores Olmedo purchased the property in 1962; after remodeling, it became her home in 1964.

The main buildings of the hacienda take up about 20,000 square feet. The construction—including walls, roofs, ironwork and the cupolas in the chapel—is preserved from the 16th century. This also includes



In an area of more than 100,000 square feet, architecture and landscape work together to frame this great national treasure.



*Dolores Olmedo in her Oriental-style home.*



*Portrait of Dolores Olmedo by her husband Howard Phillips.*



*Interviewer and interviewee accompanied by xoloitzcuintles.*



*Her new home was designed with respect for the museum's colonial architecture.*



*The well from which La Noria got its name.*

Olmedo's former bedroom, which now houses several self-portraits by Diego as well as portraits of the Phillips-Olmedo family and watercolors which Diego painted of Russian children.

Dolores Olmedo lives in an annex built next to the museum's main building according to a design inspired by the architecture of the original hacienda building. When she is gone, the annex will house her library of over 3,000 books, focusing on art, history and botany.

To the right of the entrance we find the museum's first building, in what was once the hacienda barn. This houses the Temporary Exhibit Hall, the bookstore—where visitors can buy such souvenirs as rings, keychains, datebooks, playing cards, T-shirts, posters and books with reproductions of works by Diego Rivera and, above all, Frida Kahlo—as well as the museum offices.

Olmedo's former home, which is now the main museum building, is located at the end of a large garden. This is a favorite area for children, since animals freely roam the grounds: peacocks, ducks, Canada geese, chickens, turkeys and *xoloitzcuintles*—an endangered species of hairless, pre-Hispanic dog.

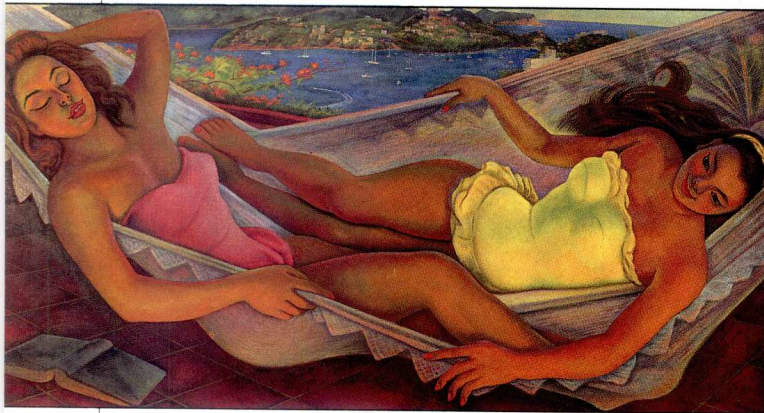
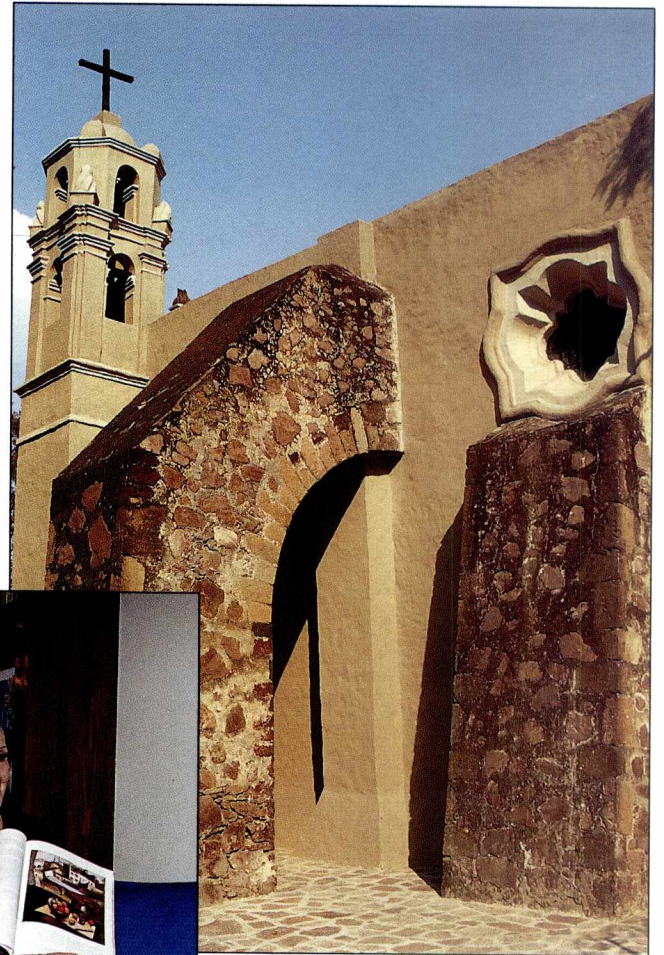
In the first hall of the museum, before entering the main area, visitors can view 42 engravings and drawings by the Russian painter Angelina Beloff—Diego Rivera's first wife, who lived in Mexico until her death in 1969. Further along is the former living-room, which holds some of the museum's 137 Rivera works, exhibited together with 400 pre-Hispanic figures. (In all, the museum houses more than 600 acquired pieces, registered at the National Institute of Anthropology and History and donated by Dolores

Olmedo.) The hall devoted to Frida Kahlo exhibits 25 of her works.

In the kitchen, visitors may admire a silver table service which belonged to the Emperor Maximilian, as well as commemorative plates which New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art illustrated with pictures by Diego Rivera for the "Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries" exhibit. It also features the collection of commendations various museums and institutions have given to Dolores Olmedo in recognition of her renowned, wide-ranging altruistic work for the benefit of our country's art and culture.

To the rear of the former hacienda compound is the Fernando Gamboa Room, which exhibits folk art that Dolores Olmedo used in the yearly "Day of the Dead" altars she has made over the last 35 years in the Diego

Sixteenth century chapel dome.



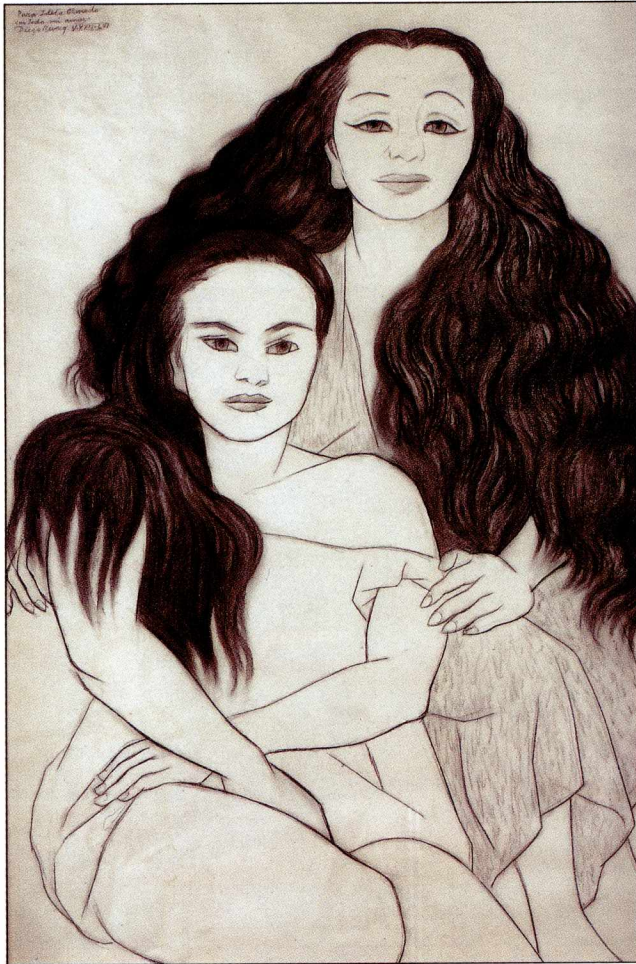
Diego Rivera, The Hammock, oil on tempera, 1956.

Dolores Olmedo happily shows the last Diego Rivera painting which she acquired last November at Sotheby's.



When Olmedo is gone, the annex will house her library of over 3,000 books.

José Juárez, Coatitlán, 1994 (museum's emblem).



*Diego Rivera, Dolores Olmedo with Her Daughter Irene, charcoal and crayon drawing on paper, 1956.*

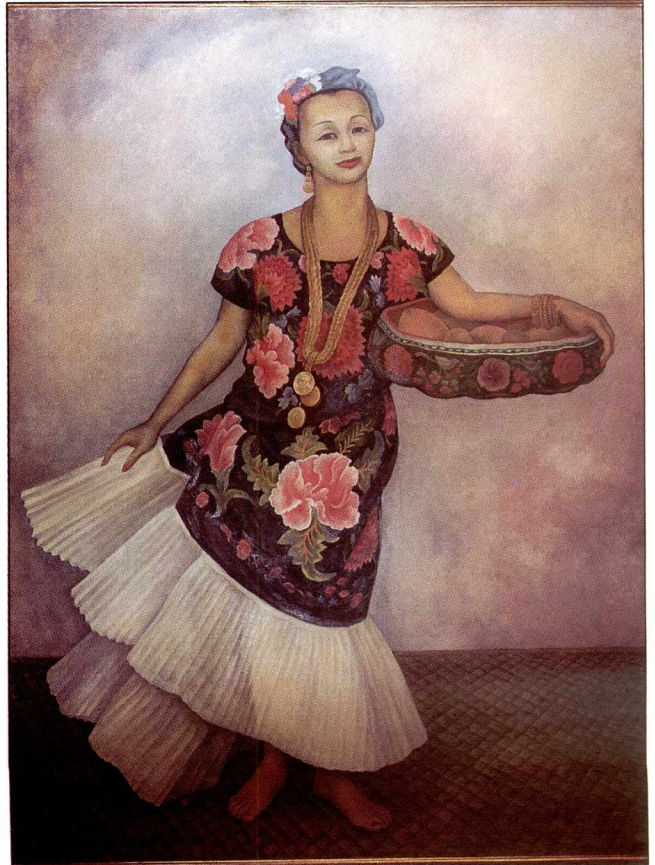


*Diego Rivera, The Watermelons, oil on canvas, 1957.*



*Diego Rivera, The Mathematician, oil on canvas, 1919.*

*Diego Rivera, Portrait of Dolores Olmedo (Tehuana), oil on canvas, 1955.*





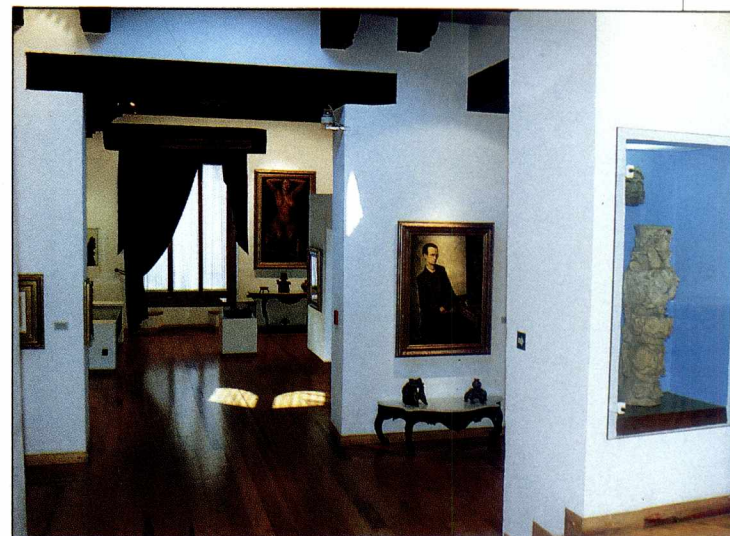
*Engravings and drawings by Angelina Beloff.*



*Series of sunsets that represents Rivera's "life curve."*



*Entrance to the hall dedicated to Angelina Beloff.*



*Visitors can also view 400 pre-Hispanic figures.*

*Part of the folk art exhibited in the museum.*



Rivera Anahuacalli and Frida Kahlo museums. Next door, in the patio, there is a small open-air forum for special events such as concerts, plays and dance performances. A small cafeteria is to open soon, allowing visitors to enjoy the museum's outdoor areas.

Dolores Olmedo met Diego Rivera in 1930. After Frida Kahlo's death in 1954 the friendship became closer, so

much so that they became inseparable from 1955 to 1957, the year of Rivera's death. The artist spent his last years in Olmedo's house in Acapulco, where he painted portraits of Dolores and her children as well as a series of 25 sunsets, 20 of which belong to the museum.

This series occupies one of the museum halls. Rivera said that the "curve of his life" could be seen in these sunsets—that they showed how

he responded to the "academicist" influence of José María Velasco, then developed his own style, returning in the end to academicism.

During his stay in Acapulco, he periodically traveled to Mexico City in order to undergo treatment for the pains caused by the cancer he suffered from. During one of these trips in June of 1957, he visited Dolores Olmedo in her former home, El Batán, and told her: "*Linda* [pretty one—his affectionate name for her], that fountain is horrible; shouldn't we fix it up? This is how he came to carry out his last monumental work, entitled *The Mirror of the Star*.

Diego often said that the costliest lover he had ever had was his mural painting, since he was paid very little for the murals in comparison to how much he had to invest in the realization of each project. Like many artists, he died poor. And this grieved him when several of Frida's paintings were put up for sale and he was unable to buy them. When Dolores Olmedo presented him with the surprise that she had bought them, he was moved to tears.

Before his death she told him of her plans to create a museum with his and Frida's work, and he made a list of paintings to be acquired for the museum's holdings. Many were purchased directly from him, others at auctions organized by important art galleries.

Thus, in addition to its inherent beauty, the Dolores Olmedo Patiño Museum is home to an impressive collection. It includes one of the first pencil drawings Diego made at the age of ten, a portrait of his mother, as well as the last picture he painted and signed: *The Watermelons*. The museum's founder is considered the world's foremost collector of the works of Rivera, Kahlo and Beloff ❧

Marybel Toro Gayol.

Managing Editor

Photos by Arturo Piera.



Olmedo and Rivera became inseparable from 1955 to 1957, the year of his death.

# The Frida Kahlo Museum



**A**t the beginning of the century, in Coyoacán—one of Mexico City's most beautiful and peaceful neighborhoods—Guillermo Kahlo built the house in which the story of one of the most interesting and controversial personalities of Mexican culture would unfold. It was there that Frida Kahlo was born on July 7, 1907. Her story—forty-four years of life—ends, prematurely and painfully, in the same place that it begins.

At fifteen she suffered an accident when a bus that was taking her to school collided with a streetcar. The handrail went through her, leaving serious consequences for the rest of her life. Triple fracture of the pelvis and severe damage to the spine condemned her to immobility and long years of pain. Her biographers speak of more than twenty operations performed on the self-taught painter, corsets that confined her to bed, barely allowing the most indispensable movement and, in the end, the amputation of one leg, two years before her death.

All this might lead one to view Frida's as a life full of limitations. Yet thanks to her vigorous spirit and indomitable character, she achieved her greatest aspirations—aspirations which took her to the margins of traditional values and morals. She lived as she wished, dressed as she wished, loved whom she wished, and there was practically nothing nor nobody that could keep her from expressing her feelings and passions in a way that, while others considered it extravagant, for her was full of meaning.

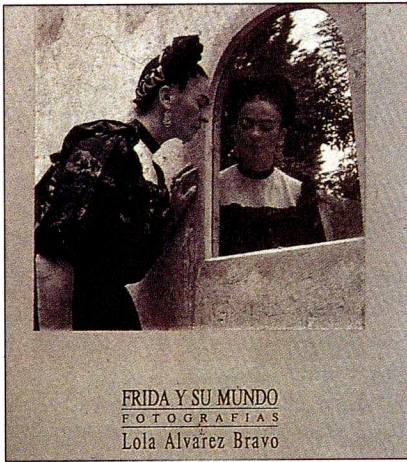


Stairwell with retablos.



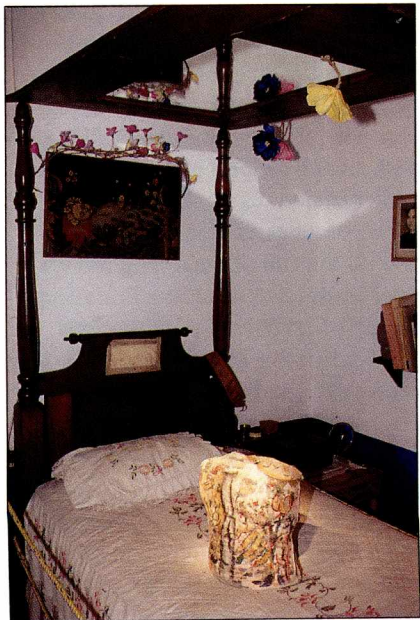
In the kitchen, Frida's and Diego's names are printed on tiny clay jugs.

Frida Kahlo's photo by Lola Alvarez Bravo.

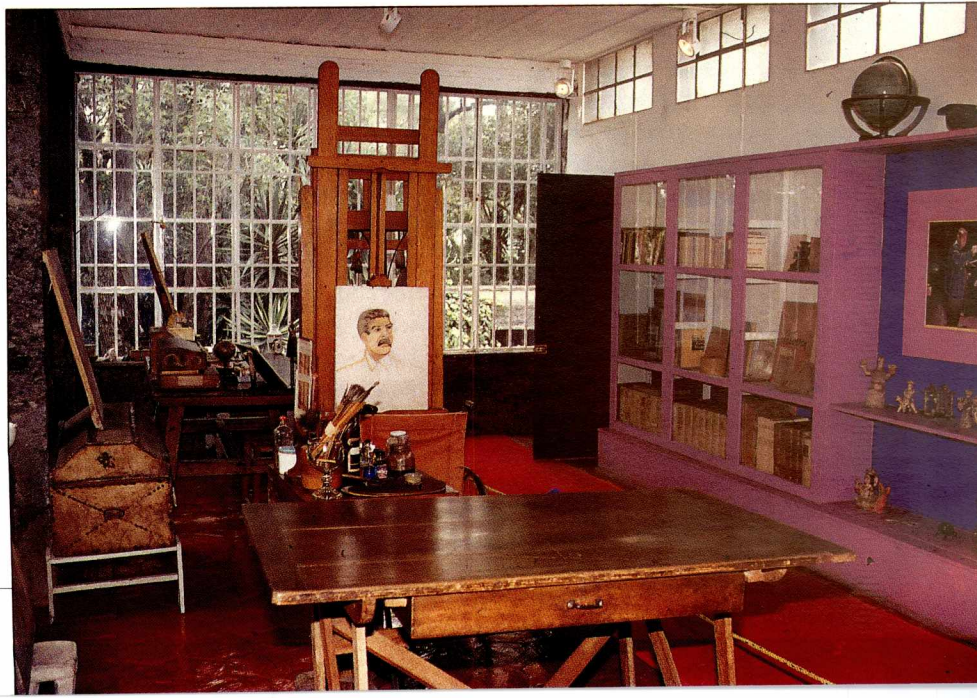


Photos of "The Central Post Office" (issue # 28) were also taken by Arturo Piera. (Editor's note.)

Frida's bed.



Frida said: "Why do I need feet when I have wings to fly with?"





Entrance of the "Blue House."

While still very young she joined the Mexican Communist Party. In 1929 she married Diego Rivera, one of the greatest Mexican muralists, who had already gained international prestige.

Diego's unending fondness for women, combined with the painter's long romance with Cristina, Frida's favorite sister, caused the couple serious crises, which resulted in frequent separations. The most radical of these was in 1940 and led to divorce. Despite these episodes, their emotional dependence was so strong that on December 8th of the same year they were remarried.

It was then that they moved into the house in Coyoacán where Frida had spent her childhood with her parents and sisters. This house would eventually be converted into one of Mexico City's most charming museums.

#### The museum house

Shortly after Frida's death, the poet Carlos Pellicer was commissioned to make the Coyoacán house into a museum, in honor of one of Mexico's greatest women and artists.

While Pellicer succeeded in maintaining Frida's things where

they had been while she was alive, they were modified for the purpose of visibility. Closets, wardrobes and file cabinets exchanged their heavy wooden doors for glass ones so that visitors could see what was once part of an intimate domain. Small glass cases were designed in which visitors could see the contents of letters and messages. In the kitchen and dining room the clay pots, china and vases remain in their original places.

On entering the house visitors can see that the structure of the "Blue House"—so called because of the intense blue of its walls—is the same as that of the city's typical old houses: a central U-shaped patio surrounded by rooms.

During the most difficult stage of her illness, when she was close to death, Frida adapted this patio so that she could move more freely in her wheelchair. A ramp runs next to the stairs that lead to the first room of the museum, making it easy to imagine Frida descending in her wheelchair. The ironwork of the windows between the rooms and the patio is painted green, as it was when the house was lived in.

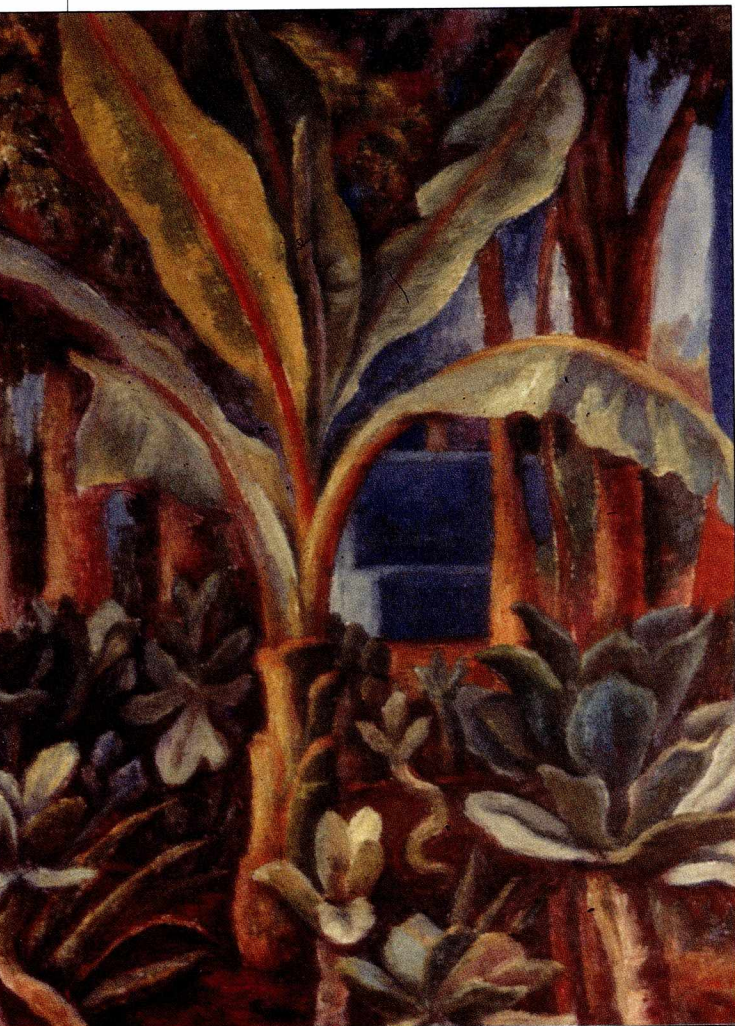
In the first room of the museum, which was the Kahlo family's living room and later Frida's first studio in the house, one can observe some of the painter's works. Not all are finished, but the "Portrait of Don Guillermo Kahlo" and "My Grandparents, My Parents and I" stand out, as do some drawings copied from Frida's diary, such as "Why Do I Need Feet When I Have Wings to Fly With?"

In the next room, which once functioned as a library, we are amazed at the collection of Olmec, Mixtec and Mayan pieces: carved jade and obsidian figures, earrings, necklaces, breastplates, and Oaxacan filigree jewelry. Many were part of Frida's daily attire.

In this same room we come across copies of passages from her diary, messages and fond notes that Diego and Frida sent each other. The Tehuana dresses that Frida wore are majestically displayed inside a large glass case. In the kitchen and dining room, the visitor is overwhelmed by the intensity of colors and the variety of shapes that characterize objects destined for domestic use. A particularly Mexican flamboyance appears here as in no other part of the house. The simplicity and austerity of the furniture, painted in lemon yellow, highlight the incredible variety of utensils and objects: casseroles, jugs, clay pots in every size; candelabras with animal shapes; pitchers, glasses and crystal vases of blown glass in different tones of blue.

At the end of the dining room a door leads us to what was Frida and Diego's first bedroom. In the final days before her death they slept separately and this was Diego's room. His overalls and traditional sombrero hang on a hat rack, as if they were about to be used.

In the stairwell beyond the dining room visitors can admire one of the museum's most impressive collections. *Retablos*<sup>1</sup> with a



Diego Rivera, Frida's Garden, oil on masonite, 1944.

IE/UNAM.



The museum's garden.



The visitor is overwhelmed by the intensity of colors.

Part of the collection of Olmec, Mixtec and Mayan pieces.

One can observe some of the painter's works.





*Vestibule with large “Judases” and natural stone mosaic-decorated ceiling.*

remarkable variety of requests hang on the walls, covering two of them completely. Once again, “Mexicanness”—in this case connected to a religiosity deeply rooted in the lower classes—is part of the surroundings Frida created tenaciously throughout her life.

The stairway leads to the newer part of the house, built by Diego around 1940. At the top is a long room in the form of an “L” profusely illuminated by three enormous windows, through which one can see the old ash trees in the garden; this was Frida’s studio. The objects are placed as if she were still living. In the center, on a large worktable, we see brushes and spatulas; further on, the wheelchair, an easel, and on a large

wall her books, imprisoned in large glass cases.

At the end of the studio, on the right, in a small space that for many years was the entrance hall, we come upon the bed from which, after having lost a leg, Frida could see the garden. The painting of a dead child with a bunch of flowers on its abdomen—Frida’s work—guards the head of the bed. From the opposite side we find images of Trotsky, Lenin, Stalin, Marx and Mao.

We enter the large rectangular room that was Frida’s previous bedroom. The canopied bed is adorned with figures of death made of glue and paper, small “Judases” and a neat collection of dried butterflies hanging from the ceiling. An infinite collection of diminutive objects—sugar skulls, carnival toys, little boxes, paper

flowers and masks—look at us from inside several glass cases.

We descend to the garden, finding some large “Judases” and enormous cardboard heads adorning the vestibule. The ceiling is decorated with a natural stone mosaic of the Communist hammer and sickle as well as a comet. Juan O’Gorman acknowledged that this mosaic was an important antecedent for the murals he created using this technique in the central library at the National University campus.

Leaving the vestibule, on the upper part of the walls we see inlaid clay pots; a high wall leading to the roof has enormous sea shells embedded in the stones.

At the end of the garden, the vision of a pyramid brings us back to other ages and places. It is a stepped pyramid, on which Diego placed some

<sup>1</sup> Popular paintings made to give thanks to God or the Virgin for some favor.



The Dolores Olmedo Museum Collection.

The Deceased Dimas Rosas (at 3 years of age), oil on masonite, 1937.

The Dolores Olmedo Museum Collection.

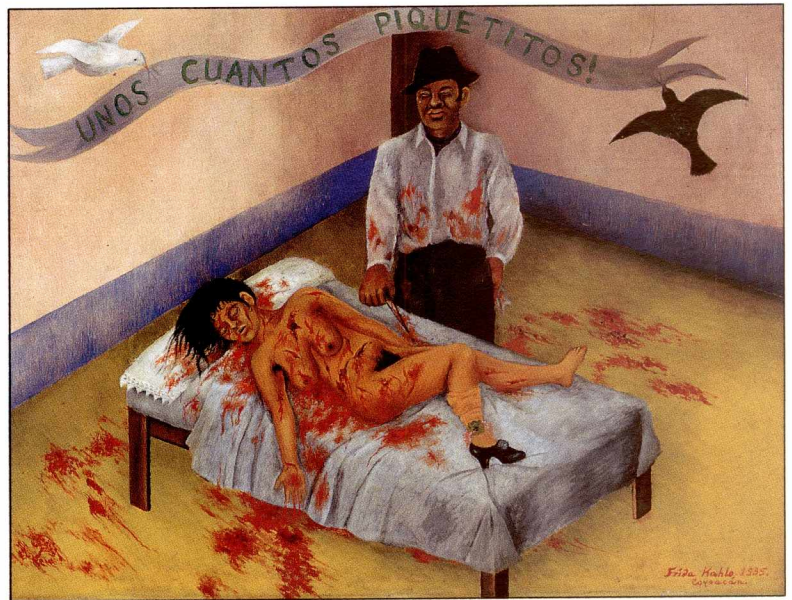
The Bus, oil on canvas, 1929.



The Dolores Olmedo Museum Collection.



Henry Ford Hospital, oil on lamina, 1932.



A Few Pricks, oil on lamina, 1935.

The Dolores Olmedo Museum Collection.

of the figures from his collection of archeological pieces, which numbered around 55,000.

### Frida's personality

In order to learn more about the artist we interviewed Diego's daughter, Guadalupe Rivera Marín.

- What can you tell us about Frida's personality?
- Frida was a very active person, very enthusiastic, with a very broad

social life. She liked to share a few drinks with her friends in places with mariachi bands, go to the movies and the theater. She was very cheerful. In reality she had nothing to do with the current image people have of her. Yes, there was a certain extent of neurosis, which she handled very well. She was not explosive; she didn't have violent outbursts or hysterical attacks. All this neurosis—which got worse in the final years of

her life when they amputated her leg—she managed to channel into her painting.

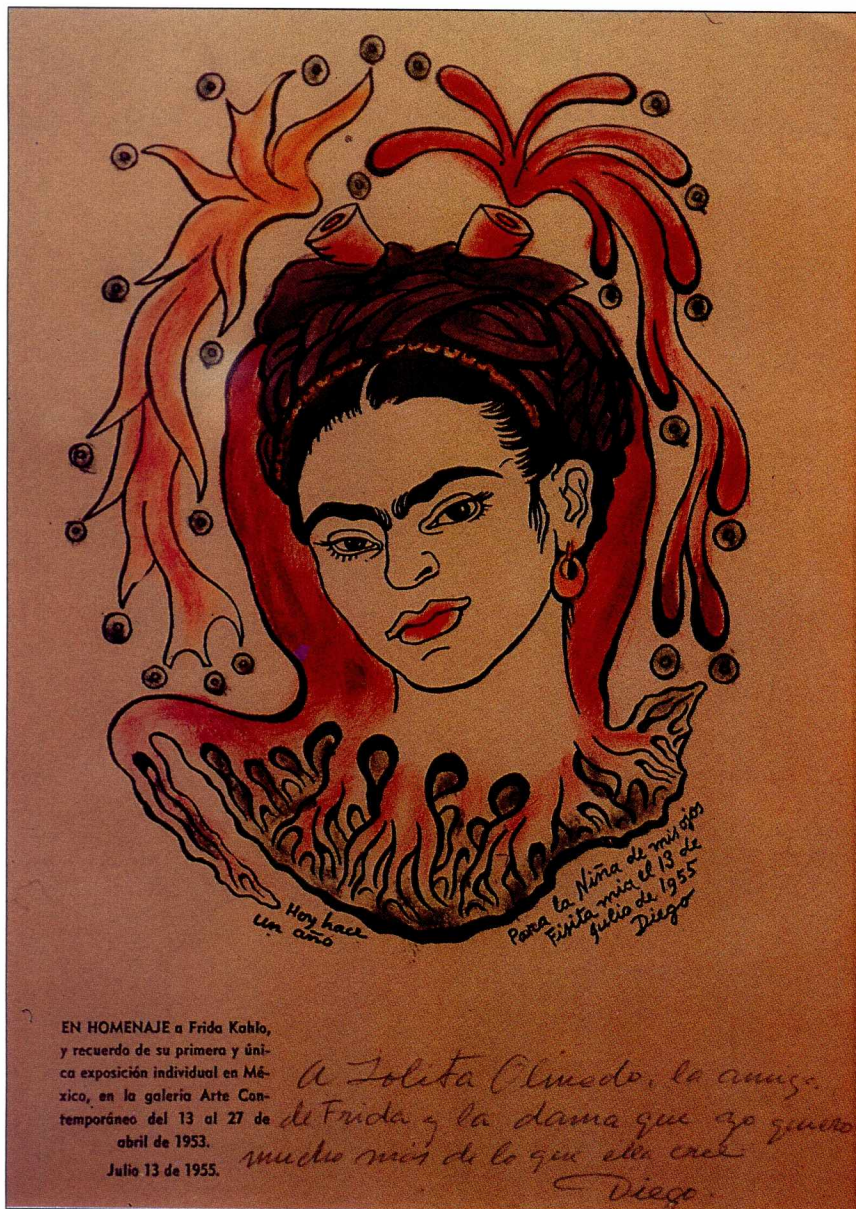
- What else can you tell us about her final years?
- When they amputated her leg she began to fall apart. Even though she used a prosthetic leg and later began to walk again, she never was able to integrate herself into life as she had before. She could never overcome this mutilation of her body; she let herself go more and more, until she finally died.
- Where did this neurotic tendency come from?

- I think she had this illness from the time she was very young. Even then her way of life caused a scandal in Coyoacán. None of the little girls rode bicycles or skated, but she did. She was very rebellious. She went to school by herself. She took the streetcar to go all the way to Mexico City, which was a long ride in those days. For the people of Coyoacán, her behavior seemed somewhat antisocial. I think she must have inherited something from her father's epilepsy, something like a deformation of her character.

- About the life of Frida and Diego, much has been written, a myth has been created. What do you think about this?

- The Frida phenomenon was artificially created. During the retrospective of Diego Rivera's work in Berlin in 1986, a friend from Berlin told me that German women took Frida as a model for their own liberation, because she was a painter with German roots, a very liberated woman for her times; because her suffering gave her a special halo, and because her lesbianism was another example of her liberation. I attribute all this to the gay movement's need to raise an international banner. In reality she was bisexual, because she had relationships with my father and with other men.

- Much has been said about the relationship between Frida and Diego.



The Dolores Olmedo Museum Collection.

Diego Rivera, Portrait of Frida Kahlo, offset of an engraving, 1955.

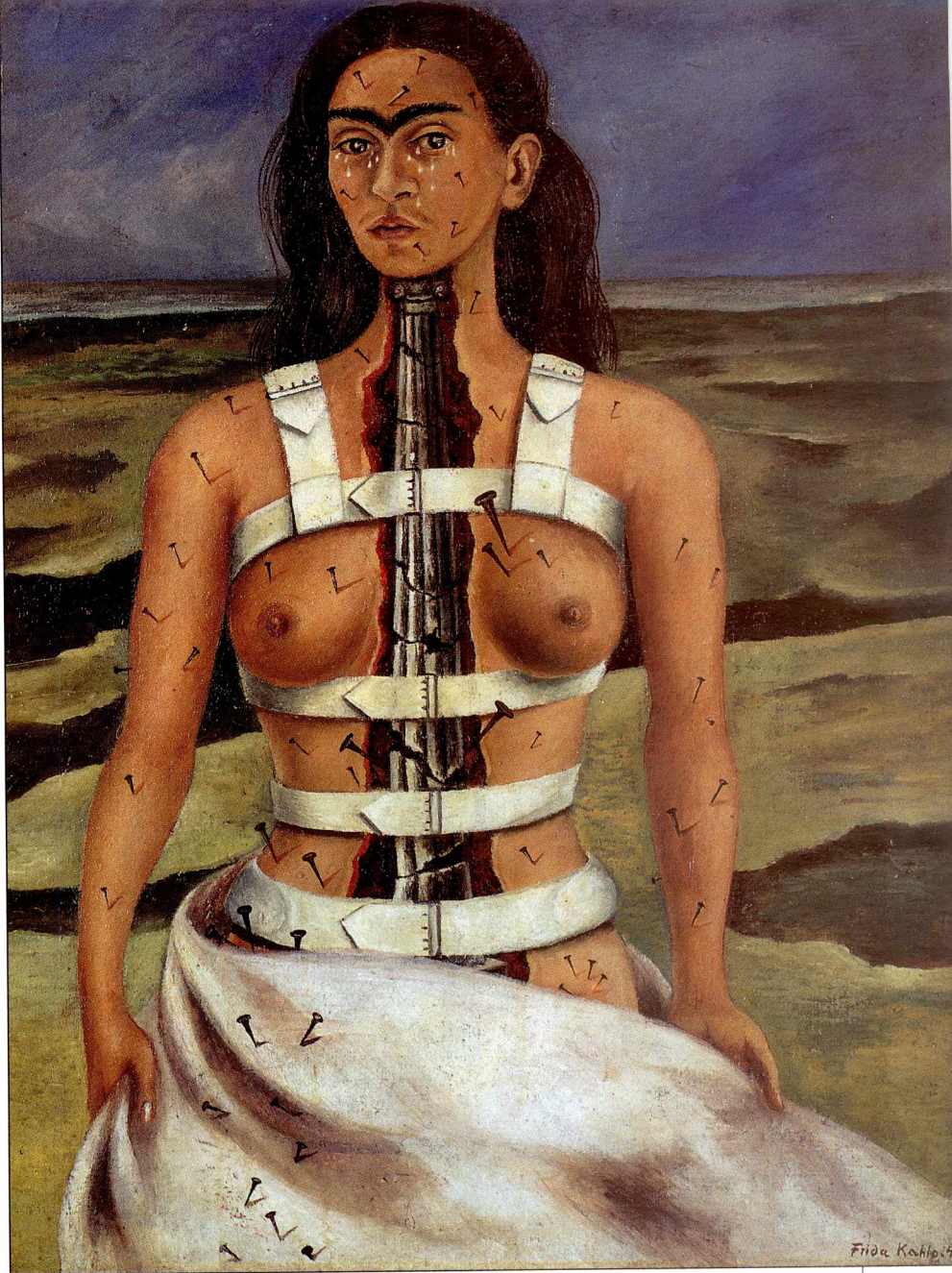


However, as someone who lived with them for a short time and had a relationship with both of them, could you add anything new?

■ It was a complex relationship, because neither handled married life as an adult, with adult responsibility. In a psychological sense, they did not take responsibility with each other. They spoke of a very strong love, but it was a pretty infantile relationship; it wasn't the emotional giving of a couple that lovingly develops a sensual, sexual, passionate life. Even though they did have a sexual relationship, it was more a game of appearances between them—not because they cared about others' opinions, since each of them lived their own passions.

● During my tour of the museum I was wondering how similar Frida and Diego were in their taste for Mexican things.

■ Frida did not have this taste originally. It was my father who instilled it in her. Frida and her family led a very traditional kind of life. She studied in the German school and dressed like a German, with plaid skirts, blouse and sailor hat. Her family had a strong European influence, but Frida changed due to her relationship with my father. All this Mexican influence in Frida's painting has to do



The Broken Column, oil on masonite, 1944 (The Dolores Olmedo Museum Collection).

Death mask of Diego Rivera.



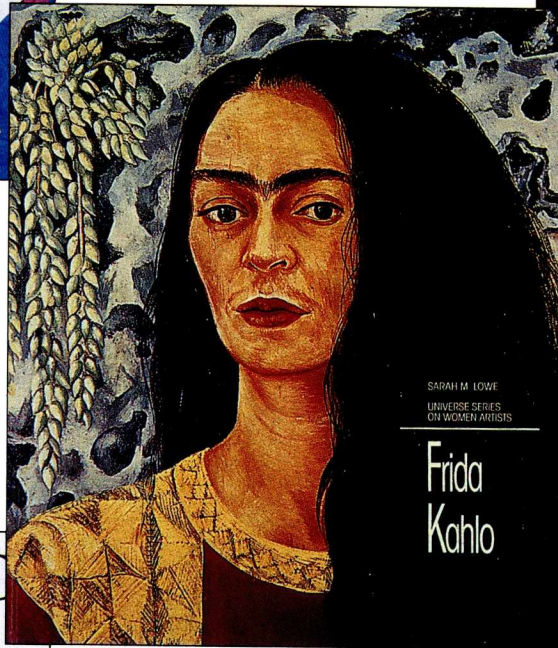
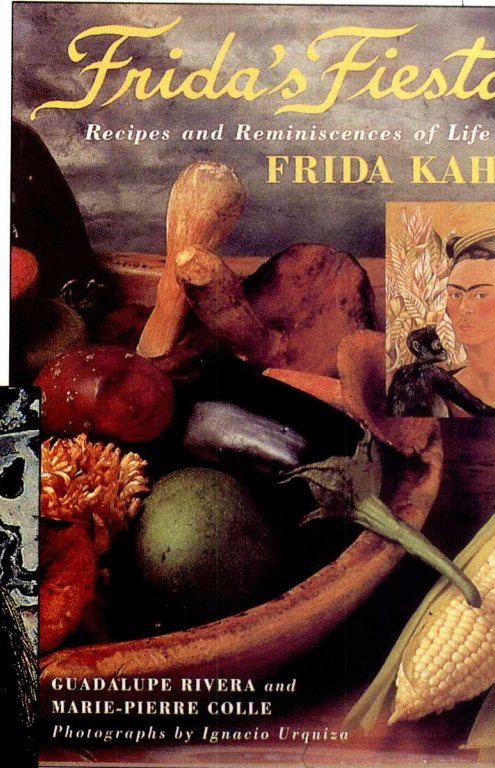
with Diego. He asked her to dress like a Tehuana, and bought her clothing from Tehuantepec. Frida's personality, in this sense, is a product of the symbiosis with Diego, absolutely.

Nevertheless, the Frida Kahlo Museum would not exist if this house had not been inhabited by Frida with all the power of her spirit and personality. ✎

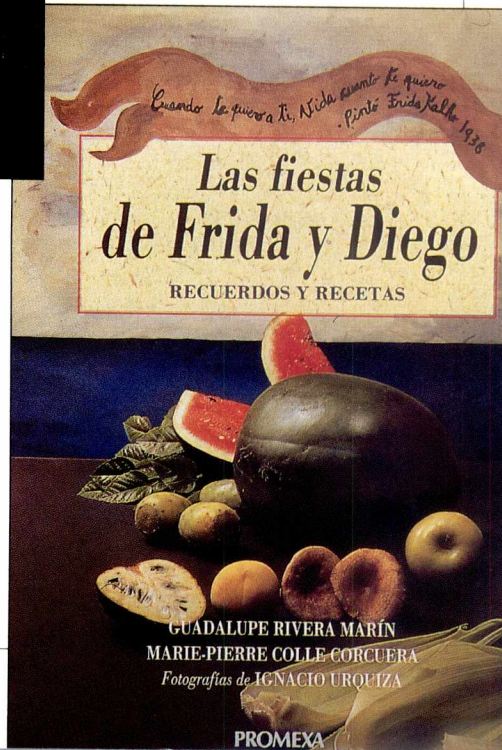
Maricarmen Velasco Ballesteros  
Staff Writer.

Photos by Arturo Piera.

# Reviews



FRIDA KAHLO



**Frida Kahlo & Ignacio Aguirre**  
**Cartas de una pasión**

(Letters of a Passion)  
 Luis Mario Schneider (preface)  
 Ricardo Noriega (design)  
 Glypho, Taller de Gráfica, S.C.  
 (pre-press production)  
 Editorial Trabuco y Clavel  
 Mexico City, 1994, 64 pp.

Much has been written about Frida Kahlo. Nevertheless, this volume of previously unpublished letters, in her own hand, helps reveal another of her facets. For Frida-followers this book is a new delight.

Ignacio Aguirre was a novelist and engraver from Jalisco. From 1915 (when he was only 15 years old) to 1917 he fought against Pancho Villa as a member of the forces commanded by Carranza. In 1920 he took up arms again, in support of General Alvaro Obregón. From 1921 to 1929 he worked in the Secretariat of Communications and the Office of the President of the Republic.

At the same time he devoted himself to art. He was one of the founders of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists in 1933 and the People's Graphic Workshop in 1937. In 1940 he won first prize in the Latin American Engraving Exhibit at the World Fair in New York, a city where he put on five exhibitions. He also showed his work in Washington in 1942.

He was a friend of the photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, for whom he also posed as a model. A photo of him was even used for the cover of the catalogue for the photography exhibition held at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1987.

He painted several murals, and the one he did in Mexico City for the Military Aviation Library—destroyed when the building was demolished—bore witness to his love affair with Frida Kahlo.

Their liaisons were held at Puente de Alvarado No. 45, where Aguirre

lived and where Frida addressed most of her letters (which were always stamped "For immediate delivery"), as well as in the aviation library or the home of very close friends. Unfortunately none of Aguirre's letters have been found, although from one of Frida's we deduce that he did write her: (August 19, 1935)

*I kept your letter like a treasure  
 —Your voice gave me the purest joy —I didn't know what to do—  
 and I sat down to write this letter which will be unable to tell you,  
 with my words, everything I would like to say —everything you deserve for giving me so much! —  
 your beauty —your hands —you.  
 I wish I could be so pretty for you!  
 I wish I could give you all that which you have never had, and even so you wouldn't know how wonderful it is to be able to love you. I will wait all the minutes until I can see you. Wait for me at six fifteen on Wednesday —below, in the big hallway of your house, because I think that's easiest —  
 Call me tomorrow at six in the afternoon; I just want to hear your voice, even if only for a moment. If you call me, I will gather many little flowers for you and I will bring them to you on Wednesday, but if you don't call me I will bring them to you anyway —so many that they could make a garden on your chest —  
 the color of humid earth.  
 The frogs are still singing for us —and our river is waiting —the chaste town is looking at the Great Bear constellation —and as for me —I love you.*

While Ignacio Aguirre's letters to Frida Kahlo have not been found, the testimony of his love and admiration remains in the lecture he gave on her in 1986, four years before his death:

*... Frida is the event of each day, with birds and flowers, forget-me-nots, pelicans, marigolds, the moisture of the garden and the aroma of a burning*

*comal [traditional Mexican griddle]... One day (and I don't want to brag about the thousands and thousands of anecdotes I know about Frida) I was painting a mural for the Military Aviation Library, which was then located on Balbuena Street. Frida was helping me... today it's nothing but dust, a memory amidst the nostalgia of what I am..... When Diego Rivera had to go to New York to talk with Rockefeller about the mural he did, which was later destroyed for reasons all of you know, Frida went with him. Scandalously beautiful Frida... I haven't seen, heard or read anything about Frida Kahlo. I knew her so well, I was so close to her in her artistic work, her struggles and her life, that I wouldn't want to change or upset the image I have retained of her. I simply remain with the Frida I know, who I looked at and listened to for many years.*

Luis Mario Schneider's preface to *Frida Kahlo & Ignacio Aguirre, Cartas de una pasión* provides the historical context of this love affair and mentions the factors that may have begun and ended it. The book also includes Kahlo's manuscript letters, together with a typescript version of each one; the images which María Esther Velázquez Piña Aguirre gave the publishers, together with the letters; and the full text of the lecture Ignacio Aguirre gave on his beloved Frida.

Marybel Toro Gayol,  
 Managing Editor.

**Frida Kahlo: Images and Icons**

**Frida Kahlo**  
 Sarah Lowe  
 Universe Publishing  
 New York: 1991, 128 pp.

**Frida Kahlo: The Camera Seduced**  
 Elena Poniatowska and Carla Stellweg (essays)  
 Chatto & Windus Ltd.  
 London: 1992, 125 pp.

Frida Kahlo continues to occupy the limelight as a choice subject for journalists, curators and academics. Sarah Lowe<sup>1</sup> looks at Frida from an art historian's perspective. Her book includes a short introduction, a brief biographical overview, a chronology and two main chapters: 1) The Self-Portraits and 2) Surrealism, "Primitivism" and the Still-Life Tradition.

The book is designed carefully, with color plates accompanying the text describing a particular work of art. In addition to beautiful color plates of Kahlo's paintings, there are also illustrations of related figures of codices, "ex votos" and other images, which the author uses to describe Frida's work.

### Self-portraits

Lowe presents a conscientious analysis of each of the plates included in the book, although she does not explain her rationale for including or excluding work. Her detailed descriptions educate the reader's eyes to notice details. The narrative flows from the identification of a particular technique to the names of artists who have done similar work in other periods of history. The dates and artists mentioned span centuries and continents.

There is a concerted effort to interpret Frida's work and draw conclusions relating to her relationship with Diego Rivera, whom she married twice, and the medical problems she endured.

### Surrealism, "Primitivism" and the Still-Life Tradition

Sarah Lowe's skill as an art historian is evident in this discourse on Frida

and Surrealism. She weaves in and out of "isms," focusing on elements which could place Frida into a tidy classification. Yet Kahlo's still-lives don't classify easily. Lowe is forced to conclude that Frida's work reflects her *mexicanidad*, that is her identity as part of the Mexican Renaissance of the 1920's and 30's.

Fruit, flowers and vegetables reminiscent of vendors' arrangements in Mexican open-air markets are redefined in terms of Surrealist concepts and feminist convictions. Odorless camelias become "sweet smelling" (p. 107), as if they were gardenias. In the description of "Unos cuantos piquetitos" (A Few Little Stab Wounds), a painting reminiscent of a José Guadalupe Posada engraving about a crime, Lowe inserts her own feminism:

*Unlike surrealist art, which glamorized misogyny and in whose visual images women are portrayed with a stylized, sanitized elegance, Kahlo's painting serves as an explicit reminder of the concrete reality of daily violence in women's lives (p. 86).*

The extensive analysis accomplishes the author's goal of placing Kahlo within the framework of art history, although the chapter might well have been called "Why Frida Kahlo Was/Wasn't a Surrealist." The material on "still-lives" goes beyond the careful classification of the self-portraits. Lowe asserts interpretations repeatedly, even assuming—when describing the Detroit painting *Store Window*, which includes a portrait of George Washington—that "It must have amused her [Frida] to think of this aristocratic-looking man as America's great revolutionary hero."

### Images

The well-known Mexican journalist Elena Poniatowska provides a

refreshing contrast to Sarah Lowe's position as a U.S.-trained art historian. Her essay is written as if Frida were the one expressing who she is and what she feels. Having personally known Kahlo, I have finally come across a text that is more like the Frida I knew. The text flows, chock full of irreverence and humor, without making light of the painful reality of the artist's body. Poniatowska alludes (on p. 20) to the collection of photographs presented in the book:

*Look at my face, look at my eyes, much is written there, much is hidden from view. My real self is in my painting. I hate pity.*

Carla Stellweg complements Poniatowska's text and Kahlo's images with a biographical essay, again including interpretations. She writes:

*At the age of five, in a photograph taken by her father, Frida strikes a seductive pose, resting her round face with its dimpled chin on her chubby arm. Mischievously she looks out at the photographer.*

The same image could project a defiant or bored Frida, depending on the conclusions one wants to draw about her.

### The subjective voice

There is an old Mexican saying: "Nothing is true and nothing false. It all depends on the color of the lens one looks through." Lowe looks at Frida through the lens of a non-Mexican feminist art historian. Poniatowska, a Mexican journalist and novelist, presents her interpretations by speaking out for Frida. Carla Stellweg presents her interpretations as a foreign art curator and journalist who lived in Mexico for many years.

Stellweg invites the viewer to "penetrate the mask [Kahlo] consciously designed, and to be

<sup>1</sup> Doctoral candidate at the City University of New York (CUNY), currently writing a thesis on Tina Modotti.

emotionally moved by the ways in which she shifted and changed to create her persona.”<sup>2</sup>

There are many wonderful photographs of Frida taken by professionals, novices, friends and family members, among them Ansel Adams, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Lola Alvarez Bravo, Lucienne Bloch, Imogen Cunningham, Hector García, Nickolas Muray, Bernard G. Silberstein and Edward Weston. Stellweg’s essay discusses the role of each photographer in Frida’s life and singles out Lucienne Bloch:

*Kahlo and Bloch enjoyed each other’s company; they went to the movies, drew together, cracked jokes, and sang off-color Mexican songs. Bloch made a unique series of photographs of Kahlo showing off, having fun, mimicking for the camera expressing the fun-loving daredevil side she usually hid from photographers.*<sup>3</sup>

Who is Lucienne Bloch? The captions document the backgrounds of most of the photographers, but not Bloch, who is mentioned but not identified as an artist who created many fresco murals of her own, together with her husband Stephen Dimitroff. They learned the technique working with Diego Rivera as assistants, apprentices and friends. Bloch’s images are outstanding: Frida is alive, a real person, not an enigmatic, mysterious myth!

More than twenty-five books and papers have been written about the “mythological Frida” since Hayden Herrera’s biography was published ten years ago—most of them by women. If Frida were alive today, I suspect, she would poke fun at the growing bibliography and plethora of

interpretations. She would probably go out of her way to become more outrageously cryptic for “interpreting scholars and journalists.” Or she might get bored with it all as she did with the monumental “old man,” Trotsky.

*Susannah Glusker*

Doctoral candidate studying the “Relationships among Intellectuals in Mexico and the United States” at Union Institute.

### **Frida’s Fiestas. Recipes and Reminiscences of Life with Frida Kahlo**

Guadalupe Rivera and Marie-Pierre Colle Ignacio Urquiza (photography) Spanish edition, Mexico City: Promexa, 1994, 223 pp. (English version, New York: Pavilion Books Limited, 1994, 224 pp.)

Each time we open the trunk of memories of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera we find a reason not only to talk about them but to put out a new book about them. This time Diego’s daughter Guadalupe Rivera joins with Marie-Pierre Colle to show us the salt and pepper in these two artists’ lives: the gastronomy and the parties.

Without being a novel, *Frida’s Fiestas* maintains an intimate link between characters and recipes. Rather than a simple book about the couple’s favorite dishes, this volume shows some of the ways in which Frida expressed her love for all things Mexican, for Diego, for her friends and—as she always said—for life in general.

Guadalupe Rivera lived with the couple and as a result, this book describes a loving and enthusiastic Frida who was generous with her support, even organizing parties so her university friends could meet the famous painter of the

Revolution and his wife, painter of scandalous canvases.

The book also reveals little-known anecdotes, such as the relation between Frida and Diego’s first wife, Guadalupe Marín (mother of Guadalupe Rivera), who prepared the food for her ex-husband’s wedding, since she knew which were the favorite dishes of the demanding Diego. The wedding ended with a scandal *a la mexicana*.

Famous personages passed through the dining room of the “Blue House” more than once. Tina Modotti, Juan O’Gorman and Trotsky, among many others, enjoyed the famous *chiles rellenos*, *chiles en nogada*, *pozoles*, *enchiladas*, *pulques* and *tequilas*. The cause for celebration mattered little—it could be anything from a political meeting to the Day of the Dead.

The Riveras’ lives were dedicated to reviving Mexican traditions, and they carried this out in many ways as part of their daily lives, from their way of dressing to how they celebrated and, above all, what they ate.

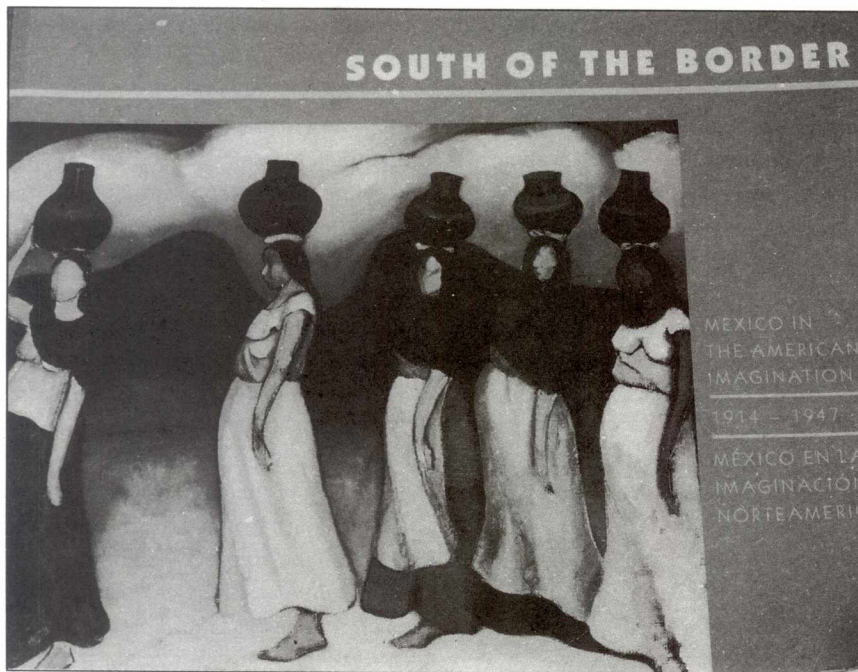
In a time when it was fashionable for women to wear short hairstyles, with heavily made-up eyelids and mouths and straight knee-length dresses, Frida Kahlo deliberately broke away with her original way of dressing, using regional outfits from the states of Oaxaca and Veracruz as well as the Tehuantepec Isthmus. Dressed in this special way, she made the rounds of the flower and fruit stands in the Coyoacán market several times a week.

*Frida’s Fiesta* was printed in August, the month the book begins with a listing of the special dates the Riveras celebrated throughout the year, each with its own menu and recipes and a short story for dessert.

*Mónica Ching*  
Assistant Editor.

<sup>2</sup> Poniatowska and Stellweg, page 118.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 112.



**South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914-1947**

James Oles

Smithsonian Institution Press  
Washington and London, 1993 (in Spanish and English), 296 pp.

During the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, hundreds of artists from the United States carried their brushes, pencils and canvases across the border to Mexico. Drawn by visions of a simple, rural life close to the earth, the excitement of the muralism movement, and an art relying on indigenous sources, they came to Mexico, gathered images, and almost uniformly returned home. The view they carried back to the United States both reflected and shaped Americans' impressions of their neighbor to the south.

*South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination* gathers images of Mexico created by foreign artists, mainly Americans, who visited Mexico during the first half of this century, essentially beginning in the

1920s when Mexico attracted the attention of the world with its "mural renaissance," and ending after World War II, when the focus of the art world turned to Abstract Expressionism.

The book is the first comprehensive study of this diverse group of American artists working in Mexico during these years, and is particularly welcome since it provides the context for their work in Mexico. It is truly a "treasure trove" for collectors, art historians, museum curators and art dealers who are interested in the individual artists and the significance of their work in Mexico. It is also an important source for those studying the influence of Mexican art in the U.S., or the genesis of stereotypes regarding Mexico and Mexicans.

The art reproduced and discussed in the book is as varied as its creators: Milton Avery's tranquil painting of a woman praying, Pablo O'Higgins' mural of capitalists with their war machine, perfectly arranged Oaxacan jars photographed by

Edward Weston, a *New Yorker* cartoon of a society woman talking about Mexico and ringworm. Text explains the social, economic, and political conditions that drew American artists to Mexico, the bases for their choices of images to depict in their art, and how those choices shaped Americans' vision of Mexico.

The unifying metaphor in the text is the 1939 song *South of the Border*, about an American man who falls in love with a Mexican woman, proposes to her, then jilts her at the altar. To Oles, this reflects America's sincere passion for Mexico, as well as its "broken vows and condescension."

Like the man in the song, many American artists saw in Mexico what they wanted to see and took from Mexico images that reinforced their dreams of what Mexico ought to be (for America's gratification and convenience), but ignored the country's reality. The images they carried back to the States —of "[p]easants and burros, small villages, fields of corn or maguey, local fiestas and communal markets"— are in part responsible for the stereotypes that Mexicans and Mexican Americans still suffer from today.

Travel brochures from as early as 1889 depicted Mexico as an exotic paradise "ripe for American investment, even colonization." One of the common images used is that of the voluptuous young maiden graciously offering the abundant fruits of Mexico (and implicitly herself) to Americans. To Oles, she personifies Mexico and its susceptibility to dominance "by the artistic or economic forces of the North."

The images of Mexico as a rural, communal country became even more seductive to Americans during the 1930s depression, as people lost faith in the U.S. emphasis on individuality

over community, as well as the increasing mechanization of life. Oles concludes that Americans saw in Mexico a more desirable, "organic" life, and viewed the Mexican Indian as firmly connected to "his ancient past, an anchor of stability in an era of otherwise rapid and frightening change."

To their credit, American artists captured a lovely aesthetic quality in their scenes of an outwardly tranquil Mexican life. The soft folds of a campesina's *rebozo*, the harsh spikes of the maguey cactus, the shiny curves of a Oaxacan jug, are all worthy of the artist's attention.

But at the same time, those who judge aesthetics often fail to see beyond color, line and texture. The campesina in the beautiful *rebozo* may be starving, *pulque* from the maguey may be intoxicating the men and preventing them from supporting their families, and heavy water jugs may cripple the spine. A quotation from writer Carleton Beals is a disturbing indictment of visiting artists' tendency to value form over reality. Beals laments:

*[M]uch that is lovely in the native handicrafts will go by the boards. Kewpie dolls will probably crowd out the delightful terra cotta figurines and straw-woven horsemen. Five gallon oil cans, rather than beautifully molded native jars, in many places, already grace the swaying shoulders of the local Rebeccas.*

Never mind that carrying water numerous times a day up steep hills was a backbreaking chore. To Beals it was a lovely dance. Surely, had he been the water bearer and had the incline been the stairs of his sixth-floor Manhattan walk-up, he would not have been so delighted by the aesthetics of it all.

Oles observes that the tendency of American artists to idealize Mexico also caused them to transform individuals, usually Mexican Indians, into an abstract "faceless symbol of a timeless world...." He acknowledges that Mexican artists, most notably Diego Rivera, were guilty of this as well:

*[T]he vast majority of the figures who parade through [Rivera's] murals and easel paintings are anonymous peasants.... American artists, in their representations of the Mexican Indian, would also depersonalize their subjects, converting them into the symbolic denizens of a dreamlike rural Mexico.*

Oles points out that the failure of American artists to let Mexican reality intrude into their canvases stemmed not from any malevolence, but from a wish that Mexico be as lovely, simple, and pure as it can appear to be.

Mexico is not a country, nor are Mexicans a people, who wash their dirty laundry in public. The artists who visited Mexico were probably received graciously, treated with respect and hospitality, and shown the country's most beautiful sights. Many were not fluent in Spanish, which further limited their ability to gather information about the nation independently.

The Mexican government assisted in presenting only the country's "best face" to the U.S. art-viewing public. According to one artist who visited in 1936, at the border the government confiscated all artwork "indicative of poverty or squalor," thereby ensuring that only innocuous images of Mexico entered the U.S.

As always, there are exceptions. A few of the artists who came during these years depicted an "ugly" side of Mexico —poverty, drunkenness,

violence, social inequities. Those who did, most notably Pablo O'Higgins and Elizabeth Catlett, were deeply committed to the Mexican workers' and campesinos' struggle for social and political justice. O'Higgins, an assistant to Diego Rivera and later co-founder of the Taller de Gráfica Popular (People's Graphics Workshop), painted murals condemning U.S. capitalists' exploitation of Mexico, child labor, and other social evils. Catlett and O'Higgins produced extensive graphic works through the Taller, and both eventually became Mexican citizens.

James' lively and concisely written text is preceded by the essay "Constructing a Modern Mexican Art, 1910-1940," by art history professor Karen Cordero Reiman. Those who cannot easily manage the following sentence are advised to skip the essay, or to attempt it after reading the text, by which time they will have developed a voracious appetite for more information on this period in Mexican art history. Reiman writes:

*In the work of Julio Castellanos and Agustín Lazo... subtle perspectival distortions and the contrast between the massivity and volumetric modeling of the figures and the flattening of pictorial space in other respects instill a disquieting spirit, akin to Italian metaphysical painting, that suggests a veiled critique or ironic stance in relation to the quotidian scenes they represent.*

Reiman's essay presents the hard facts of Mexican art history, but without the *joie d'art* that distinguishes Oles' writing ❧

Susan Vogel.

# Ruiz Massieu's political thought

*Roberto Ortega Lomelín\**

**T**hroughout his administrative and political career, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu was concerned with leaving a record of the duties he discharged, this being an inherent part of every public servant's responsibilities. Yet in addition to fully exercising his public duties, he continually reflected on the great issues and challenges facing the nation.

His record of public service made him a key protagonist, as well as observer, of several aspects of Mexico's political life, roles which he complemented through the study of constitutional law, politics, history and comparative analysis.

Within the federal government, he held high-level positions in central administration and management of state

\* Assistant Secretary General, National Executive Committee of the PRI.

enterprises, as well as in such social-policy fields as health, housing and social security. At the local level he reached the highest office as governor of his home state of Guerrero.

In his party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), he coordinated presidential campaign activities as well as those aimed at ideological enrichment and debate, and found his place in the national leadership: he was assistant director of the Institute of Political, Economic and Social Studies, president of the Cambio XXI Foundation and the National Ideology Commission, as well as secretary general of the National Executive Committee, representative to the Federal Elections Institute and coordinator of the PRI caucus of representatives elected to the 56th Federal Legislature.

Thus, his rich biography took shape through intense study, writing, the formulation of ideology, political practice, government experience and service in public administration at both the federal and state levels.

A key element in José Francisco Ruiz Massieu's published work was the unraveling and explication, through critical analysis, of the phenomenon of power. In a multiplicity of forums — from books, prologues, newspaper and magazine articles, lectures and interviews to government reports— he put forward his vision of government, democracy, politics, public administration, presidentialism, the workings of parliament, justice, federalism, party relations, the electoral system and the PRI.

For Ruiz Massieu, the new politics meant both an ideological formulation for the understanding of new times and a proposal for action to face them successfully. He founded his vision of democracy in Mexico on a systematic analysis of the democratic process, with an overall, historical view,



Angeles Torrejón / Imagenlatina

*Ruiz Massieu in one of his appearances at the Federal Electoral Institute.*



supported by the study of comparative politics and stressing the challenges involved in advancing and accelerating the democratic process.

### The new politics

The new, modern politics—which is not necessarily that of the new politicians—consists of changing the old abuses which are no longer accepted, instituting the new uses demanded by our times, and reaffirming those practices which the people have always considered good and valid.

Why do our times demand a new politics? Because this is a time of transition bringing together the old problems we have still to overcome and the many new problems we find ourselves facing. The new politics involves a new attitude towards power and the exercise thereof, the renewal of political language as well as the customs and habits of power and the reaffirmation of ever-relevant political values.

This new politics is that which rejects politics as the art of fakery, dissimulation and myth-making. Thus it demands the use of truth, without fear or frailty: “The truth reveals reality in order to be able to transform it; its absence—the absence of truth—makes reality rebel, sooner or later.”

To illustrate the new politics, José Francisco would contrast it to the old politics as well as to “anti-politics,” while stressing the attributes that men of state and modern politicians ought to possess: “The practitioner of the old politics cannot withstand light; his natural habitat is darkness or at least shadows; he lacks ideas, or if he has them does not express them; his language is cryptic; he reflexively falls into sloganeering, and since he yearns for the old days when there was no opposition, no national debate or crisis, he confuses criticism with treason, questioning with defiance. He is proud of his ability to avoid providing answers, and believes that dialogue is a monologue for two voices.

“The new politician, on the other hand, never lets an opportunity pass to rendezvous with public opinion and his adversaries, to show himself to society, drawing close to it, communicating with it and seeking its support. He must have ideas and know how to debate them, possess a ‘thick hide,’ since he has to resist aggression, pressure, demands and even trivialities without losing his spirits or his serenity, without allowing his pulse to race or good faith to give way to anger. He must be possessed of serenity as well as a keen eye in order to interpret facts faithfully; a sense of proportion, in order to calibrate events in a measured way,

without overlooking their real weight, but without attributing more weight to them than they have; the gift of anticipation, so as to act in time and react opportunely; the ability to act with imagination but not according to whim; to handle power with responsibility, balance, forethought and calculation, always looking out for the long-term interests of the nation.”

Prone to illustrating and summing up his views in phrases and adjectives, which then became mottos, he stressed: “Politics is passion and patience. It is also tolerance and detachment.” “What we are witnessing is not the decay of ideologies: we are beginning to witness the decay of

“*The new politics is in the process of appearing, while the old politics in a phase prior to its death agony. These are times of transition, and whoever fails to understand this will be left behind*”

José Francisco Ruiz Massieu

myths, so man and society may free themselves; the decay of the myths that exempt those in public office from being effective, that exempt public officials from giving an accounting of their output to the people.” “Either we change or we’ll be exchanged. When everyone changes, he who doesn’t change changes too: he turns inward, he changes in a backward direction when

everyone else is going forward.” “The government must work in the spirit of political ethics. Ethics weighs the intention and validity of ideas, while politics puts the accent on efficiency in order to bring ideas into the temperamental world of facts.” “The solution to conflicts must be political, but above all legal. Political solutions must be found, but within the parameters of the law. Solutions which advance democracy rather than perverting it. Anti-politics, on the other hand, means exterminating one’s adversary, the use of violence as well as the authoritarian wielding of power as if it were one’s personal property.”

The book of new politics is made up of various chapters, as Ruiz Massieu summed it up in one of his works:

- *Scarcity.* The practitioner of the new politics—in contrast to that of the old, who had access to ample resources—must perspicaciously manage planning (“anti-chance”) and politics (“anti-dilemma”), in order to administer scarce resources and harmonize competing demands.
- *Opposition.* The new political man must contend with an active, growing opposition, which is already participating in areas of government; he must look after the interests of the PRI while simultaneously serving the national interest and building essential points of consensus with members of the opposition.
- *Plurality.* Democracy can be viewed as a continual process of differentiation, which makes it a system of plurality. In the new politics there is no substitute for harmonizing

conflicting, legitimate interests, and this calls for men who do not confuse principles with dogmas, convictions with stubbornness, affiliation with sectarianism.

- *"Concertación."*<sup>1</sup> The scarcity of resources and the need to reorient and accelerate growth demand *concertación*, so the social contract may be continually renewed, as well as the establishment of projects that will benefit the nation, in a common effort with all the sectors that make up the country. In political life, discord results from any and all neglect, while active concord requires patient, tempered and thick-skinned negotiators.
- *The outside world.* In a period of greater international interdependency, Mexicans must become more proficient interlocutors with the outside world, recognizing that it will never again be possible to leave dialogue to professional negotiators. As a nation, Mexico cannot continue acting autistically; the leading groups [particularly the business and intellectual communities] must be characterized by an activism which leads to modern, practical understanding.
- *Change.* Society is never static, but there are those who believe that things can remain as they are, or refuse to recognize that things have already changed. The new politics demands men capable of facing up to the acceleration of change, who realize that what society demands is not an end to abuses—that is but a lower stage—but the establishment of new uses. That is the tenor of our times.
- *Politics in public.* The activity of the mass media, together with the expansion of the middle classes, takes the lid off politics, which becomes less secret every day. Neither concrete decisions, overall policy nor the people in power can go unnoticed, since today's democracies are better informed and therefore more critical. Those who fail to grasp that politics is no longer played out simply in official offices can only make mistakes, showing that they lack the instinct of contemporaneity.
- *Ideas.* Politics is not only for the engineers of power or the professionals of ideas. Politics is, above all, ideas and acts; it is thought in action. No political system can do without ideological work, which prevents it from drying out. In the new politics government officials must have ideas and be able to debate them.

### Engineering democracy

As a student of democratic transitions and processes, he wrote about these topics. In his book *El proceso democrático de México* (Mexico's Democratic Process) he

<sup>1</sup> This word, increasingly popular in Mexican political vocabulary, has no exact English equivalent; it involves the concepts of negotiation, consensus politics and the harmonizing of antagonistic positions. (Editor's note.)

coined the concept of "democratic engineering" or "political engineering," meaning the systematic definition of the ways and means for implanting and developing democracy, as well as the stages and time-frames for its use. This is a technological, methodological question. Both the democratic transition and the acceleration of the democratic process itself not only require a collective commitment to the liberal democratic doctrine, as well as what has been called the democratic education of the citizenry and of the "real factors of power"; they also call for democratic engineering.

This is an exercise in political planning, a design which corresponds to the government and political forces pushing for a qualitative transformation, which, in turn, means coming to an understanding. And this understanding is achieved only when the protagonists of the democratic process formulate and implement a common democratic culture. The axis of democratic culture is a shared conception of democracy which includes the role of parties, the function of elections, the nature and operation of basic political institutions, as well as the organic and territorial arrangement of power.

What are the fundamental issues with regard to which agreement must be reached? Sixteen key points, upon which the exercise of democratic engineering must be based, sum up José Francisco Ruiz Massieu's thinking on the democratic process:

1. That the idea of democracy's inevitability be rejected; instead, what should be accepted is its desirability and accessibility. It should be desirable and viable, so that it may be planned.
2. That there be a shared conviction that the democratic process is a dialectical, not a Manichean, process. According to the dialectical conception, dialogue for *concertación* is the irreplaceable method, while the Manichean method is violence, the effects of which—annulment and extermination—may be called "anti-politics."
3. Democratic culture is an exercise in collective political intelligence, whose fundamental resource is reason

“The practitioner of the new politics must perspicaciously manage planning ('anti-chance') and politics ('anti-dilemma'), in order to administer scarce resources and harmonize competing demands”

José Francisco Ruiz Massieu

—political reason, which can be achieved only through the constant use of dialogue among players. This means laying to rest the “thesis of the hero” and its corollary, “the thesis of the antihero,” as well as voluntarism.

4. The transition must be understood as an agreed-upon project in terms of its modalities, ends, stages and time-frames.

5. The transition must be inclusive. Every protagonist has a place and plays a role which strengthens the logic and workability of the whole. This inclusiveness means recognizing that pluralism invigorates political processes and increases their efficiency.

6. The transition rejects dogmas, instead embracing programs and relying on the efficacy of agreed-upon gradualism.

7. The end product of the culture of transition consists of agreements, whether they be informal or of the highest normative level.

8. The democratic process is an endogenous task which is the business, essentially and without excuses, of the society which proposes to carry out a transition. The history of transitions does not record cases of successful democratic projects being imposed from abroad.

9. Democracy must be seen as an integral process, which certainly has a political content, but also an economic, social and cultural one. The pact [for democracy] must therefore be simultaneously viewed as furthering the advance of democracy, development, social justice, governability and national sovereignty.

10. As part of the definition of democratic engineering, it is indispensable that the convergent political forces become genuine interlocutors, and as far as the government is concerned the interlocutors are political parties. Thus, if there is no reasonably efficient and responsible party system it is impossible to achieve this pact, without which there can be no democratic shift and acceleration. In some cases parties institute themselves, in others they restore themselves, while in others still they reconstruct themselves in order to co-author the work of democracy. In a period of democratization, the parties’ natural allies are the intellectuals, the university community and the mass media, and the participating forces therefore usually seek to incorporate these sectors into the process.

11. In a genuine transition the principle of the centrality of the parliamentary institution may be observed: it is in parliament that consensus is achieved, pacts are sealed, agendas are drawn up and the tasks of democratic engineering defined, the latter finding expression in declarations, political debates and laws. There is no record of any durable, authentic democratic transition occurring in the absence of the demand for a reevaluation of the role of parliament and of the parties participating and giving life to this institution.

*“No political system can do without ideological work, which prevents it from drying out. In the new politics government officials must have ideas and know how to debate them ”*

José Francisco Ruiz Massieu


12. Intelligent, applicable and equitable electoral legislation, which guarantees the effectiveness of suffrage and parliamentary efficacy while strengthening political parties, is one of the most essential aspects of democratic engineering.

13. The exercise of political planning which the rise of democracy demands is aimed at preventing ideological and programmatic “bipolarization” by fostering centrism. Centrist tendencies can culminate in a genuine national convergence around a basic social pact, making possible the alternation of government power which can aid in consolidating democratic advances without unleashing collective discord or reviving historic quarrels. Centristism is expressed in a constant: in a democracy one doesn’t win everything, nor does one win forever.

14. Centristism and party pluralism make it necessary that the agenda of the democratic process take up the great issue of the organic and territorial arrangement of power, the division of powers and political decentralization.

15. A moderating and temporary solution is the formula of incorporating members of the old regime into representative or simply governmental organs during the first phases of transition, in order to block radicalisms and remove obstacles.

16. Transitions have an international dimension which the engineers of democracy must especially keep an eye on if the process is to be successful and to avoid foreign interference.

This is a brief summary of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu’s ideas regarding two concepts he put forward for explaining and carrying out the changes demanded by Mexican political life, changes to which he devoted many hours of reflection. This was the result of a firm conviction, which he always upheld: “Those who carry out functions of government and leadership must link ideas, words and action. Ideas illuminate collective problems, words carry the message of ideas and action transfers them to the field of political reality, in brief.” This conviction and his gift for anticipation led him to formulate and expound his ideas opportunely and submit them to public debate. 

# Some recollections

I knew Francisco Ruiz Massieu since he was a student. He was distinguished by his clear vocation to become, in time, a public servant. He studied the problems of our country and participated in students groups united by a single objective: to seek solutions to our long-standing deficiencies and thereby strengthen progress for all, distributing benefits to the neediest.

I remember, upon returning to Mexico from abroad, having breakfast with some of the students who were anxious to prepare themselves to serve Mexico. We discussed and debated international and domestic issues. The group's academic training was excellent. They had made the highest grades at the university and all were motivated by the desire to work and confront the nation's problems. Today this group occupies top-level posts in our government.

After Ruiz Massieu became governor of Guerrero, I found myself in frequent contact with him again. He provided outstanding assistance to the university magazine *Voices of Mexico*. We also had the pleasure of publishing two of his articles: "Mexico's Political Assets" (issue No. 18, January-March, 1992) and "Limited Transition: The Chilean Case" (issue No. 27, April-June, 1994). The latter refers to the democratic changes that took place in Chile and Spain, when the dictatorships of Pinochet and Franco were democratically replaced.

Ruiz Massieu was convinced of the benefits of democracy and his final activities in the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) centered on a struggle to establish a straightforward democracy in our country, with democratic rules within the PRI for the selection of candidates.

From the conversations of that time I remember some of his key concerns: he was in favor of mass education to abolish illiteracy once and for all, since he considered this Mexico's greatest problem. "It is urgent to combat the ignorance of the majority who live in grinding poverty; otherwise democracy cannot really work," he stressed.

"If we fail to construct a solid base for democracy, we will live in a dangerous state of transition. In the absence of democracy the national ulcer of *caudillismo* will grow," he commented—unaware that he himself would be a victim of political violence.

We discussed the defense of the government through democracy. If aspirants to public office are nominated in a

unilateral way, this produces serious, deep-going resentments against those who decide in favor of one and not another. We talked about the case of Manuel Camacho, who—disappointed at not being named successor to the president—clumsily provoked a crisis during a difficult and worrisome year. If the PRI had nominated its presidential candidate according to clear democratic rules, no one would have felt cheated.

I have insisted on this point because of the drama of the assassination of Ruiz Massieu, apparently carried out as the fruit of hatreds and resentments on the part of those who found themselves left on the political sidelines.

As a result of my contact with Ruiz Massieu, I always considered him an honest, idealistic man, a talented jurist who wanted to fight for the good of Mexico and the genuine rule of law. His merit did not remain at the theoretical level; he worked tirelessly for his goals through action. He played an important role as PRI representative to the Federal Electoral Institute, distinguishing himself through his clear and concrete contributions.

He reached a top-level post in the PRI and had been named coordinator of the party's caucus in the Chamber of Deputies. We expected a lot from José Francisco Ruiz Massieu. We knew he was well prepared for the job. "Automatic majority votes are undesirable," he said in his last speech before the deputies-elect of the PRI. He asked for rational votes based on study and analysis, as well as dignity, unity and loyalty.

He was a supporter of separation between the PRI and the government, of converting the PRI into a party with a doctrine of progress so that, on the basis of study and research, it could anticipate government decisions. "To condemn and combat the system's deviations would be our greatest contribution to Mexico," he said.

Luis Donaldo Colosio, supporter of change, died by assassination. José Francisco Ruiz Massieu also wanted change and was murdered by criminals from his own party. These two sacrifices obligate us to struggle for the victims' ideals, since the salvation of our country will be democracy ✕

Hugo B. Margáin  
Editorial Director.

# José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, an irreparable loss

*In Mexico there is room for plurality, dissent and criticism, which are indispensable elements of democracy. But never for violence, which is the antithesis of politics!*

**María Fernanda Riveroll, widow of Ruiz Massieu**

Only one day after President Carlos Salinas proclaimed that the presidential transition—which takes place on December 1, 1994—would be characterized by stability and order, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, Secretary General of the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), was assassinated.

And while crimes are committed every day in Mexico City—as in any other great metropolis—this second political assassination in our tragic year of 1994 shook Mexican society once again. As the writer Carlos Fuentes asked: Who's next?

The assassinations of Luis Donald Colosio (March 23) and José Francisco Ruiz Massieu (September 28) constitute “a much more disconcerting, terrifying and phantasmagorical [kind of] violence.... This is not the violence which enemies and opponents of the regime use against its members, which would at least be explainable. This is the violence that breaks out between powerful members of one and the same family.... It is a suicidal violence... which leaves society bewildered, with an unbearable sense of danger and orphanhood,” wrote Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, a congressman from the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) (*Reforma*, October 14).

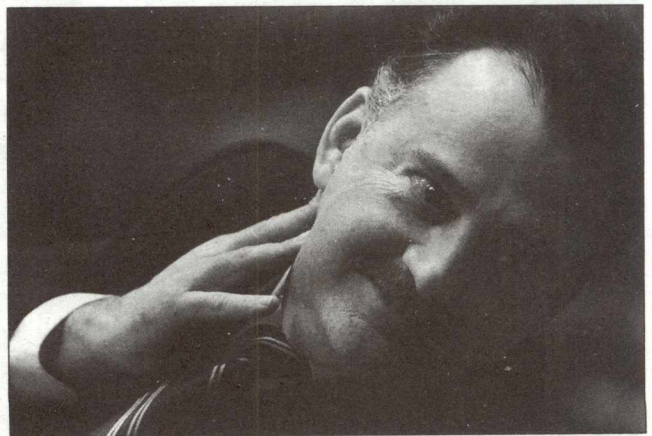
Ruiz Massieu did not get his last wish. At the time of his assassination he was on his way to the Federal Elections Institute (IFE), where a long-awaited debate was to be held between Jorge Carpizo—president of the IFE and Secretary of *Gobernación* (the Interior Ministry)—and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, president of the PRD. “It’s a good

cast and I don’t want to miss the event,” he said before getting into his car, where he received the fatal gunshot.

Muñoz Ledo stressed parallels in the deaths of Colosio and Ruiz Massieu: “Colosio was murdered when agreements for a political reform began to be translated into will and action. Ruiz Massieu was killed when the desire for a national democratic dialogue began to be translated into deeds.” The latter assassination occurred one day after the PRI published a call for political reform.

In addition to the fact that both victims favored democratizing the country and carrying out a dialogue with the opposition, they were both extremely close to the president. Although as a result of his divorce Ruiz Massieu ceased to be a member of the Salinas family, he continued to have an excellent personal and professional relationship with the president.

José Francisco Ruiz Massieu was born in Acapulco, Guerrero on July 22, 1946. In 1969 he received his *licenciatura* (roughly equivalent to a bachelor’s degree) in law from the National University of Mexico (UNAM), and was immediately awarded a scholarship to carry out



Angeles Torrejon - Imagenlatina

*He was a well-prepared and creative politician, with a genuine vocation to serve his country.*

## Sad Spectacle in the Legislature

It was almost a *fait accompli* that José Francisco Ruiz Massieu was to become president of the House of Representatives' "Grand Commission" on November 1st. Shortly before his death he noted: "The great challenge is for Congress to become the stage for political *concertación* [accord through negotiation of conflicting positions]; that the House of Representatives become the house of political dialogue." He insisted on the need for a constant dialogue which would replace the idea of a struggle for power through the extermination of adversaries.

This practice was very common in Mexico during the first part of this century. In honor of one of its victims the Belisario Domínguez Medal was established, to be awarded by the Senate in recognition of service to society. On October 7, shortly after Ruiz Massieu's assassination, the Chiapas poet Jaime Sabines was awarded this medal. A senator from Ruiz Massieu's home state of Guerrero gave the traditional reading of the historic speech that Belisario Domínguez made from the Senate floor against President Victoriano Huerta in 1913—a speech which cost him his life. "The text moved many. Nothing could have been more up-to-date or relevant" (Néstor Martínez, *La Jornada*, October 8). Among its passages is the following: "The fatherland demands that you fulfill your duty, even in the face of danger, and even if it is certain that you will lose your life...."

The duty of our legislators is to watch over and safeguard the interests of the people who elected them. Nevertheless, the Permanent Commission of Congress was stained with Ruiz Massieu's blood on October 5, when the PRI majority voted to give a leave of absence to PRI congressman Manuel Muñoz Rocha—one of the alleged intellectual authors of the murder—rather than depriving him of parliamentary immunity. (So long as a legislator enjoys this constitutionally stipulated immunity, no legal action may be undertaken against him.)

Even five days later, the House of Representatives' Subcommittee of Inquiry ruled out, on the grounds that it was "unnecessary," the request by the attorney general's office that Muñoz Rocha be stripped of his immunity.

Néstor Martínez and Oscar Camacho wrote the following account of this unfortunate commission session (*La Jornada*, October 6):

...The discussion went on along the same lines for almost three hours until [PRI congressman] Florencio Salazar, with tears in his eyes, spoke of his memories of his chief and friend.

In his remarks Salazar explained that he had originally planned to vote in favor of the leave of absence, but that after listening to the arguments made by the PAN and PRD, "I believe it would benefit Congress for this ethics judgment to be approved if all arguments are exhausted...." Above and beyond specific hypotheses, Salazar said that the murder of Ruiz Massieu is undoubtedly a political assassination, and that he would vote against [the leave of absence] for the sake of consistency and because the country demands justice, public security, certitude and change, as well as politicians who conscientiously face up to their responsibilities.

Salazar's statement met with the approval of many members of his party. When [commission president] Humberto Lugo Gil saw that this was endangering the process of approving the leave of absence, he called a ten-minute recess. PRI congressmen were summoned to a private discussion in an adjoining conference room, where Lugo Gil and González Avelar called for party unity.

Not all were convinced, but in the end they obeyed discipline and voted in favor, with the exception of Florencio....

## Poor Donaldo, poor me

With his unjust disappearance, Luis Donaldo did me a final favor: he gave me back the ability to feel sadness with an intensity I thought I had lost forever exactly 30 years ago, on another occasion when death by violence paid a visit to my life. While I met him at a young age —twelve years ago, during Miguel de la Madrid's presidential campaign— our friendship grew ever closer over the past eight years of working together as part of Carlos Salinas' team.

In December of 1991, circumstances, concretely the inadvisability of an early withdrawal from my duties in the Guerrero state government, prevented me from working with him in the PRI's National Executive Committee as we had both wished. The catastrophe of Wednesday the 23rd prevents this once again, this time in an irrevocable and terribly painful way.

Nevertheless, in recent years and especially over the past four months, I was close enough to Luis Donaldo to get to know his real nature, without any kind of obstacle. I was able to get past the outer shell all public men must maintain, and to see the man and his authentic soul.

Thus I was able to see that President Colosio would go down in Mexico's political history as the "noble president," because he had an upright, measured and warm vision of the matters of state. This vision left no room for malign passions, resentment or pettiness, nor even arrogance, that professional disease that often besets rulers of countries such as our own.

His seriousness —his sense of responsibility— was neither sad nor opaque. On the contrary, he was happy, with an unrowdy, straightforward and transparent kind of happiness, born of a sharp intelligence yet based above all on his moral condition, on his healthiness as a human being.

I would also like to bear witness to the fact that his presidential aspirations —which in his case it would be dull-witted to take as mere ambition, and which never led him to get involved in bureaucratic in-fighting— flowed from an inclusive objective: he had this aspiration because he wanted progress towards a system in which everyone would have a place, in which nobody would be left out, which would include external antagonists and internal competitors, all social groups and every region of the country. This was a genuinely humanistic conviction, alien to any kind of wheeling and dealing.

His party and parliamentary activities and his work in the field of popular welfare, like his modest origins in the rural middle class (as what he called a "child of the culture of effort"), gave him gifts which are indispensable for governing a country such as Mexico will be: patience, tolerance, generosity, simplicity and a sense of balance. He was equipped to be a president who would show the kind of leadership that the peoples of the world demand today.

The last hundred days, specifically since the rising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), were very hard for Colosio as a candidate, and even harder for the good man that this young martyr was. He faced up to everything, as only upright people —whole people, as the men of the countryside say— can: he withstood bitter criticisms of his campaign and sought the explanation in its deficiencies rather than supposing that his detractors spoke in bad faith. He thoughtfully faced the evolution of events, including the unprecedented and the unfortunate ones, in order to contribute to a solution. He paid no heed to the pressures urging him to break with the president. He behaved generously towards the main protagonists of the past hundred days, extending his hand in fraternity. Rather than political artifice, all this was an exercise in morality. Not once, even in moments of confidence and in the most private surroundings, did he speak a word that contradicted his public behavior, nor did his frank visage give expression to anything that went against his public stand. *He acted out of conviction, not calculation; strength, not weakness; authority, not fear.*

Until the end —until Sunday, when I spoke with Donaldo for the last time— his comments regarding the president were characterized only by a kind of complete affection which is seldom seen at the top levels of government. He had only cordial words regarding those who, intentionally or not, stood in the way of his moving forward; and an understanding attitude towards opponents who did not respond to his initiatives for political civility and his efforts towards democratization.

To end: when his death was confirmed, I could only exclaim, in a voice I never knew I had: "Poor Donaldo, poor me, poor us; poor all of us!"

**José Francisco Ruiz Massieu**

Article dedicated to President Carlos Salinas, published in *La Jornada* on March 25 (under its original title, "Luis Donaldo, the Man") and again on September 29, 1994.

post-graduate studies in political science at Great Britain's University of Essex.

In 1971, together with his brothers-in-law Raúl and Carlos Salinas, as well as Manuel Camacho, he formed the Politics and Revolutionary Professions civic association, whose motto was "The professions in the service of politics; politics in the service of the people."

From 1987 to 1993 he served as governor of Guerrero, one of Mexico's most tumultuous states —completing a six-year term there was in itself a feat, Ruiz Massieu being one of the few to do so.

He was a law professor at UNAM and the Autonomous Metropolitan University. One of his students, Rafael Tovar y de Teresa, president of the National Council for Culture and the Arts during the Salinas administration, wrote: "What I remember from his classes is not only his insistence that one learn the structure of juridical systems and the function of government, but the most important point: his emphasis on the values which should be the basis of public officials' ethics.... There is no way anyone could forget seeing him arrive for the first day of class with copies, for each one of us, of texts which cannot be found in Mexico; he considered these materials crucial to our training."

Ruiz Massieu sought the elimination of illiteracy. Thus he believed that the most important thing about culture is to spread and share it. Despite his intense political activity, he always made time to read and write. He authored or

coauthored numerous articles, books and prologues, coordinated publications and sponsored a range of cultural and academic projects. Key among his books are *El proceso democrático en México* (Mexico's Democratic Process), *¿Nueva clase política o nueva política?* (A New Political Class or a New Politics?) *Ideas a tiempo: las perspectivas de la democracia* (Ideas in Time: Perspectives for Democracy), *La construcción democrática* (Building Democracy) and *Cuestiones de derecho político* (Issues in Political Law).

Among other posts that José Francisco Ruiz Massieu held were those of Assistant Secretary of Health and General Director of the Institute of the National Fund for Workers' Housing. Starting on May 13, 1994 he served as Secretary General of the PRI and that party's representative to the IFE. He had recently been named coordinator of the PRI and was expected to be made president of the House of Representatives' "Grand Commission."

While he did not always put his modernizing and democratic political thinking into practice, and his term as Guerrero governor had some negative aspects, he was a tireless, well-prepared and creative politician, with progressive ideas and a genuine vocation to serve his country. Thus we consider his death an irreparable loss for Mexico. ❧

Marybel Toro Gayol  
Managing Editor.

## Goodbye, Pepe

Pepe [José Francisco Ruiz Massieu] was one of the most singular characters that you could meet. An impassioned reader, profound analyst, noteworthy writer and vigorous polemicist, he paid tribute to intelligence and knowledge.

His political vocation came at an early age. Thus he studied law, as a way of learning about contemporary reality, as well as history, in order to learn that of the past; for the same reasons, his post-graduate studies focused on political science. To preserve his memory, we are left with his broad-ranging written and material work.

Pepe was one of those men in whose presence one felt obligated to think. Talking with him was a dizzyingly intense experience. Sometimes a conversation would result in new lines being written in his ever-present notebook. But with him nothing was a whim or passing fancy; everything was converted into action.

We lost him at what showed every sign of becoming the best time in his life and at a crucial point in the life of the country. A bullet went through Pepe's neck and lodged in the heart of us all.

Diego Valadés  
Excerpted from *La Jornada*, September 29.



# Diana Laura Riojas

**D**iana Laura Riojas —the woman who moved Mexicans through the courage and integrity she showed after the assassination of her husband, PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio— died in Mexico City on November 18. The cause of death was pancreatic cancer.

Colosio's widow fought against her illness since mid-1990. The seriousness of her condition had led to fears for her life on two occasions: the first when the disease was diagnosed and surgery was performed to remove a tumor; the second in late 1993 while her husband was contending to be named presidential candidate for the PRI. Yet Diana Laura recovered on both occasions, and stood out for the enthusiasm with which she supported her husband during his campaign appearances.

An economist by profession, she believed she was witnessing a historic moment in the life of the PRI. During a meeting with the wives of party officials, shortly before her husband's death, she stated: "Belonging to the Institutional Revolutionary Party involves a great commitment; it doesn't mean taking the easy route. It's a mistake to think that by joining the PRI you're going to have it made" (*Proceso*, November 21, 1994).

Public opinion recognized this young woman's courage and strength on March 25 when, in front of Luis Donaldo Colosio's coffin, she gave a speech upholding her husband's political ideals. After hearing her, the poet Jaime Sabines wrote a poem which ends with these words: "...Luis Donaldo, you had so many reasons to love her."

Admiration for Colosio's widow reached the point that many citizens voted for her in the elections held last August 21.

Diana Laura Riojas was born on March 9, 1958 in Nueva Rosita, Coahuila. She attended primary, secondary and preparatory school in Monterrey before moving to Mexico City, where she studied economics at the Anáhuac University. One of her teachers was the man who later became her husband.

She also received degrees in international trade and political analysis, in addition to taking refresher courses in various fields. She held several posts in the public and private sectors before getting a job at the Secretariat of Planning and the Budget, where she again met Luis

Donaldo Colosio, whom she married in 1984. The couple had two children, Luis Donaldo and Mariana, who were respectively 9 years and a year and nine months old when she died.

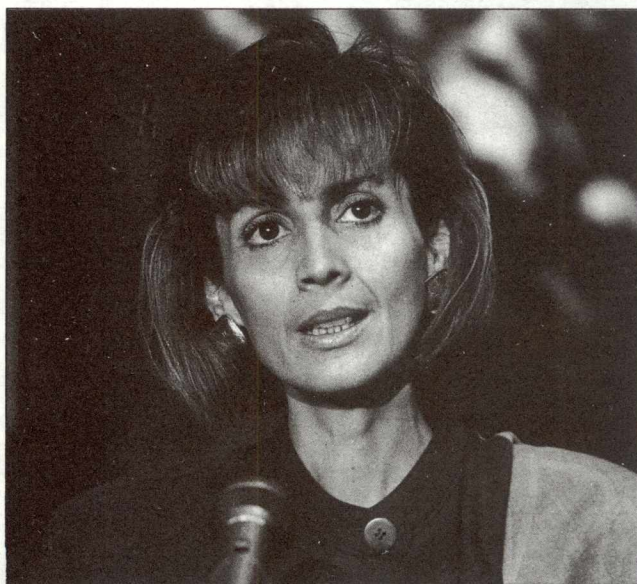
When her husband was killed, she expressed the wish not only to dedicate herself to their children but to give permanent form to his political ideas. As a result, she founded the Luis Donaldo Colosio Foundation as well as a scholarship in his name. Despite the intense activity she carried out during this period, she made few public appearances, among them some references to advances in the investigation of her husband's assassination. In June she commented that it was unlikely that the truth would soon be discovered.

In an interview with the weekly newsmagazine *Proceso*, she spoke of her feelings for Luis Donaldo: "Love doesn't go away; love remains and grows.... And I was unable to love him more because they didn't give me the time to do so..."

Her illness worsened in late September, with fatal consequences. Reporting the cause of her death, her doctor paid her this tribute: "Only death—which she confronted with determination and great dignity, without bitterness—was able to curb the desire to live, to serve and unite the Mexican people held by this great woman, who was frail in body but strong in spirit."

Diana Laura's remains lie together with those of Luis Donaldo in Magdalena de Kino, Sonora.

*Elsie L. Montiel*  
Assistant Editor



Hector Garcia / Imagenlatina.

*Admiration for Colosio's widow made many citizens vote for her to be President of Mexico.*

## Farewell to Colosio

The bullets of hatred, resentment and cowardice interrupted Luis Donaldo's life; they cut short his existence, but not the ideas for which he fought.

The fatherland benefitted from this great Mexican's devotion, dedication and effort. He had a deep-going humanistic vocation. He would say that at the center of all our aspirations and efforts is man, his well-being and his freedoms.

Luis Donaldo defined himself as a Mexican of humble origins. A man of great sensibility and great nobility, he always felt enormously proud to have inherited a culture of effort rather than privilege. He was always impassioned by living together with the people, which allowed him to remain true to his origins and be authentic. He was an upright man, rigorous with himself and demanding with his friends, but always giving the greatest loyalty. He was convinced that actions speak louder than words. That was Luis Donaldo, the man.

His life was also generous in proposals, commitments and the example of consistency he passed on to us.

The nation and freedom were his great passions. Luis Donaldo said: "The nation is the highest value for society and freedom is man's most precious possession."

His great aspiration was to contribute to the nation's strength, and he always thought that democracy and justice were the paths for defending our sovereignty.

He wanted every Mexican to be able to enjoy the broadest freedoms. He believed that without freedom there is no dignity, and that freedoms fully express themselves only when man can decide between different options, can choose his own path.

He wanted a more just Mexico. He was offended and hurt by poverty. He believed that the chasms of inequality divide the nation. He believed that he had the answers for this nation which hungers and thirsts for justice. That is why he wanted to be President of Mexico.

He wanted change for Mexico, but a change with responsibility and a path forward; that we not throw overboard what we have achieved with so much sacrifice; that there be a clear future of less inequality and more opportunities.

Luis Donaldo wanted a future of peace and concord; he wanted a single Mexico, without divisions, without violence, without bitterness between brothers.

He was a man who thought about the great reforms our country demands at this, the century's end. The reform of government in order to broaden citizens' rights, so we may all live under the protection of the law. This is the certitude of which Luis Donaldo spoke.

He said it many times: he wanted to be president. But he wanted to achieve that through the vote of Mexicans who were convinced this was best, through exemplary elections which our children could be proud of. That was his democratic commitment, and he practiced what he preached.

He loved all of Mexico. He wanted people to live better in every corner and every community of our country. That is why he offered development to each of our regions. That is why he said the time had come for all of our communities.

Luis Donaldo believed that only through education could we achieve progress. He was concerned about the education that Mexico's children receive. He wanted them to receive a nationalist, quality education which would prepare them for life, for making our country greater, for competing in the world.

Luis Donaldo was a man of responsibilities. He thought that what has been achieved should be consolidated, but that at the same time, the economy had to move forward in order to generate better conditions of well-being for every family. He used to say: "We must go from sound national finances to sound family finances." He always thought that the best means to achieve this was generating more jobs.

He would say that "a person who has a job raises his self-esteem vis à vis his own family and community, is able to feed his family and look after its health, educate his children and have fun in a healthy way." In brief, he said, "a job is income, and income is the ability to do right by your family, society and Mexico."

These are Luis Donaldo's ideas, but I—who had the good fortune to be his companion and to build a family with him—can also say that he was a wonderful father and an exemplary husband. He was outstanding in his generosity and honesty, his great ability to awaken people's sympathy and appreciation.

He was a man hewn of a single piece. He followed his parents' advice to the end: to be honest and keep to the straight and narrow.

He was one of those men who act in the present while thinking always of the future. Luis Donaldo used to say: "The world was passed on to us by our parents; it has been lent to us by our children." That was Luis Donaldo, his attitude, his commitment.

Today Luis Donaldo is gone, but he has left us his example, the feeling of his affection, his ideas and, above all, he has left his family and friends the responsibility to honor his legacy. We all have a commitment to Luis Donaldo. We all have a job to do in order to keep his memory alive.

Today, here, in Magdalena de Kino, land of missionaries, we say goodbye to a man whose footsteps showed a path for others. In the name of all the family, in the name of my children Luis Donaldo and Mariana, in my own name, but above all in the name of my husband Luis Donaldo, I thank you for accompanying me today. ❧

*Diana Laura Riojas*  
Remarks at the funeral of Luis Donaldo Colosio.

# José Agustín Arrieta, 19th-century Mexican painter

**A** show of works by Agustín Arrieta was recently organized by the National Museum of Art, providing the public with a look at a facet of 19th-century art which had remained largely unknown until recently.

José Agustín Arrieta was born in 1803 near Puebla, in the small town of Santa Ana Chiautempan, famous for its

lovely *sarapes*, whose colors inevitably influenced the artist. It is said that Arrieta inherited the strong personality of his father, Tomás, a dentist who may have been an amateur painter.

Arrieta began painting at the Drawing Salon in the city of Puebla. At that time, rather than encouraging experimentation with new themes and techniques, the school — following

the pattern laid down by Mexico City's San Carlos Academy— had its students make copies of famous works by such classic masters as Rubens and Velázquez.

Since many of his paintings were undated and unsigned, it remains unknown whether it was then that Arrieta began dealing with the folk themes for which he is known today. Still, the small number of his works on religious themes would seem to indicate that his stay at the Salon was brief. Years later he was to work there as a teacher.

In the 19th century Puebla had lost its prominence as the second most important city in New Spain (as Mexico was called in Colonial times). The decline of its once bustling commerce was reflected in the city's streets, where ragged beggars and poor people proliferated.

It was these people, together with scenes of the city's street life, that Arrieta began to portray in his work. The painter found himself face to face with a world full of life and happenings: the insurgent soldiers who took liberties with the "*chinas*";<sup>1</sup> the ladies doing their shopping at the market, side by side with beggars asking for alms and dogs fighting; the beautiful women who sold water in a completely rural setting.

*Pulquerias*<sup>2</sup> and drunkards, madmen and beggars all reflected a reality which Puebla's conservative society circles did not want to accept, let alone display on their walls. Since during his own day his work was not highly sought-after, Arrieta's was not a life of luxury.

## La china

Many legends surround Puebla's *la china* style. Some relate it to the arrival of an Asian princess in Puebla, who became a nun and was given the

<sup>1</sup> See below for a description of Puebla's *chinas* —literally, Chinese women; women who followed the *china poblana* style. (Editor's note.)

<sup>2</sup> Bars that sell *pulque*, a drink made from fermented cactus juice. (Editor's note.)



*Water-Seller's Stand, 1860.*



The "come-on."

name Catarina de San Juan. But according to Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *la china* was a type of woman that appeared first in Mexico City and later came to be characteristic of Puebla. The term *china libre* (free Chinese woman) —used to describe a well-dressed woman who goes out freely, telling nobody where she is headed— relates to this prototype.

Arrieta was drawn to portraying these women's beauty and sensuality in the context of their daily lives. Famous for their special way of dressing, the *chinas* belonged to different social classes; they could be anything from maids of wealthy families to mistresses of high-placed men of the day.

When Manuel Payno visited Arrieta's studio he took note of these

personages, much-painted by the Puebla master. He wrote: "The education '*la china*' received is no more polished than that of the men. She is taught to sew or cook in the local style and to read the catechism by rote. But by the age of fifteen she is well aware of her charms, and thinks of nothing but showing off that regional attire which is so elegant, so peculiar to Mexico, so full of lively grace. The *china*'s skin is pink and soft, as delicate as an otter's. Her eyes are olive, burning and explosive, her shape all rounded, svelte and well turned out... There is no public festivity where the *china* is not present, with her pretty little face full of charm; there is no street where she is not to be seen, attractive and elegant."

In his paintings *The Servant*, *The Surprise*, *Water-Seller's Stand* and *Horchata Vendor*<sup>3</sup> Arrieta's brush, carefully delineating her shape and attire, pays tribute to the *china*'s beauty. Some say that the artist's wife was his model for these works.

### Still lifes

In Spanish there are many names for still-life paintings showing kitchenware, food, flowers and animals —themes taken up in much of Arrieta's work.

It is likely that he painted these various still-life studies in order to earn his livelihood. The selection of elements —crystal and European objects, contrasting with Puebla's own Spanish-style ceramics— bears witness to mid-19th century Mexican tastes.

English soup tureens, cups filled with olives, Parisian vases, clay utensils, wine bottles, woven baskets, glassware, cats, parakeets, chickens and cans of sardines were key elements in his still-life works.

The chroniclers of his time relate that Arrieta was known as "A poor, old painter, quite romantic, bohemian, given to staying up all night but never

<sup>3</sup> *Horchata* (orgeat) is a popular almond-flavored, non-alcoholic drink. (Editor's note.)



*Still Life, 1859.*



*Still Life, 1859.*

drunk. Since he was always mocking the vain social prejudices of the day, backward-looking and envious people began calling him a low-class artist. Later, when his liberal views became known, he was called a 'Jacobin', which led to his rejection by the well-to-do."<sup>4</sup> After his wife's death in 1868, he asked to be allowed to stay in a room at the poorhouse, where he gave painting classes.

Many legends surround the painter. Some say that he hung the elements for his still lifes from the ceiling of his room since he lacked even the necessary furniture. But in one of the few photographs of Arrieta, showing him painting one of his still lifes, we see a comfortable and

relatively prosperous scene. This photo also clears up questions relating to his origins, since his birth certificate was confused with that of an Indian who was born the same year. During his last years he eked out a meager wage working as a janitor for Congress.

His work attracted the interest of foreign buyers, fascinated by Mexico's culture and traditions. When the French army arrived in 1867, the troops were so drawn by the images of strange characters and exotic themes that they kept the paintings for themselves. This explains why so few of Arrieta's works are to be found in Mexico.

His paintings *The Drunken Women*, *The Man from the Coast* and *A Happy Marriage* are currently considered masterpieces, not only as testimony to their times, but because of the mastery of their composition as well as their sense of volume and color.

The almost choreographic grace of Arrieta's paintings — as the Modern Art Museum's Director Teresa del Conde calls it — remains little known. It was only on the 120th anniversary of his death that enough of his work had been brought together to provide a look at this artist, who, together with others of his generation, laid the foundations for the subsequent rise of the Mexican School of painting, led by Diego Rivera.

José Agustín Arrieta died on July 23, 1874, in the city of Puebla. One of his final works is entitled *Last Love*; it shows an old woman petting a cat. She is said to have been a friend he spent time with in his old age, who had a free and happy past like that of the young *chinas* he so enjoyed painting. M

Mónica Ching  
Assistant Editor.

<sup>4</sup> Efraín Castro Morales, *Homenaje Nacional José Agustín Arrieta (1803-1874)*. Patronato del Museo Nacional de Arte, p. 35.



*Dining Room Scene, 1858.*

# The creative impulse of Leonora Carrington

**L**eonora Carrington was born on April 6, 1917, in Clayton Green, Lancashire, England. Her father was a local middle-class Englishman. As a child she wrote stories and made drawings. Years later she was to become one of the most important painters in the Surrealist movement.

She studied drawing and painting at London's Amédée

Ozenfant Academy. The Burlington Gallery in the English capital houses some of the works with which she participated in the First International Surrealist Exposition.

In 1936, while studying painting in London, she met and married the Surrealist Max Ernst, becoming both his wife and disciple. From that time on she was affiliated with the Surrealist movement, participating in many

expositions in Paris and Amsterdam. During the German occupation of France in 1940, Ernst was taken to a concentration camp. Leonora Carrington suffered a breakdown and was interned for six months in a psychiatric hospital in Spain.

After her recovery she traveled to Portugal and took refuge in the Mexican consulate. It was there that she met the Mexican poet Renato



The Meal of Lord Candlestick, oil on canvas, 1938.



The Temptation of St. Anthony, oil on canvas, 1947.

Leduc, who was to become her second husband. They moved to Mexico in 1942, where she lived from then on. Years later, after divorcing Leduc, she married the Hungarian photographer Emérico Weiz.

Her works have been shown in important galleries in the United States, Mexico and Europe. She has produced more than a thousand paintings, hundreds of drawings, watercolors,

tempera paintings, sculptures and tapestries. She is the author of *La dame ovale* (1939) —published by Era in 1965— and *En bas* (1945), as well as the dramatic works *The Flannel Night Shirt* and *Penelope*.

In the most significant retrospective of the artist's work, the critic Luis Carlos Emerich has selected 77 paintings, which were borrowed from 50 private and public

collections in Mexico, the U.S., London and Paris. These paintings represent different productive stages of the painter's work. The retrospective show was recently produced at the Contemporary Art Museum in Monterrey and is now showing at Mexico City's Museum of Modern Art.

Leonora Carrington lives and works in Mexico City's Colonia Roma neighborhood, near a building destroyed in the September 1985 earthquake. At the end of a dark hallway, stairs lead to a modest apartment where you find two armchairs decorated in flower designs, placed perpendicular to two twin beds.

Leonora is late. She enters suddenly. A light and friendly smile and a gesture to sit down accompany the following words: "Excuse me, but I usually don't have visitors...."

- Do you consider yourself a Surrealist?
- *No, señor* —she responds quickly and categorically. I don't place myself under any definition. There is no definition because there are more important things in life. I believe Surrealism was an important movement because it took into account the intellectual aspect of human beings. It used that part and allowed imagination and dreams to enter. All of the Surrealists, if you know a bit about them, are different; they accomplished very different things.

Leonora Carrington is hard to pin down. It is evident that she can't be subjected to a pre-established list of questions as a tool for the interview. It's not that she tries to evade, mislead, go in circles or block the interviewer's work. She herself *is* the circle.

- What can you tell us about your painting?
- I never have the same opinion about my painting. It changes from one moment to the next. One day you might consider



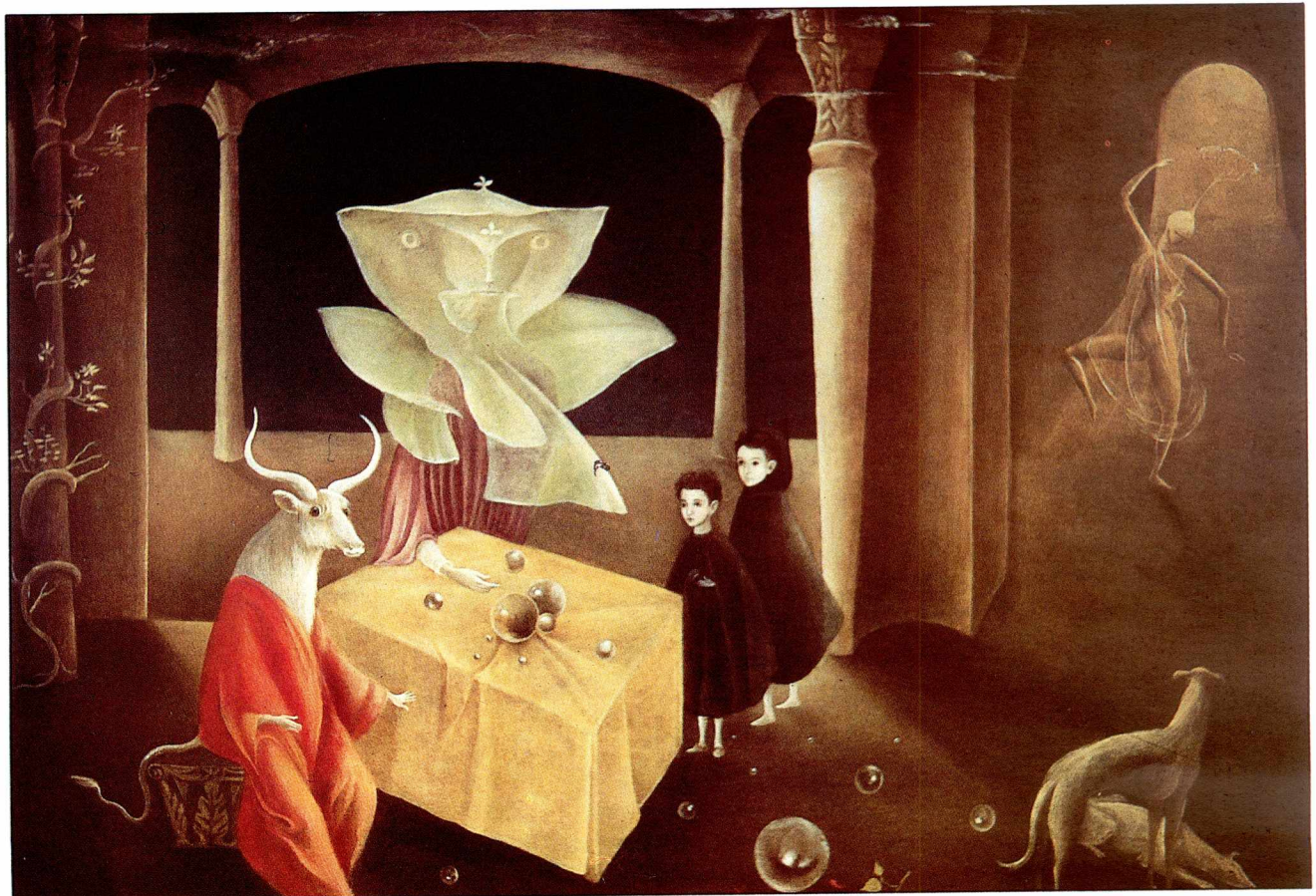
yourself the genius of reporting, and the next moment say: How stupid I am! It's about composition, rhythm, a certain play of color which is impossible to define. But it's true that a certain color is there for a reason. It's something in the world, which isn't easy to describe verbally. It has more to do with sensations, the feeling of heat, cold, fear, pleasure. I think when you paint there is something you know ahead of time, before you know it consciously.

- Where do your dreams and images come from?
- I don't know. Psychoanalysts claim to know where they come from, but they don't know. It would be wonderful if someone discovered where these images

and dreams come from. Sometimes you have an inkling where they come from, but it is always just an inkling. Sometimes an image comes and you can see it on paper or canvas, and it's like a mirror; the image is projected on the mirror, with the changes that occur during the technical transmission. I think that images come in dreams, in blood, in what you eat. They are already there. I think they already exist and the human apparatus is limited by its body and time. Nevertheless, to a certain extent it can open up more. You can start by accepting that what you see is what you are accustomed to seeing. For example, in this room there are many things that exist but which I am unable to see because they

haven't been accepted in my way of seeing. They are not in my paradigm of this room. You have to open up.

- What does open up, break the paradigms mean?
- It means having the courage to say to yourself: I don't know, really I know very little. What I don't know is enormous, but I am open to understanding a little more.
- Regarding your painting, people often speak about a magic or marvelous world, the world of childhood...
- I think this world is fantastic and marvelous. For me everything is marvelous.
- Does that imply a certain way of seeing the world?
- Or a way the world looks at me...or I look at the world...or a mixture of



And Then We Saw the Daughter of the Minotaur!, oil on canvas, 1953.

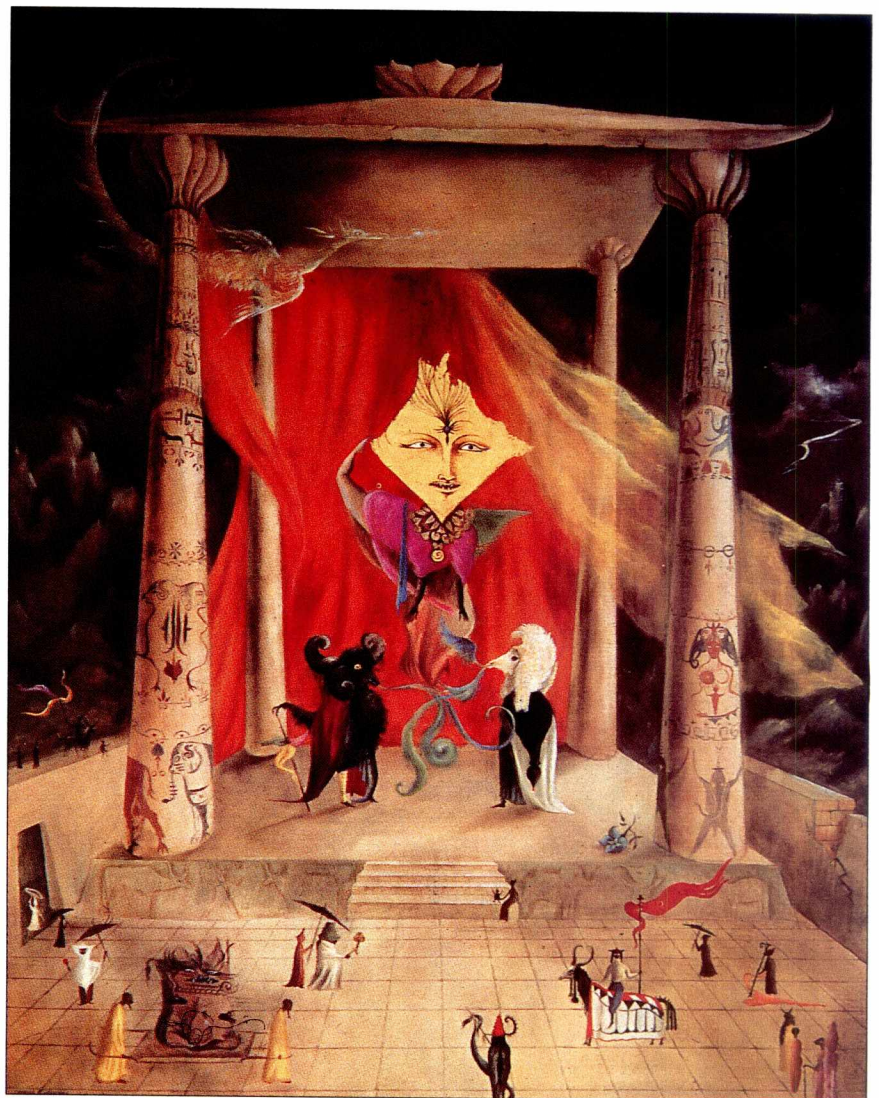
the two. What is outside and what is inside? Where does magic begin and reality end? These borders are now becoming more mobile. One use to refer to the soul, the spirit, the body, the human mind, the animal mind; now it's no longer so clear that animals don't think—we don't even know how we think. Everything was compartmentalized. That's very convenient for institutions' ability to control people. It's easy to control someone who doesn't ask questions, who can't imagine anything.

- Why are the borders being erased, when in reality it's not convenient to erase them?
- It's very mysterious why paradigms change. For example, for hundreds of years it was believed that the world was square, but Columbus crossed the ocean. They thought you would fall over the side. They didn't like it when Galileo said the world was round. I don't know what they did to Galileo—they burned him or something like that. It was a change of paradigm that people didn't want, because control is exercised through paradigms. You can't take a boat and cross to the other side because you'll fall over the edge.
- Have you developed a great sensitivity in order to express your dreams through painting?
- Yes. You can open up...but you must have the inclination, the need, to transmit. And that need must be so big that you continue despite criticism: that this is a bad painting, this is foolishness or copied from I don't know who. You must have a great desire to do it. There are many men who treat women as though they are mentally retarded because they aren't making dinner for their husband or ironing his shirts, but instead are involved in "men's work." Men don't like that, it

scares them, it threatens them. Women are creating a new consciousness within themselves and men are afraid, because they feel they're losing control. Before, the husband would ask: Where were you? Who were you with? And the woman would answer. Now you can maintain your own private life. I dislike the limitations imposed on me by the paradigms of the last thousand years. There are paternalistic paradigms, and I'm trying to see what lies behind them. You always have a struggle inside, the

claim to your own time. Men claim their own time—he comes home from work, he's tired; the whole world pays attention to him, respecting him, although I don't know if this still exists. I've lived this, the traditional things. I married, had two children whom I love dearly, but I've always lived with this great longing to live my own life and to accomplish this inner impulse—to which I cannot give a name ✽

*Maricarmen Velasco Ballesteros*  
Staff Writer.



Temple of the Word, oil and gold leaf on cloth, 1954.

# Alfonso Villa Rojas, from Chan Kom to Chicago

One day a young Yucatecan riding the bus to the village of Chan Kom, where he worked as a teacher, noticed some very tall, pale people who sounded like they were barking when they talked.

Alfonso Villa Rojas' curiosity was kindled by the experience, so he went to Chichén Itzá to investigate. He followed his innate talent for observing, which he would later exercise professionally. The people that had aroused his interest in 1930 were the Carnegie Institute team of archaeologists and artists working with Morley.<sup>1</sup>

The group included Kitty Mackay, a friendly housekeeper and nurse, who saw Villa Rojas in the hot sun and invited him in for coffee and a meal. He accepted the coffee, but feared the peculiar food that she took out of tin cans. He waited until she wasn't looking to get rid of it, lest he be poisoned. These are some of the stories that Villa Rojas enjoys telling.

Kitty Mackay's warmth made it possible for Villa Rojas to come back to Chichén on numerous occasions. "It was close, only 20 kilometers," he says, without mentioning that there weren't any roads from Chan Kom to Chichén Itzá. Morley befriended him, introduced him to books about the Yucatan and invited him to use his

library. The soft-spoken Yucatecan was on his way to unraveling the mystery of the harsh-sounding pale people's language—English!

Robert Redfield, also with the Carnegie Institute, arrived in Chichén Itzá in 1932. Morley encouraged him to study the village of Chan Kom, a community near Mérida. He enthusiastically recommended Alfonso as a field assistant.

Villa Rojas began his career as an anthropologist observing and recording with Redfield in Chan Kom. A part-time activity grew into full-time work. It expanded from Chan Kom to Tusic, and other villages, including some where outsiders were not welcome unless they were sales agents. Redfield describes how Villa Rojas disguised himself as "a traveling peddler of cloth, medicine and gunpowder"<sup>2</sup> to gain entry into remote villages.

Villa Rojas gave up his role as a school teacher, but he never gave up teaching the people of the Yucatan. His work has always been two-fold: writing as an academic and solving problems for villagers as a teacher-anthropologist.<sup>3</sup>

Redfield's support was crucial in helping Villa Rojas obtain Carnegie Institute funding to do academic work at the University of Chicago. Villa Rojas' help was just as critical for Redfield in the field. Together they

documented the customs and beliefs of the Mayan people.

## The historical setting

The events take place during a period of important changes in Mexico and especially in the Yucatan. When the armed phase of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 was over, artists and intellectuals worked together to create a new society.

Felipe Carrillo Puerto, a socialist governor of the Yucatan, later murdered, brought socialists such as Roberto Haberman—who in turn brought Bertram Wolfe—to the peninsula to participate in this work. He had the Constitution of 1917 translated into Mayan, so that the people would know the law and their rights.

One of the primary issues was restating the importance of Mexico's indigenous peoples. Anita Brenner was among the first to write about artists' turning away from the European influence in Mexico and towards the indigenous. She recorded religious customs and beliefs expressed by the people and their art. Her first book, *Idols Behind Altars*, originally conceived as a catalogue of Mexican art, illustrates the merging of the indigenous with Spanish elements. She recorded Nahuatl stories told by Luz Jiménez<sup>4</sup> and later published them for children.

A longer version of this paper was presented by the author at the Society for Applied Anthropology meeting in Cancún.

<sup>1</sup> Sylvanus Morley led the Carnegie Institute's excavations at Chichén Itzá as early as 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*, p. 34.

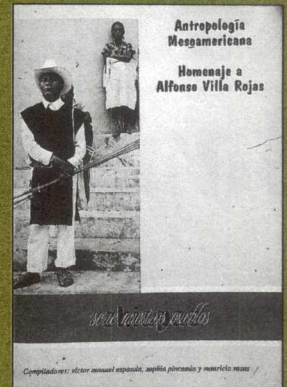
<sup>3</sup> Jacinto Arias, "Algunos recuerdos de los indios sobre Alfonso Villa Rojas" (Indians' Recollections of Alfonso Villa Rojas) in *Antropología Mesoamericana. Homenaje a Alfonso Villa Rojas*, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Model for Diego Rivera, Jean Charlot and many others and later instructor of Nahuatl at the University of the Americas. Her stories are published in Anita Brenner, *The Boy Who Could Do Anything*. Connecticut, Shoestring Press, 1992.

**Antropología mesoamericana.  
Homenaje a Alfonso Villa Rojas**

(Mesoamerican Anthropology.  
A Tribute to Alfonso Villa Rojas)  
*Víctor Manuel Esponda Jimeno,  
Sophia Pincemin Deliberos,  
and Mauricio Rosas Kifur*

Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas,  
Consejo Estatal de Fomento a la  
Investigación y Difusión de la  
Cultura, DIF-Chiapas/Instituto  
Chiapaneco de Cultura.  
Mexico City, 1992, 545 pp.



Chiapas and the Yucatan, home of the Maya, are the subject of many research projects. This book is based on the special meeting organized by students and colleagues of Alfonso Villa Rojas to honor this important Maya anthropologist. The published proceedings include translations of his work published in English in the 1940's.

The material is organized by topic, in six major areas: 1) Villa Rojas, 2) the Highland Peoples of Chiapas, 3) the Zoques, 4) the Maya, 5) Philosophy and Policy, and 6) Other.

**About Villa Rojas**

Four papers focus on Villa Rojas. A short biography is complemented by an impressive chronological bibliography that includes 110 entries. The real portrait is drawn by Jacinto Arias, who went back to the villages where Villa Rojas worked and lived to gather anecdotes from people who knew him. We learn that as a participant-observer, Villa Rojas did not hesitate to defend people when the occasion arose. He prevented Protestants from being expelled from one village and in another helped defend a man who had been treated unjustly.

Villa Rojas is one of the few anthropologists to contribute both to the community and to academic knowledge. His role as an anthropologist included that of rural school teacher, a friendly educator who participates in village life. While I was visiting Chan Kom with a group from the Society of Applied Anthropology, a nineteen-year-old woman came up to me and asked me to tape a message for him; he had given her a doll when she was a little girl. She knew he had been ill and could not travel, but she wanted to thank him.

**The highland peoples: Tzeltals and Tzotzils**

The first paper in this part of the book, "Kinship and *Nagualism* in a Tzeltal Community, Southeastern Mexico," was written by Alfonso Villa Rojas and published by the *American Anthropologist* in 1947. Manuel Jiménez Castillo of UNAM's Institute of Anthropological Research has translated it into Spanish and contributed a brief introduction.

Villa Rojas began his work with the Tzeltals in 1938. He went to live in the area in 1942 and worked with Robert Redfield, who had received a grant from the Carnegie Institute of Washington. The paper was published in English and the field notes were microfilmed by the University of Chicago. The information which many Mexicans read in English is finally available in Spanish.

The other contributions in this section are by prominent anthropologists who were introduced to Chiapas by Villa Rojas. Some are descriptive, while others look at change over a period of time, using Villa Rojas' material as a reference.

**Zoques and Maya**

The papers included in these sections deal with issues that have been examined, discussed and debated in the literature of the field. They include mythology, archaeology, geography, power structures, medical information, identity and survival.

Gertrudis Duby Blom contributes a plea for the survival of the Lacandon people. Although she is not a "trained anthropologist," she spent forty years living in the area with her husband and welcomed many social scientists to their home-hostel, known as "Na Bolom." Her first encounter with Villa Rojas took place on a

stormy night, when he and his wife invited her in for coffee. It was the first of many long conversations, some by the fireplace in "Na Bolom."

Blom describes witnessing ritual ceremonies focused on rain, fertility and personal requests. Her recollections include the transition from indigenous religion to Catholicism and then to Protestantism. The process of exploiting tropical woods brought disease and with it the death of the great chief and the loss of information on tribal traditions. Her vivid description of the arrival of civilization and with it the destruction of forests is a moving plea to learn from these events. She closes with a quote from Chan K'in, the wise octogenarian from Naha, who said: "When a tree falls in the jungle, a star falls from heaven."

#### Philosophy, government policy and other topics

Four papers were presented that discuss the philosophy behind government policies for indigenous peoples: *indigenismo*. The issues, very much alive today, focus on integrating native peoples into contemporary lifestyles. Villa Rojas identifies language and dress as priorities. Acquiring a working knowledge of the Spanish language, without losing the native tongue, requires a delicate balance. One of the papers addresses educational issues, including the problems that arise in hostels that board students from villages in a given area. Others deal with specific time periods in recent years.

The last section includes work that is related to Villa Rojas' interests but does not fit into the above categories. One deals with the controversy with Paul Kirchhoff about the dissemination of ideas from Asia to America. Another discusses the advantages of being an anthropologist. Lucía Aranda compares a Maya ceremony with one in the Huasteca region.

The diversity of subjects presented illustrates the wide scope of Villa Rojas' work. His contributions are both as a scholar and as an extraordinary field worker. The conference and book are an homage to Villa Rojas in appreciation for his enrichment of the field and its professionals.

Brenner travelled to Chichén Itzá in 1927 with her roommate, Lucy Knox, to visit their friends Jean Charlot<sup>5</sup> and Lowell Houser, artists working with Morley. Her journal says:

*It is about nine thirty in the morning and so hot that one is clammy in the shade. Nevertheless, I don't mind it, and out on the white roads, with dark glasses to shut out some of the glare, tramping along and drip drip dripping, I love it and so does Lucy. It is very much like Texas in the summer time....*

*We've been here a week.... One breakfasts between five-thirty and six, and everybody scatters between six and seven. At eight it is like eleven or twelve o'clock in the morning elsewhere.*

*At eleven thirty the tocsin sounds for lunch. Siesta until two, then back to work until tea time, that is, of course, five. Dinner at*

*six, and then dancing, or bridge, or walking, or whatever it may be. People scatter or fall into little groups of cliques, if they partake of recreation at all, and these cliques hold throughout. One dresses for dinner, white trousers are the order of the day. At table, when the daily paper comes, Morley reads out choice bits, translating literally, providing much amusement for the familia....*

*Earl Morris is also admirable. He is Scotch-looking, with large blue eyes which look as if they were accustomed to looking always upon wide space...what can you say about a man who has spent most of his life in the desert, digging.... Ann, his wife, is well-described by both Lowell and Jean as brittle, fragile, glittering.... We have less contact with the others, who are —Kitty Mackay, the housekeeper, a gay and light-footed Irishwoman, in spite of her bulk, and capacious*

*emotionally. Even the parrots love her, and she is the mamacita [loving mother] of the Indians. There is Karl U. Ruppert, a long Blue-clad person, much like a university prof. of the younger kind who form nuclei of poets and intellectuals in their schools around them.... Of women, there is Morley's fiancée, Frances Rhodes, a little dark girl, whom Lowell thinks has something of the demure and the shrew; her sister Dorothy, also a little dark girl, but more romantic, much more of a dreamer and with the air of one who has just been emerging from a hot-house.... Their chaperone, a Mrs. Thornton, is like hundreds of slim and normally blonde married women of those who run in "sets" —bridge and tea and newest book stuff. She is the kind of person I visualize in a dressing gown. Nina Piatt, Morley's secretary, is also little and dark (that's his style, evidently), very young,*

<sup>5</sup> See article in our previous issue on the retrospective exhibit of Charlot's work.

amiable, a little aloof due, thinks Lowell, to her youth and inexperience —inferiority complex stuff easily acquired in a highly specialized crowd like this.... At intervals, there are Dr. and Mrs. Geo Williams, who metabolize and measure heads and all that sort of thing. They are focused entirely on their work, but in a disagreeable German way of seeing people no longer as anything but a set of measurements, and acting accordingly, a thing much resented by whomever happens to be subjected to it. We live scattered around the central building, the old main building of the hacienda, which is the dining room, dancing room, library and where Morley is living now, also Miss Mackay and Nina. The old despacho [office] of the hacienda is the office. The Japanese butlers and so forth live someplace near the hacienda, which also contains kitchen and bodega [warehouse]. The old chapel of the hacienda, a short way down the road, is now Morley's house, as pretty a little place as could be had, with a patio, hammocks, and all the rest of the love-bird stuff.<sup>6</sup>

Villa Rojas recalls his admiration for the *indigenista* [pro-Indian] position Brenner put forward in her writing. The artistic expression of the indigenous population was recognized. Public art, murals and publications such as *El Machete*<sup>7</sup> posted on the walls, with vivid illustrations —this was the order of the day. Those Mexicans who could not read and write were part of the population that the artists sought to reach. Brown-skinned Mexicans became “visible” in the avant-garde

<sup>6</sup> Anita Brenner, unpublished journal; May 4, 1927.

<sup>7</sup> See Alicia Azuela, “*El Machete and Frente a Frente*,” Art Committed to Social Justice in Mexico,” *Art Journal*, Spring 1993.

works of artists such as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Jean Charlot, to mention only the best known.

### The web of connections among anthropologists

People came from Europe and the United States to build a new society. Mexicans who studied abroad put new ideas into practice. Manuel Gamio —a Franz Boas Ph.D. from Columbia University— was among the first to transform “cultural” anthropology into what Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán calls “living anthropology.”<sup>8</sup> The role of the professional went beyond observing and recording; it involved facilitating change so that indigenous peoples could participate in the mainstream, without losing their identity.

The role of anthropology in the United States was primarily historical, limited to observing and recording traditions and beliefs from the past. Boas introduced scientific elements into the study of people and culture, and his results are a key element in fighting racism.

The complex web of relationships among intellectuals involves issues of race, politics and gender. Women acting as catalysts often cut across divisions of race and politics. Boas, a German pacifist, was in contact with Zelia Nuttall, an American archaeologist who moved to Mexico in 1908.<sup>9</sup> Although the written documentation of Boas' role in Mexico is scant, we know he was in Mexico as early as 1911, when he founded the International School of

<sup>8</sup> Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *El proceso de aculturación y el cambio sociocultural en México* (The Acculturation Process and Socio-Cultural Change in Mexico), p. 194.

<sup>9</sup> Angeles González Gamio, *Manuel Gamio, una lucha sin final* (Manuel Gamio, A Struggle with No End). Mexico City, UNAM, 1987, p. 30. There is a record of contact between Boas and Nuttall as early as 1901. See Angeles González Gamio, *Lucha sin fin* (Struggle Without End), p. 31.

American Archaeology and Ethnology, which he directed.<sup>10</sup>

Encouraged by Nuttall, Gamio was invited by Boas to come to New York and work towards a graduate degree at Columbia University. He sailed for New York in 1909<sup>11</sup> with a scholarship from the Mexican government. When he returned, he brought back his own version of Boas' anti-racist philosophy.

Villa Rojas' route into a professional relationship with intellectuals in the United States was direct. He responded to Kitty Mackay's warm gesture and delved into a library which led to bringing change to the Maya people.

Villa Rojas crystallizes the shared vision of U.S. and Mexican anthropologists. He became a major contributor to his field, with academic and field work that both improved the living conditions of the people of the Yucatan and Chiapas, and expanded understanding of their wisdom and knowledge.

Although Villa Rojas dropped the formal title and role of a school teacher, what he did, while listening and learning, was to teach, lead and defend the Maya people so that they could choose their own path to integrate into the 20th century with dignity.

He, and others such as Gamio and Aguirre Beltrán, were the intellectual brigade, the pioneers who brought ideas to the people who today have formed the Zapatista Army, struggling for the right to self-rule and the benefits of education and medical care ❧

Susannah Glusker

Doctoral candidate in the “Relationships among Intellectuals in Mexico and the U.S.” at Union Institute.

<sup>10</sup> Aguirre Beltrán, p. 187; and Melville J. Herskovits, *Franz Boas, The Science of Man in the Making*. New York and London, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953, p. 61.

<sup>11</sup> Angeles González Gamio, p. 31.

# The fly factory: cooperative use of atomic energy

**F**ew would imagine that the natural beauty of the state of Chiapas is home to flies bred in a factory. These screw-worm flies originally infested tropical and sub-tropical areas in the southern United States, Mexico, Central America, two thirds of South America and the Caribbean islands.

In the thirties, Edward F. Knipling and Raymond C. Bushland discovered that the screw-worm fly could be sterilized at the larval stage, using atomic energy. This biological control technique proved successful because the female fly mates only once in its life, and if it is fertilized by a sterile male, the eggs it lays in the open wounds of warm-blooded animals never hatch.

This process led to the successful elimination of the parasite in the southern United States in 1961. Eradication was later carried out in the southeast, along the border with Mexico. Yet, since the screw-worm continued to damage animal health in both countries, cattle-ranchers on both sides of the border asked their respective governments for help in eliminating the plague. The Mexican-American Commission for the Eradication of Screw-Worms in Livestock was formed on August 28, 1972.

In the early years, sterile flies were bred and sent to Mexico from the plant in Mission, Texas. The commission's first objective was to eradicate the screw-worm in the north and west of Mexico, as far as the Tehuantepec isthmus. Mexican and American technicians worked jointly on the longer-term objective of creating a "sterile fly barrier" in the area.

The program's benefits gradually began to be noticed. In 1976, it became necessary to build a new plant for producing sterile flies in Chiapa de Corzo, Chiapas, with a weekly production of 550 million sterile flies for dispersion. Work included packing and sending insects to distribution centers where airplanes were used to disperse them over infested areas, so they would fertilize flies living in the wild.

Livestock was continuously inspected in "field operations." When an animal was found to be infested with

screw-worm larvae, the latter were collected and sent to the laboratory for diagnosis. This was used to determine the number of sterile flies which would have to be released over the areas where eradication was being carried out.

By 1984, the Mexican-American Commission for the Eradication of the Screw-Worm in Livestock had achieved the total disinfection proposed in 1976. To maintain the "sterile fly barrier" and prevent the possibility of reinfestation in disease-free zones, the commission designed a means of controlling livestock movement: three fixed inspection and quarantine stations were established along the cattle routes of the Tehuantepec isthmus; other, temporary stations were set up in areas where infection continued to exist.

At the permanent stations, all animals passing through were subjected to a detailed examination and bathed in a



*If you find a box of sterile flies, open it to protect the animals (propaganda for the eradication of the screw-worm).*

larvicide solution. Any animal found to have the parasite or open wounds was kept in quarantine until cured.

Over the course of eight years of continuous work, the quarantine stations inspected 2,688,829 animals and quarantined 1,063, of which 175 were infested with the parasite. A total of 10,703 animals originating abroad were also inspected. New outbreaks in disinfested areas were thereby controlled, and by 1984 the goal of eradication proposed in the initial agreement had been achieved.

In 1986, a new agreement was signed that increased the responsibility of the Mexican-American Commission with an eradication program starting in the southeast of the Tehuantepec isthmus (Yucatan peninsula) and continuing to the neighboring Central American countries. That same year Guatemala signed an agreement with the Commission, with eradication work beginning in 1987. Belize did the same a year later, while in 1989 the Mexican-American Commission's program came into force.

The Mexican-American Commission declared Mexico free of screw-worm in livestock on February 25, 1991. This marked the culmination of nineteen years of intense work and coordination, involving a total investment of 413.5 million dollars and the creation of 1,905 field jobs of various kinds. This meant a savings of 82.6 million dollars for the Mexican cattle industry. Almost 251 billion sterile flies were released, as a result of 58,000 hours' flying time, protecting 77.5 million head of cattle on 491.75 million acres of protected land.

It is noteworthy that in late 1990, the Commission received an emergency request to eradicate an outbreak of screw-worm in livestock in Libya. Agreements for confronting this problem were signed with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The program was actively maintained in North Africa, with

Mexican and American staff, from December 1990 to October 1991. Direct flights from Tuxtla Gutiérrez to Tripoli carried over 1.3 billion sterile flies. In 1992, the screw-worm was declared fully eradicated in Libya, Belize and Guatemala.

The Mexican-American Commission for the Eradication of the Screw-Worm in Livestock used to be headquartered in Mexico City, but last August the Commission moved to the plant in Chiapa de Corzo. *Voices of Mexico* interviewed the Commission's Director, Carlos Bajatta, who discussed the organization's importance as well as the plant's usefulness, projected changes and future plans.

- What is the current state of the Commission's work?
- Disinfestation began in El Salvador in 1993. Although this country is now technically free of the parasite, surveillance work continues. Field and dispersion programs are being continued in western Honduras. In the case of Nicaragua, work was carried out in half of the western region; in July coverage began to extend to the entire country. Mexico continues to export sterile flies in preparation for the main objective: achieving a "biological barrier" extending to Panama. Eradication is therefore projected to begin in Costa Rica and Panama.
- How many sterile flies are being produced at the Chiapa de Corzo plant?
- At the moment, 210 million sterile flies are being produced every week, then dispersed in various areas in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Land in Guatemala and Belize is no longer treated with sterile insects, since the plague has been eradicated. This is also the case in Mexico, with the exception—as a biological security measure—of the area where the plant is located.
- What is the most outstanding feature of the technology applied in the plant for producing sterile flies?
- First, the positive use of atomic energy, since when people talk about atomic energy the first thing that comes to mind is the atomic bomb or a nuclear plant disaster. Another important point is the biological control system, which prevents contamination and the overpopulation of a species, since it is a balanced, natural system that does not affect other species. On the contrary, it contributes to the health of other animals and man himself.
- Why did you decide to close your offices in Mexico City and transfer to the Chiapa de Corzo plant?
- Because the commission's activity has been reduced to the production of insects at the plant. Field work for Mexico has come to an end; the responsibility of checking for possible reinfestations has been handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Mexico-United States Commission



*A positive use of atomic energy.*





*A teamwork is needed to really eradicate a plague.*

for the Prevention of Aphthous Fever and Other Exotic Diseases. In fact, the commission has only really reduced its geographic scope, since approximately 850 people are employed at the plant.

- How long will sterile flies continue to be produced at the Chiapa de Corzo plant?
- Until they build the one planned for Panama, to establish a “fly barrier” at the isthmus. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has already signed an agreement with the Panamanian government to build the plant, but work is not expected to begin for a couple of years.
- When the Panamanian plant is built, will Mexico no longer have a place in the project?
- Yes, and in a certain way we’re already looking at that, since the U.S. Department of Agriculture made the agreements directly with Panama. So when the Chiapa de Corzo plant closes, the Mexican-American Commission will probably cease to exist, or it will become a small organization for emergency cases, but not the large agency it is today.
- What will happen to the Mexican plant when the Panamanian one replaces it?

- Possibly the same as happened to the one in Mission, Texas, which is closed, but kept in perfect condition as a reserve.
- Instead of closing it, wouldn’t it be possible to use it for another scientific purpose, similar to the present one?
- I think it would be more practical and beneficial to put it to some use. And now is the time to think about what other program the installations could be adapted for.
- Could the Chiapa de Corzo plant be turned into a research center or school to study the possibility of eradicating other parasites with atomic energy? One example might be the six kinds of simuliids or flies that transmit oncocercosis, a disease which blinds millions of people in the Americas and throughout the world, including in Africa where 50 million suffer from the disease.
- That would be feasible, although the screw-worm fly is more similar to other kinds of insects, like Mediterranean fruit flies, which transmit parasites to fruit. In fact, there’s already a plant in Chiapas that produces those flies, where atomic energy is used for sterilization. But what you say about the oncocercosis-transmitting simuliids shouldn’t be ruled out. But first it would be necessary to study the sexual conduct of those six species, to see if atomic energy could be used to sterilize them.
- Would the Mexican-American Commission be interested in receiving technical-scientific proposals on how the Chiapa de Corzo plant could be used?
- I believe it would. I think both the American and the Mexican side would be open to scientific proposals and would be willing to take part in them by creating agreements for putting the plant to a new purpose. So we hope suggestions will start coming in....

The history of the Mexican-American Commission for the Eradication of the Screw-Worm in Livestock is further proof of the importance of teamwork, in which linguistic and cultural differences between nations are overcome. It serves as an example of how bilateral or multilateral initiatives can provide valuable benefits for society.

We hope this article will encourage the scientific community to seek positive new uses of atomic energy in the Chiapa de Corzo plant, to prevent it from becoming the mausoleum of a great fly factory in the service of humanity.

Suggestions may be sent to the following address:

Planta Productora de Moscas Estériles del Gusano Barrenador del Ganado, Km. 2 Carretera La Angostura, Chiapa de Corzo, Chiapas, Mexico.

Telephone numbers: (91-961) 414-23, 414-24, 414-25, 414-36 and 414-39 ✉

*Dinorah Isaak*  
Staff Writer.

# Medal for Jaime Sabines

**T**he Mexican Senate has awarded the Belisario Domínguez Medal to the Chiapas poet Jaime Sabines Gutiérrez.

Sabines was born in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas on March 25, 1926. He studied medicine for three years, received a B.A. in Spanish language and literature, and carried out post-graduate studies at UNAM. He was a fellow at the Mexican Writers' Center and served as federal representative for Chiapas from 1976 to 1979 and Mexico City from 1988 to 1991.

The author of numerous books, among his outstanding works are *Horal*, *La señal* (The Signal), *Adán y Eva* (Adam and Eve), *Tarumba* (Mix-Up) and *Algo*

*sobre la muerte del mayor Sabines* (Something About the Death of Major Sabines).

Awards he has received include the Chiapas (1959), Souraski Letters (1962), Juchimán de la Plata Arts and Letters (1966), National Linguistics and Literature (1983) and Mexico City (1991) prizes.

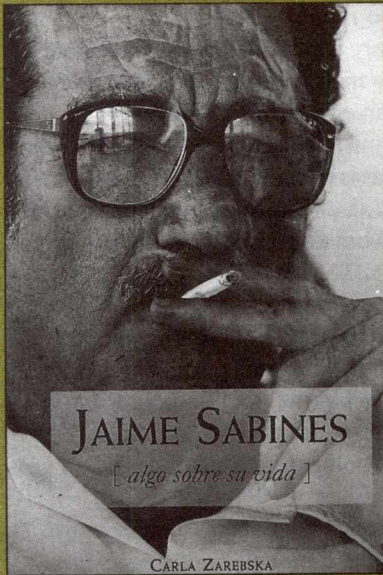
The Belisario Domínguez Medal was created on January 3, 1953, by then-President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, in homage to the Chiapas hero Belisario Domínguez, who from the Senate floor put the dictatorship of Victoriano Huerta on trial.

The much-valued award has been bestowed on 41 Mexicans, from renowned artists such as the painter



Angeles Torrejón / Imagenlatina.

*Jaime Sabines receives the Belisario Dominguez Medal from Carlos Salinas.*



## Jaime Sabines. Algo sobre su vida

(Jaime Sabines. Something About His Life)

Carla Zarebska

Mexico City: Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transporte,  
1994, 355 pp.

"Thank you, Jaime Sabines, for teaching us what poetry is for. It is as you said: to create flowers from ashes."

These are the final words of the prologue by José Emilio Pacheco to a new book on Jaime Sabines, based on the research coordinated by Carla Zarebska.

Sabines recently received the Belisario Domínguez Award. This deluxe edition, divided into six chapters on the Chiapas poet's life and work, accompanies this recognition.

In Mexico, recognition has begun to be given to the importance of documenting artists' lives and work, the best example being the case of Sabines himself.

What should a book about a poet be like? *Jaime Sabines, Algo sobre su vida* is a very intimate book. It narrates the story of his life, his solitude, love, death. We find letters, photos, invitations, signatures of friends and family (such as that of another great Chiapas writer, Rosario Castellanos), book covers, drawings, loose copies of original newspaper clippings attached to the pages—but more than anything else, his poetry.

There is a poetic sampler from some of his books: *Horas* (1950), *La señal* (The Signal, 1951), *Tarumba* (Mix-Up, 1954) and *Yuria* (1967). Sabines himself relates vicissitudes and anecdotes, sometimes reflecting on the origins of titles or the *raison d'être* of one or another poem.

Jaime Sabines is the only Mexican poet who can boast of being widely read. Those who don't own all his books have most likely copied parts or received one as a gift.

"Mexico is a country of poets, not of poetry readers," comments the writer José Emilio Pacheco. With regard to the book, Pacheco tells Sabines: "Forgive us, Jaime, but this book is not for you. It is a gift for your readers, and we will treasure it along with what is most yours—that is, side by side with your poetry."

Mónica Ching  
Assistant Editor.

Gerardo Murillo (Dr. Atl) to trade-union leaders such as Fidel Velázquez.

The sea is measured by waves,  
the sky by wings,  
we by tears.  
The air rests on the leaves,  
water in the eyes,  
we on nothing.

It seems like salts and suns,  
we and nothing...

(Taken from *Horas*, one of his most celebrated collections of poems, published in 1950 by the Chiapas State Government.) ❧

Raquel Villanueva  
Staff Writer.

# Bits & pieces

**Chiapas conflict still unresolved.** In the early days of October the EZLN announced its intention to break off talks with the federal government. Scoring its recent peace proposals as a farce, the Zapatistas view the government as undesirous of a peaceful solution to the armed conflict. They charge the federal army with flying over EZLN-controlled zones with the intent of provoking anti-aircraft fire from the Zapatistas in order to blame them for breaking the treaty. EZLN spokesman Marcos states that a breakdown of the ceasefire would bring disastrous consequences, since the war would not be limited to Chiapas but would spread across the whole country: "Everyone will have to live through it themselves. We're not lying when we say our army exists throughout the country."

The Zapatistas believe that the federal government has been preparing an escalation of violence against the EZLN since achieving its objective of preventing them from interfering with the August 21 elections. The victory of PRI candidate Eduardo Robledo Rincón in the Chiapas gubernatorial race has been questioned by several local groups which demand that opposition candidate Amado Avendaño Figueroa be recognized as governor-elect, increasing the tension caused by the breakdown of peace talks.


Meanwhile, Bishop Samuel Ruiz put forward a new proposal which includes resolution of the post-electoral conflict, a return by the EZLN and federal army to the positions they occupied before the elections, and the naming of a new mediating commission made up of distinguished civilians and academics from around the country. While commissioner Madrazo initially rejected the proposal, he later accepted the point on the mediation commission and proposed that Zapatista accusations regarding army mobilizations be investigated in return for the Zapatistas answering charges that they have blocked aid from reaching non-Zapatista refugees living in territory under EZLN control.

The tension generated by the talks' breakdown has been increased by constant land takeovers and the removal of municipal authorities by local citizens. Up until December 8, the date on which Eduardo Robledo became Governor of Chiapas, the conflict continued without resolution.

**Colosio assassin sentenced.** On October 31, seven months after the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, 23-year-old Mario Aburto was sentenced to 42 years in

prison for the crimes of premeditated homicide and carrying an unlicensed firearm. The charge of "advantage" (a category which further exacerbates the finding of first-degree murder) was dropped. Aburto's sentencing brings to an end an initial stage of the investigation; it remains to be established whether others were involved in the assassination. The attorney general's office made an appeal that Aburto be given the maximum sentence (50 years), while the defense will ask that the term be reduced to 8 to 20 years.

**Urgent aid to the Tarahumaras.** The Tarahumara Mountains are located in Chihuahua, Mexico's largest state. While Chihuahua has the least numerous Indian population in the country (2.9 percent, which is particularly low when compared to states such as Yucatan with its 44.2 percent Indian population), several indigenous ethnic groups live in the mountain range. The largest of these is the Tarahumara people: *raramuri* ("light-footed ones"), in their language. In this region official statistics fail to convey the reality of the Indians' lives. Doctors at the four local clinics estimate that only one out of every four infant deaths is reported. Between 50 and 90 percent of the Indians suffer from malnutrition. In 1993, 515 Tarahumaras died due to various causes, foremost among them violence and hunger, while by early November 1994, 512 deaths had already been registered, including those of 53 minors. The Tarahumaras—who live largely by cultivating corn, beans and some fruits—faced a critical situation with the advent of the worst drought in the past forty years. Chihuahua's governor asked that the state be declared a disaster zone. After a visit to the area, President Salinas announced an emergency aid program including 35 million pesos (roughly equivalent to 10 million dollars) for food purchases, hospital construction and agricultural improvements.

**Myth & Magic: Oaxaca Past & Present.** Through the Neighbors Abroad program, the permanent exchange relationship between the cities of Palo Alto, California and Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca has made possible the "Myth & Magic" exhibition on the customs, cultural roots, myths and magic of the state of Oaxaca's capital city. The show presents paintings and works on paper by fifteen of the city's most important contemporary visual artists. Fables and stories told in the myths of Oaxaca's past and present are also featured in the exhibition and are presented in the catalogue, accompanied by the artists' illustrations. "Myth & Magic" was first shown last year at the Palo Alto Cultural Center. In early 1995 it will be shown in several East Coast U.S. cities, traveling to the Santa Cruz, California Museum of Art in April and May. 

# PUBLICATIONS

EL CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES  
SOBRE AMERICA DEL NORTE

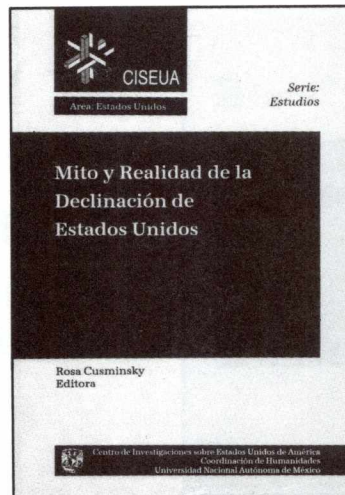
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## El Tratado de Libre Comercio. Entre el viejo y el nuevo orden

Mónica C. Gambrell y Bárbara Driscoll de Alvarado (eds.), 1992, 283 pp.  
This book analyzes the likely impact of NAFTA on: the energy industry, agriculture, geographical regions, in-bond industry; labor rights, immigration to the U.S., social classes, democracy, diplomatic relations, telecommunications and higher education. NAFTA is considered in light of other trade agreements, U.S. economic requirements and political processes.

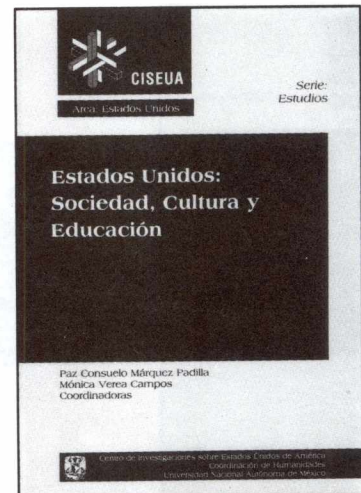
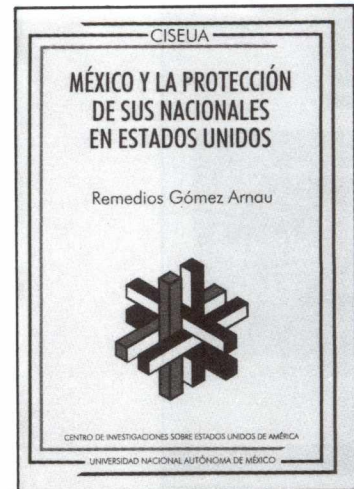


## Mito y realidad de la declinación de los Estados Unidos

Rosa Cusminsky Mogilner (ed.), Serie: Estudios, 1992, 180 pp.  
This book contains the contributions of lecturers from various countries who participated in the seminar "The Myth and Reality of the Decline of the United States of America," on the present academic debate about the crisis of the United States' hegemony.

## México y la protección de sus nacionales en Estados Unidos

Remedios Gómez Arnau, 1990, 245 pp.  
A chronicle of the Mexican government's efforts to protect the rights of Mexican migrant workers in the United States. An impressive study that sheds new light on the issue. Recommended for experts and non-experts in U.S.- Mexican relations and human rights.



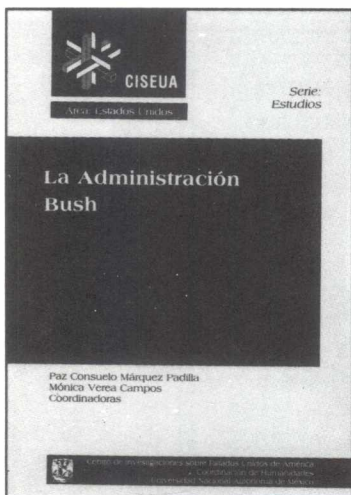
## Estados Unidos: sociedad, cultura y educación

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla, Mónica Vereá Campos (coords.), Serie: Estudios, 1991, 177 pp.  
Thirteen Mexican and U.S. specialists analyze from different perspectives the socio-cultural components of the U.S. as a rich mosaic of cultures and their main forms of expression, the complex social fabric, and the highly-debated U.S. education system.

### La administración Bush

Mónica Vereá Campos, Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla (coords.), Serie: Estudios, 1991, 210 pp.

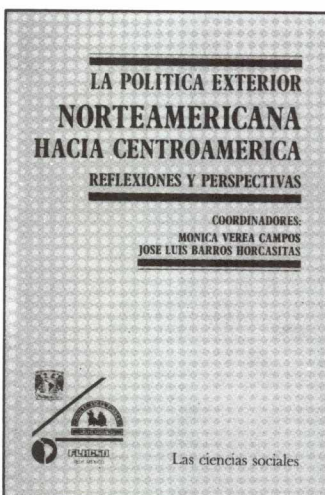
Fifteen Mexican and U.S. specialists examine the main events of the first year of the Bush administration. This includes studies on minorities, arms control, the war on drugs, the economic crisis, foreign policy, and the North American Free Trade Agreement.



### La política exterior norteamericana hacia Centroamérica: reflexiones y perspectivas

Mónica Vereá Campos y José Luis Barros Horcasitas, FLACSO, CISEUA-UNAM, Editorial Miguel Angel Porrúa, Serie: Las Ciencias Sociales, 1991, 442 pp.

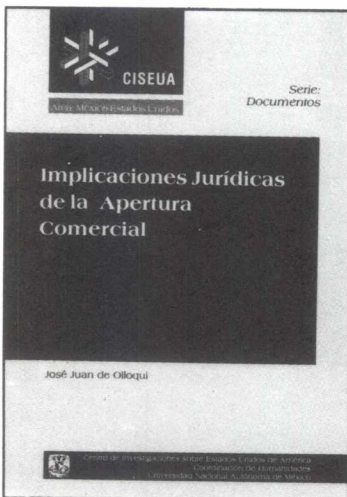
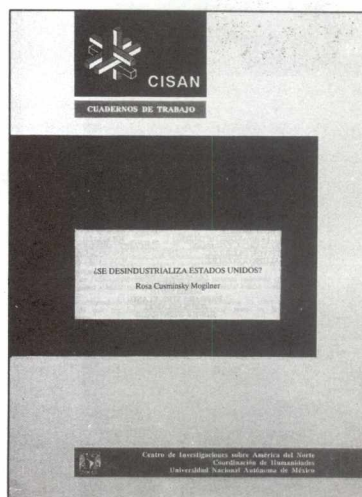
This book contains various articles written by North American and Central American specialists regarding the role of the United States in Central America's recent history.



### ¿Se desindustrializa Estados Unidos?

Rosa Cusminsky Mogilner, Serie: Cuadernos de Trabajo, 1993, 139 pp. Fears relating to the industrial decline of the United States are associated with questions about the ability of the U.S. to maintain its position of influence and world leadership.

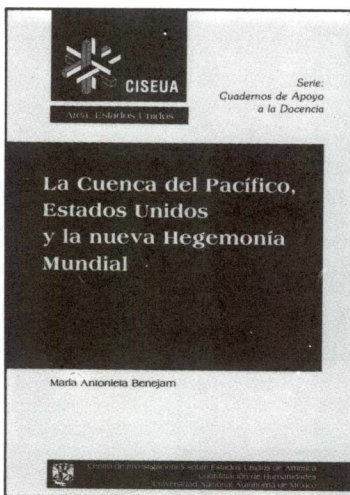
This book summarizes current debates on whether U.S. industry has ceased to be competitive.



### Implicaciones jurídicas de la apertura comercial

José J. de Ollóqui, Serie: Documentos, 1991, 42 pp.

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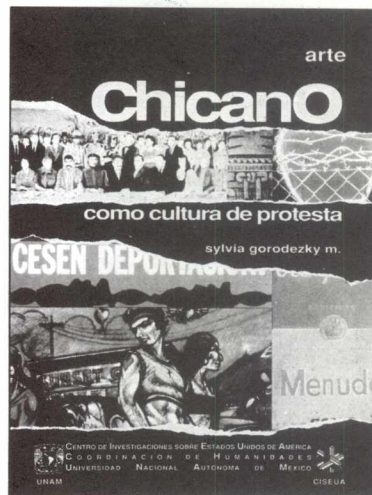


### La Cuenca del Pacífico, Estados Unidos

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Ma. Antonieta Benejam, Serie: Cuadernos de Apoyo a la Docencia, 1991, 106 pp.

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### Arte chicano como cultura de protesta

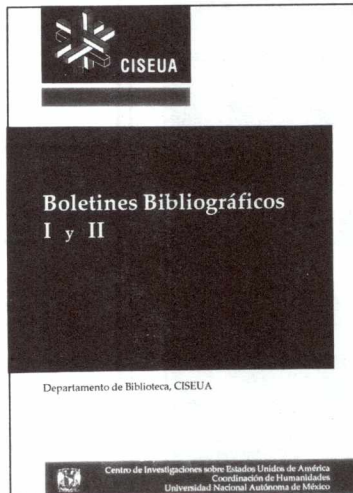
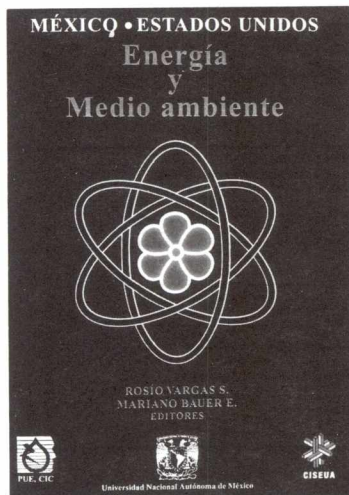
Sylvia Gorodezky, 1993, 169 pp.

An incisive analysis of how Chicanos give artistic expression to the effects of the social and political oppression they experience within "mainstream" society. Includes photographs of key murals, sculptures and other works of art.

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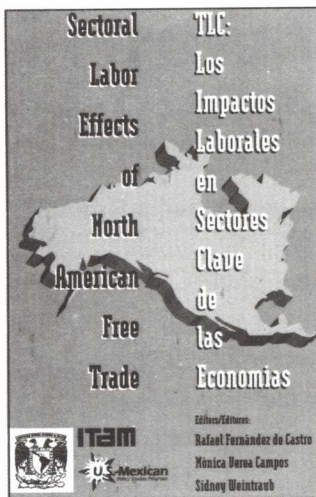
Rosío Vargas and Mariano Bauer (eds.), 1993, 259 pp.

An overview of Mexican and American environmental legislation as well as its social, political and economic implications in the context of NAFTA. Also analyzes the relation between energy policy and environment in both countries.



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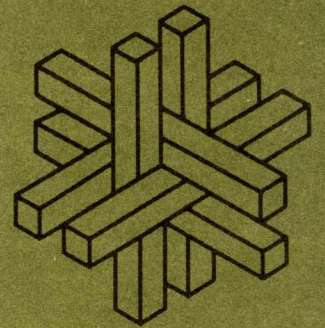
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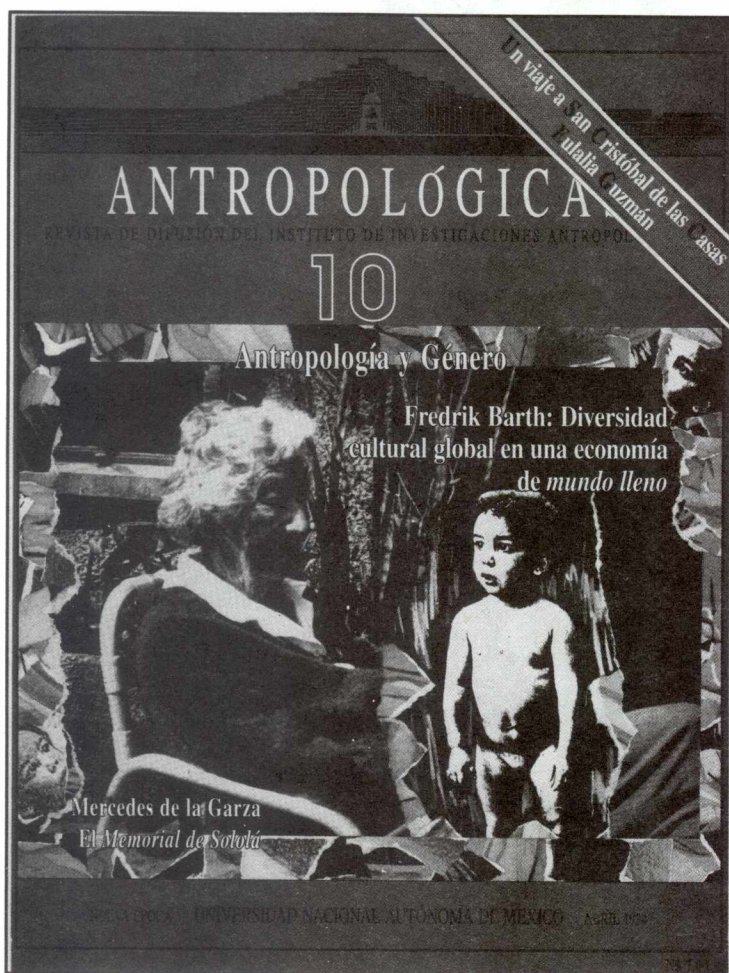
**Sectoral labor effects of North American Free Trade/TLC: Los impactos laborales en sectores clave de las economías**

Rafael Fernández de Castro, Mónica Vereá Campos and Sidney Weintraub (eds.), 1993, 368 pp.

This book examines possible effects on the labor force of the countries involved in NAFTA, particularly in such industrial sectors as autos and textile as well as in agriculture and the *maquiladoras*. Some of NAFTA's legal implications are also reviewed.



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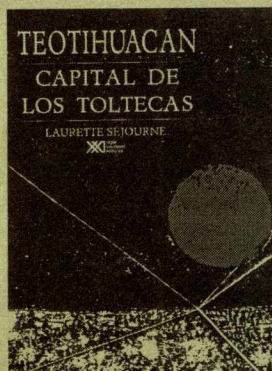
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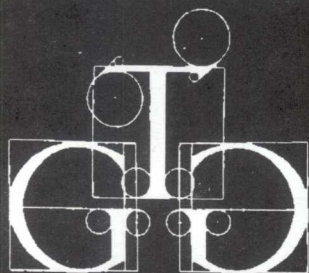
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# Mural Encuentro de Dos Culturas

**E**l mural **Encuentro de dos culturas** fue realizado por Víctor Mohedano para el **Museo Amparo** y está ubicado en el área que da acceso a la biblioteca. La obra intenta representar plásticamente el encuentro y fusión de dos culturas: la mesoamericana y la española; es decir, la indígena y la europea.

El mural está formado por tres partes y por lo tanto puede ser leído como un tríptico:

La cultura española está representada por dos personajes: el principal, a caballo, viste una armadura que es propia de sus atributos europeos y acorde con la cultura hispánica. Es un conquistador. El segundo personaje es un fraile franciscano, de pie, que representa la evangelización.

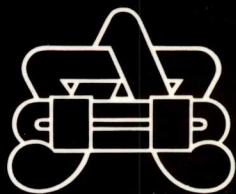
La escena que recrea las culturas prehispánicas posee tres personajes: el principal, ricamente ataviado, sostiene en la mano izquierda un par de flechas y con la derecha señala a Quetzalcóatl, la Serpiente Emplumada. Los otros dos personajes, de menor rango social, son quienes lo transportan en una litera. Ambos personajes principales —el español y el indígena— sostienen un diálogo.

En el centro del mural ha sido pintada una mujer. Ella representa la fusión de ambas

culturas. Puede ser vista como una imagen del mestizaje y sostiene en sus manos una cuerda que representa la unión o ruptura de las dos culturas que se encuentran. Atrás de este personaje femenino el sincretismo religioso es representado por Coatlicue en forma de cruz.

En el fondo de la obra algunos elementos del extremo derecho recuerdan la iconografía prehispánica y los del extremo izquierdo la española. Ambos elementos iconográficos se fusionan hacia el centro del mural representados en un viento que levanta y funde partículas de las dos culturas para que, finalmente, el viento forme con sus colores la bandera de México.

El fondo de este mural fue trabajado con una serie de elementos **volátiles** en un intento por acentuar el sentido mágico del encuentro, dejando de lado los acontecimientos históricos posteriores. En este sentido, se vuelve necesario reflexionar que el momento, por sí mismo, debió ser del todo mágico para ambas culturas pues fue el encuentro de mundos distintos, lenguajes desconocidos, vestimentas diversas. La realización de este mural por un artista contemporáneo muestra una vez cómo un museo alojado en un recinto colonial y con una colección prehispánica puede tener ciertos apoyos museográficos con obras del arte moderno.



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