VOICES of Mexico
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About Mexicans' Voting Abroad
Articles by Diego Valadés and Jesús Silva-Herzog M.
Raúl Anguiano's World of Painting
Articles by Berta Taracena and Beatriz Vidal
On U.S. Immigration Policy
Luis Herrera-Lasso
Two Short Stories by Juan José Arreola
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**Cover:** Raúl Anguiano, *Squash and Flowers*, n.d. (oil on canvas).

# OUR VOICE

Democracy is undoubtedly the best of all known political systems. Throughout its history, however, it has been multi-faceted. Opposing causes have been defended in its name and the struggles of interest groups have determined the different concepts of democracy.

The classic paradigms of democracy seem to be insufficient to explain the current political situation in the United States. Before last November's elections two stances could be clearly distinguished in the political arena. The conservative Republicans headed by Newt Gingrich, were pushing for the impeachment of President William Clinton. The Democrats, on the other hand, were in an uncomfortable position because they disapproved of Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinski but could do nothing but support their party leader.

Public opinion polls play a central role in the political arena today as a fundamental tool for legitimizing democratic processes. Before the November elections, the polls showed that the public disapproved the Clinton-Lewinski relationship, but it condemned even more strongly the political harassment of the president. Nevertheless, these voices were disregarded by conservative politicians, which prompted a drop in the Republican vote count.

Another consequence of the election results was the resignation of Republican spokesperson and House speaker Newt Gingrich. All indicators pointed to the impression that the public mandate had finally been heard. But the impeachment procedure continues its course, even despite the fact that a November 11 CNN poll indicated that 63 percent of the public disapproves, while only 34 percent favors its continuing.

The democratic rules of the game are not rigid —nor should they be. Nevertheless, to what point is it valid to use a democratic political system's legal and administrative procedures, set up to control probable abuses of power by those in office, to judge the private life of a high government official? The response to this question implies a conception of democracy, which should be strictly confined to public matters.

The article by U.S. specialist Patricia de los Ríos, "Paradoxes of the 1998 U.S. Elections," in our "United States Affairs" section, goes into the electoral consequences of the political and media handling of the Clinton-Lewinski case and probes the political trends and phenomena that have had a decisive impact on the voting results. Important among them is the increasing influence the U.S. population of Hispanic

origin has on political representation. Appealing to the Latino vote is no longer resorted to only by the Democratic Party, but also by the Republicans, as Ríos points out in her article.

Our "Politics" section includes two articles on a topic of major importance in Mexico today: the right of Mexicans to vote while abroad. Jesús Silva-Herzog Márquez supports the proposal arguing that this right cannot be denied to Mexican migrants, particularly those who —as in the case of people of Mexican origin in the United States— are closely linked to policies and problems in Mexico, both for emotional and trade and financial reasons. Jurist Diego Valadés alerts the reader to the legal problem involved when giving the vote to a great many Mexicans abroad who have dual citizenship.

In the same section, political scientist Rubén García Clarck examines presidentialism in Mexico in the context of the ongoing international debate on presidentialism versus parlamentarianism. García Clarck contends that both for historical and political reasons, the Mexican political system should remain presidential or, in any case, semipresidential. He does state, however, that the "reform of the state" process must be concluded to put checks on presidentialism in order to achieve a fully democratic system.

Mexican migration to the United States is a topic which will always need exploring. In this issue's "Society" section, we present a contribution by Luis Herrera-Lasso, Mexican consul general in San Diego, who deals with the contradictions that migration has produced in bilateral Mexico-U.S. relations. While economic links in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement are on the rise, on the other hand, restrictive U.S. immigration policies are intensifying, as is shown by the increasing militarization of the border.

Gabriel Rovira also deals with our northern border, but from another angle, in his article "Reflections on Transculturation," assessing the sometimes negative effects of the penetration of certain U.S. cultural values, like consumerism, into Mexican border areas.

Our "Canadian Issues" section includes an article by researcher Julián Castro Rea, "Mexico and Canada. The Internationalization of Domestic Policies." Castro points to the intensification of relations between both governments parallel to the increasing interest of the civil societies of both countries in broadening their mutual familiarity, partly due to an increased information flow between the two. One example of this is the concern in Canada today about the situation in Chiapas. As part of an effort to create bridges between Canada and Mexico, *Voices of Mexico* presents Dianne Pearce's review "Anatomical Permutations. Ten Canadian Artists in Mexico" about the works presented at the 26th International Cervantes Festival last October in Guanajuato.

Francisco Sevilla offers our readers a detailed analysis of the complex question of Mexico's Savings Protection Bank Fund (Fobaproa), its origins and possible repercussions for society as a whole. This is a topic which will determine Mexico's economic future for the next three decades. Clearly, the Congress will have to take a course which will avert a collapse of the banking system, which would have terrible consequences for the country, but at the same time, it must make sure the legality and transparency of loans already given be investigated, since many of them are questioned by the opposition. That is, those guilty of white collar financial crimes must also be punished.

The "Ecology" section in this issue deals with concern for a beautiful bird that human "progress" has endangered: the flamingo. Strategies for sustainable development must be found that include the ecological factors which will conserve their habitat.

*Voices of Mexico* dedicates its "History," "The Splendor of Mexico", "Literature" and part of its "Science, Art and Culture" sections to the state of Jalisco, known for the wealth of its folk culture as well as its well known artists and writers. Historian Javier Moreno explains how the capital city of Jalisco, beautiful Guadalajara, was founded four times. Researcher Ana María de la O Castellanos offers our readers a sketch of the municipality of Zapopan and its religious traditions, particularly the faithful followers of the popular figure, Our Lady of Expectation or Our Lady of Zapopan. Folk art specialist Silvia González Anguiano reviews the different kinds of ceramics to be found in Jalisco, particularly in Tlaquepaque and Tonalá, its main craft corridors. Patricia Ríos opens up the world of complexity and mysticism of the art of the Huichols, one of the indigenous ethnic groups which has managed to conserve its ancestral traditions.

In "Science, Art and Culture," Berta Taracena and Beatriz Vidal, both art critics, delve into the work of Jalisco artist Raúl Anguiano, whose importance and influence in Mexican visual arts is unquestioned, as one of the founders of the Popular Graphics Workshop, where some of Mexico's most important painters were trained. María Tarriba narrates the preparations and development of the traditional "dance of the *tastoanes*" in the town of San Juan Ocotán, Jalisco. Arturo Cosme tells us both the real and mythical story of the birth of tequila, perhaps the world's best known local drink.

Rafael Alvarez's boxes, an outstanding example of object-art, are not only important as an aesthetic proposal, but also because they recover folk legends and pieces of Mexican life and customs.

The "Literature" section pays homage to Jalisco-born Juan José Arreola, writer and conversationalist, at the age of 80. A brief sketch of his life accompanies two short stories representative of his ties to Jalisco.

*Paz Consuelo Márquez-Padilla*
**Director of CISAN**

# Constitutional Implications of Mexicans' Voting Abroad

*Diego Valadés**

The discussion about Mexican citizens being able to vote abroad has particularly emphasized the technical side, while the most important issue, that of dual citizenship, has been neglected. Different solutions to the problems in ensuring honest balloting abroad have been carefully reviewed, but other considerations have not.

Today, nations increasingly tend to allow their citizens to vote abroad; although a still only relatively limited number of countries permit it, the practice seems to be on the rise. It should be emphasized, however, that no country which allows it is similar to Mexico.

Mexico became part of this general trend when it amended Article 36 of its Constitution and existing electoral legislation allowed for the possibility of Mexicans abroad voting in presidential elections. These reforms came into effect in October 1996. Article 32 of the constitution was then amended in March 1998 to allow for dual citizenship.

This is where both moral and technical problems arise that have still not been resolved by those who defend the proposed change. I will refrain from going into the moral questions in order to deal in more depth with the legal, technical issues.

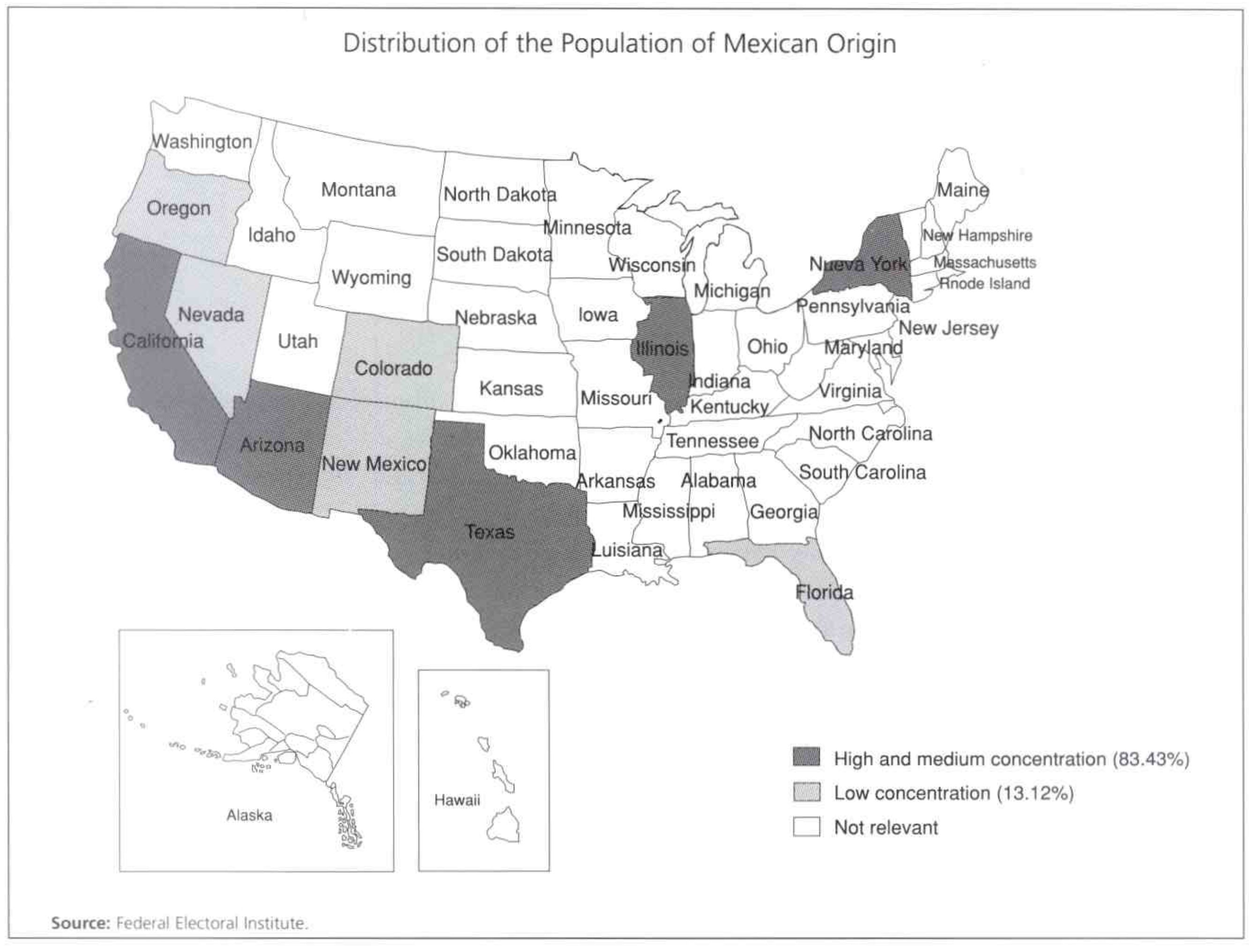
What is involved is not merely a matter of procedure or guaranteeing transparency: since March 1998, not only would Mexican citizens be able to vote abroad, but the change in Article 32 of the Constitution opens up the possibility for millions of people who hold both Mexican and U.S. citizenship to vote in Mexican elections. What this means is that millions of U.S. citizens could participate in the election of the president of Mexico.

How many Mexicans currently residing in the United States will opt for U.S. citizenship? No one knows or can predict how many. But, on the other hand, the second transitory article of the amendment to Article 32 stipulates that all Mexicans who prior to 1998 had voluntarily acquired another nationality will recover their Mexican nationality through the retroactive application of Fraction A of that amendment which states that "no Mexican by birth may be stripped of his or her nationality."

This brings out a new dimension to the problem since nationality implies citizenship if all requirements are met.[1] Neither legal nor moral arguments exist to deny citizenship to Mexicans who are also U.S., Japanese or Spanish citizens. This takes us into the topic of dual citizenship, which has not been appropriately dealt with. The central discussion is not whether someone of a given nationality should be allowed to vote when abroad. What has absolutely no political or legal basis is for people who vote in elections of other countries to also be allowed to vote in Mexican elections. Article 37 of the Mexican Constitution stipulates the conditions under which citizenship may be lost. The one which may most affect Mexican-U.S. citizens in the future is the prohibition of "voluntarily providing official services to a foreign government without the permission of the Federal Congress or its Permanent Commission." Millions of American citizens in the armed forces, for example, would not come under this limitation in the Mexican Constitution and therefore would be allowed to vote in our elections: here, the concept of sovereignty, so maligned of late, becomes crucial.

We are not only discussing whether Mexicans can or cannot vote while abroad, but whether foreigners can vote in our elections.

* Director of the UNAM Institute for Legal Research and former attorney general of Mexico.




**Source:** Federal Electoral Institute.

Voting can be defined as an act of sovereignty. Therefore, when foreign citizens participate in balloting to elect members of one of the branches of government, clearly Mexican sovereignty will from that time rest in the Mexican people and part of the American people. This is a contradiction which destroys the concept of sovereignty itself: sovereignty either resides exclusively in one people, or, by definition, it ceases to be sovereignty.

We all know that the concept of "a people" is very problematic. However, Hans Kelsen offers us a useful definition: he says it is "the unit of regulatory, legal ordering of the conduct of men."[2] For legal purposes, therefore, a people is a unit whose decisions emanate from a normative order which regulates the action of each of its members as well as the whole. This is the case, at least, in a system in which the people continue to be sovereign. The contractual nature of Kelsen's thesis is clear, understandably, because only contract theory can provide the conceptual basis for democracy.

However, there is something more: in the terms of Article 39 of our Constitution, the people have "at all times the inalienable right to alter or change the form of government." "Form of government" is understood here not only as the organization of power, but also as the entire set of social relations and economic functions that the Constitution regulates. Therefore, an indeterminate number of U.S. citizens who also hold Mexican citizenship will be able to alter or change our form of government through the votes they cast.

This is the case, for example, of the proposals made by some parties that we write a new Constitution or legalize referenda. If the referendum were established as the mechanism for approving constitutional amendments, which criteria would be applicable? Would residents abroad be excluded, or would the same logic apply as for presidential elections, in which they would have the right to vote? If the latter were the case, we would find ourselves in a situation in which citizens of foreign countries would participate direct-

ly in Mexico's constitutional process; otherwise we would be establishing a very strange distinction because we would consider the same people we hold eligible to elect the president of our country ineligible to contribute to the definition of our legal system. This contradiction is very difficult to disregard.

Let us also examine another matter under debate: the issue of establishing a second round of voting in the presidential race. Since voters abroad will not participate in congressional elections, the disproportion that normally occurs between the congressional and presidential majorities in electoral systems with second rounds of voting would be considerably accentuated. This is in addition to the problem that one of Mexico's most respected constitutionalists, Jorge Carpizo, has already pointed out in the sense that in a close election, even without a run-off, the deciding votes might well be cast by dual citizens. If run-off elections were instituted, their influence would be even greater.

This would force our presidential candidates to do two things: first, they would have to ask U.S. migration officials for permission to carry out their campaigns inside the United States; and secondly, they would have to take care that their campaign issues and proposals not be alien to the interests of U.S. citizens nor opposed to those held by the U.S. government. For example, could a Mexican presidential hopeful disagree with the bombing of Afghanistan or the blockade of Cuba, or —to give examples from other times— with the occupation of the Dominican Republic, Panama or Grenada?

Contrary to what has been said, therefore, not only are there political but also strictly legal arguments against instituting voting abroad. Strong political arguments firmly based in the Constitution have also been invoked by different people, among them myself, over the last few months.

Among these arguments is the fact that U.S.-Mexican citizens, in addition to enjoying dual nationality and dual citizenship, would also in many cases have dual partisan affiliation. This means that they would be subject to the influence of so-called [political] "bosses," or vote manipulators, well known in the United States, which would violate Article 9 of the Constitution that prohibits foreigners from gathering to take part in the country's political affairs. If this constitutional stipulation were not changed, the law which allows foreign citizens to associate to vote in Mexican elections —in this case the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures (COFIPE)— could be considered unconstitutional.

Clearly, for dual citizens, the simple fact of identifying themselves electorally with a U.S. political party would imply a degree of influence with regard to certain particularly sensitive topics which we cannot overlook and which could turn Mexicans there into powerful enemies of Mexicans here.

For example, U.S. energy policy will continue to generate pressure for Mexican oil to cease being part of the country's patrimony. Once we have been stripped of our sovereign decision-making ability in the political realm, what arguments would we have to retain it in matters of patrimony?

What has absolutely no political or legal basis is for people who vote in elections of other countries to also be allowed to vote in Mexican elections.

But there is still more. One of the greatest problems we face in the future with the United States is migration. And it is here where dual citizens will either have to vote for the discriminatory policies restricting Mexican immigration proposed by both U.S. parties or for the reasonable attention demanded by Mexicans. This could provoke serious tension.

The most paradoxical and deplorable development would be that the Americans themselves solve these problems for us. The U.S. Congress has already legislated to deprive any American who has voted in elections outside the United States of his or her citizenship. This was controversial legislation and was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. courts in the case of Afroyim v. Rusk in 1967. The court reasoned that, according to the 24th amendment to the Constitution, American citizenship could only be lost through its voluntary renunciation, but not through legislation.

We Mexicans should not confuse things. We are not only discussing whether Mexicans can or cannot vote while abroad, but whether foreigners can vote in our elections. I am sure that if a comparative study is made of the problems involved in dual citizenship throughout the world, very different conclusions would be reached than those that have come out of only examining the technical problems of voting abroad. I am also certain that many distinguished Mexicans who have argued for establishing the right for Mexicans to vote abroad would not support that right for dual citizens.

We have advanced greatly with the United States in reaching reasonable understandings, but if we open the door to new forms of intervention and dependency, the tensions between the two countries, partially overcome, will increase.

The argument made in this article presupposes no animosity toward the United States as a sovereign nation, much less toward the millions of Mexicans who live there and in many cases contribute significantly to the well being of those here. Mexico must think and act in their benefit, but not at the price of endangering the essence of our sovereignty. We will be able to do very little for them when so little is left to ourselves.

The vote is an extremely sensitive issue and it must be dealt with in the best possible way given the circumstances. The democratic advances in Mexico are many and should be even greater in the future. I do not think that dual citizenship contributes to the consolidation of democracy, but rather to dependency. Let us not turn hypothetical advances into real retreats. Democracy is not only a system of guarantees for freedoms inside the country, but also for independence externally. It is democracy based on the sovereignty of the people that allows us to defend our interests, our rights and, above all, our dignity. VM

NOTES

[1] Mexico's Constitution stipulates that native born Mexican nationals become citizens only when they come of age and if they have an honest form of livelihood. [Editor's Note.]

[2] Hans Kelsen, *Esencia y valor de la democracia* (1974), p. 31.

## Mexicans Eligible to Vote

By the time of the 2000 elections, approximately 70.158 million Mexicans will be eligible to vote both inside the country and in foreign countries: 85.88 percent (60.254 million) will be residing in Mexico; 14.12 percent (9.904 million) will be residing abroad.

DISTRIBUTION OF VOTERS ABROAD

*In the United States*: 98.95 percent of all Mexicans residing abroad (9.80 million) live in the United States: only 420 persons (less than one percent) are part of the Mexican foreign service; 7.126 million (72.71 percent) are immigrants born in Mexico; 2.674 million (27.28 percent) were born in the United States of either a Mexican father or mother.

*In countries other than the United States*: 104,000 Mexicans (1.05 percent of all Mexicans residing abroad) live in countries other than the U.S.: 740 are in the diplomatic service; 76,000 are immigrants born in Mexico, and 27,000 were born abroad but of a Mexican father and/or mother.

*Total projected Mexican voters abroad*: 10.787 million persons, including both those who reside abroad and those who are temporarily out of the country on election day. (It is estimated that one out of four of the 10.787 million Mexicans of voting age in the United States will have some sort of irregular migratory status at the time of the election.)

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION
OF MEXICAN RESIDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Eighty-four percent of Mexicans of voting age born in Mexico reside in five states: 46.3 percent in California; 21.3 percent in Texas; 6.6 percent in Arizona; 6.3 percent in Illinois; and 3 percent in New York.

Florida, Oregon, Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada also have significant Mexican communities. Almost 90 percent of all Mexicans resident in the United States are concentrated in 11 states of the union.

Specialists indicate that there is no clear correlation between the concentration of Mexicans and the availability of consular services.

Source: Published in the Mexico City daily newspaper *Reforma*, 15 November 1998, p. 17-A.

# Voting at a Distance[1]

*Jesús Silva-Herzog Márquez**

The issue of Mexicans being permitted to vote abroad has not been discussed as it deserves. It entered into our legislation almost surreptitiously: elliptically, the obstacles to voting abroad were removed, but no clear mechanisms were put in place for the new right to actually be exercised. A great deal is at stake in the way we deal with the debate: the relationship of the Mexican government to its migrants, the credibility of electoral processes, the notion of citizenship, the transformation of sovereignty and of democracy itself. I would like to take up two issues of this multifaceted question: the logistical complexity of the endeavor and its democratic significance.

I will begin with the former. We already know that organizing elections in Mexico is a monumental task. Organizing elections the world over would seem a superhuman undertaking. For all practical purposes, clearly, elections outside Mexico would center in the United States. In any case, the immensity of the job is unprecedented despite the number of countries whose electoral legislation allow for it. The logistical unknowns are many: How could reliable voter registration rolls be developed outside Mexico? Would polling booths be set up or would people vote by mail or electronically? Would electoral campaigns be carried out abroad? How would violations of electoral laws and regulations committed abroad be dealt with? From a strictly logistical perspective, the operation is of colossal proportions. In that sense, prior international experiences are not comparable.

The real danger in this thorny polyhedron is that, considering the universe of potential voters and that the mechanisms that make for credibility are not easily exportable, the process could be a step backward for the definitive establishment of electoral confidence. The credibility elections enjoy today is something we must protect above all else. The gains of 1997 are not definitive. Trust takes a long time to accumulate, but can fall apart in a split second. Even in the mosaic that is Mexico, different qualities of democracy exist. In Oaxaca, we saw the Party of the Democratic Revolution's national leader proclaiming the victory of the candidate who all the preliminary results and the overwhelming majority of exit polls predicted as the loser.[2] Mistrust still has havens where it can be cemented; it would not seem reasonable to increase their number. For that reason, if all the links in the electoral process are not carefully nurtured, we could open up an extremely delicate flank of electoral vulnerability.

**The credibility elections enjoy today is something we must protect above all else.**

I think that in this area, one principle must be maintained: voting abroad cannot relax the rigorousness of domestic balloting. Any weakening in requirements could be politically explosive in that it could spark discredit. We do not want to replay that particular scenario. In any case, the logistical problems are just that: challenges for our organizational imagination. The fundamental debate is the underlying essence: the meaning of voting at a distance. We must consider voting at a distance in light of a democratic theory for the conditions of our time.

Let us go back to basics. A democracy is a political system in which those subject to the law participate, even if only indirectly, in its creation; it is a system in which those obligated by the power structure have the right to found it. In consequence, it is undemocratic for power to emanate from those who are not subject to that power. This, in my view, is the center of our debate. Is it democratic for those who have emigrated to participate in forming the government? I am beginning to think so. And I must point out here the change in my opinion. Until very recently, I was convinced of the essentially undemocratic nature of voting from afar. Voting abroad would be undemocratic if, as I supposed looking at it through the prism of my prejudice, voting from a distance was

* Professor of political science at the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico (ITAM).

## Six Federal Electoral Institute Proposals for Voting Abroad

1. Voting at a normal polling booth, checking a voter registration list and voter ID with photograph.
   U.S.$268,569,283.50

2. Voting at a normal polling booth checking a voter registration list and personal ID.
   U.S.$273,712,483.50

3. Voting at a special polling booth without checking a voter registration list but checking a voter ID with photograph.
   U.S.$76,060,458.00

4. Voting at a special polling booth, without checking a voter registration list but checking personal ID.
   U.S.$271,984,914.00

5. Voting without being physically present, checking a voter registration list and a voter ID with photograph.
   a) By mail: U.S.$283,229,959.90
   b) By telephone: U.S.$351,229,959.90

6. Voting without being physically present, checking a voter registration list and personal ID.
   a) By mail: U.S.$288,373,159.90
   b) By telephone: U.S.$356,373,159.90

**Source:** Published in the Mexico City daily newspaper *Reforma,* 15 November 1998, p.17-A.

necessarily a distant vote. My previous opinion was based on the idea that whoever is not immersed in the community, whoever is not affected by the meaning of his or her vote, whoever does not feel through his/her eyes, hands and pocketbook the experience of that world, should not have the right to determine the course of a community which has become alien. The voter exercises his/her civil rights to the extent that he/she can directly feel the effects of the decision. That is the key to civic responsibility. When I vote, I am betting my future. Looking at things more closely, I can now see that crossing the border does not imply severing ties: community survives distance.

The data reveals the situation that must be legislated. A survey carried out by Mexico City's daily *Reforma* and the *Los Angeles Times* shows that 34 percent of Mexicans have worked at one time or another in the United States and that 43 percent have relatives there. The money sent home by Mexicans from the U.S. is the third largest item in the Mexican economy, closely tying emigrants to the future of the country. The most important thing about this picture is that most Mexicans living in the United States will return to their communities in less than two years. The attachment to their country felt by millions of Mexicans who have to emigrate is undeniable. We cannot think, therefore, that Mexicans casting their votes abroad is, as was previously thought, a remote ballot.

I want to emphasize the basis for my argument against my former opinion. Citizenship does not exist in the abstract: citizenship is tied to community. A complex network of emotional, family, trade, legal and fiscal relationships sustain that political right. That is why, as long as important groups of Mexicans maintain and even reinforce those ties, their right to participate in the fate of their homeland should be affirmed. This would also bring with it the positive effect of the active participation of permanent U.S. residents in forging the political determination of their communities to counteract the xenophobia and anti-Mexicanism brewing there. The crucial phenomenon is the emergence of a new Mexican nomadic existence. A country which has suffered through a long and painful economic crisis for an entire generation has become a country of migrants, a nation that expels its most valuable people. In effect, tremendous migration is one of the fundamental features of Mexico's population dynamics at the close of the century. If we want to build a political system worthy of its society, we must begin to recognize its face. That is the other sign of our internationalization: the Mexican political system does not begin and end inside its borders. It seems to me not only archaic but also naive to think that Mexicans' voting abroad violates our virginal sovereignty.

The debate, in my view, must center on consolidating rigorousness in elections outside our national boundaries. This must not be hurried. I repeat: the worst possible thing would be to tear the delicate tissue of electoral certainty. It would be dreadfully irresponsible to move in that direction without having paved the road to trust. VM

NOTES

[1] First published in the Mexico City daily newspaper *Reforma,* 5 October 1998.

[2] The author refers to Andrés Manuel López Obrador, PRD national leader, who after the state of Oaxaca's August 1998 gubernatorial elections declared his party's candidate the winner despite all the data pointing the other way. [Editor's Note.]

Jerónimo Arteaga/AVE

# Perspectives for the Presidentialist System in Mexico

*Rubén R. García Clarck**

A year and a half later, fears of a crisis of governability due to the divided government that resulted from Mexico's July 6, 1997, federal elections have abated. That crisis would have been made possible by a paralyzing confrontation between the majority opposition bloc of federal deputies and the president, a member of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). This was averted because the opposition bloc has not acted as such in all cases. For example, when the legislature dealt with the weighty question of federal spending at the end of 1997, a majority was formed which negotiated some modifications to the original bill and agreed to pass it, regardless of the polarization around other topics between the PRI and its opponents.

However, the difficulties that the different congressional caucuses have in moving forward the political reform of the state do give pause; the conclusion of that process —at least its main aspects— is a necessary precondition to guarantee political stability for the presidential elections in the year 2000, whichever party or candidate emerges the victor.

In this framework, one of the central topics on the political agenda today is the separation and equilibrium among the branches of government. In the debate on this question, some propose continuing the reforms for strengthening the autonomy of both the judiciary and the legislature as well as for increase executive branch efficiency to improve the system of checks and balances among the three.

Another proposal points to the relevance of a change in regimen, from presidential to semipresidential or semiparliamentary,

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as the ideal way to overcome the age-old shortcomings of the Mexican presidential system: centralism and the subordination of the legislature and the judiciary to the executive, among others. Similarly, this proposal aims to avoid the risks threatening the viability of Mexico's presidential system under the current conditions of a divided government.

This position coincides with that of authors like Juan J. Linz and Giovanni Sartori, who have proposed abandoning classical presidential government in Latin America as a whole and adopting a parliamentary or intermittent presidential system.[1] However, while academia has been proposing a change in the region's political systems to consolidate democracy, in practice, on the ground, there has been an attempt not only to maintain the presidential regimens in the Latin American countries, but even to shore them up through mechanisms like reelection and the implementation of second ballots.

This forces us to ask what factors explain the decision to maintain and reinforce the presidential option in Latin America when it is associated precisely with the bankruptcy of the Latin American democracies in the 1970s and the regimes which, although not dictatorial, have had markedly authoritarian traits.

The answer lies in the confidence the institution of the presidency seems to inspire in the region's political elites with regard to governability and representation. It is not by accident that at the Sixth Iberoamerican Summit held in Santiago and Viña del Mar, Chile, November 7-11, 1996, the heads of state and/or government who participated recommended that the existing political systems be perfected. In the majority of these countries, these systems are presidential.

Other factors involved in the reinforcement of Latin America's presidential systems may be: a) the military's preference for this kind of regimen, since it maintains a well defined hierarchy that facilitates understanding between the civilian power structure and the army; b) the current process of privatization due to economic opening and the dismantling of the nationalist populist states, both phenomena linked to globalization; and c) the crisis of representation manifested in the weakening of traditional political actors and the discrediting of party and parliamentary politics.

Faced with the double challenge of economic globalization and the crisis of representation, Latin America has used the institution of the presidency to overcome its difficulties.

Faced with the double challenge of economic globalization and the crisis of representation, Latin America has used the institution of the presidency to overcome its difficulties. On the one hand, it has found the executive to be the only instrument available to reconcentrate, even if only symbolically, the representation of the nation and in this way deal with the loss of sovereignty of the nation states, to come up with policies that enable them to insert themselves more solidly into the globalized economy, to make more expeditious governmental decisions in more and more unstable national and international situations and, at the same time, to ensure continuity in the implementation of the necessary macroeconomic strategies.

On the other hand, the discrediting of politics and politicians, the plurality of the divided forces, the anti-partisan or a-partisan positions of social actors who move chaotically within or outside legal boundaries, as well as the fragility of political alliances, which lead more to divided parliaments than to divided governments, are all factors that have made it necessary to rescue the presidency as an institution, even when it is occupied by figures from outside the realm of the political class, and give it the none-too-easy task of personifying the vague will of a society in the process of political recomposition.

Mexico is no exception, even though the path it has taken is somewhat exceptional since it has not attempted to shore up the presidential system through reelection or a second round in presidential elections. Rather, efforts have focused on strengthening the legislative and judicial branches and state and municipal governments. It should be pointed out that in Mexico's case, reelection of the president is rejected for historical reasons, and the proposal to institute a run-off vote for the chief executive has not sparked a consensus among the main national political parties.

Historically speaking, Mexico's presidential regimen is the result of an almost century-long struggle between the occupants and supporters of the executive and those of the legislature. We should remember that in the nineteenth century, confronted with the bare-faced autocratic postures of both Agustín de Iturbide[2] and Antonio López de Santa Anna,[3] voices were raised demanding the recognition of the legislative branch as the legitimate representative of the nation. The strengthening of the legislature and

the division of powers meant the creation of the Senate by the Constituent Congress of 1824. But, with the aim of saving the young nation's independence and liberty, the executive's prerogatives were increased.

It was not until the Constituent Congress of 1856-57 that a decisive step was made toward a parliamentary system. As Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada said at the time, "The way [the branches of government] are organized in the Constitution, the legislature is all and the executive lacks authority of its own in the face of the legislature. This could create very grave difficulties in the normal exercise of the functions of both branches of government."[4] As scholar Jorge Sayeg says, it was more or less a parliamentary system, since in place of a congress, the new constitution went so far as to establish within a single chamber, an actual legislative convention.

Faced with an omnipotent Congress, the executive resorted to extraordinary powers to govern and passed a bill in 1874 establishing the presidential veto and the reestablishment of the Senate, conceived to keep the Chamber of Deputies in check. Later, using the constitutional reforms which finally allowed for reelection of the president, Porfirio Díaz established himself as dictator, brought down in the end only by the 1910 Revolution. The revolutionary movement defended the principle of non-reelection for the president and a new vindication of Congress vis-à-vis the executive, especially during the administration of Francisco I. Madero.

A few years later, in the Constituent Congress of 1916-17, Venustiano Carranza's criteria of guaranteeing a balance of powers as the basis for national political stability won the day.

After the tragic experience of the coup d'état against Madero, Carranza proposed a draft constitution that amended the lofty principles of the 1857 Constitution to fit the new national situation and strengthened the executive versus the legislative branch. In this way, Carranza, chief of the Constitutionalist Army, took the side of a strong administration based on a division of powers that —in contrast with the *porfiriato*— would recognize the independence of the legislature, and —as opposed to what happened during the Madero presidency— set limits on the nation's representatives to avoid the subjection of the executive to the legislature.

In short, the draft constitution sought to link up the branches of government "in such a way as to ensure that none would overshadow another and to avoid conflicts [that would disrupt] peace and order in the Republic."[5] In the framework of a presidential system, the Constituent Congress of Querétaro sought a balance between the legislature and the executive. However, the middle-of-the-road position proposed by Carranza was distorted during the rest of the century by two factors: the new abuse of presidential power and the hegemonic party system.

Vis-à-vis the first factor, recently the legal and extralegal prerogatives of the chief executive have been restricted through constitutional reforms and the self-limitation of Mexico's current president. With regard to the second factor, given the increasing demand for democracy, the public, political parties and the government itself have contributed in moving toward a system of competing parties in an electoral framework of transparent, open, equitable competition that has made it possible for them to alternate in office at the municipal, state and federal level.

In this context of changes, it can be argued that the excesses to which our presidential system has led have been corrected and can be corrected without the need for a new kind of system, since the balance of powers established in today's Constitution is viable even in the country's current situation of a divided government. If the checks and balances among the branches of government established in the Constitution had not been implemented, it was fundamentally due to factors external to the Constitution itself. Clearly, no constitutional instrument will be effective —including the amendment of the Constitution itself— if there is no political need and determination to wield it. This is not the case of the current political scenario, in which the actors' and institutions' ability to process the new political balance of forces has been clear.

The challenges of a divided government are unavoidable, but in Mexico they are not of a magnitude that would make it necessary to deal with them by substituting our presidential system. Before thinking about a complete overhaul, we must deepen the discussion about the kinds of specific changes that would contribute to strengthening the balance of powers and guaranteeing democratic governability.

The challenges of a divided government are unavoidable, but in Mexico they are not of a magnitude that would make it necessary to deal with them by substituting our presidential system.

Along these lines, several bills are coming up for discussion that are worth watching: the executive's bill that would create the congressional Higher Federal Audit Commission as well as some reforms to the Congressional Charter. These bills would democratically consolidate the relationship among the branches of government and adjust the legislature's internal norms to the new conditions of greater plurality and the rotation in office in today's Mexico. They would aim to favor agreements among congressional caucuses, between the two chambers of the legislature and between the latter and the executive in order to make decisions that are representative of public opinion as well as effective and timely.

In addition, the proposal to permit consecutive reelection of legislators would give deputies and senators more grounding in society and independence and experience. Another would establish a professional civil service system in the federal administration, thus ensuring greater stability, professionalism and effectiveness in the exercise of the functions of government.[6]

Taking all this into account, we can say that given the challenges posed for the country by the international situation and the rapidly approaching presidential race, it requires greater institutional solidity. This can be brought about by completing the political reform of the state, using the criteria of the members of the Constituent Congress of 1916-17: guaranteeing a strong government through a political system that fits both our history and our project of building a fully democratic nation. VM

## NOTES

[1] Juan J. Linz, "Los peligros del presidencialismo," in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, comps., *El resurgimiento global de la democracia* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la UNAM, 1996), p. 103; and Giovanni Sartori, *Ingeniería constitucional comparada. Una investigación de estructuras, incentivos y resultados* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), p. 109.

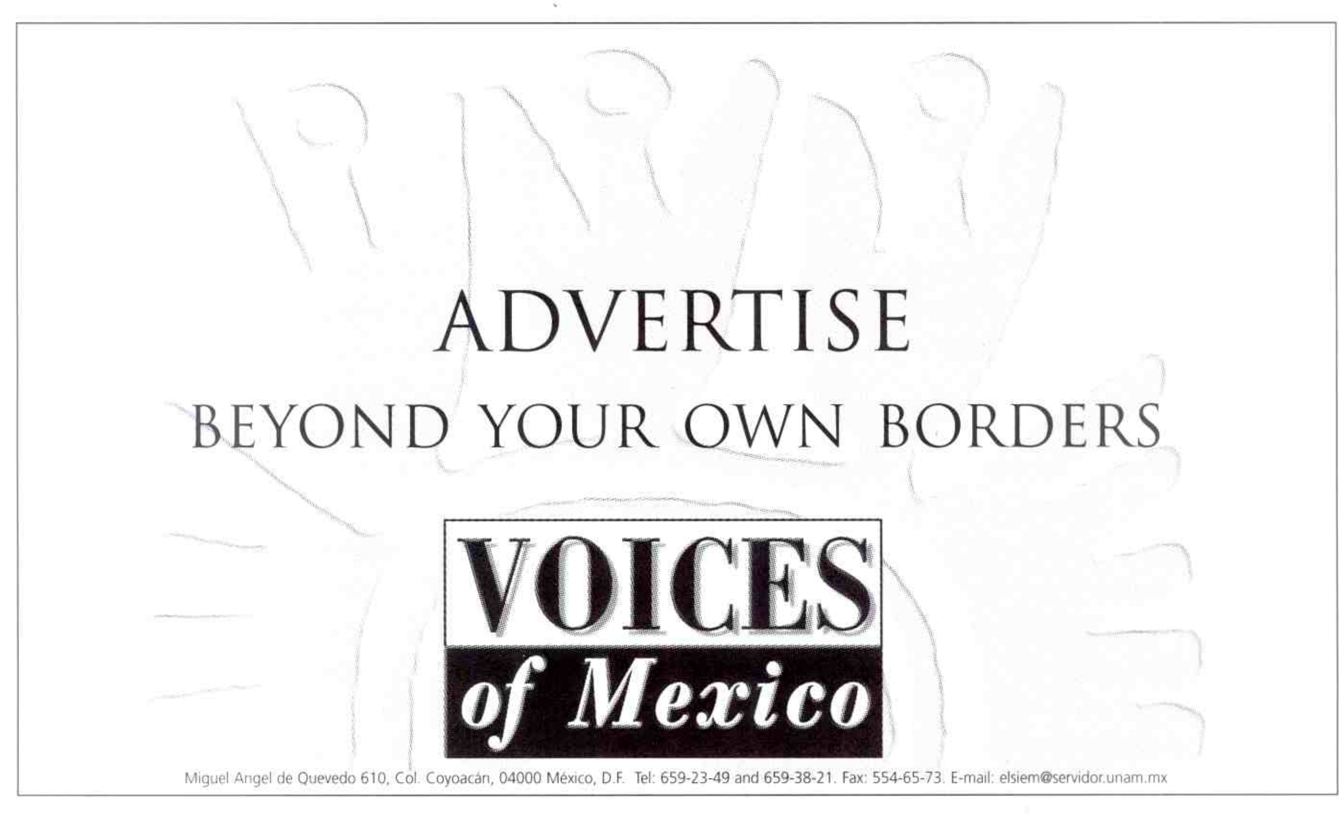
[2] Viceroy Juan O'Donojú signed the Treaty of Córdoba with Iturbide, recognizing the independence of Mexico and offering the crown to the Bourbon dynasty. The Bourbons' refusal and the viceroy's death facilitated Iturbide's ascension to the throne; in 1822 he was crowned Agustín the First, Emperor of Mexico; and in 1823 he abdicated and went into exile in Europe after Congress was reestablished. [Editor's Note.]

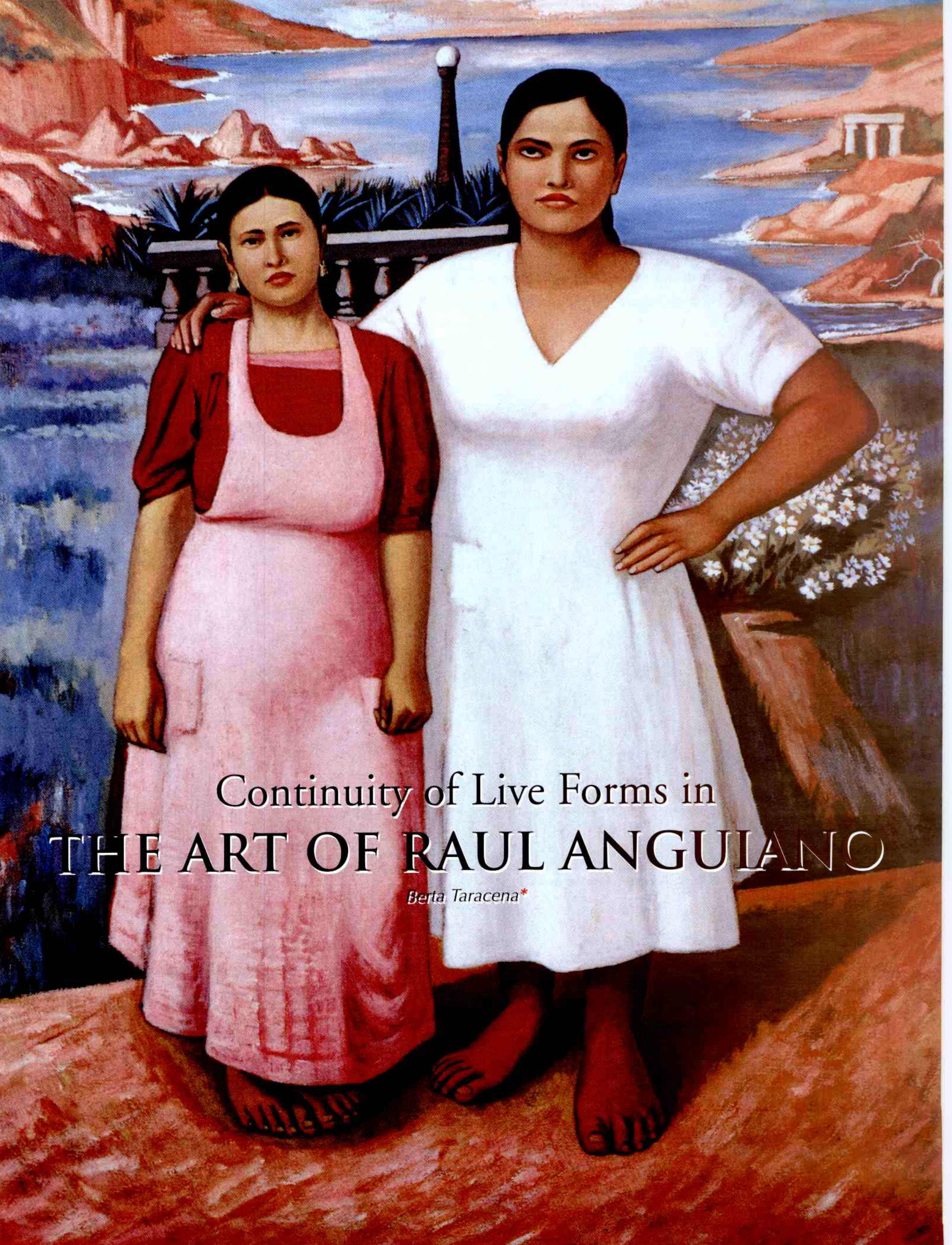
[3] Santa Anna participated in the uprising and proposed a new constituent congress. He was president of the Republic 11 times from 1833 to 1855. [Editor's Note.]

[4] Jorge Sayeg Helú, *Introducción a la historia constitucional de México* (Mexico City: Instituto Politécnico Nacional, 1996), p. 105.

[5] *Congreso Constituyente 1916-1917. Diario de debates* vol. 1 (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1985), p. 394.

[6] By the end of 1998, of all the bills and proposed reforms the author mentions, only one had been approved by the Chamber of Deputies, the creation of the congressional Higher Federal Audit Commission. [Editor's Note.]





# Continuity of Live Forms in THE ART OF RAUL ANGUIANO

Berta Taracena*

Painter, muralist, sculptor, ceramist, sketch artist and engraver, Raúl Anguiano is one of the most important exponents of twentieth century Mexican art. Fundamental values like luminosity, sculpting structure, the simplification of volumes and chromatic balance are to be found in him. His work is a mixture of different techniques, genres and tendencies and aims to portray ordinary people's lives and human endeavors through classical realism: scenes of daily work, portraits, landscapes, nudes, free poetically inspired compositions and historic themes (in his murals). His splendid body of work includes several masterpieces.

A general review of his work reveals that Anguiano is a multifaceted creator capable of condensing images akin to his sensibility and temperament in particular forms and modes of expression.

His original brand of realism gives him great freedom of poetic expression, one of his main characteristics. His power of observation makes him lean toward using a figure from his surroundings as a reference point and giving it a fantastic aura simply by accentuating a gesture, an attitude or a particular trait, as in his works *Birth and Death* (1942), *The Thorn* (1952), *War and Peace* (1967), *Cinetic Venus* (1968), *Melancholy* (1971) and *Woman with Iguanas* (1986). Their lyricism comes out in a surprising continuity of live forms in his language. Details of the world around him as simple as a mask, a thorn or the charm of an indigenous woman, exalted to the point of poetry, attain a singular character, an original mode of expression that identifies the true Anguiano.

Photos reprinted courtesy of Raúl Anguiano

*Birth and Death*, 55 x 75 cm, 1942 (oil on canvas).

* Mexican art critic.

Photos reproduced by Arturo Piera.
**Previous page:** *The Maids*, 90 x 70 cm, 1943 (oil on canvas).

## Early Period

From his early period (1935-1950) —with its circus people, scenes of the lives of workers and peasants, rooftops— An-

guiano's talent for fusing magic and realism was already clear. At that time, portraits of little girls brought together his best qualities, in classic works such as *Duck Flower* (1942), *Girl in Pink* (1942), *The Royal Lemon* (1943), which made him realize his talent for portraiture and for a time turned him into one of Mexico's most sought after portrait artists.

These paintings already foreshadow the monumental nature of other figures, which blossomed completely in *Annunciation* (1951), *The Woman of the Iguanas* (1956), *The Three Suns* (1957), *Nude in Red* (1959) and other freely inspired and daring compositions.

*The Thorn,* 120 x 170 cm, 1952 (oil on canvas).

Equally important in those years was his surrealist period, his approaching distant realities and day-to-day events with originality of style and a sharp critical sense, which produced impressive, surprising works such as *The Flight* (1942), *The Weeping Woman* (1941), *The Bricklayer* (1947), *Still Life with Shell* (1947), *The Tower* (1947), *The Dome* (1948) and others.

This is a first period with fully developed simple and complex themes. A symphony of color. Compositions whose value relations are balanced and perfectly harmonious.

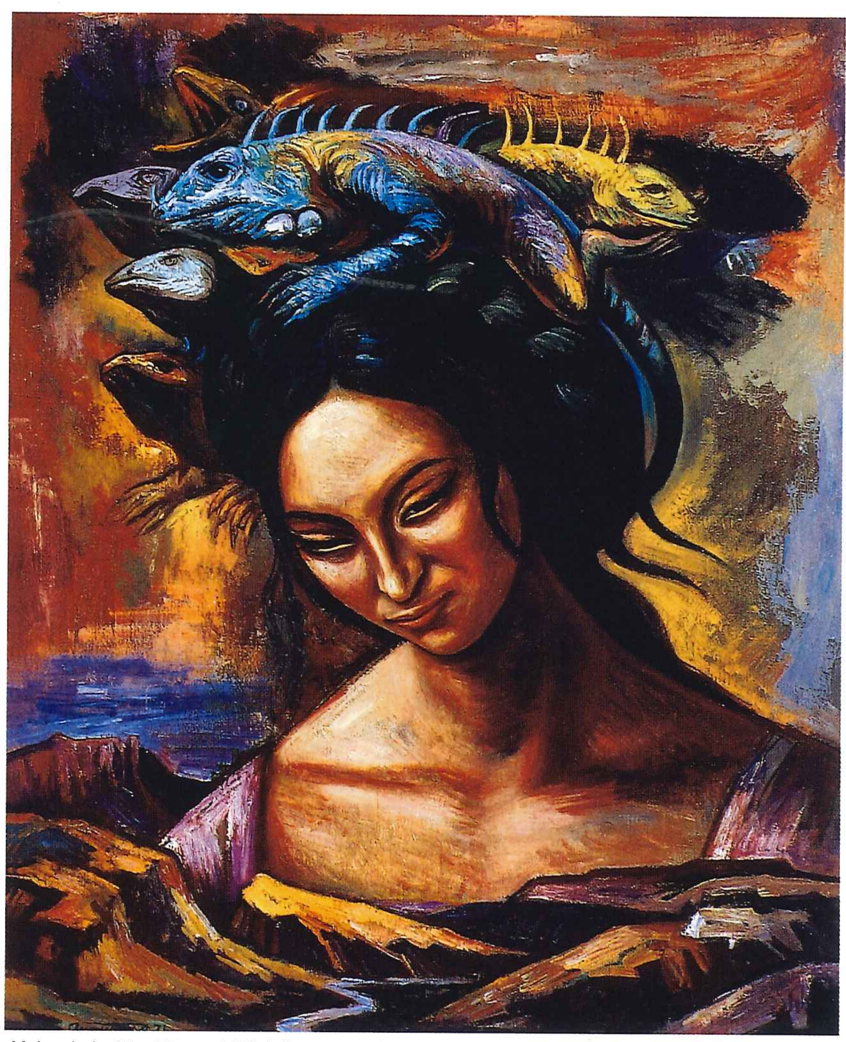
Like any good Mexican, Anguiano is a man full of optical curiosity. For Mexicans, seeing is one of the most sought after, constant pleasures.

Other peoples are —or seem to be— always active, busy, absorbed in something. But Mexicans have a talent for observing and contemplating. They watch the spectacle of the street, people going by, working; everything that goes on, big and small, pretty and ugly. Anguiano is of this sort; he observes and then, from memory, draws and paints what he has seen.

## The Murals

Anguiano's mural work spans the period from 1934 to today. On that long road,

the artist has moved through history in his painting. His foregrounds emphasize the symbol of Man in different historical circumstances, underlining scenes from the conquest and the Catholic Church's evangelizing, as well as of modern and contemporary Mexico. It can be said that his murals transcend the purely historical event, since with metaphysical feeling, the painter speaks of Man and suggests a mystery beyond. He uses visual symbols to indicate that the doors of his art are open to all possibilities, all readings, all proposals. With that, Anguiano shows himself to be, as a twentieth century artist, an exponent of contemporary universal consciousness: novel, profound, constructive and creative, just like many of the other great plastic artists of modern Mexico.

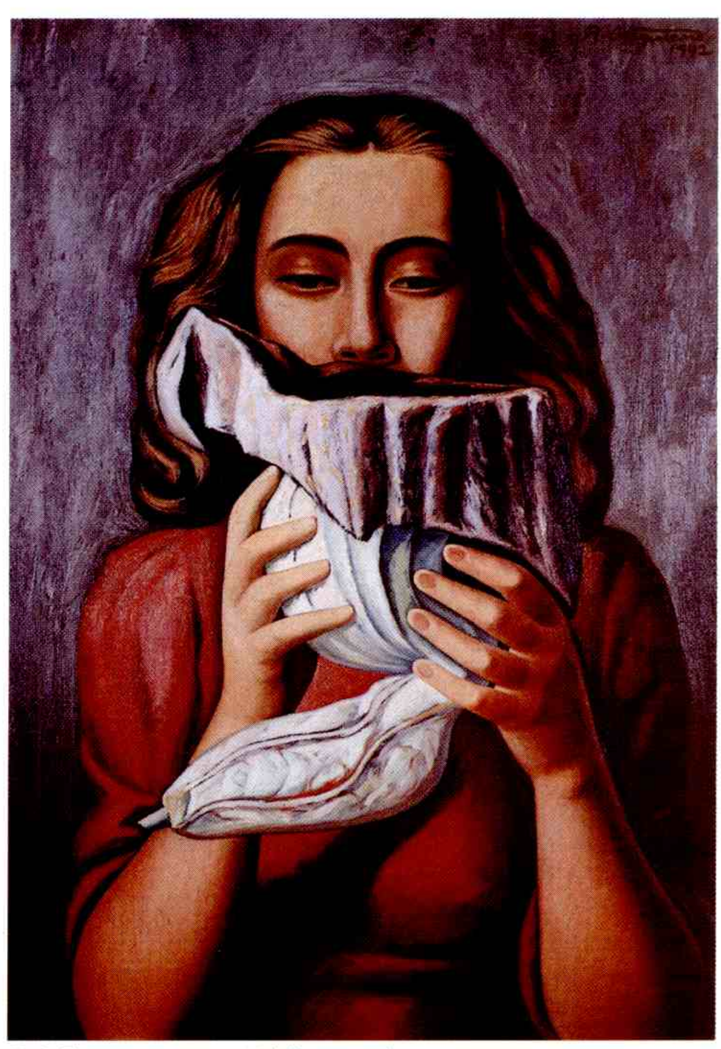


*Melancholy*, 85 x 75 cm, 1971 (oil on canvas).

Among his outstanding murals are *The Creation of Man in the Mayan World, Deities of Mesoamerica, Palatine Scenes in Palenque, Mayan Rites* (National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City, 1964); *The Baptism of Christ* (San Marcos Church, Tonalá, Jalisco, 1970); *The Creation in the Pre-Hispanic World, The Creation in the Colonial Period, Communication in the Modern World* (Ferrer Publicity Office, Mexico City, 1979); *Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, General Lázaro Cárdenas* (Foreign Relations Ministry, Mexico City, 1986); *Trilogy of Nationality* (Federal Attorney General's Office, Mexico City, 1993); and *Encounter of Two Cultures* or *The Mixed Blood of the Mexican People* (Public Education Ministry, Mexico City, 1996).

About his mural *History and Legend of Coyoacán* (Raúl Anguiano House, Pedregal de Coyoacán, 1997), Anguiano wrote, "Quetzalcóatl, a plumed serpent inspired in the pre-Hispanic petroglyph found in this area of Pedregal when it was dynamited for urbanization, is at the bottom of the composition. As in various cultures of Mesoamerica, Quetzalcóatl was the tutelary deity. In the center of the mural is the pyramid of Cuicuilco, surrounded by lava from the eruption of Xitle, a volcano depicted at the top of the composition. At the right are Hernán Cortés and the Malinche, a couple who procreated one of Mexico's first mestizos and a symbol of the mix of the two cultures, the Aztec and Hispanic, blended to forge our nationality."

Employing different historical and geographic elements and various techniques such as oils, frescoes, sketching and acrylic, Anguiano puts together a far-reaching, significant body of murals with all the traits of an artist who had a vocation from the very first and possesses notable technique and great poetic and decorative sense. In the same way, he is a painter with a great capacity for absorbing trends in the plastic arts, from both the past and the present, with both fine sensibility and a sharp intellect which allow him to synthesize eloquent and convincing images.



*Duck Flower,* 83 x 61 cm, 1942 (oil on canvas).

No less important are his entrepreneurial spirit, his organizing talents, his likeableness, elegance and idealism, and particularly his intolerance of the evil of our time: the exploitation of Man by Man.

## NEW PROPOSALS

Around 1970, Anguiano's search for new proposals produced the splendid series called *Development of Venus,* done in sculpture, painting and sketching.

Taking the *Venus of Lespuegue* (Alta Gerona, France) as a central element, Anguiano produced dynamic essays of simultaneous figures whose powerful absraction evokes both cubism and cinetism.

As a result, he has produced fundamental works, series done over several decades with themes such as Venus and love, women seen as a force of nature and represented in all their facets, effigies of workers and peasants, of heroes and the founding fathers of Mexico, historical landscapes and other key examples in new versions such as *The Dream of Na-Kin* (Lacandona de Chiapas, 1990), *Model in Repose* (1995), *Penitents of Taxco* (1996) and *Holocaust* (1996), which show would be sufficient to consider his work extraordinary. The important thing, of course, is not the volume in and of itself, but the fact that this unique creator never repeats himself; for him, routine, conventional schematics and the commonplace do not exist; each new sketch or print is a new aesthetic contribution thanks to his unlimited gift of observation and his inexhaustible cache of formal resources.

*Still Life,* 90 x 110 cm, 1946 (oil on canvas).

Decomposition and understanding guided him toward an active definition of the image and a broader, more harmonious structure in his compositions.

In sculpture and ceramics, Anguiano shows the same qualities of clarity and monumental proportions that have characterized great Mexican artists throughout the main periods of its art: pre-Hispanic, viceroyal, modern and contemporary.

the eclectic cultural fiber from which emerge —as though from a sea of impressions and remembrances, encounters and clashes— audacious, independent plastic solutions.

## SKETCHING AND GRAPHICS

Anguiano has produced so many sketches and other graphic works that this alone

His talent for the visual arts became clear in his adolescence in the drawing classes given by José Vizcarra in Guadalajara. His ability as a graphic artist developed when he became part of the group of intellectuals and painters called "Banners of the Provinces," which included Agustín Yáñez, José Guadalupe Zuno, Enrique Martínez Ulloa, Emanuel Palacios, Alfonso Gutiérrez Hermosillo,

José Cornejo Franco, Manuel Martínez Valadez, Jesús Guerrero Galván and Rubén Mora Gálvez. This group came together because of its members' interest in the complex social problems of the period (1930). Thinking about and analyzing the truth was a duty to himself that Anguiano took on from the first years of his career.

His being an nonconformist who rebelled against indifference, injustice and mental and spiritual sloth enriches his talent as an artist; both in his visual work and his writing, conversation and lectures, he takes sides, denounces, harangues.

In 1934, he traveled to Mexico City where he became assistant fresco mural painter in the team created by, among others, Jesús Guerrero Galván (1910-1973) and Máximo Pacheco (1905-1970). He learned theory and practice about the golden section from Diego Rivera (1886-1957) and later joined the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists and the Popular Graphics Workshop, working side by side with Leopoldo Méndez (1902-1969), Alfredo Zalce (1908- ), Pablo O'Higgins (1904-1983), Feliciano Peña (1915-1982), Francisco Dosamantes (1911-1986), José Chávez Morado (1909- ), Juan de la Cabada (1902-1986), José Mancisidor (1914-1956), Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940) and other great men of Mexican culture of the period (1930-1950), recognized for the spirit of social renovation expressed in their work.

*Portrait of my Mother and my Brother Pepe,* 100 x 130 cm, 1944 (oil on canvas).

Anguiano's graphic composition, rounded and in broad strokes, uses powerful contrasts to give his drawing and prints (like in his other disciplines) a certain sculptural character, like forms hewn with a chisel. Masses related among themselves, in black and white or in color, suggest corporeality every single time; suddenly, from the dark, from an opaque dun or a blackish grey, the artist's colors tend toward the luminous. It is as if the impenetrable, solid darkness had been the matter from which these energetically outlined figures were carved: the heads of stupendous portraits, landscapes, still lifes, scenes from daily life, historical events, all depicted with clear precision.

Inside Anguiano's vision, the plastic and social world is organized in the form of masses, and, like a dense, moving and open mass, it includes each of the figures, each head, each isolated form, a whole of beings and things perceived by the artist both inside and outside himself, with a sharp eye, the hand of a master and unequaled genius. VM

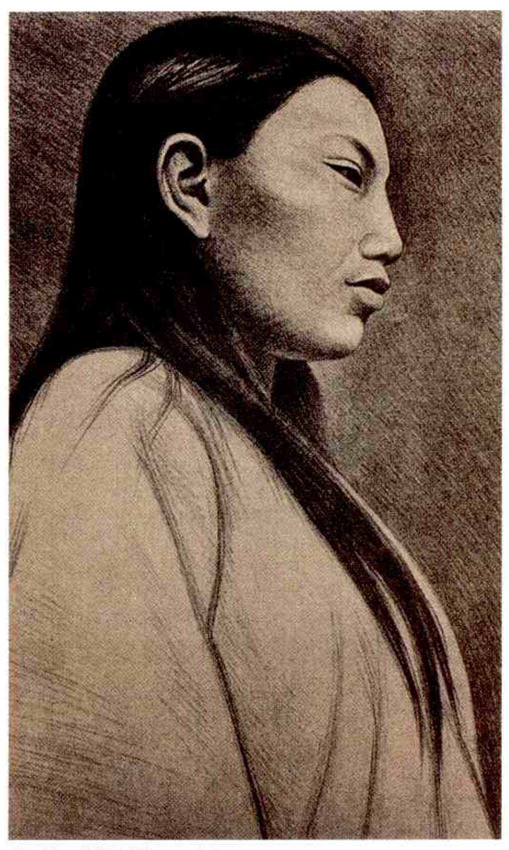
Photos reprinted courtesy of Raúl Anguiano

*The Earth,* 100 x 130 cm, 1956 (oil on canvas).

# Raúl Anguiano
# A WORLD IN PERPETUAL MOVEMENT

*Beatriz Vidal**

The splendid world of Raúl Anguiano bursts forth before our eyes. Yet again, we can envisage a whole gamut of creative possibilities that the artist has been able to shape in an ever-renewing process, painting and changing reality, extending its limits to all real and possible universes, transforming his world into something lucid, sensitive, accessible. In other words, he humanizes his surroundings, the cosmos.



*Na-Kin*, 1950 (lithograph).

Raúl Anguiano is known both in Mexico and abroad for the originality of the topics he deals with and for clear, defined visual language, easily comprehensible because his proposal is based on events, characters or facts of our folk culture that identify us and differentiate us from other countries.

He began in graphics in 1937 as one of the main founders of the Popular Graphics Workshop, together with Leopoldo Méndez, Luis Arenal, Pablo O'Higgins and Alfredo Zalce, among others. There, according to his teacher and friend José Sánchez, he did his first lithograph, a portrait of Emiliano Zapata. Even today, Raúl Anguiano has two parallel careers, each developed with unlimited capacity enriched day by day: easel painting and graphics.

The art of Raúl Anguiano is not aesthetic recreation, but a personal, spontaneous response to the realities of our age. To approach his painting, the viewer must have a cultural background as vast as the artist himself. At 83, he helps anyone in need of it. He loves and admires Mexico and his generosity funds social services at the same time that he enriches our country's artistic and cultural patrimony. Anguiano works untiringly; he is a man of his land and his age. The charm of his figures, his objects, his dreams emanates from his infinite energy, and he recreates in each of his works the traditions, customs, myths and aesthetic and social interests that have motivated him all his life.

The feminine figure in Anguiano's work is the emblem of ancestral greatness that can be guessed at in the strong but tender faces of his women.

He found a vast folk typology and his art reflects Mexican life in its different aspects: work, fiestas, myths, silences, as well

* Director of Mexico City's National Print Museum.

Photos reproduced by Arturo Piera.

*Fishing Nets*, 101 x 179 cm, 1956 (oil on canvas).

as a permanent homage to Mexican women, always present in his craft.

In his murals and other visual art he communicates his great concern for daily things. It is on this that he bases his critique of the problems society faces. His graphic production expresses situations overlooked by many in this increasingly technical world subject to the media, since, constantly running, we do not have the time to discover who we are or what we are like.

Mural painter, sketch artist and engraver, Raúl Anguiano takes nourishment from the sources of traditional Mexican art, simultaneously using the precepts of modern painting. The motifs and influences in his work combine the ancient and the contemporary Mexican art as something specific and at the same time universal.

His work shows us Mexico City as a place where revelry and tragedy, hopelessness and a tenacious will to survive, and even the illusion of happiness all coexist. His paintings and engravings offer us a brisk nocturnal stroll through the corners of the metropolis that in the 1940s began to experience the frenzy of modernization at any cost: musical reviews and vaudeville in theaters and tents, whorehouses, the Salón Mexico (for dancing the *danzón* and the mambo) and Garibaldi Square, the alleyways where some of his characters wander.

Anguiano works untiringly; he is a man of his land and his age. The charm of his figures, his objects, his dreams emanates from his infinite energy.

The feminine figure in Anguiano's work is the emblem of ancestral greatness that can be guessed at in the strong but tender faces of his women: women from the Lacandon jungle, Juchitán, Veracruz and Cuetzala. His women are earthy, terrestrial; they are the mother and the source. The solid, heavy volume of their bodies give them a sculptural beauty; these are bodies which are temples of clay and *tezontle*, Mexico's red porous stone. They are aspects of a reality in which women are a basic element, a gravitational center around which the universe is organized.

*The Spinner*, 145 x 205 cm, 1958 (oil on canvas).

This artist's work, through a lifetime of training, constancy and an intimate relationship with his times and his people, shows a major commitment to social questions as well as a formidable command of sketching and color. Anguiano is one of the most genuine representatives of Mexican painting in the grand tradition, a current that, despite the changes in fashion over the years, has not painted itself out and whose influence continues in the expression of other pictorial movements.

His work includes the elements that have characterized Mexico's most outstanding visual artistic currents throughout its history: colors, themes, biographical and political itineraries, as well as variety, originality and his own style, common to the other great Mexican artists.

His style's spiritual particularity can be seen in the serenity that would almost seem like detachment if it were not for the aftereffect of concern in his portraits, including his self-portraits. The colors share that same characteristic: even when they seem bright, they betray a certain circumspection.

As a participant in the main political and artistic events that have determined the life of Mexico in the postrevolutionary period, he devoted himself to group activism which helped define the indigenist and social nature of his work. Cautious of content and rigorous of technique, his painting has maintained an equilibrium which has given it both mastery and authenticity.

Mural painter, sketch artist and engraver, Raúl Anguiano takes nourishment from the sources of traditional Mexican art, simultaneously using the precepts of modern painting.

Although engraving demands a smaller format, Anguiano always tends toward monumental works because they echo a cosmogony animated by perpetual movement. His work fully deserves the special place it has attained in Mexican visual arts. His genius and openness has allowed him to sojourn peaceably through a world sometimes competitive and jealous of art. VM

# RAUL ANGUIANO

Reprinted courtesy of Raúl Anguiano

Raúl Anguiano belongs to the so-called "Third Generation" of postrevolutionary painters, along with Juan O'Gorman, Jorge González Camarena, José Chávez Morado, Alfredo Zalce, Jesús Guerrero Galván and Julio Castellanos, all known for being unorthodox, both in politics and in art, while at the same time holding to certain traditional canons. Anguiano's work is viewed as an expression of its time because of its undeniably Mexican flavor, and this link to his people is clear not only in his murals but also on canvas, in etchings, pencil and ink drawings, lithographs and illustrations, and also more recently in sculpture and ceramics. Without compromising his personality or ethnic roots, and at the same time not allowing them to limit him, Anguiano has vindicated and taken advantage of the principles of modern art, and this gives his work a universal character transcending boundaries.

Raúl Anguiano was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, on February 26, 1915. He started drawing cubist pictures at the age of 5, and it is said that his first models were movie stars: Mary Pickford, Pola Negri and Charlie Chaplin. Anguiano recalls that his first artistic influence or aesthetic emotion came from the *Holy Family* by Rafael Sanzio.

At 12, Anguiano entered Guadalajara's Free School of Painting under Ixca Farías, whose method was to hang reproductions of works by Michelangelo and Rafael on the walls and have the students copy them. From 1928 to 1933, he studied with master painter José Vizcarra, the disciple of Santiago Rebull and José Salomé Piña, and organized the group "Young Painters of Jalisco" with other artists. During this period, Anguiano worked with different kinds of models: workmen, employees and a few intellectuals like Pita Amor. He began to develop a pre-

ference for Oriental features and straight hair, which lasted throughout his career. This was why he was so interested by the Lacandon people from the jungles of Chiapas, and the exoticism of Gauguin's Tahiti paintings.

In 1934 Anguiano moved to Mexico City. In addition to his creative painting, Anguiano began teaching in primary schools. He taught drawing and painting at La Esmeralda academy and the UNAM School of Art. Anguiano is a member of the Mexican Artistic Renaissance movement which was started in the 1920s by the Mexican School of Art to which he belonged. This renaissance began with the San Carlos Academy movement —among whose leaders were Ignacio Asúnsolo and José Clemente Orozco— that emerged out of the students' and teachers' discontent with traditional painting methods (academicism), and the close contact the young artists had with the problems of Mexico and its people, which explains the marked critical realism of the painters of the time, including Anguiano himself. This same year, Anguiano received a commission to paint his first mural, *Socialist Education*, a 70-meter fresco for Mexico City's Carlos A. Carrillo School. Other works followed, including *Mayan Rituals* (oils on canvas and wood), for the Mayan Hall in the National Museum of Anthropology, and *Trilogy of Nationality* (acrylic on canvas and wood), for the Attorney General's Office.

In 1936 he moved on to his surrealist period, which lasted almost a decade. He painted circus performers and prostitutes, and most notable among his works of the time are *The Madame* (gouache, 1936), *The Clown's Daughter* (oil, 1940) and *The Pink Circus Artist* and the *Grey Circus Artist* (oil, 1941). Also during this period Anguiano produced a series of drawings based on his dreams, with cold tones and silver-grays predominating. Other stages followed: he was a portrait painter during the 1940s, influenced by Cézanne, Tintoretto and Picasso, when he painted María Asúnsolo and Ruth Rivera, and then came the naturalist realism stage, which could well be considered a forerunner of U.S. hyper-realism; his work on the theme of the Bonampak Indians belongs to this period.

In 1937 Anguiano joined the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists. Together with Alfredo Zalce and Pablo O'Higgins, he was also a founding member of the Popular Graphics Workshop, where artists practiced a graphic style based on Mexico's folk traditions. This was due to the powerful influence of the recently discovered José Guadalupe Posada and Goya. Anguiano's relationship with artists of other disciplines, for example the poet Efraín Huerta and the cinematographer Emilio "Indio" Fernández, enriched his world of life sensations and experiences, because, in addition to discussing literature and different art forms with other artists, Anguiano came to know and frequent places such as the Peralvillo district, Garibaldi and the Salón México, where the poor and working classes and some of the capital's intellectuals gave free rein to their sensuality until the early hours of the morning.

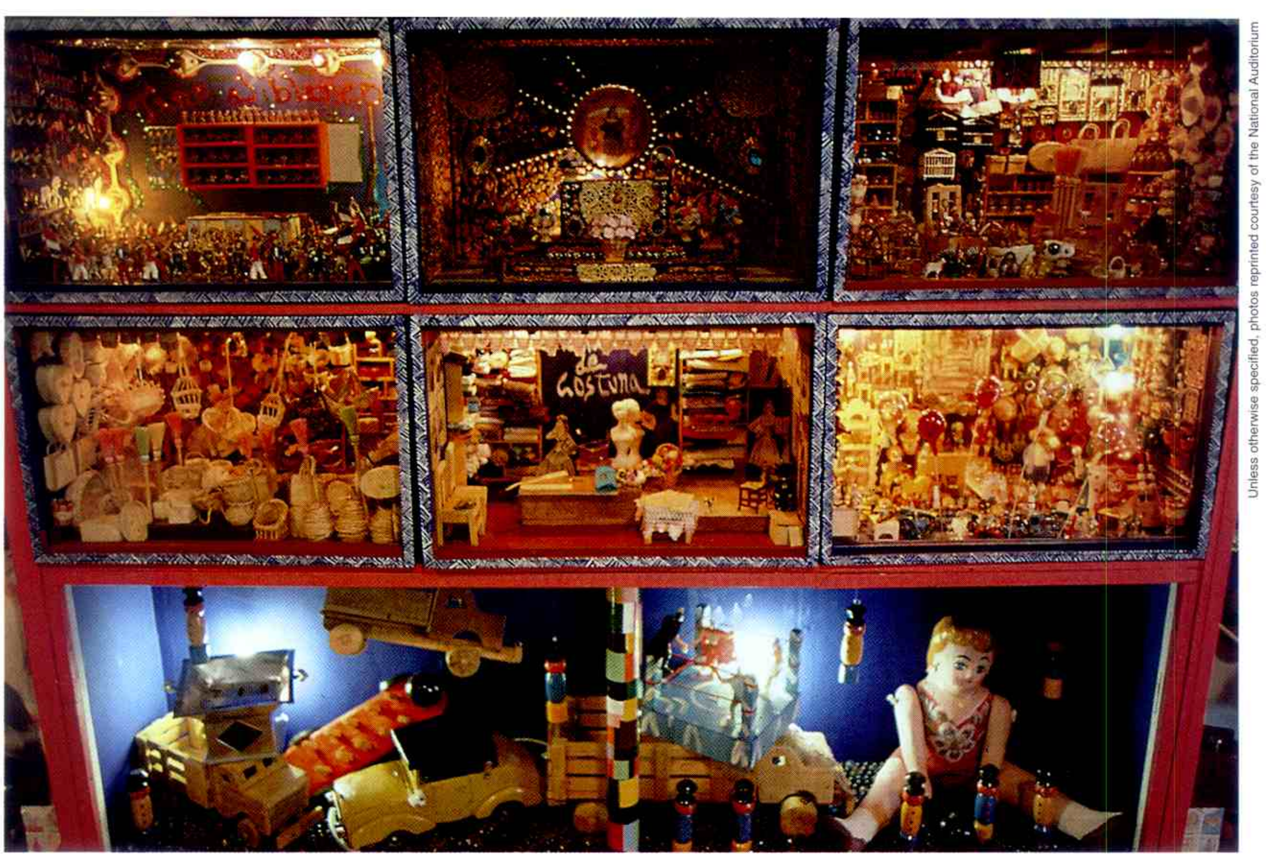
Anguiano held his first solo exhibition, entitled "Raúl Anguiano and Máximo Pacheco", at the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City, in 1935; and in 1940 he took part in his first collective exhibition, "Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art." These were followed by more than 100 shows in many countries: Cuba, Chile, Colombia, Brazil, the United States, France, Italy, the former Soviet Union, Israel, Germany and Japan. His most recent exhibitions include the presentation of a series of four color lithographs, held at the Hall of Graphic Arts SAGA 88, from 1989 to 1990, in Paris; and a retrospective look at Anguiano's work in graphics (1938-1940), held at the National Print Museum in Mexico City in 1990.

Anguiano's works form part of well known national and foreign collections in China, New York, San Francisco, Brussels, Poland, France and Italy. Since 1982, Anguiano has been full member of Mexico City's Academy of Arts, and since 1993, he has also been Creator Emeritus of the National System of the Creators of Art.

*Translated by Jennifer Turret*

# Rafael Alvarez

# The World within Four Walls



Unless otherwise specified, photos reprinted courtesy of the National Auditorium

The difference between handicrafts and art is sometimes difficult to define. When it comes to Rafael Alvarez it is even more difficult; even when we assume no difference between the two concepts, how do we define Alvarez's work? Is it object-art, collage or installation?

It is impossible to choose. If, in the exercise of their craft, magicians seek at the ends of the earth and in the depths of the sea materials scorned by or unknown to others, and if the gods speak the word or blow on a handful of soil to create worlds, then where along this continuum do we place artists who, with nothing more than chunks of wood and everyday objects, design scenes in which they depict at will the lives of us all?

> Each of Alvarez's compositions is a portrait, an anecdote relating a moment in Mexico's history and its attendant dreams.

Rafael Alvarez Díaz was born in Mexico City on August 4, 1947. When very young, he moved to Orizaba, Veracruz, where he attended primary and secondary school. Alvarez describes himself as an observer: of Mexican life, of the techniques of folk art, of color, of the taste for variegated hues and detail. His enormous curiosity has led him into many activities: from the buying and selling of antiques and rare objects, to the formation of an experimental movie group, including his role as production assistant at the History Theater of Mexico. Alvarez's

interest in the history of religion has led him to the particular study of everything related to Christian symbolism. Later, as a curious observer of the ex-voto technique, Alvarez has even created religious ex-votos (paintings or boxes of various sizes where he depicts a difficult situation that has already been resolved, and in which thanks are being given to some divine figure for his/her intervention); lay ex-votos (in which the local apothecary, for example, is thanked for favors received); and a strange anti-ex-voto, in which he depicts everything that, despite promises, candles and flowers, the saint never actually did.

Alvarez describes his work as "a synthesis of frustrations."

Reprinted courtesy of Rafael Alvarez

Detail of a typical town shop.

Rafael Alvarez began as a miniaturist by chance. As a child, he was given a box of miniature toys, made of clay, vegetable fiber and tinplate. Many people asked him to sell them that present, but that did not happen. This tiny fantasy world was the reason the artist would begin 22 years ago to devote his time and avid interest to working with minuscule objects. He decided to place them within a confined space and the result was a type of object-art that aroused the curiosity and admiration of the general public.

Each of Alvarez's compositions, whether of an old-fashioned house or kitchen, of a shop or a toy maker's, of a *jarcería*[1] or photo studio, is a portrait, an anecdote relating a moment in Mexico's history and its attendant dreams, a narration of local character circumscribed within the semi-cubic space of a wooden box.

A portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Alvarez's themes vary tremendously. They include the fall of Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship, Madero's rise to the presidency; the link between the photographer León Toral and Madre Conchita, controversial figures in President Alvaro Obregón's assassination in "La Bombilla" restaurant; the village store and Cristeros;[2] figures from show business (such as the box describing the meeting between Pérez Prado, the celebrated creator of the mambo, and Fellini), and the infra-world of the fetish. In June 1988, in his amazing *Box of Solutions and Testimonies* Alvarez even included a pine cross to keep vampires at bay, "witch oil" to give us power over the minds of others, a hummingbird to win that desired loved-one, a deer's eye to protect one against the evil eye and a place to note down the testimony of anyone who has, in good faith, made use of the box's services.

According to Rafael Alvarez, the visual arts do not have to be divorced from the other disciplines. He describes his work as "a synthesis of frustrations," something which can be perceived in the experimental nature of his work. Very often Alvarez's boxes have a text pinned to one of the walls, summarizing

what is depicted in the box; for example, in some boxes of shops the text will read: "Credit available," "No gossiping," "I don't serve braggarts," and in his *Box of Solutions and Testimonies*, there is a text telling the story of a woman who resorts to witchcraft to win her husband back. The box of solutions gave Alvarez the idea of using the Saint Benito ribbon (the white one because —Watch out!— the red is to send a man away and the brown one to put him in a coffin in three days).

This interaction among the arts can also be noted in other activities Alvarez is involved in; for example *The Offering of Light*, a piece of performance art using Alvarez's work, an interplay of lights and music dedicated to dead writers, which has been presented in Mexico City, where the music was played by the Coyoacán Symphony Orchestra, and Havana.

Reprinted courtesy of Rafael Alvarez

Detail of *The Toy Box*.

Currently Alvarez contributes articles to *México desconocido* (Unknown Mexico) magazine on Mexican culture, for example the olive green presidential train and cemeteries of foreign communities in Mexico.

Alvarez's work, known across the five continents, has been featured in more than 15 collective exhibitions. Some of his creations constitute important items in places such as the Metropolitan Cathedral and the National Auditorium in Mexico City; the Centennial Museum in Monterrey, Nuevo León; and in the U.S., the Mexican Museum in San Antonio, Texas; the La Raza Gallery in San Francisco; the Grass Roots Gallery in New York; in the Caribbean House in Santiago, Chile; as well as in Belgium, France and Japan.

Detail of the *Box of Solutions and Testimonies*.

To date Alvarez's work comprises more than 2,000 pieces. Each is set in the present, but it could refer to any period, more so because standardization, technology and mass production are casting doubt on the status of object-art: a unique piece, created outside the dictates of the clock and the utilitarian, immediate feelings that motivate creation. As a profound admirer of Juan Rulfo, Rafael Alvarez agrees that Mexico is a beautiful country, built on rituals, loyalties and respect for one's word, on traditions jealously guarded and passed on, which should be propagated to illuminate the dark areas in our perception of Mexican-ness. Otherwise cross-cultural trends and a short historical memory might allow those areas to be filled with ghosts. VM

*María Cristina Hernández*
**Assistant Editor**

*Translated by Jennifer Turret*

## NOTES

[1] A *jarciería* is a shop that sells cord, brooms and cleaning cloths (*jarcias*), among other things. [Editor's Note.]

[2] After the Mexican Revolution, the Plutarco Elías Calles administration imposed restrictions on the Catholic Church to try to create a more lay state. This led to the Cristera Rebellion (1926-1929). [Editor's Note.]

# The Dance of the *Tastoanes*
## An Expression of Indigenous Dignity

*María Tarriba Unger**

In July, several indigenous communities in Mexico's state of Jalisco carry out celebrations in honor of the Christian figure, James the Apostle. The preparations take all year; members of the community make complicated masks and disguises; they rehearse with the actors and dancers who are to perform; they organize their own security; and, despite their own economic limitations, they use their ingenuity to raise considerable sums of money to pay festivity expenses.

The town of San Juan Ocotán, Jalisco, celebrates the day of James the Apostle on July 25. An "overseer"[1] is in charge of organizing this festivity around the figures of Christian saints. These celebrations involve both pre-Hispanic and Spanish cultural elements. An interesting example of the revaluing of the indigenous identity as well as of cultural syncretism is the "Dance of the *Tastoanes*."

Clay mask used in the dance.

Its origins are said to be rooted in a unique legend: the kingdom of Tonalá, in what is today Jalisco, was governed by Queen Tzaponzintli, who receives word that the conquistador Nuño de Guzmán, famous for his savagery in battle, is about to invade her lands.

Tzaponzintli, overwhelmed by the news, prepares a splendid reception for the conquistador, secretly hoping that her friendliness will blunt Nuño de Guzmán's fury and make him spare the lives of her people. However, the *tastoanes*, or captains of the realm, consider the queen's decision cowardly and they conspire together to oppose Nuño de Guzmán's forces. But, the Spaniards, forewarned of the conspiracy, prepare to vanquish the *tastoanes*.

* Mexican art and dance critic.

Unless otherwise specified, photos reprinted courtesy of the Tonalá, Jalisco mayor's office.

The effects of Catholic evangelism can be seen at the end of the story: at the height of the battle many Tonaltecs see the image of James in the sky, frightening the *tastoanes* and aiding in the victory of Spain and Christianity over the indigenous people.

The *tastoanes* are played by nearly 60 men dressed as Spanish and French soldiers. This seems perplexing, but it should be remembered that in the first years of the conquest, indigenous people worked at different jobs and could accumulate certain sums of money, allowing them to dress as Europeans and even ride horses.

Clay figure of a *tastoán*.

In the New World, horses became a symbol of prestige. For that very reason, as of 1700, indigenous people were stripped of all their rights; they were even forbidden to ride horses. The power of the image of the horse is easy to see in different artistic expressions of the Mexican people, such as dance, folk music and the famous "charra" fiestas.[2]

The dance represents local inhabitants' resistance to the Spaniards' expropriation of their lands.

The actors playing the *tastoanes* wear monstrous leather masks trimmed in horsehair, which must be thick and resistent because during the dance, St. James' hatchet blows rain down on the *tastoanes* with great realism. They are guided by three royal figures dressed in satins and velvets, representing nobility, who wear similar masks and a crown. Another important figure is the Moor, who personifies Spain. His role is to pretend to be a friend and interpreter for St. James, when what he really wants is to sell him to the *tastoanes* in exchange for their lands.

The central character is the apostle, who rides a horse and uses his machete to defend himself from the *tastoanes*. "The captains" of the festival also play an important role as representatives of the indigenous military chiefs, responsible for maintaining order among the actors and for keeping the spectators at a prudent distance from the action. Both functions are necessary given that the players take realism to extremes, and it is not unusual for them to be injured during the performance.

The festival lasts three days. The first morning, the *tastoanes* carry the figure of St. James through the streets of the town on their way to the church. Immediately after, they return to the central plaza where the town priest blesses the ceremony and advises the participants not to drink too much or get carried away by the festivities.

The next scene represents the meeting of the Moor and the *tastoanes*. A group meets at a corner of the church, where the kings of the *tastoanes* argue with the Moor over the price for St. James. The Moor wants the *tastoane* land. With a stick, he draws the boundaries he wants and the *tastoanes* and their kings argue with him. They finally come to an agreement and the Moor gives them St. James in exchange for the land. All this is celebrated with a toast, repeated three times at each of the corners of the church, for which a barrel of beer has been provided. Once James the Apostle is in *tastoane* hands, they beat him to death. The Moor repents as he watches the scene, mourning the loss of St. James, and takes a switch to the *tastoanes* who remain indifferent to his attack, totally absorbed in their savage victory dance.

St. James is revived, whereupon he gets up and mounts his horse. Hatchet in hand, he prepares to attack his enemies, displaying the strength of Christianity.

The *tastoanes* represent the sinners that St. James must punish and purify by cutting off their heads. When they begin searching for their heads, they find only the heads of grotesque animals that they put on their shoulders.

This ritual dance is difficult to interpret: the *tastoanes* seem to symbolize the pagan forces resistant to Christianity, but they wear European clothing. Adding to the confusion, the *tastoán* kings, dressed in velvet, look like the figures of the king and queen of Spain. Apparently, this ritual does not represent the indigenous world's resis-

tance to Christianity, but that of the local inhabitants to the Spaniards' expropriation of their lands.

On the second day, the participants go through the town organizing ambushes neighborhood by neighborhood that last from 20 to 30 minutes each. On one side of the street is St. James, astride his horse; on the other side are the Moor and the *tastoanes*. Each scene is performed to music played on a flute called a *chirimía* and drums. The *tastoanes* make an oval in the middle of the street and the battle solemnly begins.

Dante Barrera

Clay figures representing the dance. (Artisan's House of Tonalá.)

Before attacking, the *tastoanes* show their solidarity through a ritual clash of arms. Then, they line up next to their kings and jump and shout ferociously, performing a simple dance step. The king selects one of them, taking him by the hair to give him instructions. Finally, he sends him to fight against James the Apostle.

The battle commences. The attacking *tastoán* tries to avoid St. James' horse and hatchet. The actors playing the *tastoanes* are not allowed to injure St. James with their arms, which they have to keep in front of their masks to protect themselves against his hatchet.

During the entire scene, the players speak a nonsense language that is supposed to represent Nahuatl. Any *tastoán* who speaks Spanish is punished, except if he uses swear words. They are allowed to pull on the reins of St. James' horse or snatch off his hat to enrage him, and he pursues them with his hatchet. At this point, the battle is almost real: frequently the *tastoanes* are severely injured. Whenever one is badly hurt or exhausted, another actor takes his place.

The *tastoanes* seem to symbolize the pagan forces opposed to Christianity.

The battle ends when the *tastoanes* begin to walk in a circle and strike their knives together. During rest periods in the celebration, the dancers smoke and drink large amounts of alcohol, arguing that the alcohol is necessary since it is the only way to stand the physical pain and exhaustion caused by their participation in the ritual dance.

The actor-dancer who plays St. James must stay in the battle the entire time, unless he faints during the performance. When this happens, one of the leaders or captains takes his place astride his horse and the battle continues.

On the last day of the festival the actor who will play James the Apostle the following year is selected. After a large feast in the afternoon, the participants gather at the home of the one selected and two overseers carry him through the streets of the town on their shoulders, followed by a marching band, while a spectacular fireworks display is staged. Some people take the opportunity to offer vows or promises of sacrifices to God. Others do penance, dragging themselves through the streets on their knees.

The new St. James is taken to the church, where the priest gives him a ceremonious welcome. The *tastoanes* enter the church pushing the masks onto the top of their heads, making an impressive picture: worn this way, the masks resemble monsters' faces looking to the sky for a divine sign. At the bottom of the nave is the great crucifix in the dim light of the altar. Seemingly, the celebration is at an end, but there is one more battle. In the soccer field, the *tastoanes* attack the new St. James en masse. After a brief skirmish, next year's St. James disappears, indicating the end of the festivities, and the dancers, exhausted, return home with their families, taking with them the benediction of James the Apostle. **VM**

NOTES

[1] The overseer is a highly dignified and sought-after job because of its status.

[2] A "charro" is a Mexican horseman, typically dressed in an elaborately decorated outfit of tight-fitting pants, a jacket and sombrero. A "fiesta charra" is a rodeo-like event that includes displays of horsemanship. [Translator's Note.]

Photos by Dante Barrera

# Huichol Art

*Patricia Ríos**

Many authors —from Karl Lumholtz[1] to Fernando Benítez, Ramón Mata, Peter Furst and Juan Negrín, most ethnologists or anthropologists— have studied Huichol art and even influenced its development.[2] But, what should be understood as Huichol or Wirrárica art?

* Head of cultural dissemination for Aid to Indigenous Communities, University of Guadalajara.

The Wirráricas, or soothsayers, as the Huichol call themselves, are an exemplary artistic people and one of those which best preserves its traditions and customs. Their art is part of every aspects of their lives: their magnificently embroidered clothing; the rustic architecture of their homes and churches; their furniture (chairs, stools and *equipales*, wicker chairs with leather seats and backs); their hats, girdles and game bags; their bows and arrows for hunting; their musical instruments; their necklaces, bracelets, rings and pendants; the crosses called "God's eyes"; the animal totems made of clay or wood (like the jaguars decorated with beads); the many ceremonial objects (bowls, containers, sculptures, shields, mats, arrows, fetishes, feathers, altars, etc.); the wooden masks decorated with beads; the yarn boards with scenes from their mythology or customs; their face paint; their dances and songs; their stories, and, in general, their oral tradition.

Their art expresses their collective values and beliefs; it shows the images and symbols of their cosmogony and mythology. In this collective framework, the artist expresses his individuality. In addition, their art is sacred and centers around their deities, artistic visions and the memory of their ancestors. Many of their works of art are used as prayers or offerings or by their *marakames* (shamans) as part of the paraphernalia for magical-spiritual medicine. Embroidering a cloth, making a yarn drawing or decorating a mask with beading, concentrating on what the figures symbolize, is another form of active prayer, of being spiritually united to the dimension of their deities and ancestors.

Wirrárica art is also utilitarian: all the objects or artistic creations have a specific function in the life of the community. They are used in ceremonies and fiestas, as decoration or clothing, as containers for food, in their homes, in hunting, medicine, trade, entertainment, etc.

Traditionally, these objects now considered artistic, were destined to be used by the maker. The role of artist, as such, did not exist. In general, all members of the community practice some form of artistic expression, in addition to being farmers, hunters, shamans, housewives or carrying out some other activity. Being an artist was part of daily life. With the arrival of modern culture to Wirrárica communities, this changed; they began to make art objects with the sole aim of selling them outside their community for money that would lessen their dependence on agriculture and animal husbandry. In this way, some Wirráricas became "artists," specializing in the production and sale of their creations, which began to be displayed in museums, galleries and tourist shops in Mexico's main cities and abroad, where potential buyers live.

This external destination for their art led the Wirráricas to begin to design it for their new clientele's tastes, needs and possibilities. They invented the yarn boards and objects of all kinds covered in beads; spectacular-sized "God's eyes"[3] in striking colors that are in great demand among tourists. Unfortunately, the result has been that the objects have become degraded, estranged from their original magical-sacred use, their symbolism changed to make them merely decorative, like any of the Mexican curious that abound in the marketplace. Today, relatively cheap objects are produced for mass consumption, side by side with very sophisticated, intricately designed, dramatic-sized, original items which take many hours of work to produce and are signed by the artist —in the Western style— generally made to be sold abroad at very high prices.

Many Huichol works of art are used as prayers of offerings or by their *marakames* (shamans) as part of the paraphernalia for magical-spiritual medicine.

Unfortunately, the Wirráricas were forced to sell their art due to economic necessity or because they were seduced by this way of becoming modern, and they adopted this new identity of "indigenous artisans" to be able to sell to domestic and foreign tourists. Given this, it is appropriate to ask what will happen in the future with traditional Wirrárica art and its magic-religious function, as well as with the group's ancestral identity. Trading artistic and craft products is a two-edged sword: it provides subsistence for the artisan and a way of superficially disseminating some aspects of their tradition

(superficial because the buyer almost never knows what symbols or stories are represented in the object he or she purchased). On the other hand, it is also a way of alienating one's own culture, changing the traditional function of the creations and giving priority to the commercial end.

Westerners yearn to possess objects or beautiful creations from strange or "exotic" cultures and we assemble collections to exhibit them, even if we never have any real contact with the community or the artisans who made them.

In contrast, when the object itself makes us take an interest in the artist and the community that produced it, then it is fulfilling an important function: it becomes a symbolic ambassador and a magic bridge charged with energy, that acts as an intermediary in the meeting of two different mentalities or cultures. The role of spiritual ambassador of a culture is nobler than that of a mere maker of items for sale. Hopefully, the Wirrárica artists will become the spiritual ambassadors of their culture. VM

Huichol Art Museum, Zapopan

Wirrárica art is also utilitarian: all the objects or artistic creations have a specific function in the life of the community.

## NOTES

[1] The Huichol community lives in the Sierra Madre Occidental, in the states of Jalisco and Nayarit, in the northwestern part of Mexico. At the end of the nineteenth century the Huichols were practically unknown, until Karl Lumholtz, a Norwegian anthropologist, traveled to their region and was the first to present their art to the world. Early in this century he systematized and analyzed it in his book *México desconocido*, later published by the National Indigenist Institute.

[2] As Fernando Benítez points out in his introduction to Lumholtz' book (Mexico City: National Indigenous Institute, 1986) this influence can be seen in the example of the relationship between anthropologist Peter Furst and the apprentice Ramón Medina, who, like all the Huichols, knew how to make offerings of yarn stuck to a board with wax. Medina sang about his myths, and Furst had the idea that they be described using the same method as for making offerings. This happen around 1960 and was the origin of the yarn boards representing scenes from Huichol mythology and customs, which have become famous the world over.

[3] The nierika, or "God's eye", is a small square in a round board with a hole in the middle that represents the magic eye through which Man and God can see each other.

Huichol Art Museum, Zapopan

# The Symbolism of Huichol Art

"The art of the Huichols is religious and esoteric, mainly found in offerings to the gods."[1] Their perception of the world is not seen through the eyes, but in the spiritual attitude of Man toward nature. The Huichols represent their myths, hopes and fears with great artistry which might confuse the unschooled observer, who may see in Huichol design only deceptive simplicity.

Without exception, both men and women know how to embroider and make arrows, recipients and votive boards without altering traditional patterns. Invariably, they make these objects with the same symbols and similar formal treatment. However, their meaning, together with the complexity of the design, give Huichol art a depth difficult to unravel without the necessary information.

It is also geometric, a play of rigorous variations on certain models: the flower, which represents peyote, the Shining Divinity; the dear; the *bule* (a container for water); the Sun; the star; the squirrel; the serpent. Surprisingly, these designs decorate men's and not women's clothing. Women dress in any way they please.

Learning to embroider includes a complex initiation ritual: it is a form of prayer, of pleasing the gods and imposing order in the cosmic disorder.

The number five has a tyrannical hold over the Huichols: the world was created in five days; things must be done five times before thinking they have been done well (only "done well," since for the Huichols, perfection is a prerogative of the gods); the Huichol gods and Christ do everything five times; they worship the gods of the four cardinal points and a fifth god, the god of the center.

Despite its complexity and beauty, Huichol art is in danger of extinction, because it is static and difficult to market. At the same time, it is being mass produced, which contradicts its very nature: art made in a waking dream, its lines and colors dictated by the gods. VM

[1] Quotes and information were taken from Fernando Benítez, *Los indios de México* (Mexico City: Biblioteca ERA, 1968), pp. 515 on, and from Benítez's introduction to *El arte simbólico y decorativo de los huicholes* by Karl Lumholtz (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1986), pp. 7-8.

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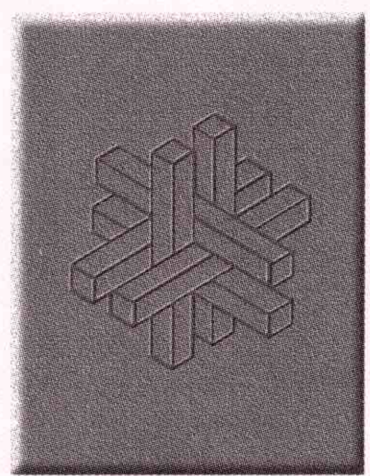

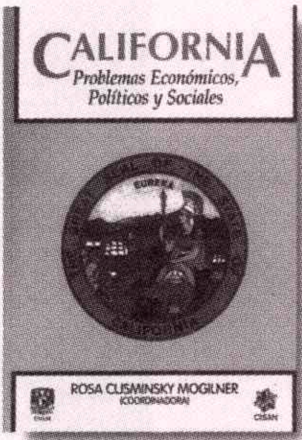


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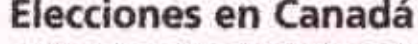

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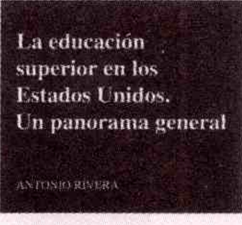

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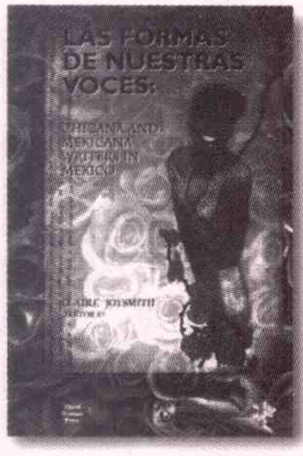

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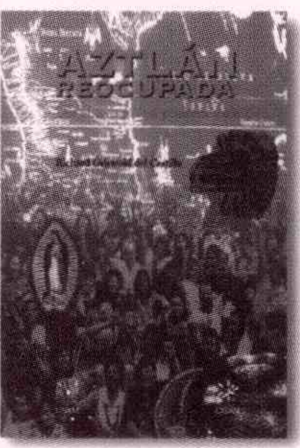

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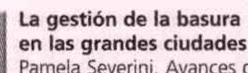

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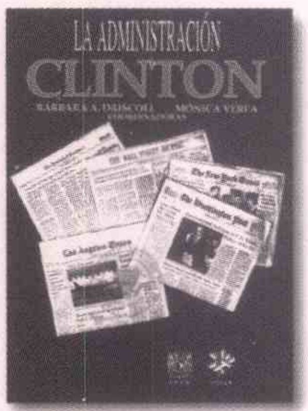


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# Reflections on Transculturation

*Gabriel Rovira**

I think that the West —and perhaps the planet— will be bilingual.
Spanish and English, which complement each other,
will be the common language of humanity.

*Jorge Luis Borges*
*Buenos Aires, 1985*

The border between Mexico and the United States —established politically, drawn geographically and represented physically by walls and wire fences— is not as stable as it might seem, at least culturally and socially. It is a constant point of struggle and negotiation between unequal parties.

Some philosophers and historians have described the history of the world as the victory or imposition of the point of view of the strongest, describing this as the triumph of the West.[1] They also say that —culturally speaking— dominant countries tend to absorb the weaker ones, more or less painfully. This is not necessarily a law of history: it is even possible that in some cases, the victor has adapted its own culture to that of the vanquished.

The United States, our powerful neighbor, exerts very real economic and political pressure on Mexico, with the intention of expanding its domination of the market and the countries of the Americas. Here, I will not go into the question of military invasions or the annexation of territory. Rather, I will examine something much more dangerous to our sovereignty and what can be called our homeland from the human point of view: the imposition of the cultural models of the so-called "American way of life."

Our neighbor is also pressured by the Latino population that has flowed north and has made Spanish a second language in the United States (although not officially and in some cases almost clandestinely). More than 20 million Spanish-speakers are bringing with them their "foreign" customs and values, despite the resistance of suspicious cowboys.

Adaptation implies a constant evaluation and permanent negotiations with your counterpart in order to make sure the most valuable aspects of your own culture prevail.

Things are not so simple nowadays. The world's economic changes and the rapid access to information has complicated them, blurring the border.

The globalized economy not only makes us dependent on other countries, but also questions the very notion of sovereignty and eats away at the identity of nations as we know them today, as it imposes bodies and relationships that transcend borders and challenge domestic legislation, like multinational corporations, financial consortia, free trade areas, the worldwide information network, drug cartels and the contraband of goods, documents and people.

Of these phenomena, the para-national groups —some more clearly defined than others, but all with different interests and viewpoints— exert pressure on the fate of nations, without regard for their

* Professor of the Autonomous University of Baja California Humanities Department in La Paz.

inhabitants' desires, laws or plans for the future. These groups impose values according to their own interests, confronting them with the traditional values of entire peoples. A particularly serious example can be found in towns and cities of the states of Sinaloa and Sonora, where drug traffickers are admired and imitated by a good part of the population, a feeling that is spreading to the rest of the country through expressions of folk culture and art like fashion and songs or through official or clandestine political groups, like the Drug Trafficking Federation.

The situation on the Mexican-U.S. border is even more chaotic because of the complexity of the make-up of the population of both countries. Pressure exerted on both sides of the border creates an area wherein values are undefined, where some use their power to make their ways of thinking and living prevail while others resist. The result is a mixture and syncretism —often very odd— that substitute old values and customs and give birth to such bizarre phenomena as "Spanglish," Thanksgiving dinners of turkey in *mole* sauce, pumpkins on altars erected for the Day of the Dead and fast food with chili peppers. Going on to less trivial matters (I have made an attempt to stay away from the word "folklore"), this has translated into the dissolution of the "extended family" and the advent of the nuclear family, more portable and adaptable to market conditions, made up only of parents and children; a loss of interest in neighbors as people with human histories; rampant individualism as opposed to community values; sanctification of private property; work and the attainment of material wealth as the goal and meaning of life instead of the quest for happiness; and the triumph of the episodic conception of time over the traditional, cyclical understanding. These are to a great degree the result of substituting (more or less painfully, depending on the case) the values of the "American way of life" for traditional Mexican values.

In this meeting of cultures, Mexico, as the weaker country economically, militarily and politically, is clearly the potential loser. Given this, with slight variations, there are only three roads open to us: resistance, adaptation or integration.

This is reflected even in international policy, in which the tradition of hospitality, humanism and the respect for the self-determination of peoples have been lost in our foreign policy. Now, instead of receiving foreign refugees, our officials have headed up the hunt for "inconvenient" outsiders to oust them from the country. Among others, examples of this are the cases of the Mexican-born children of Guatemalan parents who were never given Mexican nationality, and the foreign observers and journalists who live in La Realidad, Chiapas, whom the media were quick to vilify.

There are those who say that borders will dissolve and that, just as the small kingdoms of the Middle Ages joined to create the great nation states of today, in the future the super-states that potentially exist in the European Union and the regional free trade agreements will replace the nations of today. The trend of human history will be to give way to a global government coordinated with the aid of the new media, or, perhaps it would be better to say, controlled by Big Brother's technological apparatus.

This dream à la Billy Gates is far from being a utopia; on the contrary, it is coming into being, despite the fact that it means the total loss of many peoples' cultures, and even the total disappearance of entire peoples. As Alejandro Piscitelli says, "It is not the same to belong to the virtual communities of the North —that unplug themselves out of ennui— as to belong to those of the South, that are unplugged by privation,"[2] since our Latin American peoples continue to live in extreme poverty, marginalization and even conditions where traditional technologies still prevail.

The fact is that we Mexicans, as a nation, face enormous pressures on our traditional, historic values: the extended family, neighborhood solidarity, our attachment to the land, happiness as the aim of life, the respect for other people's rights, tolerance, hospitality, a taste for food, domestic rituals and the traditional, cyclical perception of time, among other things, not to mention religious values that are succumbing to lay academic ideas.

These pressures are exerted by all the nations immersed in the play of the global market, as well as by para-national power groups; but the strongest push comes from the North and produces particularly noticeable clashes there.

In this meeting of cultures, we, as the weaker country economically, militarily and politically, are clearly the potential losers. Given this, with slight variations, in my opinion there are only three roads open to us: resistance, adaptation or integration.

Resistance could contribute to keeping our traditions alive, or at least to keeping a museological record of what we are losing. It could keep Mexicans together as a self-defense unit, particularly those who live on the other side of the border. However, resistance tends to isolate groups of people and separate them from the possible benefits —which do indeed exist— of change. Let us remember the example of the Apaches in the United States, segregated on reservations, or the Tuxtla indigenous community in Chiapas. What good did it do the Tuxtlas when in their pride they dashed themselves against the bottom of Sumidero Canyon?[3] Nevertheless, cultural resistance is the bastion of love for the homeland. It is the immediate, natural reaction against aggression, and, therefore, the banner of many artists and cultural groups within any borders.

Integration, which seems to be the way of the Mexican government, is the opposite of resistance; it means forgetting your roots and denying your own values. It is the way of the Mexican who feels ashamed of what he or she calls "the country's cultural backwardness" and aspires to integrate into "modern" life, "globalization," "productive optimization," the 600 TOEFL points, the magic of the white man. He cannot be happy while the creators of his models do not certify his actions. He has replaced his *compadres*[4] with business partners, reduced his family in order to better control his property; he does aerobics and has gone on a diet; he has renounced being happy to try to be a millionaire; he uses creams to lighten his skin and has decided to do absolutely anything to further his ends. This way of looking at things is less painful than resistance, but it creates a need that those who resist do not have: being accepted in a world that does not belong to you and where you do not belong.

> The dissolution of the "extended family," a loss of interest in neighbors as people with human histories and rampant individualism are some of the results of substituting the values of the "American way of life" for traditional Mexican values.

Lastly, adaptation implies understanding the changes in order to take advantage of them, and your own traditions and values to be able to preserve them. It goes beyond the naiveté of mere protests and shutting yourself off culturally, but it also resists giving in completely to the onslaught by the other culture.

Adaptation implies a constant evaluation and permanent negotiations with your counterpart in order to make sure the most valuable aspects of your culture prevail. Therefore, it requires an important effort of cultural dissemination of your own values, accompanied by constant research, both of which back up the fight on a societal level.

One example of adaptation is the efforts of Chicano and Latino communities to guarantee their children bilingual and bicultural education. This has had good results in some cities, and has even won the support of U.S. authorities in places where they cannot ignore that among their constituents are 23 million Spanish speakers.

Apparently, the adage, "Know everything and pick the best," continues to be good advice, at least for making sure that, as Borges hoped, the most valuable things of our people prevail in the future of the West, surviving the pressure of a dominant culture which is always —culturally speaking, of course— a threat. VM

## NOTES

[1] For example, this is how Edmundo O'Gorman describes the way in which the "New World" was incorporated into the West in *La invención de América*. Borges has called it the victory of the barbarians.

[2] Alejandro Piscitelli, *Cibercultura en la era de las máquinas inteligentes* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1995).

[3] The Tuxtla people threw themselves into the river at the bottom of Sumidero Canyon in Chiapas, sacrificing their lives instead of accepting defeat and Spanish domination. [Editor's Note.]

[4] A *compadre* is, literally, the godfather of one's child. In Mexico, this link brings with it a series of obligations and rights similar to family ties, and, in fact, extend the family even more. [Translator's Note.]

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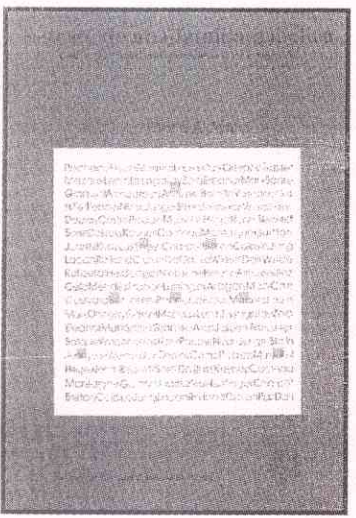

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1998, 254 págs.

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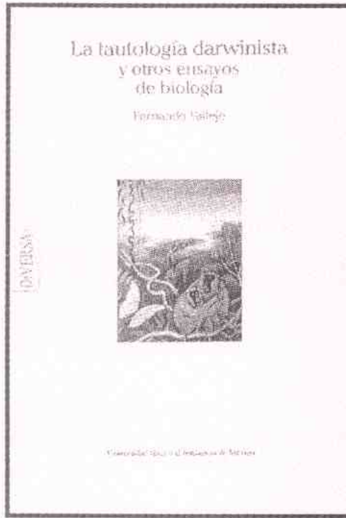


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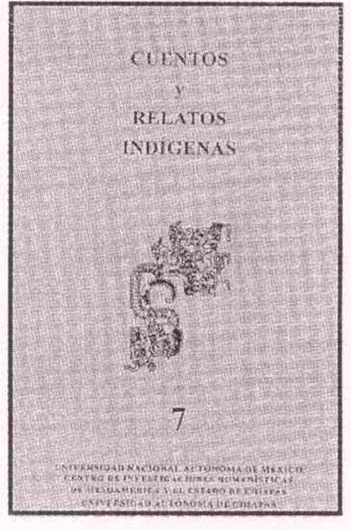


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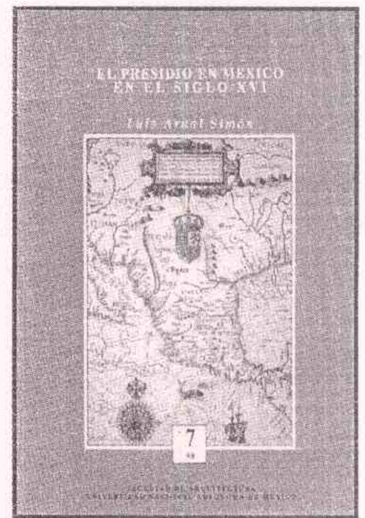


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Paulina Boutris/Celia Ramírez

# The Impact of U.S. Immigration Policy
## On U.S.-Mexican Relations

*Luis Herrera-Lasso**

The United States is a nation of immigrants, but not all of them arrived under the same circumstances: at least two general categories can be distinguished. Broadly speaking, immigrants of African, Chinese or Mexican descent are fundamentally different from those who came from England, Ireland and continental Europe.

The difference is who came first, and subsequently, who else those early settlers would allow in. The conditions in which they came were markedly different, and distinctions of nationality, culture and ethnicity among later migrants are still very marked in American society despite the constitutional ideal of equal rights and opportunities for all. A grasp of the history and differences among the various waves of migrants to the United States

* Mexican consul general in San Diego.

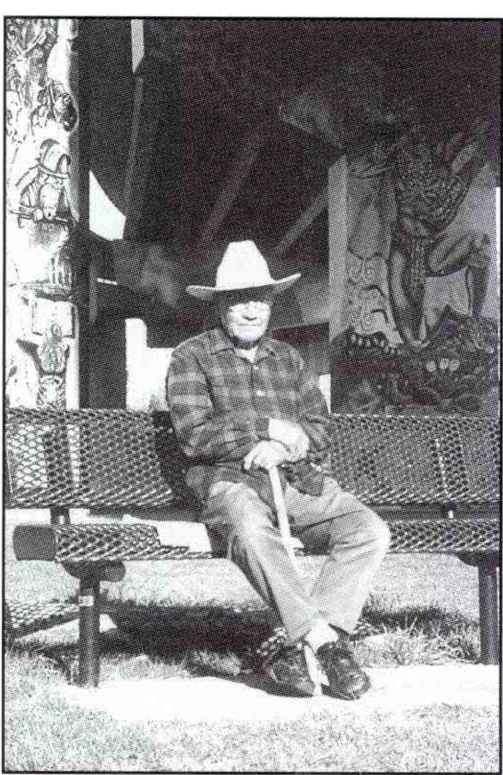
Photos by Paulina Boutris and Celia Ramírez are reprinted courtesy of Migrant Education San Diego.

and the U.S. response to them is crucial to understanding not only the nature of migratory flows, but also how they can affect relations between governments.

## MEXICAN IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

Mexican immigration into the United States has happened in a very different context from that of other nationalities. First, Mexicans inhabited much of what is now the western United States before the U.S. had achieved independence from England. In fact, Santa Fe, New Mexico, was settled before the English raised their flag at Jamestown in 1607. Later, more Mexicans "came" when half of Mexico's territory became part of the United States as a result of the U.S.-Mexican war in 1847. This historical link between the people of Mexico and the territory currently known as the western half of the United States is crucial to a more comprehensive understanding of Mexican migration in the region.

Modern Mexican migration to the United States as an economic and social phenomenon started early this century. During the latter part of the nineteenth century and through the turn of the century, a large amount of inexpensive labor was needed for building railroads and agricultural development, especially in California. During this period, Mexicans were welcomed openly. But when bad times came during the years of the Depression in the United States, one-third of the Mexican population living there was expelled.



Julieta Molina

Of all the immigrants on the street, who is an "economic partner" and who "a threat"?

A new cycle began during and after World War II. Cheap labor was needed to contribute to the home economy during the overseas war effort. For the first time an attempt was made to deal with the matter of labor migration bilaterally, due in large part to the fact that the U.S. and Mexico were military allies as well as neighbors. The goal was achieved and the results seemed mutually beneficial: Mexican labor flowed into the United States during a period of severe labor shortages on the home front, and Mexican nationals enjoyed increased employment opportunities so long as they were willing to move. This initial bilateral arrangement, better known as the Bracero Program, worked, but only in that particular instance. The Bracero Program was the first —and only— bilateral migration system implemented between the United States and Mexico.

In 1954, the Mexican population faced a drastic turn in U.S. immigration policy. Based on economic estimates, U.S. decision makers perceived an excess domestic supply of labor that the economy could not effectively sustain. As a result of this change in attitudes, nearly one million Mexicans without documentation (and in some cases with documentation) were detained by U.S. government agents and sent back to Mexico. This unilateral decision broke with the environment of cooperation of the Bracero period. Since the demise of the Bracero Program, the U.S. government has made no attempts to discuss Mexican economic migrants bilaterally, as the momentum for this kind of dialogue evident during the war soon faded.

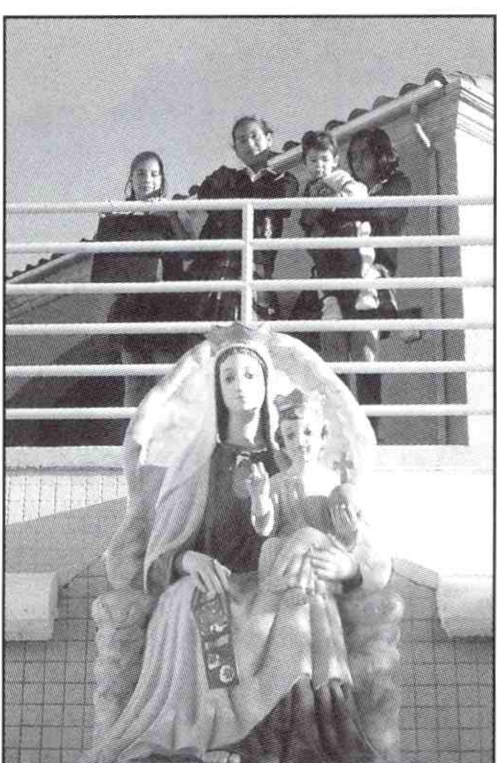
More recently, during the 1970s and 1980s, the pace of Mexican immigration to the United States increased significantly for several reasons. First was the demand for immigrant labor in various sectors of the U.S. economy, coupled with Mexican expectations of increased opportunities and higher wages than were offered in the Mexican labor market. Second, the dynamics of economically motivated immigration have been magnified through U.S. family reunification policies. Migrants who decided to permanently emigrate to the United States were no doubt eager to bring their families to live with them in their new home. Third, the increased pace of migrant flows has been a natural consequence of demographic growth in Mexico, combined with low economic expectations among Mexican workers.

In 1986, a new reform of U.S. immigration laws had a positive impact on Mexican

immigration. For the first time, the U.S. government attempted a more comprehensive approach. Although its primary purpose was to stem the flow of migrants from Mexico, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) permitted almost two million Mexicans to regularize their migratory status in the United States. This development stands out in stark contrast to changes in U.S. policies evident in 1954. This seeming openness on the part of the U.S. government would not last long, however.

In 1996, the U.S. Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibilities Act (IIRAIRA), which set up new, unprecedented conditions. It introduced severe policies to deter illegal immigration by increasing the number of Border Patrol agents along the U.S.-Mexican border and allocated funds for new technology and the construction of new fences along the southern border.

This recent legislation posed many obstacles to those who wished to immigrate to the United States and increased the risks and difficulties associated with entering and staying in the country without documents. Because of this, most Mexicans find it difficult, if not impossible, to enter and legalize their status. These new policies have also led to other, unintended consequences, most notably significant increases in the number of migrants who have died in attempts to gain unauthorized entry into the United States. For example, 85 Mexican migrants died in border crossing attempts in 1997 alone. From January to October 1998, 120 have died under the same circumstances. Such developments must certainly have negative effects on U.S.-Mexican relations.


Julieta Molina

Mexican migrants are changing the demographic landscape in the United States.

## U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONS

In 1997 U.S.-Mexican trade reached a record figure of 165 billion dollars, making Mexico the United States' second largest trading partner. Yet, while the economic integration and cooperation since the passage of NAFTA bodes well for relations between the two countries, recent developments in U.S. immigration policy dampen them. These trends and how they are perceived by the Mexican public and its policy makers are briefly outlined below.

### *Threat or Partner?*

The diverging trends between economic policy and immigration policy presents a paradox for U.S.-Mexican relations. Of all the Mexicans on the streets of Southern California (and elsewhere in the United States), which ones are the "economic partners" (in accordance with the logic of NAFTA) and which ones are the "threat to national interests" (as trends in U.S. immigration and border policy would imply)? The two come from the same country and culture, and they look alike. This apparent contradiction has led to considerable confusion among the Mexican population. From the U.S. perspective, one day it encourages economic ties with its second trading partner, and the next day it sends more police and troops to the border to deter Mexican economic migrants. One day U.S. policy makers visit Mexico and talk about the splendid relationship between the two nations; the next day a new fence goes up at some point along the border, prompting the inevitable increase in human rights violations. Which attitudes should Mexico respond to?

### *American Perceptions of Mexico*

With the passage of IIRAIRA in 1996 and other recent policies directed at Mexican immigration, important domestic political actors have considered Mexican migrants a threat to the national interests of the United States. These views are based on either economic fears (i.e. Mexican migrants take away U.S. jobs and depress wages for local workers, or that Mexican immigrants are less skilled than immigrants of other national origins) or cultural insecurity (Mexican migrants are changing the demographic landscape in the United States, especially in border states like California, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico). These trends came to a head in 1994, when, to the astonishment of the Mexican government and people, two U.S. governors described Mexican migration as a "foreign invasion" and filed lawsuits against the federal government for

compensation for the consequences of this "invasion." This trend has since become strong enough to create a perception among average U.S. citizens that immigration from Mexico (in particular) is a real threat to the national interests and security of the United States.

*Deterrence and a Police Approach to Immigration Policy*

Another perception tensing bilateral relations is the growing sense that a link exists between Mexican immigrants and criminal behavior. With new U.S. government strategies, police forces are playing a central role in the deterrence of illegal immigration along the U.S.-Mexican border. This sends a clear message that can hardly be misinterpreted by Mexican decision makers: police forces are needed to control immigration because unauthorized entry into the U.S. constitutes a domestic criminal act. Such moves no doubt spur similar attitudes among the general population in the U.S. Despite the fact that the great majority of Mexican migrants working (or seeking work) in the United States are peaceful and law-abiding, they are increasingly blamed for all sorts of criminal activity, in most cases with little evidence to support the assumptions. This perception has little to do with the real nature of the Mexican economic migrant.

*Beyond the Border*

The social impact of making it a criminal act to enter the United States without proper authorization or documentation goes beyond the border. The U.S. Mexican-American community numbers about 17 million people, seven million of whom were born in Mexico. Again, the question of how one distinguishes economic partner from economic threat becomes increasingly complicated. Of those on the street, who are legal and who are illegal? And consequently, who are criminals? The point is that current U.S. immigration policies are not only having a negative social impact on Mexicans living in Mexico, but also on Mexican nationals and Mexican-Americans (who still have strong ties to their country of origin) living in the United States.

Paulina Boutris/Celia Ramírez

One of the reasons for Mexican immigration is the demand for labor in various sectors of the U.S. economy.

> With the 1996 passage of IIRAIRA, important domestic political actors have considered Mexican migrants a threat to U.S. national interests.

## BEYOND DOMESTIC SOLUTIONS: GLOBAL VS. BILATERAL POLICY

From a Mexican perspective, the 1996 IIRAIRA is one of the most restrictive and severe laws in the history of U.S. immigration policy. Although the United States often argues that immigration law is part of a global policy, not directly aimed at Mexico either coincidentally or purposely, those most affected by this legislation are Mexicans. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimates the illegal immigrant community in the United States to number roughly five million, of whom 54 percent are thought to be Mexican. Of the immigrants detained at the U.S.-Mexico border, at least 90 percent are Mexicans. Though it is said that IIRAIRA was not directed against Mexicans, the figures show that they are the most affected.

Yet, even though Mexicans are disproportionately affected by the new legislation (and U.S. immigration and border policy in general), immigration is not on the bilateral agenda with Mexico. The government and people of Mexico are not included in the policy debate because they are viewed as external actors with no voice or vote on domestic issues. And clearly, U.S. attitudes convey that immigration is considered an exclusively domestic policy matter which does not belong on the foreign policy agenda. Mexicans, both public officials and private citizens, may post grievances in instances of human rights violations associated with border policy, for human rights have managed to transcend the domestic realm.

However, Mexicans have little to say about the manner in which the U.S. controls immigration. Since it is considered an exclusively domestic matter, the procedures used to legislate it are also exclusively internal. Legislators in the U.S. Congress have sole power to make decisions regarding immigration policy that can greatly affect the bilateral relationship with Mexico and other countries. The attitude persists among conservative policy makers that if Mexico wants cooperation in this area, it would consist of measures instigated by the Mexican government to stop Mexican migration to the United States. Most U.S. legislators have very little knowledge of Mexico and are not familiar with the dynamics and complexity of the U.S.-Mexican border. Nor do they feel much incentive to develop any sensitivity, since none are directly responsible for matters of international relations with Mexico.

Paulina Boutris/Celia Ramírez

Another reason Mexicans migrate is their expectations of higher wages and a better life.

The executive branch also provides little guidance for developing international sensitivity regarding migration. From the perspective of the executive, presidential action is needed only to implement congressional policies through its bureaucratic arm, the Department of Justice. Institutions like this one and the INS implement policies that follow the mandates set forth by Congress, though the nature of these bureaucratic measures can have a profound effect on relations between nations. Nevertheless, the Department of State has very little to say or to do in the matter. In other words, the whole process of legislation and implementation of immigration policies is a perfect circle closed off from outside input or intervention. Since immigration is not on the bilateral or international agenda, very little can be done from outside to influence the legislative process or the nature of policy implementation in the United States.

## Is Free Trade the Solution?

Rather than pursue bilateral or international policy options, some U.S. lawmakers propose that the most viable solution to the increasing flows of Mexican migrants into the U.S. is to encourage and support economic growth in Mexico. They argue that development, facilitated largely through free trade regimens such as NAFTA, will serve to overcome asymmetries that have developed between the two nations.

From a Mexican perspective, the 1996 IIRAIRA is one of the most restrictive and severe laws in the history of U.S. immigration policy.

This seems to be a rather daunting undertaking, considering that the United States is the world's strongest economy, while Mexico's is 20 times smaller. The question arises: How long would it take to close the economic gap? Though development in Mexico will spur job growth, is the United States going to restrain its own economic growth in order to give Mexico a chance to mitigate the disparities in wages, job opportunities and social conditions? This is certainly unlikely. Given that development will progress on both fronts, one must wonder whether the relative disparity will converge through such a program.

Of course, continuous economic growth in Mexico will help considerably, but not to the level needed to dissuade Mexicans from seeking work in the United States, at least not in the foreseeable future. Moreover, one must also consider the social aspects of migration, not just the economics. With seven million Mexicans in the United States, it should be expected that a continuous flow will result due to the desire of naturalized immigrants to sponsor their families under family reunification provisions of U.S. law.

## Where Do We Go from Here?

Mexican immigrants whose migratory status remains in flux, in a worst case scenario,

number less than three million. Most of them work, and work hard, and are decent law-abiding people. Though the cost or benefits such migrants represent remains hotly debated, one might guess that in the end the costs and benefits balance out. Mexicans come to the United States because jobs are there —"Mexican jobs." It seems unlikely that, given all the disadvantages of being "illegal," an undocumented migrant could obtain a job that is in demand by the native work force.

Mexico, a country of 90 million people, shares not only more than 2,000 miles of common border with the United States, but also a history, that although periodically turbulent, is an intimate one. As this relationship has moved even closer after NAFTA, one must ask: Do all these factors not qualify Mexico to deserve special attention in matters that have significant consequences on both sides of the border? Is Mexican immigration such a big problem for the economy and national interest of the United States that there is no alternative to unilaterally mandated border enforcement that jeopardizes the whole relationship? How can we check these negative trends while also nurturing the cooperation that has evolved between the United States and Mexico on issues like trade?

Three paths of action are recommendable to start a better future for bilateral relations. First, U.S. policy makers should consider redefining Mexican immigration (and perhaps immigration in general) as a matter of foreign policy which should be included on the bilateral agenda. Second, when legislating new policy, U.S. lawmakers must reconsider their shortsighted perspective of immigration (and other policies) and take into account the multiple effects new policies can have on their neighbors and other issues (trade, for example). Lastly, considering that law enforcement and militarization may not be the best policy choice because of their negative effects on international relations, new options should be weighed and debated.

All three options represent significant changes in current attitudes and norms. We know this is not an easy task. Nonetheless, failing to address such concerns can bring unintended consequences on the bilateral relationship. Economic integration is inevitably linked to increasing labor market integration. The fact that the United States and Mexico are neighbors will no doubt cause such interaction to increase.

Today this is the natural evolution of our bilateral relationship in the new world order. The border region should be considered a privileged space, one that requires a more comprehensive understanding of the complex historical, economic and social ties that exist and continue to evolve between the United States and Mexico. Depending on how we move from here, changes evident in the border region may either erode or improve the relationship and the future of our two countries. **VM**

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# Mexico's Savings Protection Bank Fund And the Financial Crisis

*Francisco Sevilla**

The Savings Protection Bank Fund (Fobaproa) will be subject to debate for a long time, not only because the enormous resources needed to solve the financial crisis it caused will come out of taxpayers' pockets for many years, but also because the financial and fiscal reform still has a long way to go to prove its merits in a climate of skepticism and distrust.

Mexico's Bank Savings Protection Fund (Fobaproa), a federal trust to guarantee savings accounts deposited in the national banking system, has become the main factor in the financial crisis facing our country today. In addition to the sizeable sum of Fobaproa's liabilities, the generalized rejection of the government proposal to converting them into public debt is well founded.

The much debated financial bailout that the government has effected over the last four years by exchanging coupon-bonds for overdue loan portfolio has polarized the debate in the Chamber of Deputies. Adding fuel to the fire is the fact that these discussions coincided with the executive's introduction of its proposal for the government earnings part of the annual 1999 budget. The bill includes both tax hikes and increased prices in government goods and services (including utilities), giving the impression that the executive, not satisfied with cutting social spending, is eagerly seeking to bolster Mexico's stagnating economy by channeling funds to bankers.

The central point in the discussions have been very large loans granted without sufficient collateral, currently being audited to determine which bank and governmental officials are responsible for what.

## Fobaproa and the Financial Crisis

Undoubtedly the Savings Protection Bank Fund (Fobaproa) will be subject to debate for a long time, not only because the enormous resources needed to solve the financial crisis it caused will come out of taxpayers' pockets for many years, but also because the financial and fiscal reform still has a long way to go to prove its merits in a climate of skepticism and distrust.

The agreement to come to the negotiating table to solve political and financial difficulties has put Mexico's entire political system in its new democratic mode to the test. Tensions could be felt throughout society and sharpened discrepancies not only among political parties, but also among the different currents inside them.

Today's rarified political atmosphere has made it difficult to appreciate the scope of a financial reform that would prevent Fobaproa's becoming a recurrent problem.

With bleak prospects, 1999 is beginning with a tax hike on top of the already heavy fiscal burden borne by the economy's ever shrinking formal sector, an increase in the prices of government goods and services and the struggle over the presidential succession in a still unconsolidated democracy.

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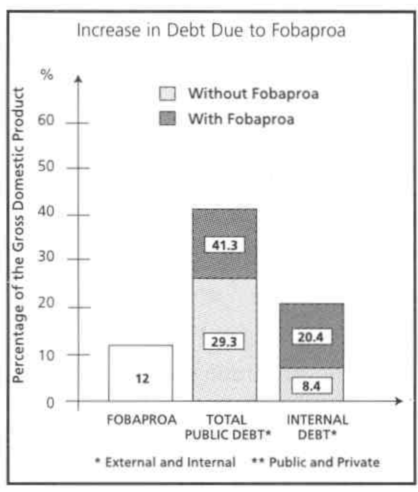
Mexico's official Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) will have to bear the brunt of the political cost of a difficult negotiation, including establishing alliances with the opposition, to reach an agreement to reform the country's entire financial system. The economy is in difficult straits since the prospects for getting enough funds to transfer to Fobaproa are not what were expected, and the audits may indeed link well known figures in the financial and political world to illegal operations.

The executive's initial proposal to Congress of converting Fobaproa's liabilities into public debt had to be changed because the amount involved was much larger that the government could possibly deal with. Apparently, President Zedillo's government never considered the possibility of having a minority in the Chamber of Deputies (the PRI holds only 47 percent of the seats). The publicity campaign arguing that the bank bailout was to protect savers' money was countered with the scandal sparked by bankers' misdirecting funds and underwriting loans without collateral. These same bankers —men like Jorge Lankenau, Carlos Cabal Peniche and Angel Isidoro Rodríguez (nicknamed "The Divine"), once touted as models of "successful businessmen"— were first linked with high government officials, and above all to the PRI, and then exposed as common criminals who watched as their financial empires came down like houses of cards. But the most important thing is that every negotiation related to the financial sector has been held in the shadow of the suspicion surrounding even those bankers who have not been named in connection with illegal operations.

## THE MAGNITUDE OF FOBAPROA

In November 1998, official figures put Fobaproa's liabilities at 609 billion pesos (12 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product, that is almost one-eighth of all the goods and services that Mexicans produce in a year). This sum eliminates any possibility of it being dealt with in a single fiscal year. Getting enough government funds to cover it would require several fiscal years and congressional approval.

At one time, Fobaproa was a life raft for Mexico's financial system. But the transformation of liabilities into public debt unleashed a great polemic since the executive branch can only acquire debt with the approval of the Chamber of Deputies. However, Finance Ministry officials argued that it was a contingency debt that should be taken on as such, since it was the only way to guarantee the deposits in the national banking system. Fobaproa liabilities raise the total public debt from 29.3 percent to 41.3 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and the internal debt from 8.4 percent to 20.4 percent of GDP.




The executive's initial proposal to Congress of converting Fobaproa's liabilities into public debt had to be changed because the amount involved was much larger that the government could possibly deal with.

Fobaproa requires 30 percent of all bank funds, affecting access to credit, but this figure is growing and, clearly, the domestic private sector will no longer have access to credit. On the other hand, the cost of servicing Fobaproa's debt hovers around 100 billion pesos, which could temporarily drop to 25 or 30 billion pesos due to the rewriting of zero-coupon bonds that pay only real interest and postpone payment of liabilities until they mature.

## AN INEFFICIENT BANKING SYSTEM

This process is only the beginning of the restructuring of the national financial system. However, the banking system continues to suffer from high costs and longstanding vices and inefficiency, making it expensive and untrustworthy. The 20-point spread between lending and savings interest rates, the government's constant stepping in at moments of crisis, as in the case of Fobaproa, and privileges in charging for services have not been enough to create a banking system that can play the economic and social role that the nation needs.

Mexico, a country with almost 100 million inhabitants and a work force 35 million

strong, has only 13 million bank customers. More than 7,000 bank branches service them, an average of fewer than 2,000 clients per branch. Each branch consumes 70 percent of its earnings in operating costs, while the recently established Chase Manhattan Bank of Mexico consumes 55 percent, according to General Director John Donnelly. System-wide data indicates that 26 of every 100 pesos that come in are used to cover administrative expenses (payroll, current account, systems, maintenance, etc.). At the same time, 79 out of every 100 pesos are needed to cover financial expenses (reserves and bankruptcies because of bad loans, interest payments, etc.). Clearly, if we do the addition, the result is a considerable deficit, which the banks went to Fobaproa to cover. They have also made commissions on services rendered and on the sale and purchase of securities their main source of income.

The financial sector's crisis involves many factors and, today, inefficiency is more and more evident. It is rooted in the absence of a clear definition of the model of banking system being followed, a glaring absence even before reprivatization of the banks. In general, the social function of the banking system has always taken a back seat to making a profit; resource management has also been inappropriate, so much so that today it has reached dimensions that affect the taxpayers.

## The Gestation of the Financial Crisis

Mexico's economic development required active state participation. For many years the government banking system and development trust funds played a leading role in fostering industry. Monetary regulation was an economic policy tool for guaranteeing stability through the legal reserve, setting different interest rates according to the objectives of the loan, establishing general interest rates, etc. The theory that gave rise to the reprivatization of the banks meant an abrupt suppression of monetary controls and the country went from what was called "financial repression" to a "libertine financial policy." The immediate effect was unchecked growth in credit: between 1988 and 1994 alone, the overall loan portfolio rose from 49 percent to 72 percent of GDP. Loans were given —irresponsibly in most cases— to individuals who could not guarantee payment and, in some cases, equally irresponsibly, members of the boards of directors of the banks themselves were granted large loans without the necessary collateral. This was the case of Lankenau, Cabal Peniche and Angel Isidoro Rodríguez, today all under criminal indictment. While this explains Fobaproa's high level of liabilities, to understand how the financial crisis developed, we must look at other factors such as the following:

* Channeling of bank funds to non-productive activities, favoring speculation and the creation of consumers, not producers.

* The lack of an industrial policy that could protect small and medium-sized industries and agriculture from an extremely rapid economic opening, which led to many producers' insolvency.

* The sudden obsolescence of regulatory systems which, added to bankers' lack of experience, spurred inappropriate or illegal bank management.

Photos by Antonio Nava/AVE

Guillermo Ortiz, president of the Banco de México, and José Angel Gurría, Finance Minister.

* The elimination of most functions of the development banking system, after which no new mechanisms were established to replace them and nor was a transitional plan implemented to adapt to the new situation.

* A lagging exchange rate. Between 1988 and 1994 particularly, the setting of the exchange rate became the main anti-inflationary instrument. Toward the end of that period, the pressure for devaluation and capital flight accelerated the financial breakdown.

* Interest rate hikes. After the December 1994 peso devaluation, high floating

interest rates made most loans unpayable. Payments on credits originally designed to be covered by a fifth or sixth of the borrower's monthly income skyrocketed, and even the most careful and responsible loan holders defaulted when their entire monthly income was not enough to cover the new premiums demanded by the banks using the rising interest rates.

Members of *El Barzón*, the most active debtor organization, demonstrating against Fobaproa.

The refinancing mechanism using what were called Investment Units (UDIs), indexing the amount of the loan to increases in the minimum wage and turning whatever the borrower does not cover in monthly payments into capital, made paying off the loans impossible, particularly in the case of mortgages. Today, the original loan plus the capitalized interest comes to three times the market value of the property.

* The expansion of the bad loan portfolio. This has recently become more severe, but it actually dates from several years ago. By December 1994, bad debts already amounted to 8 percent or 9 percent of all loans, about three times the maximum recommended by international norms. New 1997 accounting criteria have an impact here: basically they consider the entire loan is in default when more than two monthly payments have been missed.

In conclusion, we could say that the financial crisis has been made more severe by over-borrowing by both companies and individuals, exchange rate adjustments, the economic slowdown and the government's ending protectionism for an economy whose major gains had been based on state tutelage.

## A PARTISAN SOLUTION

During the difficult negotiations to find a solution to the financial crisis, it became popular to say, "We don't know what's worse: having Fobaproa or not having it." What is certain is that the main political parties, the PRI, the National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), do agree on the need to find an immediate solution to the problem rather than running the risk of leaving it to a new administration that any of the three of them could head up.

Therefore, despite the urgency of finding a viable solution in financial, political and social terms, the discussions have been bogged down by the political situation typical of a period prior to a presidential campaign. The PRI's relative weakness in the Chamber of Deputies is augmented by having to defend points of view that, strictly speaking, are those of the bankers. The most coherent proposals were presented only at the last minute and the general impression is that they were achievements of the opposition parties.

The negotiations on Fobaproa liabilities came on top of those around the 1999 budget, and under "miscellaneous items," it was proposed they be turned into public debt. This further complicated approval of the 1999 budget: in addition to the drop in international oil prices (oil supplies 40 percent of federal earnings), which prompted a tax hike and mounting prices in government goods and services, the servicing of the public debt would be augmented by Fobaproa liabilities.

The official party has to bear most of the political cost; even though toward the end of the discussions the alternatives were only slightly different, the partisan climate made them more noticeable and spurred each of the political players to try to capture media attention and look like defenders of the people's cause, regardless of the viability of their proposals. At a time when the "protest" vote might become decisive in the 2000 elec-

tions, the opposition parties will try to make the PRI pay a heavy price for the errors and illegal activities that have an impact on the financial crisis.

The PAN is trying to convince the public that the PRI supports its proposal and that thanks to its valuable intervention the break-up of the banking system has been averted, as well as the resulting loss of the savings of millions of Mexicans. To capture the protest and "penalty" votes, the PAN is presenting itself as a responsible organization capable even from the opposition of negotiating and supporting the decisions the country needs.

For its part, the PRD will continue with its strategy of denouncing the PAN/PRI alliance for championing the bankers' cause and of insisting that it distanced itself from the Fobaproa discussions because of the mandate received in the public consultation it carried out on the question, which expressed the "public's opposition" to the fund's liabilities being taken over as government debt. Therefore, the PRD will declare itself the only true opposition party.

Circumstances will force the PRI to seek to benefit from the comprehensive financial reform which until now has been paid scant attention, but which is actually the best result of this entire difficult process.

## THE REFORM OF THE FINANCIAL SYSTEM

Underpinning the restructuring of the financial system are two premises: across-the-board punishment of all lawbreakers and the principle that whoever has enough money to pay must do so.

The main discrepancy lies in the illegally granted loans since they concentrate large sums in a small number of transactions. They are said to come to 600, currently being audited. In addition, the value of Fobaproa's physical assets must be realized; as of now they are in warehouses or, in the case of real estate, in the hands of the debtors.

In order for society to incur the least possible cost, accounts must be scrutinized and different criteria applied according to the original object of the loan. Deputy Santiago Creel Miranda (PAN) suggests that this financial dilemma be divided in two parts: the capitalization program that came out of bank investments and other Fobaproa expenditures, which come to 360 billion pesos, and the purchase of loan portfolio, which comes to approximately 160 billion pesos.

The capitalization program should be carefully investigated because, in addition to inappropriate management, discretionary decisions by authorities to transfer resources to the banks are also questionable.

The financial bailout proposed by the executive polarized the Chamber of Deputies.

Figures taken from the October 1998 issue of the magazine *Mundo Ejecutivo* (Executive World) indicate that the interventions in the banks came to 59.472 billion pesos, of which Banco Unión and Banpaís received the largest sums.

Banco Unión received a total of 16.275 billion pesos to bail out 158 loans; Banpaís collected 11.375 billion for 112 loans; Banca Cremi secured 5.6 billion for 33; Banco del Centro needed 5.419 billion pesos for 33 loans; Banco Capital obtained 2.96 billion to save 12 loans; Banco de Oriente employed 2.262 billion pesos for 12 loans; Banco Obrero got 1.9 billion pesos for the 20 most important loans that it bailed out; Banco Interestatal received 338 million pesos for its 5 largest loans; Banco del Sureste was given 62 million for one loan; and Banco Promotor also saved one loan with 66 million pesos it got from Fobaproa.

The current proposal that any loan over 5 million pesos be excluded from Fo-

baproa seems the most reasonable because it returns to the banks the responsibility for recovering loans granted without the necessary guarantees, particularly since the majority were given to individuals or companies which were either part of or close to the investment groups those same banks represent. We should mention here that these are well known companies and groups that enjoy financial solidity and extensive investments and therefore are more likely to be able to repay them.

Debtor support programs should be implemented: measures would include a reduction in the total owed, accessible interest rates and mechanisms for refinancing that would allow borrowers to pay according to their incomes. Mortgage holders should be considered the most likely to repay if realistic criteria are applied in terms of the market value of their real estate, since today its market value is approximately half or one-third of their debt.[1]

Mortgage holders, as well as many agricultural, industrial and merchant entrepreneurs deserve the most possible support and are the most objective possibility of making good on the bad loan portfolio.[2] It should be mentioned that this kind of support would not necessarily mean losses for the banks. They would simply be applying lower interest rates and setting up realistic conditions for payment. They would earn less, but they would still make a profit.

### THE FINANCIAL PACKAGE

Different emergency measures have been implemented during the financial crisis, but both the financial sector and the public at large have called for actions that today are the basis for the so-called financial reform:

The central point in the Fobaproa discussions has been the very large loans granted without sufficient collateral, currently being audited to determine which bank and governmental officials are responsible for what.

* Updating legislation to subject white collar criminals to exemplary punishment and to protect savings account holders through strict regulations.[3]

* Liberalizing restrictions on foreign investments aimed at acquiring and controlling the commercial banking system. This would have two purposes: on the one hand, it would professionalize banking and on the other, it would avert a further drop in the banks' value and their having to sell off their stock at a huge discount, like Banco Probursa, which got 20 cents on the peso from Banco Bilbao Vizcaya, or Banco Confía, which only received 5 cents on the peso for its net capital.

* Creating a deposit guarantee fund for up to the equivalent of half a million UDIs, which would be worth 1.1 million of today's pesos.[4] Ninety-eight percent of depositors have accounts totaling under 250,000 pesos.

* Strengthening the autonomy of the central bank, the Banco de México, so it can effectively take complete responsibility for managing the exchange rate and supervising the banking system.

* Canceling the license of the Fobaproa and Fameval Trusts (Fameval is the Stock Market Support Fund). The liabilities they now hold would be handed over to another body which would sell the corresponding goods left as collateral.

The financial reform is only the beginning of the recomposition of the entire economic system. The economy's successful functioning requires a socially responsible banking system that supports production, checks speculation as much as possible and inflicts exemplary punishment on illegal practices. VM

### NOTES

[1] For example, 43-year-old José Antonio Castellanos, a prosperous lawyer and university professor, says, "In 1994 I was given a 550,000 peso loan which I was paying off at 7,000 pesos a month, about 20 percent of my income. I used the loan to buy a larger, more comfortable apartment. But after January 1995, it became a nightmare: first the monthly payments grew so much that my entire income combined with my wife's was not enough to pay the bank. When I refinanced in investment units (UDIs), my debt grew so much that now I owe three times what the property is worth, notwithstanding the fact that I paid part of my debt for the last four years and I included the money obtained from the sale of my previous apartment. When the property is auctioned off, I will still be in debt to the bank and I won't get a cent."

[2] On the last day of the regular congressional session, December 15, 1998, a PRI/PAN majority in the Chamber of Deputies approved a bill cancelling the Fobaproa and creating the Institute for the Protection of Bank Savings (IPROAP). This new institution will have the same general function as its predecessor in that it validates the bank bailout, although a significant change is that it will only guarantee deposits of up to 400,000 UDIs (about U.S.$85,000). Also, a debtor-support plan was approved that will allow for cancellation of between 45 percent and 60 percent of what is owed on mortgages and loans to small and medium industries and agricultural producers. [Editor's Note.]

[3] Also on the last day of the 1998 regular session, the Chamber of Deputies amended the penal code to raise sentences for white collar crime, putting financial offenses in the category of "serious crimes," thus making suspects ineligible for bail. [Editor's Note.]

# Eighth Iberoamerican Summit

Heads of state of 21 Iberoamerican countries met on October 17 and 18, 1998 in the city of Oporto, Portugal, for the Eighth Iberoamerican Summit. These meetings have been held annually and since 1991 have alternated as a forum for dialogue and centralizing efforts for technical cooperation and complementation in fields pertaining to the development of these nations.

On this occasion, the summit centered on "The Challenges of Globalization and Regional Integration," which will serve as a bridge for the 1999 Rio de Janeiro summit. At the meeting, discussion focused mainly on the role of Portugal as a member of the European Union and the experiences of regional integration both in Europe and Latin America.

The heads of state and government attending the summit decided to call on the more developed countries to promote conditions to favor access of all Iberoamerican countries to international financial markets. They raised the need to support the smaller and less developed countries and proposed that both the World Bank as well as the International Monetary Fund and the Interamerican Development Bank promote the adoption of appropriate fiscal, monetary and banking policies to help resolve the financial problems these nations face.

They also called on the more developed economies to join in the creation of a contingency fund. It was initially agreed that the Spanish government would contribute five billion dollars and Argentina, one billion dollars. The Brazilian president indicated that the fund could come to 90 billion dollars.

During his stay in Oporto, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León met with his Brazilian and Argentinian counterparts to analyze the international financial situation. As is traditional in these meetings, Zedillo met with King Juan Carlos de Borbón and the head of the Spanish government, José María Aznar, who agreed on the analysis of the current crisis, but also on the need to focus on its short-term basic aspects.

The eighth summit concluded with a call to resolve the world financial crisis and avoid a recession, a condemnation of extraterritorial laws and for the creation of the contingency fund. The final declaration, entitled "The Challenges of Globalization and Regional Integration," included four appendices. In this document, the Iberoamerican nations issued a call to Japan, the United States, and the European Union to assume a leadership role with regard to the critical international financial situation. They also pledged to strengthen democratic institutions, political pluralism, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental liberties. The heads of state also reiterated their respect for non-intervention in the domestic affairs of each country and proposed the creation of a cooperation commission, whose tasks would be settled at the next summit. By the same token, the Iberoamerican presidents expressed their opposition to extraterritorial application of national laws and called on the U.S. government to cease application of the Helms-Burton Act, which toughens the embargo of Cuba. The four appendices of the Oporto declaration take up the issues of peace between Ecuador and Peru, the peace process in Colombia, the international financial situation and promoting relations between Latin America and the European Union.

The summit meeting was attended by the heads of state of Portugal, Spain, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

*Raquel Villanueva*
**Staff writer**
*Translated by Peter Gellert*

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# Paradoxes of the 1998 U.S. Elections

*Patricia de los Ríos**

The mid-term elections recently held in the United States provided some surprising results. For the first time since 1822, a Democratic president's party won seats in the House of Representatives during a second presidential term instead of losing them.

The Republicans retained their majority in both houses of Congress on November 3, though by a much smaller margin than they had anticipated. The composition of the Senate remained unchanged, with 55 Republicans and 45 Democrats. In the House of Representatives the Republicans still hold a majority —223 against 211—after losing five seats. The Republicans govern 31 states, the Democrats 17, and independents, two.

However, these statistics are not enough to analyze the real consequences of the elections, so we will raise a series of considerations concerning the different levels of government.

## President Clinton Wins Without Running

While mid-term elections are dominated by local issues, on this occasion the impeachment proceedings against President Clinton were the backdrop to the electoral process. As in the 1996 election, the Republicans tried to make the elections into a referendum on the president. However, the polls indicate that a majority of the public perceives the impeachment process as a retaliation, although this does not mean it condones Clinton's personal shortcomings. Voters decided not to base their decision on what has been said about the president's private life since, again, opinion polls show that the public is optimistic about the situation of the country. The U.S. economy is still growing steadily, unemployment has declined, and there are no international conflicts threatening the security of the United States.

On the other hand, the Republicans' attitude of going after the president influenced the most loyal sectors of the Democratic Party —Afro-Americans, women, Latinos, and unionized workers— to vote in large numbers for their party, which provided the Democrats with the margin needed to win in certain very close races.

As is traditional in mid-term elections, most U.S. voters stayed home on election day, and only 37 percent of those eligible went to the polls.

Although the Democrats did not recover a majority, the results were sufficiently favorable to allow President Clinton to conclude his term in conditions of greater strength vis-à-vis his party, his country and the world. With the year 2000 presidential elections approaching, the outcome of this year's races will result in

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Translated by Peter Gellert.

greater internal cohesion of the Democratic Party and allow it to propose a government program more consistent with the expectations of voters, who believe the Democrats offer better campaign pledges.

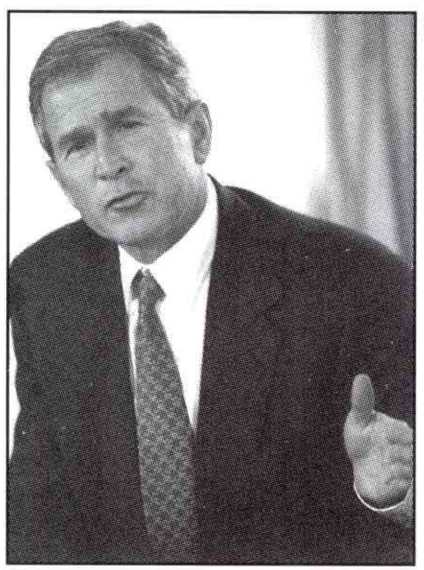
The presidential candidacy for the year 2000 of Vice President Al Gore also was strengthened. Gore's participation in the last weeks of the electoral process was outstanding, campaigning in favor of his fellow party candidates.

## TOWARD GREATER BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS

As previously mentioned, the equilibrium between the parties was maintained in the Senate, with 55 Republicans and 45 Democrats. The former were unable to obtain the majority of 60 senators they need to stop filibustering,[1] and therefore, their possibilities of subjecting the president to impeachment proceedings have diminished.

The Republicans suffered some important defeats. For example, Alphonse D'Amato lost the New York Senate seat to Democratic candidate Charles Schumer.

In the House of Representatives, the political effects of the elections' outcome were immediate. Newt Gingrich, Republic spokesman and legislator, who organized the party's electoral victory in the 1994 elections based on the "Contract with America," was now the scapegoat for the results at the ballot box. A few days after the election, and given the threat of a revolt within Republican ranks, Gingrich declared that not only would he not again seek the post of speaker of the House, but would even resign his seat. The position of speaker of the House has great political



AFP

The results of the race have made George Bush Jr. a strong contender for the 2000 Republican presidential nomination.

Voters decided not to base their decision on what has been said about the president's private life.

importance in Washington and is perhaps the best known post in the legislature.

The new House speaker will be Louisiana congressman Robert Livingston. Although the southern legislator is also a conservative, it is felt that his style will be much more discreet than that of Gingrich, who tended to exercise power autocratically. In his first interviews as a candidate for House speaker, Livingston called for granting much more power to the presidents of legislative commissions.

From the point of view of legislative policy, it can be expected that the Republicans will not be able to carry their impeachment proceedings against President Clinton to their ultimate consequences, and perhaps they will be inclined to a more bipartisan policy. At the same time, it is likely that the more conservative legislators who took office in 1994 and were re-elected in this year's races will play a more active role and pressure the new Republican leaders to adopt a more conservative political line.

For the Democrats, as I already mentioned, the electoral results are a breather and afford the possibility of promoting a more coherent legislative agenda and thus prepare for the year 2000 elections with greater internal cohesion.

## STATE ELECTIONS

While overseas great attention is not usually placed on state election results, the policies of the New Federalism, which granted the states many of the attributes previously held by the federal government, as well as the economic prosperity achieved by some states, have made governors' activities increasingly important for understanding new tendencies in public policies in the United States.

It is particularly important for Mexico to remain abreast of political developments in the states along its borders. With this in mind, several important developments should be pointed out.

On a national level, the Republicans managed to maintain most gubernatorial spots, even though they suffered a major defeat in California, where Democratic candidate Gray Davis won the race against Pete Wilson's heir, Dan Lungren, who had been state attorney general. In California, the political strength of new social groups made its appearance, particularly among voters of Mexican origin who felt their

interests deeply affected by Proposition 187. An expression of this participation and renewed political activism by voters of Mexican background is the election of a Latino politician, in this case Cruz Bustamante of Fresno, as lieutenant governor.

In New Mexico another Latino, Martin Chávez, also ran for governor. Despite having the support of the entire Democratic Party apparatus, from Hillary Clinton to Vice President Al Gore, he was unable to defeat Republican Governor Gary Johnson.

Nonetheless, not all Latinos vote for the Democrats, and the Republicans have clearly understood that they cannot ignore the strength of the Hispanic electorate, much less offend or mobilize it with an anti-immigrant policy. An interesting example of this new Republican perception was displayed in Texas, where George Bush Jr. won the elections with 69 percent of the vote in a race in which special emphasis was placed on voters of Mexican origin. The results of the race have made Bush a strong contender for the Republican nomination for the year 2000 presidential elections.

By the same token, in the state of Florida, Jeb Bush, brother of the Texas governor, also scored an important victory, complemented with the presence of Republican majorities in both houses of the state congress. In this case, the Latino electorate, particularly Cuban-Americans, was especially targeted.

Another important point related to the year 2000 electoral process is that the Republican Party consolidated its political presence in the south, a Democratic stronghold for more than 100 years, and its domination in Western states —Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. Although these states together have the same or less population than Florida or California, they comprise a bastion of safe Electoral College votes for the Republicans.

Finally, in a curious note, the new governor of Minnesota, Jesse Ventura, a member of Ross Perot's Reform Party who until recently earned his living as a wrestler, defeated both Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey III —son of former Vice President Humphrey— as well as Republican contender Norm Coleman, both well known traditional style politicians. This race and the re-election of independent governor Angus King of Maine reflect a certain tendency toward a quest for other political options, even if not posed as an alternative to the traditional two-party system.

Another important question is the process of redistricting. The U.S. Constitution stipulates that electoral districts, both federal and state, must be determined based on a census taken every 10 years. This process of redrawing district lines takes place in the state legislatures, and therefore the balance of forces in each state is very important. While districts can have more or less the same number of inhabitants, in U.S. political life traditionally the drawing of district lines is manipulated, a procedure that even has a name: gerrymandering.

Since the next census will coincide with local elections, it will acquire much greater importance than is normally the case. In the end, the Democrats obtained control of both houses in 21 state congresses, the Republicans have a majority in 17, and in 11 states the two parties share power. The Nebraska state legislature has only one chamber, and its members are not elected on party tickets.

With the strengthening of state powers, redistricting will influence how billions of dollars are spent as well as the future of education and welfare policies.

Finally, another element in the recent electoral process were referenda voted by the electorate against the opinion of state legislatures and federal policies. The most important case involved the approval of ballot initiatives to allow the medical use of marijuana in five states: Alaska, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.

The 1998 elections confirmed the idea once expressed by House speaker Thomas P. O'Neill during the Ronald Reagan presidency, in the sense that "all politics is local." In most of the races, citizens voted based on specific concerns, not adherence to a specific party. At the same time, the results show the close relationship between local, state and national issues, since the biggest winner, President Clinton, was not even in the running. On the other hand, the elections for governors' seats and the results of state legislative races will be key in understanding U.S. politics with a view to the presidential elections in the year 2000, and on a more long-term basis, the importance of electoral redistricting and its impact on Democratic or Republican predominance. **VM**

NOTES

[1] The filibuster, a parliamentary tactic aimed at delaying decisions, is based on the right of senators to speak without restriction. This allows a single senator, at the end of the discussion period, to hold up legislation by speaking for as long as he or she desires. The number of senators is important, due to the rule that stipulates that if three-fifths of the Senate, that is, 60 senators, decide to do so, they can stop a speaker. For a detailed explanation of the question see Roger H. Davidson and Walter J. Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1988), pp. 243-246.

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# Guadalajara Founding to Independence

*Javier Moreno Rodríguez**

Founded in the early sixteenth century by the Spanish conquistador Nuño de Guzmán and his captains, almost from the beginning Guadalajara was the capital of the New Kingdom of Galicia —part of New Spain's Viceroyalty— seat of the Audience of New Galicia and seat of the Diocese of Guadalajara. Toward the end of the colonial period, in 1782, it became the capital of one of the 12 intendencies into which the Bourbon Reforms divided New Spain and, in 1792, the seat of the Royal Literary University of Guadalajara.

Guadalajara was founded in the context of the disputes between Hernán Cortés, conquistador of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, and Nuño de Guzmán, who arrived in New Spain with the title of governor of Pánuco in 1526 and was appointed president of the first Audience of Mexico in

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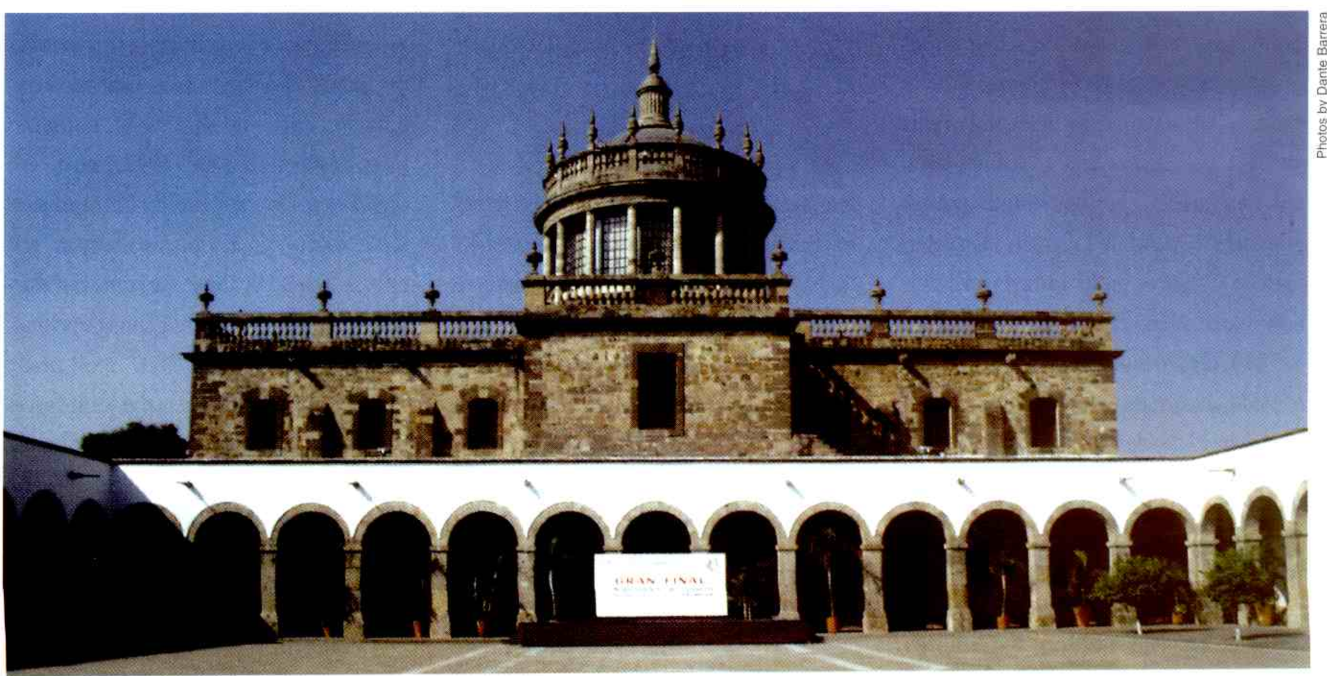

Photos by Dante Barrera

The Cabañas Cultural Institute, one of Guadalajara's most majestic buildings.

The Degollado Theater, built on the site of the definitive founding of Guadalajara.

1528. With these appointments the Spanish crown intended to stop the abuses perpetrated by Cortés' captains, but Nuño de Guzmán's excesses were so great that instead of improving, the situation worsened during the year he held the post of president of the Audience of Mexico.[1]

At the end of 1529, Nuño de Guzmán left Mexico City for western New Spain to attempt a series of conquests that would equal or surpass those of Hernán Cortés and thus conserve the royal favor. For this reason, Guadalajara was founded not once, but four times. The first founding took place when Nuño de Guzmán instructed Juan de Oñate to build a town in what is now Nochistlán, Zacatecas. On January 5, 1530, Oñate founded a village that was named Guadalajara in honor of the Spanish city where Nuño de Guzmán had been born.

However, Nuño de Guzmán was not pleased with the location and, when he visited it in 1533, he ordered it be moved. Some of the villagers suggested a place called Tlacotlán or Tacotlán, north of the Santiago River gorge. Nuño de Guzmán accepted,

Even before it was the capital of New Galicia, Guadalajara had become involved in the economic, social, political, religious and cultural processes that the Spaniards imposed on all its colonies in the Americas.

but Juan de Oñate impetuously preferred to change the site to the town of Tonalá on August 8, 1533, where Villa de Guadalajara was founded for a second time.

The change lasted only two years, however, because Nuño de Guzmán, at that time residing in what was then the capital of New Galicia, Compostela, Nayarit, upon hearing that his instructions had not been followed, ordered that the settlement be relocated in the place he had originally authorized, Tlacotlán. This change was made in early 1535.

In 1536, Nuño de Guzmán decided to travel to Mexico City on his way to Spain to face charges brought against him[2] and to try to buttress the king's opinion of his activities in New Spain. Nuño de Guzmán never returned to this hemisphere; he died in Spain, poverty-stricken and forgotten in 1544.

Meanwhile, in 1539 King Charles V gave the town of Guadalajara in Tlacotlán the status of a city and a coat of arms. However, the royal decrees did not reach their destination until 1542, when the brand new city had already changed sites for a fourth time. So, Guadalajara was only in Tlacotlán about six years, but during that time a great indigenous uprising, known as the Mixtón War,[3] took place, whose climax came when the joint forces of New Galicia, headed by Cristóbal de Oñate, and of New Spain, captained by Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, defeated the Cazcan rebels and their leader Tenamaxtli on December 16, 1541.

Despite the victory of the Spanish conquistadors, Guadalajara needed a safer lo-

The Arts Museum houses two murals by well known Jalisco muralist José Clemente Orozco.

cation. In early 1542, a site was picked in the Atemajac Valley on the western bank of the San Juan de Dios River. The definitive establishment of Guadalajara took place February 14, 1542, the date its founding is still celebrated.

As a result of the indigenous war, New Galicia remained under the military authority of New Spain's viceroy, who rigidly controlled tax collection.

A monument to favorite sons.

The city of Compostela continued to be the most important in New Galicia. In 1544, Pope Paul III authorized the creation of a bishopric in New Galicia, and the first bishop, Pedro Gómez de Maraver, arrived in 1547. Gómez thought that Guadalajara was a better seat for the bishopric than Compostela and began the paperwork for the change; he died, however, in 1551, before he could complete his aim. As part of that process, the Audience of New Galicia was established in 1547, naming its four judges, subordinate to the Audience of Mexico City in questions involving sums over 300 pesos (which would later be raised to 500) and in capital crimes. In addition, the judges were to act as mayors, so that besides their judicial duties, they had to exercise certain governmental functions.

At the same time, in Atemajac Valley, where Guadalajara was definitively set up in 1542, indigenous settlements already existed: Mezquitán, populated by Tecuans; Mexicaltzingo, founded by Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza in 1540, inhabited by Mexicas; and Tetlán, founded by the Franciscan Friar Antonio de Segovia. These townships were the origins of the Mexican Guadalajara, which, in memory of the Spanish birthplace of Nuño de Guzmán, retains its name.

In 1560, Guadalajara became the undisputed capital of New Galicia when the president of the Audience, Pedro Morones, and the new bishop, the Franciscan Pedro de Ayala, moved there.

Even before it was the capital of New Galicia, Guadalajara had become involved in the economic, social, political, religious and cultural processes that the Spaniards imposed on all its colonies in the Americas. It developed economically, predominantly through agriculture and cattle ranching, and later, commerce. Mining was not important in what is today the state of Jalisco, but it was very important in what is now the state of Zacatecas, part of New Galicia until the late eighteenth century.

In that same century, the century of the Enlightenment, the Spanish monarchy and empire went through the deep political, social, economic and religious transforma-

tions known as the Bourbon Reforms, which affected the organization of the viceroyalties of both New Spain and New Galicia. In 1786, the territorial division of New Spain, in force for two centuries, disappeared,[4] as did the areas called "provinces," including the Yucatán Peninsula in the Southeast and the internal provinces of the West and the East in the northern part of the viceroyalty.

The viceroyalty was restructured into 12 intendencies: Mexico, Puebla, Guadalajara, Guanajuato, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí, Veracruz, Valladolid, Mérida (including what is today the state of Tabasco), Zacatecas, Durango and Arizpe (what are now the states of Sonora and Sinaloa).

The Intendency of Guadalajara included practically the same territories that had made up New Galicia, with the exception of Zacatecas which, because of the economic importance of its mines, became and intendency in and of itself.

Guadalajara's cathedral took 300 years to build.

Although the intendencies were relatively short-lived (from 1786 to 1821), it was in that period that the city of Guadalajara created two institutions fundamental to its history and for what is today the state of Jalisco and the West of Mexico: the San Miguel de Belén Hospital —today the Civic Hospital of Guadalajara— and the Royal Literary University of Guadalajara —today the University of Guadalajara. Founded by Bishop Friar Antonio Alcalde in 1792, they have both guided higher education, culture, art, science and medicine in Jalisco until today.

Lastly, it is important to point out Guadalajara's pivotal role in the independence movement headed by Miguel Hidalgo, who spent almost half of the four months that his insurrection lasted (from September 1810 to January 1811) there. Hidalgo arrived in Guadalajara November 26, 1810, and only withdrew after his defeat at the Battle of the Calderón Bridge on January 17, 1811. While there, Hidalgo decreed the abolition of slavery (November 28); published the first independentist newspaper, *El despertador americano* (The American Awakening), edited by Francisco Severo Maldonado who put out seven issues between November 1810 and January 1811; and organized an insurgent government with two ministries, the Ministry of Grace and Justice and of State, headed by José María Chico and Ignacio López Rayón, respectively. VM

## NOTES

[1] Nuño de Guzmán was one of the cruelest and bloodiest conquistadors in his treatment of the indigenous peoples in New Spain. [Editor's Note.]

[2] Hernán Cortés had brought charges against Nuño de Guzmán to strip him of both his authority and his property. Among the many charges were abuse of authority, slave trading, murder, invasion of conquered lands and appropriation of crown goods. [Editor's Note.]

[3] After Nuño de Guzmán's departure, indigenous resistance to the conquistadors intensified and several towns rose up in arms. One of the most serious rebellions was that of the indigenous people from the Mixtón region; the Spanish forces of New Galicia could not put it down alone.

[4] The new kingdoms were New Spain, New Galicia, New Vizcaya, New Leon and New Mexico.

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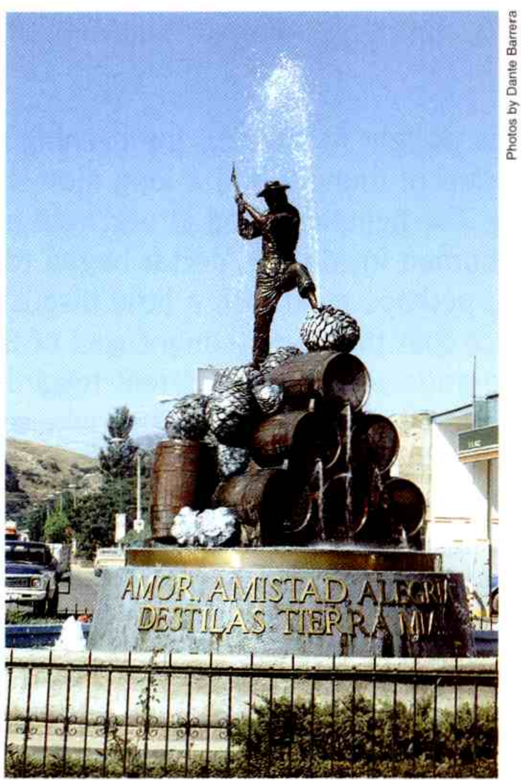


Photos by Dante Barrera



# TEQUILA
## The Liquid Heart of Mexico

*Arturo Cosme Valadez**

*Who doesn't go down to the cantina*
*demanding his tequila and calling for a song?*

José Alfredo Jiménez

In Mexico tequila is more than simply aguardiente: it is a tradition, a symbol of our national character. The cinema popularized tequila as a friend of the solitary rancher who confesses his sorrows only to his glass, but which is also a must at any merry-making. Sometimes tequila is seen as alcohol for brawlers, sometimes as the life of the party, or for sealing a ritual with one's *compadre*. Regardless, undeniably, this robust drink usually accompanies every important occasion in the life of any Mexican, and it has always been present in some way down through the country's history. Originally just a poor man's drink, it has now become a sophisticated international product that represents precisely the liquid heart of Mexico.

### A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH

Nowadays, most people know that the Mayan culture produced monumental architecture and developed remarkable mathematical calculations. Less well known, but no less significant, was their discovery of an alcoholic drink called "pulque," still widely consumed in Mexico. Pulque is the grandfather of tequila: a liquid that ferments due to the sugar content of the agave

* Mexican writer.

Translated by Jennifer Turret.

First came the glow of light in the sky; the evening was already dark.
Then came the clap of thunder and a long moment of confusion.
They approached reverently. The lightening had struck right at the heart of the maguey.
The plant burned inside and nectar began to flow out.
With fear and trepidation, perhaps even with a little disgust, they tasted the nectar.
They knew at once that the gods thought well of them or, at least,
that the gods were not indifferent toward them.
They felt grateful because, in the arid wastes where the agave grows,
any sign of hospitality is welcome.
We will never know whether it was a miracle, fantasy or pure chance.
However, today it has become a legend that bears witness to the gods' love
for the children of the maguey.

or maguey, members of the botanical family *agaveceae* that comprises about 400 species.

In pre-Hispanic times, pulque was the preserve of priests, medicine men, the elderly and warriors. It was associated with divination, health —in that health was a link with the universe— wisdom and strength on the battlefield. Even nobles and their children paid with their lives if they transgressed this prohibition. Getting drunk was a privilege justifiable only when related to the gods. Mayáhuel, a deity of Nahuatl origin, symbolizes the maguey and also gave her name to the plant.

Only mature blue agaves, about 8 years old, are ready for making tequila.

The Tonalmatláhuatl Codex mentions that the Mexicas had learned to cook mezcal-agave hearts, a technique well-suited to preserving liquids during prolonged forays into the desert. It appears that, even before the Spaniards arrived, the Mexicas knew how to make aguardiente using the plants to hand, secrets which they guarded with fervor and respect.

The Nahuatl Codex tells us that the ancient Indians could distinguish between different types of agave. One hieroglyphic mentions nine varieties which produced one type of liquor and countless types of alcohol.

Long before the Spaniards came to the Americas, the technique of cooking the heart of a plant and fermenting the juices was widely known among the different cultures that populated Mexico. Friar Toribio de Benavente, the author of *Las indias de la Nueva España* (The Indies of New Spain), writes, "If the [maguey] heads are well cooked by a good master, they have such a good head that many

Spaniards like them as much as if they were sweet cider."

Among the varieties of maguey, one Nahuatl tribe found the most refined variety. The Tiquila people (Ticuila, Tiquilos or Tiquilinos as they were also called) who lived in Amatitán, Jalisco, cultivated the blue agave, which later came to be known as the *Weber tequila*, after the botanist who classified the plant.

The arrival of the Europeans to Mexico radically transformed the techniques of producing alcoholic drinks. Distillation, a process the Spaniards had learned from the Arabs, made it possible to produce a transparent liquor with a higher ethyl gradation from the maguey. This drink was called *mezcal*.

During colonial times, the Iberians controlled all distilling, cultivated large maguey plantations and created a domestic market for their product. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the large haciendas, originally exclusively agricultural, became centers of industry covering a good part of Mexico's arable land. Since then, the ranches in Jalisco, particularly in the Tequila, Amatitán and Arenal valleys, have become the main producers and distillers of the blue agave.

In 1785, Viceroy Matías Gálvez persuaded King Carlos III of Spain to sign a decree banning the production and trade of native aguardiente. This favored the importation of wines and liquors from the old world. This attempt at putting a brake on New Spain's flourishing mezcal industry was short-lived. Only a decade later, the governor of the province of New Galicia, Juan Canseco y Quiñones, drew up regulations for the production and trade of mezcal. Then in 1795, José María Guadalupe Cuervo received the first actual concession from the King of Spain to manufacture tequila, even though the drink itself already existed. In fact it was a type of mezcal, differentiated from mezcal itself in that it came from a special kind of agave that was left between seven to ten years to mature, as opposed to the three years required by the mezcal-producing plant.

The first distillery where tequila was produced was at the Cuisillos Hacienda, owned by Pedro Sánchez de Tagle, considered the "father of tequila." From the last decade of the eighteenth century, this branch of agro-industry grew tremendously. Production was concentrated in the west of the country and the tequila market grew immensely among peons and peasants. Its fame spread across the country and contributed significantly to the pros-

The town of Tequila's main plaza.

The ovens, where *piñas* are cooked for 24 hours. (Casa Cuervo, Tequila, Jalisco.)

The *aguamiel* mixed with water ferments naturally because of its sugar content. (Casa Cuervo, Tequila, Jalisco.)

perity of the region where it was made.

Tequila became an international drink in the nineteenth century. The owner of the La Perseverancia Distillery, Don Cenobio Sauza, exported it to the United States for the first time. New Mexican soldiers had developed a taste for the drink during their invasions of Mexico. Thanks to the growth of trading networks and the construction of the railway, it became enormously popular domestically as well as along the northern border in the times of Porfirio Díaz.

In about 1900, a European botanist named Weber classified the different species of agave, helping to determine which varieties were best suited to the production of tequila. In 1910, during an exhibition in San Antonio, Texas, the drink was named "Tequila wine," and from then on, this particular aguardiente has been called the name we know it by today.

The tequila industry has grown steadily during the twentieth century, becoming one of Mexico's most prosperous. Today, more than 90,000 acres of blue agave are under cultivation in the Tequila region alone (mainly in a little town located about 45 miles northeast of Guadalajara), putting Mexico's annual production at over 55 million liters. In the 1990s, the European Union awarded tequila the status of "drink of origin," thereby establishing the difference between tequila and its imitators, particularly from Japan. Now a full fledged drink, tequila has become increasingly popular and is enjoyed internationally.

*Piñas*, or *cogollos*, ready to be steamed.

## MANUFACTURE

The cultivation of the agave begins with the planting of *mecuates*, small roots that grow on the base of mature agaves. In commercial fields, between 1,500 to 2,000 *mecuates* are planted per acre of land. The mature agave, about eight years old, stands about 5 or 6 feet high and is ready to reproduce. This is the only stage at which the plant can be used to make tequila.

Then comes the *jima*, which consists of exposing the heart of the agave. *Jimadores*, farm workers specialized in this type of work, cut through the sharp-pointed leaves of the plant with machetes to expose the heart, called *piña* or *cogollo*. The hearts, weighing between 50 and 150 pounds, are then sent to the factory in the traditional way, on the back of a donkey, although some farms now also use trucks.

Once at the distillery, the *piñas* are cut in half and placed in ovens, where they cook for 24 hours. After cooling for another 24 hours, they become soft and fibrous and turn a dark golden color. The cooking process has already transformed the plant's natural carbohydrates into the sugars required for fermentation.

The next step consists of grinding the *cogollos*, a task originally done in a sump of volcanic stone with a mule or horse

*Alambiques,* where tequila is distilled. (Casa Cuervo, Tequila, Jalisco.)

Tequila stored in wooden barrels is prized for the special flavor it acquires. (Casa Cuervo, Tequila, Jalisco.)

turning the grinding mechanism. The milling process produces a thick juice called *aguamiel* (honey-water), the raw material for making tequila. The *aguamiel* is mixed with water and left in large vats where it ferments naturally because of the sugar content of the plant itself (some species produce as many as 40 different types of sugars). Following a period of anywhere between 72 and 150 hours, the liquid is filtered and placed in huge steel containers called *alambiques* where a double distillation process takes place, after which the drink has acquired an average ethyl content of 110 proof. Once again it is mixed with distilled water to produce the required gradation, which varies between 76 and 90 proof.

The result of the process is called "white tequila," although the correct term is "silver." Some producers bottle the product immediately at this stage. Others wait a month or two. During that period, herbs may be added, giving it a particular flavor, aroma or color; the result is called "soft" or "golden tequila." If the liquid is stored in wooden barrels (usually white oak) for at least three months, the product is called *tequila reposado* (rested tequila) prized for the special flavor it acquires in the barrel. A superior quality of tequila at least one year old is called *tequila añejo* (aged tequila). The rare varieties, aged for more than five years, go by the name of *tequila muy añejo* (very aged tequila), but some connoisseurs think these varieties have lost the actual "spirit" of tequila, and consider these very aged drinks too strong.

The Mexican regulations (Official Mexican Standard, or NOM) for tequila production, in place since 1978, determine that tequila must be fermented with at least 51 percent blue agave. Other varieties contain alcohol derived from maize, *piloncillo*[1] and other substances. Of course the best tequila is manufactured solely from the blue agave.

Traditionally, tequila should be drunk straight or with lemon and salt, and occasionally together with sangrita, a drink made of tomato juice, orange juice, spices and hot sauce. In recent years any number of cocktails have been invented using a tequila base. Nevertheless, under any circumstances, tequila is a drink that should be consumed with respect, as it readily "goes to a person's head" very suddenly and without warning. As a sort of caution to tequila drinkers, the following popular verse describes the effects of tequila drunk in excess:

*Water from the green plants:*
*You lose me, you kill me,*
*You make me need to go on all fours.*

Notes

[1] A brown sugar derived from the processing of sugar cane. The sugar is pressed into a cone shape and left to cool. This sugar is used in deserts and cakes, and to sweeten some hot drinks. [Editor's Note.]

# The Gods of the Agave

Ancient Mexican manuscripts make reference to the many uses of the maguey, which provided food, soap, fiber for textiles, paper for writing, color for painting and a very sturdy material for footwear. It was also used to make religious artifacts, needle and thread for sewing, ropes and *tejamaniles*,[1] so that the world of Man could be differentiated from nature and made less hostile. The maguey was so important that it was part of all ceremonies, and even became a citizen in its own right. People began to use it, and it yielded enough products to make a place for itself in Mexica society. Of course the Mexicas also recognized that the maguey's aroma was ritual. The plant grew in the earth, but its most prized fruit was cooked in heaven. The fount of this basic alcohol always remained greater than the people who procured it, and who paid tribute to their own work on the assumption that the euphoria the nectar induced in the best of men had some sort of meaning that surpassed those men and linked them to the cosmos.

In somewhat ambiguous hieroglyphics, the Tonalmatláhuatl Codex tells of the Aztecs' pilgrimage that began in 1116, when a tribe left Aztlán ("the place of herons") and set out in search of an eagle perched on a nopal cactus, swallowing a serpent. Those brave —or simply obstinate— men left the islands of Mextaltitlán (also known as Mezcales in the loose Confederation of Chimalhuacán) with the idea of pursuing their vague, foolhardy adventure. This strange document, also known as the "Pilgrimage Strip," suggests that the name "Mexico" was chosen by great defeated gods who talked to the agave of their secret tragedy. The god Huitzilopochtli ordered them to find a new name. The men obeyed because they knew the gods to be a primeval force. Not without modesty or fear at the dizzying change, they consented to call themselves "Mexicas." They trudged on for long days and tiring kilometers in search of the promised symbol and finally found it, or thought they had, in what is now the capital of Mexico. No one intended to forget —yet no one remembered— that primitive god Mextli (derived from *melt*, meaning agave or pulque, and *xicltli* meaning *quiote*) who was associated with duty, law and destiny. Throughout their arduous journey, those men fed and clothed themselves with the help of the maguey cactus.

In about 1325, this deranged but upstanding tribe founded the unlikely city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. In their language, its name means "where the gods of the agave reside."

## Notes

[1] A thin board, cut up into strips, used as roofing material. [Editor's Note.]

Dante Barrera

# A Portrait of Zapopan

*Ana María de la O Castellanos**

Photos by Dante Barrera

The basilica dedicated to the veneration of Our Lady of Zapopan.

Since the 1970s the municipality of Zapopan has been part of Guadalajara's metropolitan area. Many avenues connect both cities and in some places, only a single street separates them. As late as 1950, however, they were still clearly distinguishable: the imposing outline of the towers of the Basilica of Zapopan was visible on the horizon several kilometers from Guadalajara. At that time, Zapopan had only 30,000 residents, while in 1998, they numbered more than a million.

The basilica, erected in 1739 and remodeled in 1892, with its plateresque facade and Corinthian reliefs, is one of the many fascinating buildings in Zapopan's historic downtown area. The church is dedicated to the veneration of the image of Our Lady of Expectation, or Our Lady de la O, popularly known as Our Lady of Zapopan. Made by the Purépechas of cornstalk paste in the sixteenth century, the image is only 34 cm high.[1] This figure has a great many faithful followers in western Mexico, particularly in the Archdiocese of Guadalajara, of which she is patron saint.

A piece from the Huichol Art Museum.

The close relationship between Our Lady of Zapopan and the *tapatíos*, as the residents of Guadalajara are called, dates from more than two centuries ago. In 1721, she was declared the "patron saint against epidemics" and in 1734, after a period of heavy rains, "patron saint of waters and against lightening and storms." From that

* Professor at the University of Guadalajara.

time on, both civic and ecclesiastic authorities decided that the effigy should remain in Guadalajara from June 13 to October 5 of each year, to intercede for the city in preventing floods. This tradition survives even today.

During that period every year, then, the figure is carried through the different neighborhoods and markets of Guadalajara. The streets are festooned with *composturas* (garlands decorated with cut paper) and carpeted with alfalfa for the virgin to pass. At night, each parish organizes a fair and fireworks to the peal of church bells announcing her arrival or departure.[2]

Our Lady of Zapopan, patron saint and protectress of the state of Jalisco.

This singular form of worship also stems from another of Our Lady of Zapopan's titles given to her in 1821 by the head of the province: "General and universal protectress of the armies of the state of Jalisco." It is said then, that in the last century, she received welcomes and sendoffs in Guadalajara with a 21 cannon salute. Today, she is rendered military honors —complete with trumpet calls, drums and double-time marching— during her entire sojourn through church atria and Guadalajara streets by the "Guard of Honor," made up of great numbers of men, women and children wearing costumes and insignias befitting their title.

A view of Zapopan's main plaza.

The "Pilgrimage of Our Lady" takes place every year on October 12 to celebrate "the carrying" —as it is popularly called— of the effigy back to its basilica. Approximately two million faithful, counting participants and observers, can be found along the almost 8-kilometer route. More than 250 groups of dancers also accompany the effigy's return to Zapopan after it has visited most of Guadalajara's Catholic churches.

The close relationship between Our Lady of Zapopan and the *tapatíos* dates from more than two centuries ago.

Moving on to other topics, we should ask ourselves what kind of occupations are common in Zapopan. For almost four centuries the population of what was originally a hamlet, including the ranches and villages within its borders, has been occupied in trade and cattle raising, as well as cultivating corn, beans, wheat, fruit and vegetables, and logging trees from nearby forests to sell wood for fuel and make charcoal.

Important haciendas were built in Zapopan, like Santa Lucía, the largest in the area in the nineteenth century, Copala, La Venta Del Astillero, De Lazo, La Soledad and La Magdalena. However, the large number of ranches and small holdings predominated in the Zapopan countryside, particularly in its Tesistán Valley. In this century, since the 1960s, Zapopan has begun to be known as the corn belt because of the high crop yields in the Tesistán which made it number one nationwide in bushels per hectare. This has also led to the development of local crafts made with corn husks.

Some more remotely located Zapopan communities still celebrate festivities two or more centuries old. Among them

are the Christmas pastorales in December, the Easter Week *Judea*, or passion play, and festivities to invoke good weather. But the most deeply rooted is the Fiesta of the *Tastoanes* celebrated every year in some of the towns with large indigenous populations: Ixcatán, Jocotán, Nextipac, San Juan de Ocotán and Santa Ana Tepititlán.[3]

*The Town History.* Detail of Ricardo Peña's mural in Zapopan's city hall.

Zapopan's first textile factories opened in the 1840s. La Escoba was the earliest, famous for its modern machinery and highly mechanized work methods, followed by La Prosperidad in 1851 in Atemajac. The El Batán paper mill was inaugurated in 1844. Today, the city boasts industrial parks devoted entirely to manufacturing and assembly.

The municipality now has innumerable areas subdivided for housing and the majority of greater Guadalajara's hotels and shopping malls are in Zapopan, as well as campuses of the area's main universities and schools: the University of Guadalajara, the Autonomous University of Guadalajara, the University of the Atemajac Valley, the Panamerican University and the Monterrey Technological Institute, as well as the Defense Ministry's Air College.

Of cultural and tourist interest in the municipal seat is the Franciscan convent —located next to the basilica—, founded in 1819 as the Apostolic College for the Propagation of the Faith, which boasts an important collection of paintings in addition to the jewels and relics of Our Lady. There, too, is the Huichol Art Museum.

The main patio of Zapopan's colonial-style city hall.

Other important buildings are the neoclassical parish church of San Pedro Apóstol, built in 1819, and the colonial-style city hall, which holds the murals *The Universal Revolution*, by Guillermo Chávez Vega and *The Town History*, by Ricardo Peña.

Other places worthy of a visit are the eighteenth-century Nextipac Chapel, the seventeenth-century Santa Ana Tepetitlán Chapel, as well as the chapels of Ixcatán, San Juan de Ocotán, Tesistán, Jocotán and Atemajac. Other sights that should not be missed are the main houses —or their ruins— of the Santa Lucía, La Escoba, El Lazo, Copala, La Magdalena and La Venta Haciendas.

Zapopan also has admirable natural attractions, like the Doctor Atl Lookout Park, with its three sites built on the Santiago River Ravine; the Ixcatán geothermic geyser area; the Primavera and San Isidro Forests; and the Copalita and Santa Lucía Dams.

Even though Zapopan is part of the rapidly growing Guadalajara metropolitan area, the recovery of its own history gives it an identity of its own. VM

## NOTES

[1] The Purépechas inhabited what is today Jalisco's neighboring state of Michoacán. Cornstalk paste sculptures, mainly religious figures, are made with pre-Hispanic techniques. See *Voices of Mexico* no. 45.

[2] There are actually three figures of the virgin: the original is at the altar at the Zapopan Basilica, donated to local residents in 1541 by Friar Antonio de Segovia; the one which travels to different neighborhoods around the city for several months a year; and an ivory figure housed in the Franciscan convent next to the basilica. [Editor's Note.]

[3] See the article in this issue about the *tastoanes* festivities in San Juan de Ocotán, pp. 33-35.

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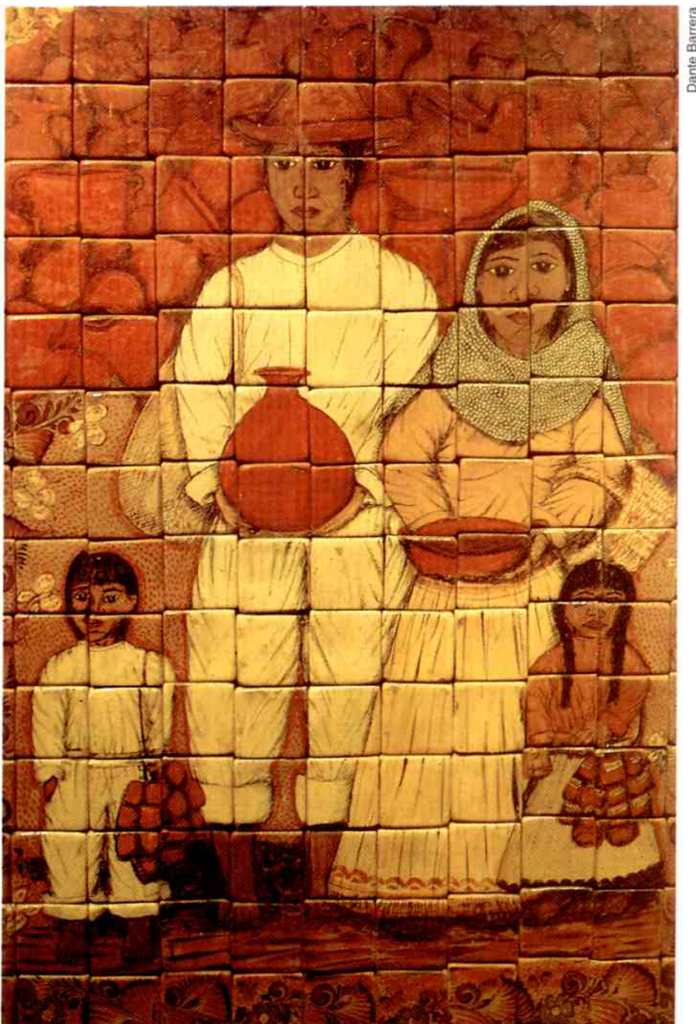
# Ceramics in Jalisco

*Silvia González Anguiano**



Dante Barrera

José Tomás Esperanza León, *Allegory*, 1994 (burnished clay). (Pantaleón Panduro Museum, Tlaquepaque.)

Usually seen as beautiful, utilitarian objects, and in some cases luxury products, crafts can be so attractive that the buyer seldom asks what goes into them: the long days of hard work, collective experiences and creative needs of the people who conceived of them.

Crafts were born as an answer to Man's need to change his environment and make it more accessible. The struggle for survival is implicit in some of these products, for example, the ones made of unraveled vegetable fibers which were the first crafts of early men.[1]

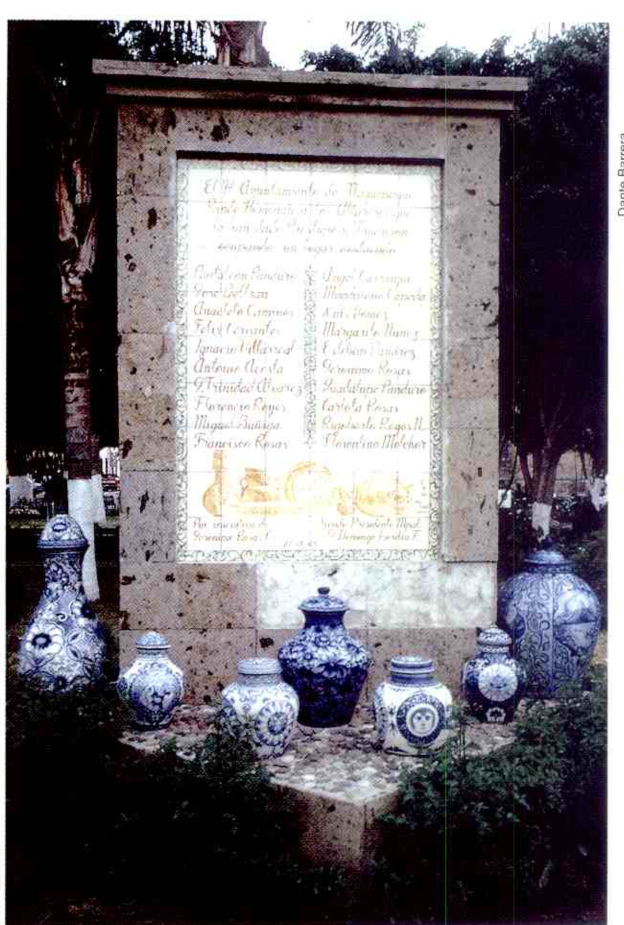
This first change of Man's surroundings allowed him to develop other abilities and craft forms; he began to cover baskets with mud, which was hardened in the Sun: these were the first predecessors of ceramics. Undoubtedly, in this same period the most important step forward in mastering the environment was the invention of the bow and arrow.

Weaves diversified and people began to work with fibers that were "friendlier" than vegetable fibers. Women concentrated on two kinds of production: cera-

* Researcher on folk art in Jalisco.

Reprinted courtesy of the mayor's office of Tonalá

*Bandera* earthenware took its name from Mexico's national colors.


Dante Barrera

A plaque to Tlaquepaque's artisans.

mics and textiles. Two other activities that began at this time were also basic for the development of humanity: agriculture and the discovery of metals in the Neolithic Period. Precisely in this period, the conditions for the development of crafts and trade —beginning with barter— were consolidated.

Once basic needs were satisfied, people concentrated on symbolism: art, religion, myths and a joint form of cosmogony, the way they conceived of and explained life.

## TRADITIONAL CERAMICS

Some say that pottery was discovered accidentally when some mud-covered baskets were left hardening in the Sun. Others give it divine connotations, saying the first potter was the Creator, who made the first man out of clay. The fact is that ceramics in all its different forms has accompanied Man throughout his development.

A great many forms, colors and finishes have been used in Mexican clay work, from simple terra cotta used to make rudimentary baskets and containers to satisfy the most elemental needs of men, to ritual ceramics made and decorated to please the gods.

Today, some pre-Hispanic techniques continue to be used, as in the case of the *bruñido* (burnished) clay made in Tonalá and Tlaquepaque,[2] also called "aroma" clay because of the smell it gives off when wet. The containers are covered with a bath of *matiz,*[3] over which many floral or animal motifs are painted. This work is signed by the artisans who then patiently polish each piece with pyrite.

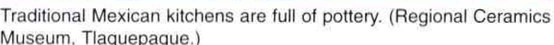
Tasks are divided up in the family: some family members wet the piece and begin the polishing; others make large holes in the patio to put the objects in so they remain damp and are thus easier to polish.

Derivative of *bruñido* crockery are the *encebadas* (tallowed) pieces, for which the sheen is obtained not by rubbing, but with a bath of fat which adheres to the clay when its surface shrinks during firing.

One of the varieties of this is the *canelo* (cinnamon) earthenware, which comes from the town of El Rosario. Typically, it has ocher tones and a floral decoration and is made in the shape of containers for liquids. At the beginning of the century it was known as *loza amarilla* (yellow crockery).

*Bandera* (flag) earthenware takes its name from Mexico's national colors:

Dante Barrera



Traditional Mexican kitchens are full of pottery. (Regional Ceramics Museum, Tlaquepaque.)

Reprinted courtesy of the mayor's office of Tonalá

*Petatillo* pieces can be recognized by their thin diagonal lines surrounding images of plants and animals.

pieces bathed in red clay beaten until it "flowers" are decorated with a bath of color and large white and green flowers.

Another type of *encebada* ceramics is a shining, black crockery, as dark as the night, known as "graffito black," which only emphasizes its brilliance, decorated with an awl when the clay is still wet.

Beautiful in all its forms —capricious like Man's creativity itself, allegorical as a recreation of life— still useful for utilitarian objects, as active as Man himself, traditional ceramics will continue to exist as long as people have anything to say about it.

## COLONIAL CERAMICS

In pre-Hispanic Mexico, the *toltecas*, or artisans, were recognized for their great ability and enjoyed special privileges. When the Spanish arrived they found that although Mexican potters were only familiar with polishing as a technique for waterproofing their receptacles, they already displayed great sophistication in ornamentation based on frets and lines which never crossed and the use of wax molds.

The Spaniards made their own contribution by teaching them the uses of the *greta*, a technique they had learned from the Arabs for giving a sheen to crockery. This was the origin of what is called *loza de lumbre* (open-fire crockery),[4] which continues to be made in every town in Mexico and is sold at local markets, just as it is in Jalisco. The Spaniards also brought with them the use of the modern potter's wheel and the kiln.

Mexican potters contributed to ceramics the highly baroque decoration such as in the *petatillo*[5] pieces made in Tonalá and Tlaquepaque.

*Loza de lumbre* is for everyday use in cooking food; it is decorated with large white flowers and has small holes in the lids to let the steam escape until the last bubble of boiling beans.

*Betus* or *betún*[6] clay, decorated in bright colors and a shining finish recalls the legends recounted in the town of Santa Cruz about supposed "spirits" that wander through the San Gaspar Forest. It is also used for children's toys and, in its past glory, was used to make recipients for berry milk and gold dust to present as gifts to prominent and important persons.

In a class by itself among the techniques brought from Spain is the doubly fired majolica ware[7] or Queen's Talavera ware; its

tin oxide bath gives the clay a whitish finish which is then decorated with different colored floral motifs or very intricate frets reminiscent of its Arab origins. It was born in the town of Sayula, Jalisco, in the factory owned by Epigmenio Vargas, where friezes, sets of dishes and utensils were made with the famous "bat wing" design in cobalt blue. This style disappeared because no *güerito* (person with light skin) wanted to learn the trade, and it was generally considered that *morenitos* (persons with dark skin) were not good enough to continue the tradition of making this kind of crockery, the preference of kings and princes.

**Above:** *Canelo* earthenware has ocher tones and a floral decoration. (Reprinted courtesy of the mayor's office of Tonalá.)

**Below:** Blanca Goens, *Tree of Life* (contemporary ceramics). (Pantaleón Panduro Museum, Tlaquepaque.)

## CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS

Centuries before the birth of Christ, ceramics were already being fired at high temperatures thanks to a kiln made with several chambers. This technique came to Mexico in the middle of this century and established itself firmly in the 1960s when everything Latin American became popular, not only folk art but also the visual arts and literature in general.

The need for new products led to the manufacture of ceramics made of kaolin or china clay, the raw material that when mixed with quartz and other chemicals is used to make porcelain. Fired at a medium temperature, with a brilliant finish decorated with flowers and geometric figures, it is sold mainly on the decorator market.

Jorge Wilmot and Ken Edwards are the first to produce ceramics fired at high temperatures in a workshop they set up in a town in Tonalá. They are experimenting with designs and local decorative motifs as a way to preserve the local forms of expression, using materials which need to be doubly fired at temperatures of up to 1,400 degrees centigrade.

This is the beginning of a creative and social reform in Jalisco's craft corridor —Tlaquepaque and Tonalá— since they have managed to make both glazed and non-glazed crockery called Stoneware that is more resistent and free from the danger of lead contamination. VM

### NOTES

[1] These first crafts still survive in Mexico's indigenous communities. For example, the Seris still weave with the fiber called *torete*, so strong and dense that baskets made of it can be used to carry water.

[2] The municipalities of San Pedro Tlaquepaque and Tonalá, together with Zapopan, are part of the Guadalajara metropolitan area. The first two are Jalisco's most important craft corridors. Many of their artisans have specialized and their mastery in ceramics, chicle, cornstalk paste, blown glass and iron working are recognized throughout Mexico and the world. [Editor's Note.]

[3] A bath of clay dissolved in water. [Editor's Note.]

[4] A form of inexpensive, flame-resistant glazed pottery that can be placed on an open fire. [Editor's Note.]

[5] *Petatillo*, considered luxury crockery is decorated with thin diagonal lines that look like a mat weave that surrounds images of animals, flowers and plants. [Editor's Note.]

[6] *Betus* crockery is made in bright colors with a finish that looks like cake frosting.

[7] Majolica ware is made in the Spanish town of Talavera de la Reyna. When the Spaniards brought the technique to the Americas it was called Talavera de Puebla, to distinguish it from the original. [Editor's Note.]

# Flamingoes[1]

Photos by Fulvio Eccardi

The American or Caribbean pink flamingo is one of the oldest species of birds, as well as one of those humans find most attractive. Their color and size and the fact that they always move in a group have made them participants in a spectacle of nature that Man has not wanted to miss.

In Mexico, they live on the coasts of the Yucatán Peninsula, where large coastal lagoons called *rías* abound, as well as in the marshes and mangroves that separate dry land from the beach. Their main feeding grounds are in the northern coast of the state of Yucatán, in Los Petenes, Campeche, on the southern end of Filobobos Island, in Quintana Roo, and even in the middle of the Sian Ka'an Preserve.

Unfortunately, this magnificent water fowl is endangered for many reasons: human expansion toward its habitat has transformed *rías* and mangroves, severely perturbing its way of life. For example, not a few young flamingoes are injured when they hit high tension wires when flying from one area to another.

The flamingo is a gregarious bird; throughout its life cycle, when it nests, feeds or flies, it does everything in large groups. They are seriously affected by predators and other disturbances caused by either nature or Man. For example, any alteration to the colonies where they nest can create stress in the parents, who may abandon the nest itself and the colony for several seasons.

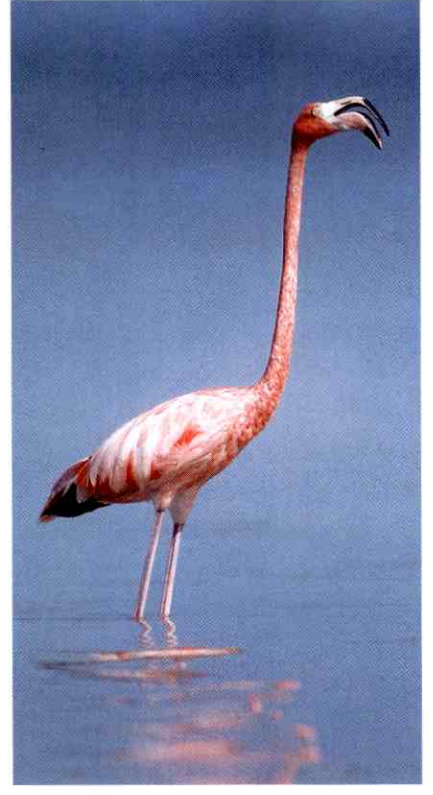
Reproduction of the species is also affected by the fact that flamingo eggs are in demand for human consumption.

Many more are lost due to flooding or the activities of predators like bobcats who, given the slightest chance, will steal the eggs from the nests.

Man, for his part, has made a tourist attraction out of watching pink flamingoes feeding or flying over coastal lagoons, and tourists do not hesitate to travel hours to see them. This has had negative consequences for the birds. The passage of boats, the noise they make and the fact that people even deliberately frighten them so they take flight and can be photographed and filmed are some of the causes of their reduced feeding.

In addition, the boats' passing makes vegetation break loose from the bottom of the lagoons, destroying basic organisms the flamingoes feed on. The reduction of algae and sea grass also reduces the number of flamingoes per group, and the population as a whole scatters. This then influences how they use their energy: now they must expend more energy in looking for food and less in reproduction.

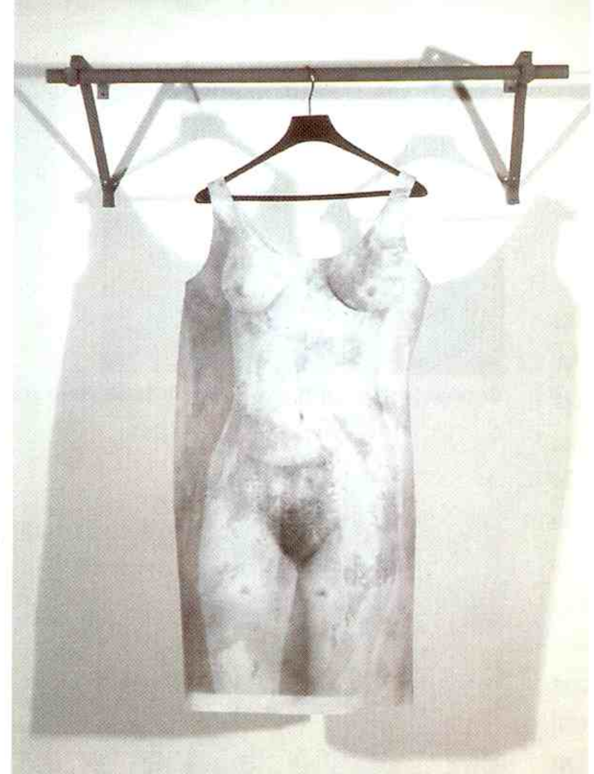
The flamingo is one of the oldest species of birds.



Man, one of the greatest threats to the survival of these birds, could become their greatest protector. In Mexico there is great interest in conserving the areas inhabited by flamingoes. The government has made several decrees aimed at protecting their habitat, which have resulted in a noticeable increase in their number. Currently, the flamingo population has stabilized; however, monitoring of it should continue, as should protection of nesting grounds, and environmental education for children and adults, as well as awareness campaigns for industrialists, politicians and the people who work in nesting areas about the importance of protecting their habitat. This is necessary if we want to continue to enjoy the spectacle of a haughty procession of flamingoes going through the *rías* or flying over Mexico's tidelands, painting the sky pink. **VM**

NOTES

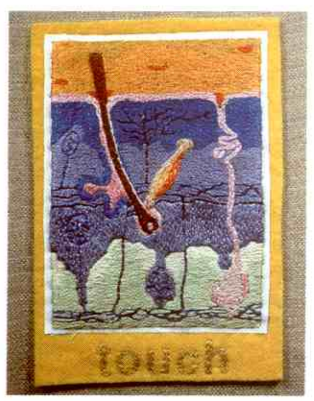
[1] Information taken from the bimonthly bulletin of the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity, *Biodiversitas*, no. 15 (October 1997), pp. 1-7.



Steffani Frideres, *Body Glove*, 68 x 28 x 30 cm, 1994-1996 (liquid light on cloth).

# Anatomical Permutations
## Ten Canadian Artists in Mexico

*Dianne Pearce**




Dianne Pearce, *Sentiments*, series of 3, 44 x 132 cm, 1998 (transfer, embroidery, photo, acrylic matte medium, linen).

From transplanting to fragmenting, from sensitizing and perfecting to repelling, notions of human beings and being human —the body and the psyche— were magnified by the work of 10 Canadian artists at the 26th International Cervantes Festival in Guanajuato last October.[1] Individual body parts laying askew on the examination table are somehow reassembled to form a new body, different from the one we knew, now infused with experience and understanding, now a hybrid being.

"Anatomical Permutations" is not an exhibition about the physical anatomy of the human body. Rather, it addresses a broader concept of anatomy that isolates the parts of an organism to ascertain their position, relations, structure and function. This is akin to an analysis, if you will, of the experiences and events that change the lineal sequence of an ordered set of objects as we know them. The result? Anatomical permutations: changes to the body and psyche in the form of physical change, psycholog-

* Artist living and working in Montreal.

Photos reproduced courtesy of Dianne Pearce.

ical growth, spiritual awareness, cultural understanding.

Without a doubt, this theme encompasses a vast territory of issues, issues that each artist addresses with her own personal exploration. Therefore, while the themes of change and the body unify the exhibition, they by no means preclude figurative art. In fact, there is no common representative object present in the artists' work: while each piece alludes to the body in some way, the human figure may be entirely absent.

In the context of the show, the concept remains central to the curatorial proposal while the medium employed plays almost a secondary role: it provides a means by which each artist can best express the concept. They all employ techniques specific to their studies and experience, resulting in a diverse exhibition that includes fiber, painting, photography, installation, print making, sculpture and mixed media.

The work of the 10 artists was divided into five concepts, each dealing with varied notions of the human figure: Transplanted, Fragmented, Sensitized, Perfected and Repulsed.

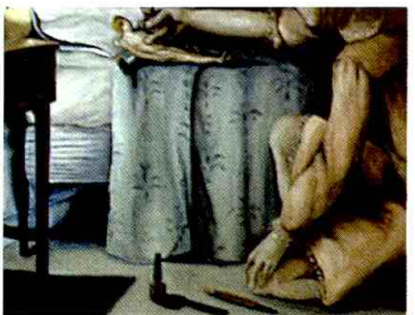
### TRANSPLANTED

Having moved frequently as a child, Lisa Fedak (Guelph, Ontario) comes to terms with living in a small town while struggling with the demands of an urban art scene. Studying the notion of placement, for her the body becomes a unit of containment, much like a house or garden, that can be uprooted, moved, and placed elsewhere.

Karen Michelsen (Montreal) also comments on the cultural fragmentation inherent in shifting territories. Simultaneously a product of mixed bloodlines and an immi-

Gretchen Sankey, *The Bible According to Barbie*, series of 8, 63 x 81 cm, 1995 (oil on canvas).

Karen Michelsen, *And a Cloth of Tears* (detail), 39 x 71 x 15 cm, 1996 (embroidery, painted fabric, acrylic medium transfer, organza).



grant in a new country, Michelsen sees herself as both giving to and taking from her new environment: not only does she contribute further to the already quilted culture of her new home, but she adds yet another layer of memory to her multi-layered history.

Catherine Heard, *Freud's Bride* (detail), 125 cm tall, 1996 (embroidery on found dress and three wax heads).

## Fragmented

Jeannie Thib (Toronto) references historical sources such as art, textiles, maps and manuals and combines these edited and altered images with contemporary ones to create composite pieces in which objects from the past and present co-exist harmoniously. The amalgamation of these disparate artifacts is a metaphor for fragmentation, a concept that compels humans to leave an archival mark by creating and organizing.

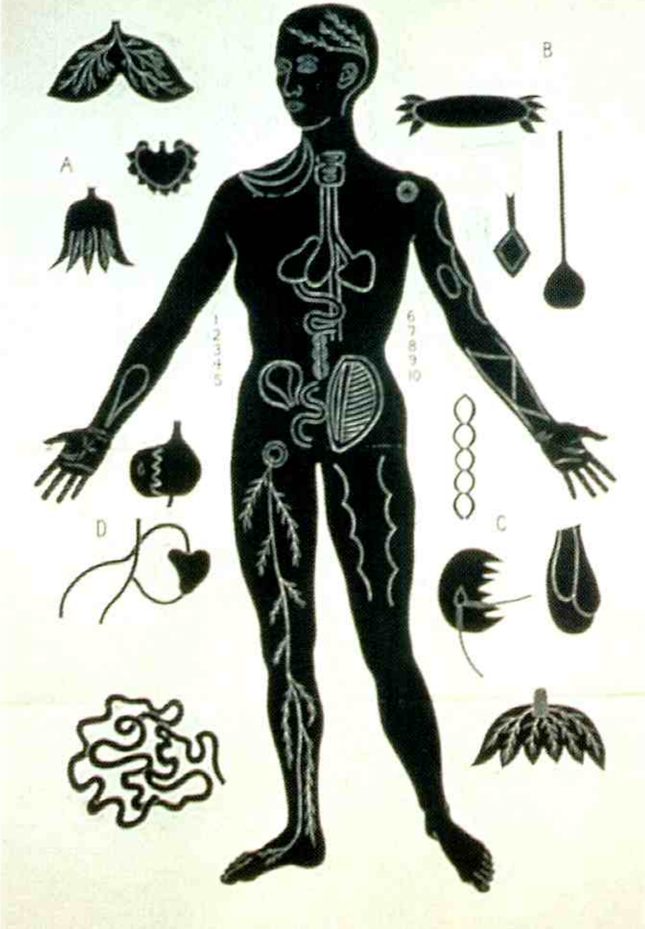
Dianna Frid (Vancouver and New York City) also takes generic images found in pictorial dictionaries and didactic materials such as manuals, maps and guides and assembles them via sewing to form new narratives distinct from their origin. In this way, Frid subverts empirical systems of representation, questions the linear nature of traditional narrative and alludes to the inconsistencies inherent in the system.

## Sensitized

For Millie Chen (Toronto), culture is communicated through food and shelter so that the sensual intelligence of the body —the senses of taste and smell in particular— can convey psychic and physical memory. The traveler enters into and experiences a new culture via the mouth, which is both the oral passage of taste and the oral tool for spoken words.

Dianne Pearce's (Montreal) work highlights the notions of belonging and exile by exploring the "social club" and "badges." We all wear brand names, and we choose them according to the marketed image we identify with.

Pearce's intent is to create a "club" for these mad geniuses, complete with embroidered "mad badges" of anatomical drawings of the senses to indicate the heightened sensory awareness of the members.



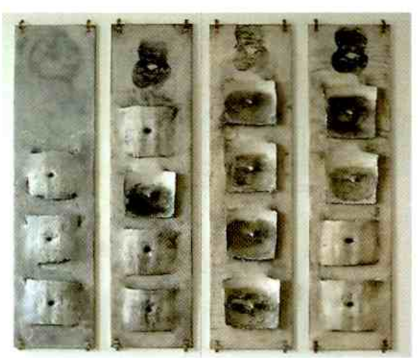

Jeannie Thib, *Terra Incognita*, 245 x 191 cm, 1993 (linocut on mulberry paper, ink).

## PERFECTED

Steffani Frideres (Calgary) comments on the devaluation of women who do not fit into the socially acceptable parameters of ideal size, shape and weight dictated by the media. Women are fed manipulative information from the fashion and cosmetics industries promising attractiveness, youth and leanness if their products are consumed.

Gretchen Sankey (Toronto) examines sexual politics of fairy tales and inserts menacing visual representations into popular folk songs and biblical stories to emphasize the conceptual intersection of faith, sexuality and violence in society today. In her work, a young girl acts out her prepubescent sexual fantasies onto her dolls, Barbie, Ken and G. I. Joe, all of which are highly idealized and wholly unrealistic sexual models for young girls and boys.

Carolyn Pinder (St. Catharines, Ontario) reflects on the innocence and idealism that we feel when reminiscing about our childhood. In her work, Pinder uses familiar children's rhymes and stories which are themselves quite tragic or violent. These distressing tales are reminders that childhood is not wholesome; rather, it is in the revision of our own memory that it becomes idyllic.



Lisa Fedak, *Endless Column of Bellies*, 122 x 31 cm each panel, 1994 (drywall, polyfilla, plaster bandages).

## REPULSED

Catherine Heard (Toronto) explores incongruous dualities —sometimes repulsive— inherent in the human form. Heard's richly and beautifully crafted pieces lure the viewer closer until the grotesquely deformed subject is comprehended and the viewer retracts in repulsion. These monstrous freaks both alarm us and at the same time stir us to protect and nurture them.

◆ ◆ ◆

"Anatomical Permutations" provided a significant opportunity to exhibit Canadian art on an international level and foster relationships between Canadian and Mexican institutions. Also, participating alongside other artists in Mexico offered the artists the chance to share their work with an enormous and varied public.

The exhibition was possible thanks to the generous funding by the Canada Council for the Arts, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Conseil des Arts et Lettres du Québec and Bombardier Transport Group. Also, the goods and services provided by the International Cervantes Festival and the People's Museum in Guanajuato were instrumental in realizing a successful exhibition. VM

## NOTES

[1] Artist/curator Dianne Pearce and the artist-run center Observatoire 4 de Montréal presented the exhibition "Anatomical Permutations: Ten Canadian Artists" at the 26th International Cervantes Festival (FIC) in Guanajuato last October. The FIC is an annual festival of music, theater, dance and fine arts which presents musicians, performers, dancers and artists from more than 30 countries in 10 to 15 different venues, as well as the streets of the small city of Guanajuato.

# Mexico and Canada
## The Internationalization of Domestic Policies

*Julián Castro Rea**

Relations between Mexico and Canada, for 45 years characterized by "friendly indifference," have made an impressive breakthrough in the 1990s. If previously the common fields of interest between the two countries were few and unimportant, they are now numerous and of capital importance for their respective foreign policies.[1]

The formalization of this bilateral relation in the diplomatic and business spheres brought with it unexpected effects. Civil society, whether nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or ordinary citizens, did not expect to be invited to this rapprochement and on its own accord created bridges and ties between the two countries.

This official coming together has resulted in what could be called "the internationalization of Mexican and Canadian domestic policies." What happens in Mexico is increasingly important for Canadians and vice versa; the United States is used as an alternative terrain for domestic political debate.

This phenomenon began seven years ago, with the discussion of the advisability of establishing a free trade agreement that would link up the economies of both countries and that of their common neighbor, the United States. Opponents of free trade discovered the advantages of working together to attempt to break the consensus achieved at the official negotiating table. Of course, we now know that they were unable to break it, but their work together resulted in permanent organizations and coalitions.

Umbrella organizations opposed to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) were, in Canada, the Action Canada Network (ACN), and in Mexico, the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade (RMALC). In point of fact, the organization of the Mexican network was inspired by its Canadian counterpart. In Canada, the ACN was supported by labor confederations, mainly the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), nongovernmental organizations and even a political party, the New Democratic Party. In Mexico, the RMALC was supported by a similar coalition of independent unions, mainly the Authentic Labor Front (FAT), nongovernmental organizations and a political party, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Representatives of the two coalitions made numerous visits to the other country to disseminate information about the reasons behind their opposition to the agreement and to exchange experiences about their strategies for opposing it.

This bilateral solidarity work, which at times became trilateral in scope, has been widely studied and documented.[2]

Another important participant in this internationalization of domestic policies has been the press. If in the not too distant past, coverage concerning Canada in Mexico was scarce and deficient, it is now much more in depth. Previously news coverage was almost exclusively focused on trade, but now includes topics involving social issues, domestic policies, culture, etc. The same can be said of coverage concerning Mexico in Canada. Previously, Mexico was reported in the Canadian media only when catastrophes or scandals occurred. Today, the quantity and quality of articles, television programs and editorials on Mexico has notably increased. More journalists are sent to Mexico permanently as correspondents or to do specific stories; they use more varied informational sources and their interpretations are sounder. The Canadian public interested in Mexico today is larger, better informed and more demanding in terms of fair treatment in the news.

The process of Mexican and Canadian society growing closer has paralleled the development of electronic communication technologies through the Internet and electronic mail. Just a few years ago it was difficult and costly to obtain information about Canada in Mexico and vice versa. Now, with a simple personal computer hook-up to Internet, an almost unlimited amount of information about the other country is obtainable and direct communication can be established with flesh-and-blood people in real time. This communication is horizontal and interactive and undoubtedly has

* Researcher and coordinator of the CISAN's Canadian Studies Area.

Translated by Peter Gellert.

favored ordinary citizens of both countries getting to know each other.

The result of all this is growing interest in each country in what happens in the other. In Mexico, the October 1995 Canadian referendum on Quebec sovereignty, which almost led to a reformulation of that province's relations with the rest of the country, was closely followed. In Canada, there was equal interest in the Chiapas events from the beginning of the Zapatista insurrection in January 1994. Several days after the uprising began, two Canadian commissions traveled to the conflict area. One of them was comprised of representatives of the International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development —an organization created and financed by the Canadian Parliament— and the Assembly of First Nations, the main indigenous organization in Canada.[3] The other commission was made up of representatives of five Canadian churches.[4] Both expressed critical opinions of Mexican government and army activities in the region.

Both the Canadian and Mexican governments have made sure these questions of domestic politics do not influence the definition of the bilateral agenda. In addition, the Mexican government has systematically avoided ceding to the Quebec government's insistence on having a similar status to that of Canada in its relations with Mexico. Recognition by Mexico is an important element in Quebec's international strategy. Proof of this is that following drastic cutbacks in its 1996 and 1997 provincial budget which forced the closure of many of its representative offices abroad, the Mexico office not only stayed open, but maintained its status as "General Office" and not a minor commercial representation office or one dealing with immigration questions. For its part, the Canadian government has repeatedly expressed its confidence in the Mexican government's ability to resolve the Chiapas conflict.

Undoubtedly in this parallel effort at prudence, the Canadian government has the more difficult task, due to its traditional foreign policy. Since the end of World War II, Canada has gained a reputation as a mediator par excellence in resolving conflicts throughout the world, either through participating in peace negotiations or by sending personnel to supervise truces and agreements between the contending sides. The very idea of "maintaining the peace" is a Canadian invention, which moreover won its promoter, then-Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lester Bowles, a Nobel Peace Prize. Canada has participated in all missions of this nature sponsored by the United Nations; therefore, it is not strange for many Canadians to consider their country's role in the world as one of the elements of their own identity.

The Canadian public interested in Mexico today is larger, better informed and more demanding in terms of fair treatment in the news.

Therefore, broad sectors of domestic public opinion are pressuring the Canadian government to adopt an active role promoting human rights worldwide. Given the increasing importance of Mexico among the Canadian public, it is easy to understand why they are demanding greater activism from Ottawa in its relations with Mexico.

This is the meaning of important Canadian delegations being sent to observe the 1994 and 1997 Mexican elections, missions with Canadian government backing.[5] Since then, close cooperation has developed between Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) and its Canadian counterpart, Elections Canada. In 1996, the two agencies formalized their exchanges through the adoption of a memorandum of understanding for electoral cooperation.

Recently a chance incident again placed Mexico on the front pages of the Canadian press. On April 20, 1998, two young Canadians, Julie Marquette and Sarah Mireille Baillargeon, were expelled from Mexico, accused of involvement in domestic political affairs. Upon arriving in Canada, the two women made statements to the effect that the Mexican government does not want witnesses to what is happening in Chiapas, and that the Canadian government should adopt a more active approach in the defense of human rights in Mexico. The issue was debated in the Canadian parliament, where the opposition questioned the government's policy toward Mexico.[6] From the floor, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien indicated that he had discussed the matter with President Ernesto Zedillo, offering to send a parliamentary delegation to gather evidence on the Chiapas situation, investigate the Acteal events[7] and better inform the Canadian government on these issues. Days later the Mexican government agreed to the request.

As a result, from May 8 to 11, 1998,[8] Mexico was visited by a multipartisan delegation of five members of parliament:

Jacques Saada, who headed the mission, and David Iftody, both of the governing Liberal Party;[9] Diane St. Jacques, of the Conservative Party; Dick Proctor, of the New Democratic Party; and Daniel Turp, of the Quebec Bloc. During a brief, four-day visit with a tight schedule drawn up by the Canadian Embassy in Mexico, the five parliamentarians met with academic specialists, government officials —including Chiapas Governor Roberto Albores and Interior Minister Francisco Labastida— leaders of NGOs, the Coadjutor Bishop of Chiapas, Raúl Vera López, representatives of the main political parties, etc. They visited the conflict zone, refugee camps and hospitals that provide care for victims of violence. In other words, they were able to hear the opinions of different participants in the conflict, with the notable exceptions of representatives of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) and Bishop Samuel Ruiz.

Four of the five parliamentarians were present at the press conference the delegation held in the Canadian Embassy in Mexico at the end of their visit (Turb returned to Canada before the meeting with the press).[10] The Liberal Party legislators used the bulk of the time available; the other two MPs made only brief and sporadic contributions. The delegation's conclusions were cautious and nuanced, but reflected the anxiety Chiapas is experiencing (fear, mistrust, poverty, etc.). They indicated that the military's presence is controversial because the government argues that soldiers are stationed there to protect the population, but residents fear them and see them as a source of tension. The paramilitary groups in the region, Procter said, endanger the peace more than the troops. Saada said that the human rights violations the delegation witnessed contravene the convictions upheld by Canada and that the Acteal events had not been adequately investigated nor the guilty parties punished. He added that there is distrust about the usefulness of the negotiations because the government has not complied with previous agreements.

The delegation members did not wish to comment on the recent events leading to the deportation of foreigners from Mexico. However, they obtained a promise from the Ministry of the Interior that the self-declared autonomous municipalities would not be forcibly dismantled —as long as they do not violate human rights and no new ones are set up— because, they said, for the Minister the use of force is not a solution. They stated that they were returning to Canada with a sad account of the events and a message of hope that the government's promises of negotiation and not to use force will be complied with.

Questioned by reporters concerning the concrete measures that they will adopt, the parliamentarians expressed divergent opinions. Liberal Party member Jacques Saada felt that their role was to open the road to dialogue, an opinion backed by Conservative Diane St. Jacques. Saada mentioned that an agreement between Canada and Mexico has been in effect since 1996 to improve the living conditions of their respective indigenous communities, expressing the hope that this accord will be strengthened. David Iftody offered the view that Ottawa's experience in resolving its differences with the indigenous communities through dialogue could be useful, and therefore suggested that the Canadian government's advisors for indigenous issues could "in a respectful manner" advise the Mexican people in formulating policy on Chiapas.

New Democratic Party MP Dick Proctor, in expressing the view that among friends and partners one should speak frankly, called for toughening Canadian policy toward Mexico if the promises of reconciliation are not concretized. He said that in that event, commercial sanctions should be applied because "the Canadian government should be honest in its policies toward Mexico." This view was nuanced by his three colleagues. Saada repeated the Canadian government's official position that the best way to encourage human rights in Mexico is by increasing trade to foster prosperity. He added, however, that Canada has the right to monitor the behavior of its trade partners to demand respect for human rights and guarantee that the wealth created by trade effectively reach all citizens. Iftody added that with commercial embargoes, those who suffer most are the people, not the governments, and therefore such measures can be counterproductive for the objectives sought. He indicated that the delegation invited Emilio Rabasa, Mexican government peace commissioner, to explain the Mexican government's position to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons. Diane

The Canadian and Mexican governments have made sure questions of domestic politics do not influence the definition of the bilateral agenda.

St. Jacques argued that trade sanctions are dangerous, since they can place the country in question in a more critical position.

Finally, Saada concluded that the only solution is to rebuild bridges between civil society and the government, since although the Canadian MPs want to help, resolving the Chiapas problem is the exclusive responsibility of Mexico's government and civil society.

In conclusion, the Canadian government is subject to dual pressure, on the one hand from its people, who demand that it play a more active role in promoting human rights in Mexico, and on the other, for respect for the principle of non-intervention proclaimed by the Mexican government. The various political currents in Canada perceive the conflict differently and extrapolate their divergences when discussing the concrete measures to be adopted. It remains to be seen which of these tendencies will win out and what the results will be. VM

## NOTES

[1] See Carlos Rico, "Mexico-Canada: A Growing Relationship," in *Voices of Mexico* no. 45 (October-December 1998), pp. 99-101.

[2] See Jeffrey Ayres, *Defying Conventional Wisdom: Political Movements and Popular Contention against North American Free Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Leslie Howard, "Transnational Civil Society, Neoliberal Hegemony, and Resistance: The Role of Mexican-Canadian Civil Linkages," paper presented at the congress of the Canadian Association for Mexican Studies, Vancouver, March 1998. Also see two papers presented at the biennial congress of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, Minneapolis, November 1997: Scott Littlehale, "Battling over the Borders of Power: Strategic Responses of Canadian Trade Union Organizations to the FTA" and Ian Robinson "Neoliberal Integration and Labour Movement Power in Canada and the United States: A Three Dimensional Analysis."

[3] This commission's report was published as *L'Insurrection d'un peuple oublié* (Montreal: Centre International des Droits de la Personne et du Développement Démocratique, January 1994).

[4] Anne Marie Mergier, "Condenar los abusos en Chiapas y condicionar el TLC, piden a Canadá," in *Proceso*, 24 January 1994, pp. 59-63.

[5] The monitoring of the 1994 elections was critically reported in Teresa Healy, ed., *Canadian NGO/Church/-Labour/Women's Delegation. International Visitors/Civil Alliance Observation. 1994 Mexican Election Final Report* (November 1994, mimeographed).

[6] Both the opinions of the young women deported as well as the debate in the House of Commons can be consulted on the Canadian parliament's Internet page: http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/1/parlbus/chambus/house/debates, for April 21, and May 6 and 14, 1998.

[7] In December 1997, 45 persons were killed in this village with high power firearms by a paramilitary group, without the Chiapas state police or the Mexican army doing anything to prevent it.

[8] "Canadians to Probe Massacre in Mexico" in *The Globe and Mail*, 7 May 1998.

[9] Saada was also parliamentary secretary of Canada's then-Solicitor General Andy Scott; that is, Saada belongs to Chrétien's inner circle.

[10] The author was present at the press conference. The information quoted here was transcribed directly from the tape recording of the event.

Siglo Veintiuno Editores

**PODER Y DESVIACIONES:**
**GÉNESIS DE UNA SOCIEDAD MESTIZA EN MESOAMÉRICA**
GEORGES BAUDOT (COORD.)

Entre la conquista y la independencia de la América hispánica se extiende, durante tres siglos, un periodo decisivo para la formación —y la comprensión— de la América contemporánea. Despúes del choque inicial de civilizaciones se organiza, en medio de dificultades y contingencias, una comunidad compleja cuyas conductas familiares, religiosas y políticas oscilan entre la adaptación y la resistencia al nuevo orden colonial. Los cuatro capítulos que componen la obra ofrecen diversas apreciaciones del posicionamiento de las élites sociales amerindias e hispano-americanas con relación a la estructura estatal española, en sus componentes metropolitano y colonial. Según nuestros autores, las prácticas de los "vencedores" o los comportamientos de los "vencidos" son reflejo de las tensiones sociopolíticas que atraviesan la nueva sociedad mestiza en gestación.

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Photos by Dante Barrera

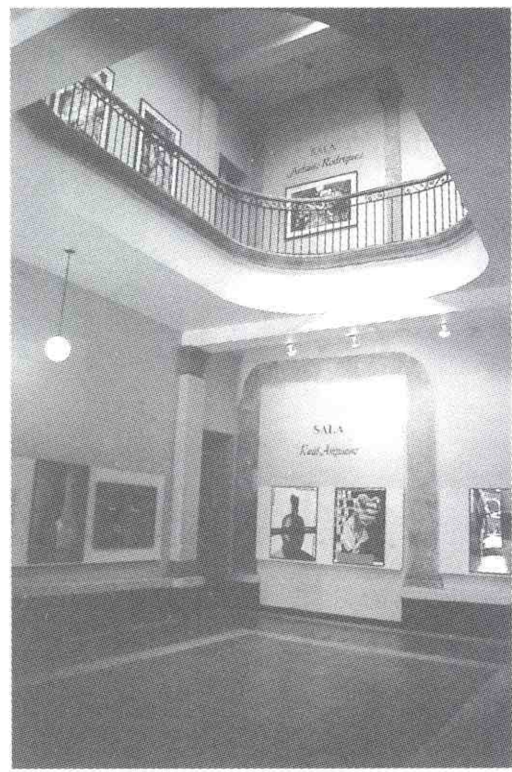
# The National Print Museum

## Where World Graphics Meet

The National Print Museum occupies a late nineteenth-century neoclassical building in Santa Veracruz Plaza in Mexico City's Historic Downtown Area. Created in late 1986, its object is to research, promote and disseminate graphic work of all styles by contemporary artists from Mexico and abroad, including work that goes beyond traditional prints. Print is defined in this case as the production of multiple originals from a single matrix, be it a plate, a stencil or another medium.

The museum is managed under the auspices of the National Council for Cul-

Photographs taken with permission of the National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature (INBA).



ture and the Arts (Conaculta) and the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA). Its permanent collection numbers approximately 40,000 works, including every kind of print: woodcuts, metal engraving, lithography, serigraphy and neographics (new, non-traditional techniques such as photocopying, computer printing, mimeographing), among others.

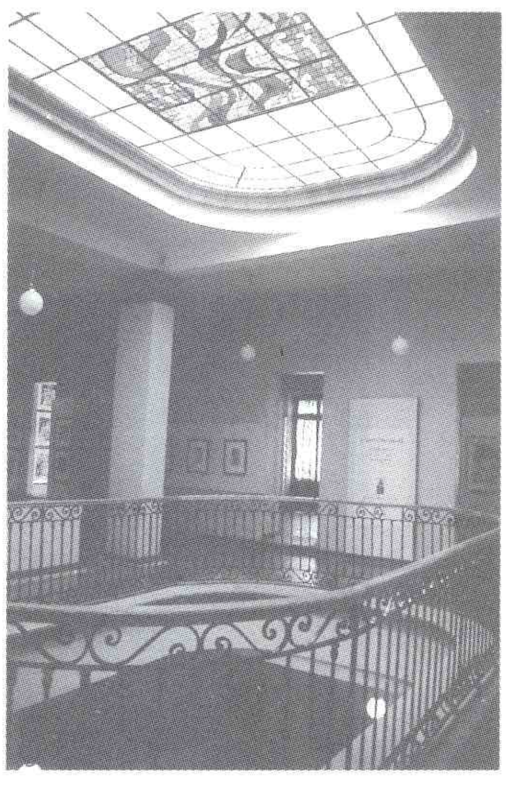
The museum does more than simply put on exhibits. It also has an educational aim: before mounting each exhibit, it does extensive research into the work and the context in which it was produced. It also contributes to the dissemination of printing history and techniques and their place in the visual arts in general through guided tours, consulting services, courses and lectures.

The two-story building that houses the museum is divided into two vestibules (named after Raúl Anguiano and Antonio Rodríguez) and four rooms (named for José Guadalupe Posada, Pablo O'Higgins, Francisco Díaz de León and Francisco Moreno Capdevila).

To give the public a panorama of what the museum holds, the art history department has arranged the exhibits in chronological order.

The permanent exhibit is an introduction to the nature of printing and its techniques, where visitors, particularly young people, can observe and familiarize themselves with the tools used by master engravers.

The impossibility of showing all the works in the museum's collection means many are awaiting exhibition in the different shows planned throughout the year. The plan is established on the basis of an



Art History Dissemination Program prepared by museum authorities in coordination with international cultural bodies and foreign governments through their embassies to bridge the gaps between the different periods of printing and the public. The program also includes the celebration of important events in world art and organizing fora to pay homage to artists, like the retrospective of Francisco Moreno Capdevila's work or the 1998 commemoration of 60 years of the Popular Graphics Workshop.

The museum holds approximately 30 shows a year with samples of artists' work from around the world, but mainly from Mexico, representative of centuries of print work, from pre-Hispanic engraving, done with seals and *pintaderas*,[1] to twentieth century works exhibited in the national print rooms, including those from the last INBA Biennial, contemporary graphics —or neo-graphics— and the production of printed graphics abroad, in Europe, the United States, Canada, the former socialist countries, Asia and Central and South America.

Special mention should be made of the revolutionary period, represented by the engravings of José Guadalupe Posada and others like caricature artist Constantino Escalante and engraver Manuel Manilla, and of print in the 1920s because of its relationship to the founding of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists; the work of the Free Schools, the National School of Plastic Arts (formerly the San Carlos Academy), and the birth of the School of Painting, Sculpture and Engraving. Those were times when print was at the service of social struggles with the creation and development of the Popular Graphics Workshop from 1937 to 1960.

The museum contributes to the dissemination of printing history and techniques and their place in the visual arts.

The National Print Museum was the second of its kind to be founded in the world and the first in Latin America. To take its collection to more and more members of the public, the museum participates in cultural decentralization efforts by sending exhibits around the country, as well as gathering prints made in the rest of the republic and promoting them in Mexico City.

It holds two yearly contests open to the general public: "A Modern Interpretation of Don Quixote de la Mancha" and an Annual Miniprint Room. Also planned are international exhibits about new alternatives in print, more lectures and round table discussions to accompany some exhibits, research about new techniques, projects for recovering graphic works, and even children's summer workshops to sensitize possible future artists, beginning by teaching them to look at a work of art.

All this is a means to an end: establishing an even closer link between artistic practice, its representatives and research and teaching of art history. **VM**

NOTES

[1] A utensil consisting of a small notched wheel connected to a handle that allows it to spin used for making engravings. [Editor's Note.]

FÍSICA
LÓGICA
FILOSOFÍA
ECOLOGÍA
GEOLOGÍA
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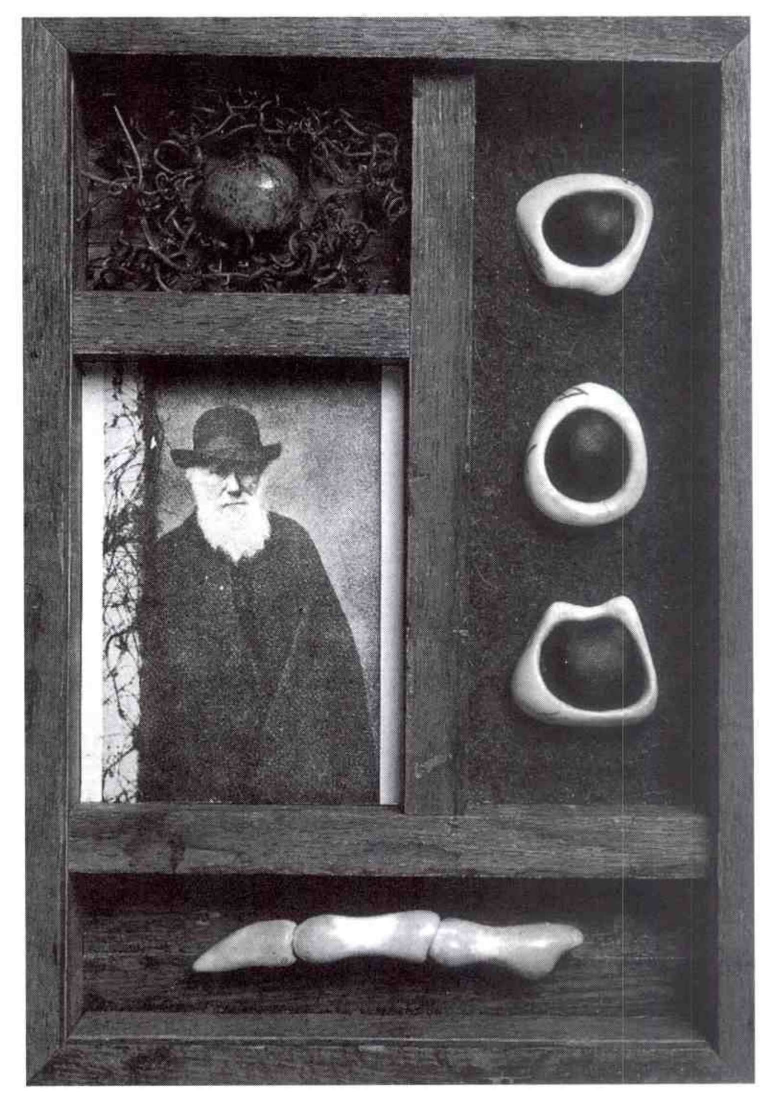


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SUSCRIPCIONES Y NÚMEROS ANTERIORES
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# Parable OF THE EXCHANGE[1]

*Juan José Arreola*

Drawings by Lydia Peña

To the cry of "I exchange old wives for new!" the merchant canvassed the streets of the town with his convoy of painted carts.

Transactions, based on inexorably fixed prices, were carried out rapidly. Those interested received proofs of quality and certificates of guaranty, but nobody had a choice. According to the merchant, his were twenty-four carat women, all blonde and Circassian. More than blonde, golden as candlesticks.

As soon as men saw their neighbor's acquisition, they ran pell-mell after the dealer. Many were ruined. Only a newlywed man could get an even exchange. His wife was brand new and did not compare unfavorably with the exotic women. But she wasn't as blonde as they.

I was all atremble behind my window as a sumptuous cart passed by. Reclining among cushions and curtains, a woman who seemed a leopard gazed dazzlingly up at me, as from a block of topaz. Seized with that contagious frenzy, I was on the point of hurtling through the glass panes, but then ashamed, I turned away from the window to look at Sophia.

She was calm, embroidering the usual initials on a new table cloth. Untouched by the tumult, she threaded her needle with sure fingers. Only I who know her could notice her faint, imperceptible pallor. At the end of the street the merchant made his disturbing proclamation a last time: "I exchange old wives for new!" But I stayed with my feet glued to the floor, shutting my ears to this definitive opportunity. Outside the town was all in an uproar.

Incapable of any comment, Sophia and I had supper in silence. Carrying out the plates, she finally said to me, "Why didn't you exchange me for another wife?"

I couldn't answer her and we fell more deeply into the vacuum. We went to bed early but couldn't sleep. Separated and silent, that night we played the role of stony guests.

From then on we lived in a little desert island, surrounded by tempestuous happiness. The town seemed a chicken run infested with peacocks. Lazy and voluptuous, the new women would spend the day lolling abed. They would come out at dusk, resplendent in the setting sun, like silken yellow banners.

Not for a moment did their complacent and submissive husbands leave them. Caught in this honeyed sweetness, the men neglected their work, never thinking of tomorrow.

In the neighborhood they thought I was a fool, and I lost the few friends I had. They all believed that I wanted to teach them a lesson, giving an absurd example of fidelity. They pointed at me with their fingers, laughing, casting sly remarks at me from their richly entrenched position. They dubbed me with obscene nicknames, and I wound up feeling like a kind of eunuch in that eden of pleasures.

For her part, Sophia became more and more withdrawn and silent. She refused to go out with me in order to avoid comparisons and contrasts.

What is worse, she reluctantly fulfilled her strictest marital duties. To speak truly, we both felt embarrassed by such modestly conjugal love.

Her guilty air was what offended me most. She felt herself responsible for my not having a wife like the others. From the very first she thought that her humble everyday look was incapable of erasing the tempting image I carried in my head. Before the invaders' beauty she beat a retreat to the farthest corners of mute resentment. In vain I used up all our little savings, buying her trinkets, perfumes, jewels and dresses.

"Don't pity me!"

She turned her back on all the gifts. If I made an effort to pamper her, she would answer tearfully, "I'll never pardon you for not exchanging me!"

She blamed me for everything. I was running out of patience. Recalling the leopard woman, I wished with all my heart that the merchant would come through town again.

Then one day the blondes started to get oxidized. Our little island recovered its oasis quality, now surrounded by desert. A hostile desert, full of wild, discontented cries. Dazzled at first sight, the men had not really looked closely at those women, nor had it occurred to them to assay their metal. Far from being new, they were secondhand, thirdhand, God knows how many hands old. The merchant simply made some indispensable repairs on them, and gave them a bath of such cheap, thin-layered gold that it didn't resist the test of the first rains.

The first man to notice something odd didn't let on about it, nor did the second. But the third, a druggist, noticed one day the characteristic emanation of sulphate of copper mingled in the aromas which came from his wife. Alarmed, he examined her closely and found dark stains on her skin. Then he started to yell to high heaven.

Soon similar blemishes appeared on all the women's faces, as if an epidemic of rust had broken out among them. The husbands hid their wives' defects from each other, secretly tormented with terrible suspicions concerning their cause. Little by little the truth came out, and each one learned that he had received a counterfeit woman.

The bridegroom who had been borne along on the current of enthusiasm which the exchanges provoked fell into a profound gloom. Obsessed by the memory of a body of unequivocal whiteness, he soon gave signs of madness. One day he began removing the remaining gold on his wife's body with corrosive acids, and she was left a sorry sight, a veritable mummy.

Sophia and I found ourselves envied and hated. I thought it best to take some precautions, but Sophia was loathe to dissimulate her jubilation, and she took to going out in her best finery, sparkling in the midst of so much desolation. Far from attributing some merit to my conduct, Sophia naturally thought I had stayed with her out of cowardliness and that I had really wanted to exchange her.

Today the expedition of deceived husbands left town to search for the merchant. It was really a sad spectacle. The men shook their fists in the air, vowing vengeance. The women went about in mourning, faded and disheveled, like whining lepers. The only man who stayed home is the famous newlywed, and people fear for his sanity. Showing signs of a maniacal attachment, he now declares that he will remain faithful until death parts him from his tarnished wife, whom he completely ruined with the sulfuric acid.

I don't know what my life will be like at the side of a foolish or prudent Sophia. For the present, her admirers are absent. Now we are on a real island, surrounded by solitude on every side. Before leaving, the husbands declared that they would seek even in Hell for traces of their deceiver, and in truth, they all assumed the faces of condemned men on saying this.

Sophia is not as dark as she seems. In the lamplight, her slumbering face is filled with reflections, as if light, golden thoughts of pride issued from her dreams. VM

NOTES

[1] Taken from Juan José Arreola's book, *Confabulario and Other Inventions*, trans. George D. Shade (Austin, Texas: U. of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 180-185.

# Ballad[1]

*Juan José Arreola*

In Zapotlán there is a plaza called Ameca, nobody knows why. A wide, cobbled street runs to its end there, then forks in two. From this point the town merges with its cornfields.

That's the little plaza at Ameca with its octagonal shape and its houses with immense doors. One afternoon a long time ago two rivals met there by chance. But there was a girl in between.

Lots of carts and wagons go through the little plaza at Ameca and their wheels grind the earth into the ruts until it becomes very fine. A fine white dust that burns the eyes when the wind blows. And there was a fountain there until recently. A water pipe with its bronze faucet and stone basin.

The girl with her red water jug arrived first along the wide street that divides in two. The rivals were walking opposite her along the side streets, not knowing they would meet at the intersection. The two men and the girl seemed to be going along, each on his own street, in accord with destiny.

The girl was going for water and she turned on the faucet. At that moment the two men saw each other and realized they were interested in the same thing. Each one's street ended there, and nei-

ther wished to go ahead. They stood there glaring fiercely at each other and neither lowered his eyes.

"Look here, friend, you're staring at me."

"Well, staring is natural."

Without speaking, that is what they seemed to say. Their looks said everything. There wasn't a word of warning. In the plaza which the townspeople were purposely deserting, the thing was about to start.

The stream of water pouring into the water jug —all that broke the dead silence— was filling those two with the desire to fight. The girl turned off the faucet, realzing what was up, when the water already was spilling over. She thrust the jug on her shoulder, almost breaking into a run she was so scared.

The two men who wanted her were at the last stage of suspense, like fighting cocks not yet unleashed, hypnotized by the black points of each other's eyes. When she stepped up on the opposite sidewalk, the girl stumbled, and the jug and water came crashing down to the ground in pieces.

That was all the signal they needed. One with a dagger, a real big one, and the other with a large machete, they went at each other with their blades, parrying the blows a little with their sarapes. All that was left of the girl was the water stain, and there the two men fought for the remains of the water jug.

They were both good and they both struck home. On that afternoon that was almost over and then stopped. They both lay there, face up, one with his throat slit, the other with his head sliced open, like good fighting cocks, just one of them with a bit of breath left.

Afterwards, in the evening, lots of people came. Women who began to pray and men who probably were going to notify the law. One of the dying men was still able to say something: he asked whether the other had kicked the bucket too.

Later it was learned that there was a girl involved. And the girl with the water jug got a bad reputation over the fight. They say she never even got married. Even if she'd gone as far away as Jilotlán de los Dolores, her bad name would have followed her or probably got there ahead of her. **VM**

NOTES

[1] Taken from Juan José Arreola's book, *Confabulario and Other Inventions*, trans. George D. Shade (Austin, Texas: U. of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 157-158.

# Juan José Arreola

Juan José Arreola was born in Ciudad Guzmán, Jalisco, in 1918, the fourth in a family of 14. He never finished primary school, but learned to read simply by listening, the same way he later learned French. At the age of 12, Arreola became a bookbinder's apprentice. Then he moved on to other jobs, becoming a street salesman in his native Ciudad Guzmán, and then in Guadalajara, Manzanillo and Mexico City. All this time he continued reading Charles Baudelaire, Walt Whitman, Giovanni Papini and Marcel Schwob (Arreola credited these last two with influencing his own style). In 1936, he entered the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) where he studied theater under dramatist Rodolfo Usigli and the poet Xavier Villaurrutia.

Arreola's first writings appeared in *El Vigía,* a Ciudad Guzmán newspaper, in 1939. He met up with Juan Rulfo and philologist Antonio Alatorre, founding with the latter the magazine *Pan*. Publication of Arreola's short story "Hizo el bien mientras vivió" (He Did Good While He Lived) in the magazine *Eos* (1943) earned him the reputation of having been born an "adult" with regard to literature. In 1945 Arreola moved to Paris, where he studied elocution and acting under Jean Barrault, Pierre Renoir and Louis Jouvet, whom he had met in Guadalajara, and later worked in the *Comédie française* as an extra.

Arreola founded and directed the book collection "Los Presentes" (Those Present), editing up to its fiftieth issue. He also founded and directed the "Unicornio" book collection, and the magazine *Mester*, which came out of his famous literature workshop, the first of its kind. This workshop was the training ground for young writers with literary interests, from which Carlos Fuentes was later to emerge. Arreola made contributions to magazines such as *Letras de México* (Mexican Letters), *El Hijo Pródigo* (The Prodigal Son) and *Universidad de México* (University of Mexico), and to the cultural supplements of the newspaper *Novedades* and the magazine *Siempre!* He also became a professor at UNAM's School of Philosophy and Letters.

Known as a great conversationalist, one of his most famous interviews was with fellow writer, Jorge Luis Borges, whom Arreola hardly allowed to get a word in. His role as a commentator during the U.S. 1994 World Cup stirred up enormous controversy as a result of Arreola's views on soccer as a party.

Arreola has been described as a nationalistic writer, something more evident in his way of handling anecdotes rather than in the stories themselves. His idea of recovering the oral tradition as a form of literature is expressed in the novel *La feria* (The Fair), a fragmented story narrated by several voices: those of the government, of landowners and the dispossessed, all set against each other, which allows the airing of different views regarding land ownership, a recurrent problem in the history of Mexico.

A master of prose, Arreola created a new type of short story or narrative genre called "varied invention" a collage of texts of different styles, mainly poetry or prose, coherently put together. The example par excellence is *Varia invención* (Other Inventions) (1949).

Although not vast (16 books published), Arreola's work has been translated into several languages including English and French. He has received numerous awards, among them Mexico's National Prize for Linguistics and Literature in 1976, the National Prize for Journalism and the National Prize for Television Cultural Programs, as well as a decoration from the French government as an Officer of French Arts and Literature.

In 1998, at the age of 80, we pay tribute to Juan José Arreola who has been responsible for turning words into an enjoyable profession and a memorable, lasting conversation.

*Translated by Jennifer Turret*

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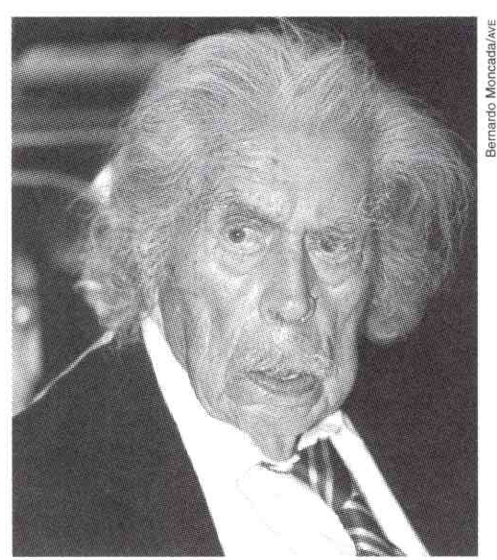
# In Memoriam


Bernardo Moncada/AVE

**Germán List Arzubide**
**A Time-naut**
**(1898-1998)**

In the early years of the century, amidst the sensation of abandonment and explosion caused by the threat of war and the mechanization of postrevolutionary daily life, in which human beings continued to be an important part —but in the end, only a part, like a crank or the engine of the great modern machine— language, and particularly the language of some poets, could not stay on the sidelines.

Day-to-day language was invaded by that onslaught of new perspectives, sensations, terms and concepts. Structures and intentions were also stood on their heads by a group of artists, among them musicians like Manuel M. Ponce and Silvestre Revueltas, painters like Raúl Anguiano and Diego Rivera and poets like Arqueles Vela and Germán List Arzubide. They gathered at a call from poet Manuel Maples Arce in the first "stridentist" manifesto, printed as a leaflet called *Actual núm. 1* (Current, No. 1) distributed in late December 1922, to form a diversified, multicolor, poliphonous basis for transforming the world in "a rapid strike of total subversion," with a provocative, daring, impertinent, irreverent, good-humored gesture.

Perhaps the only way of wringing the neck of traditionalism in the 1920s was to impose —not propose— a new aesthetic as the sole truth that would reflect contemporary humanity: its concerns and persecutory dreams. That is how this aesthetic provocation called stridentism was born, abominating Rubén Darío's modernism and fed by European trends like Marinetti's futurism; the unanimism conceived by Jules Romains, from which it took its multitudinous nature and the rhythm of modern cities; dadaism, represented by Tristan Tzara, from which it incorporated play and the desacralizing thrust; and the creationism of Vicente Huidobro, which situates the poet-as-creator on a level with God.

"The stridentists changed the panorama of the forms of artistic creation and by doing so became part of postrevolutionary Mexico and its great cultural transformations. The

avant garde in Mexico, stridentism, was inevitable; it had to happen because artistic activity is not static, but changing," said Germán List Arzubide, poet, narrator, editor and playwright, emblematic figure and sole survivor of the movement, at a 1989 ceremony in his honor in Tlaxcala.

List Arzubide was born in Puebla, Mexico, May 31, 1898. Very early he learned the link between artistic vocation (in his case, for literature) and political commitment. In 1913, he joined the Peace and Work Batallion, formed by workers and peasants under the command of Colonel Gabriel Riojano, and was arrested while making a speech to his fellow junior high school students about why Francisco I. Madero had opposed the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. He wrote his first poem on the wall of his cell as a provocative response to mistreatment by a guard. In 1920 he was a soldier in President Carranza's forces and from then on his work closely followed the causes of both the underprivileged members of society and of art.

"The stridentists changed the panorama of artistic creation and became part of postrevolutionary Mexico and its great cultural transformations."

After his discharge from the army, in Puebla, List founded first the literary magazine *Vincit*, dedicated to disseminating the works of the masters of modernism. A little later, he founded the magazine *Ser* (Being), dedicated to the masters of symbolism. In 1923, after joining the stridentist movement, which embodied his ideal of rebellious, subversive art, he began to be an activist, jointly writing its second manifesto with Maples Arce. He began publishing in this vein: in 1924, his first collection of poems was *Esquina* (Corner). Thirty more works followed, including manifestos, like *El movimiento estridentista* (The Stridentist Movement) (1926); epic poems like *¡Mueran los gachupines!* (Death to the Filthy Spaniards!) (1926) and *Emiliano Zapata. Exaltación* (Emiliano Zapata. Exaltation) (1927); plays like *Tres comedias revolucionarias* (Three Revolutionary Comedies) (1931); collections of poems like *Cantos del hombre errante* (Songs of a Wanderer) (1972); and books of short stories like *El robo de la mujer de Rubens. Cuentos de viaje* (The Kidnapping of Rubens' Wife. Travel Stories) (1976).

His revolutionary ideas and opposition to all established norms that violated his sense of justice made him a hunted man, sought by police, and led him to seek asylum in the Soviet Union, only returning to Mexico at the end of the 1930s during President Lázaro Cárdenas' administration. From 1941 to 1953 he was a staff writer at *Tiempo* (Time) magazine, also giving history classes to workers and literature classes to teachers at the Federal Training Institute. From the heyday of stridentism to the present, List Arzubide, in addition to writing books and teaching, lectured about literature or history and published newspaper articles, which led him to travel throughout Mexico.

The linguistic revolution proposed and fomented by stridentism had an impact abroad (some of List Arzubide's stories were translated into English, Catalonian and French). It spurred real feedback, given the influences that nurtured stridentism, even though in Mexico the movement lasted only from 1922 to 1927. This was due to the precariousness of its publishing, the stridentists exclusion by the media —their marginalization was so extreme that they were denied entrance to the Fine Arts Institute— and the general incomprehension of their tenets. However, stridentism was a touchstone for later generations of poets such as that of Efraín Huerta and Octavio Paz, for whom they opened up the road to a broader play in the possibilities of language. In 1983, List Arzubide was given the National Prize for Cultural Journalism.

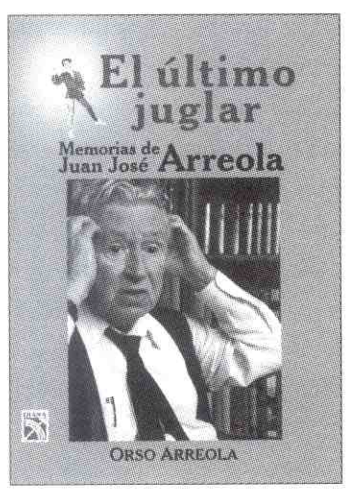
List Arzubide died October 17, 1998, cutting short his intention of writing an autobiography and preventing him, a "time-naut," from completing his journey through three centuries: born at the end of the nineteenth century, he lived through the entire twentieth century and contemplated the possibility of landing and "staying awhile" in the twenty-first.

A year before his death President Zedillo gave him the National Prize for Art in the fields of linguistics and literature. At the ceremony, List Arzubide said, "Being an activist in the real opposition is a very bitter experience....You are an oppositionist because of hunger or out of a sense of dignity, when you can no longer stand the abuse and oppression....There are those who show themselves up leaving inheritances of millions of dollars; the only thing I'll leave behind are my four suits." This words would become his testament, to which the paraphrase of another idea of his could be added: the only legacy a man can leave behind to other men is his work. **VM**

*María Cristina Hernández*
**Assistant Editor**

# Reviews

**El último juglar**
**Memorias de Juan José Arreola**
(The Last Minstrel. Memoirs of Juan José Arreola)
*Orso Arreola*
Diana
Mexico City, 1998, 422 pp.




*What is this interval between me and me?*
Fernando Pessoa

"The word most difficult to pronounce and conveniently situate is 'I,'" wrote Juan José Arreola (Zapotlán el Grande, Jalisco, 1918- ) in his personal diary in 1943, when he was 25 years old and had been living six years in Mexico City. The young man, impetuous and sensitive, "his pride injured" from a disappointment in love, but with the intensity of someone seeking to recover, evokes the spirit of the French poet Alfred de Vigny in his diary and through him, the object of his constant desire, and gives a finer shade of meaning: "To love, to invent, to admire: this is my life." Was the acting student using this statement to overcome the vertigo he suffered from because of the abysses and chaos of his personal identity? Was he foretelling his destiny in some way? How close did he get to the object of his desire, he who now makes us a gift of his memoirs like someone who accepts finishing a cycle at the age of 80?

The meaning of these questions is clear if we first understand something he said a few decades ago: "I am of the confessional genre. I am a man who seeks a confidant. Very often I throw the heavy duty content at someone I have just met, like a dump truck. I want to die without a single one of my actions remaining hidden. My life —even to the most shameful— dwells among priests in my childhood and doctors in my youth, and men and women friends from all periods. I'm still wearing one last T-shirt. To the bone, then!"

Juan José Arreola, or the "sentimental monopoly" of confession, if you like, but, we cannot elude this character trait that makes him akin to our first modern poet, Ramón López Velarde (born in Jerez, Zacatecas; 1880-1921): he also liked confession and his commitment to language had moral roots, built like a critical system and an examination of conscience. Similarly, Juan José Arreola's memoirs confirm what he had already said under the mask of a creator of fictions, in his short prose (*Confabulario* [Confabulation], *Palíndroma* [Palindrome], *Varia invención* [Other Inventions], *Bestiario* [Bestiary]), and in his only novel (*La feria* [The Fair]). In *El último juglar*, once again we find the doubtful style, the sinuous outline, the thoughtful reflection or the rectification of previously commented upon events, the time of the fragmenting memory, the fear —the same kind of fear that plagued Saint Augustine, Villon and Montaigne— of leaving this world "without understanding it or oneself."

Although as readers of Arreola, we can put his complete works on a bookshelf and discover in his fiction a unifying design, reading *El último juglar. Memorias de Juan José Arreola* involves us as confidants of both the artist and the man, opening up a critical distance with the character who in this way invites us to go more deeply into his secret self. Neither can we ignore that the mature man —not the public personage— has stated several times his

disloyalty to the craft of writing because of having dedicated too much time to women, chess and literature. This is a disquieting confession that, 55 years after his 1943 personal diary entry, likens him to the old aristocrat Alfred de Vigny, secluded in the gloomy castle of Turón, continually regretting with inconsolable melancholy having wasted his life.

Memory and oblivion are intertwined in this "long, labyrinthine conversation" between Orso Arreola and his father, making a more finely sifted picture of the man and the artist possible. We cannot at all, however, fix exact limits between the two and, after all, perhaps it is not worth trying. "I play myself; I invented my own character and I will die with him; I am the other who has never been happy with himself; I am the one who stood staring at his face in the mirror and could no longer get out of it; for better or for worse, I have been my own performance."

The difficulty in finding the image that brings together Arreola's desideratum is precisely the center of interest in this vast circumnavigation. But it also pushes the reader of *El último juglar* to jump the intervals, those "shreds of reports" that Paul Valéry talked about when he tried to establish the continuity of a whole life of a well known individual who has become part of our imagination. In the case of Arreola, the images in the minds of his contemporaries are those of an ironic writer, the pessimistic lover, the teacher who expected nothing in return, the university professor who in 1968 protested the massacre at Tlatelolco, the cultured, sharp polemicist or conversationalist, the steadfast friend, the generous, daring editor, the actor and lover of classical theater, the cultural promoter, the husband and the father. However, the complementary, or even fragmentary or contradictory, facets of personality, as well as the long cycles and grand temporary perspectives, are what spur a good reader of memoirs.

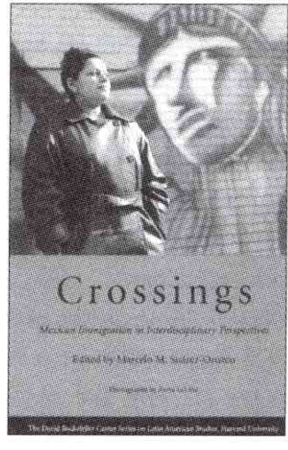
Orso Arreola had the good sense to include considerable portions of the diaries from Juan José Arreola's youth, as well as absolute jewels like the letter Julio Cortázar wrote him from Paris in September 1954. I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing here some comments from that letter: "And I think the best thing about *Confabulario* and *Varia invención* comes from the fact that you have what Rimbaud called "*le lieu et la formule*," the way of taking the bull by the horns and —Ah!— not by the tail like so many others who wear out the print shops of this world." And another: "I am amazed at what you are able to achieve with so little verbal material."

The best homage and show of affection that we can make to Juan José Arreola is in not admiring or abusing him confusedly and in daring, when reading *El último juglar*, to reconstruct the character. Because, when all is said and done, we cannot and do not want to be free of him. **VM**

*Mauricio Grobet Vallarta*
**Mexican writer and editor**

## Crossings: Mexican Immigration In Interdisciplinary Perspectives

*Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco,* editor
The David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies,
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1998, 440 pp.




As a one-volume study on Mexican immigration, *Crossings* successfully synthesizes much research currently being done on what editor Suárez-Orozco considers to be the key issue in understanding the mosaic of recent Mexican immigration to the United States. Based on a conference held at Harvard University in April 1997, and developed as a project of the newly expanded David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard, *Crossings* brings together distinguished U.S. and Mexican researchers from several disciplines in examining Mexican immigration through distinctive methodologies and perspectives.

Like many others who tackle the daunting question of Mexican immigration, Suárez-Orozco contends that the growing presence of Mexican-origin communities through immigration and natural increase challenges U.S. society like no other. While many other countries from Latin America and Asia, and to a much lesser extent, Europe, are represented in this "new" immigration, Mexican immigrants comprise the largest group, and will continue to do so into the next century. Each article in *Crossings* approaches the implications of recent Mexican immigration through a different prism and together they form a guide to the field.

To set the broad parameters for individual discussions, Mexican scholar Enrique Dussel Peters writes about recent changes in the Mexican economy that contribute to sending immigrants, while Susan González Baker, et al.[1] provide a detailed, long-term demographic analysis of the legal and undocumented Mexican immigrant population. Moreover, González Baker et al. lay out key issues parallel to immigration, such as the forces behind migration, and citizenship and settlement.

Nonetheless, a meaningful and successful incorporation of Mexican immigrants into U.S. society invariably means steady, well paid jobs. Wayne Cornelius writes about the intensifying dependence on unskilled Mexican workers in various sectors of the San Diego County economy, particularly among immigrant entrepreneurs. Especially disturbing is a study by Dowell Myers that clearly demonstrates that the present Mexican origin community cannot reasonably expect the social and economic mobility of previous generations.

Further, regarding the incorporation of the Mexican origin community into U.S. society, *Crossings* includes a study about intermarriage between Mexicans and non-Mexicans by Jorge Durand of Guadalajara, an analysis of the access to health insurance and medical care for the children of Mexican immigrant families by a research team of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research led by E. Richard Brown,[2] and a discussion by Enrique Trueba about the challenges that Mexican origin children face in acquiring an education in the United States.

Most innovative in the organization of the volume is a section entitled "Psycho Cultural Themes." Ricardo C. Ainslie explores the process of adaptation every immigrant goes through of balancing the losses and gains, and the attendant search for constructing a new cultural identity. Further, Mexican American historian David G. Gutiérrez approaches the accommodation of the Mexican origin population through their efforts to transform U.S. "social space," by organizing cultural activities, participating in the political system, engaging in grass roots organizing and exploring many other phenomena. Likewise, Peter Andreas contributes an insightful analysis of how the recent much-publicized efforts of the U.S. government to secure its border with Mexico succeeds, not in necessarily controlling the movements of undocumented immigrants or their employment, but in enhancing the image of a federal government that seems to be able to defend its territorial integrity. Finally, Thomas J. Espenshade and Maryann Belanger examine the ambiguous evolution of U.S. public opinion regarding legal and undocumented immigration and immigrants, and conclude by remarking that while most U.S. residents do not identify immigration as a top national priority, it receives disproportionate attention in public discourse.

In short, *Crossings* provides an exceptional introduction and/or update to current research and salient issues in the area of Mexican immigration. However, for readers unfamiliar with the topic, the organization of the book as well as its content belie the vast amount of past research conducted in many parts of the United States and to a lesser extend in Mexico about Mexican immigration.

Moreover, while the editor should be commended for including both Mexican and U.S. researchers as authors, the absence in the bibliographies of information generated in Mexico is notable. If nothing else, the *Binational Study*[3] confirmed that a large cohort of experienced researchers publish in Mexico about immigration and related topics. While the immigration process is intrinsically bilateral, commonly available information about it is not always so. Yet the view south of the Rio Grande enriches analyses about Mexican immigration and often provides necessary complementary data about the impact of migration on local communities. Recent innovative studies in both countries about the increasingly transnational character of Mexican immigration clearly demonstrate the binational char-

[1] Susan González Baker, Frank D. Bean, Agustín Escobar Latapí and Sidney Weintraub.

[2] The authors are E. Richard Brown, Roberta Wyn, Hongjian Yu, Abel Valenzuela and Liane Dong.

[3] *Migration between Mexico and the United States, Binational Study; Estudio binacional: México-Estados Unidos sobre migración* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1997).

acter of immigration; indeed, the *transnacionalización* of recent Mexican immigrant experience and its implications promises to be the next frontier of immigration studies.

If *Crossings* is any indication —and I am sure it is— Mexican immigration will persist well into the next century. Its long-term consequences for both countries will broaden as the Latino population of the United States grows and matures, and Mexico comes to terms with emigration's multi-faceted effects on sending communities. VM

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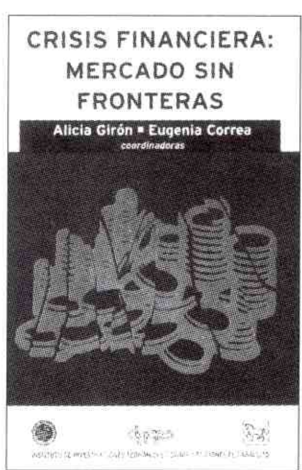
## Crisis financiera: mercado sin fronteras

(Financial Crisis. A Market without Borders)
*Alicia Girón and Eugenia Correa,* compilers
Ediciones El Caballito
Mexico City, 1998, 404 pp.




Once we recognize the decay of the post-war financial order, and take into account all the current signs in the economy, we can discern the major trends and changes in international financial markets. This includes problems derived from today's world situation and the relative inability of monetary policies to resolve them due to their inefficiency and the scant supervision they receive, as well as the difficulties encountered by institutions like the International Monetary Fund and each country's lack of monitoring systems and public policies. This means weakness in the face of the need to appropriately channel enormous financial flows and the growing necessity of facing financial contingencies and emergencies caused by the decline and adjustments in capital flows.

In *Crisis financiera,* Alicia Girón and Eugenia Correa contend that, given progressive, constant financial instability and fragility, the limitations of international financial bodies and U.S. financial authorities have generated responses that have not led to a stable expansion of financing. On the contrary, these institutions and officials insist that the world should pay the consequences of the banking crises with many years of low economic growth and a decline in social welfare standards.

Among the major tendencies at play are the expansion of different inter-bank financial operations, as well as an increase in extra-bank intermediation. This generates greater market valuation and liquidity, a growing presence of various types of non-banking financial intermediaries, as well as deregulation processes in the markets and an increase in the limits and difficulties in control by financial authorities of each country. This is imposed by the very innovation of the financial system, since financial markets operate 24 hours a day, which has contributed to rapid changes in payment systems as a mechanism to diminish systematic risk levels. For traditional banking activity, this has implied the recognition of the inability of local banks to restore insolvent bank creditors' payment capacity through debt restructuring and financing. It has also led to the rise of foreign financial intermediaries that have slowly been imposing their own cost and margin structure on banking system operations. This raises the possibility of losing control over the payment system on a national level, which would underscore the emergency situation prevailing in very weak national financial systems.

The authors argue that one sign of instability is that innovations in and the growing development of financial derivative markets have resulted in major losses to several countries and bankruptcies of credit institutions that tend to carry out these types of transactions without the appropriate information.

In Latin America, financial instability and weak and erratic economic growth are factors in the transformation of international capital markets, and, in particular, in the increasing importance of the U.S. economy in the region. Therefore, capital

flows that have entered the region in recent years, especially at the beginning of the 1990s, are part of a profound transformation, which includes the privatization of state-run companies, market liberalization and deregulation, flexible labor relations and the trade opening, among others.

In addition, Girón and Correa contend that intense competition among financial intermediaries in the formation of high-yield assets in the most diverse currencies —plus bank failures and the process of mergers and large acquisitions— is leading to greater centralization in large financial conglomerates. This, however, does not necessarily mean an improvement in their competitive position that would make for stable and efficient financial intermediation. At present, companies are products that are directly sold in the markets for corporate control; they do not respect geographical borders.

Asian countries like Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, Taiwan and Hong Kong, which sought greater consolidation and centralization of banks, have gone through several bank crises, with greater or lesser degrees of severity.

This book explores the nature and evolution of the international financial crisis in the current worldwide recessive panorama. It also considers the problem of foreign indebtedness, emphasizing the modifications in international capital markets and domestic financing policies, especially in developing countries, when syndicated bank loans are transformed into financing through shares. This has clear consequences, such as extending financial fragility, vulnerability, structural instability and increasing the magnitude of the crisis, which makes economic recovery difficult.

In the second part of the book, the authors discuss trends in financial innovation and globalization as key components of the transformation and evolution of the international financial system and the momentum of technological change, particularly the development of communications and the electronics industry. Regardless of increased competition among financial institutions, they face problems such as maintaining profitability and capitalization levels, which pressure intermediaries to maintain low data processing and transaction costs, and on the other hand, to link these tendencies to development in the different countries.

The third section of the book deals with over-indebtedness and the banking crises. The authors explain that during deflationary periods, the disparity between real interest rates and real rates of economic growth is a permanent feature in the industrialized economies. This has been the case since the 1980s, when the different countries' monetary policies were guided by the need to combat inflation. Reference is also made to the way liquidity and its different hazards such as credit risks, the exchange rate, interest rates, etc., are handled, which are central features for appropriately managing banking institutions. The authors point out that in economies like Mexico's, in the 1990s the combination of financial deregulation and commercial liberalization has been creating conditions for over-indebtedness which companies, consumers, the government and Mexican banks are now confronting.

In the book's fourth section, dealing with the central bank and public policies, the authors highlight the problem of genuine autonomy for the central bank —which is the ultimate lender— and the characteristics of the Mexican financial system's deregulation process. Also discussed here are the effects of financial liberalization on Mexico's public debt and the specifics of its monetary policies at different stages of the process. Key measures adopted at this point included the elimination of the minimum deposit commercial banks were required to make with the Banco de Mexico (known as *encaje legal*), the liberalization of interest rates and the deregulation of foreign investment in the Mexican stock market. In addition, the authors consider the scope and limitations of Mexico's export perspectives.

The fifth chapter of the book makes a proposal, "Toward a definitive solution to the foreign debt problem," which acknowledges the incompatibility between debt payment and national development in Latin America (sustained growth of the gross domestic product, stability in price levels, defense of the national currency, fair distribution of income, and industrialization and the construction of basic productive infrastructure). This follows 14 years of recessive adjustment policies and renegotiations, which meant a net loss of 250 billion dollars for the region in debt servicing. The authors emphasize the joint responsibility of governments and the main creditor countries for this situation.

Questions related to regional and social development are also examined. One example is the role of remittances from overseas by emigrants as a source of regional financing, resources that have served to finance different social development projects that eventually could become mechanisms for floating produc-

tive projects that reduce social polarization and emigration itself. In addition, given the inconsistency of the neoliberal development model and the short and long term challenges, the authors insist on the need to reactivate the Mexican economy, which requires a recovery in domestic demand. The conditions for this kind of reactivation would be, among others, placing a priority on national projects and interests over foreign concerns, productive over financial investment; an agricultural and industrial policy that guides private investment decisions; actions of the public sector that make a priority of economic growth and employment; trade and foreign investment policies at the service of industrial policies and fostering agriculture; economic growth based on domestic sources of financing; and low real interest rates and flexibility in monetary policy. In sum, this means moving from a situation in which financial interests predominate to one in which domestic production takes precedence.

This book represents an important collective effort that invites the reader to reflect and understand the major end-of-century financial phenomena that are shaping the destiny of countries like Mexico both in the near and distant future. For all these reasons, *Crisis financiera: mercado sin fronteras* is required reading. VM

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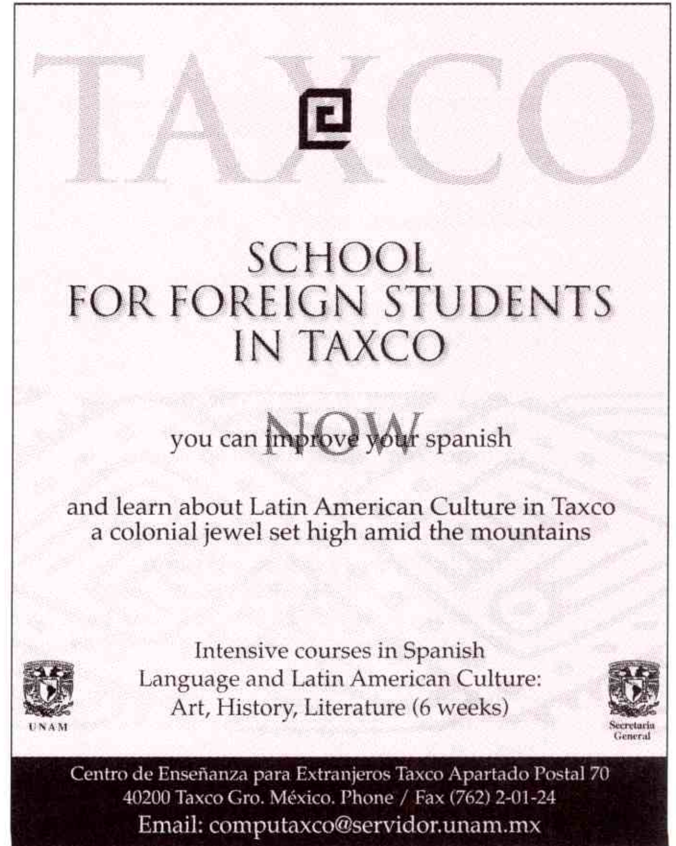
*Translated by Peter Gellert*



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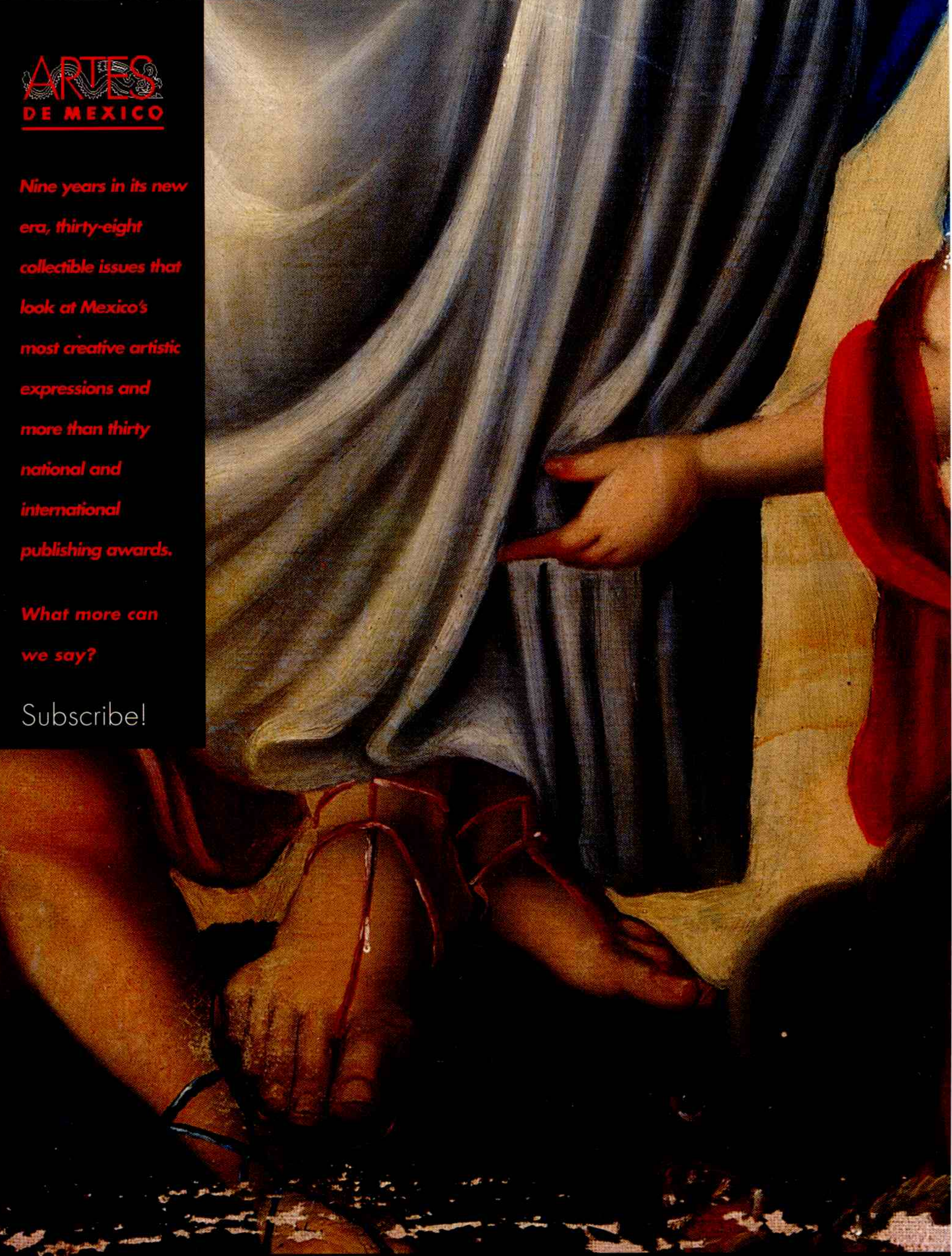


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