

The Monterrey Museum

*Jorge García Murillo**

The Monterrey Museum opened its doors on November 7, 1977, thereby becoming a part of the great Mexican museum tradition. It was founded thanks to the generosity and vision of the Cuauhtémoc Brewery's directors and managers who realized that Monterrey needed a museum offering important national and international works of art to the community.

The building and its spaces

The Monterrey Museum is located in a splendid building erected at the end of the nineteenth century that had housed the Cuauhtémoc Brewery's production and administrative areas. Retaining the building's beauty and character, the ground and first floors were adapted for museum displays.

The remodeling was done to the highest standards of the International Council of Museums. Conditions were carefully monitored to the last detail, including proper humidity control, special lighting for art works on paper, wood, oils, etc., air conditioning and an electronic security system. The result could not be more gratifying: an architectural example with a personality fitting the period when it was built.

Passing through the impressive ivy-covered facade, visitors enter a grand lobby. A majestic period staircase

and steps made of steel, with bronze hand rail and finials, leads to the first floor. Huge barrels (that once held beer during the fermenting process) frame the cafeteria and access to upper rooms.

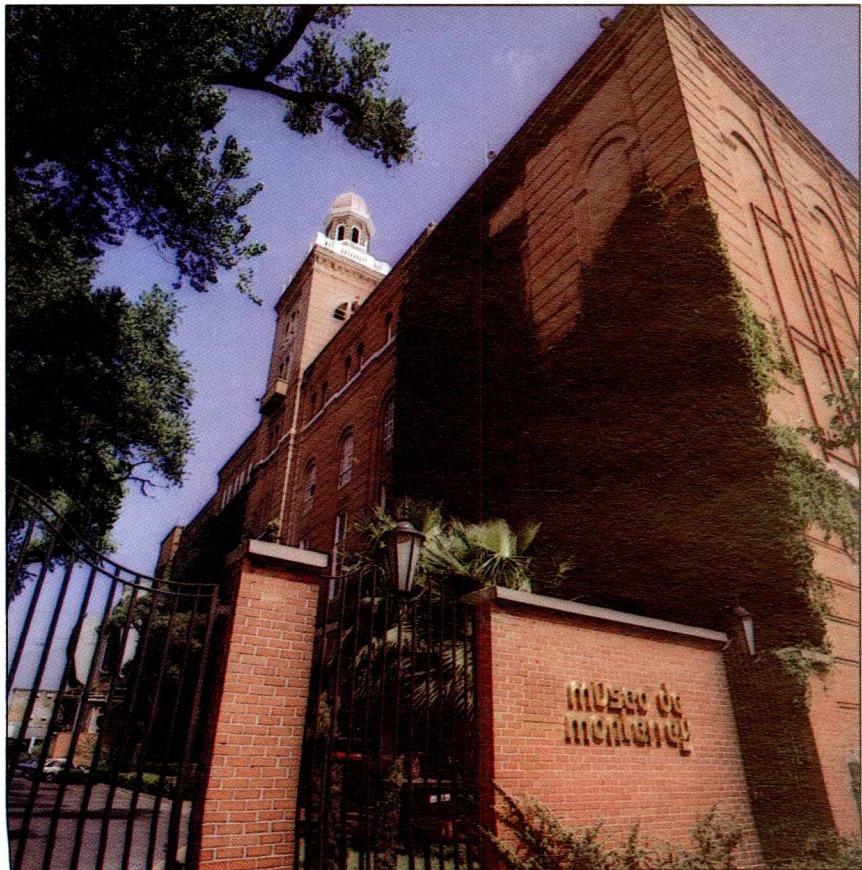
Today the Museum houses ten exhibit halls, a specialized art library, a video library, a cafeteria and a gift shop. Visitors can buy art books, catalogues, publications, souvenirs and gifts.

Permanent collection

Central to all museums is the series of art works that constitute its collection. An important collection of pictorial and sculptural works has been gathered during fifteen years of operation.

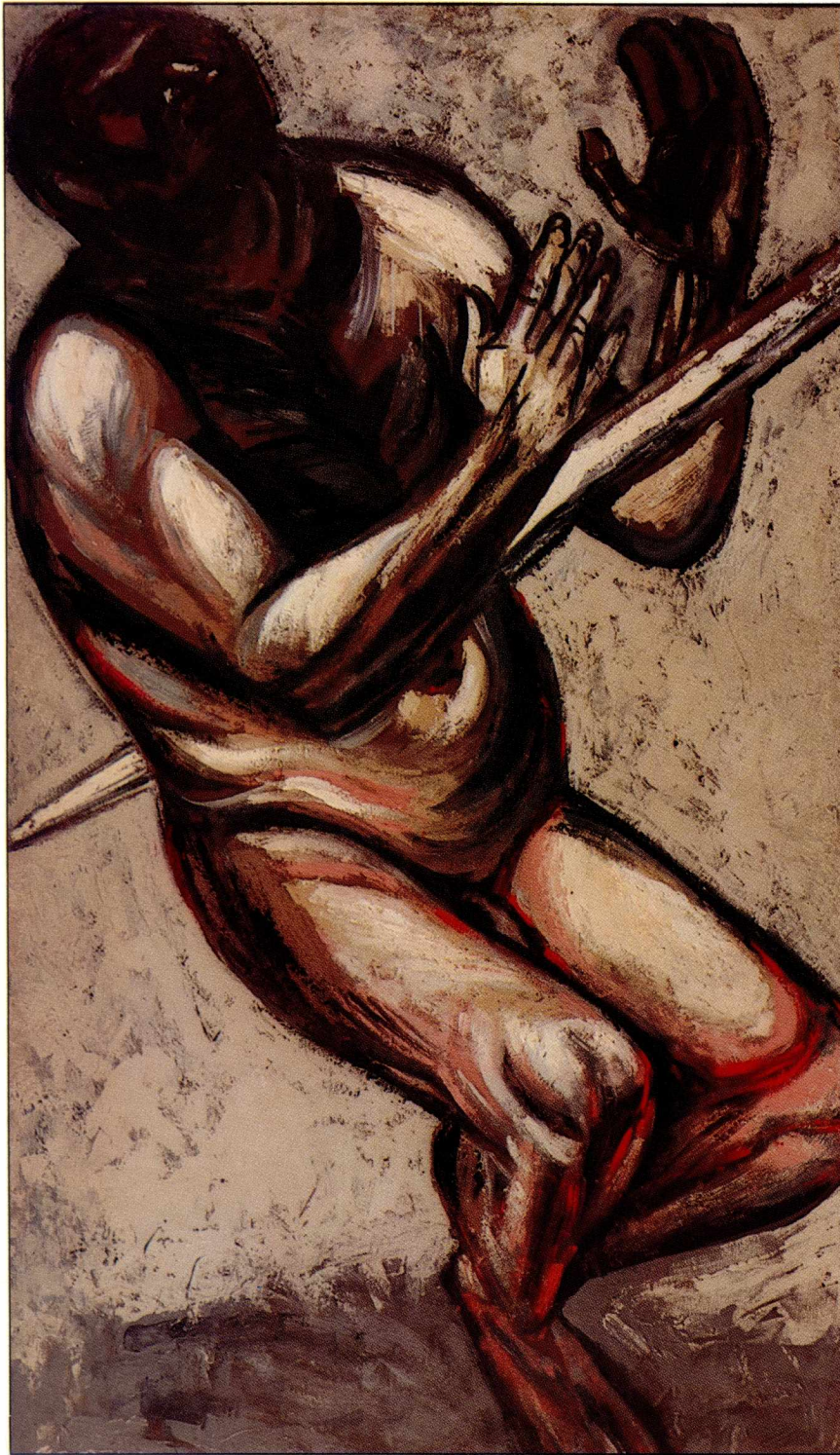
From the outset, it was decided that the collection would focus on representative modern and contemporary Latin American art, especially Mexican art.

To date, the collection comprises more than a thousand works, of which four, considered Mexican masterpieces, stand out. They are included in the Mexican artistic heritage: *El maizal* (The corn field), by Gerardo Murillo (Dr. Atl), 1955, *El Grande de España* (The Spanish grandee), by Diego Rivera, 1914, *El alanceado* (The victim of the lance), by José Clemente Orozco, 1947 and *La Mujer Dormida* (The



Exterior of the old Cuauhtémoc Brewery, now the Museum of Monterrey.

* Director of the Monterrey Museum.



José Clemente Orozco, The victim of the lance, 1974.

Sleeping Woman), by David Alfaro Siqueiros, 1946-47.

Other Mexican masters such as Roberto Montenegro, Rufino Tamayo, Leonora Carrington, Juan Soriano,

Vicente Rojo, Gunther Gerzso, Francisco Toledo, Carlos Mérida, Fernando García Ponce and Lilia Carrillo are included in the collection, as are other important

modern and contemporary Mexican artists.

Other important Latin American works are: *Edulis*, by Roberto Matta, Chile; *Cuando yo no duermo, sueño* (When I don't sleep, I dream), Wilfredo Lam, Cuba; *Construcción en blanco y negro* (Construction in black and white), Joaquín Torres García, Uruguay; and *Puerto cerca de la Guaira* (Port near la Guaira) Armando Reverón, Venezuela; More excellent works by Marcelo Bonevardi, Argentina; Armando Morales, Nicaragua; Jacobo Borges, Venezuela; Fernando Botero, Colombia; Julio Larraz, Cuba; Fernando de Szyszlo, Peru; Luis Caballero, Colombia; and Antonio Amaral, Brazil; are included with many other artists from Central and South America.

The sculpture section contains works by Edgar Negret, Colombia; and Sebastián, Angela Gurría, Francisco Moyao, Manuel Felguérez, and Jorge Elizondo, who are all Mexican.

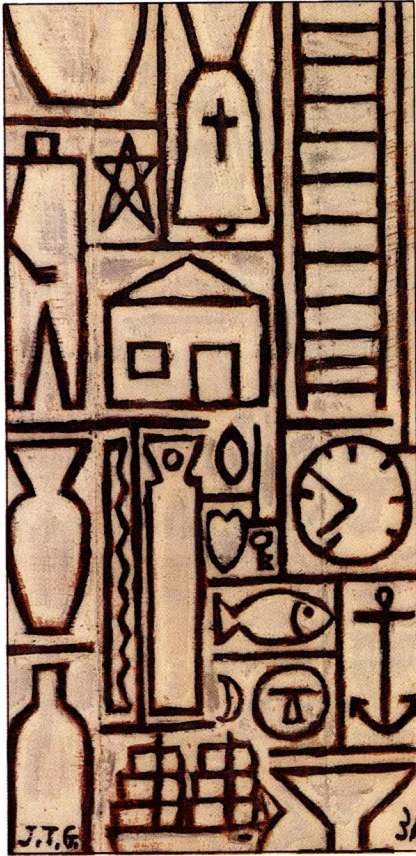
Donations

When the Museum opened, it received a donation that became the first painting in the permanent collection: A magnificent canvas, *El maizal*, painted by Dr. Atl, generously donated by Mrs. Rosario Garza Sada de Zambrano.

On the tenth anniversary of the Museum in 1987, Cartón y Papel de México donated their large collection of Panamerican graphic arts. The collection is unique, including approximately 500 works by artists from all regions of America, commissioned by the company.

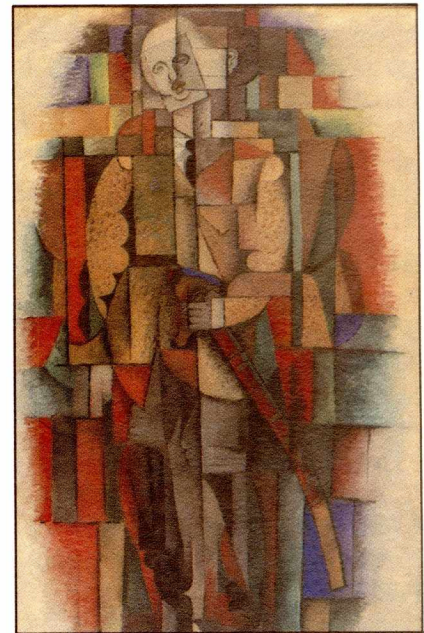
This collection grows every year, thanks to Cartón y Papel de México, who continue their annual editions of works on paper by diverse artists of all the Americas. The Monterrey Museum is the only American institution that has the complete collection.

Institutional and private collectors, and artists, regularly donate works



Old vats at the Cuauhtémoc Brewery, now the Museum of Monterrey cafeteria.

Joaquín Torres García, Construction in black and white, 1939.



Diego Rivera, The Spanish Grandee (The Blue Angel), 1914.



Interior view of the ground floor galleries.



Interior of one of the second floor galleries.

that enrich the museum's art holdings. Specially significant is the Olivieri, Capetillo and Traeger families' donation of a huge collection of pre-Hispanic pieces that Dr. Otto Roehr amassed during his lifetime.

History

The list of exhibits presented over a fifteen-year period, is too long to include here. The Monterrey Museum has presented temporary exhibitions of such highly recognized artists as Giacometti, Henry Moore, Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, Rufino Tamayo, Remedios Varo, Claudio Bravo, Sandro Chia, Juan Soriano, Gunther Gerzso, Armando Reverón, Fernando de Szyszlo, Jacobo Borges, and Julio Larraz.

Likewise, the Museum remains interested in showing collected works of great interest in the history of art. Some of them are: *El Templo Mayor* (The Great Temple), *Pintura mexicana, 1950-1980* (Mexican painting, 1950-1980), *Escuelas al aire libre* (Open-air schools), *La mujer en México*

(Women in Mexico), *Constantes del arte catalán actual* (Constants in today's Catalan art), *El surrealismo en México* (Surrealism in Mexico), *Escuela del sur, el taller Torres-García y su legado* (Southern school, the Torres-García studio and its legacy), and *Retrato civil de la Nueva España* (Civil portrait of New Spain). The Museum has maintained contacts with the best museums in the world regarding itineraries of expositions, so that the Museum has presented projects assembled in Europe and also in North and South America.

Themes

The Museum has conceived and organized exhibitions on important themes that merit special mention. The exhibit entitled *Castas mexicanas* (Mexican castes), shown by the Museum in 1989, is a collection of a type of painting that thrived during the colonial period. In 1990, the Museum's spaces were transformed into the interiors of a palace of that period. More than 850 objects including paintings, sculpture, furniture, ivory, candelabra,

etc., were part of the exhibit called *Los palacios de la Nueva España, sus tesoros interiores* (The interior treasures of the palaces of New Spain).

Cultural center

Like all museums, the Monterrey Museum endeavors to include catalogues with its temporary exhibitions. Visitor's material such as sheets for each room, brief monographs on artists, educational information and theme posters are also produced.

Besides, lectures, round tables, informal talks and debates about exhibitions; concerts, theater and poetry readings, live theater, cinema series, book presentations and discussions with artists have made the Museum's spaces into a dynamic center for the dissemination of culture.

Mexican traditions

The Museum maintains a program to preserve and recover Mexico's most treasured traditions. Specific traditional events are celebrated: a Good Friday altar is decorated at Easter; patriotic decorations are put up in September when Independence day is celebrated; an altar is decorated for the Day of the Dead (All Souls); a Nativity is presented and a Mexican *posada* with a *piñata* and Christmas songs is held. These are some of the events the community enjoys at the Museum.

Fifteenth anniversary

This year is the Museum's fifteenth anniversary and important events are being prepared for the celebration. The high point will be the First Monterrey Biennial, with painting and sculpture exhibitions organized by the Museum. The Biennial, a national event for the first time, will offer large prizes and will, doubtless, draw the participation of the artistic community. **M**