

The William Spratling Museum in Taxco, Guerrero, houses the considerable collection of pre-Hispanic works he donated to the National University of Mexico.

The William Spratling Museum¹

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The William Spratling Museum, Taxco.

The William Spratling Museum is located behind the Santa Prisca parish church, next to little Juan Ruiz de Alarcón square, among the narrow alleys of picturesque Taxco, Guerrero.

The Museum building consists of three floors and a basement which, since 1989, has served as a space for temporary exhibits.

The permanent collection is displayed in rectangular rooms on the first and second floors. It includes pre-Hispanic pieces from Olmec, Huastec, Totonac, Maya, Zapotec, and Mexica cultures, from regions such as Mezcala, Guerrero and the Pacific coast (Nayarit, Colima).

A variety of pieces with identifying labels are located in glass cases: vessels, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures, musical instruments, yokes, palms, braziers, breastplates and others. The collection is highlighted by vertical stripes painted in bright Mexican pink on the white walls behind the glass cases.

Complementing the collection, chronological and comparative charts and maps of Mesoamerica's various

¹ Photographs by the author.

* Of the Institute for Aesthetic Research, UNAM.

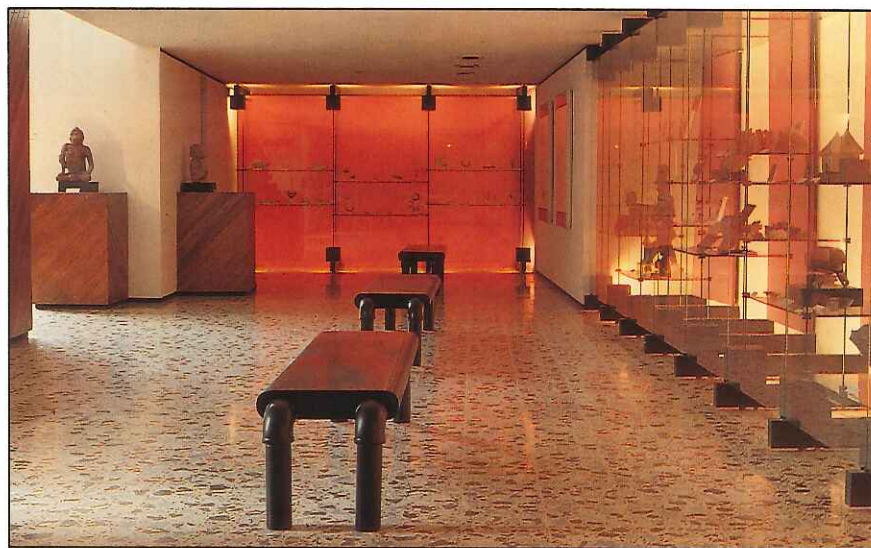
cultural areas, and other world regions, help to understand the selections on display. On walls (behind the glass cases), or inserted on information panels, are quotes by William Spratling, Miguel Covarrubias, Paul Westheim and Octavio Paz, referring to the art of pre-Hispanic cultures.

A reproduction of the *Tamuín adolescent*, from the Huastec culture, is located in a separate first-floor area, almost opposite the Museum's entrance. An original stele from the Balsas region with sun-cult reliefs is presented next to it. Both are also visible from the second floor. Two



Archaeological treasures at the Spratling Museum, Taxco.

Gallery at the Spratling Museum, Taxco.



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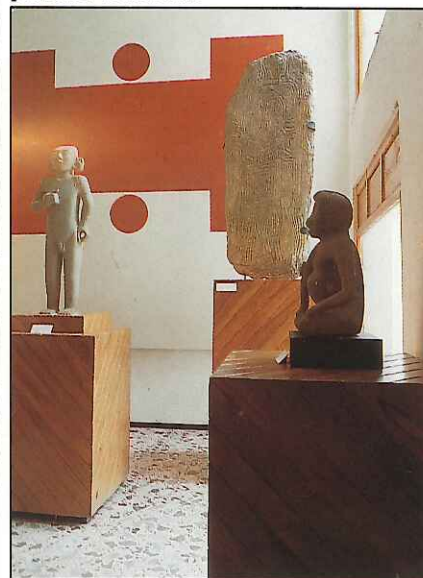
staircases, at opposite ends of the building, lead from the first to the second floor.

The collection includes approximately two thousand pieces, counting those in storage, almost four hundred of which are exhibited.

Most pieces come from the collection William Spratling donated to the National Museum of Anthropology in 1963. He had made an earlier large donation of pre-Hispanic works to the National University of Mexico in 1959. William Spratling lived in Mexico from 1929 to 1967, the year he died; he was named Favorite Son of Taxco in 1953.

The Museum exhibits a bronze bust of him by Monzalvo (1986), and

Figures from William Spratling's personal collection.



the reproduction of a lithograph of him done by Siqueiros in 1931, while the artist was under arrest in Taxco.

The National Institute of Anthropology and History has managed the Museum since its inauguration July 31, 1975. It bears the name William Spratling, in homage to the man who valued and preserved part of Mexican culture through collections, documentaries, articles and publications ❖