

The X in Mexico

Mexico opened my eyes and made me into a poet. Until then, I was lost.

Ramón del Valle-Inclán.

So, my dear Unamuno, the X in Mexico, that only a few years ago you thought a sign of American pedantry, attracted Valle-Inclán and made him a poet? Dear little X, so small and yet so great you indicate the four points of the compass; you were at the crossroads of destiny!

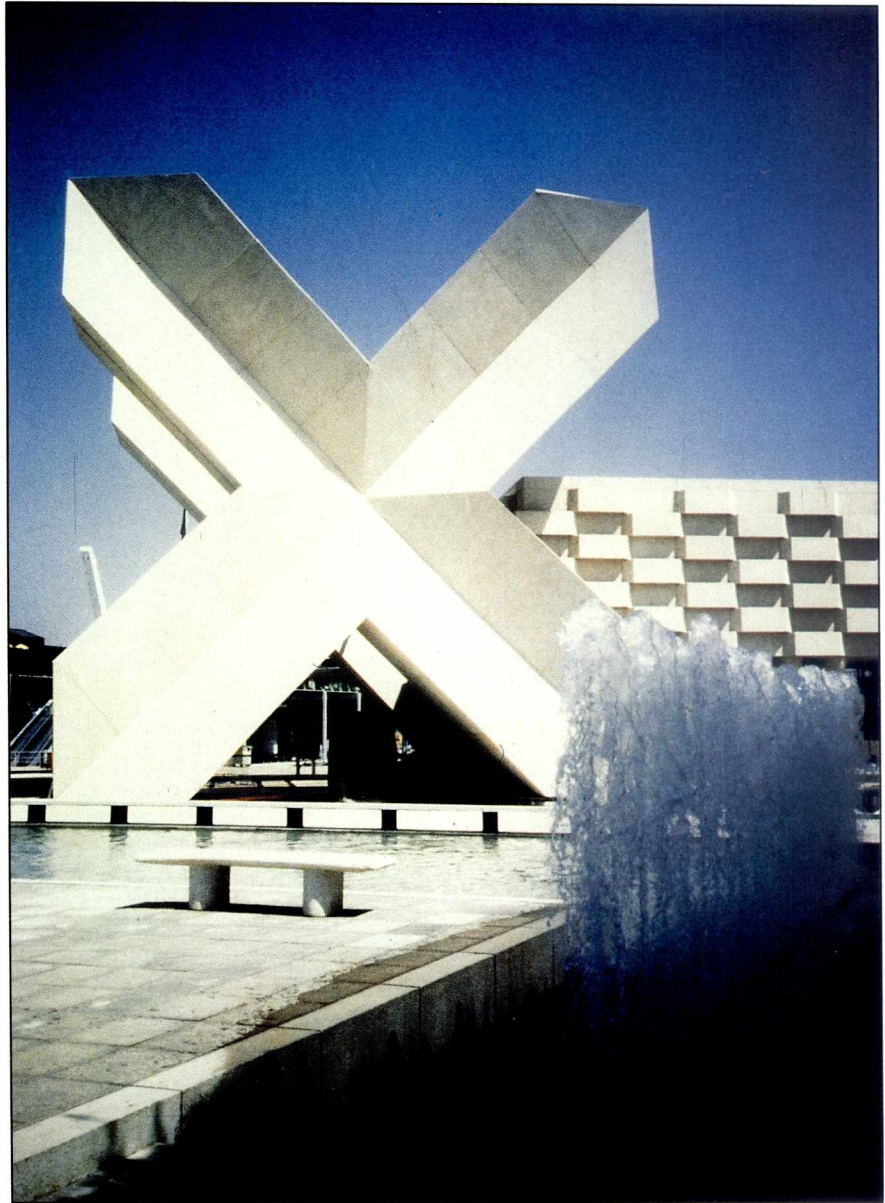
Alfonso Reyes.

The Nahuatl and Mesoamerican worlds, like all other cultures in the history of human institutions, religious practices and customs, revolved around the intersecting axes of time and space.

When they measured time and eras, the Mesoamericans explored the relationship between all things, according to underlying order and harmony. As Miguel León-Portilla notes in *La filosofía náhuatl*, these concepts are key elements in the origin of the gods, created by a dual god. They are the essence of the balance between the heavens and the netherworlds, night and day; opposites that both devour and complement each other, enabling the universe to be destroyed and renewed. In each cycle of time, chaos is prevented and order restored once more.

According to the Mendocine Codex, order existed before chaos and was restored afterwards. The earth's

Text based on *Memoir and presence of Mexico in Seville (I)*. Mexico-Seville '92 Trust.



The X in Mexico symbolizes both crossings, both crossroads and a fabric of differences.

Many conquered peoples' traditions were altered by the Conquest. Mexico's very name was changed. Spain chose to spell it Méjico, while we insisted on México. Five hundred years later we still regard the X as important; so much so, in fact, that it was chosen as the symbol of the Mexican Pavilion at Expo-Sevilla '92.



The X was a sacred symbol for the Aztecs.

surface is an X centered at a point that is sacred and affects everything that occurs, all human beings and every aspect of men's lives.

The Mexicas, the Nahuatl people, took this to the extreme of regarding everything as the sum of crossed dualities, an exact replica of universal order.

México-Tenochtitlan, the great city of the so-called Mexica empire, lay at the center of the world and cosmos, while the earth reflected the sacred order of the universe. The center of the X, where the great city stood, was where the universe's paths crossed reproducing the constant duality of man's origin.

The center of the sacred X and the four areas of the Earth's equilibrium, is the point of vertical communication, like the branches of a tree with one area for the gods and another for life and death and the other opposites.

Manuel Capetillo.

The Mexican Pavilion at Expo Seville '92

Mexico's presence at the 1992 Universal Exhibition in Seville aims to provide a communications link. In

addition to bridging two shores it will also span thousands of years from ancient origins to modern nations. The X in Mexico symbolizes both crossings, both crossroads and a fabric of differences.

Mexico's space, the Pavilion, functions as a communications unit, enabling millions of visitors to be saturated with Mexico, a living presence of art and culture, and via satellite at the Pavilion, a continuous link between Mexico and Spain, and the rest of the Spanish-speaking world.

Expo Seville '92 offers the varied aspects of human intercourse and cultural and scientific development at the apex of a century declining and another rising.

The exhibition is also a show-case for the latest communications technology. Most important for Mexico, however, is the message—realities revealed, surprising facts, mutual contributions, historical coincidences and their legacy—that places Mexico in its historical context.

Mexican character is rooted in a splendid, ancient past expressed by the X in Mexico. This millenarian sign points to the challenges of the present



Lively colors at the Expo.

and the aspirations of the future, of a character that has been shaped by its cultural legacy and the sum of its successes and contributions, reflected in an original culture and a particular view of life.

We remember rather than celebrate 1992. We recall who we are, an ancient crossing of influences and numerous contributions that originated at this crossroad called Mexico.

Pedro Ramírez Vázquez
Designer of the Architectural Project in the Mexican Pavilion.

The most outstanding features of the Mexican Pavilion include an 18 meter high sculpture of the letter X, in double silhouette, rising above the square at the main entrance to the



Model of the great city of Tenochtitlan.



The Mexican Pavilion under construction.

building, like a crossroad symbolizing the plurality of encounters, a long, highly original covered footbridge and an orthogonal building on landscaped taluses.

The Pavilion is situated on a corner between two of the fair's main thoroughfares: the Route of Discoveries and the Avenue of Water, opposite the lake and the Plaza of America housing the Latin American exhibits. It stands next to the Spanish

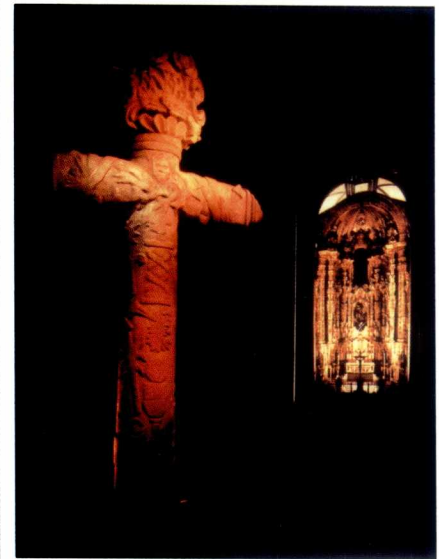
View of Seville '92 with Mexico's huge X.

Pavilion, along the same road as the United States exhibit, and to one side of one of the main entrances to the fair, the north gate, where there is a cable car link to Seville.

The entrance to the Pavilion is through the Square. There is an elevator for the handicapped and stairs and escalators leading from the X to the footbridge. Some 43m long and 8m wide, the footbridge affords visitors an introductory area as well as a lobby. Visitors then proceed to the top floor of the 12m high building, composed of a basement and two floors capped by a terrace.

Both floors were designed to hold a constantly moving multimedia show. This involves a series of scenes beginning at the top floor and leading down a moving double ramp to the exit on the ground floor.

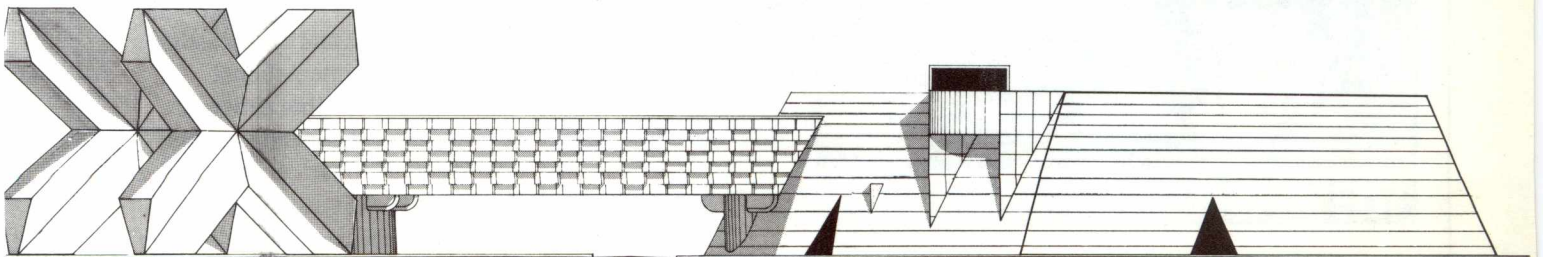
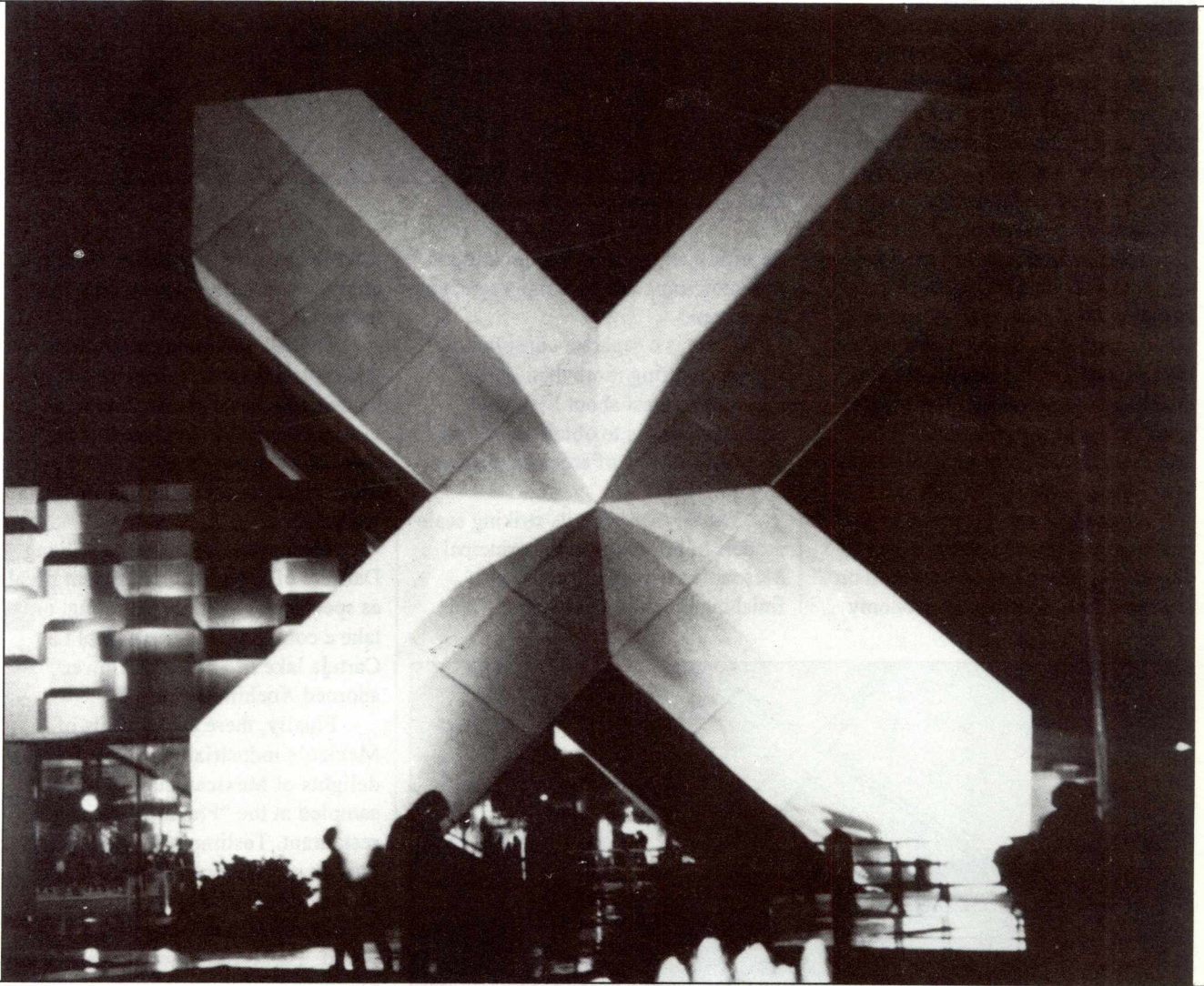
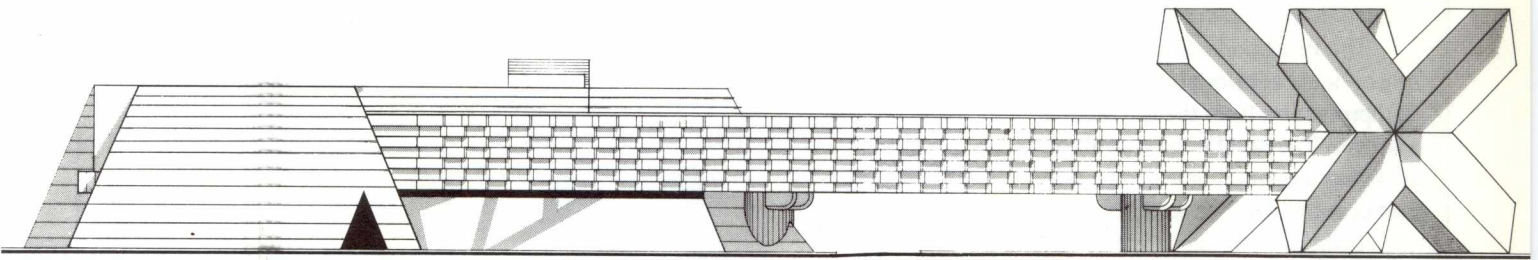
This last area holds the information systems and a book-store,



The merging of two cultures.

as well as the escalator and elevator leading to the upper terrace exhibiting models of Mesoamerica and an entertainment area. A television studio, offices, maintenance





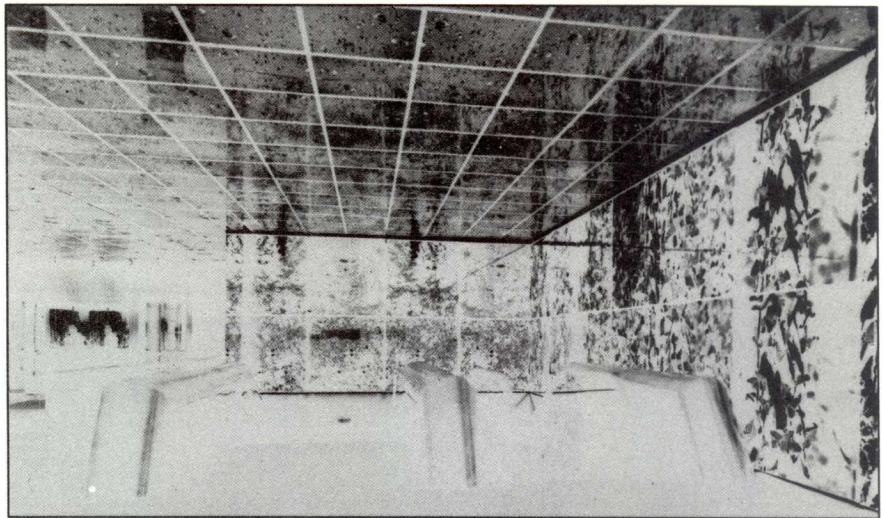
workshops and other services are located in the basement.

The Pavilion had to be designed to provide a comfortable environment and protection from the hot Seville summer. The architectural solution recreates a cool climate as naturally and economically as possible. Hence the covered footbridge and the sloping garden that lower the outside temperature by creating a layer of moist air. The cushion of air inside the double wall surrounding the building, and between the terrace floor and tiling, causes the temperature to drop even further. Finally, the moisture from the lakes and fountains has a natural cooling effect.

The Pavilion covers a total area of 4,800 sq m with 6,000 sq m of building and 2,000 sq m of greenery.

"Mexico: course and destiny" is the name of the multimedia show enabling visitors to discover Mexico's origins, and glimpse its multi-ethnic and multicultural present and future in less than an hour.

After the show, visitors can find out more about any subject they choose. Audio-visual information on anything from tourism, gastronomy,



Walls covered with monarch butterflies.

the arts, ecology, and foreign trade to economics appears by simply touching the screen.

There is a separate consultation system covering more than 2,500 topics of interest about Mexico enabling visitors to obtain an instant printed summary of any article they choose.


The terrace, with its striking scale models of buildings in the principal Mesoamerican cities, provides a finishing touch to the Pavilion. This

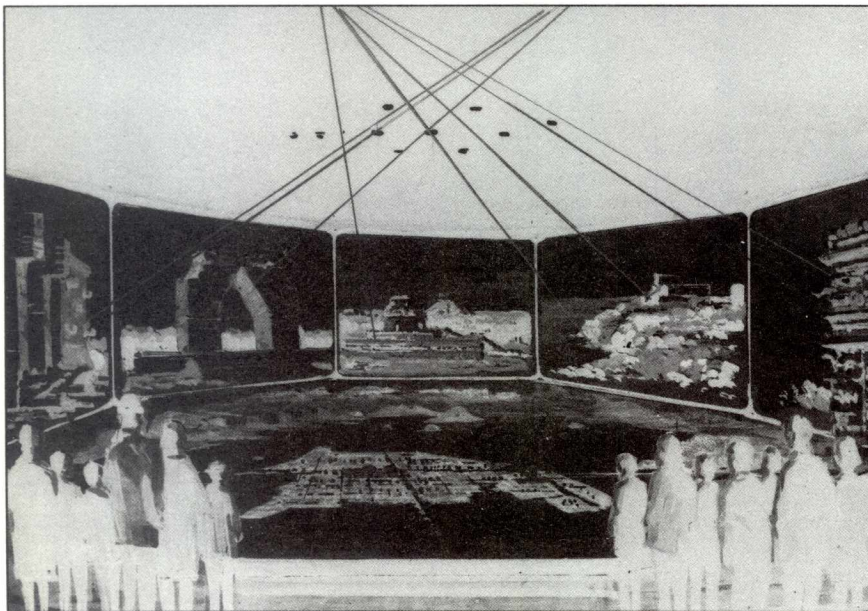
recreational area, accessible to visitors after the show, can also be seen from the aerial tramway.

The fair's auditorium, cock pit and central theater present music, theater and dance shows, literature, visual arts and the folklore that has come to be synonymous with Mexico's artistic and festive image the world over.

Visitors can also see the "Flying Dancers of Papantla", an ancient ritual as spectacular as it is enthralling, or take a cool, relaxing trip across La Cartuja lake in a colorful, flower adorned Xochimilco punt.

Finally, there are exhibits of Mexico's industrial products, and the delights of Mexican cuisine may be sampled at the "Flavor of Mexico" restaurant. Testimony to the high quality of Mexico's publishers are books, videos and posters on the subjects of Mexico's message to the world. These and other souvenirs are all available for purchase.

The Mexican pavilion provides a communications and broadcasting link through its international television and satellite network, covering the vast Spanish-speaking population of America, Europe and North Africa. Mexico's message is relayed by this means to millions of people daily 



Model of Mayan culture.