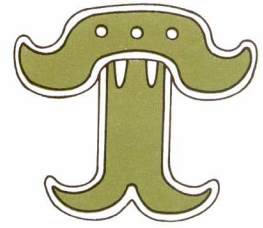


The Dolores Olmedo Patiño Museum



The world's largest collection of the works of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo can be seen in the beautiful Dolores Olmedo Patiño Museum, which opened its doors to the public on September 17, 1994. In an area of more than 100,000 square feet, architecture and landscape work together to frame this great national treasure, donated by Dolores Olmedo.

The museum is located in Xochimilco, where even today flowers

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

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

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

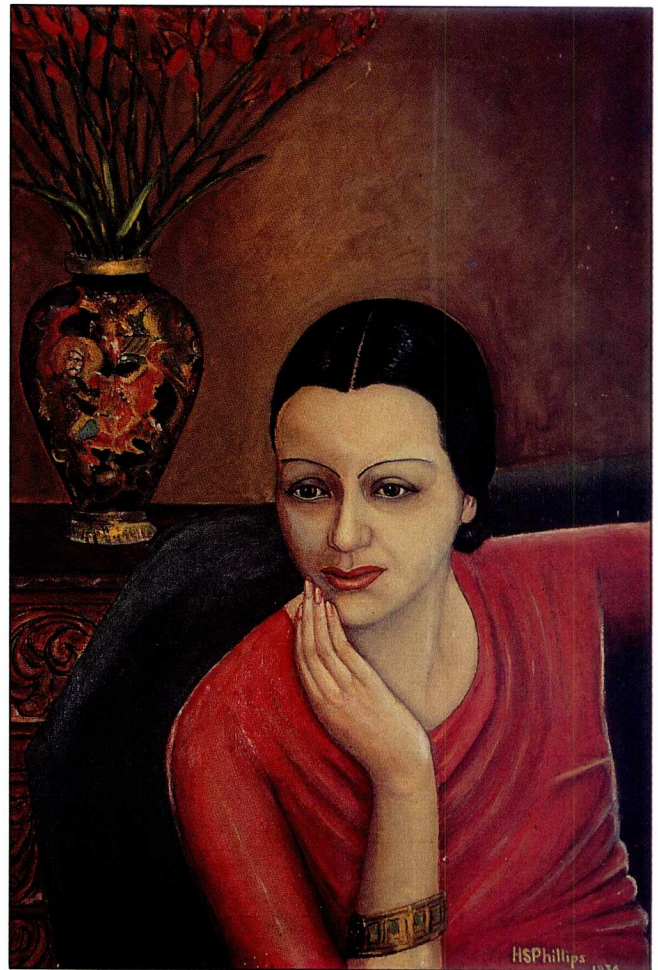
The main buildings of the hacienda take up about 20,000 square feet. The construction—including walls, roofs, ironwork and the cupolas in the chapel—is preserved from the 16th century. This also includes



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



Dolores Olmedo in her Oriental-style home.



Portrait of Dolores Olmedo by her husband Howard Phillips.



Interviewer and interviewee accompanied by xoloitzcuintles.



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



The well from which La Noria got its name.

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

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

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

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

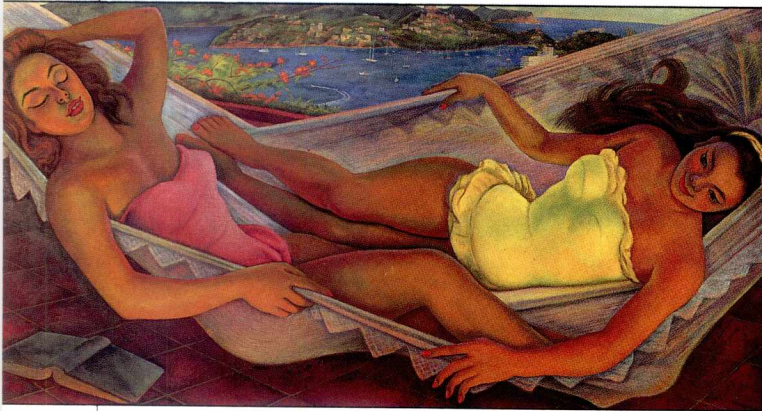
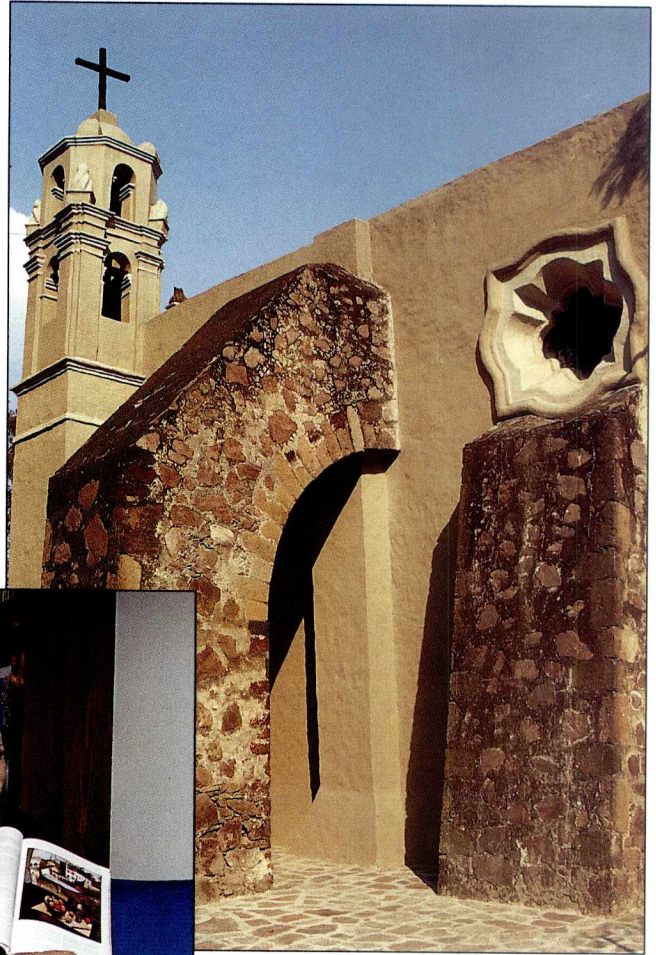
In the first hall of the museum, before entering the main area, visitors can view 42 engravings and drawings by the Russian painter Angelina Beloff—Diego Rivera's first wife, who lived in Mexico until her death in 1969. Further along is the former living-room, which holds some of the museum's 137 Rivera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

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

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

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

Sixteenth century chapel dome.



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

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



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

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



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

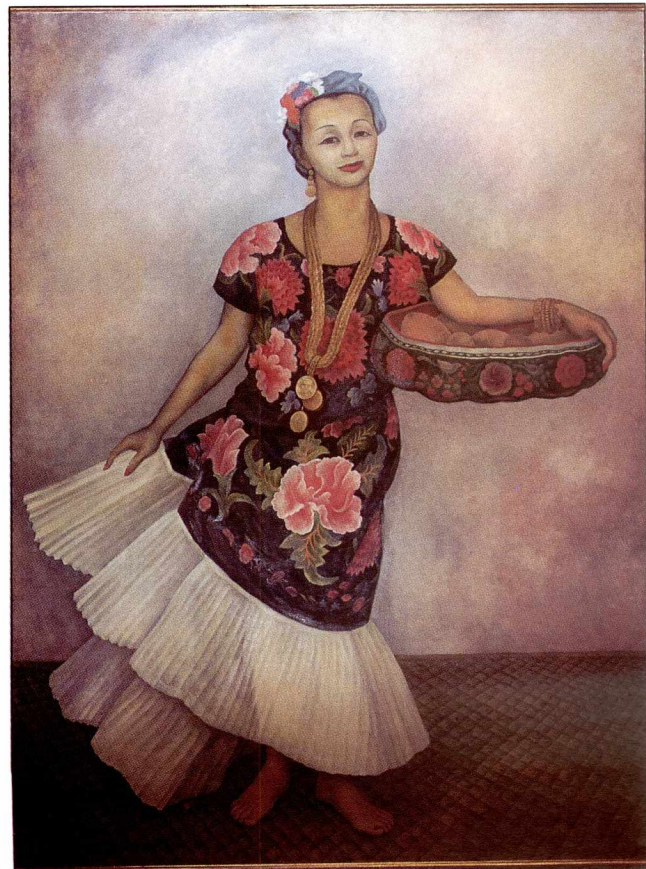


Diego Rivera, The Watermelons, oil on canvas, 1957.



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

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





Engravings and drawings by Angelina Beloff.



Entrance to the hall dedicated to Angelina Beloff.



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



Visitors can also view 400 pre-Hispanic figures.

Part of the folk art exhibited in the museum.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marybel Toro Gayol.

Managing Editor

Photos by Arturo Piera.



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