

# Mexico's Pavilion At Expo Hanover 2000

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An average of 8,000 people a day visited the Mexican pavilion at Expo Hanover 2000, making it among the most visited. Its six halls and three patios were an invitation to journey through ancient and modern Mexico.



Photos by Gabriel Figueroa

Northern view of the Mexican pavilion.



The front of the pavilion.



Hall 2. The National Mosaic. Pre-Hispanic wall.

Mexico has been a great success at Expo Hanover 2000. For the first three months of the exhibition, inaugurated June 1, an average of 8,000 people visited the Mexican pavilion daily, making it one of the most visited.

This is partly due to its museography, an invitation to journey through ancient and contemporary Mexico. The pavilion's six halls and three patios offer the visitor the opportunity to actively participate in the age-old construction of the country and its projection into the future. For 40 minutes, the visitor is immersed in the essence of Mexico.

The journey through the pavilion alternates between spacious patios and the translucent cubes of its exhibition halls. The patios offer abstract representations of the country's three main ecosystems, while the halls present a diversity of messages amidst waves of music specially written for the occasion by contemporary Mexican composers.

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Translated by Andrea Martínez.

#### MEXICO: AN AGE-OLD CONSTRUCTION

The first hall is dedicated to the Zócalo, Mexico City's central square, beginning with a virtual voyage through Mexico's history, summing up the pavilion's basic themes: the historic construction of Mexico, the pride of its people and the coexistence of different cultures, ethnic groups, customs and beliefs.

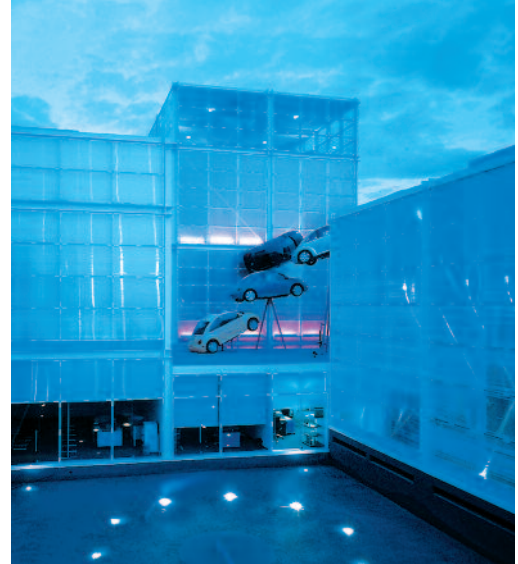
Two techniques are used in this hall: video and 3D computer modeling and rendering in real time. Present day Mexico in all its richness is portrayed on video while ancient Mexico is recreated by the computer in real time. Combining virtual and actual realities, the hall illustrates the continuity of Mexican history, despite the centuries between pre-Hispanic times and the present.

#### THE NATIONAL MOSAIC

The second hall's message is that at the end of a century marked by worldwide racial, religious and economic strife, Mexico's most valuable achievement has been its diverse ethnic and cultural groups being able to live together.



*Offering 1* by Juan Soriano.



The Sea Patio.

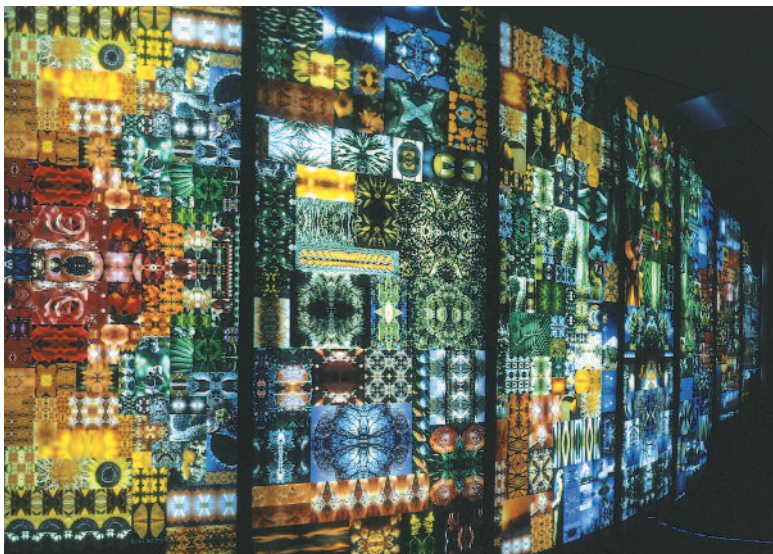
The hall can be read on two levels. At eye level, the visitor may observe works of art representing different aspects of the national mosaic. The second level, on the upper frieze, boasts a display of photographs of different parts of the ethnic and cultural amalgam that is Mexico today.

The mosaic, a masterpiece of curatorship, is a dialogue between eras: pre-Hispanic sculptures such as *The Bat* or *The Priest of Death* share the spotlight with the more recent

works of Diego Rivera, Saturnino Herrán and Rufino Tamayo.

The 16 large-scale photographs on the frieze emphasize the mix of ethnic and cultural groups expressed in our cuisine, markets, holidays and daily and family life.

Like in the rest of the pavilion, this hall offers an emotional and sensory—rather than analytical and intellectual—experience. The art, photographs and music present a synthesis of historic Mexico.



Hall 6. The Construction of Our Future.

#### THE MEXICAN SPIRIT

The premise of the third hall is that faith, tolerance and the vocation for freedom are the elements that make up Mexican spirituality. This finds its expression in a diversity of ways, from folk culture to the fine arts, such as the poetry of Nezahualcóyotl, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Octavio Paz and the paintings of Rufino Tamayo, presented here.

The second area goes deeper into the heart of religious Mexico, into the popular tradition of the Day of the Dead. Using a life-size stereoscopic projection, the visitor is immersed in the nocturnal ritual on the Island of Janitzio in Michoacán.

Six screens lined up symmetrically along a



Mexico's pavilion, unique in its museography and design.

tunnel lead the visitor through preparations for the ceremony, the vigil and the setting up of the altars in this unique tradition.

#### FROM THE PYRAMID TO THE PLAZA

The fourth hall deals with Mexico's political construction. It is the testimony of a country on a quest for democracy, through institutions that capitalize on their historical experience and participate in the construction of a promising future. The hall is divided into two parallel areas. In the first, a video projection portrays the country's most relevant political moments in the twentieth century. It oscillates continuously between the past —when power frequently lay solely in the hands of a charismatic leader— and the present —characterized by the quest for democracy and more political participation by the public.

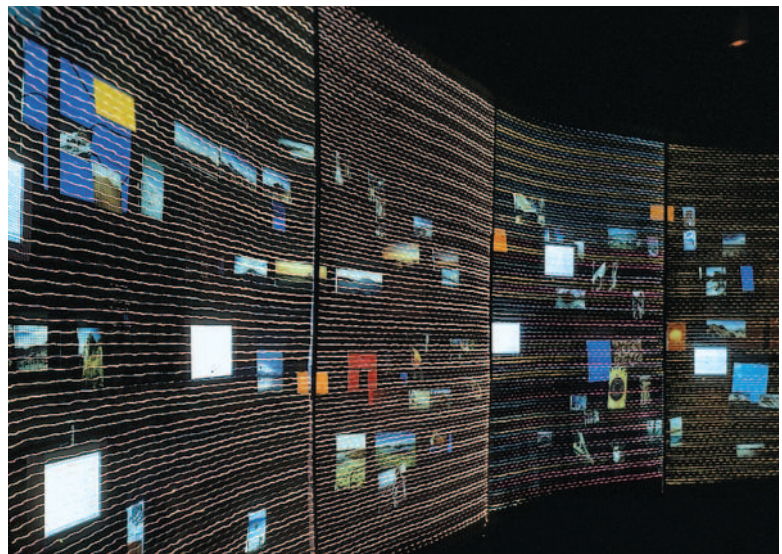
In the second area, a video projects scenes from the July 2, 2000 elections. The important turn-out at the polls, the timely public announcement of the results and the speeches by both candidates and the president acknowledging the results all illustrate how far elections have come in Mexico.



*With All of Us, By All of Us and For All of Us, Too*, installation by Yolanda Gutiérrez.

The two areas are connected at the end of the hall by an installation representing the country's political progress and its future, a result of the will and the common efforts of Mexican society. Young artist Yolanda Gutiérrez's piece consists of a large ear of corn resting on an internally lit onyx sphere.

The visitor may place a few multicolored grains of corn on the upper part of the sculpture as a metaphor for the construction of democracy in Mexico.



Hall 6. Interior wall seen from the entrance.



Hall 2. A dialogue between eras.



Hall 5. A creative People.

#### A CREATIVE PEOPLE

The fifth hall is dedicated to the economic construction of Mexico and illustrates the creativity, ingenuity and determination of the Mexican people in a diversity of ways. Also portrayed are, on the one hand, the tenacity in seeking out solutions to problems and, on the other hand, industrial progress resulting from the efforts spanning generations.

Like in a gallery, the hall displays 27 large-scale black-and-white photographs in glass showcases, photographs of products made by Mexicans participating in the country's economic construction in all fields: from handicrafts to complex industry.

#### THE CONSTRUCTION OF OUR FUTURE

The last hall is a representation of our promising future, showing the idea that Mexico is part of the globalization process and its future will be built in contact with the rest of the world. In addition, it portrays the idea that Mexico's future lies in sustainable development thanks to its human potential, rich natural resources and specific economic programs and policies.

The design combines photographs and videos seen through a woven mesh of moving fiber optic threads. The hall also contains two murals: one depicting Mexico's biodiversity and the other its children, a promising symbol of the country's strength.

The vestibule presents our tourist attractions and explanations of projects for sustainable development as well as an account of exporting strategies based on the free trade agreements with countries belonging to different economic regions of the world.

#### THE CENTRAL MESSAGE

Through its museography, the Mexican pavilion in Expo Hanover 2000 strives to present an up-to-date image of our country, far from the stereotypes so prevalent today, offering the visitor a new way of seeing Mexico. In this context, it traces a historic road filled with struggle and sometimes explosive processes that spark changes. It also speaks to the construction of a country where ethnic and cultural blending has been unlike that anywhere else in the world. In Hanover, Mexico offers itself as a gift to the rest of the world; a country filled with historic hope, endurance and renewed perspectives. ■■■