

# Cátedra México Featuring Graciela Iturbide

A VISIONS AND VOICES SIGNATURE EVENT PRESENTED WITH  
THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF MEXICO IN LOS ANGELES

Monday, October 16, 2017, at 7 p.m. | Town and Gown

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Graciela Iturbide is one of the best-known Mexican photographers alive.
- Her images explore indigenous and border cultures, identity, sexuality, rituals, and the visual aspects of cultures in transition.
- Iturbide was born in Mexico City in 1942, studied to be a filmmaker, apprenticed with famed photographer Manuel Álvarez Bravo, and traveled widely across Latin America before she began photographing indigenous Mexicans in 1978. She has also worked in Cuba, East Germany, India, Madagascar, Hungary, Paris, and the United States.
- Her decade-long project *Juchitán de las Mujeres* documents a Zapotec town where women dominate all aspects of social life, from the economy to religious rituals.
- She has had solo exhibitions at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Getty Museum, among others.

- Iturbide will engage in a conversation with Enrique Martínez Celaya, the first Provost Professor of Humanities and Arts at USC. Martínez Celaya was born in Cuba and raised in Spain and Puerto Rico. He abandoned a career as a physicist to become an artist instead.

## GRACIELA ITURBIDE ON PHOTOGRAPHY

*“The camera is an excuse to share the life of the people, the rhythm and simplicity of festivities, to discover my country. While using my camera I am, above all, an actress participating in the scene taking place at the moment, and the other actors know what role I play. I never think of my images as a project, I simply live the situations and photograph them; it is afterwards that I discover the images.”*

*“... between the gaze of the photographer and the gaze of the subject the image becomes a reflection of the person taking the picture.”*

## LOOK FAMILIAR?

A large mural painted on the side of a building in L.A.'s Sunset Junction area was inspired by Iturbide's iconic photograph *Nuestra Señora de las Iguanas*. The "Juchitán Medusa," as she came to be known, also appeared in the 1996 film *Female Perversions*.

## INDIGENOUS CULTURES OF MEXICO

Mexico's indigenous peoples trace their roots to before the arrival of Europeans in the area now known as Mexico. More than 25 million people, or about 21 percent of the nation's population, self-identify as indigenous. There are numerous different indigenous groups in Mexico, where more than 50 different indigenous languages are spoken. In several parts of the country, indigenous people are the dominant population group. Indigenous people have rights to self-determination under the Mexican constitution. Graciela Iturbide has primarily photographed Zapotec, Mixtec, and Seri peoples.

## VOCABULARY CORNER

**Documentary photography:** Photography that chronicles events or environments deemed of social or historical significance, often looking at scenes of everyday life. A distinction is sometimes made between photojournalism that covers breaking news stories and documentary photography that follows a single topic or story over time, to offer an in-depth perspective.

**Gaze:** In contemporary art theory, the concept of "the gaze" refers to the acts of seeing and being seen, and considers how viewers of an artwork see the figures in the work, how the camera or photographer looks at the represented subject/object, and even how objects/subjects within a work of art look at each other or at the viewer. Thinking about the gaze, or multiple gazes, directs our attention to the relationships between artist and subject, viewer and work of art, object and viewer, and so forth, which can reveal and provoke us to think about dynamics of culture, identity, perception, and power.

**La frontera:** The border, in Spanish. This phrase is often specifically used to describe the U.S./Mexico border.

**Object and subject:** In philosophy and art theory, a subject is a being who has consciousness and/or will, while an object is something—or someone—that a subject observes. In short: a subject is an observer and an object is observed. Most of us are, at different times or even at the same time, both.

**Photo essay:** A group of photographs arranged to explore a theme or tell a story.

**Representation:** This term has multiple meanings. It describes what a work of art is "about"—for example, a painting of a bowl of fruit is a work of representational art about objects that exist in the real world. In art and media, "representation" also refers to how a work deals with and presents elements of identity such as gender, age, or ethnicity; discussions of this kind of representation often emphasize the power of works of art to shape viewers' perceptions of a given identity or social group.

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Why do you think Iturbide photographs primarily in black-and-white?
- Iturbide focuses on photo essays more than individual photographs. How do you think this strengthens, or limits, her projects?
- Do you think there is a line between representation and objectification? Where is it? Or where do these things blur or overlap?

## TO LEARN MORE, EXPLORE THESE RESOURCES:

- A bookmaking workshop with Graciela Iturbide and James hd Brown, Tuesday, October 17, 5:30 p.m., at Art Division  
[http://visionsandvoices.usc.edu/events/listing.php?event\\_id=965740](http://visionsandvoices.usc.edu/events/listing.php?event_id=965740)



Graciela Iturbide, *Nuestra Señora de las Iguanas*, 1979



The "Juchitán Medusa"



Graciela Iturbide, *Desierto de Sonora*, 1979



Graciela Iturbide, *Hidroscalo*, 2008



- Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, a series of exhibitions and art events presented throughout Los Angeles this fall that explore and encourage dialogue between Latin American and Latino art and Los Angeles

<http://www.pacificstandardtime.org>

- Graciela Iturbide's *Juchitán de las Mujeres, A Day in the Life of America*, and other projects
- *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger

## DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

**STACY WILLIAMS** of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about Graciela Iturbide and tonight's event. Except where a call number is given, these are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at [libraries.usc.edu](http://libraries.usc.edu).

### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Iturbide, Graciela, and Museo Amparo. *Graciela Iturbide*. Puebla, Mexico, Fundación Amparo, 2012.  
**ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: TR647.I88 A45 2012**
- Medina, Cuauhtémoc., and Graciela Iturbide. *Graciela Iturbide*. ser. 55, London ; New York, NY, Phaidon, 2001.  
**ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: TR654.I864 2001X**
- Iturbide, Graciela, et al. *Graciela Iturbide : Juchitán*. Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007.  
**ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: TR647.I877 2007**
- Iturbide, Graciela, and Galería López Quiroga. *Naturata : Graciela Iturbide, 1996-2004*. 1. ed., México: Paris, Galería López Quiroga; Toluca Editions, 2004.  
**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS/BOECKMANN OVERSIZE: TR654.I867 2004**
- Iturbide, Graciela. *No Hay Nadie = There Is No One*. Madrid, La Fábrica, 2011.  
**ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: TR654.I874 2011**

### RECOMMENDED ARTICLES

- Gardner, Nathaniel. "Visual Witness: A Critical Rereading of Graciela Iturbide's Photography." *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2017, pp. 174-194.
- Brandes, Stanley. "Graciela Iturbide as Anthropological Photographer." *Visual Anthropology Review*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2008, pp. 95-102.
- Iturbide, Graciela. "Eight Photographs." *Sulfur*, vol. 36, 1995, p. 120.

### RECOMMENDED DATABASES

- Art & Architecture Archive  
Art and Architecture Archive is a major research resource comprising the digitized backfiles of many of the foremost art and architecture magazines of the twentieth century.
- Arts & Humanities  
This database features hundreds of titles covering Art, Architecture, Design, History, Philosophy, Music, Literature, Theatre, and Cultural Studies.
- Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson)  
Art Full Text is a comprehensive resource for art information featuring full-text articles from more than 300 periodicals dating back to 1995, high-quality indexing and abstracting of over 600 periodicals dating as far back as 1984, including 280 peer-reviewed journals, as well as indexing and abstracting of over 13,000 art dissertations.
- ARTstor  
Provides access to over a million high quality images of art and photography, with descriptions and provenance. Also includes images in the fields of anthropology and architecture.

