

New Mexico

Exhibit embraces anything but painting traditions

By Nancy Gilson
Dispatch Arts Reporter

Much of the art being created in Mexico now has little to do with Diego Rivera-like murals or, for that matter, painting at all.

"Mexico Now: Point of Departure," opening Saturday at the Riffe Gallery, helps make the point that Mexican art has moved in new directions. It features works by 11 emerging artists who have broken away not only from the traditional Mexican schools of painting but also from specific schools in contemporary art.

"People who have been the art historians just don't quite know how to fit these people into their definitions," said Robert Stearns, guest curator of the Ohio Arts Council show.

Mexican art, he said, has progressed through the muralists, the "Rupture" school (favoring abstraction) and, during the 1980s, neoMexicanism — all dominated by painting.

"What unifies these artists, if anything, is their departure from strict canons of painting."

"With this show, we didn't want to just throw together a survey of who's who in modern Mexican art. At a certain point, all you have is a kind of button collection. We looked for artists who have struggled to find an independent path away from the center of painting."

The artists — ranging in age from 27 to 47 — have contributed works in a variety of mediums: electronic neon (Diego Toledo), projected images and videos (Gerardo Suter), assemblages (Nestor Quinones) and the jawbones of cows (Yolanda Gutierrez).

Melanie Smith, an English expatriate and the only non-native Mexican in the show, is represented with works from her "Orange Lush" series — large assemblages filled with objects such as inner tubes, soccer uniforms, balloons and dish scrubbers, all in neon orange.

Carlos Aguirre made *El Bosque (The Forest)* of ax heads mounted on steel rods.

■ "Mexico Now: Point of Departure" will open with a reception at 6 p.m. Saturday and continue through April 5 at the Riffe Gallery, 77 S. High St. Hours: noon-4 p.m. weekends, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Wednesday and 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays. Admission is free; call 644-9624.

Yet even the Aguirre piece is less threatening than one might expect.

"These artists are not cynical," Stearns said. "They may be disappointed about various aspects of life or struggles as an artist, but the nature of their work is thoughtful and bright."

"That is the rule, I think, of all artists in Mexico. The work is

thoughtful, articulate, intelligent but without cynicism."

Stearns, a free-lance curator and a former director of the Wexner Center for the Arts, began work on "Mexico Now" several years ago. Additional curators included Agustin Arteaga of the Instituto

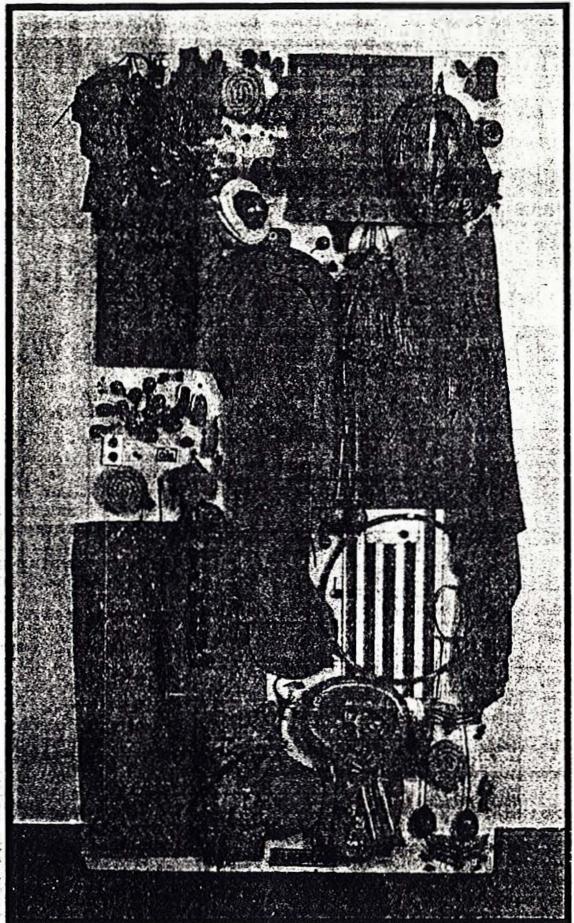
Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City; and Maria Guerra, an independent curator from Mexico City.

Stearns views the exhibit as "a significant step in the evolution of public involvement in the arts."

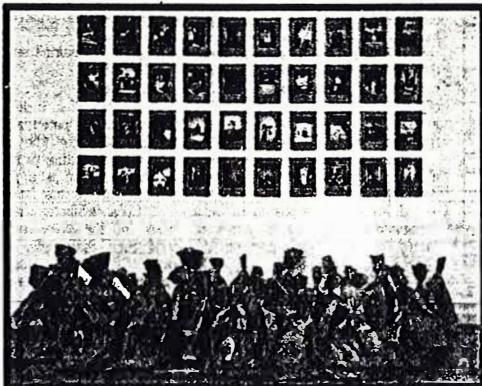
"For a relatively modest cost, Ohio, Mexico and the other arts agencies are getting a significant, international art show."



Sin Mas (Without More)
by Diego Toledo



Orange Lush I by Melanie Smith



Distributing Bread (La Reparticion de los Panes) by Monica Castillo

A cultural exchange

"Mexico Now" is a major achievement for the Ohio Arts Council, which in recent years has emphasized cultural exchanges with several nations.

The exhibit, produced with seven other arts agencies, will tour for two years, reaching six U.S. cities as well as San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The touring show will include works by two additional artists, Carlos Arias and Betsabee Romero, who were recently featured at the Lancaster Festival.

<http://www.usatoday.com>



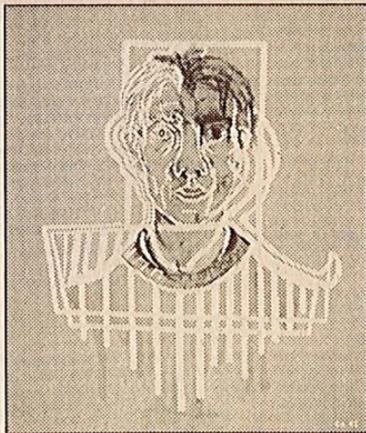
Life

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 1997

NK

Life on vacation

COLUMBUS, Ohio: Art from south of the border comes to the heartland when *México Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure* premieres Saturday at the Ohio Arts Council's Riffe Gallery. The exhibit spotlights photography, painting, sculpture and installations by contemporary Mexican artists that reflect a break from traditional Mexican 20th century painting. The exhibit runs through April 5, after which it will travel to six sites around the USA and Puerto Rico. Information, 614-644-9624.



Galeria Arte Actual, Monterrey

Art of Mexico: 'Self Portrait 1996' is part of the Ohio exhibit.

the Guide

● Star Wars:

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The review. 20

● **Music:** Snoop Doggy Dogg was—surprise!—mellow and joyful. 16

ENTERTAINMENT • ARTS • DINING • NIGHTLIFE • THE AGENDA

Mexico NOW!

The Ohio Arts Council, under the leadership of Executive Director Wayne Lawson, has always thought globally. And now we see the results of a relationship with Mexico in **México Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure**, which is on view at the OAC's Riffe Gallery through April 5 before traveling around the U.S. and to Puerto Rico.

The bold, 40-piece exhibition of contemporary art from Mexico reveals "a backing away from the stereotype of Mexican art," Lawson said. There are paintings (including those of Marco Arce; detail of *Serie del Poder/Power Series* shown here), sculptures, photography and installations, including an interactive one and a forest of axes. Fans of the color orange, be sure to check out Melanie Smith's wild *Orange Lush* mixed-media pieces, featuring a slew of ordinary objects in different shades of orange. (Smith was born in England; in fact, many of the artists are immigrants to Mexico.)

The show has big money behind it: Philip Morris is the corporate sponsor, and additional support is provided by the U.S./Mexico Fund for Culture. The show was curated by Robert Stearns (former Wexner Center director) of Stearns+Associates in Columbus, Agustin Arteaga of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, and Maria Guerra, an independent curator in Mexico City.

A full-color, bilingual catalog is available at the Riffe Gallery for \$15. All gallery materials are bilingual.

The gallery, 77 S. High St. in the Riffe Center downtown, is open Monday-Wednesday 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Thursday and Friday 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday noon-4 p.m. Admission is free.

the
Agenda

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By Jacqueline Hall
Dispatch Art Critic

THE LANCASTER FESTIVAL, first and foremost about music, has developed an increasingly important niche for the visual arts — thanks to the high-caliber exhibitions of the Hammond Galleries.

The exhibits, worthy of New York or Chicago, have focused on the cutting edge of contemporary art. They have brought to central Ohio the works of nationally and internationally recognized American artists as well as those of established European artists.

For the past three years, each of the shows has been the brainchild of Robert Stearns, former director of the Wexner Center for the Arts — who, as a free-lance curator, organizes exhibitions for institutions as far away as Japan and Italy.

His fourth exhibition for the Hammond Galleries, called “En las Calles — Six Artists in Mexico City,” concerns the urban experience there.

“My projects kind of snowball and mesh together,” Stearns said.

While in Mexico City for the opening of his “Photography and Beyond in Japan” (now at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington), he developed an interest in the Mexican art scene and met some of its young luminaries.

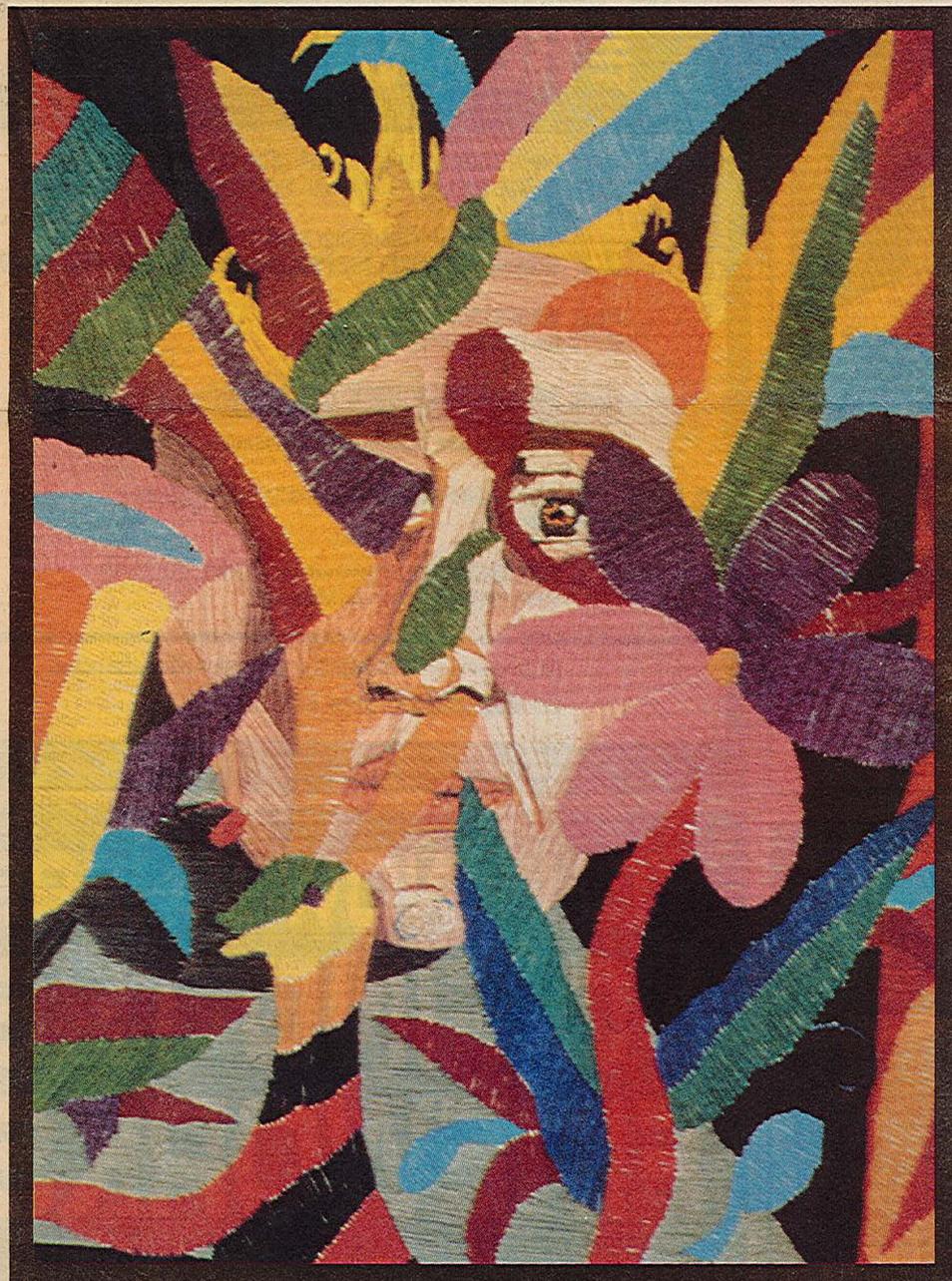
So, when the Ohio Arts Council asked him about putting

Please see **STREETS** Page 2F



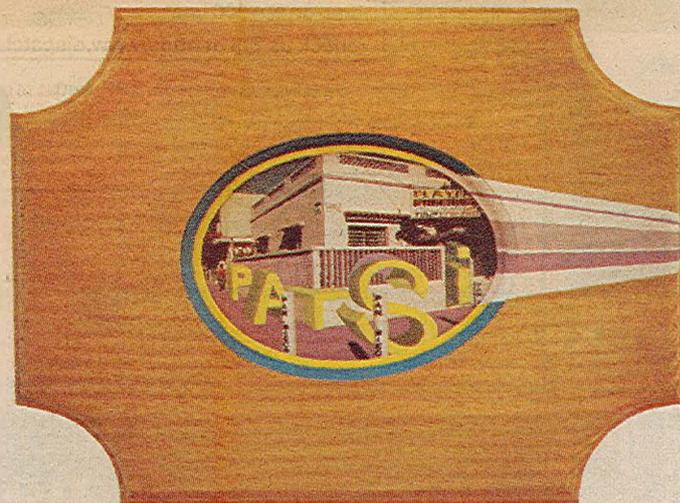
Rojo y Negra (Red and Black), embroidery on cotton, by Carlos Arias

‘In the Streets’



Detail of *Tres Cabezas (Three Heads)*, embroidery on cotton, by Carlos Arias

*Mexico City up-and-comers
interpret their
metropolis for
LANCASTER FESTIVAL*



Naomi by Daniela Rossell

■ “En las Calles” (“In the Streets”) and “The Power of Place” will open July 16 at the Hammond Galleries, 203 S. Broad St., in Lancaster, Ohio. The former will close July 27 and the latter Aug. 3. Call 653-0663.

■ The Lancaster Festival will run July 16-27. For tickets, call 653-8700 or 800-LANFEST; for more information, call 687-4808.

Traditions of form, content left behind

New generation takes another look at what constitutes painting

By Jacqueline Hall
Dispatch Art Critic

"Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida (Mexico Now: Point of Departure)" at the Riffe Gallery showcases the work of contemporary Mexican artists, focusing on the significant changes in those artists' attitude toward painting, which has dominated the Mexican art scene this century.

The exhibition offers painting, sculpture, photography and installations — often combined in unorthodox manners — by 11 emerging artists. A project of the Ohio Arts Council's international program designed to encourage cultural exchanges between artists in Ohio and abroad, the show was organized in partnership with arts councils and foundations around the country.

"Mexico Ahora" will travel to six other U.S. venues through 1998 in a slightly larger form. Carlos Arias' and Betsabee Romero's pieces are not in the Riffe Gallery because of limited space, but their work was shown last summer at the Hammond Gallery in Lancaster.

Robert Stearns, of Stearns & Associates consultants of Columbus and former director of the Wexner Center for the Arts, was curator for "Mexico Ahora" in association with Agustin Arteaga of Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, and Maria Guerra, an independent curator also from Mexico City. The three put together an exhibition that illustrates how young Mexican artists are questioning the form and content of their country's traditional art.

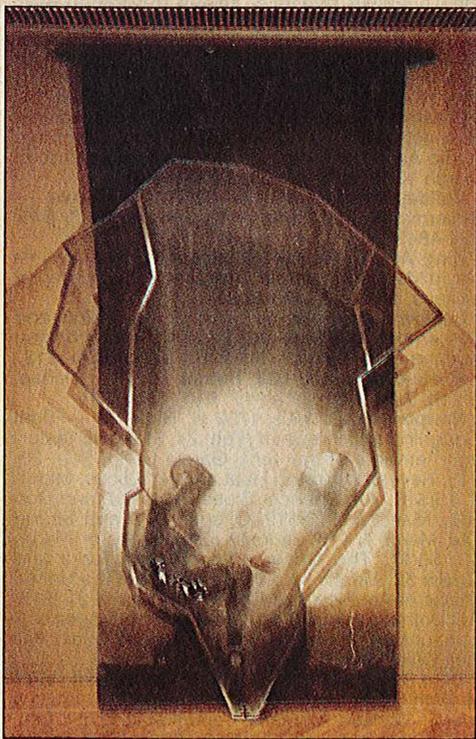
The exhibition's international flavor strikes visitors first. There is an experimental feeling generally associated with Western contemporary art, but a more careful study also reveals a lingering interest in figuration and subtle narrative content or storytelling.

The narrative content is most obvious in Monica Castillo's *Cuadros para Marta* (*Pictures for Marta*), in which paintings of a waterfall are accompanied by Marta's comments on the artist's efforts to satisfy her. Contents are generally more ambiguous, as in Carlos Aguirre's *The Weight of the Law*, and Gerardo Suter's *The Black Box*. Both are interactive installations.

Viewer involvement is physical in Suter's video installation, where visitors find themselves in a darkened space between video screen and still-transparent photograph. In Aguirre's arrangement of photograph and books, spectators can activate a pulley to become part of "the weight of the law."



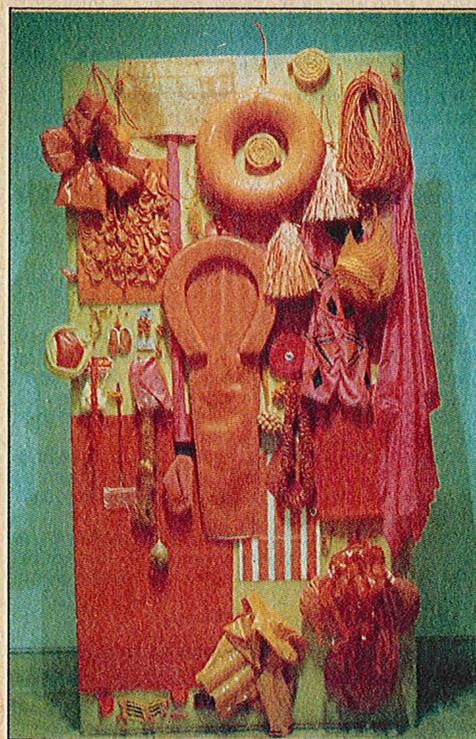
Cuadros para Marta (Pictures for Marta) by Monica Castillo



La curacion (The Cure) by Nestor Quinones

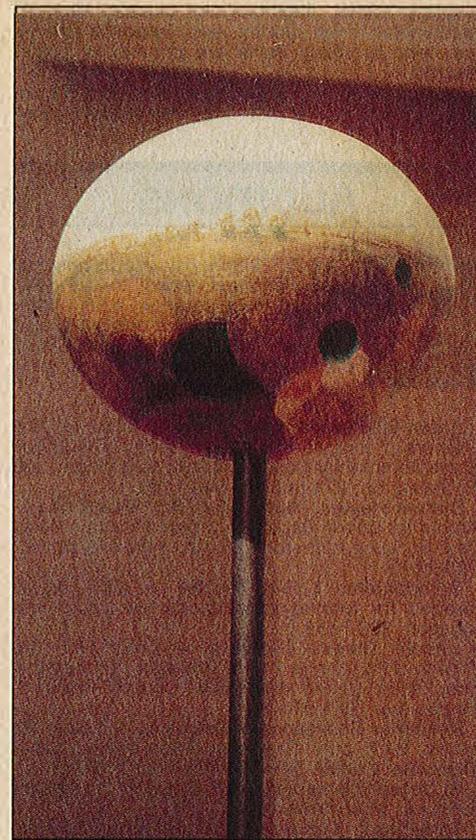
Contemporary Mexican artists may be distancing themselves from the traditional approach to painting; however, as a most perfunctory look at the show reveals, they are still painting but with different goals and methods from their predecessors.

Mario Ayala's *Downy Swine* is made up of

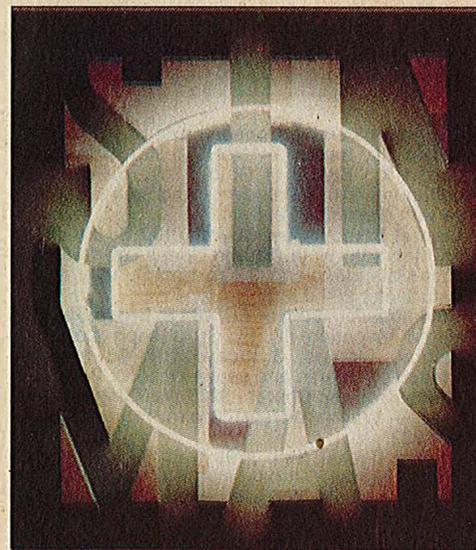


Orange Lush I by Melanie Smith

36 individual images, but it produces a fractured, disconnected vision that a monochromatic palette endows with a strange remoteness. Yishai Jusidman appears to challenge the boundaries of the painted surface in some of the most fascinating pieces in the show. His *Astronomer XXVI*



Astronomo XXVI (Astronomer XXVI) by Yishai Jusidman



Sin Mas by Diego Toledo

(*Astronomer XXVI*) presents a landscape on a globe-shaped surface, which demands to be seen in the round; his *P.Y.* confronts viewers with the monumental face of a clown; and in each of the three large white panels executed with egg tempera — *Yukio*, *Mamekazu* and *Mamehiro* — a shadowy figure vaguely takes shape from the uncertain depth of the picture.

Nestor Quinones' *La curacion (The*

RIFFE GALLERY

■ "Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida (Mexico Now: Point of Departure)" will continue through April 5 in the Riffe Gallery, 77 S. High St. Hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday; 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; and noon-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Call 644-9624.



Power Series, detail, by Marco Arce

Cure) combines the painted surface with a variety of materials, giving the ghostly figure in the foreground a fascinating, yet disquieting, presence. It seems about to be swallowed by the huge limitless space, executed with delicate tonal washes, in the background. In his own way, Quinones also seems to question the boundaries of his painted surface.

Boris Viskin and Melanie Smith are also committed to painting. But while Viskin reduces it to huge white panels barely touched by dabs of color, Smith treats her *Orange Lush* series as sculptural surfaces made of assembled mundane objects. She is among the rare artists in the show to use the explosive colors often associated with traditional Mexican art.

Diego Toledo also uses a fairly hot palette with his arrangements of electric lights and sculptural objects, which seem to turn away from nature in favor of a mechanized look at the environment, possibly a common reaction to the population explosion in Mexico City.

Silvia Gruner's *Natura/Cultura (Nature/Culture)* and Yolande Gutierrez's *Umbral (Threshold)* also show concern for the environment. Gruner offers a photographic inventory of natural and man-made objects in a form inspired by Mexican tiles; Gutierrez arranges bovine jawbones to achieve the impression of a flight of birds across the yellow



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Arts & Leisure

▶ TOP ALBUMS

1. **The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill**, Lauryn Hill
2. **'N Sync**, 'N Sync
3. **Psycho-Circus**, Kiss
4. **Supernatural**, dc Talk
5. **Mechanical Animals**, Marilyn Manson
6. **Still in the Game**, Keith Sweat
7. **Hello Nasty**, Beastie Boys
8. **Soundtrack: Rush Hour**, Def Jam
9. **Stunt**, Barenaked Ladies
10. **Come on Over**, Shania Twain

Billboard



DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

Neon tubing, plastic, aluminum, steel framing and electric transformers make up Diego Toledo's 1996 creation, USO.

Art without Borders

The new exhibit 'Mexico Now' spotlights artists who choose to push the boundaries of postmodern expression rather than toil in the name of national identity.

By **GARY MULLINAX**
Staff reporter

It was a great idea. Seven state or regional arts councils in this country — including Delaware's — would organize an exhibition of artists working in Mexico for presentation in the United States.

But which artists? What kind of art?

The answers didn't come easily, but they came. The result is "Mexico Now: Point of Departure," which opened this weekend at the Delaware Art Museum.

The show that has toured this country during the past two years features artists who have rejected the Mexican traditions of painting as the medium of choice and of art that somehow expresses a "Mexican" identity.

These 13 artists are closely aligned with international postmodernist movements, and their work tends to be abstract and conceptual. They also do very little painting — and certainly not the mural painting associated with Mexican legends like Diego Rivera, preferring installations and other three-dimensional works.

"The original notion was to just

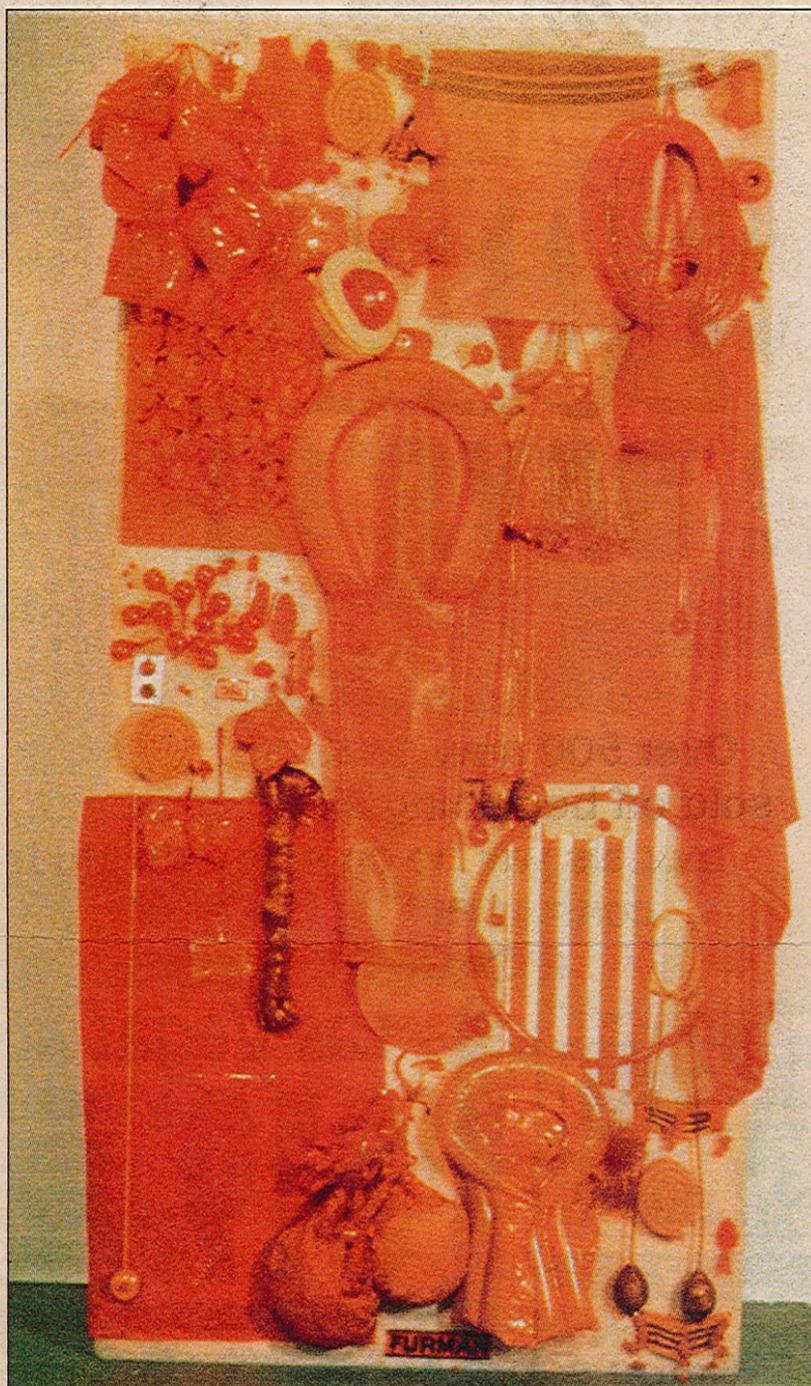
IF YOU GO

What: Mexico Now: Point of Departure
When: Through Nov. 29. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tue and Thu.-Sat.; 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wed.; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sun.
Where: Delaware Art Museum, 2301 Kentmere Parkway, Wilmington
Admission: \$5, \$3 seniors, \$2.50 students, free under 6. Free 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sat. and 4 to 9 p.m. Wed.
Information: 571-9590

go on a shopping trip and make a sort of survey of who's who among living Mexican artists," said Robert Stearns, an independent curator from Columbus, Ohio, who was the main curator of the show.

"But I began to meet a lot of artists whose work seemed the most exploratory, whose work raised the most questions. I realized I had to let them tell me why the kind of show they wanted should exist."

In a nutshell, the more adventurous artists in Mexico wanted — and got — something other than the kind of survey exhibitions of Mexican art that have traveled to the United States in recent years: collections of relatively familiar or acces-



Melanie Smith's *Orange Lush 1*, a 1994 mixed media production, takes an abstract, conceptual approach at odds with traditional Mexican art.

sible art that did not necessarily include them.

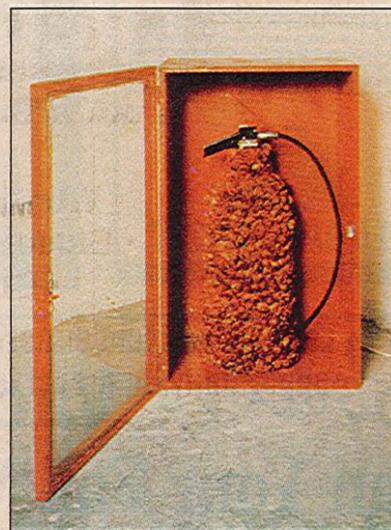
"They felt those exhibitions tended to express the interest of curators coming from another country and bringing their own clichés about what Mexican art is," Stearns said.

So "Mexico Now" brings to Delaware innovative art styles not often seen here outside of the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts. That alone is reason to visit it. A chance to see these approaches in the hands of artists from another culture is another.

"We have found that people who see the exhibit are surprised to find that the work on the surface does not look the way they expect Mexican art to look," Stearns said. "There is a well-promoted 'border' view of Mexico that people are familiar with, but people who live in the central part of Mexico away from that Tex-Mex culture say that what's in this show looks like the Mexico they know."

Still, the approximately 40 works are of varied quality and interest. In short, the exhibition reveals the strengths and weaknesses of postmodern art, or whatever we want to call work by contemporary artists trying to find something new to do while burdened by the sense that everything has already been done.

The hanging, bleached-white "birds" that fill the two-story air



Betsabeé Romero plays with traditional Mexican imagery: dried roses on wire armature, metal fixtures and enamel painting in the 1996 *Untitled* (four fire extinguishers).

space of the downstairs foyer are striking in their lightness and delicacy. The piece by Yolanda Gutiérrez becomes even more fascinating when you consider it consists of bleached animal bones. Life and death are never far apart.

The inner tubes, clothing, de-

Mexico: 'Departure' takes new direction

FROM PAGE H1

flated balloons, brooms and other found objects of Melanie Smith's "Orange Lush 1" are head-turners. All of it is painted a bright orange that this transplant from England associates with her adopted country, but without evoking the mysticism or ethnic characteristics associated with NeoMexicanism, a 1980s, painting-heavy movement that artists in this show rejected for having descended into kitsch and cliché.

Also of interest are the constructions of Néstor Quiñones, which incorporate nylon scrims and other transparent layers to convey multiple levels in a single wall-mounted work. Diego Toledo's neon construction, "USO," is not a whole lot more than a neon sign, but it's fun to look at. Incidentally, it has nothing to do with dancing soldiers. The letters mean "use."

The "fire extinguishers" by Betsabé Romero point to the dichotomy between practical objects and art. If a fire breaks out, ignore them. They are made of dried red roses — one of those symbols of Mexico, but here used in an ironic way that avoids cliché and sentimentality.

Paintings aren't excluded

While painting is de-emphasized, it is not absent. Yishai Jusidman paints portraits on hanging spheres that are unrecognizable as portraits until the viewer walks around the spheres and looks carefully. Eventually, the images coalesce in the viewer's mind.

Boris Viskin's "Mondrian With Matisse's Goldfish" is an oddly fascinating painting with the merest hint of goldfishes smeared on the white space of a Mondrian-like painting that is *all* white space except for a few geometrical lines and three small squares of color. It's a painting about painting, but it works even if this conceptual context is ignored.

Even more conceptual are the works of Mónica Castillo. Her "Pictures for Martha" consists of six painted images of a landscape and some words of explanation. Five of the landscapes were

The artists should be applauded for challenging the conventions of their country — especially for rejecting painting and the tradition of the mural painters who brought international attention to Mexico in the first half of this century.

painted by Castillo, who followed suggestions by her housekeeper about what she would like to see in such a painting. The sixth image — the one most aligned with her housekeeper's vision — is a painting Castillo bought at a street bazaar and then altered slightly.

While this is of some interest conceptually, what we really have here is six pieces of calendar art. The artist has rejected her own vision in favor of one by a nonartist. Why bother to visit a museum if you're not going to see the real thing?

Castillo's "Distributing Bread" consists of small color photographs of people who have received her "gift" of self-portraits made of bread. Bags of such bread sit in front of the photos. Castillo's anti-elitist straining to include "regular people" in her art again leads to a work that is of little aesthetic interest.

This kind of politicization bogs down the show in other places, too. Gerardo Suter explores issues of personal identity even as he rejects images of Mexican national identity. While his video projections might be of immense interest to him personally, his "strong, androgynous human figures," as the catalogue describes them, make no strong claim on anybody else's attention.

Carlos Arias' embroideries are



"Umbral Threshold," a 1992 creation by Yolanda Gutiérrez of 28 sets of cow jawbones, fills the two-story air space of the museum's downstairs foyer.

another gender statement apparently related to the artist's personal identity, since embroidery is traditionally associated with women. But if you have to know the artist is male, does it really work as art? Fortunately, the colors and designs are compelling.

Whether we like this art or not, we should be grateful for the opportunity to judge it firsthand. The artists also should be applauded for challenging the conventions of their country — especially for rejecting painting and the tradition of the mural painters who brought international attention to Mexico in the first half of this century.

"The way one artist explained it to me is that to turn your back on painting in Mexico is to intentionally marginalize yourself as an artist," Stearns said. "You're just not taken seriously by the establishment."

It's no surprise, then, that the selection of artists for this show

"caught the cultural ministry a bit off-guard," as Stearns put it. But after the show's two years of touring, the government seems content with it — the Mexican ambassador attended the private opening last week — and many of the artists are making headway in their careers, thanks partly to the exhibition.

This does not necessarily mean their work is showing up in major American galleries, though some of it is.

"Artists in Mexico have been gaining a lot of attention throughout Central and South America," Stearns said. "They don't feel they have to have a New York show to be taken seriously."

Whether they need America or not, Delaware, at least, needs them. "Mexico Now" brings a fascinating — if uneven — corner of the contemporary art world to a place where "traditional" and "American" generally tell the story.

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TIMES & DEMOCRAT
ORANGEBURG, S. C.

OCT 12 97

[220] **'Mexico Ahora' takes over museum!**

In an effort to strengthen the bond between Charlotte, N.C. and its Latin American community and explore Latin American culture, the Mint Museum of Art will join the Latin American Coalition and the Latin American Women's Association in celebrating "Latin American/Hispanic Heritage Month" which runs through Oct. 20.

The month will be held in conjunction with the Mint's exhibition "Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure." The exhibition and its national tour are sponsored by Philip Morris Companies Inc.

All the programs are held at the Mint Museum of art and are free following museum admission unless otherwise noted. For details, call the Education Department at (704) 337-2098.

Until Oct. 12 the Student Artist Exhibition "Little Family Treasures/Pequenos Tesoros Familiares" will be on display. Also on display until Dec. 13 will be "Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure," an exhibition featuring the works of 13 contemporary Mexican artists that represent Mexican art today.

On Sunday, Oct. 12, from noon to 8 p.m., the "7th Latin American Festival" will offer food and crafts, music, dances, cultural displays and children's activities from Latin American countries. Admission is \$3.

On Tuesday, Oct. 14, 21 and 28 and Nov. 4 from 7:30-9 p.m., a full art history course, "Pre-Columbian Art: The Ancient Traditions of Latin America," will be offered. Tuition is \$40 for a Mint member, \$48 for non-member.

Several more programs will be offered and for more information, call (704) 333-3399. h

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OBSERVER NEWS
ENTERPRISE
NEWTON, N. C.

OCT 15 97

[220] **Museum offers trip to Mint exhibition** A7

The Hickory Museum of Art is offering a trip to the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte to tour the exhibition Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida (Mexico Now: Point of Departure) on Thursday, October 23.

The Mexico Ahora exhibition is presented by the Mint Museum of Art in recognition of Latin American Heritage Month.

Mexico Ahora is an exhibi-

tion of the work of 13 contemporary Mexican artists who have broken loose from the traditional Mexican artistic styles.

These artists work in new media, using contemporary imagery and concepts.

The group touring will also visit The Light Factory to view the exhibition Mujeres Artistas Mexicanas: Fotografia, Filme y Video (Women Artists in Mexico: Photography, Film and Video). The exhibition brings

together images of Mexican life by women artists in Mexico and the United States.

The tour group will leave the Hickory Museum of Art at 9:15 a.m. and return at 5:00 p.m.

The cost of the trip is \$37.50 and includes transportation, museum admission, and lunch at the Providence Cafe.

For more information on the Museum trip contact Ashley Sellner at the Hickory Museum of Art at 327-8576. h

Charlotte Observer 9-13-97

Scholarship dinner next Saturday at Founders Hall

The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Greater Charlotte Chapter, will have its second annual gala dinner to benefit its scholarship fund next Saturday. The black-tie event is at 8 p.m. at Founders Hall in NationsBank Corporate Center in uptown Charlotte.

Olivia Fortson



The guest speaker is U.S. Rep. **Sheila Jackson Lee**, D-Texas. Community service awards will be presented to **Edward Dolby**, an executive vice president with NationsBank; **Wanda Montgomery**, executive director of the Afro-American Culture Center; and **Ella Scarborough**,

a Charlotte City Council member-at-large. **Rev. Dovie Roundtree**, an N.C. native who was the first African American female officer in the Army, will be honored with the organization's Living Legend award. Sweet Dreams will provide after-dinner entertainment.

The National Coalition of 100 Black Women is a nonprofit organization of professional women of diverse backgrounds. The group's mission is to provide an advocacy voice, leadership and mentoring base for African American women.

Tickets cost \$50 per person. For information, call 391-2600, anytime.

Mexican fiesta at the Mint

The Young Affiliates of the Mint Museum of Art will kick off a 1997-98 membership drive with a fiesta from 7 to 10 p.m. Friday at

the museum, 2730 Randolph Road.

The party, in conjunction with the opening of the museum's Mexican art exhibit, will feature food provided by area restaurants, ethnic music and a margarita bar. Co-amigos for the party are Catherine James and Dave Wegerek. Host amigos are Angela Black, Carolyn Cook, Falifax Cooper, Joe Davant, Ken Forester, Steve Gennett, Ellen Gibson, Paige Gunter, Gil Isbell, Vicki Jones, Scott Klepper, Glana Maier, Randall Mauney, Allen Maxwell, Garrett Moseley, Carolyn Pou, Anne Reap, Marty Viser, Charlie Winn, Noelle Wooten and Tori Wrona.

The Young Affiliates' goal is to reach 2,000 members by the year 2000. The event costs \$5 for nonmembers.

For information, call 337-2008, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

server, P.O. Box 30308, Charlotte, NC 28230-0308. Include daytime telephone numbers. Olivia Fortson's online column, *Auritie Social: Advice with Attitude*, is at <http://www.charlotte.com/observer/>

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SECTION

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ARTIST
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the 'Mexico
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(Mexico
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Mint Mu-
seum of Art
in Charlotte
through
Dec. 14.

Charlotte Observer 10-12-97

Mint Museum hosts Latin fiesta

By **BOB MEADOWS**
Staff Writer

Ecuadorean folk music, Salvadoran dance and Peruvian folklore will fill the Mint Museum today at the annual Latin American festival.

The Charlotte fiesta celebrates Latin culture. It attracts performers from South America and Spain, and brings visitors from throughout the Piedmont area. Last year, 7,000 folks attended the festival, and organizers expect to top that figure this year.

The cultural celebration, in its sixth year, runs from 1-6 p.m.

"We've put so much into it. It's really taken up all my time lately," said Teresa Vasquez, president of festival sponsors the Latin American Coalition. "But it's worth it."

Entertainment will include "Hermanos Torres," a musical quartet of siblings from Peru. Other attractions include Ximali, an Aztecan group from Mexico; Group Brisas of Mexico; and dance performances from the Caribbean

and other countries.

The festival will also include shows inside the Mint Museum, storytelling and a clown show for children.

The Latin American Festival will be held from 1 to 8 p.m. today at the Mint Museum of Art, 2730 Randolph Road. Admission is \$3 for adults; Mint Museum members and ages 12 and younger get in free. For more information, call 337-2000, from 12 to 8 p.m.

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NEWS ARGUS
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OCT 19 97
220
Mexican art

NEW YORK (AP) — A traveling exhibition of Mexican art that has opened at the Mint Museum in Charlotte introduces a new generation of contemporary artists.

The organizers say that although painting has dominated Mexico's 20th-century art, artists included in "Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now" are charting new creative territory through photography, sculpture and multimedia installations.

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STATESVILLE, N. C.

OCT 19 97
The bride is a graduate of West Statesville.
220
**Mexican contemporary
art to visit Charlotte**

NEW YORK (AP) — A traveling exhibition of Mexican art that has opened at the Mint Museum, Charlotte, N.C., introduces a new generation of contemporary artists.

The organizers say that although painting has dominated Mexico's 20th-century art, artists included in "Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now" are charting new creative territory through photography, sculpture and multimedia

installations.

The 40 or so works on view are described as showing a clear tendency toward abstraction and a more ironic attitude to their cultural heritage, while being too diverse for easy labeling.

The show's itinerary is:

—Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, N.C., through Dec. 13.

—Wood Street Galleries, Pittsburgh, March 28-May 30, 1998.

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GASTON GAZETTE
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SEP 21 97
846-2788 or (704) 372-1000.

220
Mint's Mexican exhibit

The Mint Museum of Art takes a look at Mexican art with its big new show "Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure," running through Dec. 13.

The show features 13 artists whose work reflects their roles in an international art community and the issues and themes of their generation. There are 40 works, including sculpture, painting, photography and mixed media.

The Mint is located at 2730 Randolph Road. Admission costs \$4 adults, free for children 12 and younger. For more information, call (704) 337-2000.

SPEEDS, STEEDS, READS AND MORE!

The days may be a little shorter and the nights a little colder, but the end of summer doesn't mean the end of fun in Charlotte. In fact, it means quite the opposite. Just as the leaves burst forth into a rainbow wide array of cultural, artistic and just plain fun events for the entire family.

Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now

While painting has dominated 20th century Mexican art, a new generation of contemporary Mexican artists is declaring its independence from this medium and charting new creative territory through photography, sculpture and multi-media installations. This ground-breaking work is the subject of the Mint Museum of Art's current exhibit Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure, on display through December 13th.

The exhibition presents a sample of the great variety of directions that contemporary visual artists in Mexico have decided to explore using technological innovations, pictorial images and decontextualized objects, elements that complement each other or reinvent themselves in the search for new forms of expression. The exhibition's 40 works by 13 artists manifest a clear tendency toward abstraction and a penchant for the redefinition and reinterpretation of concepts.

Popular perceptions of Mexican art is colored by its history. The paintings of early 20th century

Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now
Through December 13



UAW-GM Quality 500
October 1-5

Speedway could prove to be just as pivotal in the quest for the 1997 Winston Cup championship. The week starts off Wednesday, October 1st with Winston Pole Night. One by one, the Winston Cup drivers will give their all to claim the top starting spot for Sunday's UAW-GM Quality 500. The EasyCare Certified 200 Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA) race under the lights will top off the evening of speed.

The All Pro Bumper to Bumper 300 Challenge Race on Friday, October 3rd gives non-qualified NASCAR Busch series drivers one last chance to make Saturday's race.

muralists Rivera, Orozco, Tamayo and Siqueiros, voiced Mexico's social, political and spiritual order. Not until the late 1950s and early 1960s did abstract art gain credence in Mexico.

Art critic Osvaldo Sanchez writes that an interesting aspect of Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now is that the works allow a tracing of the shifts defining Mexican art in the past decade. A decisive factor, declares Sanchez, was the simultaneous arrival in Mexico of a large number of foreign artists—Europeans, North Americans and Cubans—and the return home of Mexican artists who had studied abroad in New York, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv, Paris and London.

The diversity of language and conceptual levels found among the works in Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now prevents easy labeling of any sort. While the exhibition offers glimpses of the unique perspective contemporary Mexican artists have toward their culture, it

also offers ample evidence of the extent to which the visual arts are evolving their own universal language.

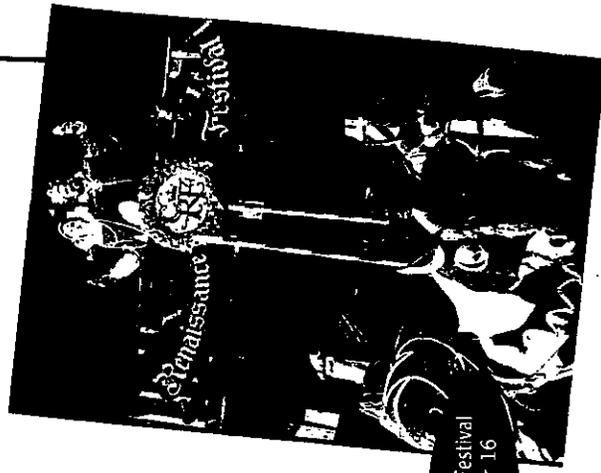
The Mint Museum of Art is located at 2730 Randolph Road. For further information, call the Mint at 337-2000.

UAW-GM Quality 500

The Charlotte Motor Speedway's Fall classic is recognized as a pivotal race in the battle for the coveted NASCAR Winston Cup Championship.

It was in last year's UAW-GM Quality 500 that current NASCAR Winston Cup champion Terry Labonte gained 110 points on teammate Jeff Gordon, trimming his lead to just one point. Labonte's victory at Charlotte Motor Speedway propelled him to the 1996 NASCAR Winston Cup championship.

This year UAW - GM
Quality 500 week at Charlotte Motor



Carolina Renaissance Festival
October 4-November 16

EVENTS

From staff reports 220

In an effort to strengthen the bond between Charlotte and its Latin American community and explore Latin American culture, the Mint Museum of Art will celebrate Latin American/Hispanic Heritage Month Sept. 20-Oct. 20 in conjunction with the exhibition "Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure," a national exhibition which will be at the museum through Dec. 13.

"Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now" presents a sample of the great variety of directions that contemporary visual artists in Mexico have decided to explore, using technological innovations, pictorial images and decontextualized objects, elements that compliment each other or reinvent themselves in the search for new forms of expression. The exhibition's 40 works, including sculpture, paintings, photography, and mixed media, manifest a clear tendency toward abstraction and a penchant for the redefinition of reinterpretation of concepts.

Popular perceptions of Mexican art are colored by its history. Not since the Renaissance have fine arts been as closely linked with public life as in their heyday of Mexican muralists such as Rivera, Orozco, Tamayo and Siqueiros in the early 20th century. As vehicle for public education, their paintings voiced Mexico's social, political, and spiritual order. Their sphere of influence crossed international borders, even inspiring a public art program in the United States as part of the Works Progress Administration of the 1930s. Diego Rivera and compatriots became cultural heroes, casting elongated shadows and defining the parameters of Mexican art throughout the rest of the century.

It would not be until the late 1950s and early 1960s that abstract art would gain credence in Mexico. A movement coined "The Rupture" displaced the dominant figurative and narrative style. Such elements would return in the 1980s with the NeoMexicanism movement that appropriated popular imagery, nationalist and religious emblems and retronostalgia as much for farce as social commentary.

For details on the exhibit or Museum programs, call (704) 337-2098.



Photo courtesy of the Mint Museum
LATIN AMERICAN ART — This painting will be part of the "Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure" national exhibition that will be at the Mint Museum in Charlotte through Dec. 13.

INSIDER

Charity begins at home — or hotel

Fall comes to the Carolinas with the astounding suddenness of the revelations in the Marv Albert trial, but Insider will truck in no seedy stories of men in garters, at least outside a Shakespearean context.

No, our hotel-room antics consist of speculation about a major hostelry uptown.

The Big I couldn't help but notice that one minute **Loews Hotel** magnate Jonathan Tisch was saying he had never been to Charlotte before, and the next minute he was talking about possibly building a 1,000-room hotel here.

Could it be the result of the \$1.500 contribution that the **Charlotte Convention & Visitors Bureau** made to a charitable foundation that Tisch oversees? If so, the Big I says, give them another few thousand. Keynesian economists call that priming the pump.

Tisch, who was in town for the Convention and Visitor's Bureau annual meeting last week, told Insider his first impression of Charlotte was that "This city has it together — listening to elected officials who understand the importance of (public-private partnerships), the booming skyline, the beautiful stadium."

As a member of the board of directors of the **New York Giants** football team, Tisch made the mandatory football jokes. He also told this one, about two signs in a small shoe repair shop in New

York City. The first sign said "Quality Service. Price," while the small sign below it said "Pick any two."

"That doesn't quite work in our business today," Tisch said.

In other celebrity spotting, **Bernadette Peters**, in Charlotte to sing with the **Charlotte Symphony Orchestra** on Sept. 19 and 20, discovered the **Cino Gilie** on **Morrison Boulevard** across from **SouthPark Mall**.

"She came in twice Saturday — for lunch and again for dinner," said **Tim Reys**, operating partner of this famed martini haunt of the Big I and other bizfolk. "She loved the place. She ordered the gulf salad (\$10.95), and . . . told us we would get twice as much for it in New York."

Reys kept the restaurant open 45 minutes after normal closing time to accommodate her party Saturday evening.

Many visiting celebrities stay at the nearby **Park Hotel**. "We've gotten a good deal of them in here," Reys said. "We have a no-automograph policy with celebrities. Our staff knows not to bother them when they come in here."

Elsewhere in eatery-land, when **Adam Kamback**, owner of **La Bibliotheque**, opened the **Bridge Cafe** on N.C. 49 at the **Buster Boyd Bridge** in April, people wondered how he would balance his fine dining

taste with a casual dining restaurant.

The early days were interesting. Some of Kamback's employees from the four-star, four-diamond **La Bibliotheque** in SouthPark were helping launch **The Bridge**, when one apologized to a customer for serving beer in a can.

The kinks are out now, says Kamback, who modeled the 100-seat lakeside restaurant, changed its image from watering hole to family casual, revamped the menu and hired a pianist to play during dinner.

The **Bridge**, with its outdoor deck seating on **Lake Wylie**, doesn't try to emulate the elegance of the 170-seat **La Bibliotheque**, in the **Roxborough Building** at 1901 **Roxborough Rd.**, said **Kamback**, who keeps reminding himself of the difference.

"The **Bridge** is a neighborhood cafe," he said. "I just try to shut up and remember that when I go down there."

Before whacking the tap, **Roussio** — who came to Charlotte 51 years ago as a newlywed — reminisced about changes in the **City of Banks**. The growing international population, for example. There he was, helping celebrate Charlotte's interpretation of a German holiday. Afterwards, he was headed for the **Mint Museum of Art's** kickoff for "Mexico Now: Point of Departure" exhibit.

Roussio got to talking about history, a Big I favorite. He recalled the expulsion of Jewish people from Spain, centuries ago. Seems he can trace his family roots to Spain.

"I'll be joining my people tonight," he said of the Mint event. More on the international front: **Joseph Jamatcki**, president of the

ducers and **The Dunn Marketing Group** bill their version of the German frolic as "The Southern Celebration of Heritage, Harvest & Fun."

"Y'all come oom, pah, pah."

Elsewhere on the brewing beat — hey, it's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it — Insider noticed that **Tim Johnson**, who with wife **Susan** sank his life savings into **Johnson Beer Co.**, was a little edgy before **Roussio** hefted the keg-tapping mallet.

"Usually we test a new beer in the privacy of just the workers here" — not a crowd of about 100 people sweating on a hot September afternoon.

Roussio took the first swig. "It feels good going down your throat," he said to rounds of applause.

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buy the **Kannapolis towel maker** is complete. **Chuck Hansen**, head of **Pillowtex** and a 1996 **Dallas Father of the Year**, drives a Ferrari.

"What color?" Insider innocently asks. "There's only one color for a Ferrari."

For the Ferrari-impaired, that would be red.

Please see **INSIDER** page 14D

American Culinary Federation's Charlotte chapter, was at the Johnson Beer event making sure everyone had copies of the menu for the **Charlotte Sister City Reception** the night before **Das Oktoberfest** starts.

The reception menu, developed by **Chef Jon Spencer** of the **Charlotte Country Club**, has items from each of the seven countries where Charlotte has a sister city. The offerings include Peruvian taiba, a spread of swordfish, chili and tomato. From Russia, garkas dromingien (stuffed cucumber cups), and from Poland, war teap har (butterflied shrimp with ham).

Jarmatcki came up with some dinner items, including apple sorbet infused with gold leaf in honor of Charlotte's gold-mining heritage. Following the palate-cleansing sorbet comes the unveiling of the top-secret Charlotte signature entree. The dish was born of a challenge from **Hizzoner Pat McCrory** to come up with a dish that says "Charlotte."

We tried to get signature-dish chef **Jeff LaBarge**, **Central Piedmont Community College's** program chair in culinary technology, to tell all.

"What do people eat in Charlotte?" LaBarge asked. "Meat and three veggies?" "You're close."

We continue to get acquainted with the Dallas dude who will be **Fieldcrest Cannon's** new CEO after **Pillowtex's** \$700 million deal to

buy the **Kannapolis towel maker** is complete. **Chuck Hansen**, head of **Pillowtex** and a 1996 **Dallas Father of the Year**, drives a Ferrari.

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Please see **INSIDER** page 14D



Johnson

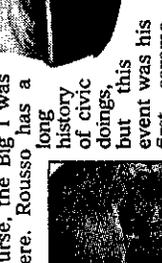


Kamback

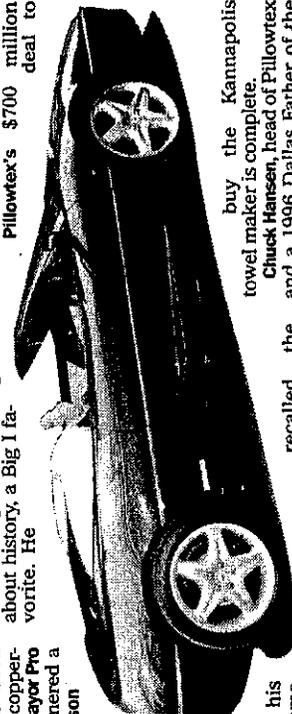


"O'zapft is" — it has been tapped — they said after copper-colored beer spewed on **Mayor Pro Tem Al Roussio** as he hammered a tap into a keg of **Johnson Beer's** first **Oktoberfest** **Bier** on Sept. 18. Of course, the **Big I** was there. **Roussio** has a long history of civic doings, but this event was his first ceremonial beer tapping.

The festivities, complete with bratwurst and kraut, marked another step toward **Das Oktoberfest** celebration Oct. 31 through Nov. 2 at the **Charlotte Merchandise Mart**. **Event Pro-**



Roussio



buy the **Kannapolis towel maker** is complete. **Chuck Hansen**, head of **Pillowtex** and a 1996 **Dallas Father of the Year**, drives a Ferrari.

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Please see **INSIDER** page 14D

A fresh view from our Southern neighbors

By JEFFREY DAY
Staff Writer

CHARLOTTE — In this region, we are usually inundated with shows by Southern artists. When they're not in the galleries, the art is by really, truly dead people.

So "Mexico Now: Point of Departure" is a breath of warm, fresh air from south of the border — and we don't mean that neon oasis north of Florence.

The show at Charlotte's Mint Museum of Art shows the artists are not dealing with issues foreign to anyone on this planet at the end of the 20th century.

REVIEW

Mexico, after all, isn't some little tiny nation. At last count, Mexico City was the one of the largest cities in the world.

While the artists have a definite cultural viewpoint reflected in subject matter, content, material and language, they certainly feel fully engaged with the post-modern art issues, with all the good and bad that implies.

But overall, this feels like a show by very fine international artists with a great deal to say. And they say it well.

The most compelling of the artists is Yishai Jusidman, who shows a great range in his paint-



A portion of 'Nature/Culture' by Silvia Gruner is one of the pieces of contemporary Mexican art on display at Mint Museum in Charlotte. At left, 'Sumo' by Yishai Jusidman, one of the most amazing artists in the show, 'Mexico Now: Point of Departure.'

like. Through them runs a boardwalk you wouldn't want to walk on, made from the trees that no longer exist.

Through the galleries are four fire extinguishers made of red roses by Betsabee Romero, along with two prayer rails of white roses.

As Romero does with flowers, two other artists have a similar approach using repetition and single colors.

Melaine Smith, a native of England, was fascinated by all the bright orange products she saw in Mexico, leading to a series called "Orange Lush." One piece consists of a wall of orange things — raincoats, shoes, balls, toys, clothes, rope. Another is a Warhol-like profusion of painted flowers, while the

If you're going

- **What:** "Mexico Now: Point of Departure"
- **When:** Through Dec., 13
- **Where:** Mint Museum of Art, 2730 Randolph Road, Charlotte
- **Cost:** \$4 for adults; \$2 for students; free for children under 12

third is an expressionist abstract painting.

Silvia Gruner has taken a red rag and tied it to many objects — knives, bones, plants, books, nails, seed pods — and taken pictures of each. These 156 photos make up "Nature/Culture."

Our region is too often out of the loop on international exhibits. Even modest ones like this.

ing" and "Mondrian with Matisses' Goldfish" both make references to art past. Both are large, mostly white paintings, with literally veiled hints to other artworks through small applications of color.

The installations of Carlos Aguirre are both funny and scary. "The Forest" consists of about 20 axes mounted on street poles, tree-

mally-defined spaces.

Another fine painter is Boris Viskin, whose "The Death of Paint-

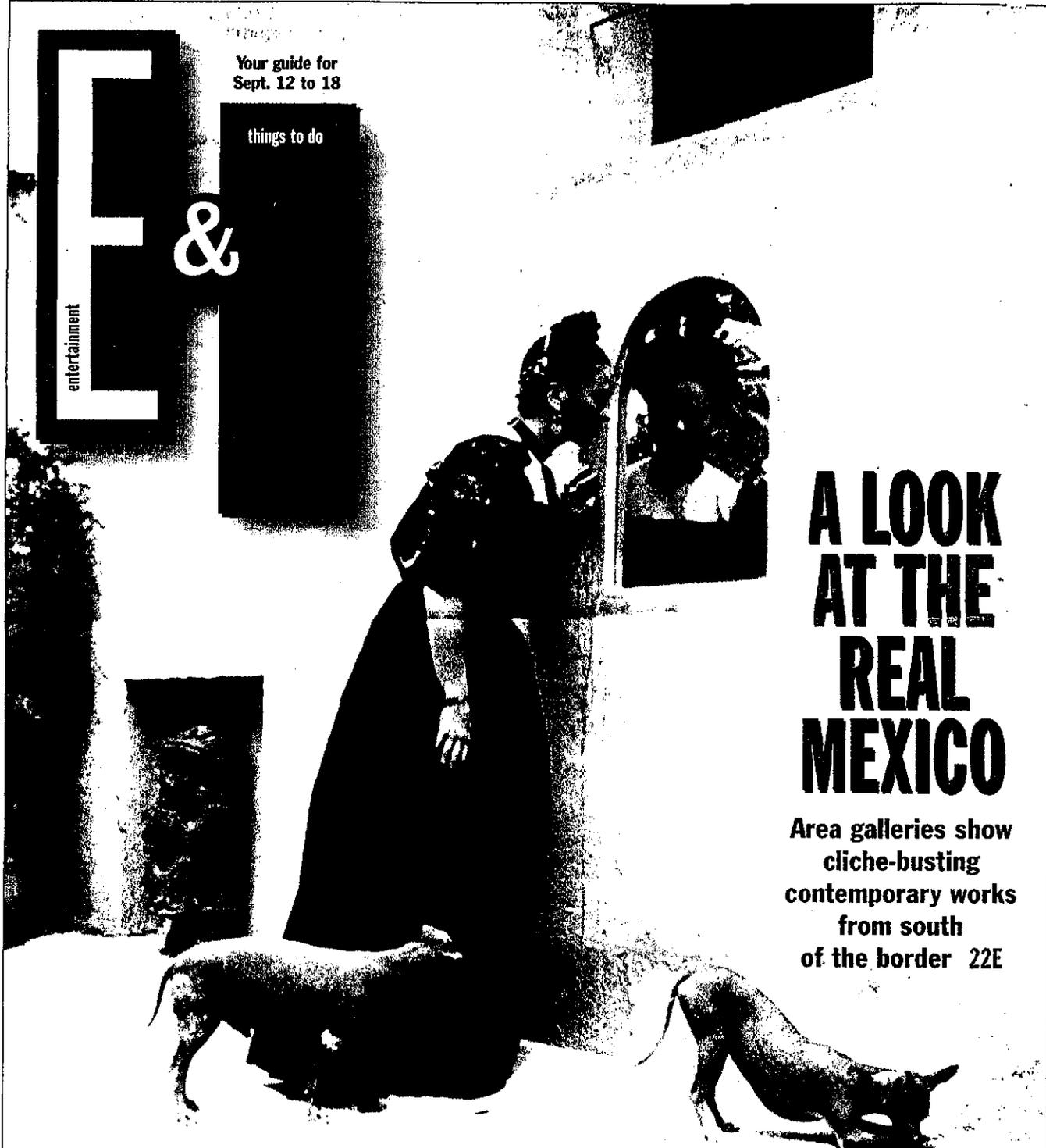
ings. Three of them are white on white with the delicately drawn full-sized figures barely visible.

A work from his "Astronomer" series is a wooden globe painted in sensuous wax. His paintings of sumo wrestlers is an exercise in the nature of painting with its for-

E
&
entertainment

Your guide for
Sept. 12 to 18

things to do



A LOOK AT THE REAL MEXICO

Area galleries show
cliche-busting
contemporary works
from south
of the border 22E

Art is for everybody at Festival in the Park 25E
On W.Va. rapids, it's you against Mother Nature 27E

The Charlotte Observer

the skinny ON ARTS

Get to know Schubert, another great Austrian

In 1991, CD companies went nuts over the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death. A lot of the hype was "Amadeus" fever. Wasn't he the genius who produced the greatest array of classical music, died at the peak of his powers and was poisoned by a hated rival? (Correct answers: Yes, yes and no.)

Lawrence Toppman



No such fuss has been made over the 200th anniversary of Franz Schubert's birth year. Dumpy, sexually ambiguous, alternately gregarious and solitary, syphilitic at the end of his life, the Austrian hardly makes fit fodder for a grand and celebratory movie. There was a forgotten play and movie about him called "Blossom Time," but it horn about as much resemblance to his humble life as a rose does to a brown-eyed Susan.

Yet he deserves acclaim. Schubert died at 31, even younger than Mozart. He left behind the largest catalog of first-rate songs ever written and piano sonatas that are second only to Beethoven's — and maybe not even second. His chamber music puts him in the first rank with Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Brahms and Shostakovich.

Like most classical composers, he's best heard live. That's why I'd send you to a Schubert concert Sunday by the Austrian Culture Society of the Carolinas.

It starts at 3:30 p.m. in Dana Auditorium at Queens College; tickets are \$8 (\$6 for students and senior citizens). The program's a capsule guide to Schubert: one movement of his unsettling "Death and the Maiden" string quartet, excerpts from the poignant song cycle "Schwanengesang" and various other songs in combination with cello, clarinet and piano.

If you know Schubert, you know how moving this music can be. If not, treat yourself. Go, and find out how a man with such a difficult life could write such heavenly sounds.

A fresh look at Mexico

Area galleries show work that explodes stereotypes

By LAWRENCE TOPPMAN
Staff Writer

What's your favorite visual stereotype of Mexico?

The sleeping peasant, head bent under a massive sombrero as he leans against a cactus?

The Tijuana street corner, where you can purchase everything from onyx chess sets to encounters best left out of a family newspaper?

The picture-postcard resort cities, with grinning pearl divers and endless waves of margaritas?

Blow those cobwebs out of your minds, or let artists blowing into the region do it for you. The Light Factory, Mint Museum of Art, Hickory Museum of Art and UNC Charlotte are paying tribute to Mexican art from recent decades.

Don't expect Diego Rivera murals, picturesque coyotes howling at full moons or manilla-clad maidens clutching roses and looking pensive. (If there are any, look for in-jokes.) Instead, starting today, you'll find religious fervor, work you might easily encounter in SoHo, even famous images deconstructed by hip modernists.

Here's the game plan.

Light Factory

The photographic-center kicks off three programs tonight. "Native Soil" lets six female photographers from Mexico depict their homeland in every fashion, from the documentary shots by Yolanda Andrade to the fact/fiction blend of Graciela Iturbide, whose work echoes the "magic realism" movement in Latin American literature.

"Shifting Borders/Moving Images" is a series of six videos that deal, as you'd guess, with borders: ethnicity, class, the literal border between the United States and Mexico, borders between men and women stuck in traditional roles.

"Half Lies" will screen continuously at the center; it uses a collage of images from mass media to undermine the Mexican government's claim that the country is run smoothly, with political stability and free-market capitalism.

Other videos will be divided between the Light Factory and the Main Library, at 310 N. Tryon St. That series starts Sept. 21 with "Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary," a documentary by Laura Angelica Simon, a third-grade teacher in East Los Angeles who wanted to show the harm done by Proposition 187 (which denies public education to undocumented aliens).

"Tangle of Complexes: Photographing in Mexico" is an exhibit that fell into place by accident. When Alabama photographer Pinky/MM Bass invited some friends in the United States down to an artistic retreat in Oaxaca in the mid-'90s, she never expected their work to be coordinated into a show.

"One person cohered the whole time she was down," says Bass, who was a missionary years earlier in Mexico City. "The idea was, 'You get fed, you rest, you see with new eyes.' Some of their best work



"Our Lady of the Iguanas," by Graciela Iturbide, is part of the "Native Soil" show at the Light Factory.

came years after the fact.

"Mexican culture is so strongly connected to the past; the really rural places aren't into this century yet. In Oaxaca, we could get to a supermarket if we needed to, yet we could go to an old-fashioned market with pigs and chickens. When I first went, I expected dirt floors. But I also found tile floors. In Mexico, the rich and poor occupy the same space."

The Light Factory is at 809 W. Hill St. (one block east of Morehead, off Cedar Street.) It's free, and open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursdays and noon to 6 p.m. weekends. The shows run through Oct. 26. There's a free reception for the artists from 6 to 9 tonight. Call 333-9755 during gallery hours to learn about exhibits or get a video schedule.

Mint Museum of Art

It's easier for Robert Stearns to say what "Mexico Now: Point of Departure" is not, rather than exactly what it is. "Artists there think, 'Everyone expects me to do X, so I want to do Y,'" says the show's curator, from Columbus, Ohio.

"The younger generation is working against the muralist tradition of Rivera (from the '20s) and neo-Mexicanism of the '80s. That was a return to mythological content, spiritual and anthropological icons that went back to the foundations of pre-Christian culture, done (over) in a pop-culture style.

"It's a dilemma for that generation. But they're not



The Mint Museum's "Mexico Now: Point of Departure" exhibit includes a spherical piece by Yishai Jusidman.

See WORKS next page

ARTS

Area art galleries exhibit a fresh look at Mexico

WORKS*From preceding page*

cynical or negative, which are the prevalent attitudes in the U.S. and Europe."

Some artists in this show could come from anywhere in the world. Many play with expectations for Mexican art. Betsabee Romero's fire extinguisher is made of dried red roses, glowing from a light that makes it seem like a reliquary. Nestor Quinones deals with elements of death, bringing them into daily life (as Mexican society does) but keeping an air of mystery.

The Mint has planned a month's worth of activities around this exhibit, which starts Sept. 20. The first is "Little Family Treasures," an exhibition by kids from the Catholic Hispanic Center and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, from Thursday through Oct. 12.

The seventh annual Latin American Festival brings food, crafts, music, dances and kids' activities to the museum Oct. 12. The museum will offer lectures and classes all autumn; call 337-2000, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, to learn more.

The Mint is at 2730 Randolph Road. It's open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays and noon to 5 p.m. Sundays. Admission is \$4 (\$3 for senior citizens, \$2 for students older than 12, free for children 12 and younger). Admission is free from 5 to 10 p.m. Tuesdays and the second Sunday of each month.

Hickory Museum of Art

"Miracles of Mexican Folk Art" stays through Oct. 29. It offers 36 retablos and ex-votos made during the second half of the Spanish colonial period, from 1780 to 1910.

Retablos are oil paintings, often on tin, of a Christian saint or

saints, painted mostly by untrained artists from the provinces. They were used to protect a household from harm, rather than for adornment.

Ex-votos are painted testimonies of miracles or commemorations of blessings received. These were usually executed by a professional village artist on copper, tin or wood, when he (or, less often, she) transcribed a client's story.

Admission to the museum is free. It's in the Arts and Science Center of Catawba Valley, 243 Third Ave. N.E., Hickory. It's open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, 1 to 4 p.m. weekends. Call (704) 327-8576, museum hours.

UNC Charlotte

"Latin American Personal Treasures" has moved into the Main Gallery of Cone University Center at UNCC, where you can see it through Oct. 5.

The exhibit, organized by the Latin American Women's Association, consists of textiles, wood carvings, papier-mache, silver, glass, ceramics, leather, jewelry and paintings lent from private collections in the Charlotte area. Members of the Hispanic community have sent in objects of historic and cultural significance (not to mention sentimental value), some dating back generations.

The gallery is open from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. weekdays, noon to 11 p.m. Saturdays and 1 to 11 p.m. Sundays. Call 547-4479 anytime.

AUTHENTIC
Mystery Dinner Theatre
 returns to Charlotte on
 Thursdays at

Vincent's Italian
Restaurant
 2401 Park Rd.
 \$32.95: dinner, show + prize for
 solving the mystery
 Reservations: 329-8260

The North Carolina Arts Council is part of a seven-state consortium collaborating on the development and tour of an exhibition of contemporary Mexican visual artists. Organized by the Ohio Arts Council's Riffe Gallery, *México Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure* will be presented at the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte from September 20 to December 13, 1997.

"This project is significant not only for its international outreach, but as a fine example of collaboration – a model for others," says Mary B. Regan, executive director of the North Carolina Arts Council. "And the arts are central to learning about our neighbors in Mexico as well as our Mexican neighbors across the street."

Other participants besides the arts councils in North Carolina and Ohio are the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, the Illinois Arts Council, the Delaware Division of the Arts, the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation based in Maryland and Arts Midwest based in Minnesota. Besides pooling their financial resources to develop the show, each organization worked with a museum or gallery in its state or region to mount the exhibition, which will tour for two years.

Thirteen contemporary artists, all born in Mexico or living and working there for some time, are represented in the show. In his essay in the catalog, American curator Robert Stearns says, "Our intention here is to reveal the unique perspective that contemporary Mexican artists have as they view their culture and the broader international situation at the same time. Here on the walls and floors of the galleries are objects that bear witness to the present state of the evolution of a complex, sophisticated and sometimes contradictory society."

In response to the complexity and richness of Mexican culture, the North Carolina Arts Council set aside grant money to fund projects in the state which will build appreciation for Mexican arts and culture and strengthen connections between North Carolina and Mexico through the arts.

The following eight proposals acknowledging and honoring the growing population of Mexican-Americans in our area have been chosen to receive funding. (At press time all event dates had not been set. Please contact the organization directly for more detailed information.)

The Hickory Museum of Art is planning an exhibition of Mexican folk art August 30 to November 2 and associated public programs. The exhibition, *Miracles of Mexican Folk Art: Retablos and Ex-Votos* is a unique and vivid celebration of Mexico's vibrant artistic and religious heritage. (704-327-8576)

The Guilford Native American Association in Greensboro will sponsor México Ahora Week, September 14 to 20 and will feature Mexican art, poetry readings, music and the Ximalli Aztec Dance Troupe. (910-273-8686)

The Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte will bring María Guerra, one of the co-curators of México Ahora, from Mexico City for a public lecture on September 21. (704-337-2000)

The Latin American Women's Association in Charlotte will

bring the Familia Mora Arriaga to Charlotte to perform at the Latin American Festival on October 12. This family of singers, dancers and musicians features authentic music, songs, costumes and dances from the diverse countries of Latin America. (704-552-1738)

The Asheville Art Museum has designed a project involving the traditions, heritage and contemporary work of Mexican-American and other Latin American fiber artists living in the state. (704-253-3227)

The Hiddenite Center in Alexander County, the Caldwell County Arts Council and the Ashe County Arts Council will sponsor several Encuentras or gatherings. One will feature La Fuerza del Norte, a Mexican band from Homestead, Florida, in Caldwell and Alexander Counties, and another in Ashe County will feature the band, Mariachi Los Viejeros. (704-632-6966)

The Penland School of Crafts will fund an artists' residency for Jamex and Einar de la Torre. The brothers are glass artists and will teach a two-week class after their residency in the summer of 1998. (704-765-2359)

The Sawtooth Center for Visual Art in Winston-Salem will sponsor a two-week residency with textile artist Arturo Sandoval in an English-as-a-second-language school. Two exhibits of works by American and Mexican children will be featured in the area afterwards. (910-723-7395)

Two other interesting programs are being planned in North Carolina as well. The Diggs Gallery at Winston-Salem State University will host the traveling show *In the Spirit of Resistance: African-American Modernists and the Mexican Muralist School* September 12 to November 8. (910-750-2458)

The Light Factory in Charlotte will sponsor a series of three exhibitions September 13 to October 26. *Tangle of Complexes: Photographing in Mexico* will feature the work of nine American women. *Native Soil: Six Mexican Photographers* will show the work of six Mexican women, and *Shifting Borders/Moving Images: Mexican Women in Film and Video* will concentrate on films and videos by or about Mexican women. (704-333-9755)



Dancers from Grupo Cultural Abolente perform at the Festival Latinoamericana in Charlotte, October 1997.

North Carolina

STAFF DIRECTOR: *Rob Boyette, Historic Sites Section, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601; Phone: 919/333-3661; Fax: 919/333-9373*

Headlining news from our state is a heartfelt thanks to all of you who attended the Annual Meeting in Raleigh. We hope you enjoyed your visit and will come back to our state to see the ever changing museums that call North Carolina their home. A special thank you to the Local Arrangements Committee for all their hard work, and to the Raleigh-Durham area museums for hosting this gathering.

On October 5, the Thomas Wolfe Memorial in Asheville officially opened their new visitor center. This state historic site now offers an audiovisual program on the life of Thomas Wolfe as well as an exhibition area detailing Wolfe's career. Guest speakers at the Sunday afternoon dedication ceremony included NC Secretary of Cultural Resources Betty Ray McCain and author Pat Conroy. The boardinghouse operated by Wolfe's mother during his early years has been refurbished and is undergoing structural renovation this winter.

The North Carolina Museums Council (NCMC) held its annual meeting November 2-4, hosted by Wilson/Rocky Mount museums. Session topics included heritage tourism, historic gardens, fundraising, developing collection plans, and interpretation programming. The conference gave attendees an opportunity to tour a variety of museums in the region and illustrated how cooperative planning can successfully promote area attractions. Next year, NCMC will meet in Asheville.

A major traveling exhibition "Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure" is on display at Charlotte's Mint Museum of Art September 20 through December 13. The exhibition features thirteen innovative artists whose work reflect their roles in an international art community and the issues and themes of their generation. "Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now" is orga-



Diego Toledo, *Win*, 1994-95, from "Mexico Now" at the Mint Museum of Art.



WORKSHOPS

HOW TO MAKE YOUR MUSEUM STORE MORE PROFITABLE, January 9, Atlanta, GA. Sponsored by the Museum Store Association. Fee: \$95. Contact: MSA, 303/328-8988.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR MUSEUM ASSOCIATIONS III, January 9-10, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the American Association of Museums. Contact: AAM Professional Education Programs, 202/289-9114. Fax: 202/289-8578, TTY: 202/289-8439.

ORAL NARRATIVE WORKSHOP FOR INTERPRETERS, January 13, Arkansas Tech University, Russellville, AR. Sponsored by the Arkansas Tech Museum of Prehistory and History. Fee: \$10. Registration deadline: December 10. Contact: Museum of Prehistory and History, 801/964-0829, Fax: 801/964-0872.

GAMG ANNUAL MEETING, "Redefining GAMG: Service to Members in a Changing Museum Community," January 21-23, Macon, CA. Sponsored by the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries. Contact: Tim Cloas, Albany Museum of Art, 912/439-8400, Fax: 912/434-4289.

STAINED GLASS WORKSHOP, January 23-25, Jekyll Island Historic District, Jekyll Island, GA. Sponsored by the Jekyll Island Museum and SEMC. Fee: \$300. Registration deadline: December 18. Contact: Jekyll Island Museum, 912/635-2119, Fax: 912/635-4420.

ALABAMA MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING; "Museum ABC's: Alliances, Bridges and Collaborations," February 8-10, Montgomery, AL. Contact: Pamela Paul Hisey, 205/789-4826.

MMA ANNUAL MEETING, "Visual Culture and Museums," February 9, Vicksburg, MS. Sponsored by the Mississippi Museums Association. Contact: Rene Paul Barilleaux, 601/960-1515, Fax: 601/960-1801.

INTRODUCTION TO MUSEUM MANAGEMENT, February 23-27, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the Smithsonian's Center for Museum Studies. Application deadline: December 23. Contact: Bettie Lee, 202/387-3101; fax 202/387-3346, Email: leebe@cms.si.edu

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN PRESERVATION, March 3-5, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN. Sponsored by SOLINET. Fee: \$200. Contact: Sharla Richards (ext. 228) or Christina Wiseman (ext. 241), 800/999-8588 or 404/892-0943, Email: <sharla_richards@solinet.net>

ARKANSAS MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING, "Preserving Our Past for the Future," March 11-13, Old Washington Historic State Park, Washington, AR. Contact: Berna Love, Arkansas Museum of Science & History, 501/324-9351, Fax: 501/324-9345.

PROFESSIONAL ROUNDTABLE FOR MUSEUM CURATORS II, March 13-14, Yale University, New Haven, CT. Sponsored by the American Association of Museums. Contact: AAM Professional Education Programs, 202/289-9114, Fax: 202/289-8578, TTY: 202/289-8439.

MUTUAL CONCERNS OF AIR & SPACE MUSEUMS, March 18-19, Washington, DC. Co-sponsored by the American Association of Museums and the National Air & Space Museum. Contact: AAM Professional Education Programs, 202/289-9114, Fax: 202/289-8578, TTY: 202/289-8439.

SCFM ANNUAL MEETING, March 25-27, Rock Hill, SC. Sponsored by the South Carolina Federation of Museums. Contact: Nana Farria, SC State Museum, 803/737-4982, Fax: 803/737-4969, Email: scfm@museum.state.sc.us

VAM ANNUAL MEETING, "Partners for the Future: Common Threads, Common Wealth," March 15-17 (pre-conference activities March 13-14), Williamsburg, VA. Sponsored by the Virginia Association of Museums. Contact: VAM, 804/849-8261, Fax: 804/849-8262, Email: vam@mond.mindspring.com

LEGAL PROBLEMS OF MUSEUM ADMINISTRATION, March 26-28, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL. Co-sponsored by the American Association of Museums, the Smithsonian Institution, and the American Law Institute-American Bar Association. Contact: AAM Professional Education Programs, 202/289-9114, Fax: 202/289-8578, TTY: 202/289-8439.

SUMMER INSTITUTE IN EARLY SOUTHERN HISTORY & DECORATIVE ARTS, June 21-July 17, Winston-Salem, NC. Sponsored by the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Application deadline: April 20. Contact: Selly Gant, MESDA Summer Institute, 910/721-7360, Fax: 910/721-7387.

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE, July 12-31, Berkeley, CA. MMI is part of the Getty Leadership Institute for Museum Management, an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust administered by the American Federation of Arts. Fee: \$3,000 for tuition, course materials, housing, and most meals; scholarships are available. Application deadline: January 9. Contact: 800/232-0270, ext. 16; Fax: 212/861-2487, Email: mmi@afaweb.org

nized by the Ohio Arts Council in partnership with the North Carolina Arts Council and five other state and regional arts councils. The exhibition's forty works include sculpture, paintings, photography, and mixed media installations.

On January 18, 1998, the Cape Fear Museum will open "Looking Back: Cape Fear Museum's First 100 Years," which shows how the state's oldest history museum has evolved from a small collection of Civil War artifacts to its current collection of more than 30,000 artifacts. It explores not only what a museum collects, but how it goes about collecting and why it collects at all. The exhibit is a combination of photographs and artifacts representing Wilmington in 1898; a sampling of materials collected over the past 100 years; and a display focusing on the 1898 race riot, showing how a controversial topic can be discussed and interpreted objectively.

A long held dream of the North Carolina Maritime Museum became a reality this July 31. On that date the Friends of the Museum signed an agreement to purchase thirty-six acres of

waterfront on Beaufort's Gallants Channel. A ten-year development plan for this property is in place that will make the North Carolina Maritime Museum one of the largest maritime complexes in the southeast. Included in that plan are proposals for a conservation lab, headquarters for the Junior Sailing Program, a small craft storage and exhibition shop, a foundry, windmill, ship chandlery, and sail loft. The additional acreage will also provide much needed parking space and open areas for demonstrations and exhibitions. The 1,852 feet of deep water frontage will afford dockage for visiting vessels, tall ships, and the museum's small craft collection. Docks will serve as a departure area for field programs and will be used for dockside oceanography programs.

The NC General Assembly has appropriated \$7.6 million for exhibits in the new NC State Museum of Natural Sciences, opening in fall, 1999. Over the last two years, museum staff and consultants have designed ten major exhibits for the new facility, working

with previous legislative appropriations totaling \$900,000. The museum's non-profit support group aims to raise a total of \$8 million in matching funds for exhibits, and has raised \$6 million of that goal. The new Museum of Natural Sciences will be four times larger than the current museum and will serve 500,000 visitors and program participants annually. Construction is scheduled for completion in the fall of 1998, when exhibit installation will begin.

"O. Winston Link: Memories and Machines" will be at the Light Factory in Charlotte, November 15 January 11. This traveling exhibition presents the documentary photography of O. Winston Link, an internationally known American photographer renowned for his images of railroad life. The exhibit was organized by the William King Regional Arts Center, Abingdon, Virginia. Its presentation at The Light Factory is made possible by the support of NationsBank and the North Carolina Transportation History Corporation—the support group for the North Carolina Transportation Museum, Spencer.

continued on page 16

The Mint Museum of Charlotte Presents: Mexico Now- Point of Departure

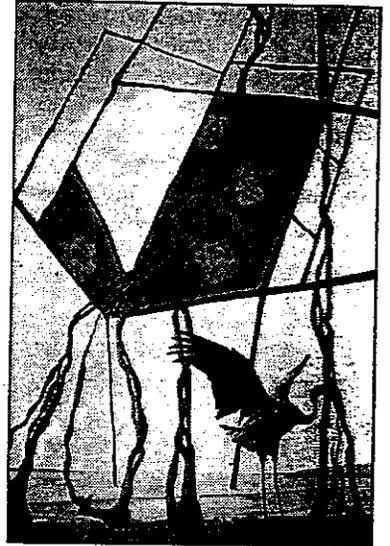
► Charlotte - While painting has dominated 20th century Mexican art, a new generation of contemporary Mexican artists is declaring its independence from this conventional medium and charting new creative territory through photography, sculpture and multi-media installations. This groundbreaking work is the subject of a major traveling exhibition *Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure*, on display at Charlotte's Mint Museum of Art September 20th through December 13th.

Philip Morris Companies Inc. is the national sponsor of *Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now*.

"As a global corporation, Philip Morris has a long tradition of supporting work by

emerging artists in our communities around the world," said Stephanie French, vice president, Corporate Contributions and Cultural Programs, for Philip Morris Companies Inc. "Mexico Now features 13 innovative artists whose work reflects their roles in an international art community and the issues and themes of their generation. Philip Morris is proud to sponsor the first U.S. touring exhibition to highlight the contemporary visual arts of Mexico."

Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now is organized by the Ohio Arts Council in partnership with the North Carolina Arts Council



Innovative artists whose work reflect their roles in an international art community is now on display at Charlotte's Mint Museum.

and five other state and regional councils. May B. Regan, executive director of the North Carolina Arts Council, was one of the project's earliest collaborators.

"International outreach and

cross-cultural programming are essential elements of our state's business and social environment," said Regan. "The arts are central to learning about our neighbors in Mexico as well as our Mexican

NORTH CAROLINA
Traveler
YOUR GUIDE TO TRAVEL DESTINATIONS ACROSS THE STATE

AY

neighbors across the street.*

Exhibition curators include Robert Stearns, Maria Guerra and Agustin Arteago of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. The exhibition presents a sample of the great variety of directions that contemporary visual artists in Mexico have decided to explore, using technological innovations, pictorial images and decontextualized objects, elements that compliment each other or reinvent themselves in the search for new forms of expression. The exhibition's 40 works, including sculpture, paintings, photography and mixed media installations by 13 artists, manifest a clear tendency toward abstraction and a penchant for the redefinition and reinterpretation of concepts.

Such work would readily feel at home in Soho. Popular perceptions of Mexican art is colored by its history. Not since the Renaissance have fine arts been as closely linked with public life as in the heyday of Mexican muralists such as Rivera, Orozco, Tamayo and Siqueiros in the early 20th century. As vehicles for public education, their paintings voiced Mexico's social, political and spiritual order. Their sphere of influence crossed international borders, even inspiring a public art program in the United States as part of the Works Progress Administration of the 1930s. Diego Rivera and compatriots became cultural heroes, casting elongated shadows and defining the parameters of Mexican art throughout the rest of the century.

It would not be until the late 1950s and early 1960s that abstract art would gain credence in Mexico. A movement coined *The Rupture* displaced the dominant figurative and narrative style.

Such elements would return in the 1980s with the *Neo-Mexicanism* movement that appropriated popular imagery, nationalist and religious emblems and retronostalgia as much for farce as social commentary.

Art critic Osvaldo Sanchez writes that an interesting aspect of Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now is that the works allow a tracing of the shifts defining Mexican art in the past decade. A decisive factor, declares Sanchez, was the simultaneous arrival in Mexico of a large number of foreign artists



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Europeans, North Americans and Cubans - and the return home of Mexican artists who had studied abroad in New York, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv, Paris and London.

"This group was imbued with a more conceptual approach, which accelerated the transition from representative painting to more analytical, postmodern devices such as manipulation and intertextuality," said Sanchez. "Thus from the

impromptu *NeoMexicanist* collage and its taste for common objects, a more serious investigation began to take shape. The former movement's penchant for kitsch was adapted by this transitional generation into a more ironic, non hierarchical gaze upon the cultural heritage of the nation."

The diversity of languages and conceptual levels found among the works in Mexico Ahora/Mexico Now prevents

easy labeling of any sort. While the exhibition offers glimpses of the unique perspectives contemporary Mexican artists have toward their culture, it also offers ample evidence of the extent to which the visual arts are evolving their own universal language.

For more information, call 704-337-2000 or E-mail: News2@mint.uncc.edu and Home page: <http://www.mintmuseum.org>.



Marco Arce, *Power Series*, 1996

Duke Energy Theatre, Spirit Square.

State Fair (October 28-November 2) This all-American Broadway musical stars John Davidson. Part of the Broadway Lights series. Tue-Sat 8 p.m., Sat-Sun 2 p.m., Sun 7 p.m. \$16-\$42. Belk Theater, Blumenthal PAC.

The Guy Upstairs (November 5-16) A local restaurant owner has a near-death experience with video camera in hand. He returns to life convinced he has a video tape of God that everyone proceeds to want, including the Vatican. Charlotte Repertory Theatre. Tue-Thu 7:30 p.m., Fri-Sat 8 p.m., Sun 2 p.m. \$16-\$23.50. Booth Playhouse, Blumenthal PAC.

Arsenic and Old Lace (November 6-23) A witty play about two seemingly sweet sisters who in reality turn out to be quite lethal, for charity of course. Theatre Charlotte, 501 Queens Rd. Thu-Sat 8 p.m., Sun 2:30 p.m. \$12-\$16. 334-9128.

DANCE

North Carolina Dance Theatre: Jazz It Up (October 3-4) Four Charlotte premieres that combine jazz and humor: *Emerson Concerto* by Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux to the music of Kieth Emerson, *Parts of a Whole* by Mark Diamond to the music of Arkady Figlin, *Who Cares?* by George Balanchine with music by George Gershwin, and Peter Anastos' *Yes, Virginia, Another Piano Ballet* with music by Frederick Chopin. 8 p.m. \$12-\$45. Belk Theater, Blumenthal PAC.

CONCERTS

BIG BAND. CLASSICAL

Charlotte Philharmonic Orchestra: Romantic Fantasy (September 23). Soprano Cecilia Bertling and photographer Thomas Nebbia join forces to present Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Overture*, and other selections from *Adagio* (Spartacus-Khachaturian) and *Hello Dolly*. 8 p.m. \$12-\$27.50. Blumenthal PAC. 846-2788.

Charlotte Symphony Orchestra: Beethoven's Mighty Ninth (September 26-27) The CSO season opener, with the Oratorio Singers, highlights Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. Featuring Sungil Lee on violin and Karen Parks, soprano. Chorus will sing *Ode to Joy*. 8 p.m. \$12-\$50. Belk Theater, Blumenthal PAC.

Charlotte Philharmonic Orchestra: Dancing in the Dark (October 10) A sixteen-piece reflection dance band will provide the music for this evening of dinner and dancing. The evening will also feature dancers from the

Collected Wisdom

Run for the Border

With the various Mexican exhibits and festivals in the area, you would think it was Cinco de Mayo. However, upon further investigation, comprised of looking at a calendar, it appears to be merely coincidental that these exhibits with similar themes will be hitting the area this fall.

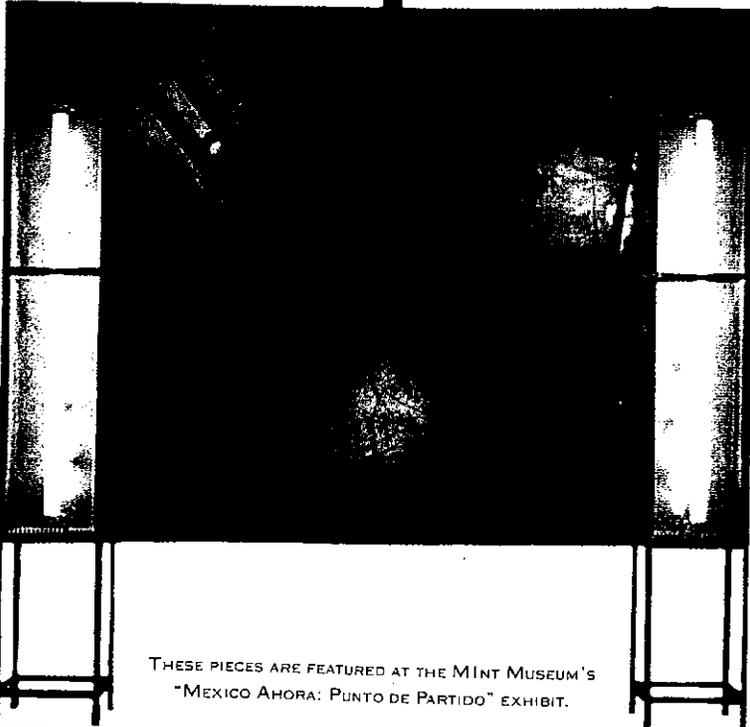
The Light Factory features three exhibits with Mexican themes in its fall lineup: *Tangle of Complexes: Photographing in Mexico*, *Native Soil: Six Mexican Women Photographers*, and *Shifting Borders/Moving Images: Mexican Women in Film and Video* (page 61). *Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida* includes the work of twelve contemporary artists and can be seen at the Mint Museum of Art (page 66). The Mint will also host a festival featuring Latin American food, music, and dance. During the festival, tours of the Mexican exhibit will be offered in both English and Spanish. Festivities begin at noon (page 80).

Drive about an hour and a half northwest and you can visit *Miracles of Mexican Folk Art: Retablos and Ex-Votos* at the Hickory Museum of Art (704/327-8576). This exhibit includes thirty-six paintings that depict miraculous events of



life on tin. The paintings were done by anonymous folk artists from 1780 to 1910. Go an hour and a half northeast and you can see *In the Spirit of Resistance: African American Modernists and the Mexican Muralist School* at Diggs Gallery at Winston-Salem State University (910/750-2458). Twenty-two artists, including North Carolina native John Biggers, will be featured in this exhibit, which shows the strong influence Mexican muralists and printmakers of the *Taller de Grafica Popular* had on African-American artists.

—Lori E. Krimminger



THESE PIECES ARE FEATURED AT THE MINT MUSEUM'S "MEXICO AHORA: PUNTO DE PARTIDO" EXHIBIT.

T R A N S A M E R I C A O P E N I N G S

The charms of the new Transamerica Square, especially its delightful open courtyard, tempted several of the city's top galleries to relocate. Noel Gallery, showcasing the finest of African-American art, opened in September at Transamerica (401 N. Tryon). The inaugural show featured the collage paintings and drawings of Benny Andrews. Andrews has work in the permanent collection of more than 20 of the top American museums, including the Metropolitan in NYC, the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn in Washington, D.C., and many more. October and November artists include Charles Farrar of Charlotte, who shows lathe-turned American and exotic hardwoods, and Michael D. Harris presenting "Icons & Ideograms," honoring traditional African expression in contemporary American art. Receptions Oct. 3 for Mr. Farrar and Oct. 15 for Dr. Harris. The gallery is open Tues.- Sat. 11am to 7pm and Sunday 11am to 3pm. Call 343-0050 for more info.

Dorothy Hodges and Christie Taylor relocated their highly respected gallery to Transamerica as well. Their first exhibition in the new space, solo exhibitions by Beverly Buchanan and Valentina DuBasky, hangs through Oct. 30. Hodges Taylor Gallery is open Tues.- Fri. 11am-6pm, Sat., 11-3. Call 334-3799 for more. Incidentally, Farvan Gallery, bumped from its Montaldo store space by the new branch of the Mint Museum, will occupy the vacated Hodges Taylor/Noel location on E. 7th St.

Left: Benny Andrews, featured artist at Noel Gallery

catalyst continued...

1659. The Catalyst wines will be available in Harris Teeters four weeks only from Oct. 13-Nov. 10. Next season's labels will be different and may be embossed on the bottles, so this could be your only chance to obtain this collector's item (with a limited number of handcrafted wine bags also available). Vinnovative Imports, by the way, was formerly Destinare, which specializes in importing South African wines, noted for their good value. The Catalyst wines will cost either \$9.99 or \$10.99 in stores, Clinton said.

Mexico At The Mint Museum

Mexican art is finally emerging from its pre-occupation with social issues and showing many uniquely individual styles: this may be the chief lesson of the new Mint Museum exhibit of Mexican photography, sculpture and multi-media installations. "México Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure" runs through Dec. 13.

The exhibition's 40 works by 13 artists tend toward abstraction and attempt to redefine concepts. The work differs from the social message orientation of the Mexican muralists who dominated the country's art for most of the 20th century. The work of artists such as Diego Rivera, Orozco, Tamayo, and Siqueiros voiced Mexico's social, political and spiritual milieu, recalling the Renaissance in its ties to public life. These murals, large in size and impact, made their creators public icons.

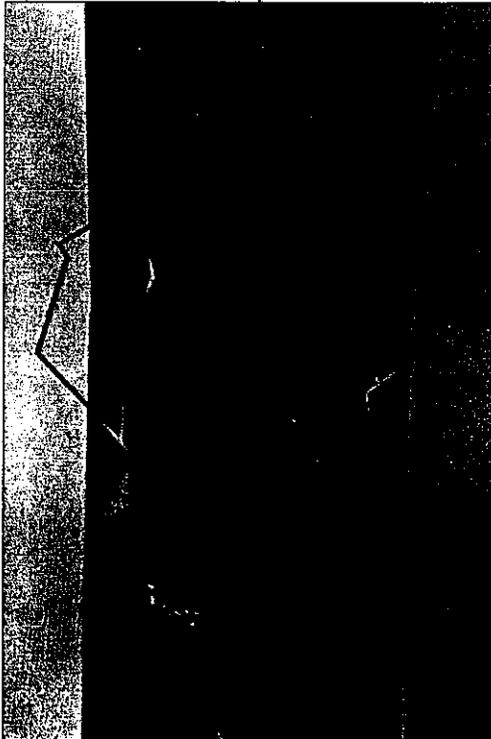
Not until the century was halfway over did Mexican artists move toward the abstrac-

tion you'll see in the Mint's current show. This movement, called The Rupture, displaced the narrative and figurative art then dominant. In the 1980s, NeoMexicanism appropriated pop imagery, nationalist and religious emblems and nostalgia more as face than social commentary.

Critic Osvaldo Sanchez writes that the works in *Mexico Ahora* trace the shifts defining Mexican art in the past decade. He notes that the simultaneous arrival in Mexico of a large number of foreign artists—Europeans, North Americans and Cubans along with Mexican artists who studied abroad—was the decisive factor in the move toward abstraction.

A key insight from the exhibit, however, may be simply the evidence it presents that the visual arts are evolving their own universal language.

The Mint hosts the 7th annual Latin American Festival in association with this exhibit on Sunday, Oct. 12, noon to 8pm. Admission \$3, under 12 & Mint members are free.



"The Healing" by Nestor Quinones, part of the Mexico Now exhibit at the Mint.

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REVIEW
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SEP 18 97

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Traveling art exhibition, Mexico Now: Point of Departure at Charlotte's Mint Museum

220-5
While painting has dominated 20th century Mexican art, a new generation of contemporary Mexican artists is declaring its independence from this conventional medium and charting new creative territory through photography, sculpture and multi-media installations. This ground-breaking work is the subject of a major traveling exhibition Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure, on display at Charlotte's Mint Museum of Art September 20th through December 13th.

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Exhibition curators include Robert Stearns, Maria Guerra and Agustin Arteaga of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. The exhibition presents a sample of the great variety of direction that contemporary visual artists in Mexico have decided to explore, using technological innovations, pictorial images and decontextualized objects, elements that complement each other or reinvent themselves in the search for new forms of expression. The exhibition's 40 works, including sculpture, paintings, photography and mixed media installations by 13 artists, manifest a clear tendency toward abstraction and a penchant for the redefinition and reinterpretation of concepts.

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B2
"This group was imbued with a more conceptual approach, which accelerated the transition from representative painting to more analytical, postmodern devices such as manipulation and intertextuality," said Sanchez. "Thus from the impromptu NeoMexicanist collage and its taste for common objects, a more serious investigation began to take shape. The former movement's penchant for kitsch was adapted by this transitional generation into a more ironic, non hierarchical gaze upon the cultural heritage of the nation."

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Mint shows traveling exhibit that is
 departure from traditional style of Mexican art

The Next Mex

Winston-Salem Journal 10-12-97



See MEXICAN, Page E6 AT THE SHOW: Nestor Quinones' The Healing.

CHARLOTTE — When curators from the United States and Mexico began planning the large traveling exhibit now at the Mint Museum of Art, they set out to assemble a show that would challenge conventional expectations about Mexican art.

Robert Stearns, an independent curator from Columbus, Ohio, said he and his fellow curators followed the advice of the contemporary Mexican artists with whom they met while developing the exhibit. "They urged us not to portray Mexican art through clichéd images," he wrote in the accompanying catalog.

Instead, these artists suggested that the curators focus on recent trends in Mexican art, particularly on efforts to gain independence from the conventions of painting that have defined serious Mexican art for many years.

With this aim in mind, the curators began the tough decision-making process that resulted in "Mexico Now: Point of Departure," the 13-art-ist exhibit that will be on display at the Mint through Dec. 14. Assisting Stearns were Maria Guerra, an independent curator from Mexico City, and Agustín Arteaga, the visual arts coordinator at Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes.

The show was organized under

By Tom Patterson
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MEXICAN

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the auspices of the Ohio Arts Council in partnership with the N.C. Arts Council and five other state and regional arts agencies. Its national sponsor is Philip Morris Companies Inc., which is also sponsoring the traveling exhibit "In the Spirit of Resistance: African-American Modernists and the Mexican Muralist School," on view at Winston-Salem State University's Diggs Gallery (reviewed on Page E4).

"Mexico Now" premiered earlier this year in Columbus before traveling to San Juan, Puerto Rico, and it will appear at four other U.S. venues after it leaves the Mint.

The artists represented are Carlos Aguirre, Marco Arce, Carlos Arias, Monica Castillo, Silvia Gruner, Yolanda Gutierrez, Yishai Jusidman, Nestor Quiñones, Betsabe Romero, Melante Smith, Gerardo Suter, Diego Toledo and Boris Viskin, all of whom are in their early 30s or younger. These artists are

relatively unknown in this country, and most of them have yet to be institutionally recognized in Mexico, said Osvaldo Sanchez, a Mexican art critic who contributed an essay to the catalog.

These works are highly diverse, but Sanchez sees the artists as united in their concern with "responding to the political and cultural tensions springing from the prolonged decline of modernity."

In many ways the works in the exhibit can be considered reactions against artistic styles and approaches that used to be considered synonymous with Mexican art. In his essay, Stearns delineated three 20th-century Mexican art movements that helped set the stage for what these contemporary artists are doing.

The first, the muralist movement, peaked in the 1930s and '40s; it is represented most famously by Diego Rivera. The second, known as "the Rupture," was a movement toward abstraction in the late 1950s and early '60s. The third, often called "Neo-Mexicanism," emerged in the 1980s to advertise a national identity through the use

of self-consciously Mexican symbols and imagery.

The artworks produced within those movements embody ideals and assumptions associated with the modernity that Sanchez called being in a state of decline. Nothing that the exponents of all three movements employed painting as their principal tool, Stearns wrote that the contemporary artists represented here "are declaring their independence from the canons of painting and from the conventions of Mexicanism."

Having defined their work in terms of what it is *not*, Stearns said that these artists "are searching for the most effective means of drawing on the broadest sources to pursue personal visions."

Despite their common interest in making new kinds of art that respond to the new realities of contemporary life, several of these artists continue to employ painting as their primary medium. But their paintings stand considerably apart from those commonly associated with Mexican art.

For example, Boris Viskin's large paintings are post-muralist compositions dominated by fields of white. They have little to do with content, and

Viskin's ambivalent stance toward his chosen medium is reflected in the title of one of his works here — *The Death of Painting*.

The large rectangular central surface that dominates Diego Toledo's mixed-media light-box piece titled *Sixty* can be considered a reference to painting. But instead of painting on this canvaslike surface, he has used it as the backdrop for an asymmetrical configuration of latex-insulated electrical wires that suggest roads on a map or the blood vessels and neural networks in a living being, and he has illuminated it from behind to highlight its resemblance to flayed human skin stretched over a rectangular framework.

Other works in the exhibit respond to Mexico's modern painting tradition by rejecting its materials and its two-dimensional format. Yolanda Gutierrez' *Threshold* is a group of birdlike assemblages made of cow jawbones and suspended from a gallery ceiling.

And Carlos Aguirre's *The Forest* is a sculptural installation in which a narrow boardwalk passes through a thicket of

menacing "trees" made of axes with freshly sharpened blades aloft on tall metal-rod stems.

Stearns wrote that these and other works in the show reflect a culture whose artists — like those in other postmodern societies — "are questioning the form and content of what art is expected to be." And he said that "their answers provide a startling departure from the past."

Many viewers will probably be startled by the absence of familiar Mexican references in this show, but those viewers might want to reconsider that initial response in light of Stearns' rhetorical question, "Wouldn't it betray a neocolonial prejudice to prefer that Mexican art still wear native costumes and play mariachi music?"

■ **Mexico Ahora: Punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure** will remain on exhibit through Dec. 14 at the Mint Museum, 2750 Randolph Road, Charlotte. A Latin American Festival will be held from noon to 8 p.m. today at the museum. For more information, call (704) 397-2000.

ART

It art be a transporting medium, then the *Mexico Ahora: Punto De Partida* exhibition at the Mint Museum of Art takes us into a brave new world in terms of time and place.

In English, the title means "point of departure," signifying breaks from tradition and breaks from what we know about art and about Mexican culture. The ensuing journey is, in fact, such a total departure from stereotypes as to totally redefine expectations about "our neighbor to the south." Judging from this show, there is an intellectual power in that country we, Americans, never see. While for Americans this exhibition may be the threshold of a new understanding about Mexico, it is clear these artists are way beyond the exploration of uncharted territory. Rather, they seem to be taking reality into their own hands and, with audacious conviction, shaping it anew.

In terms of thresholds, Gerardo Suter's installation "Black Box" really sums up the entire show, but enter at your own risk. If you are feeling at all shaky about your state of mind or state of being, this piece is not for you. In the accompanying text, the word "disappearing" jumps out as being appropriate, for even before you enter the enclosed space, your corporal presence is questioned. At



Jane Grau

the entry to the black box is a plexiglass wall that mirrors a very dark, transparent reality that becomes even more ephemeral inside, where a smoky silk screen renders all dimension indistinct. The visual blackness and accompanying white noise serve to

UMBRAIL THRESHOLD
by Yolanda Gutierrez part of
Mexico Ahora at the Mint



dislocate you physically and psychologically. You are afloat.

Finally, a video screen transmits the head and shoulders of an androgynous human in a semi-conscious state — we know this because its eyes momentarily flutter open in a terrific but vain struggle to awaken. On screens to either side of the head, raised hands and fore-

arms spasm periodically. It's a **p r e t t y** unsettling picture of Christ on the cross, or any person on the threshold of death or sleep. "Black Box" is definitely a transmutating experience, the

BRAVE NEW WORLDS

One work, Diego Toledo's "Skin," captures with wit and magic the subtle benefits of a technology that seems to otherwise be robbing us of our humanity. Toledo has stretched a textured, sanguine-colored canvas on a frame with its nerves and neurons — delicate electrical wires and tiny red light bulbs — intact. The lights flash in response to a human presence. Voila! The science of love

closest I've ever become to being a ghost and the most convincing argument for avoiding limbo I've ever heard.

Consider, too, that this out of body, out of mind effect is created not by drugs or natural means, but with technology. Technologically advanced communications and economic conditions are what make Mexico a viable presence in world affairs today and which have in turn given its artists creative independence. Don't go to the Mint expecting rare cultural images of bullfighters and bodiegers in *Mexico Ahora* only vestiges of the artistic heritage of Rivera and Kahlo can be found.

The artists of *Mexico Ahora* are deflating their independence from the canon of painting and conventions of Mexican art by defying the flat plane, using non-punctured materials, experimenting with scale and pushing photography beyond documentation. Some reject painting as the chief means of expression, others rework its elements, playing with shaped canvases and distorting the picture plane. This adventurous spirit represents a search for the broadest possible sources, *other than the past*, to pursue personal visions. As such, it is the point of departure for a turbo-charged, forward-moving journey.

ART

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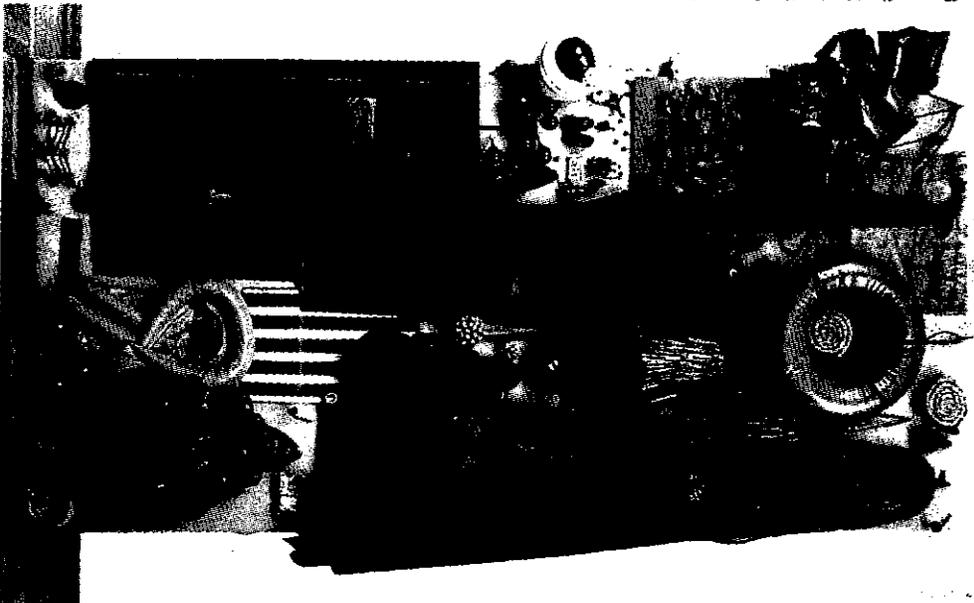
explained better than any biology class or psychology text ever could.

The idea of change, whether it be matter changing form, or the passing from one reality to another, is the common thread throughout the show. Boris Viskin's "Death of Painting" refers to physical entities such as architectural space and canvas planes that, under the hand of the artist, don't really die but are merely transformed into something altogether new and exciting — like when Yolanda Gutierrez brings "animation and life to things now dead" by turning the jawbones of 28 cows into a flock of birds in flight.

Both Monica Castillo and Betsabe Romero translate Christian mythology into plain language. In Castillo's "Distributing Bread," transubstantiation is re-interpreted when she bakes 200 self-portraits (a God-like act of creation); takes photographic images of people opening their gifts of bread (a social ritual); and is central to the spiritual act when she, or rather, her graven image, is presumably eaten. Romero's constructions, composed mainly of dried roses, use the legend of the Virgin of Guadalupe, who presented roses to Juan Diego as proof of her appearance, to remind us that in some cultures, human beings still acknowledge divine presence as essential to survival. Thus our salvation rests, in case of fire, on Romero's petal-

plastered extinguisher.

This is a painting of a painting. It's a clown.



ORANGE LUSH 1

by Melanie Smith

Romero's case the sacred with the practical — is what makes serious fun out of *Mexico Ahora*.

Take Yishai Jusidman's oversized "P.Y.," the first painting I've ever seen that makes a clown look beautiful rather than corny cutesy. Also out of proportion is Melanie Smith's "Orange Lush," which makes the tackiest color, orange, breathlessly voluptuous. While Nestor Quinones' unflattering pieces appear to be serious in concept, I imagine the artist had great fun mixing all kinds of matter together to form a unified whole.

Jusidman, Smith, and Quinones make the mundane beautiful, but the most enchanting are Jusidman's orbs. I choose to believe that these oil-on-wood spheres are the molecules of God's imagination, where embryonic tree and cloud forms emerge within a crystal ball of life.

Speaking of life, Carlos Aguirre makes a pretty obvious statement about the destruction of the earth in "The Forest" by replacing trees with uncompromising, evil-looking axes. Of the 13 artists in the show, Aguirre is perhaps the most political. Marco Arce has a "Power Series," about 36 small pieces arranged in a grid that collectively create a bas-relief surface, powerful in its simplicity and classiness. Individually, the pieces are weak, which makes a political statement of its own.

Of the 40 pieces in the show, Monica Castillo's "Pictures for Martha" is the only piece that totally fails for me. It seems contrived, self-conscious, clumsy and moves me nowhere, now. Others, however, carry out the common theme of social, physical, and psychological transformation with flair and innovation. ■

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

From the catalog of *Mexico Ahora*:

Punto de Partida:

In 20th century Mexico, painting became a powerful force with the presence of the big four: Rivera, Orozco, Tamayo, and Siqueiros. They and others were glorified as cultural heroes not just because they were accomplished artists but because their murals gave voice to the country's social, political, and spiritual order. On permanent display, they linked the fine arts to public life with authoritative messages that struck chords in Mexico and elsewhere, especially in the United States with the 1930s WPA projects.

In the 50s and 60s, The Rupture movement signaled a second renaissance of Mexican art. The rift the movement's name suggests was the displacement of figurative and narrative images in favor of abstraction with an emphasis on emotional exuberance. The 1980s witnessed a third renaissance, known as Neomexicanism, during which artists returned to native, religious, and historical symbols that embodied national identity. It is this popular backdrop against which the youngest generation of Mexican artists is seen.

The principal tool of each of these movements, painting is now being reassessed as the preeminent standard of high art. The early 90s saw the diverse influence of Europeans, North Americans, and Cubans arriving in the country, and of Mexicans returning from studies abroad. The aim of this generation is to give new meaning to art by releasing the vast potential of a new visual language consisting of manipulated objects, installation, and photography.