

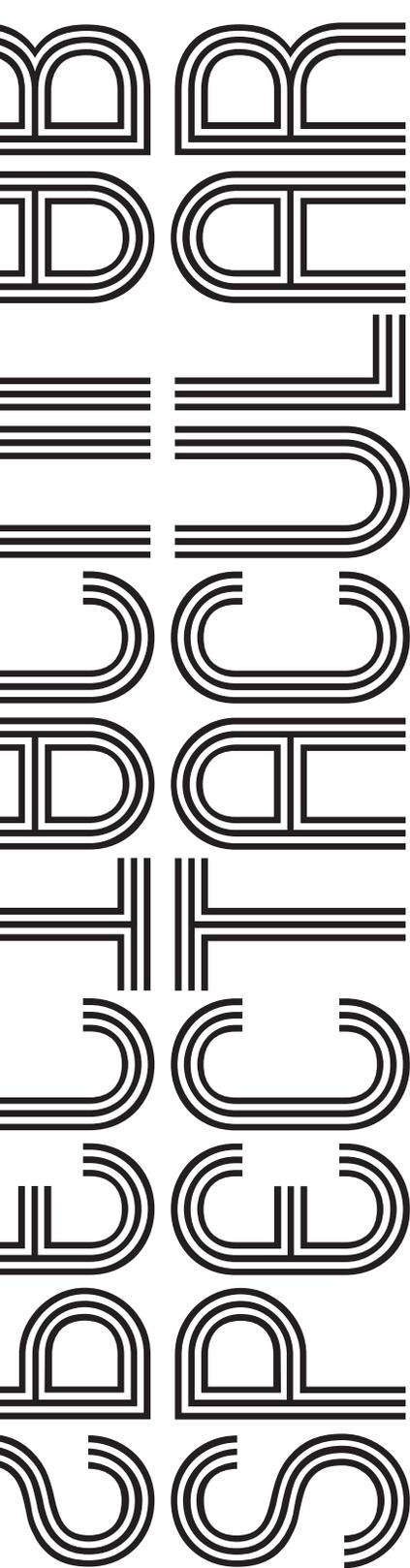
LUIS M. CASTAÑEDA

SPECTACULAR

DESIGN,
PROPAGANDA,
AND
THE
1968
OLYMPICS

SPECTACULAR

SPECTACULAR MEXICO



LUIS M. CASTAÑEDA

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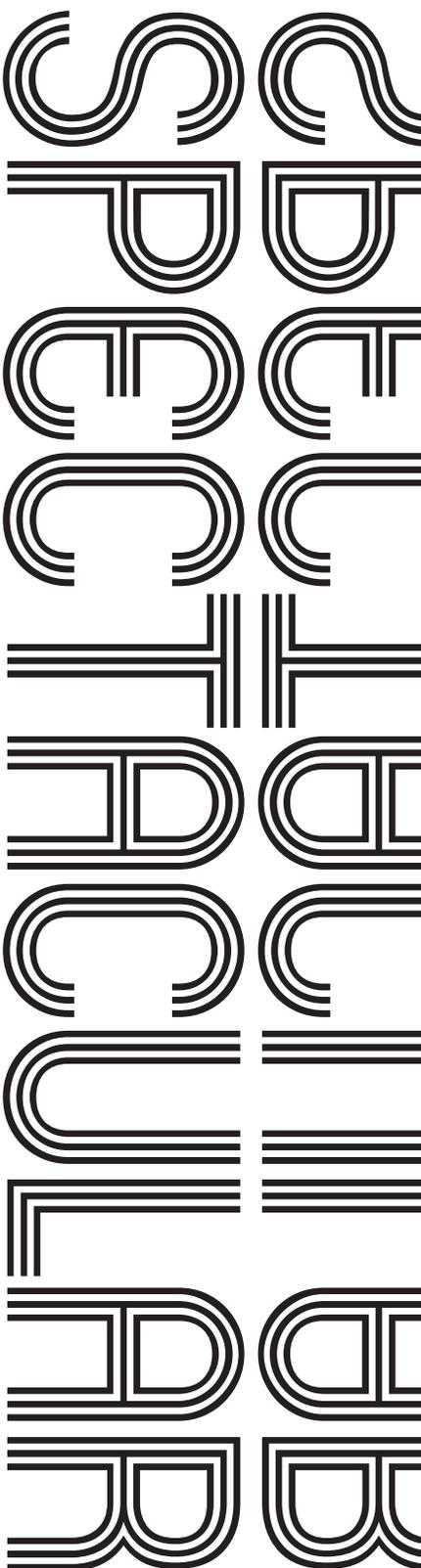
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ABBREVIATIONS

- A-MFAH Archives, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
- AGN Archivo General de la Nación (National Archives)
- AH-MNA Archivo Histórico, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Historical Archive, National Museum of Anthropology, National Institute of Anthropology and History)
- AHI-MNA Archivo Histórico Institucional, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Institutional Historical Archive, National Museum of Anthropology, National Institute of Anthropology and History)
- ALM-AGN Fondo Documental Adolfo López Mateos, Archivo General de la Nación (Adolfo López Mateos Archival Fund, National Archives)
- AMA Asociación Mexicana Automovilística (Mexican Automobilists Association)
- ANPRM Asociación Nacional de Planificadores de la República Mexicana (National Association of Planners of the Mexican Republic)
- ARV Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (Ramírez Vázquez Archive)
- ASRE Archivo Histórico Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Genaro Estrada Historical Archive, Secretariat of Foreign Relations)
- BART Bay Area Rapid Transit
- CANACINTRA Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformación (National Chamber of the Transformation Industry)
- CAOS Comité Anti-Olímpico de Subversión (Anti-Olympic Subversion Committee)
- CAPFCE Comité Administrador del Programa Federal de Construcción de Escuelas (Administrative Committee of the Federal Program of School Construction)
- CIAM Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (International Congress of Modern Architecture)
- CNOP Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (National Confederation of Popular Organizations)
- CONCAMIN Confederación de Cámaras Industriales (Confederation of Chambers of Industry)
- CTM Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (Confederation of Mexican Workers)
- DDF Departamento del Distrito Federal (Department of the Federal District)
- FCO-AGN Fondo Documental Comité Organizador de los XIX Juegos Olímpicos, Archivo General de la Nación (Archival Fund of the Organizing Committee of the XIX Olympic Games, National Archives)

FSTSE	Federación de Sindicatos de Trabajadores al Servicio al Estado (Federation of State Workers Unions)
ICA	Ingenieros Civiles Asociados (Associated Civil Engineers)
INAH	Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (National Institute of Anthropology and History)
IOC	International Olympic Committee
MAM	Museo de Arte Moderno (Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City)
MNA	Museo Nacional de Antropología (National Museum of Anthropology)
MOC	Mexican Olympic Committee (Comité Organizador de los XIX Juegos Olímpicos)
MoMA	Museum of Modern Art, New York
MUCA	Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes (University Museum of Sciences and Arts)
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
OCI	Oficina de Control de Instalaciones (Office of Control of Facilities)
PAN	Partido de Acción Nacional (National Action Party)
PCC	Puesto de Control Central (Central Control Post)
PPS	Partido Popular Socialista (Popular Socialist Party)
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
PRM	Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (Party of the Mexican Revolution)
PRONAF	Programa Nacional Fronterizo (National Borders Program)
RMP-NYPL	Robert Moses Papers, New York Public Library
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretariat of Public Education)
SMP	Sociedad Mexicana de Planificación (Mexican Planning Society)
SOP	Secretaría de Obras Públicas (Secretariat of Public Works)
STC	Sistema de Transporte Colectivo (System of Collective Transport)
STFRM	Sindicato de Trabajadores Ferrocarrileros de la República Mexicana (Union of Railroad Workers of the Mexican Republic)
UAM–Xochimilco	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana–Xochimilco (Metropolitan Autonomous University–Xochimilco)
UGOCM	Unión General de Obreros y Campesinos de México (National Union of Workers and Farmers of Mexico)
UIA	International Union of Architects
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UTSA	University of Texas at San Antonio

INTRODUCTION

THE EXHIBITIONIST STATE

Perhaps the most significant episode in the storied career of architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez (1909–2013) was his role as chief organizer of Mexico '68, the XIX Summer Olympics celebrated in Mexico City between October 12 and 27, 1968 (Figure I.1). In a confidential August 1967 report to then president of Mexico Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964–70), Ramírez Vázquez described his brainchild for the Olympics, a Cultural Olympiad to be set in motion the following January, a full nine months before the actual Olympics began. This ambitious undertaking would include performances by world-renowned theater companies; screenings of internationally acclaimed films; art, science, and culture exhibits from around the world; and the creation of permanent and temporary urban artworks in the capital city by local and international artists.¹

Ramírez Vázquez informed Díaz Ordaz that this Olympiad, an event strongly reminiscent of the world's fairs for which he had designed Mexico's national pavilions in the recent past, was intended to honor the Mexican single-party state's humanist ideals and "pacifist tradition." In this spirit, the architect and his collaborators in the Mexican Olympic Committee (MOC) used a now-infamous slogan to promote it: *Todo Es Posible en la Paz* (Everything is possible in peace). What makes this slogan infamous today is its contradictory, even macabre relationship with the violent and traumatic events that surrounded Mexico '68, chiefly the massacre of several hundred protesting students perpetrated by state forces on October 2, 1968, only ten days before the Olympics began, at the Plaza of the Three Cultures in Mexico City.

Internationally speaking, some aspects of the Mexican state's "pacifist tradition" were genuine. The controversial decision made by Díaz Ordaz's predecessor, Adolfo López Mateos (1958–64), to continue diplomatic relations with the Cuban government after the 1959 revolution had been as visible in the realm of hemispheric relations as Díaz Ordaz's denunciation of nuclear energy's military usage.²

Domestically, this “tradition” was harder to discern, even before the massacre. The increasingly militant activities of the student movement in Mexico City that would eventually lead to violent confrontations had tested the single-party state’s legitimacy months before the Olympics. Organized industrial labor, indigenous groups, and agricultural workers’ associations had also confronted state forces in several parts of Mexico, sometimes violently, between the late 1950s and the late 1960s.³

Of course, the Mexican state’s questionable pacifist credentials were only part of what the Olympics intended to showcase. Starting with the administration of Miguel Alemán (1946–52), a succession of Mexican governments constructed the import substitution model that facilitated the industrialization of many cities in Mexico. Few could have debated the growth of Mexico’s economy at a steady annual rate of 6 to 7 percent of the GDP and the persistence of low inflation rates between the Alemán and Díaz Ordaz administrations, a period of expansion dubbed the “Mexican miracle.”⁴ Yet among economists active during this period

there was no real consensus about the social, political, and cultural effects that this unevenly distributed growth would cause.⁵ Despite this uncertainty, the single-party state’s propaganda apparatus, which had

Figure I.1. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez (*center*) receives the Olympic Torch, Mexico City, October 1968. Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Mexico City.



expanded to an unprecedented extent, avidly promoted this “miracle,” taking the domestic and international visibility of Mexican art and culture to new heights as part of a highly touted *apertura* or “opening up” of Mexico to the world.⁶

Mexico ’68 was the most ambitious of a sequence of official design projects destined to support the claim that, in the aftermath of its revolutionary wars (c. 1910–20), a socially unified and prosperous Mexico had effectively arrived to the “developed” world. This book is the first to explore the intersecting histories of the design interventions aimed to support this claim.⁷ It examines five sets of projects crafted by a handful of design professionals to operate as embodiments of Mexico’s economic and cultural “miracle”: pavilions Mexico presented at world’s fairs, museums of culture produced for domestic and international audiences, venues for large sports events, the temporary Olympic spectacle, and a subway system implemented in Mexico City. Just as the violence that erupted in the context of the Olympics exposed social schisms that even the carefully designed Cultural Olympiad could not hide from public view, the production of the rest of design projects of the “miracle” was also politically charged.

The careers of several key figures converged at this critical moment, resulting in the loose formation of an officially sanctioned design entourage, with Ramírez Vázquez as figurehead. His ample experience as a cultural bureaucrat made Ramírez Vázquez an ideal candidate for the position of chief Olympic organizer, a position that no other architect had held before or has since.⁸ In addition to overseeing the design of a series of Mexican pavilions at world’s fairs, during the early 1960s the architect-politician acted as chief designer of the National Museum of Anthropology (MNA) in Mexico City (1964), the most elaborate museum ever built in Mexico and one of the most significant in the world. Like Mexico’s world’s fairs pavilions, the MNA’s curatorial program contended that a degree of ethnic and social harmony unmatched anywhere else in the world defined Mexico’s national identity.

The design of the Olympics spread a similar message, expressing the Mexican state’s avowed embrace of “cosmopolitan” and “indigenous” cultures. Commissioned by the MOC, U.S.-born designer Lance Wyman (b. 1937) devised a graphic system for the Olympics. The center of this system was Wyman’s Mexico ’68 logo, which merges the number ’68, the word “Mexico,” and the five Olympic rings to create a dynamic series of radiating patterns (Plate 1). This image recalls many international artistic practices, and mirrors the vibrating lines and colors of textiles produced by the Huicholes, an indigenous group from the Pacific coast of Mexico. The logo’s simultaneous “Mexican” and “international” associations remain controversial even today. Ramírez Vázquez and some of his collaborators interpret the logo as a tribute to Huichol art, and consistently play down its relationship to

modern art produced outside of Mexico. Wyman, for his part, describes the logo as a fusion of “Mexican” and “international” artistic traditions. The logo’s divergent interpretations illuminate a central predicament behind the creation of many of the “miracle’s” design projects: the challenge to embody Mexican cultural specificity while remaining in tune with universalizing and internationally palatable modernist trends.

The collaborative platform of the Olympics permeated into other design projects of the 1960s. Shortly after his Olympic work, Wyman provided the first three lines of Mexico City’s subway (1967–70) with an urban signage system. The Spanish-born architect Félix Candela (1910–97), who designed the most significant sports arena for the Olympic Games, the Sports Palace (1968), also produced modernist environments for several stations in this transit system. Having built warehouses of reinforced concrete for many new industrial complexes since the mid-1940s, for these high-profile projects Candela made spectacular use of hyperbolic paraboloids, intricate saddle-shaped forms of multiple curvatures. Often crafted through the use of handmade formwork by Mexican laborers, the structural sophistication and formal intricacy of these concrete “hypars” made them quite popular and earned them official praise as embodiments of essentially “Mexican” yet “modern” building practices. Candela’s success thus built on a fascination with concrete as the prime material for the expression of Mexican modernity that dated back to the early decades of the twentieth century.⁹ A tangible demonstration of Mexico’s infrastructural development, the subway was also a major work of state propaganda. President Díaz Ordaz, his collaborators in the Mexico City municipal office, and Grupo ICA, the construction company that built the subway, avidly promoted its many attributes. In particular, they praised the subway’s perceived ability to promote spatial coexistence and collaboration between various ethnic groups and social classes, and of the art and imagery displayed in its stations to reinforce the basic tenets of Mexican national culture.

In deploying design and exhibitions as tools for social control and propaganda, the Mexican state was hardly alone.¹⁰ Nation-states worldwide actively display how they administer economic and natural resources, contain social unrest, and serve as custodians of geographic territories, and are thus exhibitionist by definition. They participate in what historian of museums Tony Bennett describes as a post-Enlightenment “Exhibitionary Complex.” This “complex” includes museums, world’s fairs, trade shows, and other kinds of exhibitions in which dramatically displayed artifacts—commercial, ethnological, technological, and artistic—are central to the task of narrating the cultural identities of nations and regions.¹¹ As scholars like Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo and Shelley Garrigan have shown, Mexico’s participation in this “complex” long predated the 1960s, yet the profound

interpenetration between the practices of politicians, architects, and designers at this time has not received the attention it deserves.¹²

Several studies, notably those by David Craven, Leonard Folgarait, and Mary Coffey, have mapped out the relationship between artistic practices and politics in twentieth-century Mexico.¹³ Analyses of the relationship between politics and architecture in Mexico have also paved the way for this book. Several scholars, including Luis Carranza and Patrice Olsen, have examined the interrelation between political transformations and architectural practices during the years immediately following the Mexican Revolution.¹⁴ In the case of Ramírez Vázquez's career, particularly his role as chief organizer of Mexico '68, the work of historian Ariel Rodríguez Kuri is exemplary, for it first discussed the architect's rise to political and architectural prominence.¹⁵ Historian Eric Zolov's work also laid the groundwork for a transnational approach to the study of Mexico '68's cultural, diplomatic, and political resonance.¹⁶ Similarly, revisionist approaches to the work of mid-twentieth-century architects like Candela and Mario Pani (1911–93)—an architect of comparable official stature to Ramírez Vázquez's—have enhanced our understanding of architects' participation in the cultural politics of the period.¹⁷

This book builds on these contributions to reveal the centrality of the interpenetration between political, architectural, and design practices to the inner workings of the Mexican state. It argues that despite the tightly knit patronage circles of the “miracle's” official design projects, a multiplicity of claims about the historical, social, and political meanings of Mexico's midcentury prosperity actively shaped these interventions. It suggests that this instability was a result of the uneasy collaborations between designers and architects with diverse agendas, and of the operation of a cultural bureaucracy fractured by internecine struggles for influence. It also shows how the mass-mediated production and reception of these works not only afforded them international and domestic visibility, but also subjected them to constant social contestation.

WORKING MIRACLES

El milagro mexicano, a multiauthored book published in Mexico City in 1970, provides a critique of the economic triumphalism that much Mexican state propaganda exemplified at that time.¹⁸ *El milagro's* authors assert that Mexico's “miracle” did not succeed previous stages of feudalism during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1910), and of increasingly even distribution of wealth in the aftermath of Mexico's revolutionary wars, as this propaganda suggested. The “miracle,” they claimed, was instead a continuation of the exploitative relationship that Mexico experienced alongside the rest of the “third world” vis-à-vis the neocolonial “first-world” powers.¹⁹

Mexico's "miracle" was part of an international matrix of political and economic events. Between the 1950s and 1970s, the industrialization processes of East Germany, Japan, Spain, and Italy, among other countries, were commonly discussed as economic miracles in Euro-American specialized and popular publications.²⁰ As John Minns argues, each of these scenarios was quite different. Mexico's rapid economic expansion paralleled that of other "emerging" countries at this time, yet the geographic proximity of Mexico to the United States made the influx of U.S. capital into Mexico and the migration of Mexican laborers to the United States decisive factors of the process.²¹ Similarly, the Mexican state emerged as the primary engine of the national economy, interacting with a politically unstable bourgeoisie through various clientelist modalities. Labor relations, industry, and public investments were thus all realms where state-sponsored economic growth could advance through co-optation, corruption, and coercion.²²

In Mexico proper, Mexico's economic expansion was the subject of a series of charged debates that, as Rodríguez Kuri has shown, represent competing visions of national development. One major aspect of this debate concerned the relationship between urban and rural models. In his book *The Struggle for Peace and Bread in Mexico* (1950), influential Austrian-American historian Frank Tannenbaum (1893–1969) advocated the preservation of what he described as Mexico's self-sustaining nodes of subsistence agriculture. Prominent Mexican economists like Manuel Parra (1914–86) and Gilberto Loyo (1901–73), who occupied state-appointed positions, dismissed this view, describing it as an imperialist Arcadian fantasy aimed at perpetuating Mexico's underdevelopment. Instead, they described state-sponsored urbanization and industrialization as the most desirable means for Mexico's emergence onto the world stage.²³ Loyo and Parra's vision became predominant in coming decades, with state-sponsored industrialization that involved private and public capital, Mexican as well as foreign, becoming one of Mexico's most significant economic engines by the early 1970s.²⁴ Yet, even economists like Víctor Urquidí (1919–2004), who stood squarely behind industrialization, expressed trepidation about whether the state would be able to distribute the wealth that this process generated in an equitable manner.²⁵

Urbanization and industrialization were closely connected processes, and hence the expansion of cities, especially the capital city, was a defining phenomenon of the "miracle."²⁶ Writing in 1970, Mexican agricultural engineer Edmundo Flores (1918–2004) argued that the rural-to-urban migration caused by the expansion of urban economic engines would inevitably lead to the expansion of Mexico City into a future megalopolis.²⁷ Mexico's import substitution industrialization was specifically intended to boost domestic consumption of goods manufactured in Mexico through protectionist policies intended to aid Mexican-sponsored

industry, yet came to be increasingly dominated by U.S. economic interests. As George Flaherty points out, real-estate speculation was one of the least regulated economic sectors, and hence the influx of domestic and international capital into this activity, especially in Mexico City, partly accounts for the building boom of this period.²⁸ Cities like Monterrey in northern Mexico, as well as urban centers along the U.S.–Mexican border, also expanded rapidly.²⁹ As sociologist Diane Davis has shown, Mexico City’s economic and political preeminence in Mexico’s national picture was consistently unstable, and as the following chapters will illustrate, the border zones of the expanding capital were often the site of conflict. And yet, the urban form of the capital most dramatically reflected the transformations of the “miracle.”³⁰

Alongside industrialization and urbanization, the expansion of Mexico’s tourist industry was a third key ingredient of the “miracle’s” economic panorama, and these interrelated forces had national-scale repercussions.³¹ In addition to leaving its mark on the capital, tourism transformed the urban fabric of other regions of Mexico. The production of sites like Acapulco and Cancún as tourist enclaves, which began in the mid-1940s and late 1960s, respectively, is perhaps most emblematic of the architectural and urban effects of this process, but this industry’s effects were much more wide-ranging.³² The fact that, in 1961, after his presidential tenure, Miguel Alemán became the president of Mexico’s National Tourist Association, provides a sense of the central role that tourism played at this point in national politics. Perhaps most significantly, the expansion of tourism as an economic, political, and cultural field facilitated the production of commodified templates of Mexican national identity for domestic use as well as for international distribution.³³ Produced for domestic and international mass audiences, many of the “miracle’s” design projects aimed to accommodate the symbolic demands of these overlapping spheres of consumption.

DESIGNING DEVELOPMENTALISM

The specific modalities of development that Mexico would implement were certainly the matter of debate, but few commentators of the 1950s, 1960s, or 1970s questioned whether development itself should be the goal of state-sponsored efforts. Economic debates about Mexico’s future were thus situated squarely within the discursive horizon of developmentalism. Enabled by the transnational entrenchment of modernization theory across the institutional landscape of the post–World War II world, and as part of the geopolitical reconfiguration of the globe into the “three world” system in the aftermath of the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference, Mexico, like the rest of Latin America, became part of an expansive “third-world” terrain ripe for economic interventionism.³⁴ In a critique of this

discursive horizon, Gabriel Zaid argues that the technical and specialized debates about the causes and desired effects of development are “internal debates within the culture of progress” that never question this culture’s multiple contradictions.³⁵ In the Mexican variant of this culture a quest for progress, articulated in unequivocal Eurocentric terms, legitimizes a wide range of governmental interventions that accentuate economic inequalities and centralize political power. Especially during the “miracle,” the Mexican state expanded its network of clientelist agencies, managing dissent by providing economic, social, and political favors to multiple constituencies as a way to palliate the structural inequality that its policies exacerbated.³⁶ Concomitant with this expansion of the state apparatus was the consolidation of the paternalist public personas of Mexican presidents, who were given credit for the completion of infrastructural and other public works, as the chapters below will show.³⁷

Beyond the Mexican case, scholars have explored the relationship between developmentalist politics, visual and design culture in Latin America before. During the 1960s, Marta Traba and Juan Acha, art historians based in Latin America, expressed divergent views about whether avant-garde artistic practices should resist or work within the framework of developmentalist platforms.³⁸ In an important 1975 study, architectural historian Rafael López Rangel used a Marxist lens to describe modernist interventions produced in Mexico and other centers of architectural production in Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela under the auspices of developmentalist governments as embodiments of the economic dependency between the countries of this region and those of the “first” world.³⁹ More recently, Jorge Francisco Liernur has examined the imbrication of political, historical, and cultural trajectories wherein the histories of Latin American developmentalist politics and international transformations in modernist architecture converge.⁴⁰

Like these contributions, this book conceptualizes design practices as embedded directly within developmentalism’s expanded cultural, political, and economic spheres of influence. As anthropologist Arturo Escobar argues, developmentalism cannot be described merely as the combination of a set of economic tools that manufactured the “third world” as a space for intervention. “It was rather,” he states, in a provocative discursive turn,

the result of the establishment of a set of relations among these elements, institutions, and practices and of the systematization of these relations to form a whole. The development discourse was constituted not by the array of possible objects under its domain but by the way in which, thanks to this set of relations, it was able to form systematically the objects of which it spoke, to group them and arrange them in certain ways, and to give them a unity of their own.⁴¹

This book positions architectural and design practices fully within this relational framework. It argues that these practices provided the Mexican state's brand of developmentalism with an aesthetic dimension, and also facilitated its attempts to condition the desires and behaviors of its governed subjects. The book does not only understand the "results" of design practices—monumental buildings and elaborate exhibitions—as propagandistic demonstrations of development's promises. More substantially, it examines design sponsored by the agents of development—the state, and the institutions and interest groups clientelistically involved with it—as a developmentalist practice in and of itself. It thus contends not only that the design interventions examined here served to create "illusions" of possible development, but that they helped sustain practices of statecraft in much more substantial ways. It argues that architecture and design were situated firmly in what Michel Foucault describes as the biopolitical domain, the terrain where state control is exercised literally over the physical bodies of a population of governed, disciplined subjects, but also as a set of strategies intended to mold the affective, emotional, and social ties that structure the relations among these subjects.⁴² As we shall see, Mexican state agencies attempted to exert this control through the construction of buildings and the promotion of other design interventions intended to shape the social, economic, and political behaviors of these populations. Members of these agencies also attempted to exercise social control by having architects and designers take on the role of proxies or spokesmen for the state when its governance encountered resistance. Because architecture and design operated in these modalities, they were central tools for social control, but they also exemplified the many shortcomings of this type of governance, bearing witness to its violence and facing resistance to it.

IMAGE ECONOMIES

One of this book's central aims is to understand the exchanges of cultural capital at the heart of the operations of Mexico's official design professionals.⁴³ Situated at the convergence point of large economic investments and the significant expenditure of political energies, officially sanctioned design projects provided a disciplinary and discursive setting for these exchanges. The book defines the discursive realm where these exchanges took place as a set of "image economies," sites where the cultural capital invested by the makers and patrons of official design projects could yield a number of different returns—bureaucratic and professional esteem, critical acclaim, political influence, or financial gain. Each of the following chapters maps out one image economy that is self-contained in that it relates specifically to the production and representation of a discrete set of design projects. However, these localized economies are also porous and operate in close interdependence with one another.

For an approach of this kind, there are important precedents. Most significant is anthropologist Deborah Poole's account of the transatlantic dissemination of lithographs and photographs that claimed to represent the Andean world between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Poole introduces the concept of a "visual economy" to account for the ways in which circulating images accrue not just economic value but also cultural significance.⁴⁴ Tenorio-Trillo argues that the instability of this environment presents us with a rich and messy "exchange and appropriation of visions."⁴⁵ A similar messiness of contested and competing meanings lies at the center of the argument in this book. Relative to Poole's, however, this book's formulation is more specifically attuned to the dynamics of cultural consumption of Mexico's mass-mediated society of the twentieth century. Historian of literature Rubén Gallo is among the more insightful commentators of this context, and has mapped out the intersections between avant-garde practices in art and architecture, media, and technological change in twentieth-century Mexico in useful ways.⁴⁶ The projects discussed below are also different than those Poole studied in significant ways, and more akin to Gallo's, as they are mostly spaces and environments not necessarily produced, consumed, or disseminated just as graphic or photographic images. Yet, the production and reception of these spaces and places operated in what architectural historian Anthony Vidler has described as the "expanded field" of architecture. Vidler defines this field as the processes whereby architecture and design artifacts become assessed as commodities largely by way of the de-territorialized circulation of their representations as clusters of images.⁴⁷ This analysis does not quite relegate the spatially rooted nature of spaces and environments to a secondary order. To the contrary, throughout this book the mass-mediated condition of Mexico's official design interventions never quite detracts from the value attached to their site-specificity, or to the profound effect that their sites and materials exert on their audiences.

This book situates the consumption of these design projects within the broader panorama of official mid-twentieth-century Mexican culture. Scholars of this formation tend to understand it along the lines of what Antonio Gramsci describes as a hegemonic exchange.⁴⁸ Official culture, that is, was embroiled in a permanent process of negotiation between the normative ambitions of the state's cultural production, and the often-divergent agendas of the governed consumers of this culture.⁴⁹ Especially useful here is anthropologist Roger Bartra's expansive definition of Mexican official culture as one involving not only artifacts commissioned directly by the state, but also those that furthered its normative ambitions at various levels of remove, and often in unruly ways.⁵⁰ On the basis of these insights, this book conceptualizes the Mexican state along the lines of what Gramsci describes as a populist, inclusionary state, which, not least through its patronage of design and

architecture, attempts to construct a relatively pliable if ultimately autocratically conceived profile of “national” culture within which diverse constituencies can find a clientelist footing to make demands and exert pressures.⁵¹

Scholars have examined Mexico’s hegemonic exchanges during the “miracle” before. In *Hybrid Cultures* (1993), cultural critic Néstor García Canclini argues that “the state that had promoted an integration of the traditional and the modern, the popular and the cultured, [after the 1940s] pushes a project in which popular utopia gives way to modernization, revolutionary utopia to the planning of industrial development.”⁵² In describing this political shift so decisively, García Canclini may endow the postrevolutionary state with more ideological coherence and political stability than it ostensibly possessed. A fundamental transformation of this state did take place between 1945 and 1946, as Mexico’s ruling single party changed its name from the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM) to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the name by which it is still known today. Despite the consolidation of the official PRI party, the legitimacy and authority of the state apparatus was by no means seamless.⁵³ As Alan Knight observes, this legitimacy instead “depended on [the state’s] daunting monopoly of national power, its vast reservoir of patronage, and its calculating combination of sporadic reform and surgical repression” of opposition.⁵⁴

Historian Aaron Navarro has theorized these formulations further, demonstrating how Mexico’s single-party system derived legitimacy from a strategic deployment of “political intelligence” to absorb dissent over time.⁵⁵ This process entailed the neutralization of alternative political options, notably through the co-optation of the language of “revolution” through a sustained glorification of the revolution of the 1910s, an operation intended to deprive the political Left in Mexico of its claims, which found considerable favor until the mid-1940s, to offer avenues for genuine revolutionary transformation.⁵⁶ It also involved the coercion of labor, especially through the strategic planting of *charros*, government-appointed union leaders, in labor leadership, so as to diffuse opposition in a process that, as the chapters below explore, was not devoid of tension and often involved violent repression.⁵⁷

Although Navarro does not focus on visual or design culture, his concept of “political intelligence” may well describe the specific kind of bureaucratic savvy cultivated not only by career politicians in Mexico, but also by the designers and other cultural figures they patronized.⁵⁸ As various scholars suggest, intellectuals of all stripes were instrumental in aiding the state’s hegemonic efforts in mid-twentieth-century Mexico.⁵⁹ Between 1950 and 1970, literacy rates and the domestic audience for culture, especially mass culture, expanded dramatically in the country. By the mid-twentieth century, a generation of public intellectuals who

had first become involved with the state's patronage of culture during the early postrevolutionary years was fully established alongside an institutional apparatus that sustained its efforts. During his short tenure as secretary of public education (1921–24), José Vasconcelos provided government support to a group of writers and poets known as Los Contemporáneos, which included among its ranks figures like José Torres Bodet (1902–74) and Salvador Novo (1904–74).⁶⁰ Novo and Torres Bodet are only two of the figures alongside poet Octavio Paz (1914–98), novelist Carlos Fuentes (1928–2012), or writer Elena Poniatowska (b. 1932), to name a few, that would eventually become prominent members of an intelligentsia that occupied a variety of positions ranging from diplomatic to cultural administration capacities during the “miracle.”⁶¹ Torres Bodet is particularly significant for the career of Ramírez Vázquez, as he introduced the future architect-politician to the realm of state-sponsored cultural production in the mid-1940s. These figures' ideological and intellectual profiles were diverse, and hence, despite their varying degrees of collusion with the state, they never fully operated as the state's apologists, often publicly opposing the state's operations yet strategically finding niches to further their own agendas within its patronage networks.⁶² These figures also had different views about the cultural effects of Mexico's economic expansion during the 1950s and 1960s, had mixed feelings about the developmentalist policies of the PRI, and looked upon the “miraculous” nature of the process with caution.

As this book will show, design professionals navigated this atmosphere of clientelist practice. The projects they produced reflect their diverse ideological and political agendas, and collectively draw up a dense and chaotic vision of “national” culture. These projects aided the state in two interrelated capacities. Many of the design projects examined here helped to construct and sustain mass audiences for official culture, helping to shape the populist contours of the single-party state's cultural production. But in less obvious ways, Ramírez Vázquez and his fellow designers aided the state that patronized their operations to perform the function that sociologist Max Weber describes as the state's “monopoly of violence,” its ability to police its governed subjects and restrain dissent against its agendas through both the symbolic threat and the literal exercise of violence.⁶³ It is perhaps no coincidence that *charrismo* emerged during the tenure of Manuel Ramírez Vázquez, the architect's brother, as secretary of labor (1948–52), just as Pedro Ramírez Vázquez was beginning to rise within the state's ranks and was raising the prominence of design practices to unprecedented heights within the state's operations. Much as *charrismo* combined persuasion with the threat and exercise of violent repression, the projects completed by Ramírez Vázquez and his contemporaries simultaneously aestheticized the state's normative cultural, political, and social agendas and

attempted to regulate the behavior of their consumers in ways that often exceeded simple persuasion and entailed more violent means.

OVERVIEW

The book's first two chapters discuss the most significant curatorial interventions of the "miracle." The first chapter, titled "Diplomatic Spectacles," examines the works of exhibition architecture that defined Ramírez Vázquez's career before the Olympics as well as a series of key official shows organized during the mid-to-late 1960s. This includes the national pavilions for which Ramírez Vázquez served as chief designer, those for Expo '58 in Brussels and the 1962 and 1964–65 World's Fairs in Seattle and New York. In the context of Expo '58 and the New York World's Fair, the architect-politician collaborated with exhibition designer Fernando Gamboa. For Expo '67 and Hemisfair '68, the world's fairs celebrated in Montreal and San Antonio, Gamboa acted as chief designer of Mexico's national pavilions. The chapter argues that an attempt to inscribe Mexican national representations within an unstable landscape of evolving diplomatic trends unifies these diverse projects.

The second chapter, "Archaeologies of Power," turns to an examination of the creation of a national network of museums of culture in Mexico at the behest of president Adolfo López Mateos, and of this network's centerpiece, the National Museum of Anthropology (MNA) in Mexico City. It contrasts the formulations of Mexican cultural identity constructed at these museums, intended to be consumed by domestic audiences as well as by tourists, to similar constructions deployed by the pavilions of the preceding chapter, made mostly for international audiences. It also suggests that the narrative of cultural continuity and racial harmony constructed at the MNA defined several urban spaces in the Mexican capital, especially the Plaza of the Three Cultures (1964). The plaza is made up of an assemblage of pre-Columbian and colonial architecture, and is nestled within Mario Pani's Nonoalco–Tlatelolco housing project (1964). The space thus consists of architectural embodiments of three components that official definitions of modern Mexican culture understood as formative—pre-Columbian, colonial, and modern—assembled into an urban display that emphasizes their fusion. The site of the tragic October 2, 1968, massacre, the chapter demonstrates that the plaza lies at the heart of the debates about the social contestation of reductive constructions of Mexican national identity produced during the "miracle."

Chapters 3 and 4 turn to a political reading of Mexico's Olympic architecture and design. The third chapter, "Image Machines," explores the dual process undertaken by Mexico '68's organizers to promote, as part of a unified campaign,

refurbished “old” buildings and a new generation of structures made specifically for the Olympics. The burdens confronted in this case were not unlike those that the designers of Mexico’s pavilions grappled with, because here too the viability of the “miracle,” as evinced by the design quality of the Olympic spectacle, was on the line. Central to the chapter is a discussion of the relationship between the primary Olympic facility, Felix Candela’s Sports Palace, the largest of Ramírez Vázquez’s stadium projects, the Aztec Stadium (1966), and the mass-mediated image. The fourth chapter, “Total Design of an Olympic Metropolis,” discusses the expansive network of graphic, sculptural, and urban interventions created during the Olympics in Mexico City as part of the Cultural Olympiad. Alongside architect Eduardo Terrazas, Lance Wyman attempted to create an urban orientation system based graphically on his Mexico ’68 logo that strategically showcased the city’s “desirable” areas and hid from view the regions of the metropolis considered unfit for international visitors. Mathias Goeritz’s Route of Friendship, a collection of urban sculptures by Mexican and international artists positioned alongside the beltway marking Mexico City’s southern limits, was an additional attempt to embellish a marginal area of the capital and create a carefully edited selection of city views for visitors in moving cars. The chapter inscribes all these experiments within the longer history of Mexico City’s urban gentrification. It also looks closely at their relationships to the creation of a hospitality infrastructure that accommodated the expanding influx of tourists to the capital. The chapter concludes with an examination of the Olympic campaign’s relationship to the Camino Real Hotel (1968), designed by architect Ricardo Legorreta as the official hotel for Mexico ’68.

The final chapter, “Subterranean Scenographies,” examines the design and construction of the Mexico City subway system’s first three lines (1967–70). Originally intended to open during the Olympics, organizational conflicts and funding limitations delayed the inauguration of the subway until September 1969. The chapter demonstrates that the subway’s network of elaborate architectural spaces, which functioned in tandem with Wyman’s graphic system of urban orientation, intended to reinforce many of the notions of Mexican cultural specificity that other museums, pavilions, and urban spaces of the “miracle” also propagated. It positions the production and consumption of the Mexican subway within the larger discursive field of subway design in the 1960s and 1970s, a period during which critics, designers, and policy makers regarded the completion of urban infrastructure projects of this kind as one of the primary measuring sticks to evaluate the relative development of cities and countries around the world.

These chapters are structured around the interface between two discursive scales: an intimate one of collusion and dissension within a small circle of “official” design professionals and their patrons; and a more expansive one of dialogues

between the exhibitionist state and the economic and social forces driving its normative aspirations, as well as resistance to them. Together, these chapters aim to provide more than just a firm grasp of the Mexican state's interaction with a fluctuating political and economic environment. They seek to contribute to a broader understanding of the relationships between state formations, the corporate organizations with which they establish ties, and design as a network of disciplinary formations during the mid-twentieth century.

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ONE DIPLOMATIC SPECTACLES

MEXICO DISPLAYS ITSELF AT WORLD'S FAIRS

Shortly before the Olympics began, in an interview for the one-hundredth edition of *Arquitectura/México*, then the country's premier architectural publication, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez reflected on all that was at stake in hosting such a high-profile international event, the first of its kind in Mexico and in the developing world at large. "The rest of the world," the interview began, "has taken a long time to forget an image of Mexico, that of a figure covered by a poncho and a sombrero sleeping soundly beneath the shadow of a tree. . . . The new international image of Mexico is being created this Olympic Year. It is, of course, *entirely different, but by no means an effort being made to create a false image.*"¹ This claim about Ramírez Vázquez's work as Olympic organizer is somewhat ironic given that the Mexican Olympic delegation had won the bid to become an Olympic host in the German city of Baden-Baden in 1963 precisely by showcasing a folkloric image of the country, ponchos and sombreros included, to an international selection committee initially reticent to even consider Mexico City as a contender. Armed with originals and replicas of Mexico's most prized pre-Columbian treasures and with mariachis and authentic "Indian" dancers playing and dancing, the delegation successfully sold the prospect of an Olympics that would be made distinctive not by extravagant new sports infrastructure, by Mexico's efficient organization, or its abundance of national athletic talent, but by the warmth and charm of the Mexican people, the ancient cultural riches of Mexico, and the country's proven record of hospitality to foreign visitors.²

Its questionable accuracy aside, these provocative pre-Olympic declarations about Ramírez Vázquez's campaign were not without precedents in Mexico, where trajectories of socially engaged architecture and art that pledged to reinvent

Mexico's national and cultural identities had emerged more than once during the first half of the twentieth century. But what exactly was Mexico's "image" on the eve of the Olympics? What was "new" and "international" about it, and what role did architecture and design play in its construction? And why did those overseeing the orchestration of the Olympic spectacle feel compelled to assure their audience that this image was not "false"?

Ramírez Vázquez could claim some measure of ownership over Mexico's international "image" during the "miracle" years, as this image had primarily taken shape in a series of world's fairs pavilions produced by his design office in the years leading up to Mexico '68. Through trial and error, these pavilions tested out and perfected various scenographies of "Mexicanness"—environments intended to give foreign audiences a dramatic sense of Mexico's cultural, political, and economic conditions. Very evocative for those who actually visited these pavilions, these environments arguably reached more viewers—especially Mexican viewers—through their multiple translations across the mass media, as collections of images filmed and broadcast on television newsreels, or photographed and published in specialized and popular publications.

The actual production of these buildings was also mediated by mechanically reproduced images. The design of the pavilions was carried out by proxy between the teams at the design office in Mexico City and resident architects and curators at the locations of the world's fairs, with various types of photographic images serving as the primary means for the remote orchestration of design decisions. None of this, of course, was new for world's fairs architecture, as the interdependence between diplomatic architecture and its mass-mediated representations long predated the 1950s. Moreover, at least some ingredients of the "new" scenographies of "Mexicanness" that Ramírez Vázquez's office produced had been formulated long before the architect-politician's career even began.

The project brief for the 1958 Mexican pavilion for Brussels's Expo '58, the first of the pavilions produced at Ramírez Vázquez's office, claimed that the structure presented a "new" Mexico that was "a young and vigorous country with deep, old roots." Simple enough on paper, this unstable formulation had a long history (Figure 1.1). Simultaneously billed as part of Mexico's national essence and branded as a tourist commodity, modern Mexico's "roots" had been advertised in its pavilions for world's fairs and other international expositions from the very beginning of Mexico's participation in such events. In the pavilions of the early twentieth century, the place afforded to Mexico's past and its "youth" as a modern nation-state within constructions of national identity was a peculiar one.

Tenorio-Trillo has explored how Mexico's pavilions after the country's revolutionary wars (1910–20) articulated these notions.³ The exterior of Manuel

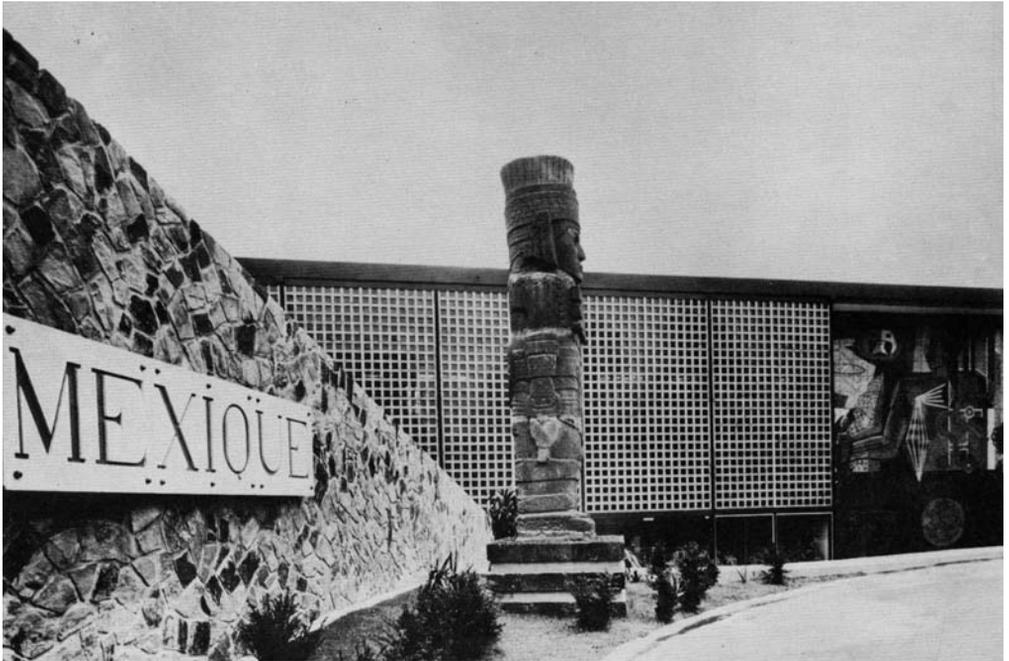


Figure 1.1. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Mexico Pavilion, Brussels World's Fair, Brussels, 1958. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.

Amábilis's pavilion for the 1929 fair in Seville, for instance, was modeled after Maya architecture from the Yucatán Peninsula, and featured murals by artist Víctor Reyes and sculptures, including some inspired by Maya works, by sculptor and architect Leopoldo Tomassi.⁴ The pavilion's interior contained a display that glorified Mexico's pre-Hispanic past, presenting it as the defining ingredient of the emerging national "race." Particularly emblematic was the mural painted along the pavilion's staircase by Reyes.⁵ The work was made up of two horizontal, filmstrip-like series of images of a man and a woman, who were identified by their attire and skin tone as "typical" Mexicans. Each of the sequences, Amábilis and Reyes claimed, embodied the "male" and "female" components of the "Mexican race" and their dynamic conjunction, perceived by spectators as they moved through the stairwell, gave visitors an impression of the normative, gendered synergy between governed bodies that allegedly defined Mexico at a national level.

Mural painting and race were closely intertwined in defining *mexicanidad* during the immediate postrevolutionary years, as were notions of race and architecture. In his own built work as well as in a series of influential texts, Amábilis, a well-connected architect trained at the Paris École des Beaux-Arts and based in the Yucatán Peninsula, advocated a revival of Maya architecture, built in strict

compliance with the most technologically advanced construction techniques of the day. He argued that the combination of a “Hispanic” component present in Mexico as a result of conquest and colonization and the “Indian” racial elements that this architecture represented defined modern Mexico’s unique ethnic makeup.⁶ Onetime secretary of public education José Vasconcelos had famously described this makeup as Mexico’s *raza cósmica*, or “cosmic race,” in his book of the same title published in 1925, glorifying the presumed fusion of Old and New World elements out of which this race was made up. Like many of his fellow early-twentieth-century writers on the relationship between race and national identity, however, Vasconcelos positioned the Old World components in the equation as the superior ones of the two.⁷ Vasconcelos’s dictum, “Por mi Raza hablará el espíritu” (spirit shall speak through my Race), was fittingly engraved on the frieze of Amábilis’s pavilion. While this particular definition of Mexicanness, understood as a result of racial mixing, was specific to the immediate postrevolutionary years, the interrelation of architecture and race continued to be featured prominently in the pavilions of the second half of the twentieth century.

After the fairs of the early twentieth century, the image of Mexico that its administrations showcased abroad underwent substantial changes. The attention paid to the ancient history of Mexico intensified in state propaganda, but its presentation shifted in style. Mexico’s Indian “roots” never quite left the picture, but the “youths” that Mexico advertised as its own changed. At the 1939 New York World’s Fair, the last of the interwar fairs, for example, Mexico was explicitly presented as a “folkloric” country, perpetually “young” on account of the ties between its pre-Columbian past and its living popular culture.⁸ The definition of folklore during the mid-twentieth century was remarkably fluid, and did not just refer to narratives and social practices associated with the remnants of preindustrial culture in Mexico, or with handmade objects and artifacts associated with these cultural spheres, themselves central to the production of official culture at various points in time.⁹ It could also serve to describe the multifarious signs of Mexico’s uneven economic growth, so that often “folkloric” and “underdeveloped” became tantamount to one another. Eric Zolov has described the international propaganda dimensions of this coupling as “the emergence of a ‘folkloric vocabulary’—tropes gleaned from tourist advertisements and scripted performances of Mexican cultural identity—which helped translate the once unsettling imagery of underdevelopment into identifiable encounters with the Other.”¹⁰ During the 1950s and 1960s, images of Mexico’s recent and explosive economic progress, marshaled as proof of its “miracle,” gradually became as pervasive as, and were shown increasingly in direct juxtaposition with, those of its ancient past and “folkloric” present. Mexico’s pre-Hispanic, folkloric, and rapidly industrializing “youths” thus

gradually became mirror images of one another, and their often-problematic dialogue took center stage as the “miracle” years unfolded.

The presentation of precisely this dialogue as a uniquely Mexican cultural trait predated the “miracle” years by quite a large stretch of time, however. As Barbara Mundy and Dana Leibsohn have shown, the 1892 pavilion that Mexico presented at the *Exposición Histórico-Americana*, convened to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus’s journeys to the New World in Madrid, simultaneously showcased and erased the country’s colonial past, placing greatest emphasis on the interplay between Mexico’s deepest past and the promise of its modern, industrialized future. The pavilion included replicas of numerous colonial artifacts, mainly codices or painted books, but it was the visual and formal connections of these artifacts to pre-Hispanic artworks and visual traditions that the exhibition focused on, not their actual context of production or usage during the colonial period. The bureaucrats who crafted this pavilion also sought to stress the perceived relationship between the administration of Porfirio Díaz, who commissioned the pavilion, and the Aztec and Maya “empires” of old, steering clear of uncomfortable explanations of the colonial “interlude,” which the postrevolutionary pavilions would attempt to present in a favorable light in terms of the *mestizaje* paradigm only several decades later.¹¹

In addition to being indebted to the multiple incarnations of this racialized national narrative, Mexico’s pavilions of the “miracle” years, sponsored by the secretariat of industry and commerce, a branch of government tied directly to the presidential circle and produced by architects and bureaucrats intimately connected to this circle, also directly reflected changes in the makeup of the country’s ruling party. In the immediate aftermath of the revolutionary wars of the 1910s, Mexican pavilions consistently advertised the radical agenda of its recently established one-party state, while in the 1950s and 1960s they emphasized the avowed stability of this state’s rule. This shift responded to changes in the state’s language and forms of governance at large.

In particular, the 1946 consolidation of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), which replaced the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM), was engineered to leave behind the memory of many aspects of Mexico’s recent political history. Among these are the radical reforms instituted during the presidencies of Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–28), who established the PRM, or of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–40), during whose presidency many such reforms were consolidated. This change in nomenclature also erased the origins of the party in the armed struggles of the 1910s, which the PRM acronym preserved, as well as a succession of highly unstable presidencies marked by social upheaval and internecine party struggles, those of Emilio Portes Gil (1928–30), Pascual Ortíz Rubio (1930–32), and Abelardo

Rodríguez (1932–34). This semantic transformation additionally reflected the multiple aspects and dimensions of the gradual entrenchment in power of the single-party apparatus. Belied by the name change, this transformation was neither sudden nor extreme. After his presidency, Cárdenas remained loyal to the political machine he contributed to instituting and, in doing so, arguably enabled the conservative turn of the Ávila Camacho (1940–46) and Miguel Alemán (1946–52) administrations, which provided the base for the *apertura*'s defining features.¹² While the actual stability of the party's rule through these and subsequent years is highly debatable and some aspects of its fragility would become obvious by the late 1960s, it was precisely the perception of the state's stability that the pavilions of the 1950s and 1960s sought to articulate.

DEVELOPMENT'S WIZARDS

Despite their clear connection to their predecessors of the Porfiriato and early postrevolutionary periods, the image economies constructed in relation to the pavilions of the 1950s and 1960s are nonetheless unique. There are localized and general reasons for this. In general world's fair history, the "late" fairs of the 1950s and 1960s are of marked interest, because they were staged at a time when the legitimacy and popularity of this genre of international events was waning. Not quite as energetically promoted as the interwar fairs that attempted to recapture the exuberance of their Victorian predecessors, the fairs of a post–World War II world defined by decolonization processes nevertheless served as significant diplomatic venues. Some, like Expo '67 in Montreal, were commercially very successful. In geopolitical terms, however, these fairs faced unprecedented challenges, central among which was the increasingly visible presence of postcolonial nations, many of which presented national pavilions for the first time. The historical divide between imperial powers and colonial domains that was fundamental to world's fairs since 1851—the year of London's Great Exhibition, the exhibit that inaugurated the genre—was thus much less clearly defined in the second half of the twentieth century. Yet the division between colonial and imperial participants was arguably replaced by two analogous structuring categories: those that positioned participating nations as more or less developed or underdeveloped when compared to one another.

Mexico's pavilions attempted to negotiate this discursive framework, which also weighed heavily on other postcolonial countries, and in this sense their language was not exceptional. Attempts to bolster Mexico's exotic characteristics at world's fairs were not too different from gestures made by other such countries to differentiate their national identities from those of Euro-American countries. And as in the case of Mexico, many of these identities were articulated through

a glorification of these countries' long since vanished ancient cultures and their perceived remnants among their "primitive," living indigenous peoples. In addition, as Shelley Garrigan notes, attempts to exacerbate the cultural specificity of national displays through the production of self-exoticist exhibitions were not unique to the pavilions of "marginal" nations at world's fairs. This compensatory exaggeration has historically defined the national exhibitions of colonial powers and "first-world" countries as much as it conditioned those of colonial domains and postcolonial nations. As Garrigan claims about the fairs of the nineteenth century, "recognizing that both European and Mexican fair displays played with practices of self-exoticism to attract potential viewers and investors helps collapse the presumed difference between Mexico and the developed world."¹³

This is not to say that, by the middle of the twentieth century, Mexico did not face a rather specific set of predicaments. The image that Ramírez Vázquez's statement cited at the beginning of this chapter evokes is the understanding of Mexico as a third-world territory. This image understood laziness and backwardness as essentially Mexican qualities, and was far from forgotten at the time. These symbolic burdens required Mexico's pavilions to reposition many indicators of the country's underdevelopment as emblems of cultural specificity. These pavilions also had to persuade their audiences of potential international tourists and investors that Mexico was indeed on its way out of its underdeveloped condition but retained its folkloric and exotic attributes, a fundamental postcolonial predicament that took on specific contours in the Mexican case. Hence, the image-building effort of the "miracle" did not exactly consist of erasing "ponchos," "sombrosos," and similar images from Mexico's propaganda displays, as Ramírez Vázquez asserted on the eve of the Olympics. Instead, it consisted of strategically recasting these symbols within articulations of cultural specificity that responded to two intersecting constructions. On the one hand, these articulations were consistent with a well-established repertoire of narratives about Mexico's national character that dated back to the Porfiriato and had been reformulated during the early postrevolutionary years, when the notion of a Mexican nation was invented at least partly through trial and error at international expositions. On the other hand, the diplomatic architecture of the "miracle" responded to a shifting horizon of geopolitical challenges specific to the middle of the twentieth century. The multiple transformations undergone by Mexican official culture at this time amount to what Eric Zolov describes as a "renarrativizing" of postrevolutionary Mexico, a process that did not reinvent Mexico's international image anew but substantially reorganized its constitutive parts to accommodate this evolving landscape.¹⁴ Such a gesture of recasting was precisely what Ramírez Vázquez's delegation at Baden-Baden pursued successfully, scoring a significant diplomatic victory without really presenting

a new Mexico to the International Olympic Committee, but rather by persuading its members to regard Mexico's relative advantages vis-à-vis the organization of an international spectacle in a different light.

Aside from the particular discursive challenges that they faced, the distinctiveness of Mexico's pavilions of the 1950s and 1960s also has to do with the political biographies of their designers and curators. In Mexico, these two decades witnessed the rise to prominence of a new generation of "Wizards of Progress," to borrow Tenorio-Trillo's characterization of similar cultural bureaucrats active during the late nineteenth century. Like these predecessors, this new generation conceptualized "modernity . . . on one hand, [as] a diverse and comprehensive set of techniques to be mastered and, on the other, [as] a means of showing that their interests coincided both with those of the nation and those of the modern civilized world."¹⁵ This hegemonic gesture was thus simultaneously produced for "domestic" and "international" audiences. Although these new "wizards" were concerned less with "modernity" in its *fin de siècle* sense than with the notion of development in its mid-twentieth-century semantics, they too understood that the official practice of bureaucracy involved both political maneuvering and discursive production. Ramírez Vázquez was not the only key figure in this context. Just as significant was Fernando Gamboa. Together, Gamboa and Ramírez Vázquez essentially monopolized the production of official culture exhibitions in Mexico for two decades.¹⁶ Before their most significant projects are analyzed, some contextualization of just who Gamboa and Ramírez Vázquez were circa 1958, when the Brussels World's Fair convened, is needed.

Ramírez Vázquez was born into a family of humble origins and no real political ties, but shares a story of unlikely political prominence with two of his brothers, Manuel (secretary of labor, 1948–52) and Mariano (justice for the Mexican Supreme Court, 1947–49, 1954–73).¹⁷ The unlikely careers of these three members of the Ramírez Vázquez clan would be hard to explain, if not seen in relation to the populist measures of the Mexican state during their early lifetimes. In particular, the early years of Ramírez Vázquez's career were defined by efforts on the part of this state to massify access to public education, especially in Mexico City. A protégé of Torres Bodet since his days as a student at Mexico City's *Escuela Preparatoria*, Ramírez Vázquez earned an architecture degree at the UNAM, Mexico's National University, in 1943.

In addition to his extensive profile as an intellectual, Torres Bodet also served as an adviser on cultural matters to presidents Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940–46), Miguel Alemán, and López Mateos. Between 1943 and 1946, and then again between 1958 and 1964, he served as secretary of public education in Mexico, and between 1946 and 1948 he served as Mexico's secretary of foreign relations. More

significantly, between 1948 and 1952 Torres Bodet also served as the second-ever director general of UNESCO, succeeding Julian Huxley (1946–48). Torres Bodet's tenure at UNESCO proved instrumental in positioning Mexican art and culture in the international spotlight at the crucial historical moment when UNESCO attempted to carve a niche for itself as an institutional body intended to position cultural exchange and scientific and humanistic inquiry as significant variables in international diplomacy. In a number of ways, Ramírez Vázquez's career as a state architect would attempt to expand this political work further by positioning art and culture at the forefront of Mexico's diplomatic efforts.¹⁸ This transformation in Mexico's state culture also had its origins in the debates of the 1930s. Torres Bodet and the *Contemporáneos* had attempted to counterbalance the collectivist impulses of cultural nationalism in early postrevolutionary Mexico with a humanist construction of the national character where, in Robin Greeley's words, "an aesthetic of the intuitive, the melancholy, and the solitary inner experience of the individual" could coexist with other populist imperatives.¹⁹ Although they received state patronage more or less consistently over time, the *Contemporáneos* had nonetheless been unable to fully entrench this vision within the panorama of official culture, where several other trends coexisted.²⁰ A central question that Ramírez Vázquez's official production as state architect addresses is hence to provide the collectivizing, technocratic profile of the developmentalist mid-twentieth-century state with precisely this humanist counterpart, a tense balancing act that other members of the "miracle's" intelligentsia also grappled with.

Ramírez Vázquez's entry into politics in Mexico began through his involvement with the construction of public schools between 1944 and 1947, during the presidency of Ávila Camacho. School building had been a highly politicized field in Mexico since the early twentieth century: not only was it dominated by the patronage of the expanding single-party state, but architecture's relationship to public education was directly informed by ideological transformations in the highest spheres of power.²¹ Ramírez Vázquez's first major commission, the 1953 School of Medicine at the UNAM campus, inaugurated that year, was completed with Héctor Velázquez and Ramón Torres, and was part of the largest state-sponsored building campaign devoted to public education in twentieth-century Mexico (Figure 1.3).²² In 1958, primarily as a result of his ties to Torres Bodet, Ramírez Vázquez was designated head of the federal program for the construction of schools (CAPFCE), an agency tied to the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), and he occupied this position until 1964.²³ Sensing the architect-politician's rising influence, some, like the members of the *Unión Liberal Revolucionaria*, a small but active organization based in Mexico City, were critical of this appointment. In a February 1959 letter addressed to Torres Bodet, the *Unión's* chief representatives

accused Ramírez Vázquez, who was already well ensconced within state-sponsored construction circles, of having organized a “mafia” by illegally awarding government contracts to a selected few members of his inner circle, and warned him not to allow the architect to “fool and betray him” in order to “continue pillaging the Patrimony of the Mexican People.”²⁴

Criticisms notwithstanding, Ramírez Vázquez won his first international accolade, the grand prize at the 1960 Milan Triennial, for his design for the prototype for a hybrid between a house for teachers and a school intended for rural communities, a project he tested in various rural contexts in Mexico during his official appointment at CAPFCE. In conjunction with the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), CAPFCE subsequently became the sponsor of Ramírez Vázquez’s MNA, and of the network of national museums of culture planned for Mexico. Before this, Ramírez Vázquez had explored the ways in which Mexico’s modernist architecture could itself become the subject of exhibitions in the context of the 8th Pan-American Congress of Architects, celebrated in 1952. For this event, the architect arranged a vast network of images of significant Mexican artworks and architecture, from the pre-Hispanic period to the twentieth century, in many spaces across the brand-new UNAM campus. This encounter of architects from the Americas was a significant one. Among other things, it gave the new campus, and Ramírez Vázquez personally, increased visibility, paving the way for his later involvement with exhibitions of a much more ambitious kind.²⁵ All these formative episodes in the architect-politician’s career were fueled by official pursuits of various levels of social and political reform, and were defined by the deployment of design to effect as well as to advertise these reforms. These pursuits were themselves made possible by the single-party state’s expansion during the 1940s and 1950s, and by the increasing centrality of state funding to the production of large-scale building in Mexico. The centrality of architecture and design’s cultural work within the nation-building efforts of the exhibitionist Mexican state remained a core operative principle throughout Ramírez Vázquez’s career, which developed in strict dependence from the state’s evolving priorities and mandates.

By the time Expo ’58 came about, Gamboa already was a renowned curator of state-sponsored exhibitions of Mexican art for foreign audiences, having organized several large shows in major European cities. Like Ramírez Vázquez, the curator’s practice was facilitated and sustained by the exhibitionist practices of the expanding single-party state. In 1947, Gamboa’s first major curatorial work had consisted of reorganizing the collections of the National Museum of Fine Arts in Mexico City. In remaking the museum’s displays, Gamboa presented a narrative of continuity between ancient and modern art that also framed “folk” and “popular” arts as the living link between the national present and its past. This curatorial

program recycled many of the early postrevolutionary displays mentioned above, and, with some changes, would be consistently reinforced in Gamboa's collaborations with Ramírez Vázquez as well as in the pavilions and shows he curated independently.²⁶ In 1949, two years after completing the curatorial project of the National Museum of Fine Arts, Gamboa collaborated with Ramírez Vázquez for the first time in a temporary exhibit of twentieth-century Mexican art in Mexico City.²⁷ In 1950, Gamboa served as the commissioner for the Mexican pavilion for the Venice Biennale, where he presented the first significant show of works by José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Rufino Tamayo in a European setting up to that date. Two years later, he presented the first major traveling exhibition of Mexican arts ancient to modern to tour Europe, a venture that largely established his reputation.

Trained at the Art Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City, Gamboa became an early practitioner of a field defined as *museografía*, which can be loosely translated as "exhibition design." This is an especially uncharitable translation, however, as it does not quite account for the intimate ties between the tasks of curating and national image building that the term contains. Beginning in the 1930s, such professionals as Daniel Rubín de la Borbolla, Miguel Covarrubias, Carlos Pellicer, and Gamboa, all trained as artists and curators, pioneered the practice of *museografía*, eventually creating a separate disciplinary and practical domain distinct from art connoisseurship and collecting. Gamboa was particularly successful in professionalizing the field, gradually tying it closer to the highest spheres of presidential power.²⁸

Gamboa and Ramírez Vázquez crossed paths precisely as their design and curatorial work took on ever-higher political stakes, and as there was much cultural capital to be generated and exchanged as part of their official practices. For the design professionals involved, visibility and prestige within the cultural apparatus of the Mexican state was the main currency in this exchange. Given the clientelist relationships in place between this apparatus and the channels of patronage for large-scale architecture and design in Mexico by the 1950s, success in the diplomatic arena of the world's fair could ensure—as it did for Ramírez Vázquez and the designers in his circle—a considerable number of large-scale commissions at home. For professionals like Gamboa, the potential rewards were equally significant. In large part thanks to the success of his international exploits, the curator enjoyed a lengthy career as a national tastemaker and cultural power broker of sorts, eventually occupying prominent positions in such institutions as the National Academy of Fine Arts as well as at Mexico City's Museum of Modern Art. Gamboa's visibility in this capacity remains, like Ramírez Vázquez's in the realm of official architectural and design production, unparalleled since the "miracle" decades in Mexico.

However, the participation of these two figures at world's fairs was not always as uncomplicated as their eventual success may suggest.

A "MOSAIC" AT BRUSSELS

Celebrated between April and October 1958 in Brussels, Expo '58 was especially concerned with a representation of energy, as rendered emblematic by the Atomium, its identifying icon. Like many design artifacts of the late 1950s, the Atomium—a monumental steel sculpture of an iron crystal—popularized one of the most visible concepts associated with atomic science, a domain of particular interest in the early post–World War II years. At Expo '58, the first world's fair staged after the end of the war, this praise of the technology responsible for many recent wonders and woes was carefully modulated with a humanist veneer.

Writer Elena Poniatowska most perceptively expressed how Mexico attempted to fulfill local and global expectations at Brussels. As she argued in her March 1958 review of the Mexican pavilion at the fair for the Mexico City daily *Novedades*, Mexico's response to the fair was to emphasize the cultural wealth of the country, exoticizing Mexico's differences from European culture and positioning the country's relative economic underdevelopment under a positive light. Poniatowska also claimed that the pavilion positioned Mexico as a peripheral observer of the arms and space race then central to the conflicts between the United States and the USSR, and emphasized the country's peaceful diplomatic agenda, which con-

trasted with this divisive global climate. "Of course, we have not invented the atomic bomb," she wrote, "and our 'sputnik' did not fly too high because the

Figure 1.2. Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, Brazil Pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1939. Postcard. Author's collection.



taut clothesline from which it was launched was not greased well enough for it, but it has all been uphill for us.” Poniatowska claimed that Gamboa’s representation of Mexico presented the country as marginal to these conflicts yet fully involved with wars of a different order. In addition to an emphasis on culture, Gamboa’s display highlighted the triumphs of the postrevolutionary Mexican state in such realms as road building, industrialization, and the management of natural resources (primarily oil), and characterized Mexico as an “ancient warrior that defends itself from civilization” by embracing its ancient history and this history’s contemporary incarnations in folklore.²⁹ The architectural press also emphasized Mexico’s articulation of cultural resistance. For instance, after the fair, the Mexican architectural periodical *Calli* reprinted a text by Spanish architect and critic Fernando Cassinello, who decried the “structural bragging” of many of the fair’s pavilions. Although Cassinello did not explicitly praise Mexico’s contribution, he did claim that the only way to halt the excesses of conspicuous expense and structural exuberance that many other pavilions at the fair, especially those of the superpowers, had suffered from, was to “humanize” construction, a role that belonged not just to architects, but “to sculptors and painters, as fundamentally as to engineers and builders.”³⁰

As much as the show itself, the container for Gamboa’s exhibition carefully negotiated all these meanings. Architect Rafael Mijares, who was responsible for much of the design at Ramírez Vázquez’s office, devised a state-of-the-art structure for Brussels (Figure 1.1). A steel-frame shed filled with prefabricated panels of concrete, the Mexican pavilion was nonetheless equipped with a number of folkloric features. Approached from two winding roads, the Avenues de Seringas and des Narcisses, the pavilion’s facade included a wooden screen fitted with blocks of blue-colored blown glass of the kind used commonly in vernacular buildings in Mexico. Light shining through the glass would create the effect, the architects claimed, of “making [the visitors] feel Mexico’s sky inside the pavilion.”³¹ Reminiscent of the concrete sun breakers of Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer’s Brazil pavilion for the 1939 World’s Fair in New York—a structure that created an elaborate scenography of Brazil as a “tropical” wonderland, a theme reiterated by Brazil’s pavilion at Expo ’58—the screen was flanked by a mural of multicolored stone and glass designed by artist José Chávez Morado.³² The relationship between the Mexican pavilion in Brussels and the Brazilian one in New York, however, was not merely formal. Costa and Niemeyer’s pavilion also negotiated Brazil’s underdeveloped status through both its interior exhibit and the pavilion’s architectural language (Figure 1.2). The pavilion’s primary mission was to position Brazil, as Daryle Williams has pointed out, “at the tropical edge of modernity.”³³ Grover Whalen, 1939 World’s Fair organizer, commented that Brazil’s “pavilion

in itself is so unique as to command the attention of all Fair-goers passing on the main avenue,” adding that the structure’s cultivation of an atmosphere of tropical immersion that appealed to all the senses created a persuasive illusion. “The tropical gardens and the brilliant tropical birds” included in the display, he claimed, “are bound to bring in many visitors. And the aroma of fine coffee that circulates around the building should just about drag in every last confirmed coffee drinker who passes this way.”³⁴

Brazil’s position of calculated self-exoticization was not unlike those articulated by the diplomatic missions of Mexico and other developing countries at world’s fairs. In the case of the 1939 fair, a significant political negotiation was at stake in Brazil’s hedonistic show. Brazilian officials were eager to advertise Brazil’s cities as tourist destinations as well as to consolidate the United States as a market for some of the country’s key exports, while U.S. officials were especially eager to persuade Brazil’s diplomats to support their Second World War efforts.³⁵ In this and other instances, the exoticism of the diplomatic scenographies of Latin American nations at world’s fairs not only expressed populist concepts of nationhood espoused by the state-appointed cultural bureaucrats that produced them or of the fair organizers at each of these venues, but it could also serve as a foil for the mediation of domestic and international power plays.

At the 1958 Brussels fair, domestic cultural politics factored as prominently as international demands for self-exoticism in determining Mexico’s diplomatic architecture. Before Brussels, Chávez Morado’s work in Mexico was devoted to the self-conscious construction of Mexico’s cultural difference from other countries. By the 1950s, he had established himself as a prominent sculptor in state-sponsored commissions and an aggressive advocator of artist-architect collaborations. In a fundamental text published a decade before Expo ’58, Chávez Morado described the rise in state-sponsored art projects in Mexico during the late 1940s as “an instinctive civic mobilization in defense of our nationality threatened by imperialist interests.”³⁶ At his Brussels project, the thrust of Chávez Morado’s proposition seemed to be in full force, and his “humanizing” contribution to the pavilion was explicitly positioned as a gesture of resistance against the structural exuberance that the pavilions of developed nations evinced.

In 1929, as suggested earlier, the Mexican pavilion at Seville had branded the combination of a pavilion and a mural as a uniquely Mexican element, echoing the promotion of the integration of large-scale murals and architectural spaces as a “national” art form.³⁷ The Brussels pavilion’s combination of modernist box and mural was also akin to the formula that characterized many of the buildings in the recently completed UNAM University City.³⁸ Most directly among University City buildings, the Brussels pavilion recalled Ramírez Vázquez’s own School of



Medicine, a hulking structure made of reinforced concrete whose main facade included a mosaic mural by artist Francisco Eppens (Figure 1.3). Like many other mural projects in the City and elsewhere in Mexico, the theme of Eppens's mural was racial hybridity. The central element of the mural is a face that emerges from the fusion of two other faces seen in profile, which flank it on either side: the faces of an "Indian" mother on the left and of a "Spanish" father on the right. The result of the fusion—a face that represents the modern mestizo nation of Mexico—is also borne out of the fusion of pre-Columbian deities, among them the central Mexican feathered serpent, the rain deity Tlaloc, and the Aztec deity Coatlicue.³⁹ Built of reinforced concrete, raised on *pilotis*, and sporting a large *brise-soleil* facade, nothing else about the building was explicitly "Mexican." However, its mixture of internationalist aspirations and national flavor—a hybrid condition that defined the entire University City—represented an architectural exploration of *mestizaje* along much the same lines toed by the official pavilions of the early postrevolutionary years in Mexico.

Chávez Morado's mural for Brussels engaged a similar narrative of racial hybridity. Gamboa's script for the pavilion claimed that the mural "represent[ed] the fusion of the two races," "Indian" and "Spanish," "that have created Mexican nationality, its social struggles and its triumph in the pursuit of material and

Figure 1.3. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Ramón Torres, and Héctor Velázquez, School of Medicine, University City, Mexico City, 1953. Mural by Francisco Eppens. Photograph by the author.

spiritual well-being.”⁴⁰ The pre-Hispanic past of this trajectory was duly represented at Brussels. The original of a colossal Toltec stone sculpture from the site of Tula, in the state of Hidalgo, stood at the intersection of streets leading to the Brussels pavilion. Its contrast with the building was meant to embody the dialogue between ancient and modern that the structure as a whole advertised as national patrimony.⁴¹ For the interior of the Brussels

Figure 1.4. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, with Fernando Gamboa (exhibition designer), interior of Mexico Pavilion, Brussels World's Fair, 1958. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.



pavilion, Gamboa assembled an exhibit that combined displays of pre-Hispanic, colonial, modern, and folk art. His layout for the pavilion emphasized the stylistic continuity between the arts of these various periods, but was particularly focused on the glorification of the most ancient and most recent periods, pitting the works of such artists as Orozco, Siqueiros, Tamayo, and Rivera against that of their alleged ancient forebears. In a text most likely written by Gamboa as an official narrative for the pavilion, he begins with a description of the iconographic dialogue between Mexico's "moderns" and "ancients." "Inside [the pavilion]," the text reads, "we can see [two works], one of them Orozco's *Patricia Moderna*, and the other an Aztec Jaguar." The pairing, he argues, "demonstrate[s] the continuing creativity of the Mexican people."⁴² Gamboa's exhibition at Brussels presented the diverse works of Orozco and his contemporaries as part of a tradition of mural painting unique to modern Mexico. Although certainly not invented at Brussels, this problematic formulation would become increasingly ingrained by the mid-twentieth century, undermining the transnational exchanges between socially involved mural painting in Mexico and the United States during the first half of the century, and the widespread usage of the mural format in national pavilions other than Mexico's at international exhibitions.⁴³

Inside Gamboa's pavilion, light-frame photographic displays hung from the ceiling, seemingly floating in space (Figure 1.4). By the late 1950s such displays were something of a lingua franca of modernist exhibition design. For instance, Edward Steichen and Beaumont Newhall's *The Family of Man* exhibition, presented in 1955 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and subsequently retooled as a traveling exhibition that circulated through various world cities until the early 1960s, popularized this kind of a display.⁴⁴ Fiberglass copies of ancient stone sculptures, an original colonial altar from the sixteenth-century convent of Tepotzotlán, and large models of archaeological sites nevertheless stood within the unmistakably modernist environment of the Mexican pavilion. The ostensible materiality of these objects contrasted with the lightness of the screens hanging from the ceiling, reminding the fair's visitors that Mexico's "new" look included rough traces of the "old."⁴⁵ A significant part of the interior display at Brussels attempted to embody the notion of *mestizaje*, elaborating on the language that the building's exterior constructed. At the pavilion, Gamboa's narrative stated, "Human wealth, the basis of a free nation,"

is expressed starting with the indigenous root as its foundation, [while also showing] the pure racial types that still exist in the country and a mosaic of the Mexican racial type at work in typical activities. . . . [This in turn expresses] the fusion to which we have arrived.⁴⁶

In Gamboa's pavilion, the cultural harmony between races that mixed yet stayed separate, and the avowedly harmonious social relations between different members of the laboring classes, created a unified national image. In addition to its general conception, the pavilion's materials and detailing were also meant to express the specificities of Mexican culture. The pavilion's walls were faced with *tezontle*, a reddish volcanic rock little known outside of Mexico and not available in Europe, which, having been used in colonial and pre-Columbian buildings in Mexico, was also employed in nineteenth-century Mexican government buildings that combined native materials and European styles.⁴⁷ The pavilion also included a garden that displayed "typical Mexican plants," not least rare cactuses, and was intended to immerse the viewers in a contained representation of the country's geographic and botanical diversity.⁴⁸ Eventually dropped from the project owing to its high construction cost, Mijares had originally planned to include a thatched roof open hut of "Veracruz type" behind the pavilion, where he planned to "sell popular art and Mexican sweets."⁴⁹

Some of the materials and textures used at Mexico's pavilion had more than a mere folkloric resonance. Not part of the final project, for example, "organic" gestures had been discussed early on. Mijares wanted his pavilion to have "two or three water sprouts" on its walls in order to have "mossy stains in some [of its] parts." If the pavilion's general form recalled that of many buildings at the University City, these gestures also stood in clear relationship to Luis Barragán's Gardens of El Pedregal (1945–53), a luxury residential subdivision the architect designed and developed. Of his pavilion's walls, Mijares wrote that "the main wall by the entrance [should] have a rough finish, not a fine one, but *one like what is done at El Pedregal*."⁵⁰

As a site of architectural experimentation, El Pedregal was highly significant. The Pedregal itself is a large volcanic rock region south of Mexico City that dates back to the ancient explosion of the Xitle volcano, and was revered as a sacred site in pre-Hispanic times. The University City's modernist buildings rise out of one region of this rugged terrain, as do Barragán's buildings and landscaping scheme. Barragán's intervention was closely imbricated with a number of mid-twentieth-century landscaping and architecture projects, but particularly with a discourse on "place" echoed on both sides of the Atlantic that glorified the expansive and rugged qualities of the landscapes of the New World. The Brussels pavilion thus evoked the surfaces of El Pedregal as a point of transatlantic connections between Mexican, American, and European modernisms while presenting their synthesis as a uniquely Mexican invention.⁵¹

The cultural synthesis that the Mexican pavilion included was not limited to the creation of environments or the choices of materials for them. One of several

forms of live entertainment that the pavilion included was a dance performance by Gloria Contreras's Ballet Clásico de México, a dance troupe whose choreographies avowedly combined classical ballet with various Mexican regional dances. As Contreras explained to Ángel Cenicerós, Mexico's secretary of public education, in a June 1958 letter, her intention was to create a heightened sense of physical immediacy between the performers and their international audience. My aim, she claimed, is to "transport [to Brussels] what Mexico is, from a plastic point of view and in motion." This was fitting for the audience of a world's fair, which did not visit the event "with the intention of listening to a concert," but craved more spectacular experiences in order to "grasp *how and what the country it visits is about*."⁵²

Despite all efforts to create an immersion into the complexities of Mexican culture, the Brussels pavilion faced significant opposition early on, some of it doubtless a result of the fair organizers' low expectations of what Mexico could offer. The plot of land assigned to Mexico was not particularly good and had been declined by representatives of Uruguay and Peru before it was offered to the cultural attaché at the Mexican embassy in Brussels.⁵³ In December 1956, upon first seeing the Mexican project, J. Van Goethem, chief architect for Expo '58, demanded that its size had to be reduced drastically, as it threatened "to break the architectural equilibrium of that sector of the Exposition."⁵⁴ Mijares responded vehemently to the request by claiming, accurately, that the British pavilion, located in the same sector of the fair, was significantly taller than most but had not encountered any problems. "The main idea of our project," Mijares wrote back to Van Goethem, "is to render worthy . . . our pavilion by making it 15 meters tall, a height which, in relation to its built surface, seems to us well proportioned, as the dimensions of our plot of land are relatively small."⁵⁵

Only after much negotiation could Oscar Urrutia, resident architect for the Mexican pavilion at Brussels, protect the original design from suffering major downsizing. This event is striking given the pavilion's eventual success, highly touted in the subsequent decades by its authors.⁵⁶ The Mexican pavilion earned the Golden Star award given at Expo '58 for architectural and curatorial excellence, and this episode of unlikely chances reversed in Mexico's favor bolstered Ramírez Vázquez's prestige, as it represented the first significant diplomatic victory that his office garnered for Mexico's presidential circle alongside Gamboa in an international arena. The Mexican pavilion not only fulfilled the aim of promoting the postrevolutionary narrative of the exhibitionist state for a large international audience. Its modernist design also packaged together the primitivist aspects of a racialized narrative of national origins and a parallel narrative of cultural evolution as evidenced by artifacts from different periods of Mexico's history. Translated into a series of architectural environments, the intersection of these narratives

instantiated Mexico's condition as a nation modernizing at a miraculous rate yet holding true to its cultural specificities. The template for a design experiment of this type had enduring value in Mexican diplomatic culture. The Brussels episode served as the measuring stick for the perceived effectiveness of Ramírez Vázquez and Gamboa's later pavilions, and the success of this venture would help the architect-politician publicly legitimize the Olympic propaganda campaign less than a decade later.

NEGOTIATING THE WORLDS OF TOMORROW

After Brussels, Mexico participated with pavilions designed at Ramírez Vázquez's office in the two world's fairs hosted by U.S. cities in the early 1960s, in Seattle in 1962 and in New York in 1964–65. In the case of both fairs, but especially in the later one, the stakes for Mexico's diplomatic delegations were especially high owing to the prominence of U.S. corporate and industrial interests, all of which would converge in these events, in Mexico's economy at the time. At the Century 21 Fair held in Seattle, the pavilions were standardized, with participant nations only allowed to add a distinctive emblem to their entrances. *Museógrafos* Iker Larrauri and Alfonso Soto Soria designed the interior, while Mijares and architect Ruth Rivera (daughter of the famed mural painter) designed the pavilion, which was fully prefabricated and assembled in four weeks.⁵⁷ Larrauri first became involved with the design of museum exhibitions through Mexican curator, art collector, and artist Miguel Covarrubias, who hired him in 1955 to work at the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City that preceded the MNA. Although Larrauri participated in national and international commissions like the Seattle pavilion, he made his mark particularly through the design of anthropological displays, examined in depth in the next chapter.⁵⁸ Taking his cue from Gamboa's Brussels show, for Seattle Larrauri designed a set of floor-to-ceiling panels covered with large photographs of Mexico's monuments, ancient as well as modern. Describing his pavilion in an interview, however, Larrauri claimed that he had attempted to "avoid archaeological or ethnographic materials in order to give the Mexican exhibit the character of progress, of a longing for better standards of living."

The only culturally distinctive emblems present at Mexico's Seattle pavilion were the Mexican coat of arms, produced by artist Alberto Beltrán; a polyester and fiberglass reproduction of the sculpture of Aztec wind god Ehecatl, the original of which was held at the collection of the Museum of Toluca, west of Mexico City; and a version made of silver of the so-called Parrot's Head, a stone sculpture found at the ball court of the pre-Hispanic site of Xochicalco, in the modern-day state of Morelos. Upon entering the pavilion, portraits of Mexicans in various regional attires taken by photojournalist Nacho López provided the "modern"

component of a dual display whose other component was a mural-sized photographic rendition of Hernán Cortés's map of Tenochtitlán (1524). Like its predecessor at Brussels, this pavilion also provided a "mosaic" of Mexican racial and regional "types," but it emphatically presented "landscapes of progress" showing the development of various economic activities. One of these landscapes included "the wooded highlands of Toluca cut in half by the highway, crossed through by electrical current." Toluca was a rapidly industrializing region west of Mexico City where several significant planning and architectural interventions fueled by industrialization took place during the early 1960s. The image Larrauri describes was no less than a glorification of the ruthless expansion of Mexico City toward its disappearing peripheries. By extension, this image also celebrated the effects of the avid support of industrialization and urbanization as interrelated agents of development throughout Mexico's national territory. After visitors to the pavilion saw these landscapes, they would encounter "the human panorama," composed of López's photographs, which provided "a mosaic of types: mulattos, criollos, indigenous [peoples], each of them performing an activity . . . fishermen, musicians, painters, shopkeepers, actors, laborers, office workers, engineers, television technicians, et cetera."

Because this photographic display presented diverse types of mostly urban economic activities as complementary to one another, it erased racial, gender, and class divisions and presented Mexico's economy as a safe investment to the visitors to the pavilion. This display also celebrated the civilizing effects of urbanization and industrialization, and the avowed ability of these interrelated processes to create a harmonious horizon of social relations not just in Mexico City but also throughout the country. This narrative stood at odds with the subtext of López's photographs of Mexican laborers and city dwellers, which often elaborated a subtle critique of social inequality, countryside-to-city migration, and the racial divisions that defined this process. As John Mraz shows in his study of López's work, the tension between the images of urban life and labor that López produced, and the efforts to sanitize their political meanings, was a constant factor in the display and dissemination of his work. In the case of another international exhibition of López's photographs in the United States, at the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C., in 1956, for example, Mexican cultural bureaucrats criticized López's penchant for everyday scenes in the life of the urban and rural poor, which were perceived to conflict with the exhibition's purpose of aggrandizing Mexico's national image abroad.⁵⁹

Despite Larrauri's attempts to sanitize the political undertones of López's work at Seattle, the social and economic tensions to which his photographs alluded were very much real. Like its predecessor in Brussels, the Mexican delegation in Seattle

presented a spectacle of racial and class harmony that was fundamentally at odds with the social conflicts gestating in various parts of Mexico in the early 1960s. At this time, the Communist-leaning National Union of Workers and Farmers (UGOCM) supported the violent takeover of arable lands in the states of Sinaloa, Sonora, and Colima, while union leader Rubén Jaramillo led similar occupations in Morelos. Jaramillo died in a confrontation with military forces in July 1962, and other agricultural associations continued to protest through the early 1960s.⁶⁰ Railway labor was also at the center of strikes in 1958 and 1959. Demetrio Vallejo (1912–85), head of the Union of Railroad Workers of the Mexican Republic (STFRM), was central among the figures who negotiated a rise in wages and demanded a restructuring of the state-owned railway company with government officials, garnering modest gains from the López Mateos administration. In July 1958, and then much more severely in March 1959, impasses between union leaders led them to renege on the government concessions they had earned. In March 1959, railroad workers launched a general strike to which the López Mateos administration reacted through the violent seizure of union headquarters as well as the imprisonment of Vallejo and other union leaders. These strikes were not isolated events but part of the expansive panorama of dissent that other groups, such as students and medical workers, who would mount significant protests in 1968 and 1965, respectively, also expressed at this time.⁶¹

Displays emphasizing Mexico's industrialization dominated the Seattle show, which, in its departure from the Brussels pavilion focus on culture, falsified this panorama of unrest for foreign eyes (Figure 1.5). Folkloric demonstrations of "Mexicanness" were also interspersed with this sanitized representation of social relations. This time *tezontle* was not exhibited as part of the pavilion's structure or exhibition but on its own, both as a Mexican industrial product and as an oddity. "Two walls of *tezontle*," a review of the Seattle pavilion published in a Mexico City daily read, "provoked admiration and generated chatter among the visitors. Its abrupt, luscious texture, its reddish, burnt, aged color, attracted them. Upon seeing *tezontle*, the question emerges: 'What is it?'"⁶² The pavilion presented other materials and techniques rarely seen out of Mexico. For instance, a wall of blown glass similar to the facade screen of the Brussels pavilion stood behind the hanging photographs alongside various other industrial products at Seattle. The pavilion also included a number of handmade products, including clothing and musical instruments.

In his comments to the local press, pavilion commissioner Lenin Molina established a connection between the Seattle display and the Mexican pavilion at Brussels, claiming that a dialogue between "modern" and "ancient" cultures characterized the Mexican show. "We asked ourselves," Molina said to the *Seattle Times*,

“what could our nation, only recently emerging from the boundaries of the past, bring to the world of the future?”⁶³ With a mural, now lost, artist Manuel Felguéz offered a provocative answer to the bureaucrat’s question. “The two-sided creation,” a report stated about the mural, “was originally intended as a designed collection of samples of all natural and industrial goods produced by Mexico.” “These run the gamut from two-penny copper coins to singing violins.”⁶⁴ Embedding the latest products of Mexico’s industrialization onto the politically charged format of the mural, Felguéz’s work proved wildly popular, generating interest not only among fair visitors and officials, but eventually drawing attention from such influential art institutions as New York’s Museum of Modern Art as well.⁶⁵

Ramírez Vázquez’s next showing, the pavilion for the New York World’s Fair of 1964, was designed in tandem with the Seattle show, but was much more ambitious than its predecessor. Mexico accepted the fair organizers’ invitation, extended by commissioner and New York master builder Robert Moses in October 1960.⁶⁶ This time, Mexico was given one of the best spots at the fairgrounds in Flushing Meadows, Queens, directly in front of the steel Unisphere designed by Gilmore D. Clarke as the

Figure 1.5. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, with Iker Larrauri (exhibition designer), Mexico Pavilion, Century 21 Fair, Seattle, 1962. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, Maryland.





Figure 1.6. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Mexico Pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1964-65. New York World's Fair 1964-65 Corporation Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

Figure 1.7. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Mexico Pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1964-65. New York World's Fair 1964-65 Corporation Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.



Fair's space-age symbol. As can be gleaned from an exchange between Lawrence McGinley, Fordham University president, and fair official Bruce Nicholson, expectations of Mexico among the fair's organizers in New York were higher than in previous fairs. While McGinley prepared to visit the pavilion architects in Mexico in late 1963, Nicholson asked him to persuade them about certain aspects of their display in the works. "The Fair would like to have the architects stress the cultural aspects of Mexico above and beyond the others," Nicholson wrote. "We are not sure that the Mexicans are entirely aware of the great impression and influence their modern architecture and paintings are having on architects and artists throughout the world." What Nicholson wanted to see in the New York pavilion, moreover, was the central element that the Brussels one had contained. "From the point of view of the mass of visitors being North Americans," he wrote, "we feel [they] should design their exhibits to stress the ancient cultures and the modern cultures as seen through their artists, *and how one was affected by the other.*"⁶⁷

Mijares did not exactly accommodate these demands, and designed a fully abstract structure of reinforced concrete clad in steel that included two levels and a mezzanine terrace (Figure 1.6). Four-sided in plan, its facades were concave and equipped with steel sunbreakers. The architect placed a still pool of water and gardens at the building's entrance, making its lower level a covered walkway continuing such open spaces. The structure rested on cross-shaped steel supports. Its central hall, capped with a translucent fiberglass dome, was as high as the pavilion was tall. Two semicircular staircases distributed circulation toward the pavilion's upper level, two stories in height. In dialogue with a number of other structures at the fair, the Mexican pavilion also related well with the Unisphere.⁶⁸ The Mexican pavilion's sunbreaker screens resonated directly with the sphere's steel surface, an affinity that photographers at the fair were eager to emphasize (Figure 1.7). The affinity was not a mere coincidence. As early as November 1961, as he prepared the design of the pavilion, Mijares had requested information about the fair's emblem, gearing its textures and forms to respond very specifically to Clarke's. Most obviously, the Mexican pavilion's concave facades directly echoed the Unisphere's curvature, as if, although physically separated, the pavilion and the sculpture belonged to a common formal assemblage.⁶⁹

These internationalist aspirations threatened to prove detrimental to how distinctively Mexican the structure would appear to the public. After visiting the fairgrounds in early 1963, Mijares was worried that his pavilion looked too much like the U.S. Federal Pavilion designed by the office of Charles Luckman (Figure 1.8), and wrote anxious telegrams to fair staff to confirm whether this was the case.⁷⁰ Mijares's anxiety was justified, because to the untrained architectural eye the Mexican and U.S. pavilions at the fair were almost identical structures:



Figure 1.8. Charles Luckman and Associates,
U.S. Federal Pavilion, New York World's Fair,
1964–65. Author's collection.

cantilevered volumes with concave facades defined by sunbreakers, both clad in steel. Because the two pavilions were relatively close together, moreover, the Mexican pavilion looked like a smaller version of the U.S. pavilion from a distance, which represented an obvious diplomatic impasse for Mexico.

During the 1964 season of the fair, the first of two seasons, the Mexican pavilion's primary focus was not on culture but on the development of the transportation, automotive, and construction industries of Mexico, much more intensely than had been the case at either Seattle or Brussels. As described by architects Mijares and Héctor Echeverría, a collaborator on the pavilion's interior, at a promotional lecture about the pavilion given in New York in December 1963, the pavilion's interior was to be devoted to an explanation of Mexico's progress since the revolution of the 1910s. Eventually scrapped from the program owing to its high cost and because there were fears that it might short-circuit if used by too many people simultaneously, was a didactic map of Mexico to be placed in its first floor. Enclosed within a glass box and fully interactive, the map would show contributions in the areas of education, transport, tourism, and nuclear energy over a map of Mexico. The purpose of the display, Mijares and Echeverría claimed, was to showcase "that which man has given to the state" in Mexico, and, in turn, to emphasize "what the state has given back to man."⁷¹ The display's primary function was thus to reify the relationships between the state, the commodities that

represented it, and the subjects who were intended to interact with these commodities at the pavilion. Georg Lukács describes reification as the purposeful occlusion of the relations between commodities and the material conditions necessary for their actual facture. He argues that the “ghostly” allure of commodities, whose consumption tends to be motivated by their perceived possession of lifelike qualities, essentially requires the muddying up, or even the complete excision from view, of these relations.⁷² The display that Mijares and Echeverría described presented the contentious, uneven, and fundamentally violent relationships between the single-party state and its governed subjects in this fashion. This interactive machine literally animated these relationships by layering its didactic, shifting lights over the cartographic representation of Mexican national space.

A less technologically savvy but no less politically charged version of this display was eventually included in the pavilion. As Mijares explained to Eduardo Terrazas, who worked as the resident architect of the Mexico pavilion, in a February 1964 letter, the map would not be interactive but would display a sequence of flashing lights mapping each of the state’s infrastructure contributions over a map of Mexico. First, lights would flash to display how many of these contributions existed in 1910, which was comparatively very few; after a few seconds, flashing lights would map the presence of these public works in 1964, by which time they had multiplied exponentially.⁷³

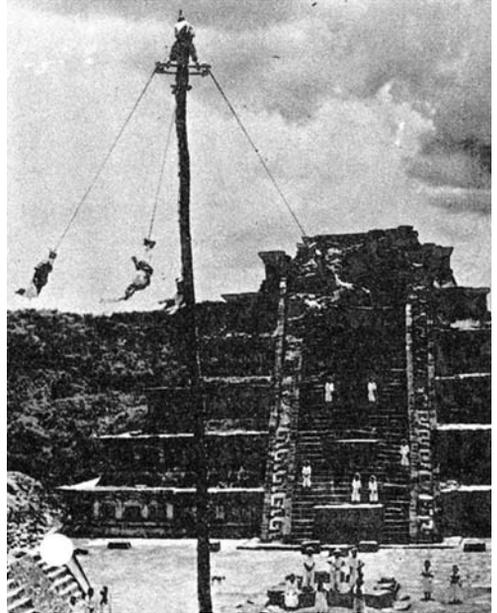
Specialized architecture publications in Mexico reviewed the Mexican pavilion favorably. Although “official” representations of countries at world’s fairs were necessarily reductive, *Calli* argued that Mexico had nevertheless managed to present an image of itself in New York that was “accurate” enough. Architecturally, the pavilion departed from the “Mexican” formula that combined murals and a modernist box presented at Brussels, and its exhibit was less folkloric than that of its predecessor, both changes that the journal welcomed. It was, in sum, a “realist portrayal of what Mexico may well be today: a *developing* country, though one that faces tremendous economic and educational challenges.”⁷⁴ As the politically conservative building industry journal *Construcción Mexicana* pointed out, the pavilion also fulfilled the function of attracting potential economic investments to Mexico. Published by a subsidiary of the U.S. publisher McGraw-Hill in Mexico, this journal often celebrated Mexican architectural and design contributions that facilitated the influx of U.S. capital into the country. Its interpretation of the New York pavilion fell along these lines. At the pavilion, the journal claimed, cultural displays only served as a prelude to the presentation of Mexico’s economic “miracle,” which was defined by the openness toward “international” entrepreneurship.⁷⁵

Despite its U.S.-friendly tone, the Mexican pavilion’s display of this kind of vigor and promise seems to have directly conflicted with the expectations of fair

organizers. An October 1960 telegram sent by organizer W. E. Potter to New York State governor and fair patron Charles Poletti gives us some sense of the kind of dynamism that Robert Moses wanted to see in the Mexican exhibit. “Mr. Moses indicated,” Potter wrote, “that the Mexican exhibit should not be static, that there should be some movement either of things or personnel, guitar-strumming, or what have you.”⁷⁶ Moses also asked Poletti to persuade the Mexican delegation to have *museógrafo* Miguel Covarrubias organize “an Indian exhibit” in the Mexican pavilion.⁷⁷ Unfortunately for Moses, Covarrubias had died four years before his request.

Moses’s desire to include Covarrubias’s participation seems logical enough. At least one show with which this *museógrafo* had been involved had left a durable imprint on U.S.–Mexican cultural relations, especially those that were negotiated in New York. Emblematic of attempts to create “good neighbor” relations between the United States and Mexico through the exchange of culture during the Second World War was the 1940 exhibition *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art*. Hosted by the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), the show was a coordinated effort between MoMA and several state-sponsored cultural institutions in the United States and Mexico. This exhibition, organized by Alfonso Caso, then president of Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), presented the widest range of pre-Hispanic, colonial, and modern artifacts from Mexico ever displayed together until then, and Covarrubias was entrusted with curating the modern art section of the show. The exhibit thus facilitated what Holly Barnett-Sánchez describes as a collaborative appropriation of the pre-Columbian past by the governments of Mexico and the United States, while also serving as the clearest curatorial precedent for Gamboa’s encyclopedic shows of Mexican art and culture.⁷⁸

Despite the political and economic undertones of their pavilion, Mexican organizers at the 1964 New York fair also attempted to accommodate demands for “folkloric” content from the very beginning. Among the responses to this expectation was a live performance organized by the commissioner of the first season of the Mexican pavilion, Jorge Canavati. In a letter sent to fair organizer Bruce Nicholson, Canavati described the show as “a spectacle derived from ancient Aztec tradition in which, hanging by their heels from ropes attached to a platform atop a 50-foot pole, the performers, acting as the four cardinal points, fling themselves into space and spiral headlong to earth in ever widening arcs, while a lone musician seated aloft calls out ritual melodies on a reed flute” (Figure 1.9).⁷⁹ As he was pitching this suggestion to a skeptical Nicholson, Canavati attached a press photograph of the flyers in front of the Pyramid of the Niches, a structure built at the ancient site of El Tajín, in Veracruz, which is not far from Papantla, where the



flyers are originally from (Figure 1.10). The flyers in New York would be placed in the same position in front of the Mexico pavilion as they were in front of the pyramid in the photograph, heightening the relationship between the photographic image of ancient buildings in Mexico and the fantasy of new ones in Queens. After a few weeks of crowded performances, complaints about the noise made by the flyers started pouring in. In July, Poletti urged Nicholson to “eliminate any barking that occurs at the Mexican pavilion,” and to “make sure that the loudness of the description of any act by [them] is reduced, so that you can’t hear it all over the place.”⁸⁰ Yet, before the show lost popularity in spite of this loud promotion, some visitors to the fair lamented that the “Aztec Birdmen” had not been marketed vigorously enough to receive the credit they deserved.⁸¹

DIPLOMATS OF STONE

Spectacular as the flyers proved to be, Eduardo Terrazas recalls that the pavilion’s 1964 season was not popular enough to fulfill the expectations of fair organizers or of the members of the Mexican delegation.⁸² This led Mexican officials to request Gamboa to replace Canavati as pavilion commissioner and design the interior of its

Figure 1.9. Flyers of Papantla perform in front of Mexico Pavilion, New York World’s Fair, 1964–65. New York World’s Fair 1964–65 Corporation Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

Figure 1.10. Photograph of flyers of Papantla in front of Pyramid of the Niches, Veracruz, Mexico, undated. New York World’s Fair 1964–65 Corporation Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

second season, which opened in April 1965. The New York pavilion's second run was much more focused on Mexican art and culture than the first, bringing back much of what audiences had liked about Mexico at Expo '58. A decisive shift thus occurred, as the template for a "folkloric" representation of Mexico supplanted one that emphasized the country's industrial, political, and economic gains. The shift was onerous, and not just symbolically so: "About three-quarters of a million dollars has been spent to redesign the pavilion and its exhibits for 1965," a press release for the fair stated. "What has emerged is a treasure house of the arts portraying a magnitude and opulence which should make this pavilion one of the most outstanding at the Fair."⁸³

Despite this clear cultural turn, not everyone was pleased with Gamboa's efforts. Among the artists featured in the exhibit were Gamboa's Brussels stars: Rivera, Tamayo, Orozco, and Siqueiros. For some U.S. fairgoers, the presence of Siqueiros was hard to stomach, and one disgruntled visitor chose to voice her discontent to Moses. "Former Head of the Communist Party [in Mexico]," she wrote, "Siqueiros was imprisoned for his activities." The visitor enclosed clippings of "a disgraceful anti-American 'March' of May 11th involving the BURNING of our United States FLAG and an effigy of Uncle Sam" that Siqueiros had led in Mexico City, and claimed that she would advise "the members of my church in New York and my friends and acquaintances to boycott the Mexican exhibition."⁸⁴

This response to the pavilion, which originated beyond the discursive realm of official diplomatic negotiations, points to a subtext of U.S.–Mexican diplomatic interactions that both the fair organizers and the Mexican delegation elided, and which the pavilion's production strategically repressed. This visitor's discomfort with the presence of Siqueiros, still a politically active figure in Mexico who had been imprisoned for the dubious crime of "social dissolution" by the López Mateos administration in 1960 in light of his challenges to this administration's cultural and political agendas, echoes the unease that another encounter between a Mexican mural painter and artistic patrons in New York had spurred: the case of Diego Rivera's 1932–34 commission for a mural at Rockefeller Center. Rivera's mural for the center was destroyed on account of its Communist-inspired imagery in the midst of conservative backlash against his otherwise popular work.⁸⁵ Resistance to the inclusion of Siqueiros's work at the Mexican pavilion in New York in 1965 alludes to the extent to which the pavilion's populist narrative may have been at odds with popular sentiment about Mexican art on both sides of the border. In other words, although this state-sponsored representation attempted to sanitize the political content of much of the mural art it presented in an effort to appeal to mass audiences in the United States—especially the content that exposed the domestic resistance of mural artists to state-sponsored cultural production in

Mexico—we cannot assume that visitors to the pavilion were necessarily sympathetic to this gesture.⁸⁶

There was probably little reason to protest about the rest of Gamboa's remade exhibit, whose other crowd-pleasing components aside from mural painting could be more easily read as politically neutral. Gamboa brought to the fair two monumental Olmec heads, very large naturalistic portraits of ancient rulers made of carved basaltic rock known as Monuments One and Five from the site of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán, in Veracruz (Figure 1.11). Over three meters in height and weighing several tons, these artifacts, carved sometime between 1500 and 400 BCE, were quite imposing, to say the least. New York audiences presumably knew the larger of the two heads, Monument One, rather well. For two weeks in May 1965, the monolith had stood at Seagram Plaza, facing Mies van der Rohe's famous skyscraper on Park Avenue, on a pedestal designed by architect Philip Johnson.⁸⁷ Generally speaking, to New

Figure 1.11. Charles Poletti and Fernando Gamboa (*left*) pose for a photograph next to San Lorenzo Monument One, installed in front of Mexico Pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1964–65. New York World's Fair 1964–65 Corporation Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.



York audiences the Olmecs presumably were not entirely unknown. Since 1950, a replica of an Olmec colossal head had been exhibited at the American Museum of Natural History in the city.⁸⁸ The *New York Times* had presented the movement of the Olmec heads and the methods for their carving as one of the “Eight Riddles of Mankind” in September 1964, alongside such other examples as Stonehenge, the Nazca lines in Peru, and the cave paintings of Lascaux, France.⁸⁹ The mass-mediated realm in which these heads made these “appearances,” wherein Olmec heads could retain their associations with Mexican culture yet also be described as part of the shared heritage of “mankind,” was precisely the domain of “universal” culture within which the diplomatic efforts of figures like Torres Bodet attempted to situate Mexico’s cultural heritage. Exhibitions like the one orchestrated by the Mexican delegation to the world’s fair in New York were instrumental in furthering these attempts.

The Olmec heads were not the first “ancient” monuments displayed in front of the Mexican pavilion at the 1964–65 World’s Fair. Before Gamboa’s heads two such artifacts had been installed in front of the Mexican pavilion and its attached structure, a restaurant that served typical Mexican fare.⁹⁰ Yet even faithful replicas of artifacts much more highly valued than the Olmec heads in Mexican nationalist mythology—the Aztec Coatlicue sculpture, installed in front of the restaurant, and the Aztec Calendar Stone, exhibited in front of the pavilion building—proved less of a draw than expected.⁹¹ In retrospect, this is somewhat surprising. The replica of Coatlicue had something of a history with New York audiences, as it had been the centerpiece of *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* at MoMA. The Aztec calendar replica, for its part, was a popular exhibit at New York’s American Museum of Natural History.⁹²

The appeal of the Olmec heads shown in the Mexican pavilion consisted largely of their status as originals, not replicas. Part of the oldest tradition of Mesoamerican art, the Olmec heads were also “new” in terms of their modern history as objects of archaeological inquiry and popular fascination. Known to specialists since the 1860s, they had been rediscovered by mass audiences in the United States only in the 1940s, and popular fascination with the size and naturalism of the heads, as well as the mysterious circumstances of their production and transportation in ancient times, had intensified over the subsequent two decades. A sequence of expeditions cosponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and *National Geographic* magazine, and led by U.S. archaeologist Matthew Stirling, catapulted the heads to mainstream visibility.⁹³

Gamboa’s remade Mexican pavilion positioned the heads at the origin of a “national” cultural trajectory. Gamboa placed San Lorenzo Monument One in front of Clarke’s Unisphere, where it replaced the Aztec calendar replica. He

positioned San Lorenzo Monument Five closely behind it, as part of an outdoor display directly adjacent to the performance of the Flyers of Papantla, who were again commissioned to appear at the pavilion for the 1965 season.⁹⁴ Here again, as in Brussels, Gamboa constructed Mexico's image on the basis of an opposition between the extremely "old" and the extremely "new," with a folkloric performance positioned as the connecting vessel between these two domains. Except that here there was a significant twist, as the fully abstract New York pavilion evinced no ostensible traits of anything Mexican, lacking the figurative mural or the use of any distinctively Mexican construction materials of its Brussels predecessor. Sure enough, the pairing of the Olmec heads, renowned for the striking naturalism of their portraiture, and the ostensibly modernist pavilion, celebrated the presumed continuity in the creativity and design dexterity of their "Mexican" makers. However, the distance between the "ancient" and "youthful" Mexicos presented in juxtaposition with one another was also spectacularly showcased.

Here again reification was the key narrative device employed by Ramírez Vázquez and his collaborators, for they deliberately obscured the arbitrary logic of the assemblage of objects they concocted, and presented the relationship between them as self-evident. At the New York World's Fair, the construction of Mexico's pavilion on the basis of arbitrary juxtapositions tied together by a tenuous narrative of cultural contiguity seemed to celebrate and negate Mexico's folkloric condition at the same time. Although the exhibit collapsed the physical distance between the ancient monoliths and the modern pavilion, it also showcased the extreme temporal distance between the two categories of objects. The message of the display was, to put it another way, that the commodities that Mexico was able to produce and showcase as part of its national repertoire had evolved tremendously, from the rugged, primitive surfaces of the Olmec heads to the sophisticated materials of the modernist pavilion behind them. And yet, the pavilion was caught in a double bind that many of its predecessors among Mexican diplomatic buildings had grappled with, wherein its bold articulation of a distinctively Mexican modernity was predicated on the atavistic worship of a piece of the country's archaeological glory.

San Lorenzo Monument One was undeniably the protagonist of the new pavilion. Its arrival at the fair on July 9, 1965, was a much-celebrated event, and included live musical performances, as well as a parade to accompany its movement through the fairgrounds. Music for the parade was not just provided by Mexican performers, but by the choir of a local church, St. Camillus Church, from Flushing, Queens, who sang "Hello, Dolly!," a Grammy Award-winning song from that year, as the heavy monolith rolled through the fairgrounds on the back of a trailer.⁹⁵ After the head was installed in front of the Mexican pavilion, Poletti, Moses, and Gamboa took turns giving speeches next to the artifact, emphasizing its primitive, elusive

origins. Gamboa did little to dispel the exotic Olmec heads' mystique, describing them as representations of a "ritual ball game between gigantic warriors or players symbolizing the cosmic struggle of the celestial bodies."⁹⁶

Although smaller than its partner, San Lorenzo Monument Number Five had a more extensive exhibition history to bring to the table. An otherwise rugged artifact, the head was paradoxically expected to enhance the international flair of the Mexican pavilion, and of the fair as a whole. As a press release from April 1965 stated, the monument had "been exhibited widely throughout the world including the cities of Paris, Rome, Leningrad, Moscow and Warsaw, among others."⁹⁷ The head had indeed traveled as part of Gamboa's largest-ever traveling exhibition, *Masterworks of Mexican Art*, which toured a number of capitals in Europe and the Americas during four full years, between 1960 and 1963. Upon the exhibition's landing in Los Angeles, its final stop in the fall of 1963, the *New York Times* estimated that nine million people had seen the show, with many more thousands flocking to its West Coast showing.⁹⁸

A collision point of ancient and modern, exotic and cosmopolitan surfaces, the juxtaposition of the steel-and-glass skin of the fully abstract Mexican pavilion against the rugged surfaces of the Olmec heads at Flushing Meadows encapsulates the seemingly contradictory articulations through which Mexican modernity was given shape at this international event. Most interestingly, perhaps, the Olmec heads brought by Gamboa stood in interesting dialogue with other symbols at the fair, nothing about which was particularly Mexican, ancient or folkloric. A press release for the fair stressed that the "Olmeca head, expressing the cultures and beliefs of [ancient Mexico], [would] face the Unisphere, the World's Fair symbol of present-day 'Peace through Understanding.' The two will serve as giant expressions of art in their respective eras."⁹⁹

The most spectacular incarnation of the "new" Mexico that Ramírez Vázquez and Gamboa would ever devise, the evolution of this exhibition as a result of conflicting symbolic demands underscores the malleability and vulnerability of Mexico's "national" articulations. Expectations of a folkloric Mexico precipitated the shift toward the primitivist display of the country, which ultimately resulted in a confrontation between ancient and modern things, and which pushed the presentation of the country's gains in economic and political realms out of the picture. Like the rest of curatorial decisions made in the context of the world's fairs seen thus far, the sequence of interventions made in New York resulted from a set of interrelated forces, including internecine divisions in Mexico's diplomatic team, the demand for Mexican self-exoticization on the part of the organizers of the fair, and the attempt to produce an exhibition that would hopefully not alienate its popular audiences.

Responding simultaneously to the demands of the fair organizers and to the desire to promote official economic and cultural policy, the organizers of the pavilion produced a spectacle of self-exoticization whose flexibility reveals that the templates for cultural performance at their disposal were quite pliable. Similarly, the interactions between the organizing cultural bureaucrats and the artists involved with these pavilions reveal that, beyond these loose narrative contours, there was no preset notion of cultural “Mexicanness” beyond what the push and pull of diplomatic negotiations during this particular encounter—and at least to some degree the popular sentiment that these narratives could engender—could shape. Much the same could be said of Mexico’s other world’s fairs pavilions, whose populist articulations did not necessarily match up with “popular” taste. Most dramatically embodied in the localized history of Mexico’s pavilion for the 1964–65 World’s Fair, similar conflicts about how to persuasively represent the “miracle’s” intersecting economic, technological, and historical forces plagued Mexico’s participation in subsequent events of this type.

HEMISPHERIC SHOWS

Largely thanks to the Olmec heads, Gamboa’s show in New York was well attended, but the Mexican delegation’s overall participation in the two seasons of the world’s fair came at a high cost. In August 1964 Erwin Witt, comptroller for the fair, wrote to Moses informing him that, considering construction costs alone, the Mexican delegation’s unpaid debt amounted to \$1.2 million, out of which \$1 million was owed to subcontractors.¹⁰⁰ Financial matters in New York were eventually settled (with legal teams involved), yet at Expo ’67, the next world’s fair in which Mexico participated with a show by Gamboa, there were hiccups early on. Owing to a number of logistical problems that included tardiness in the construction of the building and the delayed shipment of artworks for its interior exhibit, the Mexican pavilion opened a day late, a fact reported in several international press outlets that caused concern among Mexican diplomats and bureaucrats.¹⁰¹ When it eventually opened, the pavilion was one of the most ambitious that Mexico sent to any world’s fair.

The pavilion’s interior departed little from the script of Gamboa’s previous exhibitions. The center of the display was a monumental painting by Tamayo titled *The Mexican and His World*.¹⁰² “The Mexican and His World” was the general title of Mexico’s exhibit, which also included replicas of large-scale pre-Hispanic artifacts, colonial-period altars and paintings, and twentieth-century artworks by Mexico’s mural painters. Having made their first appearance at New York, the Flyers of Papantla were featured again in Gamboa’s Montreal show. The set of folkloric images that the pavilion advertised hence fell along much the same lines as those of this earlier display.

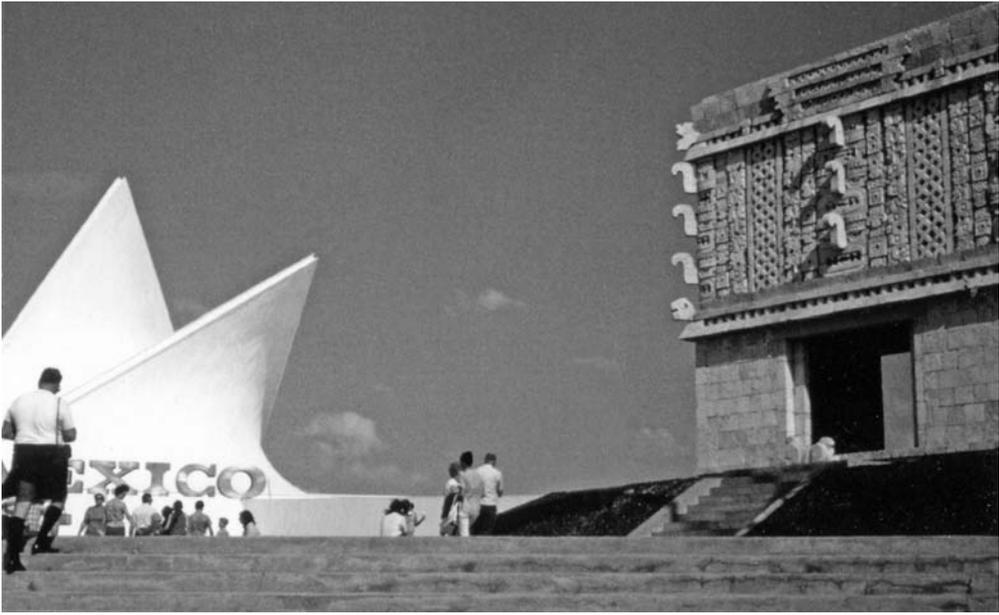


Figure 1.12. Antonio García and Leonardo Favela, Mexico Pavilion, Expo '67, Montreal, 1967. Postcard. Author's collection.

Compared to the Mexican pavilions of the recent past, however, the architecture of Mexico's contribution to Expo '67 presented a crucial formal departure. Rendering the confrontation between "old" and "new" domains more literal than its predecessors had, the Mexican pavilion was actually split into two parts (Figure 1.12). One was an outdoor replica of the so-called Nunnery Quadrangle at Uxmal, a famous Maya structure in the Yucatán Peninsula, which was built partly out of fragments of the original building shipped to Quebec. Visitors moving through this structure, which simultaneously functioned as a replica and as a gate, would find an exhibit of ancient and contemporary Mexican sculptures. Designed by architects Antonio García and Leonardo Favela, the second part of the Mexican pavilion was a fully enclosed structure built out of a light frame of aluminum and steel and a skin of wood. A "fan" of three hyperbolic paraboloids defined its facade (Figure 1.13). These shapes, *Construcción Mexicana* reported, "dominated the pavilion's exterior, looking like a butterfly, a star of a marine shell," as an expression of "*our tradition of intricate roofing.*"¹⁰³

Just whose tradition this really was is hard to say. These evocative shapes were not too distant from the gentle curvatures that defined Frei Otto's tensile tent structure enclosing the German pavilion at Montreal. Closer to them still were the forms of Iannis Xenakis and Le Corbusier's renowned Philips pavilion for Expo '58 at Brussels, a structure defined by the interplay of nine thin hyperbolic paraboloid shells of prestressed concrete. Yet, despite these internationalist echoes, the



highly sculptural forms of Mexico's Expo '67 pavilion were also strangely "Mexican," if perhaps not in the most obvious way.

Figure 1.13. Antonio García and Leonardo Favela, Mexico Pavilion, Expo '67, Montreal, 1967. Courtesy of Allan Petley.

In Mexican architecture and design circles, the hyperbolic paraboloid was a structural form most associated with the work of Félix Candela, who, having arrived in Mexico as a refugee of the Spanish Civil War in 1939, eventually rose to great prominence in the Mexican capital. By the late 1960s, Candela was renowned internationally for his ability to create intricate curved structures out of reinforced concrete in a wide range of highly visible buildings, including warehouses and industrial spaces as well churches, nightclubs, and restaurants. Among the best known such buildings was Candela's 1958 Los Manantiales restaurant, a flower-shaped structure of thin hyperbolic paraboloid shells built in Xochimilco, then a small city south of Mexico City, in collaboration with architect Joaquín Álvarez Ordóñez (Figure 1.14).

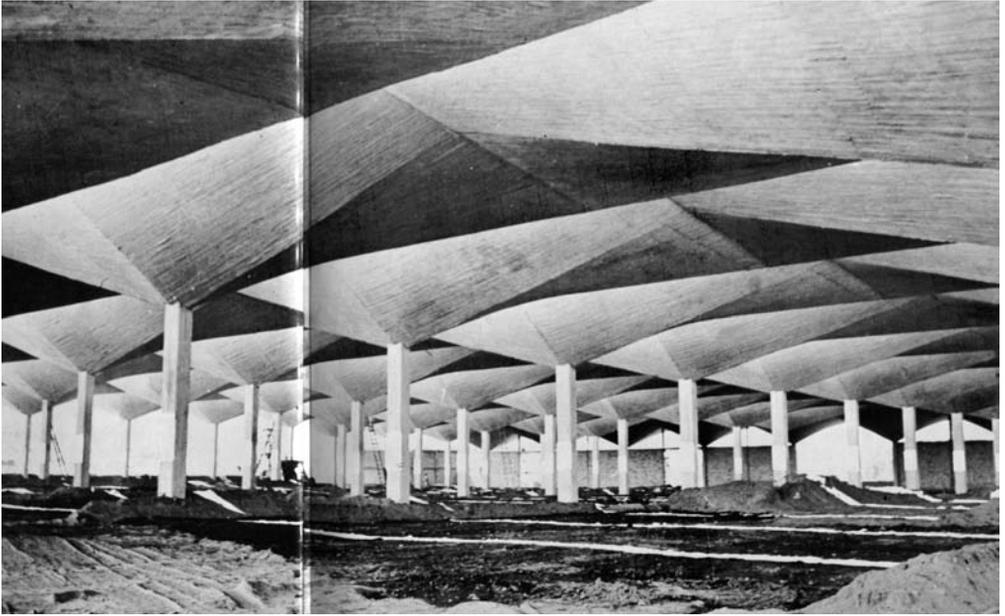
One of the most widely discussed and celebrated aspects of Candela's buildings, especially the dozens of warehouse spaces built by his company Cubiertas Ala in Mexico through the 1950s and 1960s, was the fact that they were essentially "handmade" by an abundant and cheap workforce. Especially in his more intricate buildings, Candela required wooden formworks for concrete that could be made only by hand, a method of construction made cost-efficient by the low cost of construction labor in the industrializing yet still impoverished country (Plate 2). Despite this handmade quality, Candela's buildings were structurally sound on account of



Figure 1.14. Félix Candela and Joaquín Álvarez Ordóñez, Los Manantiales restaurant, Xochimilco, Mexico, 1958. Photograph by the author.

his precise and sophisticated structural calculations, which were revered in a number of “developed” architectural centers.

In the United States, such publications as Clive Bamford Smith’s *Builders in the Sun* (1967) presented Candela as a twentieth-century architectural master. Smith had included the Spanish-born architect in an illustrious list of Mexican “form givers” alongside Mathias Goeritz (born in Germany), Mario Pani, Juan O’Gorman, and Luis Barragán. In Smith’s book, a black-and-white photograph of seemingly ever-expanding concrete umbrellas rising over the eerily empty floor of Candela’s Cabero warehouse embodies the sublime aesthetics with which the architect’s work was perceived to have infused the industrial spaces of the Mexican “miracle” (Figure 1.15).¹⁰⁴ In other publications ranging from the Mexican specialized and popular press to international mass-media outlets like *Time* magazine to the specialized accounts of architectural historians like Sigfried Giedion, Candela was singled out as the primary builder of Mexico’s economic “miracle,” and his architecture in concrete, especially his hyperbolic paraboloids, were widely understood as a “Mexican” architectural sensation.¹⁰⁵ Before Expo ’67, Candela’s hyperbolic paraboloids were internationally visible enough to attract the interest of architects who participated in world’s fairs. Charles Luckman, architect of the U.S. pavilion for the 1964–65 New York World’s Fair, invited Candela to collaborate on a different project from the one that his firm eventually built there.



The project was an ambitious structure that incorporated the use of hyperbolic paraboloids, but it did not materialize.¹⁰⁶

Undeniably, then, the “intricate roofing tradition” that the Mexican pavilion for Expo ’67 advertised was linked powerfully, if obliquely, to the visibility of Candela’s work. However, the legibility of the hyperbolic paraboloid as a Mexican structural form was not necessarily coupled with Candela’s work in specific terms. More significant was the hyperbolic paraboloid’s condition as an ideal discursive vehicle for the construction of a connection between Mexico’s industrialization and its “folkloric” culture, a central aim of the Montreal pavilion and of virtually all the Mexican pavilions of the 1950s and 1960s. Mexico’s folkloric response to the displays of sophisticated building technologies at Expo ’67, a fair dominated by such structures as Buckminster Fuller’s geodesic dome for the U.S. pavilion, was not intended as a simple rejection of the technology that these first-world countries spectacularized as part of their national displays. Instead, the Mexican pavilion glorified technological achievements and the relative underdevelopment of its construction industry by showcasing a “native” architectural advancement: at once “underdeveloped” in its production and sophisticated owing to its structural complexity, the hyperbolic paraboloid showcased Mexico’s relative strengths and weaknesses as part of a unified package. As they had been juxtaposed in the 1958, 1962, and 1964 world’s fair

Figure 1.15. Félix Candela, Cabero Warehouse, c. 1956. From Clive Bamford Smith, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1967), 98–99.

pavilions of Mexico, this folkloric spectacle of “Mexicanness” was again showcased in Montreal alongside the visual and material proof of Mexico’s advances in such areas as industrial production, chemical engineering, and nuclear energy research, all areas that Gamboa’s exhibition covered.¹⁰⁷

In proving malleable to the symbolic demands of this fair, the design produced by Gamboa’s team was making virtue out of necessity at Montreal, as had been the case in all the exhibitions we have seen. Of particular interest is the one world’s fair of the late 1960s whose general theme was actually Mexico-friendly. Themed as the “Confluence of Civilizations of the Americas,” Hemisfair ’68, organized in San Antonio, Texas, between April and October 1968, was envisioned as a celebration of Pan-Americanism. In its multiple twentieth-century inflections, this politically charged doctrine stressed the cultural kinship of the countries of the continent. As such, the fair participated in a discourse of cultural mixing very much related to the one that Mexico had articulated in all the pavilions analyzed here. Indeed, Mexican exhibitionary culture was central to the fair’s organization. Texas Governor John Connally, one of the fair’s primary patrons, was especially impressed by how the rhetoric of *mestizaje* was monumentalized at the National Museum of Anthropology (MNA) in Mexico City, a venue that, as the next chapter shows, drew a lot of its language from Mexican world’s fairs displays, and demanded that the Texas pavilion at Hemisfair model itself directly after this Mexican precedent.¹⁰⁸

Among world’s fairs celebrated in the United States, Hemisfair was unique. Unlike its peers in New York or Seattle, Hemisfair was organized in a peripheral, still largely poor and underdeveloped city in the American Southwest as an attempt to gentrify its downtown core and promote its cultural distinctiveness so as to attract tourism and other sources of revenue. Hemisfair’s organizers were fully aware that the city, divided sharply between poor Mexican Americans and African Americans and wealthier whites, did not have much in terms of cosmopolitan sophistication or technological wonders to offer, which led them to market the city’s folkloric character aggressively. Tacitly acknowledging the city’s unsophisticated condition relative to that of other cultural centers in the United States, an official Hemisfair document described San Antonio as “bilingual,” “multicultural,” and as a city that preserved “the grace of living native to Latin America.” The propaganda language for this fair was angled to emphasize the city’s geographic and cultural proximity to this cultural region, with Mexico understood as its hemispheric “gateway.”¹⁰⁹ In more ways than one, then, Hemisfair genuinely shared more in terms of symbolic challenges with Mexico and Latin America than it did with cities and territories that had hosted world’s fairs farther up north in the past.

Although such an event seemed ideally poised to include a significant pavilion

by Mexico, Hemisfair was one of the events for which a Mexican delegation was initially the most unwilling to participate. From the very beginning, Mexico's participation was considered central by the fair's organizers, who went so far as to set up a public relations agency in Mexico City in order to galvanize support for the project early in 1964, a first for any world's fair that involved Mexico's participation. Fair organizers also funded a sequence of strategic trips to Mexican border cities in order to convince regional corporate and political elites that promoting their businesses and products at the fair was a sound investment. In a December 1964 letter to Tom Frost Jr., vice president of international participation for Hemisfair, the Mexican-born Carlos Freymann, Hemisfair's primary liaison with international commissioners, argued that securing Mexican interest "could be the key that will open the door to the participation of the other two major countries in Latin America: Brazil and Argentina," a strategic goal without which the organization of the fair could be in jeopardy. Freymann argued that Hemisfair should be sold to Mexican bureaucrats as a "collaborative" venture and as a "gateway" event to the Olympics, especially since the Olympics would open on October 12, 1968, less than a week after the San Antonio fair was scheduled to close.¹¹⁰ Mexican officials were reticent to officially commit to Hemisfair until April 1966. In a confidential letter, Gustavo Ortíz, a Hemisfair publicist working in Mexico City summarized the reasons for this reticence for William Sinkin, president of the event. Ortíz argued that the primary reason for it was Mexico's embarrassment of riches when it came to demands for diplomatic architectural participations. He alluded to "the overwhelming number of invitations—542 to be exact—received by the [Mexican] Government for international events of all types: more fairs, exhibits, contests, sample showings, etc."¹¹¹

Robert González points out that, as part of early attempts to secure Mexican participation at Hemisfair, Mario Gonzales, chairman of San Antonio's Fine Arts Commission, recommended to architects O'Neill Ford and Allison Peery, the fair's primary designers, that they contact such Mexican architects and artists as Candela, Juan Sordo Madaleno, Ramírez Vázquez, Mathias Goeritz, and Juan O'Gorman in order to seek out their collaboration.¹¹² O'Gorman, whose most visible architectural project of the last decade had been the mosaic-covered library building at the UNAM University City in Mexico City (1953), eventually completed a work at Hemisfair, a similar mural of mosaic devoted to the fair's theme of cultural confluence. O'Gorman's work emblazoned one of the main facades of the Theater for Performing Arts of Hemisfair's Convention Center Complex (Figure 1.16). Artist Carlos Mérida, who had been involved with the promotion of muralism since the 1920s and had made his mark at such projects as Mario Pani's Presidente Juárez (1952) and Nonoalco-Tlatelolco housing projects in Mexico City (1964) through

the creation of monumental abstract murals, also created a mural exploring racial and cultural mixing in the Americas for the interior of the San Antonio Civic Center, built for Hemisfair. Hemisfair additionally piqued the interest of Pani, who sent a project to Ford for a tower “600 meters high, having three revolving floors and one stationary floor.” Pani explicitly compared the proposed scale of the project to other well-known world’s fair towers such as the Eiffel Tower and the Seattle World’s Fair Space Needle, but argued that these existing structures had “no point of comparison” with the one he proposed. Interestingly, Pani listed Candela as one of his structural advisers for the project, although Candela had devised a project of his

Figure 1.16. Juan O’Gorman, mural at the Fine Arts Theater, San Antonio, 1968, as seen during Hemisfair ’68. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, Maryland.



own for Hemisfair, a tower of reinforced concrete crowned by twelve hyperbolic paraboloid shells of concrete.¹¹³

Although neither Pani nor Candela's projects were built, Mexico's delegation eventually produced an ambitious pavilion for Hemisfair. Employing *tezontle*, onyx, and "precious tropical woods" in its interior construction, the pavilion was dominated by primitivist readings of pre-Hispanic aspects of Mexican culture, to an even greater extent than any of its predecessors. Commissioned to display Mexico's development during the same year that the Olympics were to be staged, the Hemisfair pavilion framed this display more explicitly than before as a re-instantiation of Mexico's vanished pre-Columbian grandeur. Nowhere were the terms of this formulation more clearly laid out than in a letter sent by Sinkin to Gustavo Díaz Ordaz on the occasion of his inauguration in December 1964, long before the Mexican president had shown any interest in the fair:

[W]hen confronted with the direct vision of *the new Mexican grandeur that drives the country towards a position that it occupied in the past*, personally, and as an inhabitant of this Continent, I can't but sincerely applaud the development accomplished by your hard-working people, and the deserved hope that it has placed in your hands.¹¹⁴

Here, Sinkin articulates Mexico's developmentalist promise as the combination of a technocratic vision of economic and technological expansion and a nostalgic cultural appeal to the ancient "origins" of Mexico's culture, and thus provides a perceptive description of the single-party state's complicated understanding of its own claims to modernity. The Mexican pavilion at Hemisfair spatially articulated this peculiar type of time travel, which moved simultaneously forward and backward in time, for its visitors. Its two central themes were the "Tree of Life," a significant concept in Mesoamerican creation narratives, as well as the "Flower," a symbol of fertility, life, and transformation in several Mesoamerican artistic traditions. Rufino Tamayo produced a large-scale mural that depicted a sequence of human figures collaborating to create a "flower" for its entrance. Unlike its predecessors, the list of contemporary Mexican artists summoned to participate at this pavilion was greatly expanded to involve the works of a generation of postmuralist, mostly figurative artists and sculptors, invited to interpret the subject of "the flower" as well.¹¹⁵ The pavilion's emblem was a large sculpture of a flower made of white onyx. In Gamboa's description, this emblem honored the fair's "confluence" theme, while constructing a diagram of global dimensions that echoed Mexico's internationalist aspirations. The flower's "pistils," he wrote, "represent the cardinal points that are, like the center [of the earth] and its opposing two elements, in

Figure 1.17. Comparison of sculpture in front of Mexico Pavilion and Hemisfair logo, 1968. MS-31, San Antonio Fair, Inc., Archives, University of Texas at San Antonio.



constant movement.”¹¹⁶ Much as the architectural form of Mijares’s pavilion for the New York World’s Fair resonated with the shape of the fair’s Unisphere, the design of this Mexican icon was especially geared to match well with Hemisfair’s primary icon, which represented the confluence theme as a diagram of swirling lines (Figure 1.17).

The rest of Mexico’s participation at Hemisfair recycled old themes. The flyers of Papantla made regular appearances. Gamboa brought San Lorenzo Monument Five to this fair, yet unlike in New York, where the artifact’s simultaneous exotic origins and international visibility were its most significant selling points, at San Antonio it was promoted in an entirely different way. A Hemisfair photograph illustrates this rather vividly, presenting a visibly disturbed Mexican-American child sitting in front of the head (Figure 1.18). “Although this fifth-century Olmec idol once inspired a respectful fear in all who gazed upon it,” the photograph’s official label claims, “this modern Texas child seems to be more afraid of the camera than the stone image that spans fifteen centuries of *her proud heritage*.”¹¹⁷ The exotic artifact was thus presented as part of the child’s, and by implication other Mexican Americans’, pre-Hispanic heritage, a heritage that, as the fair’s rhetoric would have it, the child and her peers shared with “south of the border” Mexicans. Here again, as in the rest of Gamboa’s pavilions, a delicate alignment between race and geography, past and present, was articulated through the juxtaposition of objects and images. Not merely an uphill battle to demonstrate Mexico’s development, at Hemisfair the challenge faced by Mexico’s pavilion was to articulate the perceived cultural relationships between the United States and Mexico with the help, as in the past, of a diplomat of stone. This anxious photograph thus embodies many of the careful transnational negotiations—replete with their tensions—that led to the assemblage of this exhibition, as they had to many of the pavilions of the preceding decade.

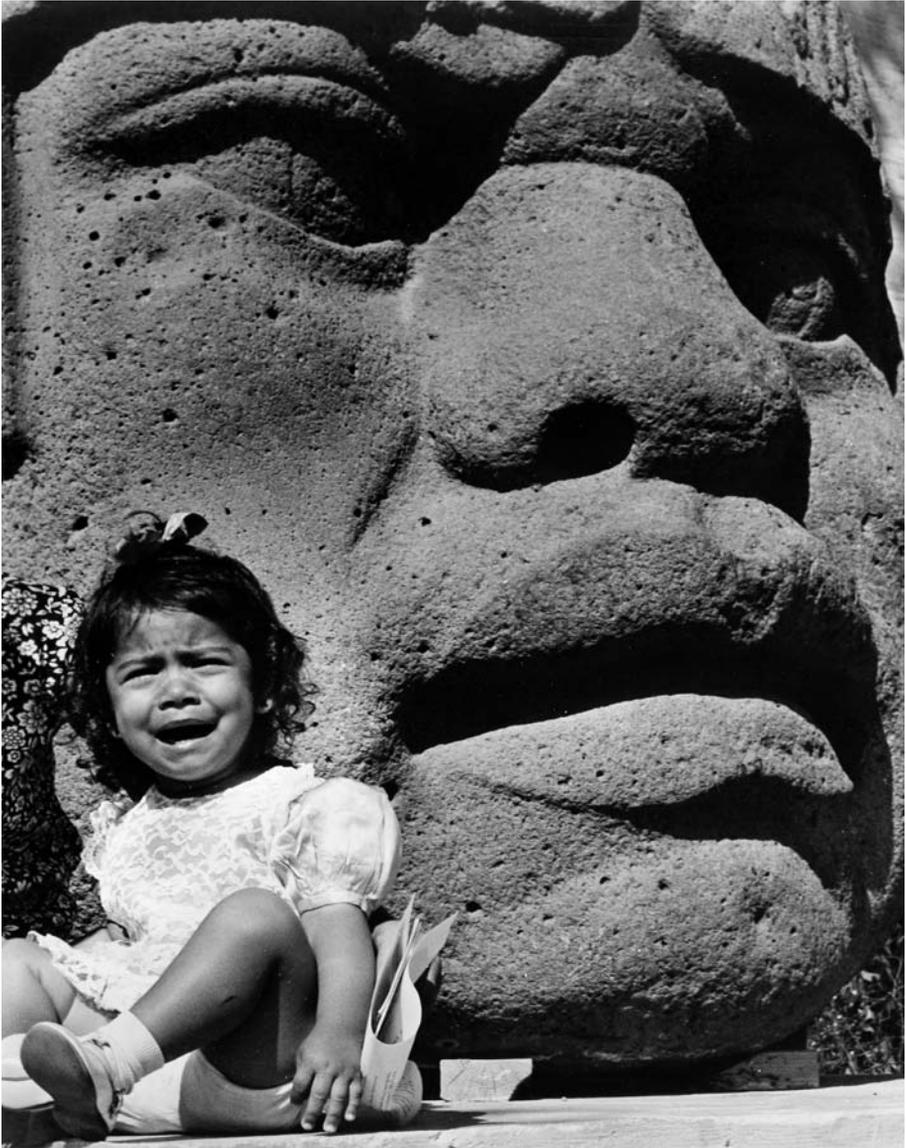


Figure 1.18. Photograph of a Mexican-American child in front of San Lorenzo Monument Five, as displayed at the Mexico Pavilion at Hemisfair '68, San Antonio, 1968. MS-31, San Antonio Fair, Inc., Archives, University of Texas at San Antonio.

TECHNOLOGICAL PREDICAMENTS

What exactly did the Mexican “miracle” look like when showcased abroad, as far as these pavilions can tell us? What kinds of images were being circulated, negotiated, and discussed, and what kind of cultural capital was being exchanged in the process? Ramírez Vázquez’s ponchos and sombreros were certainly not gone, yet the place they occupied within Mexican national representations fluctuated over time, and they were not always well received. The story of Gamboa’s last and most polemical world’s fair pavilion, for Expo ’70 in Osaka, illustrates this amply. Alongside the Tokyo ’64 Olympics, Expo ’70 was a major propaganda event intended to cement Japan’s post–World War II renaissance as a technological powerhouse and promote its own economic “miracle” internationally. At no other fair was the emphasis on technological innovation, particularly in such fields as the production of computer systems, consumer electronics, and imaging technologies (photographic and film-based), as powerful as at Osaka. Development was arguably less articulated through the kinds of heavy industry and natural resources management that Mexico had been able to showcase in previous fairs than by representations of the production process of these new types of commodities.

Furthermore, Japan was a newly established commercial partner for Mexico. In September 1970, Díaz Ordaz’s administration entered into a substantial commercial agreement with Japan, which had led, among other events, to Mexico and Japan exploring the possibility of building an industrial city in the outskirts of Mexico City.¹¹⁸ In firming up Japanese–Mexican collaborations, culture and economics went hand in hand. In 1972, a major retrospective exhibition of Siqueiros’s work in Tokyo was advertised as an event that “inaugurated a new era of intercultural relations between Japan and Mexico.”¹¹⁹ The preeminence of the United States as Mexico’s primary economic partner during the “miracle” years explains the elaborate world’s fairs pavilions that Mexico sent to these events in U.S. cities, and Japan’s rising status as a market for commercial and cultural exchange was certainly reflected by Mexico’s contribution to Expo ’70.

In spite of this, Agustín Hernández, the architect of Mexico’s Expo ’70 pavilion, still has mixed feelings about his experience. Hernández designed the pavilion as a flat platform punctuated by two triangular forms clad in marble. This arrangement simultaneously honored pre-Columbian structural forms from Mexico and resonated with his interest in Japanese Metabolism, the highly sculptural architectural trend that Expo ’70’s planning, headed by architect Kenzo Tange, renowned representative of the trend, also reflected.¹²⁰ Hernández envisioned the pavilion as a continuous surface for the fast-paced projection of images, photographic slides as well as film. Today, Hernández describes his pavilion as a “giant kaleidoscope,” and claims he wanted its sculptural exterior to function as its primary exhibition space,

its surface dematerialized by the flow of rapidly moving images. Hernández argues that the use of projections was a comparatively cheap way to make an impression at Osaka that pavilions of other underdeveloped countries, such as the Thailand pavilion, used effectively. Additionally, the architect claims that he wished to at least superficially honor the fair's technological bent despite the fact that Mexico's display admittedly did not include much in the way of technological innovations.¹²¹

According to this original project, the majority of the more conventional art displays in Hernández's pavilion—which, like its peers, was to feature juxtaposed ancient and modern Mexican artworks—would be sunken *under* the platform and thus be given secondary importance. However, Gamboa was strongly opposed to the idea of having any projections, interior or exterior, at the pavilion, and these only happened minimally. Instead, Gamboa commissioned ten artists, Manuel Felguérez among them, to complete murals for the pavilion's interior, and made this interior space the center of the entire display. For the exterior of Hernández's structure, Gamboa's curatorial program featured no displays other than the same sculpture of a Mexican "flower" of white onyx included at the Mexico pavilion at Hemisfair.

Reversing their positive appraisals of his previous pavilions, art and architecture critics in Mexico wrote damning reviews of Gamboa's decisions at Osaka. An editorial in *Calli* regretted that the country had nothing more to show for itself in the pavilion aside from its visual culture, an especially serious deficiency at a world's fair intended to highlight the technological achievements of the participating nations. Gamboa's intervention was particularly problematic given that Mexico's Osaka pavilion as envisioned originally by Hernández would have at least attempted to display some technological sophistication in addition to cultural riches. The pavilion, the editorial read, "indicates that our technological advancements are minimal," and that "we will continue to stress that our great force or value emerges from our culture."¹²² Art historian Raquel Tibol argued that between Brussels 1958 and Osaka 1970 nothing about the Mexican pavilions organized by the *museógrafo* had changed, "except the continent [where they were shown]." Tibol conceded that the consistency of Gamboa's exhibitions had allowed Mexico to save face at some of these events, given the country's comparative backwardness in terms of technological advancements. But this had come at a price, with Mexico's folkloric images having consistently taken center stage to the detriment of economic, political, or industrial contributions.¹²³

Tibol seems to have understood the political stakes of Mexico's internationally showcased image during the 1950s and 1960s. Yet in attributing a monolithic quality to Gamboa's shows, Tibol was not entirely correct.¹²⁴ A close analysis of the displays organized by Gamboa and his fellow *museógrafos* and architects during

the 1950s and 1960s gives us a sense of how anxious their collective attempt to create a consistent narrative of national culture while responding to a variety of symbolic demands truly was. As in past pavilions, moreover, many factors shaping Mexico's Osaka presentation fell largely beyond Gamboa and his cohorts' control. The curatorial program of his last pavilion certainly was outdated in many ways, but it is difficult to determine how much the curator could have done to produce a more technologically informed representation for Mexico, beyond the kinds of contrived curatorial acrobatics he had concocted in recent years.

That said, Mexico's state-sponsored push for international visibility was not fully exhausted by 1970. That year, Mexico hosted the soccer World Cup, using some of the sports facilities that its Olympics had helped update and refurbish. International exhibitions of various sorts were still considered important among high-ranking presidential and diplomatic powers in Mexico. But, at least in Osaka, the taste for the unstable mixture of primitivist and folkloric images out of which Mexico's "miracle"-age pavilions had been composed was arguably less persuasive than before. The "folkloric" template perfected at earlier events of this type convinced neither domestic nor foreign audiences, and although the currency of this curatorial model did not quite die out after Gamboa's last major pavilion, never again was the *museógrafo* in charge of an exhibition of this type. World's fairs nevertheless offered up only one discursive front on which to wage discursive battles about the past, present, and future of Mexican official identity. National museums of culture represented another crucial battleground.

TWO ARCHAEOLOGIES OF POWER ASSEMBLING THE MUSEO NACIONAL DE ANTROPOLOGÍA

A photograph taken in September 1964 documents a visit by a group of architects, politicians, and bureaucrats to the new National Museum of Anthropology (MNA) in Mexico City (Figure 2.1). In the image, Ramírez Vázquez examines the display of the Aztec chamber, the most important room in the museum, alongside President López Mateos, Jaime Torres Bodet (then secretary of public education), Mexico City’s presidentially appointed mayor Ernesto Uruchurtu (officially titled *regente* of the city), MNA director Ignacio Bernal, Rafael Mijares, and architects and designers from his office. Although the photograph presents the architect-politician as the figurehead of a presidential propaganda operation of the highest caliber, it is awkwardly off-kilter. Most noticeably, the spotlight in the room falls on the renowned Aztec Calendar Stone, to the right, while the visitors look intently in the opposite direction. Upon close examination, it becomes clear that this image is a montage in which a photograph documenting these bureaucrats’ official visit to a different part of the newly inaugurated museum has been added to a staged photograph of the empty Aztec room after the fact.

This image gives us a sense of the highly contrived nature of the relationships between designers, politicians, and other cultural bureaucrats that were cultivated during the “miracle.” The *mise-en-scène* reveals the close collaboration between various kinds of professionals as part of a major state-sponsored architectural and design project, but it also hints at the profoundly theatrical and performative nature of their interactions. Ramírez Vázquez and his collaborators posed avidly



Figure 2.1. Visita a la Sala Mexica, anonymous photographer. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.

for cameras at various moments during their visit to the newly inaugurated museum, but the postproduction work on some of these images further aggran-

dzies the events that they purportedly record.

The photograph also indicates that the combination of images and spaces that made up the exhibitionist state's curatorial practice was not only produced for international consumption. Between the late 1950s and mid-1960s, as they were actively producing international pavilions, Ramírez Vázquez and his circle of designers were busy working on elaborate cultural displays at home as well. Commissioned directly by López Mateos, Ramírez Vázquez's office was involved in the creation of a network of museums of national culture that had the MNA as its centerpiece. Although museums in Mexico had served as an interface between hegemonic articulations of national identity and the interests and demands of a broadening public sphere since the Porfiriato, this populist attempt to create museums for the education of the masses was largely unprecedented.¹

These museum commissions have usually been explained as a result of Ramírez Vázquez's personal ties to the presidential circle as well as his long-standing relationship to Torres Bodet. Additionally, the architect-politician has pointed to his

experience as chief design officer for the MNA, more than once, as the most significant prelude to his Olympic work.² Beyond the context of the architect-politician's biography, the origins of the MNA and its allied museums are also located within an international framework of diplomatic and cultural exchanges. Like his pavilions, Ramírez Vázquez's museums, made for domestic consumption but also intended to attract tourist audiences to Mexico's urban centers, monumentalized narratives of racial fusion, of cordiality among social classes in the face of heightened national modernization, and of the harmonious dialogue between the "old" and "new" components of Mexico's culture. Like the pavilions of the last chapter, Ramírez Vázquez's museums were indebted to a national repertoire of images and narrative tropes built during the Porfiriato and the early postrevolutionary period, yet they also responded, often in remarkable ways, to the intersecting cultural and geopolitical milieus of the mid-twentieth century.

One especially compelling episode illuminates several points of connection between the MNA's "national" project and broader international coordinates of cultural diplomacy. Despite the *museógrafo's* prominent standing, Gamboa monopolized neither the movement nor the display of Olmec heads beyond Mexico's borders during the early 1960s.³ San Lorenzo Monument Two, a head originally found in the same site as the heads that Gamboa brought to the world's fairs in New York and San Antonio, and to Los Angeles with his traveling *Masterworks* show, eventually became part of the permanent collection of the MNA. The very first public display of this head occurred in front of a Mies van der Rohe building, except not the Seagram building in New York, where Gamboa exhibited San Lorenzo Monument One to great fanfare. In 1963, James Johnson Sweeney, then director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, organized an exhibition whose centerpiece was San Lorenzo Monument Two as placed in front of Mies's Cullinan Hall, the steel and glass exhibition pavilion inaugurated in 1958 (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2. San Lorenzo Monument Two exhibited in front of Cullinan Hall, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1963, as part of *The Olmec Tradition*. Robert Heizer Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Maryland.



Originally, Sweeney had planned a show of “Pre-Cortés” art for Houston that would include objects primarily from the Maya and Aztec art traditions. As he began to plan this show, he came into contact with a number of Mexican diplomats and bureaucrats. In December 1962 Antonio Carrillo Flores, then Mexican ambassador in Washington, D.C., suggested to Sweeney that he consider displaying Gamboa’s *Masterworks* show, which was still on its European tour at the time and had not found a final venue in the United States.⁴ “Now that the Mona Lisa has crossed the Atlantic and there is much talk about the possibility that [Michelangelo’s] Pietà, one of the Vatican’s most treasured pieces of sculpture, may also come to the National Gallery of Art,” Carrillo wrote to Sweeney, “it would seem that there is nothing impossible in the field of international art exchanges.” Carrillo described Gamboa’s traveling exhibition as “one of the most far-reaching projects ever undertaken in the field of art in this hemisphere.” Despite his enthusiasm, Carrillo also warned Sweeney about the considerable logistical and space requirements that this show entailed: “I can tell you that the space needed is 3,000 square meters and that the transportation will be no small problem as there are 549 boxes with a total volume of 500 cubic meters and weighing about 100 tons.”⁵

In addition to its huge organizational cost, Gamboa’s show included colonial and modern Mexican art as well as pre-Columbian artifacts, and Sweeney was specifically interested in having a show devoted exclusively to pre-Columbian art from Mexico. By early 1963, Sweeney had turned his attention to Olmec art, a tradition not yet fully understood by specialists and especially appealing to popular audiences given its relative novelty, as the success of Gamboa’s *Masterworks* show in various European venues had made obvious by then.⁶ Sweeney first approached officials at the MNA, who at the time were organizing the construction of the institution’s new building, in order to request a loan of whatever monumental Olmec artifacts were available. Much to his surprise, Sweeney realized that Olmec art was not well understood or represented in Mexico City. “Perhaps you are well aware,” the director of the archaeology collections at the museum wrote back to Sweeney in May 1963, promising the loan of only a few artifacts of small scale, “that Olmec items or objects with Olmec influence are extremely scarce and rare in our Museum.”⁷

With the confirmation that Olmec art was not well represented in Mexico City’s collections, Sweeney turned his attention to the states of Veracruz and Tabasco, the Olmec “heartland,” as defined by Matthew Stirling’s explorations of the 1940s and 1950s. “It was clear,” Sweeney wrote in the catalog for his show, “that one of the colossal heads such as those shown at the Park Museum of La Venta, at the Museum of Villahermosa, or at the Museum of Jalapa, would be a

striking exhibit in Houston on the lawn outside Mies van der Rohe's handsome Cullinan Hall." While Sweeney initially thought of borrowing a head from one of those recently built museums in Mexico and eventually borrowed other monoliths from them, he was persuaded by Eusebio Dávalos, then director of Mexico's Institute of History and Anthropology (INAH), to attempt the more daring enterprise of actually excavating and moving a head from its original discovery site on the island of San Lorenzo and taking it to Houston. The head that Dávalos suggested was the last one left beyond the walls of museums in Mexico. "Here was a great head," Sweeney wrote, "a masterwork of early Amerindian art, neglected in the jungle nearly two thousand years." Sweeney then cited Dávalos's suggestion: "Why not bring it out for exhibition in Houston, then return it to Mexico City for the National Museum?"⁸

Strictly speaking, San Lorenzo Monument Two had not been neglected nearly as long as Sweeney claimed, for Stirling had documented the head exhaustively in one of his expeditions of the mid-1950s.⁹ Despite this, the "rediscovery" of the head by Sweeney's expedition and its transportation to Houston were well-documented and bombastic affairs. Sweeney traveled to Mexico with a large team from his museum, and with documentary filmmaker Richard de Rochemont, who made a film about the expedition.¹⁰ The film presented Sweeney's and Stirling's expeditions as part of the same historical trajectory, citing the museum director's readings of the archaeologist's reports as his primary motivation for the ambitious project, and explicitly positioning Sweeney as a continuator of Stirling's discoveries.¹¹ Photographs commissioned to promote Sweeney's exhibition also memorialized Stirling's visit to Houston for the opening of the show in January 1963. One photograph, for instance, pictures Stirling, his wife Marion (a key figure in all of his expeditions), and Sweeney admiring the monolith at the museum lawn (Figure 2.3).

Most media attention regarding the Houston exhibition was devoted to the exploratory aspects of Sweeney's venture. For instance, a review published in the *Christian Science Monitor* commented almost exclusively on the impressive size and remote location of the head "hunted" for Houston, praising Sweeney's bravado, and only summarily mentioning the rest of his exhibition, which included a large number of Olmec artifacts from collections in Veracruz and Mexico City, some just as large and heavy as San Lorenzo Monument Two.¹² A *New York Times* review of the show neglected to discuss the Houston display altogether, and was much keener to inform its readers about the ways in which the aesthetic magnetism of San Lorenzo Monument Two had been able to mobilize all kinds of geopolitical forces. "The accounts of the head's location were hazy," the *Times* reported, "but

Mr. Sweeney, undaunted and armed with letters from President Kennedy and Vice President [Lyndon] Johnson, won the support of the Mexican Government and set out on a quest for the treasure.”

The Mexican government lent [Sweeney] a helicopter, and flights were made over village after village to spot the quarry. Occasionally, Mr. Sweeney landed to ask villagers for clues. At last, the huge head was spotted. . . . Miguel Aleman, former President of Mexico and now president of the Mexican Tourist Council, organized Mexican Navy men into a work crew to hack out miles of jungle to bring out the head.¹³

As the language surrounding Sweeney’s travels indicates, his journey through Veracruz had more than a mere geographic dimension. In the catalog for his exhibition and in the film, Sweeney related how his travels to the depths of a primitive terrain and back had been full of treacherous moments. These included the violent opposition of locals to the removal of the

Figure 2.3. Marion Stirling, Matthew Stirling, and James Johnson Sweeney admire San Lorenzo Monument Two, Houston, January 1963. Archives, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.



head, as well as the theft of other Olmec artifacts while the movement of the head was organized. Sweeney modeled his narrative explicitly after Stirling's reports of his archaeological discoveries in Veracruz, and presented a mass-media-friendly version of these documents. Sweeney's narrative also contained all the elements of a classic tale of civilization encountering barbarism, an exchange out of which he emerged not only victorious but also edified, creating a show that not only held archaeological and artistic interest but, in his words, would also "foster international good will."¹⁴

The diplomatic undertones of Sweeney's account indicate that here too, as with Gamboa's displays of Olmec heads in state-sponsored cultural exhibitions, pre-Columbian artifacts could become unintentional participants of diplomatic exchanges. Private communications between Sweeney and various government officials in the United States and Mexico strongly suggest that this was the case. While the rest of artifacts included in *The Olmec Tradition* were only shown in Houston between January and August 1963, the exhibition of San Lorenzo Monument Two in front of Cullinan Hall was extended for more than a year on account of its popularity. Additionally, construction of the head's new home, Ramírez Vázquez's MNA, would not be finished until the fall of 1964. Sweeney convinced Eusebio Dávalos to extend the loan with the help of Edwin Shook, a U.S. archaeologist who was active at the time excavating the Maya site of Tikal, in Guatemala. Asking Shook to convince Dávalos to extend the loan on his behalf, Sweeney claimed that he should emphasize how, while on view in Houston, the head "could continue to do good propaganda work for Mexico anthropologically [and] archaeologically from the travel viewpoint, until the new museum in Mexico City is ready to welcome and display it."¹⁵ A letter Sweeney sent to MNA director Ignacio Bernal to thank him for allowing him to prolong the exhibition of San Lorenzo Monument Two after the object had been installed in the new museum is even more telling. Sweeney reassured Bernal that, having been seen by hundreds of thousands of visitors, the head had played "a major ambassadorial role" in Houston, and that "the story of its voyage from San Lorenzo to Houston focused international attention on it as a representative of the great Olmec culture of your nation's background."¹⁶

Sweeney's discussion of the movement of the Olmec head as a diplomatic event belongs to an early 1960s context of shifting perceptions of the place that cultural exchanges should occupy in diplomatic negotiations. In this context, the movement and rearrangement of monumental structures and objects took on unprecedented importance. As Lucia Allais has shown in her analysis of the UNESCO-funded transportation of temples in Egypt after 1960, this event, which comprised the de-assembly, transportation, and reassembly of a large number of ceremonial structures across vast stretches of the Nubian Desert by an international network of

bureaucrats of culture, exerted impact not only on how monuments were subsequently understood on scientific and technical grounds, but also on their perceived importance to geopolitical transactions. Sweeney's voyage to Veracruz deserves pride of place among these reconfigurations, especially given that many of the high-ranking political figures from the United States who supported Sweeney's venture also backed the Egyptian campaign. The objects that these bureaucrats inscribed into the diplomatic realm gradually came to inhabit what Allais terms the space of "global" culture, a space whose intellectual and discursive underpinnings figures such as Torres Bodet had drawn up earlier in the century, and the elusive pursuit of which consumed a great deal of Mexican diplomatic energies throughout the "miracle."¹⁷

Sweeney's dialogue with Mexican cultural officials can also be described as but a chapter in a long history of negotiations between Mexican and non-Mexican archaeologists and anthropologists, a dialogue that was formative to the institutional grounding of these disciplines in Mexico. Mechthild Rutsch argues that this transnational history involved contentious and unstable relationships among professionals in these allied fields, and was directly affected by changing political tides over time.¹⁸ During the Porfiriato, Mexican professionals had understood archaeology as one of the primary domains of knowledge through which a national identity could be constructed. A "native" tradition of archaeology funded and supported by the state could reclaim back for Mexico a disciplinary field long controlled by foreigners. As Garrigan demonstrates, this process was intimately related to the establishment of Mexico City's National Museum of Archaeology, History, and Ethnography, the direct predecessor to the MNA founded in 1888.¹⁹ This understanding of anthropology and archaeology as disciplinary practices key to nation-building efforts also established the basis for the centrality that these practices would attain in the postrevolutionary history of Mexico.

In the context of production of the MNA, Sweeney's paternalist desires vis-à-vis his Mexican colleagues were also kept much more closely in check than those of his predecessors among foreign archaeologists and explorers who had interacted with Mexican professionals. Sweeney's gesture of temporary custodianship of San Lorenzo Monument Two preserved some of the ethos of discovery of more exploitative precedents, which had led to the actual extraction of archaeological materials from Mexico for the permanent collections of museums and private collections outside the country, several of them in the United States.²⁰ Sweeney's obvious colonialist desires, by contrast, were largely sublimated within the parameters of a staged spectacle whose tangible results were ultimately subordinated to the demands of Mexico City's cultural bureaucrats. In other words, Sweeney was interested in playing up the spectacular aspects of the movement of the head, and

did not intend to actually obtain long-term possession of the artifact. The cultural capital at stake was different for all the parties involved in the transaction on account of their diverse social extractions. The exhibition enhanced Sweeney's prestige as a tastemaker in Houston, while the bureaucratic stock of the Mexican cultural officials who facilitated these events rose on account of the Olmec head's transportation and exhibition abroad.²¹ Speaking a common language of cooperation and avowedly sharing the same humanist aims for the display of culture, the negotiations orchestrated in relation to the movement of an Olmec monolith thus yielded different kinds of returns on each side of the border. While Sweeney gained significant fame as a result of his much-publicized recovery and exhibition of an Olmec head, succeeding in giving the Houston Museum of Fine Arts the kind of national visibility that its patrons very much wished for it to have, Mexican bureaucrats used what was once a colonizing force—American anthropology and archaeology—to preserve and publicize an archaeological artifact as they transformed it into part of Mexico's national heritage.

A MOVING STATE

Sweeney's transportation of the Olmec monolith to Houston and then back to Mexico was not the only event of this type that the new MNA project initiated or facilitated. Indeed, Sweeney's exhibition lent an international hand to the "national" task of gathering numerous other artifacts for the elaborate commission. Between December 1961 and September 1964, as the new museum was planned and built, archaeological missions traveled through most of Mexico to gather ancient and ethnographic artifacts for the display space in the works. But the movement of one particularly large monolith, a monolith that weighed 167 tons and was originally placed in the rural village of Coatlinchán, east of Mexico City, captured most public attention, and mirrored Sweeney's venture in more ways than one.

The monolith in question was believed to have been located in Coatlinchán for centuries and, since the nineteenth century, was understood to represent Tlaloc, the central Mexican deity associated with rain and fertility. By the early twentieth century, the Tlaloc had become a significant attraction for foreigners who visited the Mexican capital, and was featured in tourist guides of the city.²² As with the Olmec heads, the movement of this monolith, orchestrated between the fall of 1963 and April 1964, necessitated a great deal of logistical and technological calculations. Unlike San Lorenzo Monument Two, which was transported by a truck from its site in Veracruz to that city's port, and then by ship to Houston, the Coatlinchán monolith required a custom-built trailer made specifically to transport it.²³ In order to move the Coatlinchán monument, and as in the context

of Sweeney's exhibition, diplomacy played a central role, but the political stakes involved in moving the Coatlinchán monolith were arguably higher than those of Sweeney's project, and they mobilized the state in a different way.

Discussed by many figures, perhaps the most telling account of this socially and politically charged event was produced by Salvador Novo. Novo was a poet and writer of considerable fame in Mexico City since the 1920s and, by the 1960s, he held the post of "official chronicler" of the city. Although not always aligned with conservative Mexican politics, especially during his early career, like other intellectuals of his generation, his relationship with the state grew increasingly closer as his own prestige grew. Through the 1940s and 1950s, Novo had worked as public relations official for the secretariat of foreign affairs of Mexico, and held similar positions in the ministry of economics and in the secretariat of public education. The post of "chronicler" of the Mexican capital he eventually came to occupy was no small job indeed, as Novo was assigned this position by President Díaz Ordaz in 1965.²⁴ Although written in his characteristically nonchalant tone, Novo's description of the moving of the Coatlinchán monolith included in the MNA's official catalog touches on a number of key details of the event, and deserves to be cited at length:

After a year's preparation, involving hundreds of people, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez supervised the transport of the huge statue to the site of the new museum. . . . The local inhabitants . . . were determined to keep the statue, since superstition held that if Tlaloc were removed, the rains—and thus life itself—would cease. During the night, [they] cut the wires and sabotaged the trailer. To avoid further resistance, federal forces were called in, delicate negotiations carried on, and the age-old struggle between tradition and change was resolved. . . . The people of Coatlinchán watched *this national treasure leave its centuries old home*. In return, the village requested of the government a road, a school, a medical center and electricity, all of which have since been received. It was night when Tlaloc arrived in Mexico City; yet twenty-five thousand people awaited him in the Zócalo. The city was prepared as if for a fiesta; lights were on everywhere, traffic was stopped and the streets were thronged. Ironically, the arrival of the rain god was greeted by the heaviest storm ever recorded for this ordinarily dry season, and there seems to have been an abundance of showers ever since.²⁵

Novo renders mythological not only the literal appropriation and transportation of the Coatlinchán monolith by the representatives of the state, but also the symbolic appropriation of the monolith's charismatic aspects by the state apparatus via the national museum destined to showcase it (Figure 2.4). Novo tells us that

tense negotiations took place between villagers and state officials, yet he ultimately subsumes the particulars of the movement of the Tlaloc within an epic narrative that aligns the object's talismanic dimensions with the equally supernatural might of the state forces that transported it. The guarantor of biopolitical order in Coatlinchán, the monolith's life-giving powers are legitimately but only partially harnessed by the state that takes possession of it, as the unpredictable downpour that greets its arrival to the capital city makes clear. This is nevertheless inevitable, as even before leaving Coatlinchán the Tlaloc is *already* a “national treasure.” Novo positions these events within what he describes as the “age-old struggle” between traditional and modern societal practices not specific to Mexico, but common to the histories of countries in the rest of the “developed” world, and thus frames them within the parameters of what Zaid describes as the culture of progress. In Novo's account, the Coatlinchán episode thus appears as a triumph of the state and the lettered city that it represents over the rural, unruly interior of Mexico's national territory, an episode that positions Mexico firmly on a transnational,

Figure 2.4. Tlaloc Monolith transported to Mexico City, April 1964. *Caminos de México* (1964).



developmentalist path to an increasingly civilized and metropolitan future. At the same time, Novo inscribes the conflict within the contours of a “national” narrative of state formation through relatively peaceful intercultural, interracial, and class collaboration, a narrative whose resonance the MNA’s architecture and curatorial program, as we shall see, only magnified.

Beyond the supernatural tone of Novo’s propagandistic vignette, however, the moving of the Tlaloc exemplifies some of the ways in which the single-party state managed dissent in more everyday ways. As Novo notes, beyond its obvious talismanic implications, the moving of the monolith involved a rather mundane negotiation between state forces and the Coatlinchán locals, an example of “political intelligence” applied here to resolve a discrete set of incidents.²⁶ Novo’s account underscores how, like the members of Sweeney’s expedition into the Olmec heartland, the organizers of the Coatlinchán transportation campaign encountered “native” opposition. In that previous instance, however, virtually no concessions seem to have been made to the locals for letting the Olmec head go. In the various narratives of the event—Rochemont’s film, Sweeney’s writings, or mass-mediated accounts—these natives appear as passive subjects of the state forces mobilized to “rescue” the head from the oblivion of their primitive existence. In the case of the Coatlinchán incident, the forces of the state again triumph over native resistance for the sake of salvaging, displaying, and rendering into a national treasure an archaeological artifact, but the exchange is different. The resistance offered by the inhabitants of Coatlinchán to state intervention compelled Ramírez Vázquez and his associates, who were acting as the state’s spokesmen, to flex their populist muscles in several ways. On the one hand, through these spokesmen, the state hegemonically accommodated a set of concrete demands for basic services and educational facilities, providing the inhabitants of Coatlinchán with a much-needed school facility. The state attempted to persuade the Coatlinchán natives about the “national” importance of moving the monolith, relying on a clientelist negotiation to aid this task when it realized persuasion would not suffice. On the other hand, the state also made use of its monopoly of violence, for soldiers were deployed to contain unrest while the monument was removed from the village despite opposition, and to safeguard the monolith while it traveled between Coatlinchán and Mexico City. This chain of events, which was orchestrated or even “designed” by Ramírez Vázquez, activates the single-party state’s “hard” modality of official authority in conjunction with its “soft” hegemonic powers. Sandra Rozental argues that for this reason the Coatlinchán episode is emblematic of the more expansive panorama of cultural, economic, and racial conflicts that have historically defined the Mexican state’s operation during the last century. The division between countryside and lettered city that the conflict over possession of the Tlaloc represents

is also historically grounded in the cultural politics of the Porfiriato, when similar spectacular demonstrations of the state's might, combined with clientelist concessions, often made up for the state's logistical deficiencies and its precarious cultural legitimacy.²⁷

In a strict historical sense, Novo's description of the Coatlinchán incident as a "national" problem was not far off the mark. The geographic expanse of the Coatlinchán episode situates it in the contested economic, social, and urban terrain between countryside and city that many national policy discussions, especially those mentioned at the outset of this book that debated the relative merits of industrialization, urbanization, or the expansion of agricultural production, focused on at the time. In the changing demographic and urban environment of the early 1960s, Coatlinchán was not merely a peripheral village that provided the capital city's new museum with archaeological jewels. Providing the capital with some of its workforce and with arable and industrial terrains to exploit, Coatlinchán was also part of the city's expanding economic and technological geography. This tense and still undefined terrain was the site of power plays of different kinds. At stake in controlling this terrain and its archaeological wealth was not only the institutional success of the MNA or of Ramírez Vázquez's direct operation as an agent of the state, but the state's hold over the peripheries of the urban conglomerate that physically hosted the majority of its cultural and political apparatus.²⁸

ORIGINS

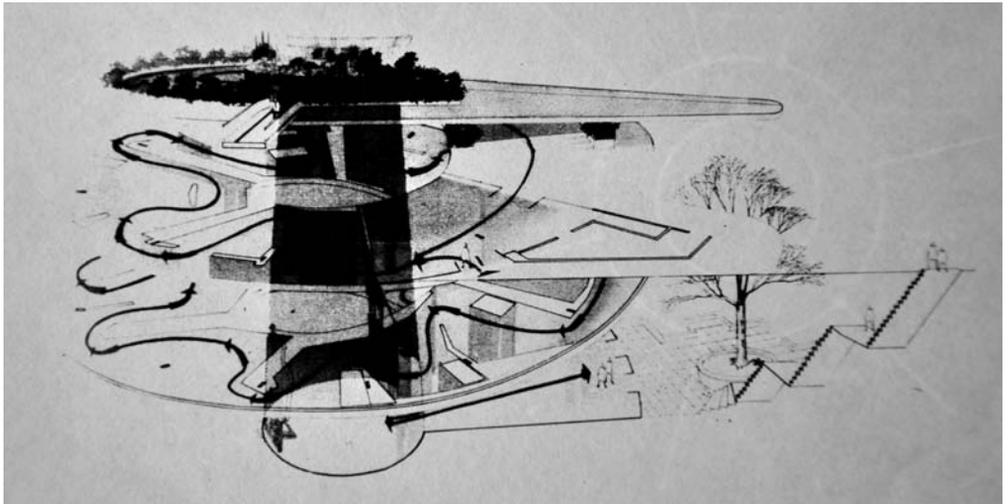
Several years before the spectacular movement of the Tlaloc, Ramírez Vázquez's museum architecture had produced mythological accounts of the relationship between Mexico's pre-Columbian past, its modern present, and its projected future. The first significant museum Ramírez Vázquez designed was the National Gallery of History, finished at Chapultepec Park in Mexico City in 1960. That same year he became director of a major state-run initiative, the cultural programs housed at Chapultepec Park, which eventually became the capital city's primary cultural venue. The redevelopment of the park was one of the most important urban planning projects of the mid-twentieth-century beautification of the Mexican capital. The site held significant historical value. In well-known origin narratives of the Aztecs, Chapultepec was the beginning point of the earliest Aztec migration, which saw the first Aztecs settle in the site that would become the city of Tenochtitlán. As predicted to them upon their departure by Huitzilopochtli, their patron deity, the exact foundation of the new city would happen where the migrants saw "an eagle land upon a cactus growing in a lake," the image that centuries later became the basis for Mexico's national coat of arms.²⁹ Commissioned by the Departamento del Distrito Federal (DDF), the city's municipal planning agency headed by *regente*

Uruchurtu, architect Leonides Guadarrama directed Chapultepec Park's planning between the late 1950s and early 1960s. Eventually, a refashioned park came to include several cultural institutions as well as facilities for leisure, including Guadarrama's Museum of Natural History (1964) and twin museums by Ramírez Vázquez, the MNA and the Museum of Modern Art (MAM) (1964).³⁰

In the 1967 edition of his *Nueva grandeza mexicana*, Novo listed the remade Chapultepec as one of the most significant new spaces for leisure and culture in the Mexican capital. Novo's book and the narrative of urban leisure within which it inscribes Chapultepec deserve elaboration here. Published in 1946 for the first time, Novo's was a guidebook sponsored by the then highest municipal authority of Mexico, the Departamento Central, the predecessor to the DDF. The Departamento organized a literary competition that Novo, already established as a journalist at the time, won. The book is written from the narrative perspective of a visitor from the northern city of Monterrey, to whom the book explains urban life in the capital.³¹ As Carlos Monsiváis has argued, *Nueva grandeza mexicana* operates as a legitimating device for the ideological agenda of the municipal and presidential circles behind much urban expansion in Mexico City in the 1940s, presenting a city defined in reality by ruthless gentrification as well as racial, gender, and class divides, as an affable and unthreatening urban environment that offers itself up for leisurely consumption. This representation of the capital, Monsiváis claims, operates as "an ideological trap that gives an appearance of *bonhomie* to ferocious capitalism."³²

Novo's *Nueva grandeza mexicana* was also a reply to *Grandeza mexicana*, a book published by Bernardo de Balbuena in 1604 as an ode to the splendors of colonial Mexico City.³³ Novo's choice of this historical source as a model was highly significant, as Vivianne Mahieux remarks, because it allowed the chronicler "to situate himself at the origin of the city's literary tradition by strategically linking his own text back to a foundational description of Mexico City."³⁴ As Vicente Quirarte argues, Novo was not the only writer of his time who attempted to aestheticize the urban transformations of mid-twentieth-century Mexico City, providing their often-ruthless pace and socially exclusionary logic with a veneer of humanist refinement. Novo's *Nueva grandeza mexicana* must be seen as part of a cultural atmosphere saturated with multiple literary, artistic, and filmic representations of the expanding metropolis. Novo harked back to a historical model that narrated a past period during which the transformations brought about by the expansion of the colonial administration's economic and political power had brought comparable changes to the capital's urban form.³⁵

Novo's *Nueva grandeza mexicana* has enjoyed a long afterlife, including multiple new editions in the decades since its release. Yet one edition is of particular



significance to the cultural climate of the 1960s. PEMEX, the Mexican state oil company, commissioned a second edition to commemorate the 7th World Petroleum Congress held in the city in April 1967, and it was distributed to those who attended as a souvenir. As described in this new edition, the new Chapultepec was sure to impress these international visitors. “To the west,” Novo told his readers, “[Mexico City] has continued to extend its amusements. Chapultepec Park was enlarged by 122 hectares, in which two artificial lakes, 24 fountains, a de luxe restaurant [were installed], along with . . . an amusement park with all kinds of mechanical equipment and a huge, tall roller coaster, the largest in the world.” The new Chapultepec, Novo claimed, was emblematic of Mexico’s enlightened municipal and presidential leadership.³⁶

Ramírez Vázquez and Mijares’s National Gallery of History supplemented this panorama of leisure. Originally known as the Gallery of the Mexican People’s Struggle for Independence (hereafter the Gallery), the structure was a snail-shaped museum built at the side of the hill leading up to Chapultepec Castle, once the seat of Emperor Maximilian’s residence in Mexico City, and Mexico’s National Museum of History starting in 1939, as decreed by Lázaro Cárdenas (Figure 2.5).³⁷ The new Gallery at Chapultepec was conceived as an introduction to the Museum of History located on top of the hill, and contained scale models of heroic episodes of Mexico’s transition toward independence from colonial rule, between the late eighteenth century and the revolutionary wars of the 1910s.

A monumental door of sculpted bronze graced the entrance to the Gallery. One of the clearest successors to his mural for Mexico’s pavilion at Expo ’58, sculptor

Figure 2.5. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Gallery of the Mexican People’s Struggle for Independence, Mexico City, 1960. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.

Chávez Morado titled this work *Cultural and Racial Components of Modern Mexico*. He sculpted both the interior and the exterior of the monumental door with two sets of large-scale human figures, rendered in profile and depicted moving together, as if in procession. Chávez Morado clearly emulated the formal language of Maya narrative sculpture, and characterized the moving figures on either side of the doorway as “Indian” and “Mexican” racial types. The gate was hence meant to embody the fusion of these racial types, constructing a similar *mestizaje* narrative as his world’s fair mural.

Appropriations of pre-Columbian art and architecture reverberated through the entire Gallery. On account of both its nickname and its spiraling plan (it became popularly known as “El Caracol,” or “The Snail”), the Gallery recalled the famous observatory at the late Classic Maya site of Chichén Itzá (900–1500 CE), known by the same name. In Aztec culture, snails and conch shells occupy a prominent position, as these artifacts have been found in various elite burial contexts. Associated with Tlaloc as well as with fertility and the regeneration of life, the spiraling snail form is also central to Aztec creation narratives and understandings of cosmic time and space.³⁸ The spiral layout of the Gallery also had international echoes in the realm of architecture, as it was highly similar to a number of twentieth-century museum buildings, most obviously Frank Lloyd Wright’s Guggenheim Museum in New York (1949).

The Gallery’s inauguration took place on November 20, 1960, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the starting date of Mexico’s revolutionary wars, as well as 150 years of independence from colonial Spanish rule. Ramírez Vázquez remarks that the script of the Gallery, written by Torres Bodet, was meant to show “in an objective manner the development and formative stages of contemporary Mexico: Independence, the [Porfiriato], and the Revolution.”³⁹ Developmentalist in structure, Torres Bodet’s understanding of Mexican history as part of this historical trajectory was indebted to the liberal tradition of historiography of the Porfiriato, which positioned Mexico along a linear path of economic and political progress shared with other nations.⁴⁰ This vision of historical progression was also congruent with the understanding of Mexican art and culture as part of a shared, universal heritage inflected with national particularities that Torres Bodet shared with several other members of the “miracle’s” intelligentsia. Intended for an audience of children, the Gallery’s three levels of displays spiraled down to a main underground chamber faced with heavy brick on all sides, designed by *museógrafo* Iker Larrauri (Figure 2.6). There the sequence of heroic events seen in numerous dioramas culminated with a bombastic rendering of the main outcome, according to the official history of Mexico, of the country’s revolutionary wars.

Inside this chamber, visitors found a dramatic confrontation between two sets of artifacts, placed at opposite ends of the room. At one end was a copy of the 1917 Mexican constitution. The constitution was attached to a Mexican flag and to the sculpture of a snake's head. On the other end was a pillar of sculpted marble, shaped like an eagle slaying a snake. The chamber was capped by a circular dome of translucent fiberglass and was lit so dramatically as to take on a religious aura, rendering visitors silent in the presence of all the ingredients of the Mexican coat of arms. The temporal inversions at work were meant to prove arresting to the audience, as Larrauri recalls.⁴¹ The Gallery's curatorial narrative moved forward in time, from colonial dependence to independence, but experientially its spatial progression seemed to move in a reverse direction. Visitors would move from well-lit, glass-encased didactic galleries, only to end up in a raw space of basic, primitive forms. Ramírez Vázquez has defined this as a ritual space, arguing that "[t]he design of the chamber seeks to produce a subjective impact similar to that produced by altars in a temple." "In a certain sense," the architect has claimed, "this chamber is an altar" that reinstantiates the Mexica myth of the foundation of Tenochtitlán for its modern visitors, presenting the history of Mexico's political modernization not as a linear progression in time but as a cycle of infinite regress to a mythological beginning.⁴²

Fully steeped in "Mexican" forms and meanings, Larrauri's chamber is also strongly reminiscent of religious architecture produced outside of Mexico. Among spaces that bear a strong resemblance to this chamber is the interior of Eero Saarinen's 1955 nondenominational chapel at the Massachusetts Institute of



Figure 2.6. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Gallery of the Mexican People's Struggle for Independence, Mexico City, 1960, view of interior. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.



Figure 2.7. Eero Saarinen, chapel at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955. Photograph by the author.

Technology (Figure 2.7). At Saarinen's chapel, also faced in heavy brick on all sides and with undulating perimeter walls, the altar, made of marble like the objects in Larrauri's chamber, is placed directly

underneath a round skylight that casts a numinous light over it. A sculpture of small, rectangular pieces of welded iron by Harry Bertioia adds to the effect, rendering the shimmering light into a halo-like presence behind the altar.

Similar international resonances came in handy for Ramírez Vázquez's ventures after Chapultepec. Shortly after the Gallery was finished, his firm developed a set of culture museums along the U.S.–Mexican border. The most dramatic one was built in Ciudad Juárez in 1963 (Figure 2.8). Circular in plan and with bell-shaped concrete walls, the Ciudad Juárez museum's main building was flanked by a pool of still water and by an elongated gallery corridor, both of which echoed its curved contours. The building's peculiar exterior did not go unnoticed. "When these buildings were designed," a report in *Construcción Mexicana* stated, "the North American taste for spectacular advertisements and Mexico's sculptural sensibilities were taken into account at the same time." Responding to the imagery of the U.S.–Mexican border, the museum's formal language also pointed to religious architecture produced farther south of the Rio Grande. The museum's circulation plan and main building, for instance, were very similar to Oscar Niemeyer's presidential chapel at Brasília (1958–60). Accessed by a ramp, Niemeyer's building had curving



walls enclosing its entrance and stood as a highly sculptural volume against the originally empty landscape of the new capital city (Figure 2.9).

Like the main chamber at the Mexican pavilion for the New York World's Fair and the ritual chamber of the Gallery at Chapultepec, the central room at the Ciudad Juárez museum was capped by a domed fiberglass ceiling (Figure 2.10). Devoted to a didactic explanation of Mexican history, this chamber included replicas of the Colossus of Tula shown

Figure 2.8. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Museo Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 1963. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.

Figure 2.9. Oscar Niemeyer, Presidential Chapel, Brasília, 1960. Courtesy of Rick Ligthelm.

at Expo '58, as well as copies of Olmec heads and of the famous Aztec Calendar Stone, artifacts that were shown in world's fairs of the 1950s and 1960s, with their originals already occupying prominent positions in the collections of permanent museums in Mexico. The museum's engagement with international architectural tropes and its dramatic presentation of artifacts central to Mexican official culture are consistent with its stated mission. Its

Figure 2.10. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Museo Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 1963, interior. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.



purpose was twofold: “on the one hand, to encourage tourism,” and on the other to “disseminate essentially Mexican cultural values and assert our nationality.”⁴³ In a retrospective account of the museum published in 1995, Ramírez Vázquez explains the museum’s mission even more specifically. Its “essential purpose,” he claims, “was to dignify the image of [Mexico] for the American tourist.”⁴⁴

The museum’s centralized, domed display space engaged well-established architectural tropes but had a distinctively “American” feeling. Perhaps the most famous domed museum of the nineteenth century is Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s Altesmuseum in Berlin (1830), whose central domed chamber evokes the Roman Pantheon to create a powerful environment recaptured in many later buildings, several of which can be found in the United States. Indeed, prestigious official buildings found in many neoclassical U.S. cities, such as the National Gallery of Art (1937) and the Library of Congress (1897) in Washington, D.C., replicated precisely this architectural trope during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. During the mid-twentieth century, domes were also prominent in major U.S. commissions, for instance, at Saarinen’s General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan (1948–56). Saarinen included a Styling Dome, a proscenium-like structure for the display of concept cars, which introduced an unprecedented dimension of theatricality to corporate design of the period.⁴⁵ Other museum buildings of the time also included domes. For example, Philip Johnson’s museum for the Bliss Collection of pre-Columbian art in Washington, D.C. (1959–61), displayed ancient art primarily from Mexico in a sequence of domed rooms (Figure 2.11).⁴⁶

In addition to his pavilion for the New York World’s Fair and his border museum, Ramírez Vázquez’s Museum of Modern Art (MAM) afforded a central role to the dome. A building of curved contours clad in a continuous spiraling curtain wall, the MAM’s lobby and primary hub for circulation is a grand, domed space very similar to Schinkel’s neoclassical precedent and its many American iterations (Figure 2.12). The domes in Mexican museums of this era rendered them conversant with a Eurocentric narrative that positioned the “classical” world that domes evoked since the nineteenth century as the point of origin from which “universal” culture irradiated toward other parts of the world. These domed museums attempted to inscribe scenographies of Mexican cultural specificity within this museological space of “universal” culture. The dome provided museums produced in Euro-American contexts with spaces of contemplative alterity that had what Anthony Vidler describes as “suprahistorical” value. Although rife with historical associations in their formal language and curatorial logic, these spaces were also meant to transcend the complexities of any one specific cultural history, generating numinous, reverent responses from their viewers.⁴⁷ Given the international legibility of their language and their capacity to endow Mexico’s cultural profile with



Figure 2.11. Philip Johnson, pavilion for Robert Woods Bliss Collection of Pre-Columbian Art, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C., 1959–61. Photograph by the author.

these universalizing associations, the domed chambers produced in Mexico during the 1960s could be as effective for the indoctrination of “national” audiences as they could prove attractive to international

audiences of visitors to Mexico’s cities.

The Ciudad Juárez museum was originally intended to have two associated museums also designed by Ramírez Vázquez in the cities of Matamoros and Tijuana, but these projects were never built owing to a lack of federal funding.⁴⁸ These border museums were part of a specialized government initiative to enhance the infrastructure of the U.S.–Mexican border as they were an integral component of President López Mateos’s Programa Nacional Fronterizo (PRONAF). Mario Pani headed the Programa’s architectural efforts, using his expertise as a politically connected planning and architectural professional to help enhance the look and functional aspects of cities along Mexico’s borders, particularly the more contentious northern border. Pani devised new regulatory plans for Tijuana, Matamoros, and Ciudad Juárez, projects within which the border cities’ new cultural infrastructure as well as a number of new hotels and other public spaces for leisure were to become inscribed.⁴⁹ U.S. publications like the *New York Times* claimed that the PRONAF’s objective was to make “a ‘Garden City’ showcase for the cultural and commercial assets of modern Mexico” out of each of these previously downtrodden



urban centers.⁵⁰ Ramírez Vázquez's border museums were also designed in tandem with more ambitious works of infrastructure. For example, in 1960 pres-

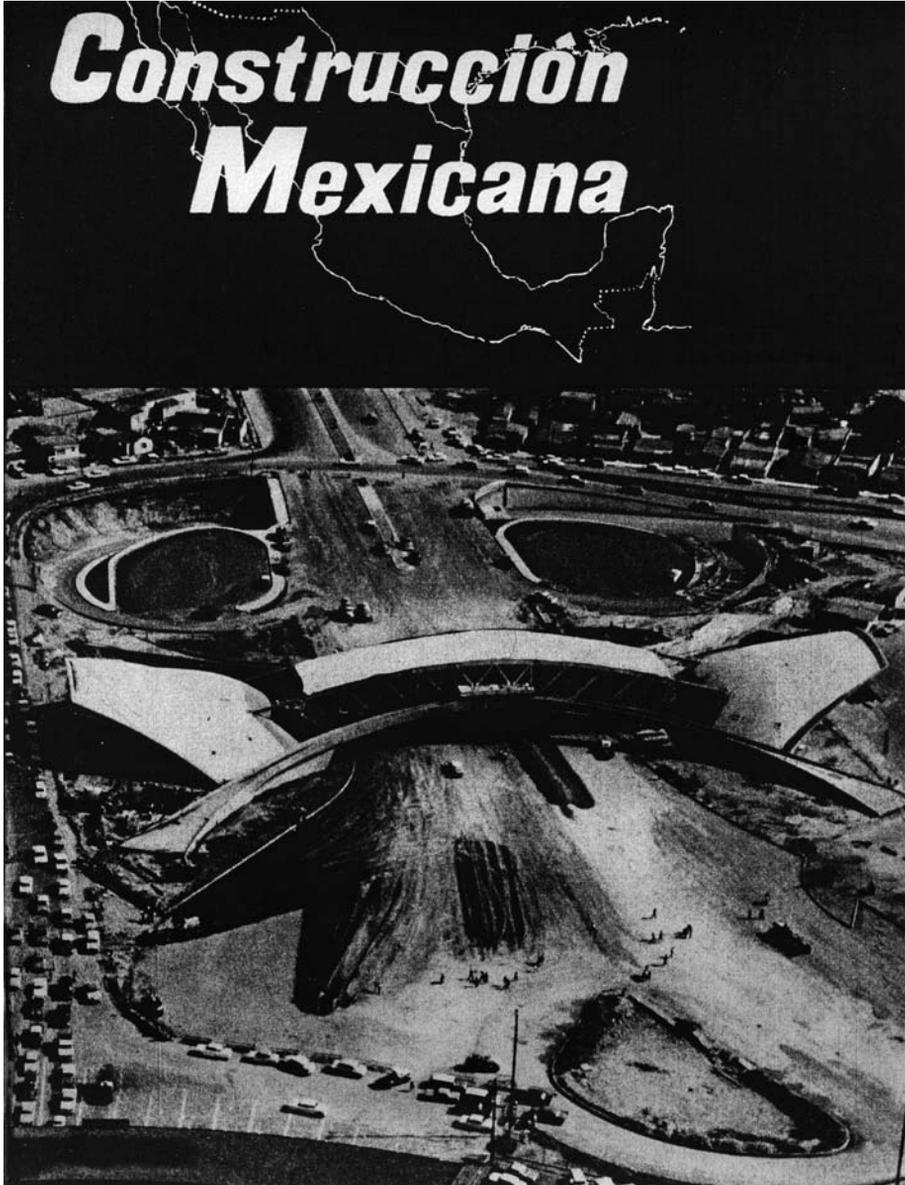
Figure 2.12. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City, 1964. Photograph by the author.

idents López Mateos and Eisenhower promoted the construction of the Amistad Dam as a collaborative venture between the U.S. and Mexican governments. The dam would harness the floodwaters of the Rio Grande, supplementing the Falcon Dam, built for the same purpose in 1953. Construction of this major work carried over to the Lyndon Johnson (1963–69) and Díaz Ordaz (1964–70) administrations, its geopolitical implications only heightened by time. In December 1967, for instance, *Construcción Mexicana* reported on the construction of the dam in an issue devoted primarily to Olympic preparations, presenting the work as “an example of how two neighboring countries can solve the common problems that affect them” and as “the result of the understanding and cordial spirit of international collaboration that happily exists between Mexico and the United States.”⁵¹

Other border infrastructure works of the period aimed to express the notion of border and international cooperation in even more direct fashion. In 1965, for instance, the Mexican state built a monumental entry gate into Mexico in Tijuana. This was one of several structures designed by the office of Mario Pani in collaboration with Félix Candela. Made up of four projecting hyperbolic paraboloid shells of reinforced concrete, the gate was a clear response to Saarinen's 1962 Trans

World Airlines Terminal at Idlewild (later JFK) Airport, a collection of concrete shells strongly suggestive of the dynamic shapes of an airplane in flight (Figure 2.13). Positioned over a highway underpass, the Mexican structure evoked the imagery of movement, flight, and transit in ways no less poetic than its U.S. counterpart.⁵² Given the high visibility of Candela's shells in the U.S. press, the gate

Figure 2.13. Cover of *Construcción Mexicana* (March 1964), showing Mario Pani's Puerta de México in Tijuana.



provided a dramatic image of the kinds of architectural forms associated with the architect's simultaneously modern and "folkloric" Mexican persona. This juxtaposition was not unlike the one that would be constructed at a metaphorical "entry-way" to Mexico only a couple of years later: the Mexican pavilion presented at Expo '67 in Montreal.

CURATING THE NATION

Sponsored by CAPFCE, the federally funded committee for school construction with which Ramírez Vázquez had been involved since 1958, the MNA was the single most important venture of public education of the 1960s and remains the most significant museum ever built in Mexico. In its final incarnation, the museum, which had Ramírez Vázquez, Rafael Mijares, and Jorge Campuzano as its head architects, included many artifacts newly gathered, excavated, or discovered, such as San Lorenzo Monument Two and the Coatlinchán monument. Like its predecessors and successors among Mexican traveling art shows and world's fair pavilions, the museum also included full-scale replicas of distant monuments. These included copies of the main temples at Hochob and Bonampak, Maya sites of significance in Chiapas, as well as of the famous tomb of king Pak'al, only discovered in 1952 at the Maya site of Palenque, also in Chiapas. Nowhere better than at this museum was a case made about Mexico's simultaneous "youth" and "deep roots," given the simultaneous novelty and antiquity of many of these artifacts, which were presented in tandem with ethnographic materials from the living indigenous cultures of Mexico. And as with the rest of exhibition designs of its era, tourism was also one of the main concerns throughout the museum's design process. A central planning committee headed by anthropologists Ignacio Marquina and Luis Aveyra de Anda, starting in December 1961, supervised this process. "A high percentage of tourism into our country is fueled by our world-renowned archaeological riches, monuments, and museums," the committee's first report stated. "This represents a source of incalculable income, which can increase greatly [with] a new Museum."⁵³ Aveyra was clear about the MNA's disciplinary objectives and sources of inspiration from the very beginning, claiming that it was to follow the lead of Ramírez Vázquez's previous museums, including those designed and built for border cities, but most directly after the precedent of his Chapultepec Gallery. Aveyra and his fellow members of the planning committee wanted the new museum to become as much of an "instrument of social and educational action" as the Gallery, which they considered "the most advanced exhibition of its kind ever done in Mexico."⁵⁴

Early on in the design process, there were strong formal affinities between these two museums. A flow diagram of the MNA, presumably produced between 1961 and 1962, envisions it as a sequence of spiral-shaped galleries that conceptually

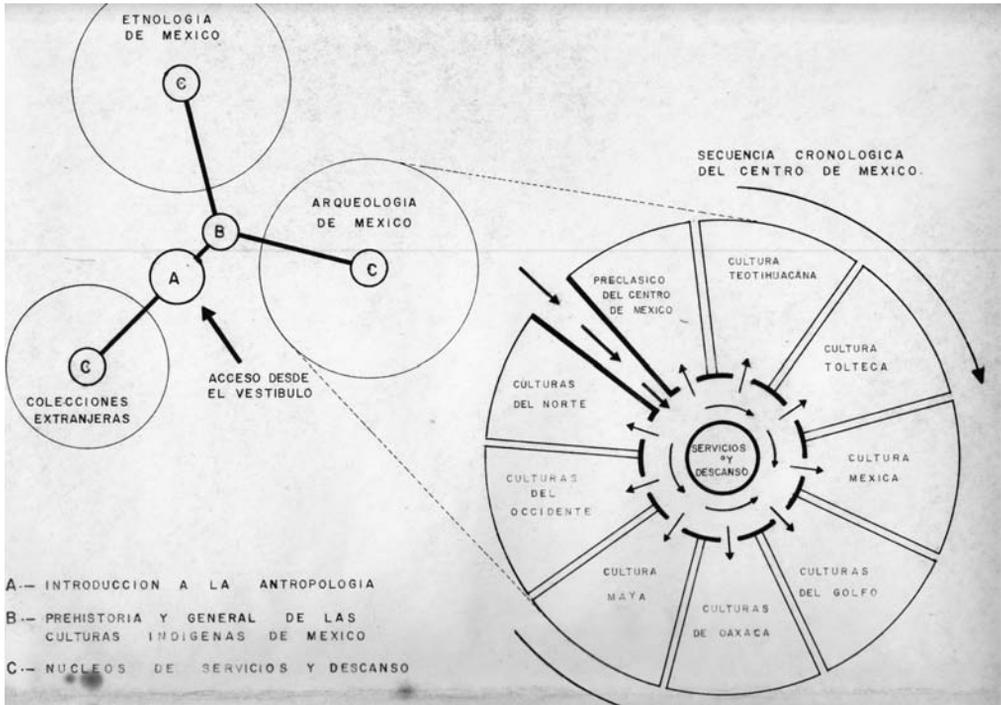


Figure 2.14. Flow diagram for the National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City, c. 1961–62. Archivo Histórico Institucional, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City.

resembles the main space of its Chapultepec predecessor (Figure 2.14).⁵⁵ In this early version of the project, the MNA consisted of clearly separated ethnological and archaeological display rooms for Mexican materials, and featured an additional space for “foreign” collections of archaeological and ethno-

graphic artifacts, all in one single floor. A total of nine rooms for archaeological materials were included in this version of the project, with an equal number of rooms devoted to ethnological collections. In addition to these rooms, the project included two more display spaces, one of them a room that would introduce visitors to the discipline of anthropology, the other devoted to the ancient prehistory of Mexico’s pre-Columbian cultures. The diagram described this first room as a “Distribution Hall” or “Hall of Honor” for the museum, which could include “only one archaeological object—a symbol, in a certain sense, of our nationality and ancient culture—the Aztec Calendar Stone, on permanent display.” In addition, this room could include “mirrors of water and interior gardens,” and its “walls could be decorated eventually with mural paintings.”⁵⁶ In this version of the project, the MNA’s circulation program consisted of a continuous passageway that would snake around the exhibition halls. These halls were understood as open

spaces that would allow visitors, who were invited to constantly move in and out of the museum buildings, to explore the natural surroundings of Chapultepec Park as part of their visit.⁵⁷

Aveleyra was forceful in his response to this initial proposition, arguing that at least twenty-two rooms were needed to cover the “basic concepts” of “national archaeology, ethnography, and physical anthropology.” In addition to these rooms for its permanent collection, he claimed that the museum needed rooms for temporary exhibitions. “If the desire is that this museum become an institution of great social usefulness,” he argued, “it is indispensable that its exhibition design be that of a true *science museum* accessible to an audience of low and medium educational level, and not that of a simple *museum of indigenous art* directed to a learned and contemplative minority that appreciates art for art’s sake.” Tellingly, he also argued that it was imperative for the museum to be inaugurated “before the current presidential term of . . . López Mateos comes to an end,” because the president “wished to offer this work to Mexico as the culmination of the significant cultural work that this regime has undertaken.”⁵⁸

The concept for the MNA that the flow diagram brings forth presented several key shortcomings. Most significantly, it did not construct a forceful enough narrative of national culture, because it gave equal footing to each of Mexico’s archaeological and ethnographic traditions without establishing a clear hierarchy within them, as the MNA’s final curatorial project would. It also lacked a display space where Mexican archaeology and anthropology could be presented in a comparative framework in relation to disciplinary traditions from other parts of the world. Establishing a comparative framework of this kind would help aggrandize the work of Mexican archaeological and ethnographic professionals by showcasing their accomplishments directly alongside those of their international counterparts, in addition to attracting more international visitors to Mexico. The possibility of exchanging collections of Egyptian, Sumerian, and Paleolithic art with other world museums was discussed as an alternative to make up for the lack of a collection of international artifacts anywhere in Mexico. Plans for a “Museum of Universal Culture” in downtown Mexico City, where Mexican art would be contextualized in relation to world artistic traditions, were also discussed. As expressed in the private communications between some of the new MNA’s designers, the need to compare Mexican traditions to international ones in a museum built in Mexico was seen as a direct result of the favorable responses that Gamboa’s traveling exhibitions of Mexican art had generated among European audiences.⁵⁹ Exhibitions at world’s fairs and other international venues had temporarily situated Mexican artifacts in spaces of “universal” culture, and this project could create a permanent space of this kind inside Mexico’s national boundaries.

As inaugurated in September 1964, the final version of the National Museum of Anthropology did not include a significant collection of international art, and was comprised of twenty-six rooms devoted to displays of Mexico's pre-Hispanic history as well as to contemporary ethnography, spread over two floors. Architects Ricardo de Robina and Marquina served as head designers of the general exhibition layout for the museum.⁶⁰ Anthropologists who specialized in each of the subject areas that were covered, which included every major known archaeological and ethnographic tradition in Mexico, wrote the scripts for the didactic rooms. Iker Larrauri served as the primary designer of these rooms.

Dioramas and other miniature displays were widely used at the MNA, a practice that harked back to the precedent of the Chapultepec Gallery. These miniatures proved particularly impressive at the larger museum owing to the contrast established throughout the building between them and the monumental scale of many of the artifacts on display, as well as the building's own large proportions.⁶¹ An army of model makers made these dioramas on the basis of a wide range of historical and literary sources. For instance, Carlos Martínez Marín created the models for the Market at Tlatelolco diorama in one of the ethnographic rooms. He based them on Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de Nueva España* (1632), one of the primary chronicles of the Mexican Conquest. In order to obtain more accurate images of Aztec costumes, he also relied, as advised by Marquina, on the illustrated *Códex Mendoza* (c. 1541), a colonial book that details the history of Aztec rulers as well as aspects of Aztec ritual and secular life.⁶² As Novo narrated in the museum's guide, Martínez Marín's final diorama, which measured thirty by twelve feet, was the result of "constant control" on the part of "Directors" and "Scientific Advisers," who strove to "ensure utmost accuracy."⁶³

The MNA's ethnology rooms were classified according to the region from which they presented artifacts, and they were placed on the second floor, directly on top of the rooms devoted to Mexico's pre-Columbian cultures. The regions out of which the ancient artifacts on the first floor originated matched the regions of origin of the ethnographic materials directly above them. This architectural setup emphasized the presumed continuity between the ancient and present-day cultures of these various regions, and presented the entire museum building as a site where these cultures, past and present, coexisted in harmony. The ethnographic dioramas and full-scale models, some of which included *tableaux vivants* of typical daily life activities of indigenous peoples, featured regionally specific clothing and artifacts made by inhabitants of these regions, who were commissioned to produce them by the designers of the museum. The racial "types" exhibited in Mexico's world's fairs pavilions were thus given even more vivid presence at the museum than in any previous exhibition. To render them as tangible and experientially impressive as

possible, many of these displays were not covered by protective glass. A prominent visitor to the museum's ethnographic rooms, University of California, Berkeley anthropologist George Foster, claimed that the rather voyeuristic setup was "most satisfying." "At times," he wrote, "one almost forgets he is in a museum, and imagines he is walking through Indian villages, invisible, peering into the daily lives of people unaware of passersby."⁶⁴

According to the museum's official guide, creating this voyeuristic experience was "the essential and comprehensive" function of the institution. The museum intended to offer "the visitor of whatever cultural origin or affiliation a visual understanding of what Indian Mexico is like," but it also attempted to give "the native Indian himself the means by which to see himself in relation to *his own ancestors*."⁶⁵ The authoritarian narrative logic of the museum thus attempted to fulfill two complementary roles. On the one hand, its system of communication was meant to be so intercultural as to prove "universal" in its legibility, conveying Mexico's national narrative to imaginary cosmopolitan viewers for whom this narrative would appear transparent enough to be seemingly unmediated by any kind of curatorial paradigm. On the other hand, it was intended to perform a highly specific normative function, forcibly assigning an abstract "Indian" visitor a place in the virtual geography of the Mexican nation that the museum's space constructed. As pointed out earlier, the Coatlinchán episode had brought to light the violent means through which part of the museum's actual collection was assembled, but in envisioning the MNA's curatorial rationale along these lines, the MNA's designers expressed other dimensions of the violence of the state, ingraining its authoritarian logic in the museum's didactic program.

Although some of these didactic techniques had been perfected in the museums and pavilions that anteceded the MNA, at this commission they were more forcefully implemented than ever before, not least because of the international voracity of the *museógrafos* involved, who actively sought out new museum technologies from their international colleagues, and were sent to various world museums on exploratory missions. In February 1961, for instance, Aveleyra wrote to sound engineer Eugene Miller to inquire about an innovative audio guide system recently implemented at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.⁶⁶ In an interview shortly before his death, Alfonso Soto Soria recalled that the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., provided him and his team of designers with innovative examples of nonreflective glass casing and lighting.⁶⁷ These teams also derived significant inspiration from Parisian museums like the Louvre and the Musée de l'Homme.⁶⁸

Iker Larrauri was aware of the importance of technology in contemporary museum design as well, as evidenced in a text written in March 1961. Larrauri

described the museum designer as “the middleman between the research scientist and the public.” To communicate specialized content to a broad audience, he claimed, the museum designer “can count on a series of adequate techniques: techniques of communication, especially audiovisual ones.”⁶⁹ Larrauri made particularly interesting use of these techniques in the introductory room he designed at the MNA, a room no longer in use today. Placed in an underground level directly below the museum lobby, in this room visitors would be greeted by a dramatic show inspired by the precedent of Ramírez Vázquez’s Chapultepec Gallery. The show consisted of a number of dioramas narrating a history of humankind, spanning from the early prehistoric migrations of the Americas to the early cultures of Mexico. Placed on a theater stage, dioramas representing each of these episodes would fall under dramatic lighting in sequence while a narrator’s voice flooded the room, telling the story of each.⁷⁰ Here, the general contours of Mexico’s “national” narrative were inscribed within a universal narrative of civilization, while the finer points of the story were left for the rest of the museum to explain.

INFINITE REGRESS

All the display rooms at the MNA, envisioned as independent exhibition pavilions, surrounded an open courtyard, the centerpiece of which was a reinforced-concrete umbrella clad in aluminum, supported by a single column and facing a pond (Figure 2.15). The column sported sculpted reliefs in bronze by Chávez Morado, which emulated a medley of Mesoamerican sculptural traditions, and was enveloped by permanent streams of water that ran down its sides. The symbolic focus of the complex, the courtyard was designed in acute awareness of international precedents. Larrauri recalls that one of the museums he and his colleagues looked at closely as a model was John Russell Pope’s National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Larrauri claims that the central courtyard that distributes circulation into the various galleries of the MNA was inspired by the neoclassical rotunda circulation system of Pope’s 1937 design. This presumed source aligns the MNA with the rest of domed Mexican museums seen in earlier sections, which looked toward neoclassical buildings for inspiration.⁷¹ The link between these repositories of “universal” culture and Mexico’s most significant museum was thus monumentalized in its space of highest visitor circulation.

While clearly defined by cosmopolitan ambitions, the architecture of the MNA was also intended to give its visitors a sense of Mexican cultural specificity. The project brief called for an “architectural expression that synthesized the dignity of pre-Hispanic art, landscape, and the interpretive sense of the mission to which the museum is devoted, with the purpose of having Mexico’s presence felt in the building.”⁷² In ways reminiscent of the play of “local” and “universal,” “old” and “new”



surfaces and materials at Mexico's pavilion for Expo '58, the museum's surfaces combined the roughness of brick and stone with the slickness of steel. The use of marble in tandem with *tezontle* also defined many of the museum's surfaces, including its walls and patio floor. Ramírez Vázquez, who was keen to discuss the museum's architecture in terms of its relationship to pre-Columbian traditions, described its central patio as "a quadrangle layout," a solution "borrowed from classical Maya architecture." "It consist[ed]," he said, "of a kind of patio bounded by enclosed buildings that communicate with the outside by means of clear spans of their corners and through doorways, arranged in register between galleries, thus maintaining a sense of the exterior merging with the interior."⁷³

Although the access between interior and exterior was not quite as fluid in the final museum's form as in the first spiral diagram for the MNA, this feature was nevertheless preserved to a considerable extent. In each of the exterior spaces accessible from the patio and the display rooms at the museum, visitors could find a monumental artifact or a replica. For example, the replica of the Hochob temple was placed outside the room devoted to Maya archaeology, while the space outside the Olmec archaeology room exhibited San Lorenzo Monument Two over a mound of rammed earth, just as it had been installed in front of Cullinan Hall in Houston. This display in turn replicated how other large Olmec monoliths were

Figure 2.15. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Jorge Campuzano, and Rafael Mijares, National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City, 1964, view of courtyard. Photograph by the author.

exhibited in the museums in Veracruz, where Sweeney had looked for inspiration for his exhibition, especially those in the Museum of Anthropology in Xalapa and at the University Museum in Veracruz.

References to Maya artistic traditions were present in the museum patio as well. The steel tracery in the courtyard's walls, designed by Manuel Felguérez and architect Javier Toussaint, recalled sculptural facades in Maya buildings in the Yucatán Peninsula, specifically the Nunnery Quadrangle at the site of Uxmal (825–1100), the structure that would be replicated at Mexico's Expo '67 pavilion in Montreal (Figure 2.16). Felguérez was only one of twenty-three living artists summoned to work at the MNA. Mathias Goeritz was also involved in the museum commission. Goeritz, who designed woven murals for the ethnographic room devoted to Mexico's Huichol peoples, had long championed abstract art as a response to what he described as an overly politicized tradition of official figurative art in Mexico, especially that of mural painting in its manifold incarnations. At the MNA Goeritz's contribution was nevertheless integrated seamlessly to the general ethos of the display, and precisely through a mural that merged abstraction with the glorification of Mexico's folk arts (Figure 2.17). Novo's museum guide made this clear enough, claiming that Goeritz's works "display[ed] the manual skill of the Indians and its transformation in terms of contemporary artistic language."⁷⁴ Goeritz's marriage of abstraction and Huichol weaving patterns also prefigured the operations at work in Wyman's Olympic logo.

Many other murals were included at the MNA. One of the museum's introductory rooms included a mural by Jorge González Camarena that, the museum's guide claimed, "shows the gradual fusion of all peoples toward a single universal race, or *mestizaje*."⁷⁵ Also included at the museum was Rufino Tamayo's monumental mural *Duality*, painted for a chamber next to the museum lobby. By 1964, Tamayo had already been the star of Gamboa's international exhibitions as well as a fixture of Mexico's world's fairs pavilions for a few years, and his mural focused on *mestizaje* as well. *Duality* featured the epic battle between deities Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca, central characters in Aztec creation myths. Suspended in tension, the image of the confrontation of these deities repurposed the myth and rendered it part of a national narrative, presenting it as emblematic of the birth of modern Mexican identity.⁷⁶

While murals were central to the propaganda aims of many of the museum's spaces, the space of highest symbolic impact at the museum was the one where, although present, murals were not the most prominent feature. In addition to his introductory room discussed earlier, Larrauri also designed the interior layout of the room devoted to Mexico's Aztec past, the main chamber of the entire museum (Figure 2.1). Located at the easternmost section of the museum's floor plan, it was



Figure 2.16. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Jorge Campuzano, and Rafael Mijares, National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City, 1964, view of courtyard tracery by Manuel Felguérez (designer) and Javier Toussaint (architect). Photograph by the author.

Figure 2.17. Mathias Goeritz, textile mural for the Huichol Room, Ethnography Galleries, National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City, 1964. Photograph by the author.



in this chamber that visitors traversing the sequence of other rooms devoted to the rest of cultures of Mexico converged from every direction. “Fundamentally,” Ramírez Vázquez has claimed, revealing the primacy of this chamber to the entire plan of the museum, “the layout of the museum can be reduced to a single rectangle running from the outer courtyard to the Mexica room.”⁷⁷ Although the centrality of the Aztec chamber was not included in the earliest spiraling diagram for the MNA, seen earlier, it eventually became its defining feature. The prominence of the Aztec chamber was also the new museum’s clearest carryover from the Porfirian National Museum of Archaeology, History, and Ethnography. Since its foundation in 1888, this predecessor to the MNA had included a Gallery of Monoliths, a room that featured the Aztec Calendar Stone as its centerpiece. In the finalized MNA project, the idea was to have the museum’s many rooms culminate in the Aztec room, with the same artifact “in the place of honor” at the new museum, just as it was in its preceding institution.⁷⁸ According to Larrauri, the architects’ plan was to install the Tlaloc monolith at the entrance to the Aztec room. Larrauri also argues that, because the Tlaloc did not make it in time to the museum before its perimeter walls were built, in April 1964, his own sculpture of a snail, which now graces the entrance to the Aztec room, replaced it. The monolith had to be placed instead outside the MNA, at the Paseo de la Reforma, as a sort of billboard advertising the museum’s presence to those traveling through the avenue.⁷⁹ If this was indeed the case, the Coatlinchán events were not merely a prelude to the triumphant production of the museum’s political space. Instead, this set of tense negotiations between the state and its governed subjects may have actually altered the MNA’s “final” architectural form in ways that its patrons and designers could not have foreseen.

Aside from the Tlaloc, the Aztec room contained the greatest number of important artworks at the museum, such as the famous Coatlicue sculpture, a replica of which was shown at the New York World’s Fair of 1965 and at other international expositions. The stone of Tizoc, another renowned Aztec artifact, was also included in the room. With no columns, the Aztec room was, like no other exhibition room in the museum, two stories high with only two partition walls at each side. The short walls were only partially load-bearing and spanned only part of the room’s depth, giving the impression that the room’s tall ceiling hovered over them. A modernization and expansion of the numinous space of the Porfirian Gallery of Monoliths, the room’s general feeling was also strongly reminiscent of such imagined modernist exhibition spaces as Mies Van der Rohe’s Project for a Museum for a Small City (1942) and, even more clearly, of the projecting wall and ceiling planes inside Mies’s paradigmatic Weimar Germany Pavilion, designed for the 1929 International Exposition held in Barcelona (Figure 2.18).

As Larrauri recalls today, at the Aztec room, as throughout the MNA, there was an attempt to “Mexicanize” these modernist sources in order to set them in tune with the contents of the room. Faced in stone, the otherwise lightweight interior of the Aztec chamber was made to seem heavier and more cave-like, if no less dynamic, than its precedents. The most important work on display in the room was the Aztec Calendar Stone. Featured prominently at the center of the room, framed by the room’s two walls and preceded by a number of its fellow monoliths on pedestals, the object was raised a few steps higher than all other artifacts and was lit dramatically in front of a wall of marble. The Stone’s impressive scale was clear enough when approaching it from the room’s front entrance, but it was no less striking when visitors walked around it. Behind the Stone, a miniature model of an Aztec market was installed, with the size of this display further magnifying the Stone’s large scale. A poignant contrast between heavy and transient, textured and streamlined, miniature and monumental, the Aztec room as a whole embodied many of the gestures that defined the MNA in a broader sense. As at the Chapultepec Gallery, here a dramatic room where stone objects were presented in a deeply theatrical environment brought the museum’s narrative full circle.⁸⁰

Novo’s writings in the MNA’s guidebook were only part of his participation in the museum’s

Figure 2.18. Mies van der Rohe, Germany Pavilion, 1929 International Exposition, Barcelona, Spain (rebuilt 1986). Photograph by the author.



didactic apparatus. He produced an audio narrative for the museum's most significant rooms. His audio narrative for the Aztec chamber encouraged visitors to take in the full extent of its spectacular details, beginning with the inscription in its entrance, which read "CEM-Anáhuac-Tenochca-Tlalpan," Nahuatl for "the world is land of the Mexicans." The statement extolled the presumed centrality of Aztec culture to the culturally specific makeup of modern Mexico, but simultaneously embedded this national praise within an internationalist, universalizing formulation, a certain idea of "the world" at large. Upon the visitor's entrance into the room, Novo claimed, the Calendar Stone, "in which is embedded the astronomical and chronological wisdom" of the Aztecs, would preside over a set of mural-sized maps that narrated the migration of the Mexicas to the eventual site of Tenochtitlán, the foundation of Mexico City, and the expansion of the Aztec empire to include territories in the modern-day periphery of Mexico City in the valleys of Mexico, Toluca, Morelos, and Puebla, the general region from which, among other artifacts, the Coatlinchán monolith had been drawn. The immediate predecessor for this display was Larrauri's juxtaposition of a map of Tenochtitlán with images of modern Mexican cities shown at the Seattle pavilion. Perhaps the implication of the juxtaposition concocted for the MNA's Aztec room was that, like the industrializing and urbanizing capital city of 1960s Mexico, which expanded to colonize its neighboring regions, the Aztec predecessor to this capital had also amplified its urban influence through military exploits, the expansion of its state apparatus, and economic dominance.

Emphasizing the centrality of lakes to the urban and economic development of Aztec culture, the map of the Aztec's migration routes in the Aztec chamber highlighted the presence of bodies of water toward which these peoples had gravitated over time.⁸¹ The understanding of the Aztecs as a lake culture resonated architecturally beyond the boundaries of the all-important Aztec room, reverberating on two different scales and in ways that expanded the play between miniature and monumental dimensions throughout the MNA beyond the physical confines of the building. The pond in the museum's courtyard was intended to provide a dramatic entry point to the Aztec room, and precisely to recall "the lake origins of [Aztec] culture," operating in tandem with the narrative in the chamber's interior.⁸² In addition, the Tlaloc, which MNA planners likely meant to place outside the Aztec room, would operate in conjunction with this pool of water and with the permanent streams of water running down Chávez Morado's monumental column and umbrella in the patio, as if overseeing the permanent flow of this artificial rainfall and the motion of water inside the courtyard. Positioned this way, the talismanic Tlaloc, the column, and the pond in the patio together assembled a contained representation of the Aztec cosmic order. On a much larger scale, however,

the entirety of Chapultepec Park, which was redesigned in relation to the management of the waterway system of the Lerma River and included two artificial lakes, expanded the resonance of this architectural tableau. For the site of the Lerma waterworks, in 1951 Diego Rivera produced a sculptural and architectural intervention that simultaneously honored Tlaloc's relationship to fertility and rain and commemorated the deaths of laborers who built the waterway system, which at the time was the primary provider of water for the capital city. Rivera's monument thus honored the modern state's all-powerful control of the capital's natural resources, and paid populist homage to the laborers that sustained its operation.⁸³

As we have seen, forcefully taking possession of the Tlaloc sculpture from Coatlinchán, which the village's inhabitants believed to have strong associations to the management of rain, water, and fertility, was also central to the production of the MNA, and had mobilized the state in dramatic fashion. Supplementing these interventions, the aquatic scenography of the Aztec chamber at the MNA positioned this central room at the center of an act of resignification that bestowed upon the cultural leadership of the López Mateos regime at the presidential level, of *regente* Uruchurtu's circle at the municipal one, and of Ramírez Vázquez's design team the kind of arresting leadership qualities attributed to the glorified Aztecs. Having operated as a central claim to the authority of Aztec leaders in this romanticized past, the talismanic and biopolitical powers associated with the management of water were bombastically represented in this network of carefully choreographed design interventions.⁸⁴

DIDACTIC POLITICS

At no point was the MNA's propaganda function hidden by its makers, yet few commentators mentioned it in the years immediately following its inauguration. In October 1964, *Fortune* magazine discussed the museum as one of the most decisive architectural statements of the decade, alongside such renowned modernist structures as Eero Saarinen's CBS headquarters building in New York (1960–65) and Louis Kahn's Salk Institute (1959–66), making no mention of the museum's political functions.⁸⁵ The February 1967 issue of *Progressive Architecture* culled together testimonies from prominent archaeologists, anthropologists, architects, and designers, headed by Philip Johnson, who triumphantly declared the museum to be the best of its kind in the entire world, with no regard to the obvious propaganda functions of the building.⁸⁶ Especially in the United States, the theatrical, crowd-pleasing character of the museum was widely noticed. For example, a Time Life book about pre-Columbian art of mass distribution published in the United States in 1967 described the MNA as “less a museum than a stage setting for a pageant of stone sculpture arranged to dramatize the whole legacy of native

Mexican culture.”⁸⁷ Popular British travel writer Irene Nicholson agreed with such an assessment, and was sympathetic to the museum’s ambitions. “Critics say that this is an architect’s rather than a museographer’s building,” she claimed in *The X in Mexico*, “and it certainly has not catered to the persnickety scholar who wants to make ancient history a toil among potsherds and bones.”⁸⁸

Awash in a torrent of positive reviews were critiques in Mexico that alluded to the tension between the museum’s stated aim of public education and its obvious political agenda. Writing in *Calli* a few months after the museum opened, for instance, architect and anthropologist Miguel Messmacher was one of few Mexican commentators to critique the new museum’s spaces. Placing murals so prominently in the museum’s various rooms, he argued, caused them to compete with the “archaeological materials, which, badly illuminated and clumsily placed, suffer the pressure of many square feet of Carrara marble and of many other square meters of precious woods.”⁸⁹

Doubtless the most influential contemporary critique of the MNA came from Octavio Paz, who held the post of ambassador to India when it opened and was one of the most internationally renowned of Mexico’s official intellectuals. In *Posdata* (1969) (translated as the *The Other Mexico* [1972]), his meditations on the political and cultural impact of the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968, Paz was the first major insider to the Mexican cultural apparatus to discuss the museum as the most significant work of political propaganda built during the “miracle.” At the museum, he argued, “anthropology and history have been made to serve an idea about Mexico’s history, and that idea is the foundation, the buried and immovable base, that sustains our conceptions of the state, of political power, and of social order.” Because the sequence of rooms devoted to various periods of Mexico’s pre-Hispanic history at the museum culminated in the Aztec one, “the diversity and complexity of two thousand years of Mesoamerican history [were] presented as a prologue to the last act, the apotheosis-apocalypse of México-Tenochtitlán.” Through this operation, the regime saw itself “transfigured in the world of the Aztecs.” Paz argued that this association was problematic for a number of reasons. The narrow glorification of this aspect of the country’s pre-Hispanic history shut Mexico’s cultural diversity, ancient as well as modern, out of the state-sponsored image of national identity. Geographically, the celebration of central Mexico’s ancient cultures as the core of national identity mirrored the extreme centralization of power and wealth in Mexico City to the detriment of the rest of Mexico, glorifying the often violent expansion of the capital city’s geographic, economic, and political boundaries. Additionally, the single-party state took as its model Aztec forms of rulership. Not based on democratic principles, these were instead sustained by the personal charisma of absolute—and ruthless—rulers.⁹⁰

More recent writings point out the museum's fundamental role in the propaganda apparatus of Mexico's single-party state. Anthropologist Claudio Lomnitz argues that by the 1960s "Mexican anthropology had provided Mexico with the theoretical and empirical materials that were used to shape a modernist aesthetics, embodied in the design of buildings such as the National Museum of Anthropology."⁹¹ Shelly Errington remarks that the MNA's narrative renders a wide variety of ethnicities and peoples as "'indios,' 'ethnics,' or 'the other,' the objects of ethnography and the objects rather than the creators of government policies towards the *indios*."⁹² Enrique Florescano observes that "the atavism of the Aztec monuments in the Hall of Monoliths during the Porfirian period . . . emerged with greater force in the new Museum." He argues that the dramatic displays of the museum came to fulfill the disciplinary goals of the "Mexican School" of anthropology, headed by Manuel Gamio—a student of Franz Boas—who found favor among various Mexican administrations in advocating a politically engaged practice that could enlighten and entertain the masses.⁹³ Finally, García Canclini has argued that the MNA fuses "two readings of [Mexico]: that of science and that of political nationalism." The culmination of the museum in the Mexica hall is to be understood as the monumentalization of the state's project in the most literal terms, on account of its culling together of a number of different archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, to attest to "the triumph of the centralist project, announcing that there the intercultural synthesis is produced."⁹⁴

Although García Canclini acknowledged that this reductive view of Mexican culture was deployed through complex scenographic methods, his own and most other analyses of the MNA pay very little attention to its lineage among the works of exhibition architecture that had crafted and perfected these techniques in the years prior to its design. All of these critics have also discussed the MNA as a polished and "final" museological space, but have not regarded the multiple levels of transience and instability that defined its creation. Paz's perspective, which preserves some of the discursive instability of the original context in which the museum was produced, is thus especially valuable for a revisionist approach here, albeit with caveats on two grounds: the problematic international reception of Paz's writings, and the poet's complicated interactions with the state's apparatus.

The author of many significant works of literature, arguably Paz's central contribution to the panorama of Mexican culture is his 1950 *El laberinto de la soledad*, a highly influential treatise on the Mexican national character to which *Posdata* was something of a response.⁹⁵ Paz's central argument in *El laberinto* is that solitude defines the Mexican national character in ways that make it simultaneously unique on account of its having resulted from Mexico's violent history of conquest and colonization, and existentially similar to the character of other modern

countries, especially developing countries, which were embarked on the traumatic philosophical pursuit of cultural self-definition in a world defined by ideological, economic, and political conflicts. Among the intellectual traditions of cosmopolitanism to which Paz was indebted in the writing of this work was that of the Contemporáneos. In their operation as avant-garde members of Mexico City's intellectual circles at the beginning of the century, and later in the century as members of the single-party state's intelligentsia, figures like Torres Bodet and Novo had attempted to align Mexican literary and artistic production with international trends produced by intellectuals in other world cities on the basis of their aesthetic and intellectual affinities, while simultaneously emphasizing their uniquely Mexican features. In *El laberinto*, Paz describes Mexico's national character as a fundamentally tragic one, and constructs a cyclical conception of national history where the trauma of the colonial past is never quite overcome and conditions the relationship between the modern state and its governed populations. Indeed, Robin Greeley argues, as part of Paz's formulation, this trauma motivates a constant oscillation over historical time among modern-day Mexicans both individually and collectively, "between despondency and outbursts of rage and random violence." "In this model," she claims, "the political violence of the Revolution and its aftermath resulted from the cyclical psychic violence imposed centuries before, not from social relations." Along these lines, in *Posdata* Paz described the Olympics and the massacre as complementary events, which were demonstrative of the contradictory aspects of Mexico's schizophrenic experience of modernity. The first Olympics ever celebrated in the developing world, for Paz, Mexico '68 marked the developed world's approval of Mexico's economic and political achievements since its revolution. And yet the massacre exposed the realities of backwardness hidden behind the thin skin of this alleged development. For Paz, the trauma of these related events sprung forth from the deeper, unresolved national tensions that structured the Mexican national character as much as from the more localized political conditions of the late 1960s.

In time, Greeley claims, only the superficial contours of Paz's powerful formulations were allowed room to breathe, and Paz's attempt to situate a nuanced philosophical articulation of Mexican selfhood within the panorama of more reductive official notions lost visibility, not least given the vast amount of mass-media constructions and reconstructions of the massacre's significance to Mexican cultural history.⁹⁶ As Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo argues, despite their highly critical tone toward the more reductive aspects of cultural nationalism in twentieth-century Mexico, Paz's *El laberinto* and *Posdata* are often understood as paeans to the cultural chauvinism of the single-party state, an interpretation that is especially predominant in the dissemination of Paz's work in English.⁹⁷ To some degree, Paz was

aware of the political stakes of his publications. His correspondence with the editors of the English translation of *El laberinto*, published by the New York-based Grove Press in 1962, suggests as much. Writing in English to Barney Rosset, the editor at the press, in January 1961, Paz described *El laberinto* as a meditation on the condition of the entire developing world already influential in Mexico but likely to become relevant in the United States in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution. “Written, as it was before the Cuban events,” in its denunciation of the conditions of social inequity in Mexico *El laberinto* “contains a mild prophecy of the things that were to happen” during the 1959 revolution in another postcolonial locale. Paz argued that “since the recent developments in [decolonizing] Africa and specially in Cuba,” “the American people has started to be more conscious of what is called, in the bureaucratic jargon of our times, ‘underdeveloped’ countries.” His book was “in some ways, a portrait of one of those countries, an inquiry made by a native writer (underdeveloped or superdeveloped?).”⁹⁸ In conjunction with the fluctuating cultural environment of dissemination of Paz’s work, the poet’s own position as an official intellectual vis-à-vis the state whose actions he denounced often made him the target of criticism. For example, Jorge Carrión, one of the contributors to *El milagro mexicano*, tentatively argued that, its critique of the state notwithstanding, Paz’s *Posdata* directly echoed the statements by politicians and cultural bureaucrats of the period who attempted to legitimize single-party rule, and thus gave their political language a gloss of “high” culture.⁹⁹

Paz wrote *Posdata* in the wake of his resignation from his ambassadorial post in India in protest of the October 2 massacre. A career diplomat since 1945, he had been instrumental in giving international visibility to Mexican art and culture along the same humanist lines as many of Torres Bodet’s interventions of the period. His assignment in India, which began in 1962, was part of a rapprochement between India and Mexico, two rapidly industrializing, nonaligned countries led at the time by developmentalist regimes that crafted official formulations of national identity on the basis of the glorification of their ancient cultures, and reached common ground on such matters as opposition to nuclear power usage and Cold War superpower interventionism. Before he resigned, Paz was in dialogue with then-Secretary of Foreign Affairs Carrillo Flores. In the late summer of 1968, as student protests escalated in Mexico City, Carrillo asked Paz for his insight about how authorities in India had dealt with similar student unrest in a document that was sent out to Mexican embassies in countries where student protests had already taken place. Paz was sympathetic to the protesters in his response to Carrillo, and his elaboration of his reasons for such sympathy would serve as the basis for *Posdata*. However, Paz’s resignation after he learned about the massacre soon earned him the condemnation of the Díaz Ordaz regime. Describing his

resignation as a sign of hypocrisy, members of this administration attempted to publicly portray his dismissal as having resulted from irregularities in his official capacity, not as a result of his disagreement with the government's actions.¹⁰⁰

Paz's case is emblematic of the pitfalls that other state intellectuals confronted during the "miracle." Beyond the specific details of his resignation, Paz's contentious relationship with the state may be understood as stemming from the poet's condition as what Lomnitz, borrowing a concept from Slavoj Žižek, has defined as an "interpassive" intellectual.¹⁰¹ As Lomnitz has argued, public intellectuals like Paz engage their audiences in a relationship where "the anticipated reaction of an interlocutor is acted out by the emissary of the original message." This relationship, which places the intellectual in a paternalist and prescriptive role vis-à-vis her or his mass-mediated audience—an audience that includes other intellectuals—facilitates the propagation of normative understandings of the presumed "national" character. When supported by a state apparatus of culture, as Paz was for a significant part of his career, the interpassive intellectual's charismatic abilities become significantly enhanced. At the same time, the rendering official of the intellectual's views necessarily flattens them and drains them of their complexity, making them more susceptible to unfavorable changes in political tides.¹⁰² While the MNA was not the primary focus of Paz's critique in *Posdata*, Paz understood the museum as part of a network of politically significant design and urban planning artifacts.¹⁰³ Situating architecture and design at the center of this period's political economy, Paz's embattled critique of the single-party state maps out a significant set of relationships between works of architecture, urban design, and planning that deserves more careful attention than it has received.

PLAZA OF FUSIONS

Opened as a public space in 1964, the infamous Plaza of the Three Cultures includes a carefully constructed set of ruins of the Templo Mayor of Tlatelolco, a twin city to Tenochtitlán until the sixteenth century, displayed in juxtaposition with the Church of Santiago de Tlatelolco. These two structures are situated in the middle of the largest modern housing project ever built in Mexico, Mario Pani's Nonoalco–Tlatelolco complex (1964). In addition to these three structures, in 1966 Ramírez Vázquez's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Building was added to the ensemble, placed just next to both the church and the Templo Mayor ruins (Figures 2.19 and 2.20). Although it had been the subject of archaeological study since 1944, beginning in 1960, as construction of Pani's complex began, this entire archaeological area was the subject of aggressive excavations under the leadership of archaeologist and architect Francisco González Rul.¹⁰⁴ In a March 1964 INAH report, González Rul reflected on the importance of the Templo Mayor remains



Figure 2.19. Ricardo de Robina, Plaza of the Three Cultures, Mexico City, 1964. Photograph by the author.



Figure 2.20. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico City, 1966. Photograph by the author.



Figure 2.21. Tlatelolco Archaeological Zone, excavation works, 1961. Fototeca de la Dirección General del Acervo Histórico Diplomático de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de México.

at Tlatelolco. He argued that the structure was significant owing to the “beauty of its sculptural reliefs and the importance that it has for science to possess an architectural-sculptural work of the ancient Mexicas.” But the Templo’s significance was also

explicitly political, “considering its immediate proximity to the Mexican Foreign Affairs Building,” and “what this implies for the visits [to Mexico] of high-ranking figures in world diplomacy.”¹⁰⁵

Ricardo de Robina, one of the main designers of the MNA’s layout, also designed the plaza, in tandem with the ongoing archaeological excavations.¹⁰⁶ Enrique de Anda demonstrates that before he became involved with the Plaza of the Three Cultures, Robina had encouraged architects involved with preservation and restoration efforts in Mexico to spectacularize the synthesis of pre-Hispanic, colonial, and modern architectures found throughout Mexico.¹⁰⁷ The Plaza of the Three Cultures served as a demonstration piece for these ideas, drawing on notions of architectural *mestizaje* explored in a wide range of projects of the 1960s. In addition to serving as the general planner for the plaza, Robina also restored the interior of the Church of Santiago, enlisting Mathias Goeritz as one of his collaborators. Goeritz designed a number of stained-glass windows for the restored church, only one of the additions to the sixteenth-century structure that substantially altered

its appearance. Through several interventions, the texture of its brick walls and the building's general proportions were harmonically blended with the ruins of the ceremonial complex of the Templo Mayor, displayed directly in front of it.¹⁰⁸ Photographs taken during the excavation of the Templo Mayor, at the center of the plaza, in 1961, are quite telling, for they show that the construction of Pani's housing blocks was all but completed before the excavation of these remains was even close to finished. While most official accounts argue that the Aztec ruins, as restored and presented to the public at the plaza's opening, predated Pani's architecture, these images provocatively suggest that the chronology was not quite so simple (Figure 2.21). Indeed, the harmony of proportions and composition between the stepped pyramidal structures at the plaza and the rigid rectilinear composition of Pani's housing blocks may have resulted from the retroactive fitting in of the ruins to the modern project, rather than the reverse.

Chronologies left aside, an analysis of the plaza's design places it squarely within the discursive frame of the exhibitions and museums examined thus far. The plaza incarnated the narrative of Mexican history embodied by Ramírez Vázquez's pavilions and museums, operating as their mirror image unfolded in Mexico City's urban space. As at the Chapultepec Gallery and the MNA, buildings that included dramatic ritual chambers situated at the points of highest visitor traffic, at the Plaza of the Three Cultures the atavistic space of the Templo Mayor of Tlatelolco was understood as the focal point of the circulation program of the entire housing project, a social space where all those moving through the project would eventually converge. Here again, the effect of the space was profoundly scenographic. As if suspending them out of time, the plaza agglomerated three paradigmatic structures, each emblematic of formative Mexican architectural traditions. According to colonial chronicles, Tlatelolco had also been the last Aztec bastion before the Spanish conquest of the empire's urban centers. As the site of this mythological confrontation between the West and Mexico's pre-Columbian world, and hence as a metaphorical "birthplace" of Mexican national identity, the plaza was also designed to render emblematic the fusion of all these traditions.

Paz understood the MNA along with the Plaza of the Three Cultures as part of a network of politically charged monuments produced by the exhibitionist state, and the plaza was one of the spaces to which he devoted most attention in *Posdata*. For Paz, Tlatelolco and the MNA ranked not too far behind the Zócalo, the primary seat of political power in Mexico and also a site of architectural fusion between the most significant colonial, Aztec, and modern buildings in all of Mexico. At the Zócalo, the most significant site of Aztec power before the Conquest, the Mexico City Cathedral and a number of colonial administration buildings had been constructed directly over the ruins of the Aztec Templo Mayor and the palaces of

Aztec rulers. Mexico's republican institutions, including the legislative and presidential palaces, occupied precisely those buildings. The MNA and the Plaza of the Three Cultures attempted to create simulacra of the historical processes of architectural layering that had taken place over several centuries at Mexico City's central square in a compressed time frame. Alongside the Zócalo, these two places created an urban triumvirate of profound political resonance. These interventions, Paz claimed, remapped the city to serve the ideological demands of Mexico's one-party state in the years immediately preceding the Olympics. "A few years ago," Paz wrote, "the regime transformed [Tlatelolco] into a complex of huge low-rent apartment buildings, and in doing so wanted to rescue the venerable plaza: it discovered part of the pyramid and, in front of it and the minuscule church, built an anonymous skyscraper: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."¹⁰⁹

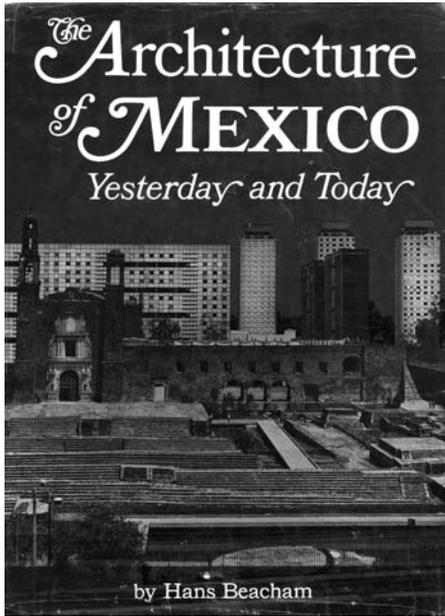
Paz's chronology may not be scientifically exact, and his characterization of the Mexican state's intentions is simplistic, as it mystifies its authority and elides its internecine contradictions. And yet, Paz was perceptive to the political stakes in the juxtaposition of architectural typologies at the plaza. Reports of the period emphasized this juxtaposition in ways that render these stakes clear. Pani's magazine, *Arquitectura México*, was understandably enthusiastic about the plaza, providing extensive coverage of its construction and inauguration, and heightening the historical dialogue embodied by its architecture.¹¹⁰ *Construcción Mexicana* claimed in March 1967 that the site "couldn't be any more adequate" for Ramírez Vázquez's ministry of foreign affairs. An article in the periodical argued enthusiastically that the tower "provides the salient example of modern architecture within the Plaza of the Three Cultures, becoming a vortex of integration of the remains of the pre-Hispanic and the colonial [periods]." Ramírez Vázquez's building thus became the "modern culmination of the [monuments] that embody the clearly defined states of the nation's cultural history at the Plaza."¹¹¹

Embedded within an ensemble of uniquely Mexican cultural and architectural fusions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Building was also more than conversant with architecture built outside of Mexico (Figure 2.20). A twenty four-story slab emerging from a cube-shaped base, the building was clad in white marble. The tower's base is strongly related to a Miesian building type, the pavilion-shaped glass cube present in such projects as Mies's New National Gallery in Berlin (1957–68) and in his Bacardí headquarters building first envisioned for Havana but built in a slightly later iteration in Mexico City (1959–63), not far from the ministry. The ministry's marble skin echoes the cladding of the United Nations Headquarters built in New York between 1947 and 1952, a commission that involved architects like Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer, and Wallace K. Harrison, as well as Niemeyer's National Congress building at Brasília (1960), which also featured a pair of slim

towers clad in marble. Monuments intended to position Brazil and the United States in the landscape of twentieth-century diplomacy, these two buildings likely provided models for Ramírez Vázquez's ministry building, which aimed to establish Mexico's presence in the international geopolitical scene.

Nonetheless, in the years immediately after its completion, the building was far from the most visible component of the Plaza of the Three Cultures. Defined powerfully and most intensively through various media instead was the relationship between Pani's self-contained city for middle-class urban dwellers and the colonial and pre-Hispanic monuments at the plaza. Abutting the plaza, Pani's buildings were at once part of and dramatically removed from the remnants of Mexico's past. Here again, as in many other examples of official architecture of the "miracle," Mexican cultural specificity was articulated through an architectural contrast of "old" and "new" artifacts, and as both a site of fusion and unresolved tension between them. As with other exhibitions and displays, however, here too folklore helped bridge the gap between these seemingly incompatible domains. Archival information suggests that the Plaza of the Three Cultures was counted as one of Mexico City's most significant urban Olympic venues. As explained in a memorandum circulated between Olympic officials and the organizer of the World Folklore Festival, one of the events of the Cultural Olympiad, the plaza was one of the intended settings for "folkloric" dance performances during the Olympics.¹¹²

Beyond this event, and even after the infamous massacre that took place inside of it, the Plaza of the Three Cultures enjoyed great visibility during the late 1960s. One image of the plaza was included as the cover of photographer Hans Beacham's 1969 book *The Architecture of Mexico: Yesterday and Today*, which echoed official identity discourses by emphasizing the aesthetic affinity between Mexico's mid-twentieth-century buildings and their alleged ancestors (Figure 2.22). Beacham wrote that the ministry was built "near the spot where [Aztec leader] Cuauhtemoc surrendered Mexico to Hernán Cortés, August 13, 1521," which lent it heightened "national" resonance in addition to architectural merits.¹¹³ The same view of the plaza on the cover of Beacham's book (which, curiously enough, left out Ramírez Vázquez's ministry) had been featured as the cover of the 1967 edition of Salvador Novo's *New Mexican Grandeur* (Figure 2.23). Photographs of the Plaza of the Three Cultures were also disseminated as part of the mass-media promotion of the Olympics. Featured in an advertisement designed by the Mexican Olympic Committee that appeared in the *New York Times* in early September 1967, a photograph of the plaza was presented to potential U.S. tourists as a condensation of the country's history, all available in a single place.¹¹⁴ An advertisement published in an October 1968 issue of *The News*, an English-language newspaper published in Mexico City that circulated during the Olympics, is among the most eloquent of



all mass-media representations of the Plaza. Coloring its monuments and framing them inside an American Express credit card, it rendered them into little more than a gateway into the commodified consumption of Mexico (Figure 2.24).

FEEBLE HARMONY

During the buildup to the Olympics, the Plaza of the Three Cultures was construed by some as the quintessential site of Mexico's cultural and political harmony. For example, a 1965 pamphlet published in conjunction with the construction of Pani's complex situated its construction at the center of the postrevolutionary state's agendas for urban renewal. The pamphlet justified the construction of the complex by arguing that it would not only beautify and gentrify an area of the city that had fallen into disrepair during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hosting the train tracks that led into Mexico City from its northern border, and being mostly full of workers' housing and squatters' settlements, but also, more significantly, reconstitute the area's lost pre-Columbian grandeur, facilitating the same kinds of time travels that many of its peers among museums and exhibitions of the early 1960s also provided for their visitors:

It was inadmissible for the social revolution of Mexico to close its eyes to that area sick with filth and poverty, embedded in the very heart of a metropolis that is growing without restraint driven by progress. And once again Tlatelolco has arisen

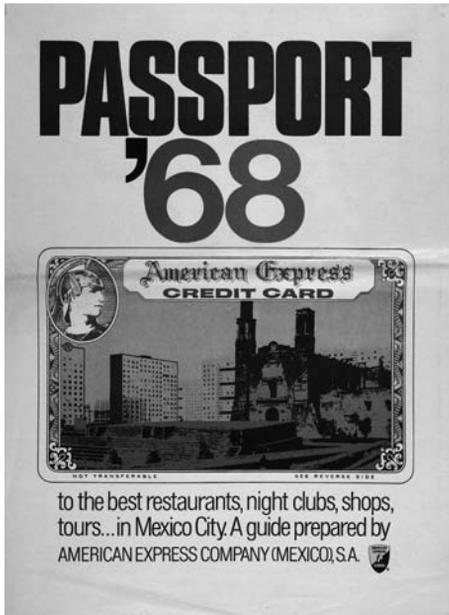


Figure 2.22. Cover of Hans Beacham, *The Architecture of Mexico: Yesterday and Today* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1969), showing the Plaza of the Three Cultures.

Figure 2.23. Cover of Salvador Novo, *New Mexican Grandeur* (Mexico City: PEMEX, 1967), showing the Plaza of the Three Cultures.

Figure 2.24. Cover of *Passport '68*, tourist guide published in *The News*, Mexico City, October 13, 1968. Félix Candela Architectural Records and Papers, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

from its glorious past, to be projected toward the most worthy example of the Mexico of tomorrow! In its new life, Tlatelolco conjugates in the most marvelous way the three medullary stages of Mexico: the Aztec, the colonial, and the modern. In its monumental Plaza of the Three Cultures, all the wounds have healed and all the grievances have quieted down, the stones of the Teocalli sing once more their symphony of centuries, the cupolas of the church of the children of the Saint of Assisi stand high up in the sky, and as an arrow of a new *Ilhuicamina* in a renewed desire to conquer stars stand the modern buildings.¹¹⁵

However, both photographs such as those described earlier and narratives like this one were deceiving, because even before the Olympics and the massacre, few things about Tlatelolco had been harmonious. Pani's project resulted from the largest "slum clearance" scheme ever executed in Mexico. Although Pani expressed a desire to translate what he perceived as the egalitarian social networks of the traditional barrios that his housing project replaced into the form of the project itself, the production of the Nonoalco–Tlatelolco housing complex was not an egalitarian process, and Pani's understanding of these networks was simplistic, to say the least. Despite their public pronouncements extolling the virtues of *tugurios*, the self-built homes of rural migrants to the expanding capital city, Pani and his peers in Mexico City's urban planning community looked anxiously at the uncontrollable urban growth that the proliferation of these units could represent in the capital

in the future, a continuous, undifferentiated “mass” that threatened to engulf the “planned” sections of the city. Strategically planned growth thus offered a possible escape from this dystopian scenario.¹¹⁶ Cristóbal Jácome observes that Pani’s understanding of urban regeneration was profoundly aligned with a developmentalist conception of political change that opposed rationally ordered cities to the perceived chaos of *tugurios*. The two barrios that Pani’s housing unit collapsed together when finished, Nonoalco and Tlatelolco, had been portrayed as spaces of urban decay and marginality in a series of influential mass-media contexts, most famously in Luis Buñuel’s 1950 film *Los Olvidados*, which chronicles the life of the urban poor in the capital.¹¹⁷ The film, Jácome writes, opposes these neighborhoods’ perceived chaos to the orderly “civil and political structure in place in the modern metropolis” that was emerging adjacent to them.¹¹⁸ Starting in 1959, the “regeneration” of these locations took place through the clearing of existing urban structures, which were replaced with contained, new units, the aggregate of which eventually comprised Pani’s large new complex.¹¹⁹ Despite the discourse of class collaboration that defined the project’s public face, thousands of people were displaced as a result of the urban intervention, remnants of the railroad infrastructure in this part of the city were destroyed, and only a small part of the archaeological remains of the ancient city of Tlatelolco was preserved at the Plaza of the Three Cultures. The archaeological excavations that had taken place in the area notwithstanding, large expanses of archaeological remains were merely documented for later study and subsequently destroyed as a result of pressures to hastily finish construction of the project.¹²⁰

The October 2 massacre did not help the reputation of Pani’s project. The destruction of one of the buildings in the Nonoalco–Tlatelolco complex as a result of the 1985 earthquake that destroyed many other structures in the capital city has furthered associations between the complex and urban tragedy in more recent times. For some commentators, Jácome argues, the building that collapsed, which was built deficiently and was thus unable to withstand the seismic shock with tragic consequences, has become emblematic of the failed social and economic policies of the single-party state during the “miracle” as well as of the promises of social justice embedded in some strands of modernist architectural production.¹²¹ For instance, Rubén Gallo positions the production of the Plaza of the Three Cultures as one of the most traumatic events in the midcentury urban transformation of Mexico City. Writing about collectivism in Mexican art in the 1970s, he explains that “the sudden interest in ‘the street’” that defined much of artistic practice during the decade was “a reaction to the profound urban changes that affected Mexico City after 1950.” Such changes included an explosive growth in the city’s population coupled with “a torrent of public works—freeways, expressways, overpasses, tunnels and

ring roads—that, much like Robert Moses’ network of highways and bridges in New York, radically transformed the region’s urban fabric.” In a nostalgic turn, Gallo claims, “a city that had once been filled with flâneurs and lively streets rapidly became a megalopolis of traffic jams, insurmountable cement structures, and homicidal vehicles.”¹²² Gallo echoes Jean Franco’s 2002 account of her encounter with this transformed city:

I left Mexico City in 1957 and returned in 1967 to a place that I hardly recognized. I left a city of clear air and breathtaking views of the volcanoes and the Ajusco mountain, a city where people traveled on public transport to the center to meet friends, to go to concerts, to shop. But 1957 was also the year Volkswagen began its assault on the city while Mayor Uruchurtu pushed his program of modernization. Soon there were cars everywhere; the middle-class population emigrated south toward the University City; freeways stretched across town, dividing barrios and enveloping nearby buildings in a constant traffic roar.¹²³

Gallo’s assessment of the modernizing forces at work in Mexico City goes far beyond Franco’s nostalgia for an egalitarian and picturesque (and, other than for tourists, largely imaginary) city tragically lost to the dark forces of capitalism. “The attack against the street,” he claims, “led not only to widespread alienation but, in some extreme cases, to death.” Gallo argues that the October 2 massacre was “made possible, in part, by urban planning and architecture.” As the military opened fire on the students, Nonoalco–Tlatelolco’s “typically modernist elements” left the students particularly vulnerable because they stood “in a modernist panopticon, where they could be surveyed from almost any point in the complex.”¹²⁴ Other critics have echoed Gallo’s dramatic assessment of Nonoalco–Tlatelolco’s failures. Cuauhtémoc Medina and Ana Elena Mallet discuss the complex as a monument not only inseparable from the massacre, but also emblematic of the Mexican state’s ultimate political failure. Mallet describes the complex as “a clear reflection of the [Mexican] government’s failure to achieve modernity by issuing decrees and erecting buildings. As a ruin, it stands as proof of haphazard attempts, of the omnipotent presidential gesture that tries to summon forth the future with tons of cement.”¹²⁵

Two observations can be made to supplement these indictments of architecture’s collusion with power in Mexico. First, while downplaying the mostly operational present-day condition of Nonoalco–Tlatelolco, which is still inhabited by thousands of residents, the picture of trauma and chaos that these authors present does little justice to the housing estate’s relative urban successes in having provided a comparatively livable space in the Mexican capital in the long run, despite its multiple shortcomings. Second, and more important, interpretations of the

architectural form of the Nonoalco–Tlatelolco complex as the direct expression of presidential desires phase out of view the internecine contradictions of the single-party regime and the institutional and economic forces that produced the complex in collusion with it. In denouncing its authority in this way, these interpretations mystify the regime's avowed ideological and political stability.

The bureaucratized production of the network of museums of culture commissioned by the López Mateos administration, of the Nonoalco–Tlatelolco complex, and of the Plaza of the Three Cultures suggests that these works did not merely monumentalize a grand narrative of national identity. For instance, the location of Pani's complex was selected in the midst of contentious dialogues between *regente* Uruchurtu and the presidential circle. Beyond Pani's agenda of urban regeneration and the site's historical significance discussed earlier, Tlatelolco was also built in its final location to address the demands of state workers, who would be one of the primary constituencies to occupy the housing project, to live within short commuting distance to Mexico City's historic center, where most state offices were located. Uruchurtu came to an agreement with this unionized and mostly middle-class constituency, whose demands the Díaz Ordaz circle, which had focused its populist energies on making largely symbolic concessions to the urban poor in the early 1960s, had been unable to accommodate.¹²⁶

Fissures internal to power circles like these defined the production of the Nonoalco–Tlatelolco complex as much as totalizing plans. As in the case of other large-scale commissions, the complex's clientelist patrons faced multiple social pressures and deployed political intelligence to address them. Understanding the production of monumental building along these lines suggests that the state's exhibitionist apparatus operated not only as an all-powerful propaganda force, but also as a more strategically flexible, if fundamentally authoritarian, set of forces. Internecine debates and social pressures also defined the production of sports facilities for the Olympics in Mexico City in the mid-to-late 1960s, as the next chapter reveals.

THREE IMAGE MACHINES MEXICO '68'S "OLD" AND "NEW" SPORTS FACILITIES

Félix Candela's Sports Palace, the most critically acclaimed of Mexico's Olympic venues, embodies the media's centrality to the production of infrastructure for the Olympics.¹ Since its completion for the games, the Palace's distinctive silhouette and shimmering copper roof have been ubiquitous in the mass-media landscape of Mexico as well as in the eyes of critics and historians. The Palace's notoriety—which has arguably eclipsed the rest of Mexico '68's architecture—has usually been understood as a result of its spectacular exterior form, which has lent itself to reproduction and dissemination in a variety of media.² Although several studies of Candela's work situate the architect's oeuvre in relation to the historical and political context of his time, a persisting trend in Candela scholarship focuses on the formal appearance of the palace and his other major buildings, and on what this appearance tells us about the structural innovations that these works include.³ As in other notable buildings by Candela, at the Sports Palace his photogenic hyperbolic paraboloids are prominent structural and formal components of the arena's ceiling, yet the relationship between these elements and the mass media goes beyond formal matters (Figure 3.1).⁴ A rendering of the Palace's interior makes it clear that concerns about the structure's capacity to inscribe itself within the circulation networks of the mechanically reproduced image were paramount from the start (Figure 3.2).⁵ Not only does the design account for the position and sight lines of television cameras all around the sports court, but it also features a couple in the foreground, who view the sports events in front of them through the lens of a television camera. The drawing thus suggests that, like many of its peers, this Olympic venue was envisioned not only as a monumental intervention in Mexico City's urban fabric but also as a hub for the transmission of televised imagery.



Figure 3.1. Félix Candela, Enrique Castañeda, and Antonio Peyrí, Palacio de los Deportes (Sports Palace), Mexico City, 1968. Photograph by the author.

As a brand-new Olympic building, at Mexico '68 Candela's Palace was more the exception than the rule. As scholars have pointed out, the majority of Mexico's Olympic architecture predated the 1968

Olympics, one of many facts that generated anxiety among the event's organizers and their critics at home and abroad, even though the preexistence of Olympic facilities certainly helped bolster Mexico City's case as a prospective host city in the eyes of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at Baden-Baden.⁶ Rodríguez Kuri suggests that the "total design" logic of the Olympics responded pragmatically to Mexico '68's condition as a "cheap" Olympics because it downplayed the heterogeneity of its existing infrastructure and diverted attention away from the absence of new, unified planning schemes in Mexico City like those that previous Olympic host cities had boasted. Architects Manuel Villazón and Eduardo Terrazas attempted to inscribe Mexico's Olympic venues within a network of sports facilities where each venue was identified by a logo at once distinctive and graphically analogous to the rest. These logos were extensions of Lance Wyman's primary logo for the Olympics. The radiating patterns of Wyman's logo were also given an urban scale, as Terrazas had the pavements surrounding the main venues of the Olympics, one of them the Sports Palace, painted with them. The pavement surrounding each of these facilities was painted with a different combination of colors, but all such colors were part of a relatively limited palette of pastels and pinks that all these painted pavements shared (Plate 3). The graphic and urban



scales of this unified iconography were thus collapsed together and given an inhabitable dimension for visitors. In addition to proving visually striking, comparatively speaking, as Terrazas recalls, this was an inexpensive, albeit labor-intensive, solution to the problem of unifying the urban environment of these buildings.⁷

Yet, creating the scenography of a “cheap” Olympics organized in a marginal, developing country was not solely a result of infrastructural or economic conditions. As Rodríguez Kuri observes, this was also a diplomatic calculation on the part of the MOC. Concerns about the quality of Olympic infrastructure in Mexico were only part of the horizon of political obstacles that Mexico’s Olympic organizers faced. The idea that Mexico City’s high altitude would hinder athletic performance was another objection to the capital’s selection as host city, and the MOC attempted to counter this claim through a systematic campaign to discredit its presumed scientific basis. The exclusion of South Africa’s apartheid state from the Olympics, and what at times seemed like an impending threat of a boycott of Olympic organizational efforts as a result of this exclusion, further complicated the racial politics that surrounded these Olympics, which were also defined by the protests for racial equality staged by African American sprinters John Carlos and Tommie Smith.⁸ The celebration of the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City reorganized the political geographies of these conflicts in ways that benefited the single-party state and the International Olympic Committee’s leadership. Staging

Figure 3.2. Félix Candela, Palacio de los Deportes (Sports Palace), rendering, 1967. Félix Candela Architectural Records and Papers, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

the Olympics in a nominally nonaligned country that purposefully spectacularized its marginality to and neutral stance toward international inter-superpower conflicts also promised to disperse some of the tensions that had dominated the celebration of previous Olympics. This relocation also expanded the IOC's institutional currency toward a "third-world" domain it had never penetrated in the past. Domestically, the organization of Mexico '68 could be inscribed within the single-party state's own developmentalist narratives, becoming aligned with the propaganda of PRI-sponsored social peace, urban modernization, and cultural and racial tolerance. Internationally, the Olympics provided the Mexican state with a temporary window through which to promote these claims. As such, Mexico's Olympics served the state's agendas on the home front and in the international arena at the same time.⁹

The next chapter will examine various aspects of Mexico '68's total design campaign as more than a merely pragmatic response to the fractious nature of the Olympic building effort. This chapter examines the MOC's refurbishing of existing buildings and the creation of "new" ones in order to inscribe "old" and "new" monuments into a common Olympic spectacle. It contends that the fragmentary nature of Mexico's Olympic infrastructure not only motivated design responses like Terrazas and Villazón's, but also conditioned the form and function of Mexico '68's new Olympic buildings. This fragmentary Olympic landscape decisively shaped the propaganda events staged in relation to the venues of pre-Olympic origin, and thus heavily informed the image economies cultivated at the meeting point between the Olympic venues and these political performances. A close reading of the bureaucratized production of these buildings and events reveals that many discursive challenges that the patrons and makers of this infrastructure faced were quite similar to those that the designers and architects of museums and pavilions of previous chapters grappled with. In other words, the Olympics provided the architects of the presidential circle in Mexico with another forum for the creation of a spectacle of social harmony and "miraculous" development through design interventions. Here, as in previous official design projects, both the prestige of these professionals within their specialized fields of expertise and their stock as part of the cultural apparatus of the exhibitionist state were at stake.

Through the formulation of the Cultural Olympiad, Ramírez Vázquez attempted to brand an emphasis on cultural display as the distinctive feature of the Mexican Olympics, tying Mexico '68 directly to his own efforts in the design of museums and world's fairs pavilions, and borrowing some of the humanist language of these events. Positioning cultural display at the center of the Olympic spectacle was also a pragmatic move on the architect-politician's part. Promoting Mexico's Olympic infrastructure as part of the Cultural Olympiad diverted attention away from the

uncomfortable comparisons drawn insistently in the local and international media in the years leading up to Mexico '68 between Mexico's disjointed Olympic building campaign and Tokyo '64's spectacular new Olympic buildings and the lavish urban transportation networks that connected them.¹⁰

Drawing attention away from these comparisons, Ramírez Vázquez systematically advertised "old" buildings refurbished for the Olympics as part of the vast panorama of Mexico's national patrimony, pre-Columbian, colonial, and modern, a corpus of existing buildings so large that the relative lack of new Olympic additions to it would ideally seem immaterial. He discussed the "new" Olympic infrastructure as the result of a longer-standing process of postrevolutionary modernization, one that the Olympics were meant to showcase to the world and accelerate. Along these lines, the architect-politician emphasized that the usefulness of Mexico's Olympic facilities *after* the Olympics would remain a central concern throughout the campaign, much more so than their monumental qualities. Here again, as in the curatorial and design programs of the diplomatic architectures of the "miracle," the duality between Mexico's "old" and "new" existential conditions structured Ramírez Vázquez's public pronouncements. He described Mexico '68 as a continuation of these earlier projects. In an interview with Raquel Tibol, he referred to his experiences as the designer of schools and official exhibitions of art and culture in the years leading up to the Olympics, collapsing the histories of the Olympic project with the narrative of his own rise through the bureaucratic ranks. He thus claimed that "Mexico arrives to the Olympics at a time at which, *thanks to interest that has already been generated, they constitute the single advertising event of greatest possible impact in this or any country.*" And yet:

Those who think that our Olympics have tourism as their ultimate goal are wrong. . . . Recently, a German journalist asked us if we thought it would have been wiser to invest funds in works of public benefit, which the country needs. That journalist did not realize that he was standing on the soil of a nation in which a school classroom is built every hour, where in the last thirty years a surface equivalent to the territory of France has been irrigated, where millions of kilometers of highways have been built, where needs for infrastructure are being taken care of.¹¹

Although Ramírez Vázquez exaggerated the scale of this process of state-sponsored modernization, its effects on Mexico City had been tangible in the decades leading up to the Olympics. Before the Olympics, these trajectories of urban and architectural production had yielded several of the new museums and public spaces seen in previous chapters, as well as such notable facilities as the 1964 complex of

the Magdalena Mixhuca, located in the southeast region of the city, within which Candela's Sports Palace would be incorporated; the Arena México, finished in 1956, and designated as the venue for boxing; and the 1952 Teatro Insurgentes, designed by architect Alejandro Prieto, whose facade included a mosaic mural devoted to the history of Mexican theater by Diego Rivera and which was chosen to host the weightlifting competitions. Two other major stadiums built before the games also played significant roles during the Olympics: the 1953 Olympic Stadium at the UNAM University City, also graced by a Diego Rivera mural and designated as the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies of the games; and the Aztec soccer stadium, designed by Ramírez Vázquez and Mijares between 1961 and 1963 and inaugurated in May 1966. In addition to the Sports Palace, Terrazas had the pavements of these latter two stadiums painted with Mexico '68's radiating patterns, demarcating them as the locations of highest architectural interest and of most intensely focused propaganda energies.

George Flaherty points out that international press envoys and their cameras represented the largest Olympic delegation of all those that attended Mexico '68, including national sports teams.¹² Rodríguez Kuri and historian Amy Bass observe that the presence of corporate media interests at Mexico '68—especially, but not exclusively, from the United States—was one of the defining commercial forces that shaped the event's organization.¹³ This heightened presence of camera lenses raised the international stakes of the event, making Mexico's perceived organizational deficiencies all the more visible. Ramírez Vázquez was aware of these risky conditions, but said that local organizers could turn them to their advantage. In a November 1966 press conference, he made reference to the then new medium of satellite television, arguing that its presence rendered the need for abundant new buildings less pressing than at previous Olympics, and thus actually helped Mexico's frugal organizational plans. "Television," he claimed, "has already increased the number of spectators of the Olympics, from the material capacity of stadiums to the capacity generated by television sets, which conservative estimates count as four hundred million worldwide." Far from having replaced actual architecture as an arena for spectatorship, the virtual spaces of television had come to contain and supplement those of architecture, with each becoming the other's resonance chamber.¹⁴

In a 1967 meeting with the press where he was pressured to comment on the perceived lack of new buildings in Mexico for the Olympics, Ramírez Vázquez took this point further, claiming that Mexico's infrastructure was envisioned for two distinct but overlapping audiences: those witnessing the Olympics in person and those taking part in the show "from the chairs in front of their television sets." Cameras would be embedded within the structure of stadiums and other sports

facilities, allowing television viewers to see even more than actual visitors. In making this remark, Ramírez Vázquez also cast the entire Olympic project in a sinister light, one more specifically suggestive of desires on the MOC's part for surveillance and control through media, desires that seem malevolent enough looking back at the violent environment in which the Olympics took place:

The placement [of cameras] has *not been disclosed in order not to interfere with the sports events*; but they will be *in every angle and place* so as to reveal to the remote observer aspects of the development of the competitions that those sitting in the grandstands will naturally be unable to perceive.¹⁵

Ramírez Vázquez here lays bare the direct intersection between Olympic design and the exercise of state surveillance, inscribing his practice as Olympic organizer squarely within the biopolitical domain. By no means allergic to occasional hyperbole, he was not exaggerating too much about this point. In facilitating the broadcasting of live images from buildings as well as to create records of Olympic events in film, the MOC's department of cinematography led by filmmaker Alberto Isaac was extremely active. Isaac's team took full advantage of the multiple camera angles provided within sports facilities, flooding the media landscape with live and delayed images of Olympic events and the venues where they took place.¹⁶ However, the physical presence of cameras within buildings was only one factor that led Mexico's Olympic venues to literally operate as image machines. Many other dialogues between the forms and materials of these "old" and "new" buildings and a range of media were equally central to their design, construction, and reception, as well as to the propaganda functions that these structures served and the contestation that they confronted.

A BUREAUCRATIZED CAMPAIGN

Ramírez Vázquez's public statements concerning the Olympic building campaign purposefully obscure the bureaucratic complexity that defined this process. In a climate of widespread doubts about Mexico's ability to host the Olympics, the MOC sent delegations to Tokyo over the course of 1964 and 1965, as well as to other former Olympic venues: Rome, Melbourne, London, and Helsinki. But by the time these delegations toured former Olympic host cities, planning in Mexico City was already under way. In October 1963, immediately after the International Olympic Committee meeting in Baden-Baden approved Mexico's bid to host the Olympics, the MOC hired architects Reynaldo Pérez and Jorge Fernández to conduct a preliminary evaluation of Mexico City's sports facilities. In their report, these architects concluded that a covered arena for basketball—the future Sports

Palace—and an Olympic swimming pool were necessary, as were a new fencing hall and a venue for volleyball. The report also established that most sports competitions would be held in Mexico City. The only exceptions were the yachting events, which required an open-sea venue and were held at the beach resort of Acapulco; Puebla, León, and Guadalajara, which provided secondary venues for Olympic soccer; and the Avándaro Golf Club in the Valle de Bravo, outside Mexico City, which hosted the horseback riding competitions.¹⁷

Most official accounts attempted to present the Olympics as a national-scale project, and Ramírez Vázquez was emphatic about the potential of television to broadcast the Olympics all over Mexico. While industrial, trade, and political groups in various parts of Mexico were keen to make use of the Olympic publicity effort to generate interest in their own activities and products, it was clear from the beginning that the Olympic construction efforts and its propaganda energies would be centralized in the capital city.¹⁸ In consultation with advisers from the IOC, Pérez and Fernández determined that the existing sports facilities in Mexico City had to be modified considerably, not only to comply with the requirements that international federations established for each sport, but to expand their seating capacity to accommodate presidential and IOC delegations, as well as considerably greater numbers of visitors than they had ever hosted. Specialized spaces for the press also had to be added to all the venues, and minimum lighting levels needed for color TV broadcasting had to be implemented, at great expense, in all of Mexico's Olympic venues.

The various efforts out of which the Olympic infrastructural campaign was comprised involved a number of federal and municipal state agencies. As in the case of the design teams responsible for the exhibitions and museums of the preceding chapters, many of the figures involved with the campaign had preexisting ties to Ramírez Vázquez's office. Construction of new facilities was the responsibility of Mexico's Secretaría de Obras Públicas (SOP), the state agency most closely tied to architectural production at the national level throughout the twentieth century. The SOP organized contests for the new Olympic facilities in mid-1966, and appointed architecture teams for the adaptation of existing ones at that time. Architect Héctor Velázquez, a former collaborator of Ramírez Vázquez's in his 1953 School of Medicine building at the UNAM University City, led this process as head of the SOP's Department of Architecture and Urbanism (1965–70). The Departamento del Distrito Federal (DDF) supervised and funded the construction of the rowing canal of Cuemanco at Xochimilco.¹⁹ For its part, the Banco Nacional Hipotecario Urbano y de Obras Públicas, which had sponsored Pani's Nonoalco–Tlatelolco housing project, funded construction of the Olympic Village and the

Villa Coapa, the two housing complexes intended to host Olympic delegations and press envoys.

The MOC oversaw the construction and refurbishing of the various facilities through one agency, the Oficina de Control de Instalaciones (OCI), headed by architect Luis Martínez del Campo. Martínez was a former collaborator of Ramírez Vázquez's as well, having served as project architect for his Aztec Stadium.²⁰ Martínez's office was not directly in charge of the construction of sports venues, but its role as an intermediary between the DDF and SOP proved crucial. Martínez delivered plans for the Olympic facilities to these two agencies in October 1967—only a year before the inauguration of the Olympic Games—and dealt with the logistical and legal intricacies of their construction thereafter.²¹ While communications between the DDF and the MOC were relatively relaxed a year before the Olympics started, they became increasingly tense as deadlines approached. The case of the construction of the Route of Friendship, the central work of permanent public art produced as part of the Cultural Olympiad, is telling of these tensions. The project, analyzed in depth in the next chapter, was cumbersome and slow to build. In an April 1968 letter sent to Roberto Medellín, the DDF's chief of public works, Martínez implored him to provide the MOC with information about the many legal hurdles involved in the route's construction, which had only begun at that point and was already far behind schedule.²² Goeritz complained to Ramírez Vázquez about Martínez's inefficient management of the project in almost daily reports, while Martínez only partly acknowledged the obvious delays in construction, blaming the DDF's incompetence for them instead.²³

These negotiations often involved government agencies other than the DDF and the MOC. For example, in January 1968, when construction teams found considerable pre-Hispanic architectural remains at the site of the future Olympic Village, Martínez had to act as a mediator between the MOC, the SOP, and the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). Bureaucrats in all these agencies had different views concerning the find, and the result of their negotiations gives an idea of the pressure they faced with construction deadlines approaching. Officials made no attempt to modify the kitchen section of the Olympic Village project in order to prevent destruction of the archaeological find, found directly underneath it. As in the case of the Nonoalco–Tlatelolco complex, during the construction of the Olympic Village the pressure to build fast and the imperative to preserve the archaeological memory of the site conflicted. Construction work was halted for a week during which archaeologists gathered information about the remains that had been found. As Martínez explained to Ramírez Vázquez in a memo from January 3, a reconstruction of the ruins, presumably destroyed during construction, was to be

built with the information afterward. After the Olympic Village was finished, the ruins were promoted as an integral part of the project, with only a vague mention of this reconstruction process.²⁴

Martínez's office was flexible in its tasks, but there was confusion about the scope of its responsibilities throughout the duration of the Olympic building campaign. In a letter sent to Ramírez Vázquez on March 15, 1968, Martínez presented the MOC chief with a list of issues that required the direct intervention of the DDF. Martínez wrote that he wished "a systematic link" with authorities at the DDF existed in order to facilitate negotiations. Because the range of problems associated with the construction of the various facilities was so wide, it was not enough to have weekly meetings between agency representatives, especially since these meetings often proved contentious and unproductive. Indeed, so much had to be dealt with that Martínez thought the creation of a specialized agency devoted exclusively to navigating these bureaucratic waters was necessary, a suggestion that never resulted in an MOC policy.²⁵

While the MOC and Ramírez Vázquez attempted to present this bureaucratically complex process as a streamlined and transparent one to the public, the SOP also attempted to provide the campaign with a unified public face, inscribing it within the propaganda emanating from the ministries of economics, tourism, the MOC, and the SOP itself. This propaganda presented state-sponsored building campaigns, in a developmentalist vein, as emblematic of socially inclusive economic growth. In its February 1968 bulletin, for instance, the SOP presented the new Olympic buildings alongside a host of other infrastructure initiatives, listing the projected use of each facility after the Games. "With the Olympic Village," the report said, "the housing problem of Mexico City will be partly resolved." "Nine thousand people will be able to buy its 904 apartments and attached facilities at cheap prices that will also pay back the 155 million [pesos] invested in the work." While this example sounded convincing enough, the SOP's justification for the Cuemanco rowing canal in Xochimilco was somewhat less so, given the sport's very limited appeal. The report claimed that the canal would "foster the development of a sport that, owing to a lack of infrastructure, is only beginning to get popular in Mexico, [contributing] to the natural beauty of Xochimilco and [giving] our capital city a new horizon in its panorama of sports and leisure."²⁶

Despite these efforts to homogenize the Olympic facilities, some critics saw the bureaucratic complexity of the Olympic preparations reflected in the architectural form of Mexico's sports infrastructure. No critique was more scathing than that formulated by Lamberto Álvarez Gayou, a founding member of the MOC and a longtime sports specialist based in Mexico City who had occupied a variety of positions in Mexico's government offices devoted to sport after beginning his

career at the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) in the 1930s. In an article published in early 1968, Álvarez lambasted Ramírez Vázquez's team. Remarking on the noticeable time lag between the initial MOC surveys of late 1963 and the organization of architectural competitions for construction of new facilities, which took place only in the summer of 1966, he claimed that this had "resulted in a lack of enough time to urbanize and plan the Olympic works properly." Without enough time available for planning, the SOP grouped thirty architects, setting them up as members of ten planning teams and giving them two weeks to produce projects for the facilities.²⁷ Although it reached fever pitch by 1968, when, as a form of protest, he presented a project for Olympic planning in Mexico City that competed with the MOC's, Álvarez's critique had much earlier origins. As early as October 1963, just after Mexico's winning bid for the Olympics was announced, he had claimed in a newspaper editorial that "it was necessary to start working, without sparing time, effort, and money, in order to duly prepare the setting for that which has been awarded to us." He expressed the high stakes involved in the organization of the Olympics by collapsing the languages of warfare and sports, and describing them as "a sort of world war that must be planned strategically with methods of the atomic age we live in, which by the time it takes place (1968) will have advanced tremendously."²⁸

Writing in 1968, Álvarez was particularly harsh in his criticism of the haste with which the process of selection and assignment of architectural teams for the design of new Olympic facilities had been undertaken. This lack of foresight had serious consequences, as "the dissimilar ideas of the architects in each team mixed like oil and water, and did not follow the models of sports buildings established worldwide."²⁹ As already seen, the SOP claimed throughout the Olympic preparations that the new facilities would be built primarily with their usefulness *after* the Games in mind. This meant that a facility such as the Olympic Village was envisioned from the beginning as a housing project undifferentiated from other housing projects. Likewise, there was little typological difference between the rest of Olympic sports facilities and their non-Olympic precedents. Álvarez claimed that this confusion resulted not from Ramírez Vázquez's or the MOC's genuine interest in the post-Olympic function of Olympic architecture, but from a lack of specialized expertise on the part of the Mexican architects they had hired for the Olympics:

Mexico has become a great "Imitator" in the construction of sports facilities . . . , which is logical, since it has never had architects or planners that specialize in such constructions; those who have been charged with this type of project have been assigned to take on the task in an improvised manner. Their facilities fail to adjust

to international models, and instead the models known in Mexico for schools and public facilities have been used, which in no way fulfill the requirements of functionality, comfort, and security for competitors, judges, officials, trainers, journalists, and sports audiences.³⁰

Álvarez's was not the only voice of dissent heard within Mexico, yet his critique is particularly prescient because it challenged not only the design and preparation of sports facilities, but also the cosmopolitan aspirations evident in the formal language of the new Olympic monuments and the ambitious graphic and urban design campaigns of the MOC. Instead of Wyman's Olympic logo, Álvarez claimed that a more authentically "Mexican" image should have served to identify the Olympics. His image of choice was taken from a ball court marker found in the Maya site in Chinkultic, Chiapas, which was part of the collection of the recently inaugurated MNA. The carved disc of stone included an image of a Maya ball player dressed in the ritual garb of the ancient organized sport and was part of a wide range of objects rediscovered and glorified as emblematic of Mexico's pre-Hispanic athletic traditions.³¹

Instead of a "traditional and classical" national architecture, Álvarez also claimed, organizers had chosen to adopt an ill-designed "internationalist style." Thus, he argued, the much-publicized copper-clad roof of Candela's Sports Palace was "a bad and poor imitation of the 'Geodesic Dome' of . . . Buckminster Fuller," specifically the one Fuller designed for the 1961 Yomiuri Golf clubhouse in Tokyo. The roof of Manuel Rosen's Olympic swimming pool was "another copy of the roofs designed by the famous Italian architect [Pier] Luigi Nervi." Álvarez's critique of these buildings and the graphic campaign through which they were promoted could be easily dismissed as a conservative response against Mexico '68's modernist aesthetics, but the panorama was likely more complex. It was not nationalism against cosmopolitanism that he attempted to marshal, but a competing modality of cosmopolitanism to the one advocated by the MOC. Furthermore, the tensions between nationalist and cosmopolitan discourses that he points toward lay at the center of the MOC's efforts, and had significant design consequences, inhabiting many of Mexico '68's primary events and architectural spaces.

MASS SPORTS, SPECTACLES OF GLASS

Álvarez was not the only critic to call into question the aesthetics of Mexico's Olympic campaign as well as its social cost. In a March 1967 interview, Elena Poniatowska questioned Ramírez Vázquez about the levels of lighting needed to broadcast sports in color television, a costly addition to all Olympic venues implemented while "thousands of poor slums with no lighting that demand lighting

desperately” were left without electrification in Mexico. “So, while we enjoy the beauty [of the Olympics],” Poniatowska claimed, “the most pressing needs of the poorest ones will remain without a solution.” Before he provided an elaborate explanation of the lighting requirements for the Olympic venues and the MOC’s plans to pay for their expense, Ramírez Vázquez responded succinctly, but in a telling, and perhaps unsurprisingly sexist tone: “This would be a great pitch for you, *Elenita*, to run for congress.”³² Ramírez Vázquez’s frustration was perhaps justified, because by the time he took part in this interview, he had been addressing similar questions concerning the social usefulness of sports venues for some time. Since its inception, the Olympic project engendered these kinds of questionings, even in the inner presidential circle. While the exhibitionist state’s commitment to the promotion of mass sports was consistent between the 1940s and 1960s, the added financial and political costs of the Olympics did bring about some measure of self-doubt. President Díaz Ordaz publicly admitted that he had entertained the possibility of backing out of the successful Olympic bid in October 1964 because of the projected high cost of hosting the Olympics in Mexico City. He also claimed that he had sought support among unionized labor and regional political leaders before fully committing to the enterprise.³³

Before the Olympics, Ramírez Vázquez had already confronted public skepticism about the social justification for mass sports venues in the context of the Aztec Stadium commission. The stadium’s history has been most closely studied as part of the biography of Emilio Azcárraga Jr., its patron and the heir to Telesistema Mexicano (which became Televisa in 1973), Mexico’s largest television corporation from the 1960s to the present day. Before discussing the specifics of the commission, a discussion of this media conglomerate’s centrality to Mexican cultural politics during the “miracle” is in order, especially because Azcárraga never concealed his sympathy for the PRI’s leadership. In the years leading up to Mexico ’68, television rose to unprecedented popularity in Mexico. Omar Hernández and Emile McAnany suggest that through its prescriptive role as an arbiter of social norms and political behavior, television often served the economic and political goals of the state and its clientelist partners. Economically, television contributed decisively to naturalize a wide range of mass consumption behaviors; politically, it provided the state’s cultural apparatus with an especially powerful device of mass communication, where carefully staged, televised politics could essentially replace actual public challenges to the state’s authority. Television’s cultural impact was also highly significant, as members of the “miracle’s” intelligentsia *such as* Salvador Novo eventually had a significant television presence, which expanded their influence beyond the realm of newspapers, popular magazines, film, and radio.³⁴ Television also played a key role in how episodes of political dissent were

presented to mass audiences. On the basis of a close analysis of Telesistema's newscasts about the October 2 massacre, Celeste González de Bustamante argues that television played a preeminent role in downplaying government intervention in the mass killings of protesting students, in demonizing these students, and in minimizing the scale of the casualties of the massacre as well as the large numbers of imprisoned protesters.³⁵

The Aztec Stadium was produced specifically to maximize its patrons' ability to profit from the growing market of televised sports, but it also provided a space where, aided by television's expressive capacities, a mass sport could become a major cultural force. As such, this commission is not only significant vis-à-vis the later centrality of television to the design of Mexico '68's facilities. It also represents a major intersection between the mass-media industry's political extensions and the practice of large-scale architecture in Mexico. In their biography of Azcárraga, Claudia Fernández and Andrew Paxman argue convincingly that the projected commercial success of the televised 1962 soccer World Cup, hosted at Santiago de Chile, was one of the primary motivations behind Azcárraga's original idea to build a major sports venue. Several years before the event took place, the 1962 Cup was predicted to prove highly profitable for advertisers, television, and soccer entrepreneurs, fueling Azcárraga's interest in tapping into the then-incipient market of televised soccer in Mexico. Azcárraga and his circle also had their sights set on having Mexico City host the 1970 World Cup and regarded the construction of the stadium as a potentially decisive factor in accomplishing that goal. In an aggressive media campaign, they advanced the claim that if Mexico could show FIFA, the international governing body of the sport, that it had a stadium with a capacity equal to the largest world stadiums, the bid could succeed with ease.³⁶ Since as early as 1958, Mexican soccer officials led by Guillermo Cañedo, owner of one of Mexico City's largest teams, promoted this plan. Historian of sport Joseph Arbena shows that the early proposals to host the Olympics and the World Cup in Mexico were largely advanced as part of a common agenda, first by Azcárraga and other private entrepreneurs, and eventually by various government officials, during the late 1950s and early 1960s.³⁷

In April 1960, Azcárraga, owner of the América soccer club, founded the Sociedad de Fútbol del Distrito Federal alongside the owners of teams Atlante and Necaxa. Although it is difficult to determine the real importance of the competition in deciding the design chosen for the Aztec Stadium, the Sociedad did invite architects Ramírez Vázquez and Mijares, Enrique de la Mora, and Félix Candela to submit projects for it.³⁸ Aside from the stadium's capacity—the largest ever planned for a sports facility in Mexico—the inclusion of a significant number of private viewing boxes, a first in any sports venue in Mexico, was an important

specification in the program for the stadium. This eventually became a decisive factor in determining the form of the projects submitted to the competition, and discussions of this feature of the stadium are telling with regard to the social divisions that informed the project's reception. Of the three projects submitted, those presented by the Ramírez Vázquez and Candela offices are most significant for the discussion at hand, as they prefigured aspects of their authors' later involvement with the Olympics, and provide a sense of the high political stakes in the design of mass sports venues.

Candela developed his project, whose exterior was defined visually by an exposed frame of reinforced concrete, with architect Luis La Guette, and positioned the stadium grandstands as a cantilevered volume, with private viewing boxes hanging from its base (Figure 3.3). Discussing his project in *Progressive Architecture*, Candela made explicit reference to the ways in which his design reified the social stratification of soccer's audiences in Mexico, asserting that the stadium boxes had to be "completely separated from the rest of the public, even to the extent of having completely separate ingress and egress." In Candela's project, the grandstands rested on three rows of buttresses organized as inverted V shapes. At the base of the grandstands, which supported the weight of the boxes, a set of thicker, V-shaped piers was used. Inverted umbrellas made up of four hyperbolic paraboloid slabs also resting on inverted V-shaped beams covered the greater part of the grandstands. Candela claimed—not without a bit of hyperbole—that his stadium had been envisioned with a capacity for one hundred and ten thousand people. Although this number exceeded the ambitious figure of a hundred thousand set by the competition brief, the final, built stadium would eventually match it.³⁹

The stadium project developed by Mijares at Ramírez Vázquez's office was also defined by the exterior display of its structural features. Its thin and slightly curved vertical buttresses, made of pre-stressed concrete, were particularly visible (Figure 3.4). Sixty-six altogether, the buttresses supported the stadium's cantilevered grandstands, while eight concrete rings spanning the stadium's circumference provided extra support. The treatment given to the private boxes in this project, also suspended underneath the main grandstands, was not strikingly different from the one Candela proposed. Indeed, as Mijares recalls, it was not a difference of design that swayed the private patrons in his and his partner's favor. Instead, Ramírez Vázquez and Mijares, the former of whom had longer-standing personal ties with Azcárraga than any of the other architects involved in the competition for the stadium, took greater care to ensure the television tycoon that the sale of the boxes could help finance the high cost of the commission, a hotly debated issue throughout the development of the project.⁴⁰ The fact that Miguel Ramírez Vázquez, the architect's brother, was an original member of the Sociedad del Fútbol—he joined



Figure 3.3. Félix Candela and Luis La Guette, project for a soccer stadium, 1960. Félix Candela Architectural Records and Papers, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

the society on behalf of soccer team Necaxa, which he owned at the time—surely helped the firm’s cause as much as any of the firm’s specifications or promises of financial gain associated with the project. Ramírez

Vázquez had acquired Necaxa from the Union of Electrical Workers, which owned the team until 1959, in what was a historically significant episode in the privatization of mass sport in Mexico. The privately commissioned Aztec Stadium became something like a monument to this process.⁴¹

A significant precedent for the stadiums designed at the two Mexican offices was Rio de Janeiro’s Maracanã Stadium, designed in 1950 by a team led by architect Raphael Galvão, and to which the Aztec Stadium was often compared in its early days. For instance, an article published in the periodical *Siempre!* listed increased seating space among the features of the new stadium that made it superior to its Brazilian predecessor, noting that unlike at the Aztec Stadium, during any given game “at the Maracanã ‘standing’ viewers were abundant.”⁴² The world’s largest in its day, the Brazilian open-air stadium built with an exposed frame of reinforced concrete was influential in later soccer stadium building, not least because of its almost circular shape, which both teams of architects in Mexico adopted. Significantly larger than their Brazilian predecessor, the Mexican projects added to its blueprint fully exposed circulation systems of ramps. Neither of



the Mexican proposals included structural supports that could interrupt spectators' ability to see the playing field from inside the arena. There was, however, one crucial difference between the two Mexican proposals. Ramírez Vázquez and Mijares's project included an aluminum cover over the grandstands, which proved significantly cheaper than the inverted umbrellas of reinforced concrete that Candela proposed.

Although the roofing was not installed until ten months after the stadium's inauguration in May 1966, it was included in the project from the start. The stadium's official publication stressed the cheaper and lighter nature of aluminum materials when compared to concrete. Had concrete been chosen for the roof, this would have required a supporting structure of "monstrous dimensions." A concrete roof would have also proven hard to build high above the stadium's upper reaches, "given that [construction] work would have had to be performed at a height greater than that of the [Mexico City] Cathedral's towers, and fifty meters away from any point of significant support."⁴³ Labor, which was significant in determining the stadium's cost, was also relevant in constructing the project's public image. Ramírez Vázquez commissioned photographer Francisco Uribe, whom he would later assign as Mexico '68's official architectural photographer, to produce images of work on the stadium's cover to distribute to the mass media. Uribe produced heroic images

Figure 3.4. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Aztec Stadium, Mexico City, 1966. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.



Figure 3.5. Francisco Uribe, untitled photograph, 1966. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.

of workers at the heights of the stadium structure. One of these images purposefully disrupts the apparent scale between the laboring body of one of these workers and the landscape around him, not least the snow-capped Popocatepetl volcano that he appears to dwarf (Figure 3.5). Alongside the Iztaccíhuatl, another volcano located in close proximity to it in the Valley of Mexico, the Popocatepetl was a primary component of a geography enshrined as central to Mexican national identity since the late nineteenth century. Representations of this geography also presented infrastructural interventions in it as symbolic of national progress.⁴⁴ Inscribing a construction worker within this heroic landscape, Uribe's image also presented labor, architecture, and mass sport as interrelated forces that engulfed the capital city's peripheries together in the early 1960s.

Common to the discourse surrounding both Ramírez Vázquez's and Candela's projects was the need to assuage the social tensions that the project for a soccer stadium brought to the fore. These tensions stemmed primarily from the project's origins as a private commission, a fact that differentiated it from previous projects for sports infrastructure, historically sponsored by the Mexican state. Some considered a project of such origins devoted to a sport of growing mass appeal suspect. For instance, in a letter sent to President López Mateos in August 1961 in which he urged the president to stop the stadium's construction, a Rodolfo Godínez claimed that the commission would solidify an "unconstitutional" monopoly over soccer held by Ramírez Vázquez, Azcárraga, and José Manuel Núñez, the owner of the Atlante soccer team, which would add to Azcárraga's already dangerous monopoly over radio and television. Godínez claimed that Azcárraga would profit illegally from the venture, as he would pass on its high construction cost to the buyers of boxes and to the future buyers of tickets, thus "robbing the people." Godínez argued that because the future stadium's private boxes were so much more luxurious than the many seats that the less privileged visitors to the stadium would occupy, the project also threatened to set a dangerous precedent by architecturally "establishing in a sports stadium the difference between classes," providing radically different spaces for the "very rich" and the "very poor."⁴⁵

Ramírez Vázquez addressed concerns about the stadium's elitist agenda in much the same way as he addressed later critiques of the Olympic project. In a 1964 article, he and Mijares established the language through which the stadium continues to be understood, one that construes the entire scheme as a project with democratizing intentions despite its origins, largely the same rationale publicly espoused to promote such projects as the Nonoalco–Tlatelolco housing complex, or the Olympics as they approached. Stressing that soccer was a sport with broad class appeal, the architects claimed that the Aztec Stadium accomplished a "relative democratization with its spaces." This was not exactly mirrored in the project's

form, which was based on the clear separation of social classes in the spaces for the audience, a fact rendered most obvious by the importance afforded to the venue's private viewing boxes.

A deep wedge spanning the circumference of the stadium's grandstands, the boxes interrupted the social landscape of the stadium's spaces for spectatorship. Ramírez Vázquez and Mijares construed this differentiation as part of the stadium's populist agenda: the venue would serve a socializing function, creating "sympathy" among different social groups by compelling them to gather to witness a common spectacle.⁴⁶ Other aspects of the stadium's reception, not least the choice of the venue's name, extended this populist agenda. The stadium's title was decided after the project was in the works through a popular survey in which the "Aztec" name was favored overwhelmingly.⁴⁷ Other mass-media accounts naturalized the class-based differentiation of viewing spaces in the stadium by presenting the relative advantages of each. "There will be seats to suit every taste," one newspaper report claimed, "and an innovation will be present whereby the most shaded or preferred seats will be the seats the highest up, and naturally roofed over." "The cheapest seats," in turn, "will present the appeal of being the closest to the playing field, as they will be very close to the grass." Completing the stadium's social map, "between each of these two will be the private viewing boxes, which will be extremely luxurious."⁴⁸

A popular history of the Aztec Stadium written in 2001 discusses the relationships between space, vision, and class that the sports venue monumentalizes in much more transparent terms. "It is a fact," the source claims, "that one of the most attractive features of the Aztec [Stadium] are its private viewing boxes. Most fans have no access to them, and therefore, what they hide *is a mystery for the greater part of them.*" For those who bought boxes, the experience of viewing the field from such spaces has long been "an unimaginable sensation," a sublime experience of mass spectacle seemingly unmediated by the invisible hand of design: "a perfect view, thirty-eight meters away from the court and fourteen meters above it, without the visual obstacle of beams *or other fans.*"⁴⁹ This fascination with the Aztec Stadium's most exclusive spaces goes back to the project's inception. Archival photography registers this captivation. A May 1963 photograph of the model for the private boxes is particularly illuminating: it displays a set of French press envoys enthralled in contemplation of the model, which was exhibited permanently at the stadium's promotion office, where its private viewing boxes were sold (Figure 3.6). All this attention notwithstanding, the sale of the private boxes was a problematic process that brought Azcárraga Jr. considerable financial malaise. The boxes did not sell particularly well, and this issue compromised the completion of the stadium more than once.⁵⁰



The Aztec Stadium was the largest single project of sports infrastructure with which Ramírez Vázquez's office was ever involved, and its early history prefigures much of the controversy that would define the later Olympic campaign. Although state-sponsored, the Olympics were no less suspect than the Aztec Stadium of not serving a socially inclusive social purpose, as Ramírez Vázquez's interactions with the media indicate. The discourse used to promote both events attempted to construe their obvious exclusionary conception as part of a democratizing exercise, downplaying the financial and political gains that their patrons intended to draw from them, and emphasizing their populist imperatives instead. Yet, beyond the discourse that surrounded them, the Olympic project and the Aztec Stadium were connected in a more direct sense as well. While the stadium was not built originally as an Olympic venue, two events associated with Mexico '68 proved decisive in moving the project forward after the final design was chosen in December 1961. The first was Mexico's own victorious bid to host the Olympics announced in October 1963, which, as Mijares recalls, went to some length in justifying a project of that scale in the public eye.⁵¹ The second took place at once very far and very close to home.

Like the 1962 Chile soccer World Cup, Tokyo 1964—the first Olympics transmitted via satellite—had illuminated the economic potential for televised sports

Figure 3.6. Press envoys examine model of Aztec Stadium's private viewing boxes, 1963. Archivo Ramírez Vázquez (ARV), Mexico City.

in Mexico, and it was also at Tokyo '64 that FIFA declared Mexico the next World Cup host.⁵² U.S. engineer Harold Rosen developed the technology that allowed for Tokyo '64's televised transmission. Rosen's Syncom III satellite famously became the first geostationary satellite to circle the Earth's orbit and facilitate the live broadcasting of images.⁵³ Azcárraga became so interested in the potential of this technology that he invited Rosen to Mexico in the fall of 1965. The tycoon introduced Rosen to high-ranking Mexican officials, including President Díaz Ordaz, in an attempt to convince them that acquiring its own satellite to control television broadcasting would have immensely positive effects, not just commercial but geopolitical as well, for Mexico. Despite Azcárraga's aggressive promotion of the plan to commission a national satellite, Mexican officials were not convinced.⁵⁴

Connected to these stratospheric events, the stadium's tangible impact on Mexico City's fabric was also considerable on the ground. The construction works associated with the stadium brought along significant urbanization to the southeastern part of Mexico City (Figure 3.7). Situated at the intersection of the Calzada de Tlalpan and the Anillo Periférico, two major city arteries, the latter of which would soon come to be punctuated by Goeritz's Route of Friendship, the stadium significantly expanded the southern boundaries of Mexico City, situating itself within the same general area as the future Olympic Village and the UNAM campus, and thus contributing significantly to the capital city's expansion toward its then-rural boundaries. The stadium's significant scale also altered the landscape of the Pedregal dramatically. Not only did the construction of the stadium entail the urbanization of a vast portion of this formerly rural landscape, but the presence of the sports venue, which became a magnet for crowds coming in from Mexico City's various neighborhoods, stimulated the construction of connecting roads between the structure and the edges of the Mexican capital, fueling real-estate and other commercial urban investments in this area. As *Construcción Mexicana* announced, never before had a sports venue of the Aztec Stadium's scale been built anywhere in the country, and the size of the venue alone rarefied the territorial distinctions between cities, states, and the new monuments that Mexico's mid-twentieth-century economic growth was producing. "At full capacity," the report read, the stadium "is capable of containing the population of an important provincial city."⁵⁵

And yet, the Aztec Stadium's size was only one of its groundbreaking features. Its construction mobilized unprecedented amounts of private capital and involved a vast number of technical professionals linked closely to the state's patronage circles as well as to the corporate patronage of private sponsors, a first for the construction of a large-scale sports facility in Mexico. It also monumentalized the alliance between television and its production of mass spectatorship, an emerging sport for mass consumption that would exert a powerful influence over Mexico's



cultural landscape, and television's production of mass publics, a central arena for hegemonic production that helped sustain the single-party state's authority. While the majority of the design process and construction of the stadium was negotiated behind closed doors between its architects and patrons, at least some contentious aspects of these processes became public. Most significantly, between 1965 and 1966, small landowners located near the stadium protested against the stadium's expanding size, which encroached upon the arable lands of their small farms, or *ejidos*, and their demands were not fully attended to until the late 1990s, when certain monetary compensations and the provision of basic social services were offered to these *ejidatarios*. Here again, as in the case of the Coatlinchán monolith, countryside and city clashed in the middle of a political negotiation where biopolitical variables like basic services related to the ownership of land were central.⁵⁶ The Aztec Stadium commission thus spurred debates concerning the divergent social and political agendas that a sports venue of this scale and complexity, and the mass-media apparatus that it was primarily built to serve, could accommodate. This large-scale operation was thus a genuine precedent for the Olympic organization, from which similar debates would come to the fore.

Figure 3.7. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, Aztec Stadium during construction, Mexico City, c. 1965–66. Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Mexico City.

“STADIOGRAPHIC” EVENTS AND A “NATIONALIST” LINEAGE

Despite the Aztec Stadium's size and visibility in the years before the Olympics, the greatest symbolic burden brought along by the Olympics fell on an older building, the stadium at the UNAM University City (1953). Selected to host the opening and closing ceremonies as well the track competitions, the UNAM stadium had to be adapted to the new demands placed upon it by the Olympics. The physical refurbishing of the building paralleled those of several other preexisting facilities in Mexico City. Appointed by the SOP, architects Treviño, Schroeder, and Nava Negrete were in charge of the process. In a press conference on January 4, 1967, Ramírez Vázquez described a number of works of adaptation under way at the UNAM Stadium. “Lighting,” he said, “will be increased twofold, so as to facilitate the broadcasting of sports events on television.” “The electrical scoreboards have already been ordered; they shall be built in Hungary, and the timing will be done by Omega.” “All of this,” he concluded, “will remain to the benefit of sport in Mexico after the Games are over.”⁵⁷

Significant Olympic events warranted all this work. An undated drawing found at Mexico City's Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), presumably produced shortly before October 12, 1968, presents a blueprint for the most important of all Olympic events, the inauguration ceremony, celebrated on that date (Figure 3.8). Traced carefully over a plan of the structure and its surroundings, the routes of President Díaz Ordaz, the Olympic torch, and its parade situate the UNAM Stadium at the center of intersecting spectacles of sports and politics. The drawing indicates that the Olympic torch carried by runner Enriqueta Basilio was to reach the stadium from the south, while a helicopter would deposit Díaz Ordaz at its back entrance. Highly schematic, the situation that the diagram's meek lines delineate could have hardly been more complicated.

A much-celebrated work of Mexican modernism, the UNAM Stadium was the most famous existing building used during Mexico '68. From the standpoint of the MOC, the political climate in which the opening ceremony took place made the UNAM University City a particularly risky choice for a venue. Throughout 1968, but especially after the early summer, the university campus had been the center of operations of the student protesters, and its schools had provided a setting for direct confrontations between police and students. Particularly after late July, when the police took over the first of several schools it would occupy—popularly known as the “Prepa” number 1—these confrontations intensified. On July 30, 1968, university president Javier Barros famously denounced the police intervention in a public speech, raising the Mexican flag at half-mast. For this highly symbolic event, when the state problematically attempted to exercise its monopoly of violence, the University City's famous buildings provided a dramatic backdrop.⁵⁸

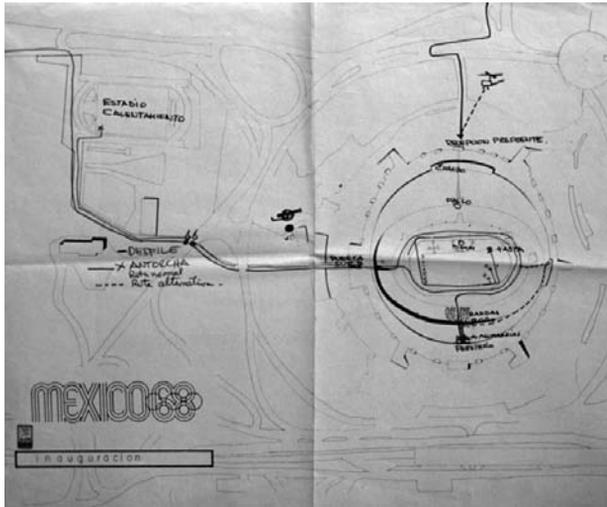


Figure 3.8. Blueprint for Mexico '68 Opening Ceremony. Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Mexico City.

Amy Bass observes that the campus continued to be the site of confrontations through September, particularly after Díaz Ordaz publicly acknowledged the unrest and pledged to use force to stop it. This included an army intervention into the campus on September 18 that led to widespread arrests, and a violent confrontation between students and army members on September 24, which prefigured the violence of the October 2 massacre. Significantly, these actions responded to the possibility that protesters, especially members of the Comité Anti-Olímpico de Subversión (CAOS) would target the opening ceremony and attempt to interrupt it.⁵⁹

Government forces left the University City on October 1, hours before the massacre of the Plaza of the Three Cultures took place. While this event proved most traumatic before the Olympics, tensions between the government and the university were evident months before, and had direct effects on the MOC's plans. As part of the Cultural Olympiad, for instance, the MOC had planned art exhibitions for the Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes (MUCA) at the UNAM campus. However, the occupation of the campus by the police and the subsequent climate of protests led to their abrupt cancellation. Gastón García Cantú, director of the MUCA, described the situation in a letter sent to former Brussels pavilion architect and then MOC official Óscar Urrutia in early September 1968. García asked Urrutia to take back artifacts, already on loan at the university campus from various institutions, in order to guard their safety. The exhibitions would no longer take place, García wrote, "owing to *circumstances known to all*."⁶⁰ In apparent partial acknowledgment of these tense conditions, which were perceived to threaten the all-important opening ceremony, the AGN drawing cited above charts an alternate route for the Olympic torch's entry into the UNAM Stadium.⁶¹ This route begins

at the stadium's east end, at the level of the grandstands, and climbs up to their upper limits before reaching its final destination in the stadium's *pebetero*, or torch cauldron (Figure 3.8). The drawing thus indicates the degree to which the threat of public, potentially violent dissent was in no way peripheral to the design and political calculations of the MOC's inner circle, despite what the MOC's public pronouncements claimed. The AGN drawing instead provides a literal, concrete embodiment of the push and pull that defined this institution's hegemonic claims, and also speaks to how the state's exercise of violence shaped that political picture.⁶² Embedded in the very texture of this private document is no less than an admission on the part of the MOC that the threat of dissent actually shaped Olympic event planning and design, not unlike the way the moving of the Coatlinchán monolith impacted the final shape of the National Museum of Anthropology.

While the occupation by the army was one of the most significant events in the political life of the UNAM campus, the Olympic Stadium had been imbricated with the politics of Mexican culture long before. Designed by architects Augusto Pérez Palacios, Raúl Salinas, and Jorge Bravo, the building's mimetic relationship with the volcanic topography of El Pedregal was its most highly praised feature (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9. Augusto Pérez Palacios, Raúl Salinas, and Jorge Bravo, UNAM Stadium, 1953. Photograph by Juan Guzmán. Colección Juan Guzmán, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, Mexico City.



Originally envisioned as a structure wholly of reinforced concrete similar to the Maracanã Stadium, a less expensive solution that took greater advantage of the local materials was eventually adopted. Volcanic stone was extracted from underneath the stadium's site, and it was terraced to give shape to the perimeter walls and grandstands.⁶³ The stadium's shape thus came to resemble that of a volcanic crater. The building's adaptation to its environment was constantly hailed in nationalist terms. In a 1952 presentation of the stadium, architect Carlos Lazo, the politically connected general manager of the UNAM campus project whose overall design was overseen by Mario Pani and Enrique del Moral, claimed that these characteristics led it to be "an indisputably modern work that has a very strong Mexican flavor at the same time." As such, the building had allowed Mexican architecture to depart from "the unfortunate influence of the colony, of *porfirismo*, and the neo-colonialist Frenchified Mexican style of the last few years, as well as the attempt to import forms from . . . international fairs in order to build or to interpret local problems with foreign ideas or solutions."⁶⁴

Yet, it was not only its construction method that made the stadium one of the most emblematic monuments of official Mexican culture. Commissioned by the SOP, Diego Rivera produced a mural of volcanic rock and ceramic panels for the building's main facade on Insurgentes Avenue. The central portion of the mural, titled *Family, Sports, and the University in Mexico*, is titled *The Child of Peace* and is composed of images of a condor and an eagle hovering over three figures flanked by a male and female athlete lighting the Olympic flame, whose hands meet as they caress a mestizo child, handing to him a white dove (Figure 3.10).⁶⁵ Below them lies the feathered serpent, symbol of the cult of sacred warfare in ancient central Mexico. The mural engages the postrevolutionary doctrine that enshrined mass sports as crucial elements in public education: their bodies civilized by sport, the union of male and female athlete produces as its offspring an ideal subject of the modern Mexican state.

Just as significant as the UNAM Stadium's form was the lineage to which it became inscribed. The UNAM Stadium took the place within Mexico City's fabric that an older National Stadium, demolished in 1949 to give way to Mario Pani's Presidente Juárez housing project (1952), had occupied. The older stadium had a particularly rich political history of its own, a brief discussion of which is relevant here. Secretary of Education José Vasconcelos commissioned architect José Villagrán to design the structure, which was finished in 1924, the last year of Vasconcelos's tenure. Rubén Gallo claims that Villagrán's stadium came closest to embodying the kind of civilizing monument of public indoctrination that Vasconcelos believed would help produce a "new" Mexico.⁶⁶ In *La raza cósmica*, Vasconcelos envisioned a utopian future for Mexico where previously unruly



Figure 3.10. Eduardo Terrazas, Olympic Cauldron (1968), next to Diego Rivera's mural *The Child of Peace* (1952), at the UNAM Stadium, Mexico City. Courtesy of Eduardo Terrazas.

masses, organized and civilized by mass rituals, would lead the way.⁶⁷ Villagrán's stadium served as the primary venue for rituals intended to create social cohesion under the banner of a shared cultural identity, and, like its successor at the UNAM, in addition to

sports events it hosted presidential inaugurations as well as visits by foreign presidents and high-ranking foreign officials. Before the Aztec Stadium rendered monumental the intersection between PRI-friendly politics, mass-media capitalist investment, and soccer as a sport of mass consumption, the UNAM Stadium had operated as the primary architectural hub for highly charged dialogues among similar forces.

In the years leading up to the Olympics, the UNAM Stadium's condition as a venue for mass national rituals, and its perceived relationship to Vasconcelos's legacy, were promoted in more aggressive ways than ever before. For instance, in a text published in 1964, architect Jorge Bravo claimed that although "nothing was lost with the destruction of [Villagrán's] stadium," there was no doubt that its true author was not Villagrán but "*Vasconcelos himself*," and that it was Vasconcelos's legacy that his own UNAM Stadium honored above all.⁶⁸ Bravo's text was published as part of a historical survey of Mexico's sports architecture, the main point of which was to present the Olympics as the climax of a long continuum of "national," "Mexican" innovations in the field stretching as far back as the

pre-Hispanic period. Bravo's discussion of his own work as part of this mythical trajectory was self-serving, allowing the architect to inscribe himself within an imagined national trajectory of sports architecture.

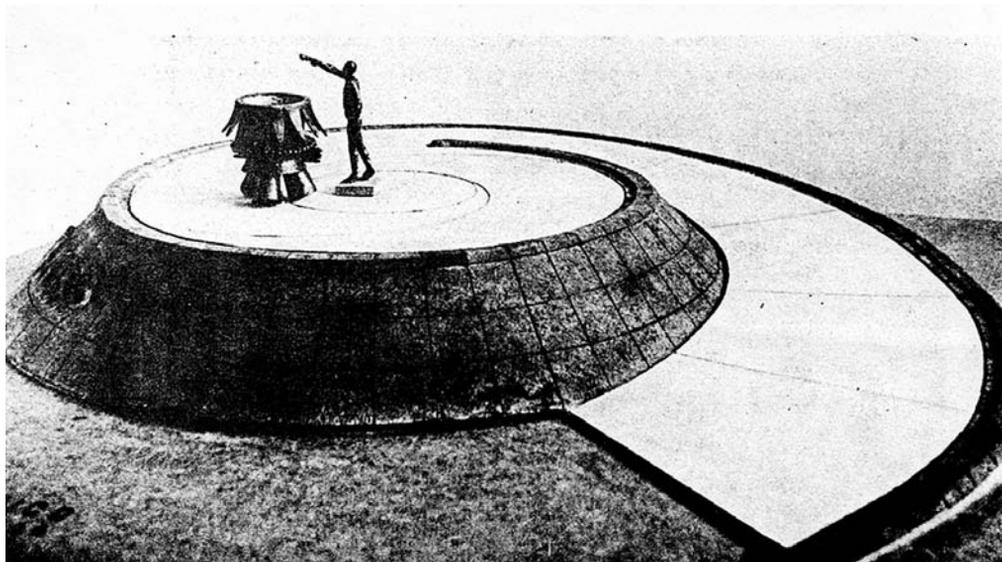
Spectacles produced at Mexico '68 perpetuated this narrative through what Gallo describes as "stadiographic" events. These events, he claims, are not limited to the actual physical boundaries of stadiums where masses gather to witness sports, political rallies, or other public rituals. Disseminated broadly through the mass media, the powers of persuasion of these events reach far beyond architecture's physical limits, with stadiums operating as mass media in and of themselves.⁶⁹ As such, these events involve the two overlapping audiences that, as seen at the beginning of this chapter, Ramírez Vázquez claimed the 1968 Olympics would reach and influence, and involve the architectural production as well as the political performance of the Aztec and UNAM stadiums.

Perhaps the most significant single stadiographic event of Mexico '68 was the arrival of the Olympic torch at the UNAM Stadium for the inauguration ceremony of the games. Eduardo Terrazas, responsible for the radiating patterns painted on the stadium's pavement, also designed the cauldron for the torch upon its arrival at the stadium. A flat, golden plate situated at the top of the stadium's north grandstands, the artifact was reached through a concrete stairwell painted in bright red, with light pink bands flanking it on either side (Figure 3.10). The cauldron granted new currency to the stadium's preexisting iconography, especially to Rivera's mural. The flaming object was placed directly above the meeting point of the male and female athletes in the mural, who ignite the Olympic torch above the family bearing the mestizo child. As seen from the stadium's urban facade on Insurgentes Avenue, one of Mexico City's busiest avenues, and the primary thoroughfare connecting the UNAM campus to the city center in the 1960s, the flame thus provided a glorious culmination to the mural's powerful imagery at a site of high urban visibility. Of course, the movement of the Olympic torch in Mexico did more than activate this artwork. Great symbolic value was also attached to the torch's carrier, Enriqueta Basilio, who was the first woman to hold such an honor in Olympic history. As Eric Zolov suggests, including a woman in this role expanded upon the MOC's desire to project an image of gender tolerance to the world, countering prevalent associations of Mexican normative culture with machismo.⁷⁰

Just as important as the receptacle or the carrier was the trajectory of the torch, whose journey to Mexico City was part of a set of carefully planned international events. October 12, selected as the opening date for the Olympics, officially commemorates Columbus's "discovery" of the New World in 1492.⁷¹ This choice fit within the rhetoric of "rediscovery" of Mexico that defined the MOC's promotion of the games, as well as the discourse of the propaganda pavilions produced in

the decade preceding the Olympics, which similarly emphasized Mexico's exotic aspects and invited foreign tourists and investors to discover them anew. Writing to an official in the port of Veracruz, Enrique Aguirre, an MOC official in charge of the torch's transcontinental passage, explained that its route would replicate Columbus's mythical journey, stop by stop. Its movement across continents, Old and New Worlds, would thus "commemorate two unforgettable dates, the discovery of America and the first Olympic Games hosted by Mexico in Latin America." After leaving Greece and passing through Genoa, "the birthplace of the illustrious Christopher Columbus," the torch would traverse Spain, leaving Puerto de Palos in the province of Huelva, as Columbus had, and arrive first in the Bahamas, finally entering Mexico via Veracruz. Because of its continental magnitude and visibility in the world media, the passage of the Olympic torch was to be regarded "as a grand opportunity that [Mexico] provides to every Spanish-speaking country."⁷²

The torch's passage would leave some permanent imprints on this New World landscape. One of these was an Olympic monument built, so the MOC claimed, at the exact point of Columbus's reported first sighting of the New World, at the island of San Salvador, off of the Bahamas (Figure 3.11).⁷³ The monument consisted of a sequence of spiraling, gently sloping platforms that culminated with the replica of a brazier excavated at Tlatelolco, the site of the Plaza of the Three Cultures. This brazier was intended to house a permanent Olympic flame, which would not only commemorate Mexico's Olympic torch, but would also deposit the copy of an Aztec archaeological artifact in a central American site, inscribing Mexico's "national" presence beyond national borders. This Olympic monument thus operated in a similar way as the movement of Olmec heads and other monumental pre-Columbian artworks and their replicas in world's fairs pavilions and traveling art shows, which left imprints of Mexico's official culture, "real" as well as "virtual," wherever they landed. Like the movement of these Olmec heads, the passage of the Olympic torch through this and all other New World territories was a process monitored closely by cameras of all types, and one that mobilized geopolitical forces across national borders. In fact, the entire journey of the torch, starting in Greece, was documented in film, and a selection of this material was featured in Alberto Isaac's *Olimpiada en México* (1968), the official promotional film for Mexico '68. Cameraman Benito Pliego was assigned the task of documenting the trajectory of the Olympic torch. As described by the executive producer of Isaac's film, the cameraman's task consisted of "record[ing] in 16mm film whatever is interesting in the Olympic Torch's route . . . even during its trips in the Spanish Navy's *Corbeta* [or battleship] and the ship of the Mexican Navy." Pliego's material was not merely produced for the official Olympic film, as he was "instructed to send [the MOC], if possible on a daily basis, and via the fastest air route, the exposed and undeveloped



16mm negative, so that after it is processed and copied, we can deliver it to our television stations to keep a constant stream of information.”⁷⁴ The Olympic torch’s journey was ostensibly the intended theme of all these processes of visual documentation, but the project was also envisioned in an interestingly self-reflexive manner. In a striking “Independent Note” to the film’s script, Alberto Isaac wrote: “Let’s pursue the possibility of the idea of *the film within the film. Camera filming another camera filming the torch.*”⁷⁵

While Isaac’s official work plants *Olimpiada en México* firmly in the trajectory of Olympic propaganda films like Leni Riefenstahl’s classic *Olympia* (1938), produced to promote the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, the film’s self-reflexivity also ties it to developments in experimental film of the late 1960s, where this condition became a significant narrative and structural resource.⁷⁶ The more specific production conditions of *Olimpiada en México* speak to the interest on the part of its makers with the film’s transmutability across media, specifically its ability to occupy the discursive space of television, the primary medium that defined Mexico ’68’s promotion and production, and had begun to decisively shape the design of facilities for mass sports in the case of the Aztec Stadium commission. Yet, inseparable from its virtual migration across media was Isaac’s film’s more concrete participation in the torch’s political journey. Before arriving at the UNAM Stadium, the Olympic torch was to make a stop of great symbolic importance. As the Spanish magazine *El Mundo Deportivo* reported in an interview with Ramírez Vázquez, on the eve of the Olympic inauguration ceremony the fire would arrive at the ancient city of

Figure 3.11. Mexican Olympic Committee, Olympic Monument on the Island of San Salvador, 1968. *Noticiero Olímpico*.

Teotihuacán, located about fifty kilometers northeast of Mexico City, wherein “a ceremony of reception of the torch will be held at the site’s central ritual precinct, the ‘Ciudadela’ and the ‘Temple of Quetzalcoatl.’” “The spectacle,” the article claimed, “will be a large-scale ballet, with nearly a thousand participating dancers, inspired by the ancient pre-Hispanic tradition of the periodical renovation of the ‘New Fire’”:

This ceremony in pre-Hispanic times was celebrated during every fifty-two-year cycle, as it was believed that at the end of that period of time humankind would end. The last cycle, at sunset, would call for lights in all households to be turned off, most objects and material possessions would be discarded, and the dawn of the new day was awaited. The new sunrise symbolized the renovation of humankind and ensured its existence for the next fifty-two years. This event was celebrated by lighting a “New Fire,” a ceremony that took place for the last time during Aztec times, in 1507.⁷⁷

Long before the Olympics, Teotihuacán was one of the sites through which the Mexican state had promoted national culture in world’s fair displays and other exhibitions, as well as at such institutional venues as the MNA, where a room devoted to Teotihuacán rivaled the Aztec room in size and prominence. The ancient site of Teotihuacán was enshrined as an official monument during the Porfiriato, and this was one of the locations where the centennial of Mexican independence was celebrated in September 1910.⁷⁸ The elaborate Olympic performance at Teotihuacán thus produced simulacra of not just an Aztec celebration, but perhaps more presciently, of the many modern-day reinventions of this Mesoamerican site and its associated mass events. Moreover, if taking possession of the Tlaloc monolith in 1964 was a gesture intended to endow the single-party state with talismanic powers aimed at controlling the management of water, the Teotihuacán spectacle emphasized the state’s alleged ability to “start” and “end” time itself.

Amalia Hernández, founder and director of Mexico’s Folkloric Ballet, and choreographer Julio Prieto, a collaborator of Ramírez Vázquez’s in the design of the MNA as well as the earlier Chapultepec Gallery, staged this performance. Like the museums and exhibitions of the period, the Ballet was central to the construction of Mexico’s international image during the “miracle.” As ethnomusicologist Sydney Hutchinson argues, the Ballet’s close association with state-sponsored cultural production in Mexico can be dated back to 1958, when the company was asked to complete a theatrical tour of North America by the Mexican department of tourism.⁷⁹ By the late 1960s, the Ballet had become so associated with the official cultural apparatus of Mexico that formal requests for its performance were

as commonly received at the Ballet's own offices as they were at the secretariat of foreign affairs, a government agency with which, on paper, the dance troupe shared no official ties. Like the physical site of Teotihuacán, the Ballet had also become a prominent tourist attraction in Mexico City by that time, boasting an elaborate headquarters designed by Agustín Hernández, the brother of Amalia Hernández and the architect of Mexico's Expo '70 pavilion.⁸⁰ For example, a January 1968 article published in Guatemalan newspaper *Impacto* discussed the Ballet's tourist appeal in telling terms: "Alongside visits to Mexican museums, those of Anthropology, Modern Art, History, Popular Arts, and others, seeing the Ballet perform is obligatory for every visitor to Mexico." "This is so much the case," the article claimed, "that none of the numerous foreign heads of state who have visited Mexico in the last few years have failed to admire it during their short official stays."⁸¹

The imagery associated with the Ballet's Teotihuacán performance grew directly out of the visual, spatial, and dramatic repertoire that Ramírez Vázquez and his circle had articulated in the decade before the Olympics, and which, as discussed in preceding chapters, also had deeper roots in the official visual cultures of the Porfiriato and the immediate postrevolutionary years. In all of the world's fairs of the "miracle," moreover, dance performances had been presented as emblematic of the fluidity and hybridity of Mexico's official identity, as a domain of culture where social, ethnic, and cultural divisions were harmoniously negotiated. The Teotihuacán performance was no different. Dressed in colorful "folkloric" attires from Mexico's diverse regions, the Ballet's dancers performed as Enriqueta Basilio made her way across the Avenue of the Dead, Teotihuacán's ceremonial avenue, and up the stone stairs of the Pyramid of the Moon, where she lit a ceremonial flame with the Olympic torch. The dancers performed as a poem attributed to Nezahualcoyotl (1402–72), ruler of the city-state of Texcoco, part of the Aztec triad alongside Tenochtitlán and Tlatelolco before the Conquest, resounded in the voices of Salvador Novo, who recited it in nahuatl language and in French, actor Raúl Dantés, who recited it in Spanish, and Noel Lindsay, translator of Novo's 1967 edition of *New Mexican Grandeur*, who recited it in English.⁸² In its mass-mediated incarnation, the Teotihuacán performance literally extended into the UNAM Stadium, where Basilio arrived the following day to light Terrazas's Olympic cauldron. In Isaac's *Olimpiada en México*, the two temporally and spatially distanced events are rendered part of a seamless, heroic sequence. The Olympic redesign of the UNAM Stadium's spaces was geared specifically to facilitate this mass-mediated dialogue, blurring the boundaries between the venue's physical spaces and the film's representation of them. Related in its color scheme to the rest of the Olympic graphic campaign, Terrazas's torch receptacle at the stadium was

also modeled directly after the ceremonial staircase of the Pyramid of the Moon. The receptacle's modern form thus contained the tense duality between "old" and "new" objects, spaces and events that the Teotihuacán performance rendered spectacular. Remote spectators watching the opening of the Olympics on television or film were meant to witness the relationship between ancient and modern architectures as a continuous one. In an elaborate operation of montage, monuments, modern and ancient, would come to inhabit a common media texture of seemingly undifferentiated forms, temporalities, and imaginations.

TECHNO-FOLKLORE

The dialogues between sports and mass media in which the Aztec and UNAM stadiums participated originated before the Olympics, but in both cases these dialogues were redefined by the symbolic demands of the Olympic celebrations. The UNAM Stadium's Olympic reactivation entailed a tense and dynamic fusion of "old" and "new" Mexican architectures and spaces. At first glance, these gestures do not seem to share much with the apparent abandonment of folkloric tropes that defined the iconography of the Olympic infrastructure built specifically for Mexico '68, especially of Candela's Sports Palace and Manuel Rosen's Olympic Pool and Gymnasium. As discussed earlier, Lamberto Álvarez criticized the formal language of Mexico '68's new infrastructure for not being "Mexican" enough. Other critics further problematized the relationship between architecture and identity. Architect Alberto González Pozo published the most significant essay about the relationship between the old and new generations of Olympic buildings in an MOC-sponsored issue of the journal *Artes de México* devoted to the Olympic campaign. In his lengthy article, González compared this campaign to the construction of the UNAM University City fifteen years earlier. He claimed that just as in the early 1950s the production of the numerous and diverse buildings of the City had compelled Mexican architects to assess Mexico's position vis-à-vis the advances of architectural modernism worldwide, 1968 offered them an opportunity to think about the country's position in this trajectory yet again, despite the fact that "[n]ot all the Olympic buildings are new, and not all the new buildings were specially built for the Olympics." Despite the similarities between these two scenarios, there were also significant differences between them. González claimed that international advances in building technology had given rise, between the early 1950s and late 1960s, to "environmental design," a field that "comprises the scientific control of lighting, heat, humidity, sound, communication, circulation, and, in general, all the functions that render comfortable and useful the architectural microclimate." His comparison of the programs of the UNAM Stadium and those of the Sports Palace and Olympic swimming pool registers this transformation:

[At the UNAM Stadium] there are few areas or rooms that are not simply those of the scene of the competition, (the sports field) and those for the public attending . . . , [whereas in the Sports Palace and Pool] there probably is a greater proportion of areas assigned to annexed locals and services: more dressing rooms, more training spaces, more places for journalists, more cabinets for radio and TV, more offices, more special boxes, more parking lots, more entrances and controls of all kinds, more engine and installation rooms, more pipelines, guts and visceras of a real living organism.⁸³

In discussing these transformations in the programs of sports facilities, González points to several of the changes this chapter has analyzed so far. He singles out the impact of growing class distinctions, the magnified public visibility and consumption of sports, and the heightened presence of architecture within mass-media networks. In particular, he dwells on the growing importance of media as a part of the programs of sports infrastructure, a phenomenon by no means exclusive to Mexico, but certainly still novel at the time he wrote his essay. Indeed, buildings had not internalized the technological apparatus of the mass media in Mexico to this extent before the late 1960s. González also saw a clear “technological emphasis” in Mexico’s new Olympic architecture not merely on a level of function or construction techniques, but also in terms of this architecture’s formal language, and, like Álvarez Gayou, he had mixed feelings about this emphasis. Invoking Herbert Marcuse’s *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), González wondered if the imagery of Mexico’s Olympic buildings resulted from passive adaptation to the demands of the technological establishment that Marcuse critiques.⁸⁴ González argued that such recent buildings as Buckminster Fuller’s geodesic dome that housed the United States Pavilion and Frei Otto’s pneumatic roof covers built to enclose the German Pavilion for Expo ’67 in Montreal were notorious examples of such adaptation (Figure 3.12). Not functional by any means, these exhibition spaces aestheticized the imagery of the first world’s industrial might. González hence thought it was not surprising that “the two more important Olympic buildings that will be inaugurated [in Mexico] are . . . a dome and two hanging roofs,” and questioned whether the designs for Candela’s Sports Palace and Manuel Rosen’s Olympic Pool and Gymnasium were merely derivative echoes of Expo ’67’s aestheticization of technological forms, produced at an “underdeveloped” architectural event.⁸⁵

González seemed relatively unconcerned with the more direct models for Rosen’s Gymnasium and Pool and Candela’s Sports Palace: two sports facilities built for the Tokyo and Rome Olympics. Rosen’s Gymnasium and Pool were clearly designed to emulate Kenzo Tange’s National Gymnasium complex, built at Yoyogi Sports Park in Tokyo in 1964 (Figures 3.13 and 3.14).⁸⁶ Tange’s complex

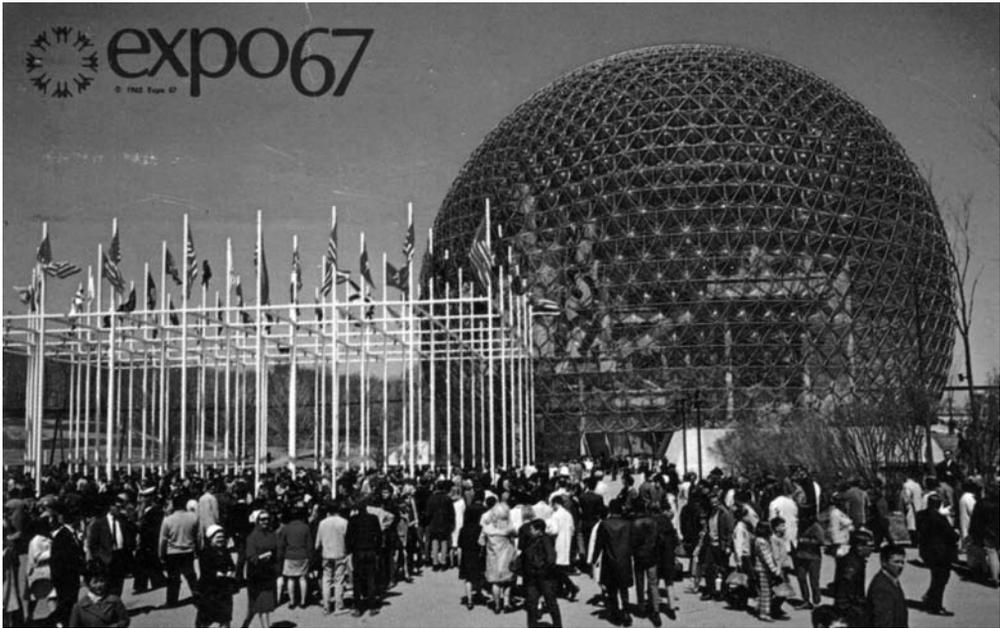


Figure 3.12. Richard Buckminster Fuller and Cambridge Seven Associates, United States Pavilion, Expo '67, Montreal. Postcard. Author's collection.

was made up of two annexed facilities, a larger swimming and diving pool and a smaller arena used for Olympic basketball. The highly sculptural curving slope of its two-part roof defined the pool's exterior.

Seen from the outside, the larger building was defined by the interaction between two interlocking swirling forms. The effect was caused by the curvature of two lightweight sloping steel roofs, anchored together by concrete pillars. The smaller building's curving roof, also defined by a catenary curve, was anchored around a single mast. Rosen's project heightened the play of its double catenary from the beginning sketches for the project, which directly echoed the most famous photographs of the interior of Tange's pool. At the level of program, the combination of gymnasium and pool at Rosen's project was also modeled directly after Tange's.⁸⁷

In turn, the most significant precedent for Candela's dome was Pier Luigi Nervi and Annibale Vitellozzi's Palazzetto of Sports for Rome 1960. With architect Marcello Piacentini, Nervi had also designed the Palazzo dello Sport for the same event (Figure 3.15). Like Candela's structure, the Palazzetto was intended to host a variety of sports events. Built fully of reinforced concrete, it was anchored to the ground by thirty-six piers of precast concrete supporting a shallow dome.⁸⁸ Candela took his structural cues for the Sports Palace, whose flattened dome superstructure rested on very similar piers, directly from Nervi's project. The interplay of criss-crossing, thin ribs leading up to a compression ring at the very center of the dome,

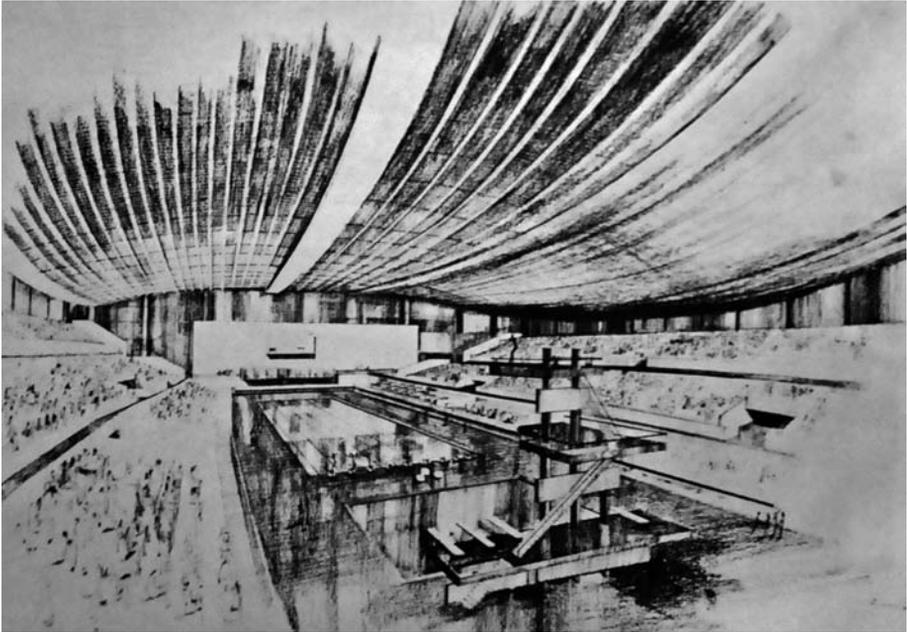


Figure 3.13. Manuel Rosen, Olympic Gymnasium and Pool, Mexico City, 1968, rendering. *Noticiero Olímpico*.

Figure 3.14. Kenzo Tange, Olympic Gymnasium and Pool, Tokyo, 1964, interior. Photograph by Nathan Vanderlaan.





Figure 3.15. Pier Luigi Nervi, Palazzetto of Sports. Courtesy of Jean-Louis Cohen.

which itself led to a lantern with clerestory windows, defined the Palazzetto's interior. Candela's Palace essentially replicated this setup, but introduced variations of hyperbolic paraboloid forms throughout the ceiling.

González likely elided these precedents because he was concerned with more than establishing formal and programmatic parallels between Olympic buildings. He argued that while in conversation with international architectural developments, Candela and Rosen's buildings took critical distance from them. The differences between the Mexican and non-Mexican works of architecture of this period were crucial, particularly in the case of Candela. Candela's dome was not a geodesic dome, but "a network dome." The Sports Palace was "a sphere segment . . . 'subdivided' by crossing it in two directions by meridians that converge in four poles out of the same segment." "The geodesic domes patented by Fuller," on the other hand, "[were] based [on] the mutation of an icosahedron formed by twenty equilateral triangles." Fuller's forms, which he produced by "exploding" the icosahedron over the surface of a sphere, could hence be expanded indefinitely, and the basic formal principle of Fuller's structure was thus defined by the logic of Fordist mass production.

In distinguishing Candela from this paradigm for the production of architecture, González invoked narratives about the architect that characterized his way

of building as uniquely Mexican on materialist grounds. “Candela’s dome, does it suffer a demerit because it is not susceptible to being industrialized? Evidently not, and its differences with Fuller’s space-structures rather underline [the Sports Palace’s] brightness.” González claimed that Candela had “neglected” domes during the two decades before the Sports Palace construction, building cheap and thin concrete shells in ways that took “full advantage of a certain equilibrium that existed . . . in the building market.”⁸⁹ This equilibrium was established by the conditions of Mexico’s “miracle”: “a demand for light and economic structures for relatively big open spaces . . . , a relative availability of basic materials such as concrete and its aggregates . . . and above all, a cheap manpower, which plays a very important role in the low cost that is attained with this type of warping surfaces.” This Candela had done, while “Fuller has multiplied his patented geodesic domes . . . with the resources of a superdeveloped country.”⁹⁰

As González pointed out, wooden domes existed in Mexico. Left out of his discussion of the politics of the geodesic dome was the existence among Mexico’s Olympic buildings of at least one such structure modeled directly after Fuller’s designs: the greenhouse at the Oaxtepec Center in Morelos, forty miles outside of Mexico City, which hosted athletes in a lower-altitude environment than the capital city during the Olympics. Built in 1965, the dome made of an aluminum structure and a plastic skin was not among the most publicized Olympic structures in Mexico, but was certainly not ignored, as it was the first structure of its kind built in the country.⁹¹ Fuller’s ideas may have had some currency in design circles in Mexico City, not least due to his intervention at the Sixth World Congress of the International Union of Architects (UIA), celebrated there in 1963.⁹² Most surprisingly absent from González’s discussion, however, was Mexico’s own contribution to Expo ’67, a building that positioned the hyperbolic paraboloid at the center of an official Mexican cultural display and articulated a sophisticated response to the building technologies that the Expo rendered spectacular. As seen in chapter 1, this pavilion simultaneously shed light on Mexico’s underdeveloped construction industry and praised the cultural specificity of the country’s “intricate roofing traditions” as defined by the usage of the hyperbolic paraboloid. In defending Candela’s “Mexican” forms and construction techniques, González echoed the argument that this pavilion made, enshrining Candela’s usage of the hyperbolic paraboloid as the most significant architectural gesture of Mexico ’68. But was there any actual correlation between these arguments and Candela’s contribution to Mexico ’68? As we shall see, Candela’s Sports Palace certainly negotiated some of the symbolic burdens that these arguments addressed, if not exactly in the most obvious ways.

AN OLYMPIC LANDMARK

By the time his Olympic commission came about, Félix Candela's celebrity status was well established. Numerous publications had added to his fame over the years, and Candela himself had been deft, since the mid-1950s, at describing his methods of calculation and construction in matter-of-fact terms as different from those of architects as they were distinct from the language of engineers.⁹³ A June 1968 spread in *Holiday* magazine, published in the United States, that promoted Mexico's tourist attractions to popular audiences speaks to Candela's mass-media appeal. The spread includes such Mexican personalities as Rufino Tamayo, Salvador Novo, Amalia Hernández, and film star María Félix, and features Candela as a "builder" underneath the naked steel ceiling of his unfinished Sports Palace, the boundaries between the architect and his Olympic monument in the works rendered ever ambiguous.

Candela's prominent participation in the Olympics is partly explained by his long-standing ties with Ramírez Vázquez, with whom he collaborated in the construction of a set of markets in Mexico City in the late 1950s.⁹⁴ Yet his participation in the Olympics exceeded the realm of architecture, and the less visible role he played in the course of Olympic organizational efforts gives us a sense of his more expansive prestige. With a great deal of effort, Candela managed to secure the loan of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937), then at New York's Museum of Modern Art, to the Mexican Olympic Committee, a highly symbolic gesture intended to bolster Mexico's humanist claims to peacefulness. Famously portraying the horrors of the Nazi bombing of the Spanish village after which the painting is titled, Picasso's work represents events equally significant to the histories of the Second World War and of the Spanish Civil War. The latter conflict had precipitated the exodus of Candela and other fellow Spaniards to many parts of the world, prominently to Mexico. Having first contacted Picasso in March 1968 to little avail, Candela had afterward negotiated the loan with officials at the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Early in October, as the work's shipment to Mexico was already in the works and with visible signs of increasing violence in Mexico City, a distressed Candela, who denounced the political violence of the October 2 massacre, and whose daughters took part in multiple student protests, wrote to Arthur Rosenblatt, curator at the Metropolitan, canceling the loan. In his letter, Candela offered his apologies for months of negotiations, informing Rosenblatt that "the [Mexican] authorities did not consider opportune the exhibition of the 'Guernica' under the disgusting political circumstances."⁹⁵

Although Candela's role as a cultural broker had mixed results, his architectural intervention in the Olympic context was more successful, becoming the most officially promoted of Mexico '68's venues. As such, Candela was placed in a

compromised position similar to that of many of his fellow architects and intellectuals, whose work was sponsored by the single-party state whose actions they often critiqued. While the Sports Palace was in the works, the *Carta Olímpica*, published by the MOC as an official periodical, claimed that it was “certain” that the Palace would be regarded as “*the symbol of the 1968 Games.*”⁹⁶ On account of its distinctive form, the Palace required little help to become memorable. Although it was not accurate about what kind of dome the Palace was, *Artes de México* best summed up the ways in which the structure generated meaning by combining technological spectacle and monumental scale:

Automobile drivers who use the eastern part of the Miguel Alemán Speedway in Mexico City do not need to be told the location of the Sports Palace [because] the building is *its own signpost with its enormous geodesic dome* studded with 121 copper-sheathed points.⁹⁷

Candela never held sole authorship of the Sports Palace, although the structure is often attributed exclusively to him. In a 2008 monograph about Candela, Enrique de Anda provides a problematic summary of Candela’s design process for the Palace by citing this phrase by the architect: “One night I just went home and sketched out the structure exactly the way it was built later, without any doubts in my mind about it.”⁹⁸ To say the least, this was a curious claim for Candela to make, particularly given the zealotry with which he defended Castañeda and Peyrí’s authorship against the tendency to attribute the Sports Palace’s design solely to him when the project first began to receive media coverage.⁹⁹ Candela’s coauthors also discussed the issue of the Palace’s collective authorship with the media. In an August 1966 interview, for instance, Enrique Castañeda argued that, for a project of that magnitude it was logical for a team of three architects to have been chosen, because it would be “all but impossible for a single architect to have the adequate focus necessary to deal with each of the [Palace’s] aspects of function, beauty, and security.”¹⁰⁰

Throughout his career, Candela had grappled with the issue of authorship, having often participated as a structural designer in collaboration with architects in the various works for which he became famous, in part because of his lack of an architectural license, a result of his foreign education and lack of accreditation in Mexico. Even when listed as a consultant subordinate to such architects, however, Candela garnered praise for the structural sophistication of these works, and he usually overshadowed the “official” creators of these buildings. Increasingly, Candela overshadowed his peers, specifically on account of his use of paraboloid forms. In his discussions of the “hypar” during the 1950s and 1960s, Candela consistently

presented it as a structural element specifically suited to the cultural and economic climate of the Mexican “miracle,” echoing González Pozo’s argument in his essay about Mexico ’68’s architecture and the usage of this form in an official capacity at Mexico’s pavilion at Expo ’67. Candela’s attempts to “Mexicanize” his own practice started long before the Olympics. In an October 1960 interview, for example, he presented the 1955 “hypar” vaulting of the Mexico City stock exchange building as the point of origin of a uniquely Mexican architectural lineage. Enrique de la Mora designed this structure with Fernando López Carmona, while Candela produced structural calculations for it.¹⁰¹ Candela continued to position himself as the torchbearer of the “hypar’s” Mexican evolution in the years to follow, most aggressively in the months leading up to Mexico ’68. In a June 1968 interview, for instance, he claimed that he “did not invent” this structural form, whose “theoretical development began in France in the 1930s.” Although in France only “four or five examples were built,” however, by the 1960s these same forms were visible “in any gas station in Mexico.” “In France, bureaucratic organization was opposed to this kind of construction,” while in Mexico “*it could prosper thanks to the climate of freedom that prevails.*”¹⁰²

The climate of freedom that Candela described was not merely one of relatively lax labor laws and avid speculative urban growth, which made his building practice possible. It was also the climate of political aperture that had facilitated his exile to Mexico alongside a number of civil war refugees, and the environment that allowed his practice to flourish for virtually the entire duration of dictator Francisco Franco’s regime in Spain (1939–75), which Candela vehemently opposed. The relationship between civil war exiles, the Franco regime, and the organization of Mexico ’68 was especially complicated. Although an official Spanish delegation would not initially participate in the Olympics in reaction to the presence of a number of civil war exiles like Candela in Mexico, Ramírez Vázquez made special efforts to ensure that a delegation was indeed sent in the end.¹⁰³ María González Pendás remarks that despite Candela’s public image as a builder unconcerned with political questions, his innovations as a builder and his political commitment are inseparable. An understanding of technology’s emancipatory potential that was not necessarily aligned with a nationalist Mexican cause, despite the fact that Candela instrumentally aligned himself with official cultural production in Mexico, connected these two domains. In his correspondence with fellow Spanish exiles Candela reveals himself to be convinced of the possibility of the formation of a pan-Hispanic “superpower” based on the expansive geography of Hispanic culture, which would include Spain itself as well as Mexico and other locations in Latin America where exiled Spaniards like himself were located. González Pendás demonstrates that Candela understood the hyperbolic paraboloid

as a geometrically “limitless” form analogous to the potentially limitless geography of this supnation: “saddle-shaped, ruled surfaces with double curvature, ideally boundless, and generated by the succession of straight lines.” “These [hyperbolic paraboloids] were static,” she argues, “when thought of as abstract and extensive geometries, from which Candela would isolate a fragment.”

Echoing theories by mid-twentieth-century thinkers about technology and urban space like Lewis Mumford and Sigfried Giedion, Candela also argued that aggressive technological development could not only enslave and alienate laborers and consumers, but could also have the opposite effect, exerting a “humanizing” function over their increasingly technologically dominated existence. Given the fast-paced and low-cost construction of his shells, and in light of their comparatively “primitive” building techniques, Candela argued that his method of construction in concrete, which he attempted to export to other parts of the Americas through his firm Cubiertas Ala, could serve to create housing as well as industrial buildings, and would thus facilitate the political and humanistic development of the entire continent. Ultimately transnational in its technical applicability and aesthetic value, Candela believed his hyperbolic paraboloids were “*of Mexico*, but not necessarily willing to represent [Mexico] aesthetically or historically.”¹⁰⁴

Candela’s pan-Hispanist vision was problematically Eurocentric because it privileged “Hispanic” culture over the many different cultural traditions of the Americas. His formulation was even redolent of the overt cultural imperialism of other Franco-era versions of pan-Hispanism, which professed the superiority of “Hispanic” culture. Candela’s position vis-à-vis both direct state patronage and the co-optation of his formal language in such official cultural displays as Mexico’s pavilion at Expo ’67 was thus no less awkward than that of the rest of Mexico’s cultural intelligentsia at this time. His political and architectural universalism coexisted with interpretations of his work as uniquely “Mexican” on cultural grounds, a perception that he probably encouraged for instrumental reasons, but which was also the result of a set of other symbolic demands, not merely “official” or Mexican ones. Indeed, the Mexicanization of Candela’s work, official and unofficial, was always a mass-mediated affair, as popular narratives about Candela perpetuated an understanding of his built work as uniquely rooted in Mexico’s economic and cultural climate. For instance, in *The X in Mexico*, Irene Nicholson naturalized the relations of production in the Mexican construction industry that Candela’s buildings rendered spectacular, and inscribed them within a heroic biographical tale that celebrated the architect’s transnational background:

Candela’s arrival in Mexico in 1939 as a Spanish republican refugee seems to have been due to a series of lucky accidents. He was not to begin evolving his shell

structures for another decade, but he had come, as it happened, to a country *ideally suited for the development of his special talents: a country prepared to experiment, and with a labor force of unskilled but artistically sensitive workmen.*¹⁰⁵

Nicholson was certainly not the first to fetishize the Mexican manual laborer through a primitivist lens. Manual laborers in general, and construction laborers in particular, were featured prominently in representations of the expanding urban landscape of Mexican cities, especially Mexico City, throughout the twentieth century. While many such representations glorified the laborer's perceived centrality to economic and political transformations, others attempted to expose the exploitative relationships that kept these laborers alienated from the wealth their labor generated, especially during the "miracle."¹⁰⁶ Nicholson's explicit reference to the simultaneous naïveté and skill of Mexican construction workers was a central piece of the argument that reified Candela's practice by occluding a clear picture of the social relations of production that structured it and presenting it instead as a "natural" result of Mexican economic growth.

Yet, in the wake of the Olympics, beyond stressing the "Mexicanness" of his work Candela had a more ambitious argument to make about the international visibility of his practice and its status as an international representative of Mexican architectural ingenuity. Later in the June 1968 interview cited earlier, Candela claimed to have "exported" back the hyperbolic paraboloid to the first world through the dissemination of his work in multiple media, simultaneously speaking to the fulfillment of his pan-Hispanist agenda while echoing the nationalist rhetoric that pervaded discussions of cultural production in Mexico at the time. In acknowledging that the mass-mediated dialogue between his buildings and their representations was central to his practice, he also reveals that he understood the hyperbolic paraboloid's condition as both a concrete architectural feature and a malleable body of images and narratives not exclusively architectural in nature. His works of the 1950s and 1960s, where the hyperbolic paraboloid transcends its own use value to become thoroughly aestheticized, render this understanding visible.

If at the beginning of his career Candela had garnered fame for the cheap and efficiently built concrete shells for various warehouse spaces in Mexico that employed this structural form, in such later works as his Los Manantiales Restaurant (1958) in Xochimilco, his warehouse for the Bacardí rum factory in Mexico City (1960), or the unbuilt project for the Aztec Stadium (1960), Candela had made the hyperbolic paraboloid his signature stylistic resource, its aesthetic value far exceeding its claims to practicality and structural efficiency (Figure 1.14). In the case of the Aztec Stadium seen in this chapter, the venue's hyperbolic paraboloid roof was explicitly—albeit tendentiously—discussed as an expensive

and impractical solution by the construction firm that eventually built Ramírez Vázquez's competing design. In the discourse surrounding each of these projects, however, Candela had deployed the hypar as a form charged with cultural, economic, and technological associations specific to Mexico.

In light of this trajectory, it was logical for Candela's Sports Palace commission—the largest he would ever receive, and the last he would complete in Mexico before leaving permanently for the United States in 1969—to elevate this form to become Mexico's primary architectural contribution during the Olympics.¹⁰⁷ The dimensions of the Palace roof made the use of concrete, Candela's preferred material and the one he and commentators discussed as most suited to Mexico's building environment, technically unfeasible. But the interior of the Palace's roof—made up of steel pipes and covered with wooden planks superseded by copper plates on the outside—was nevertheless defined by the play of his trademark “hypars,” paradoxically preserving a perceived sense of Mexican cultural specificity despite its obvious differences from virtually all of Candela's previous buildings. The culturally specific gesture that Candela's Palace would inscribe within the visual environment of the Olympics was almost wholly anticipated in an important early discussion of Candela's work that differentiated his practice from that of Nervi on account of the usage of the hyperbolic paraboloid. Writing in 1961 in Buenos Aires in a book that would contribute to Candela's reputation as a continental master, architect Félix Buschiazzo claimed that

Nervi could have arrived in a certain way to common results as Candela in terms of logic and economy [of construction], but with procedures and a degree of beauty that was different. Using prefabricated elements, of reinforced concrete, assembled during construction work, he managed to cover large clear spans, many times with surfaces of double curvature. *But I don't believe [Nervi] has used the hyperbolic paraboloid or its combinations yet.*¹⁰⁸

Despite the specific values attached to the hyperbolic paraboloid, the statement that the Palace made vis-à-vis the rest of Olympic spectacles was not limited to the discursive value of just one architectural detail, especially since these sophisticated structural forms were not the only distinctive elements the Palace exhibited. A great deal of the Palace's mystique was related to the rest of its materials, primarily its copper roofing. The roof's reflective surfaces quickly became ubiquitous in the imagery surrounding the Palace, not least in the vast number of technical publications about its materials, many of which visually exaggerated the reflective qualities of its surface. Most impressive among these is perhaps the June 1968 issue of *Cuprum*, Mexico's most prestigious specialized journal devoted to the

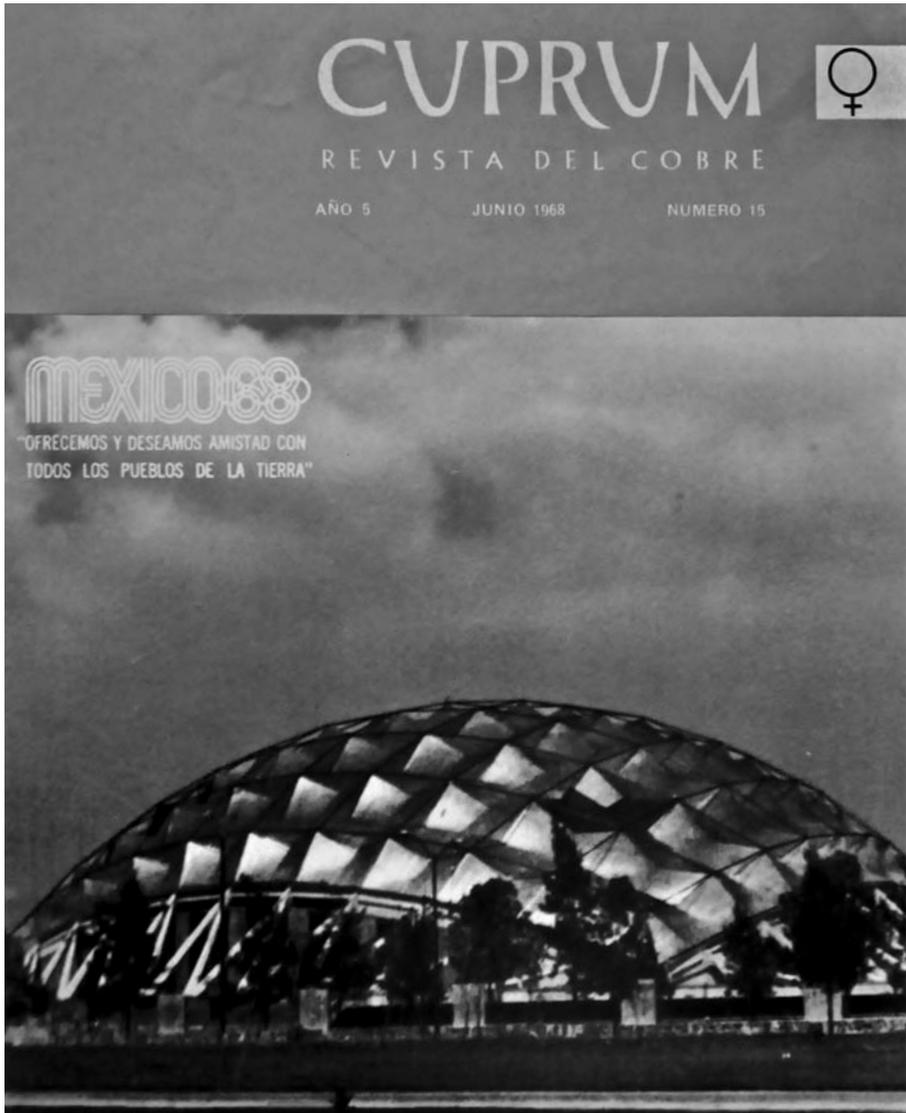


Figure 3.16. Cover of *Cuprum* (June 1968) showing Félix Candela's Sports Palace.

cover (Figure 3.16). In an unpublished May 1968 article, New York-based engineer Henry E. Voegeli best articulated what a host of other commentators of the day argued about the Palace's expressiveness in ways that collapsed together aesthetic and technological fascinations. Originally, Voegeli had intended to publish the article in *Progressive Architecture*, but its publication was called off for telling

uses of copper in architecture and engineering, which included an exaggeratedly shiny rendering of the Palace's copper roof on its

reasons: it was considered redundant in light of the vast number of articles about the structure already published at the time:

The Sports Palace has a fifth dimension. Its elegant design and the discrete choice of materials has created an effect which has never been seen before. The warm sunlight reflected from the copper is exhilarating [*sic*] and enlivens the entire architectural composition. This will endure, but to a lesser degree as the copper ages to its more somber bronze coloring. However, the bold texture of the faceted dome and the constantly changing perspective will insure contrasting shades and shadows and an exciting appearance, even if the highlights are softer.¹⁰⁹

Voegeli discusses Candela's Sports Palace with recourse to well-established tropes used to describe architectural monumentality. For Voegeli, the Palace is not merely a solid, permanent, and memorable structure, meant to withstand the passage of time, but it also aestheticizes its own technological sophistication while resonating, because of the conspicuously precious surface of its copper roof, with many buildings designed to represent state authority such as state and national capitols that, though different from the Palace in formal and structural terms, also include copper-clad domes. The Palace's technological edge, moreover, was not merely symbolic. The building was a very tangible intervention in Mexico City's southeastern fabric, and its unique facture mobilized the engineering and construction industries in Mexico to a considerable extent. As in the case of other technological innovations promoted as part of the Olympic effort, the Palace's structure and materials were advertised heavily, and the technical knowledge related to the project was disseminated in both specialized and popular publications. In official presentations of the building, the Palace's structural innovations were always advertised first. In a December 1967 meeting with the press, for example, Ramírez Vázquez described the Palace as "circular, without a single column," much to the awe of those in attendance.¹¹⁰ In other quarters, the Palace's technological "edge" was also promoted heavily. Mexico City daily *Excelsior*, for instance, stressed that "scale models" had been built to test the resistance of the Palace's roof at "up to two hundred kilometers per hour." Reports of these tests had relatively wide dissemination, and photographs of the scale models made their way to newspaper reports and other mass-media outlets.¹¹¹

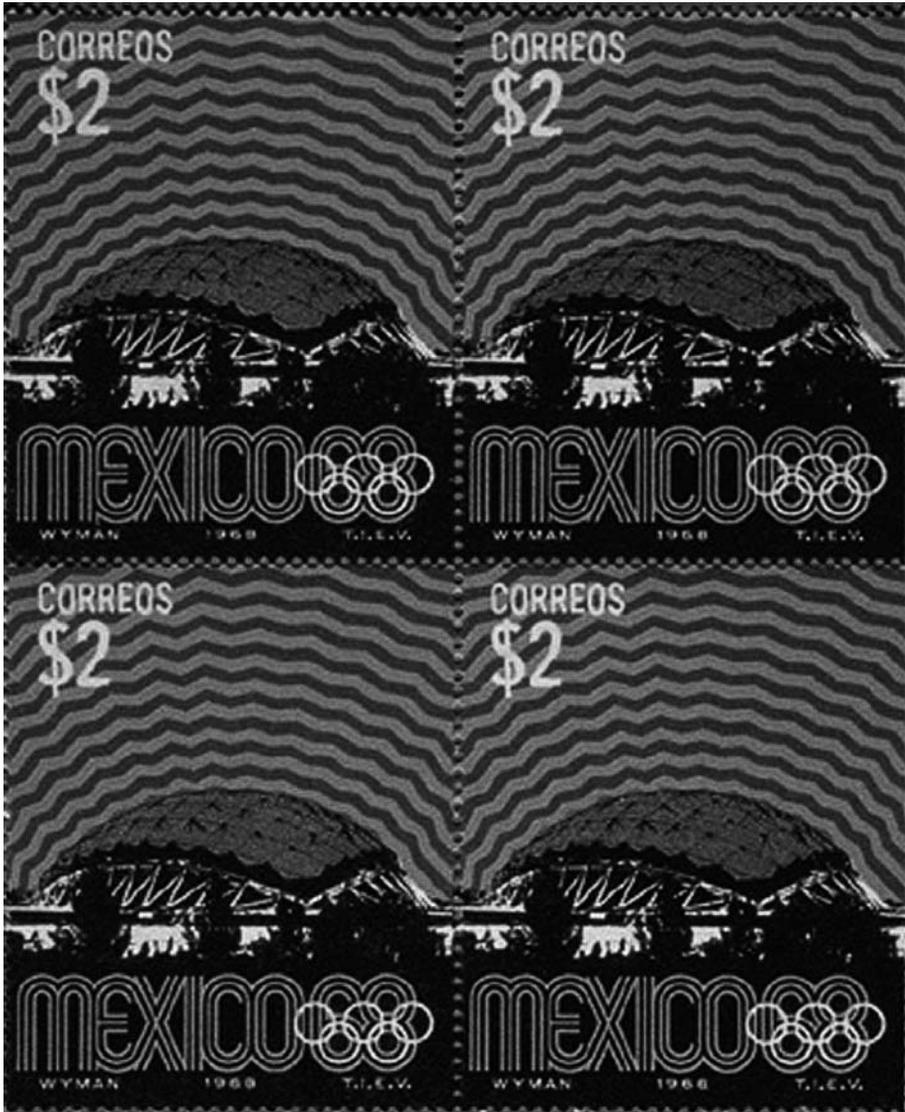
AMBIGUOUS MATERIALITIES

The Sports Palace's relationship to the mass media amplified its political and technological resonance. In implicit admission of the interdependence between the physical building and its representations across media, Candela described his

project as nothing less than an image machine: the Sports Palace was meant to create “an interesting shape from any point of view; interior or exterior, from the pedestrian’s, or even from an aerial point of view, since [the Palace] is located in an area of permanent airplane transit.”¹¹² We could extend the architect’s mention of “any point of view” beyond the mere physical, or geographic, position of its

Figure 3.17. Lance Wyman, designer, postage stamp for Mexico ’68 including Candela’s Sports Palace.

observers and include the multiple political, aesthetic, and technological discourses with which the Sports Palace’s production



overlapped. Candela had long understood the importance of the interdependence between media and architecture, and such an understanding was crucial to the success of his buildings in the decades leading up to the Olympics, much as it was integral to the exhibitionary culture of the “miracle” at large. This interdependence also facilitated the temporary Olympic spectacle. The Sports Palace broadcast live and delayed images of Olympic basketball and boxing, but its “broadcasting” was more expansive. The materials and forms of the Sports Palace were quickly integrated into the graphic propaganda of the games, with images of the building becoming ubiquitous in the publications, postage stamps, and myriad advertisements for them (Figure 3.17). The Sports Palace mediated the tensions between the seemingly conflicting folkloric and cosmopolitan discourses about Mexican national identity that had defined official works of propaganda long before the Olympics began. The relationship between Candela’s architecture and the exhibitionist practices of the single-party state would not stop with the Olympics, however, as Candela would also have a prominent role in the architectural campaign of the Mexico City subway.

Candela was not the only Olympic architect who understood the dialogues between materials, culture, and notions of cultural identity that the production of official architecture entailed. In an unpublished 1965 text, Ramírez Vázquez and Mijares described the use of concrete in their Aztec Stadium as not just a structural resource but as “the result of economic and technical premises, workforce, context, idiosyncrasy, maintenance, temperature, image, color, texture, etc.”¹¹³ Although it accounts for a number of variables involved with its production and architectural function, this celebration of concrete obscures the intersection of labor and capital that lay at the foundation of the Aztec Stadium commission. It similarly obscures the more subtle presence of a bureaucratic administration that facilitated the collusion between state, media, and large-scale construction interests and would organize a similar confluence of forces in the context of the Olympics.

Ramírez Vázquez and Mijares’s praise of concrete nevertheless reveals their understanding of the expansiveness of the material beyond its use-value in architecture and accounts for some of its cultural significance and malleable discursive potential. This understanding of the fluidity with which architecture and its materials could interrelate with the mass-mediated image allowed for the wide range of televisual events staged in relation to Mexico ’68’s sports infrastructure. The campaign of total design orchestrated in tandem with the production of permanent Olympic sports venues, discussed in the next chapter, produced results no less dramatic and momentous, even though it mobilized an entirely different range of materials, many of them used in Mexico for the very first time.

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FOUR TOTAL DESIGN OF AN OLYMPIC METROPOLIS

 Mexico's entry to the 1968 Milan Triennial Exhibition of Decorative Arts and Modern Architecture, organized by Italian architect Giancarlo di Carlo, was an installation devoted to Mexico '68 commissioned by the MOC, and designed by Eduardo Terrazas (Plate 4). Like the exteriors of sports facilities examined in the preceding chapter, the entryway to the installation, essentially a slit-like opening in one of its walls, was defined by the radiating patterns of Lance Wyman's Olympic logo. Yet unlike these painted pavements, which were limited to the exterior of the three most visited Olympic facilities, at Milan the patterns that defined the Triennial installation's exterior continued seamlessly inside. Embedded onto a plush surface of soft rugs, these patterns defined the installation's interior spaces, including its walls and ceiling. The Triennial's theme was "The Large Number," a title that, tapping into current debates about architecture and planning's possibilities for social inclusiveness and abilities to respond to the rapidly industrializing world, made reference to the multiplication of commodities spawned by industrialization, as well as to the plights for political representation and economic emergence of the masses of the world's poor.¹ The Mexican installation's response to this theme was cynical at best, as it entailed the magnified display of the logo and other images in the pavilion, such as those of Mexico's Olympic facilities and of large crowds gathered to witness mass sports, which were blown up and displayed on its walls.

Terrazas positioned multiple fruits of the Cultural Olympiad at the center of his display. Sculptures representing Wyman's logo in three dimensions were spread throughout his installation, which also included numerous samples of booklets and pamphlets produced to promote Mexico '68 by the Olympic publications office, headed by designer Beatrice Trueblood. Based in New York before Mexico '68

and summoned by the MOC to orchestrate its publicity campaign, Trueblood and her collaborators had disseminated these documents internationally in the months leading up to the Olympics. The production of this office happened on a gargantuan scale. Michael Gross, a designer who worked at the publications office, recalls that the team devoted to producing these print materials had to “smuggle the print paper into [Mexico] in order to be able to print the number of posters necessary for all the [Cultural Olympiad] events.”² Terrazas’s installation showcased the large numbers involved in this production process, and Triennial visitors were encouraged to take these publications with them in an extension of the publication office’s promotion activities.

Terrazas’s installation hence rendered Wyman’s Olympic logo and the propaganda project that the logo represented monumental in more ways than one, not only because of the number of items derived from the logo that it showcased, but because it literally gave the logo itself architectural scale. As seen in an image of the model for the installation, so directly intertwined were image, text, and space that the placement of the installation’s interior walls followed the lines of the letters and numbers that spell out the phrase “Mexico 68,” creating an uninterrupted, all-around enclosure (Figure 4.1). The political circumstances surrounding the 1968 Triennial nevertheless interrupted the pavilion’s ambitions to create an atmosphere of fully enveloping, total design. The original plan was to hold the Triennial between the months of May and July 1968, but the event, which opened on May 30, was closed down only hours later because of the protests by design and architecture students in Milan. The show reopened in July and remained open until the end of the month, albeit under very tense conditions.

Because its totalizing ambitions clashed with social and political turbulence, the Triennial installation’s fate is emblematic of the vicissitudes that defined the entire constellation of design interventions for Mexico ’68. For the Olympics, Terrazas and architect Manuel Villazón, who headed the Department of Urban Ornamentation at the MOC, attempted to create an environment of total design like the one that defined the Triennial installation, except at the urban scale of the Mexican capital. This project, like others that dealt with urban circulation, beautification, and way-finding signage during Mexico ’68, was fraught with numerous obstacles. In the context of all these interventions, the ambitions of the artists and designers commissioned by the MOC to create an Olympic urban scenography (principally Wyman, Terrazas, and Mathias Goeritz) related uneasily with the capital city’s ambiance of unrest, in addition to facing multiple logistical challenges.³

Although they were defined by these localized conditions, many of these projects

Figure 4.1. Eduardo Terrazas, Mexico Pavilion, Fourteenth Triennale of Milan. Olympic Design Program, 1968, model. Courtesy of Eduardo Terrazas.



also dealt with a broader horizon of preoccupations that extended far beyond Mexico's borders. Like the museums and sports venues built in the years leading up to the Olympics, the creation of an urban ambience for Mexico '68 provided an opportunity for the exhibitionist state to showcase its perceived organizational accomplishments to an international audience. Nowhere was an attempt made to show these alleged triumphs more aggressively than at the primary hospitality space designed for the Olympics, the Camino Real Hotel (1968). In this project, which was funded by private patrons and was aligned directly with the MOC's official agenda of promotion, Wyman and Goeritz collaborated with architect Ricardo Legorreta to create a deeply theatrical set of environments intended to translate Mexican cultural identity for foreign visitors. While this translation process reinforced the propaganda aims of the wider Olympic promotion campaign, it also underscored the severe limitations of the enterprise.

DIVISIVE GRAPHICS

As a response to the dispersal of Mexico City's Olympic facilities given the lack of a centralized Olympic campus, and in light of the mixture of "old" and "new" sports venues that were put to use during the Olympics, the MOC sponsored an ambitious attempt to unify the look of these facilities by graphic means. Central to the campaign was Wyman's generative image of expansive radiating patterns (Plate 1). The logo's simultaneous "Mexican" and "international" iconographic associations have long been hotly debated. The authorship of the image and its implementation as part of the Olympic branding campaign are also controversial, even today. Wyman and British designer Peter Murdoch have consistently received credit for the image's creation, despite Terrazas's claims to its coauthorship.⁴ In a 2011 interview, Wyman pointed out that Terrazas worked as a jack-of-all-trades, coordinating, both logistically and from a design standpoint, the translation of his graphic system into an orientation system to navigate the city. Wyman nevertheless claims that the logo itself and its many urban derivations were primarily his work.⁵

These internecine divisions within the MOC mirror the tense relationship that the Olympic branding campaign shared with the urban and social context of the Olympics themselves. Wyman and Terrazas are only two of the figures involved in the discussion. For their part, Ramírez Vázquez and some of his close collaborators have consistently traced the origin of the Mexico '68 logo back to the textile patterns made by Mexico's Huichol peoples, examples of which Wyman encountered for the first time at the MNA in 1966. At the MNA, Wyman also saw abstract and Huichol visual art merged together for the first time in Mathias Goeritz's mural for the Huichol ethnographic galleries. In occasionally chauvinistic ways, Ramírez Vázquez and Alfonso Soto Soria, one of the MNA's *museógrafos*, have played down

the ostensible dialogue between the Olympic logo and modern art, especially Op Art of the mid-1960s, which Wyman, Terrazas, and Trueblood have in turn emphasized. For instance, in a 2005 interview Soto Soria claimed that the image system of the Olympics was created entirely by the Huicholes, with no input from designers associated with the MOC.⁶ Terrazas and Trueblood responded aggressively to this claim: “How can it be said that an Indian, who lives in isolation by choice in the mountains of Jalisco and Nayarit . . . , who does not know what a logo is, could have created something as complex as an international image programme for a country?” In addition, they draw a sharp distinction between Wyman’s interventions, which they claim were limited to graphics and lasted only “six or seven months,” and production of the entire design and promotion campaign for the Olympics, which was organized over the course of more than two years and involved a wide range of media. They have noted that “If you limit yourself to . . . the graphic elements of logo and symbols and alphabet,” which Wyman was responsible for, “you are not talking about the Mexico 68 image programme as a whole.”⁷

Given the collaborative platform through which it was produced, determining the authorship of the many components of the Mexico ’68 graphic system is now exceedingly difficult. Indicative of just how much cultural capital was at stake in the project is the fact that battles over such authorship have continued to unfold for more than forty years. Relative to establishing the specific authorship of each of the campaign’s components, understanding the adaptation of the Mexico ’68 graphic system to suit the urban agenda of the MOC is somewhat easier. Terrazas’s urban planning efforts certainly relied on Wyman’s graphics, but they translated them into a different project altogether, not only expanding their design application but also confronting them with a host of organizational challenges.

Terrazas designed a color-coded map of Mexico City where each of the sports venues was assigned a logo whose font was based on Wyman’s Mexico ’68 image, as well as an individualized pictogram to identify the sports events it would host (Plate 5). Unlike the logos for sports venues at Tokyo ’64, designed by Masaru Katsumie and Yoshiro Yamashita, that included full human figures performing each sport, in Mexico abstract line drawings of fragments of bodies performing the sport, or of sports equipment, served as their primary identifying image. In Terrazas’s orientation system, specific sports were associated with specific colors, so that a total of twenty colors, which corresponded to the number of distinct sports at the games, were used. According to Terrazas and Trueblood, this range of colors was drawn from “the vivid rainbow of Mexican folklore.”⁸

Color coding worked on a number of scales. The painted pavements expanded the scale of the radiating patterns of the Mexico ’68 logo to that of the urban environment around them, but other interventions worked at a much smaller scale.

For instance, when visitors purchased tickets for a sports event, the tickets would include two colors, the color of the sports facility itself in the color-coded Olympic map, and a different color that determined where in that facility they would sit during their visit. Several weeks before the Olympics started, information booths that explained this system were installed throughout Mexico City's main avenues, and *edecanas*, young women wearing clothes defined by the radiating patterns of the Mexico '68 logo, explained this system to the public, making the system's components and design logic very hard to miss for residents and visitors to the capital. In Terrazas's words, the dissemination of this information was intended to give "people a sense of belonging to a sector of a larger unit" within the urban-scale plan he and his team devised.⁹

Although Terrazas originally thought of painting the actual pavement of the primary roads leading to each of the Olympic sports venues with the color assigned to the sport that would be performed there, this alternative was not pursued because it would have proven too costly. In this original plan, the Paseo de la Reforma, one of Mexico City's largest and most heavily transited avenues, would have been painted entirely in red, while the Circuito Interior, the ring road that then extended around the boundaries of the city core, would have been painted in magenta, a color often described at the time as "Mexican pink."¹⁰ Although painting the streets was not feasible, the light posts present in each of these roads were painted with the colors in Terrazas's map starting at a height of 120 centimeters from the ground, high enough that passengers in vehicles circulating through the roads at high speeds could perceive them as a continuous surface on either side of the thoroughfares.

Similar attempts to use color applied to roads and other urban surfaces as an orientation and planning device had been undertaken before. Most significantly, architect and painter Roberto Burle Marx had used color widely as an element of urban planning, specifically in the design of gardens. In such works as his Parque del Este project in Caracas, Venezuela (1956–61), a large-scale park located in the middle of a modernizing capital city, patterns of color on the ground, created by colored pedestrian surfaces and from arrangements of tropical plants, had served to divide sectors of the park according to their function.¹¹ Highly similar to the radiating pavements of Mexico '68 are Burle Marx's undulating pavements of black and white mosaic, produced for the promenade at Copacabana Beach, in Rio de Janeiro.¹² Although the promenade would not be finished until 1970, Burle Marx's patterns explore how large-scale graphic elements and color can prove central to urban interventions, much like Terrazas's projects in Mexico. Other precedents for Terrazas's more specific understanding of the road as a device for urban communication are also relevant. For instance, for the tenth Milan Triennial organized



in 1954, Italian industrial designer Bruno Munari grafted the icon of the event, a cartouche enclosing the letters X and T, where X stood for “tenth” and T stood for “Triennial,” onto the pavement of the roads leading to the event (Figure 4.2).¹³

Terrazas’s interpretation of the genesis of his Olympic mapping project, however, is conveniently “folkloric” and “international” at the same time, and elides references to precedents like Munari’s or Burle Marx’s. Interestingly enough, Terrazas positions state-sponsored exhibitionary practices at the center of his

Figure 4.2. Bruno Munari, pavement signage for Milan Triennale, 1954. From Mildred Constantine and Egbert Jacobson, *Sign Language for Buildings* (New York: Reinhold, 1961).

creative process, as he claims that he first thought of painted roads when he learned about a ceremony that takes place in the town of Huamantla, in the state of Tlaxcala, where streets are overlain with woven rugs of various colors in the context of a yearly carnival. Terrazas was introduced to this practice far from Mexico, during the international travels of Fernando Gamboa's exhibition, *Masterworks of Mexican Art*. When it was shown in Warsaw, Leningrad, and Paris between 1961 and 1962, Terrazas worked as an exhibition designer on its layout, where photographs of the colored Huamantla roads were included.¹⁴

In addition to the color coding of the city's primary thoroughfares and Olympic venues, Terrazas's team implemented other way-finding schemes that, while certainly in dialogue with international precedents, also retooled traditions of crafts in Mexico. Terrazas had large-scale sculptures positioned in front of each of the sports venues. The sculptures, six meters in height, rendered monumental the Mexican tradition of *Judas* sculptures, figures of wood or cardboard burned to celebrate Easter festivities. Featuring an anthropomorphic figure performing the sport that the facility hosted, each sculpture was hence individualized yet recognizably of the same type as those identifying all the other sports venues. Terrazas also installed large balloons, the fruits of a vibrant local craft industry in Mexico, at the sports venues. The first balloon, installed in the summer of 1968, was ten meters in diameter and had a transparent surface. It was placed on the ground in front of the Mexico City cathedral at the Zócalo for a photo shoot for U.S. magazine *Harper's Bazaar* (Figure 4.3). The idea was to begin to familiarize residents of the capital with the presence of large balloons as markers of the Olympic cultural and sports events that were to come a few months later. After this successful experiment, Terrazas had balloons made by Mexican artisans, three meters in diameter and covered with the radiating patterns of the Mexico '68 logo, tied by strings to the ground so they would rise above the urban fabric and could be seen from the color-coded roads at each of the Olympic sports venues. Balloons of the same kind were also installed at the Mexico City airport, in order to welcome international visitors to the capital, and at the Olympic media headquarters on the Paseo de la Reforma.

The creation of Terrazas's Olympic environment in Mexico City included more than mere attempts to help visitors and residents locate the Olympic venues. Reinforcing the pacifist agenda of the Olympics, commercial advertisements in Mexico City's primary avenues were replaced with billboards that advertised the theme of international peace. The MOC and foreign Olympic delegations produced these billboards as part of the Cultural Olympiad. During the Olympics, these kinds of messages also temporarily replaced advertisements on television.¹⁵ Both Ramírez Vázquez and Terrazas have claimed that their intention was to



Figure 4.3. Eduardo Terrazas, Olympic balloon installed in front of Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral, 1968. Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Mexico City.

bombard residents and visitors to the capital with these kinds of messages in order to encourage peaceful behavior and a general atmosphere of cordiality. Ramírez Vázquez claims that Marshall McLuhan’s popular theorizations of mass media’s persuasive potential motivated this strategy.¹⁶ Visually, the aggressive dissemination of such slogans as “Everything Is Possible in Peace” and of images of a white peace dove aided Ramírez Vázquez and Terrazas’s task. Produced at various scales, the peace dove was not only featured in large billboards around the city and installed on the painted light posts along primary roads, but also pasted, in its much smaller sticker version, onto cars that circulated throughout the capital, and even in other world cities. These images and words were meant to become emblematic of the MOC’s stated humanistic aims, echoing the many official pronouncements in the mass media by Ramírez Vázquez and his collaborators.

Given the violence that erupted in the months leading up to the Olympics, the ambitions of the Olympic organizers to accomplish social control through visual and graphic communications now seem exceedingly sinister. Although a bombardment of information on this scale had never been orchestrated in Mexico before, the Olympic system of urban signage had precedents. In fact, the MOC’s creation of an Olympic environment directly recalled the September 1910 centennial independence celebrations during the Porfiriato’s last days, where the word *Paz* was

reiterated in a network of commemorative urban decorations throughout Mexico City's main thoroughfares, especially the Paseo de la Reforma.¹⁷ In an attempt to reaffirm the Porfiriato's hold over an increasingly unstable territory, the centennial festivities were also organized with foreign eyes in mind, and Porfirio Díaz was adamant about encouraging the participation of foreign diplomatic delegations at them. Strikingly, these celebrations preceded the conflicts that would define the early days of the Mexican Revolution, starting in November 1910. In this context, the notion of peace was not intended to refer to a lack of social conflict. Instead, it was conceived as an articulation, in the urban realm, of the legitimate monopoly of violence of the Porfirian state, which enabled the regime to preserve political stability through various modalities of repression despite multiple political, economic, and social threats. In Díaz's personalist regime, the leader himself became the central focus of this propagandistic formulation, so that "peace" and "Porfirio" were to be understood as concepts tantamount to one another.¹⁸ In 1968, the term "peace" had a similar connotation. Not necessarily meant to deny the existence of social conflict in Mexico, it was instead an articulation of the capacity of the single-party state to govern by guaranteeing a similar kind of stability in the face of multiple threats through the exercise of hegemonic persuasion and legitimate violence. Interlaced with this formulation was the humanist notion of the "Olympic truce," the idea that because Olympics often took place in the midst of politically divisive climates, they could temporarily set aside social conflict for the sake of competitive sport.¹⁹ Deployed in public space, the iconography of Olympic peace attempted to present this formulation as consensually Mexican, although the PRI leadership retained ownership over it. The central components of this intervention, here design practices again operated as acts of governance, providing the single-party state with an aesthetic language for its political formulations, and attempting to mold the behaviors of the consumers of this language to conform to the state's normative agenda.

The appropriation of the total design campaign, especially the dove, as a symbol of police repression by Mexico City's protesting students illustrates how this same graphic system also provided opportunities for the expression of dissent.²⁰ Immediately after it was designated as the propaganda language for Mexico's single-party state, Wyman's system became a central component of these urban protests. The graphic language of the Mexico '68 logo was used to evoke the massacre of October 2 and other events of urban violence. In one striking case, Wyman's Mexico '68 postage, which was instrumental in the event's international promotion, turns the concept of peaceful athletic competition, central to the Olympic message, on its head. Wyman's postage stamp, intended to commemorate the heroic combat of athletes in Olympic boxing, is pressured to instead represent the



Figure 4.4. Lance Wyman, designer, Olympic postage (boxing), 1968.



Figure 4.5 Anonymous, “Año de la Lucha Democrática,” 1968 Student Movement Graphics, 1968.

much less heroic physical confrontations between police forces and students that defined the October 2 events (Figures 4.4 and 4.5). As such, the totalizing ambitions of the Mexico '68 graphic system served the purpose of state propaganda, but they also allowed for the negotiation of its hegemonic claims. The avowed universal legibility and ease of practical use of the system facilitated this *détournement*, as it was precisely the abstract simplicity of its graphics and typeface that allowed for a wide range of politically charged reinterpretations.

CHOREOGRAPHING CITIES

Terrazas's interventions were primarily designed to turn attention away from the impoverished areas of Mexico City that abutted some sports venues and the vast stretches of the city where impoverished residents remained excluded from the Olympic spectacle. Alongside the advertisements for peace, the urban sculptures, and the Mexico '68 balloons, the painted pavements surrounding the sports facilities were intended to dissolve the Mexican capital into a city-scaled “Op art piece.”²¹ Beautifying the capital before the Olympics had not been an easy task indeed, and one that the MOC had not undertaken alone but in collaboration with the Departamento del Distrito Federal (DDF) between 1966 and 1968. In February 1968, for example, an MOC architect complained to his DDF collaborators that “at Río Churubusco . . . ,” an avenue leading to Candela's Sports Palace, “there were

shantys and *tugurios* that will give a depressing image to the [visiting] tourist and athletic groups.”²² The MOC attempted to manicure these types of dwellings, providing buckets of paint for their inhabitants and instructing them to paint their facades in the same palette as Terrazas’s Olympic circulation campaign.²³ Although the festive atmosphere of the Mexican capital was praised widely and Olympic preparations were presented as the result of the voluntary collaboration between Mexico City residents and the MOC, these measures were undertaken in the midst of a militarized, tightly controlled city.²⁴

Terrazas’s efforts to network the Olympic facilities into a unified Olympic scenography were informed by the deep-seated economic and social divisions that defined the shape of Mexico City in the late 1960s, as well as by the specific challenges that, from a planning perspective, the Olympic building campaign faced.²⁵ Beyond the confines of Mexico City or the divisive atmosphere of the MOC design team itself, however, Terrazas’s projects were also conversant with a shifting ground of planning culture, especially if we bear in mind his experiences as an architect in New York, London, and Paris, where he was active before he worked for the MOC, and after he graduated from Cornell University with a master’s degree in 1960.²⁶ Not the first cosmopolitan Mexican professional to be conversant with international planning interventions, Terrazas had a degree of access to such expertise that few of his contemporaries in Mexico had at the time.

In addition to his experience with world’s fairs and exhibitions, examined in chapter 1, Terrazas had worked at the London architectural office of Howell, Killick, Partridge and Amis, the Paris office of Candilis, Josic & Woods, and the New York office of industrial designer George Nelson, all influential architecture and design firms of the mid-twentieth century. At Nelson’s office, Terrazas met Wyman, who worked there as a graphic designer between 1963 and 1966.²⁷ Added to his experiences as exhibition designer for “official” propaganda exercises, which familiarized Terrazas with the exhibitionist state’s practices of cultural representation, these experiences also situated him in relation to shifting paradigms in urban design, shifts from *tabula rasa* approaches that ignored or downright contradicted the preexisting morphologies of cities, to attempts to plan more or less responsively on the basis of these conditions.²⁸

Especially important among these shifts were those that situated the concept of urban networks at the center of attention. Mark Wigley has described the ways in which such figures as Constantinos Doxiadis, Alison and Peter Smithson, and Shadrach Woods himself theorized the forms and functions of cities through various definitions of the network during the early 1960s.²⁹ In an attempt to position streets as the central element in the generation of civic life, including the expression of collective dissent, Woods advanced the idea of planning cities around

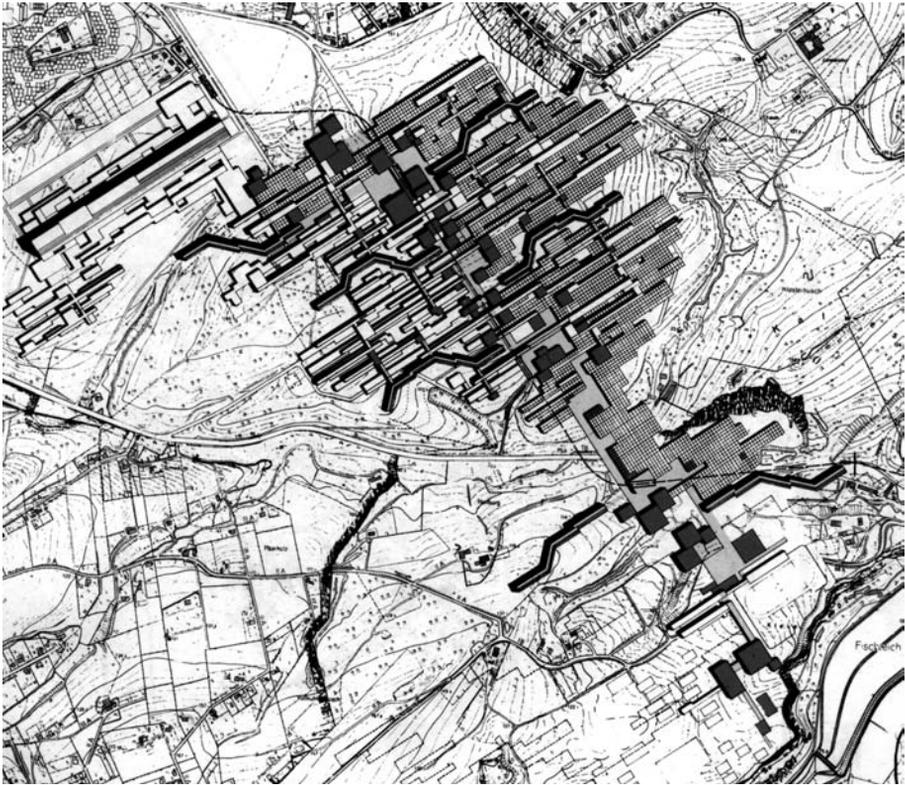


Figure 4.6. Candilis, Josic & Woods, Bochum University campus project, 1962–63. Shadrach Woods Papers and Photographs, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

streams of pedestrian circulation. Woods's firm explored these ideas in competitions for the mid-sized, rapidly industrializing cities of Caen-Hérouville (1961) in northwestern France and for the Asua Valley in Bilbao (1962) in northern Spain.

Terrazas worked on the 1962 proposal for a university campus in the German city of Bochum formulated at Woods's office, which belongs squarely to this generation of schemes. Significant for the attention it paid to the natural landscape of the university facilities located on a gently rolling hill, the Bochum project was also defined by its exploration of pedestrian traffic as the generator of urban and architectural form (Figure 4.6). A good sense of Terrazas's thinking about urban form circa 1964 (after he left Woods's office) can also be gleaned from a project he developed with Lev Zetlin, structural engineer for Mexico's Pavilion at the New York World's Fair (Figure 4.7). Terrazas and Zetlin designed a city in the air as a set of raised megablocks connected by suspended urban passageways. Although utopian projects for cities in the air were common in the 1960s, the project speaks to Terrazas's Parisian experience, resembling nothing more than the work of Paris-based



Figure 4.7. Eduardo Terrazas and Lev Zetlin, Project for a City, 1964–65, detail of model. Photograph by the author.

architect Yona Friedman, especially Friedman's *The Spatial City*, a series of schemes developed in 1959 as a city of weblike extensions above the ground. The Terrazas–Zetlin project develops this logic further, as it similarly positions a network of superstructures above the landscape of a gridded city.³⁰

After his Parisian work, and in addition to product and exhibition design schemes, at Nelson's New York office Terrazas also came into contact with the designer's city planning interventions, which had significant points of intersection with Woods's. Nelson had partici-

parted in a well-known symposium organized by architect Paul Zucker at Princeton University in 1944, where the relationship between urban monuments and the planning of cities was a central theme. "Faced with the problem of the monumental building," Nelson claimed at the symposium, "the modern architect seems to lose his creative faculties and he becomes a critic."³¹ Nelson's work after the mid-1940s emphasized the importance of monuments as focal points of city centers and positioned circulation in streets as the primary generator of urban form. By the early 1960s, Nelson's work had taken an increasingly critical tone vis-à-vis suburban growth in the United States, especially as this growth came to be defined by the preeminence of highways and car traffic to the shaping of cities, which racially and socially segregated urban centers.³²

Influential for Terrazas, Nelson's thought also shaped Wyman's early practice. One of Wyman's early commissions was his design of the graphics for the sculptural installation of items inspired by U.S. car culture for Nelson's Chrysler pavilion for the New York World's Fair. As Wyman recalls, the graphics responded to his and Nelson's interests in the various forms of detritus yielded by mid-twentieth-century American cities. They were also part of a way-finding project intended to orient visitors through the pavilion, which consisted of several "islands" of separate

displays.³³ Although this was his first way-finding scheme, it was not his first graphic design for a pavilion. While working at the office of industrial designer William Schmidt, he created a branding scheme for the U.S. pavilion at the 1962 trade show organized in Zagreb, Croatia. For this event, Wyman translated the image of a logo for the pavilion into a three-dimensional sculpture that also served as an iconic marker of the building, prefiguring the expansive logic of the 1968 graphic campaign for Mexico. Wyman had also done some early branding work for the General Motors Company in Warren, Michigan, which integrated signage, sculptures, and icons, a combination of elements that defined his interventions in Mexico. Wyman's early experiences suggest that, even if its urban implementation was not entirely his work, the visual system he devised for the 1968 Olympics was certainly prepared to have expansive applications beyond the creation of graphics alone.³⁴

Terrazas's and Wyman's trajectories allow us to inscribe the circulation projects organized for Mexico '68 as being tied simultaneously to the specific urban conditions of Mexico City, as well as to a broad range of international planning and design concerns. Common to the projects of Nelson and Woods during the early 1960s was an interest in the flows of circulation that determined the forms of cities. The color coding of Mexico City and the graphic language implemented to direct visitors between each of the Olympic venues by Terrazas and Wyman take on these concerns, exploring the relationship between visitors' movement through urban space, architecture and sculpture's monumental presence, and the graphic dissemination of information. The extent to which the program was socially inclusive is more than debatable, premised as it was on the segregation of "undesirable" areas of the city, and on the strategic display of only the areas of the Mexican capital that lived up to the graphic and sculptural standards of the planned spectacle. In addition, it explicitly served the propaganda and social-control agendas of the PRI-governed state. The fissures at the heart of these interventions were no less visible in the rest of Olympic schemes, especially the single permanent sculptural intervention that the event spawned.

SPECTACLES OF URBAN GROWTH

Prefiguring his prominent role as a cultural bureaucrat during the 1960s, in the decades leading up to the Olympics sculptor Mathias Goeritz had situated his work at the intersection of the expansion and gentrification of the Mexican capital city and the aestheticized display of this process. In Zucker's symposium, Sigfried Giedion claimed that postwar city planners should derive inspiration from the spaces of world's fairs, which engendered "collective emotional events, where the people play as important a role as the spectacle itself."³⁵ Partly as a response to this

clarion call and in conjunction with the inauguration of El Eco, an experimental display and performance space he designed in Mexico City, in 1953 Goeritz launched an “emotional” manifesto that called for the creation of spaces designed not to express specific political views, but to stir human emotions. A disavowal of the official cultural apparatus of the Mexican state, which had tended to commission politically committed art until that time, this manifesto and the projects that would follow it were also the markers of Goeritz’s entry into this apparatus as a significant player, an entry solidified by his appointment as curator of the national museum at the UNAM in 1954.³⁶ Goeritz hence came to occupy a similar space of clientelist accommodation as other members of the “miracle’s” intelligentsia, critiquing the production of official culture in Mexico yet working within the boundaries of its patronage system. By the late 1950s, Goeritz’s works not only became increasingly visible as part of state-sponsored commissions, but they were also directly aligned with the rise of speculative real-estate ventures in Mexico City. By the end of the decade, these works also took on an increasingly urban scale, as exemplified by his and Luis Barragán’s Satellite City towers, completed in

1957 (Figure 4.8). Five hollow towers of reinforced concrete painted in primary colors and placed in the middle of a highway, these “emotional” monuments

Figure 4.8. Mathias Goeritz and Luis Barragán,
Torres de Ciudad Satélite, Naucalpan, 1957.
Photograph by the author.



popularized a residential subdivision developed by Mario Pani in Naucalpan, northwest of Mexico City.

Completed a decade later, Goeritz's Route of Friendship expanded the speculative logic of the Satellite City project, having first been envisioned as a national network of sculptural clusters that would generate urbanization and economic growth across Mexico. In this first project, perhaps more dramatically than in any project that gained visibility during the "miracle," the aspirations of the Mexican state, its allied corporate interests, and the artists aligned with the official cultural apparatus coalesced. Goeritz first envisioned the project as a network of sculptural nodes placed alongside two major highways in Mexico, one traversing the country from north to south, the other from east to west. In Goeritz's words, "the idea was to erect on these highways groups of towers or gigantic primary forms of a height of 150 to 300 [meters] at points some 160 km apart in underdeveloped or even in desert regions." The monuments, he argued, would spur urban development in such areas: "Around these structures stations could be built, beginning with hotels, gasoline stations, and small regional pre-Hispanic and popular art museums, in order to become centers for automobile tourism."³⁷

In his intervention at a conference about urban sculpture organized as part of the Cultural Olympiad in June 1968, architect Max Cetto, who had collaborated with Barragán at the Gardens of El Pedregal in the 1940s, questioned the morality of Goeritz's project, which had a projected cost of a billion pesos, along similar lines as questioning of the Olympic project and the Aztec stadium seen in previous chapters. This amount of money, Cetto claimed, could be used instead to "build thousands of rural and professional schools as well as hundreds of hospitals for Mexican farmers. . . . Aside from this, I wonder what the dwellers of the cities meant to grow automatically, albeit slowly, around the towers in the desert will eat, if these towers are not also used as water tanks and grain silos."³⁸ Given their scale, Cetto argued that the completion of projects such as the one that Goeritz proposed would also pose questions of a political order for artists and architects, who would need to achieve enough power to implement them, and needed adequate institutional channels to do so. In self-serving fashion, he proposed that an institution modeled after the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM), of which he had been a member during the 1930s, should provide a model for an institution that could give artists and architects increased political purchase in Mexico.³⁹

The Route of Friendship was not the first project by Goeritz to have questionable utopian ambitions on a grand scale. Daniel Garza argues that Mario Pani envisioned his Satellite City as part of a network of similar cities located throughout Mexico. In Pani's plan, monumental sculptures like those produced by Goeritz and Barragán would have served as the markers of enclaves of urban development on a

national scale.⁴⁰ A more modest type of project that combined large-scale housing with monumental sculptural markers was actually implemented *en masse* along the U.S.-Mexican border as part of the Programa Nacional Fronterizo (PRONAF). In describing his first Route of Friendship project in similar terms as those of Pani and the PRONAF's advocates, Goeritz thus aligned himself with other state-sponsored ventures where monumental sculptural interventions and the construction of cities and roads were seen as technologies of modernization and engines of economic development meant to function in conjunction with one another.

In invoking the relationship between cultural display, motorized travel and national modernization to describe the Route of Friendship and the Satellite City, Goeritz and Pani were expressing fairly common views that Mexican entrepreneurs and politicians had held for quite some time before the "miracle." As historian of tourism Dina Berger has shown, motorized travel, particularly between the United States and Mexico, was one of the primary forces behind the expansion of Mexico's tourist industry, particularly after the opening of the highway between Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, in the state of Tamaulipas, in 1936. This infrastructure initiative had major economic repercussions, and its promotion was steeped in the same kinds of developmentalist discourse that Goeritz and Pani rehashed to promote their projects. Furthermore, mentions of national unity and universal brotherhood as the motivating forces behind these projects, which Goeritz especially redeployed for his Olympic intervention, were crucial ingredients of the language that accompanied the construction of highways and roads in Mexico throughout the twentieth century.⁴¹

None of the ideas behind the national-scale origins of the Route of Friendship were entirely unprecedented when seen beyond the Mexican artistic and design context, either. As Goeritz himself admitted while discussing the Route of Friendship, German sculptor Otto Freundlich had come up with the idea for a "Route of Human Fraternity," a concept eerily similar in form and rhetoric to Goeritz's, as early as 1936. According to Goeritz, who claimed not to have known Freundlich's project before formulating his own, Freundlich's scheme "was to consist of two roads, one leading from Holland to the Mediterranean and the second one through Germany and Poland to Russia," with the two thoroughfares including monumental interventions produced by an international list of sculptors.⁴² Moreover, Freundlich was not the only one to have envisioned a project of sculptural interventions of this kind. Belgian sculptor Jacques Moeschal and Hungarian sculptor Pierre Székely, both of whom would be selected by Goeritz to take part in the Route of Friendship, had proposed similar projects that involved roads and highways punctuated with sculptures celebrating human fraternity. Moeschal formulated his project in March 1960, while Székely presented his own as his

contribution to the International Colloquium of Sculptors held at Royaumont, France, in October 1962.⁴³

MATTERS OF SCALE

In its actually built version, the Route of Friendship stood precisely where the Olympic spectacle intersected with one of the most significant monuments to the reshaping of Mexico City to serve the circulation of automobiles, a process aggressively supported by *regente* Uruchurtu.⁴⁴ Indeed, the completion of the Anillo Periférico, the beltway surrounding Mexico City's limits, in 1964 gave concrete form to utopian calls for the city's enhanced navigability that can be traced back to the 1920s.⁴⁵ Beyond simply making transportation through the capital city more efficient, the Periférico actually served to segregate its urban fabric, facilitating the urban flight of the city's upper-income residents, who traveled mostly by car, away from the poorer areas of Mexico City's edges, including those in the city's southernmost limits.⁴⁶ The Route of Friendship was designed in public lands left after the completion of the Anillo, and awarded to the MOC by the DDF.⁴⁷ Because the project was at once produced by the temporary and contested Olympic spectacle and simultaneously aligned with the socially uneven modernization of the Mexican capital in longer duration, exactly what Goeritz was attempting to sell at the Route other than the nebulous idea of international friendship was less clear than in his past ventures, especially on account of his selection of sculptors.

Goeritz invited mostly international, not Mexican, sculptors, only very few of whom were internationally well known, to participate in the Route. These artists would also participate in an International Meeting of Sculptors, a symposium celebrated as part of the Cultural Olympiad whose purpose was to debate the relationship between urban sculpture and the growth of cities. With the exception of Alexander Calder, whom Goeritz invited explicitly to become "the representative of the United States," he made a point of not having artists sent officially by the governments of their countries of origin. He also stipulated that these artists complete large-scale, abstract sculptures with no explicit figurative subject matter in reinforced concrete. These sculptures would be placed along the southern sections of the Periférico, in the vicinity of the Olympic Village. While Goeritz imposed these restrictions on the rest of participants in the Route, Calder was not bound by any of them. "The work of most of the sculptors," Goeritz wrote to Calder, "will probably be integrated in a general architectural-urbanistic plan and shall surely be conceived for concrete constructions." But in "your case, of course, I would like to give you complete freedom to select the material you want."⁴⁸

In the Route's final iteration, works by international sculptors, which included Herbert Bayer, Constantino Nivola, and many other lesser-known artists such

as Moeschal and Székely, stood bracketed off on either end by works made by Mexican sculptors Jorge Dubón, Ángela Gurría, and Helen Escobedo, artists not quite yet established at the time (Figure 4.9).⁴⁹ Calder's contribution to the Route, a sculpture titled *El Sol Rojo*, was not even installed at the Periférico but at the center of Terrazas's painted pavements at the Aztec Stadium, relatively far from the rest of the sculptures (Plate 3). Only two other sculptures enjoyed such individually iconic status, one of them Goeritz's *La Osa Mayor*, a set of small concrete towers placed in front of Félix Candela's Sports Palace, a location originally offered to Calder.⁵⁰ The third such sculpture was Mexican sculptor Germán Cueto's *Hombre Corriendo*, installed in front of the UNAM Stadium.

Calder's preferential treatment is explained by his acquaintance with Goeritz before the Olympics, but also in light of the transnational importance of his work.⁵¹ *El Sol Rojo* was one of a series of stables or stationary, monumental, abstract sculptures he began to produce in the early 1960s. These works by Calder dotted a number of world cities by the end of the decade, including Montreal, where he completed a major commission that was unveiled during Expo '67. Miwon Kwon demonstrates that, particularly in the United States, commissions for Calder sculptures were tied specifically to campaigns of gentrification, urban renewal, and their allied processes of privatized, capitalist city expansion.⁵² Calder's contribution to the Route thus situated the Aztec Stadium within a deterritorialized network of architectural sites of international visibility, a network not necessarily grounded at the Periférico, or in Mexico's national territory.⁵³ Goeritz's Route as a whole similarly functioned as a gentrification device on two temporal levels, drawing attention away from an impoverished area of Mexico City's southern periphery during the Olympics, and promising to spawn gentrified expansion in that area of the city long after the spectacle was over. In hindsight, the logic of urban reification at work in Goeritz's plans seems clear. Goeritz and the MOC essentially claimed that the Route of Friendship would remake the social makeup of a significant part of Mexico City. Yet the Route left the existing social structures that determined the shape of the city entirely untouched, and almost became a monument to these class divides.

As Goeritz lamented after the fact, the more ambitious goals of his original project for the Route were significantly hampered by the final project's limited size, which had led its simpler, temporary effects to take precedence. Traveling through the Route of Friendship by car, Olympic tourists experienced the sequence of sculptures merely as an "outdoor gallery."⁵⁴ In response to a critique of the Route's perceived small scale published in the Mexico City English-language periodical *The News*, Goeritz claimed that he agreed "that [the Route] would look more important on its general surroundings if the sculptures could be bigger," adding

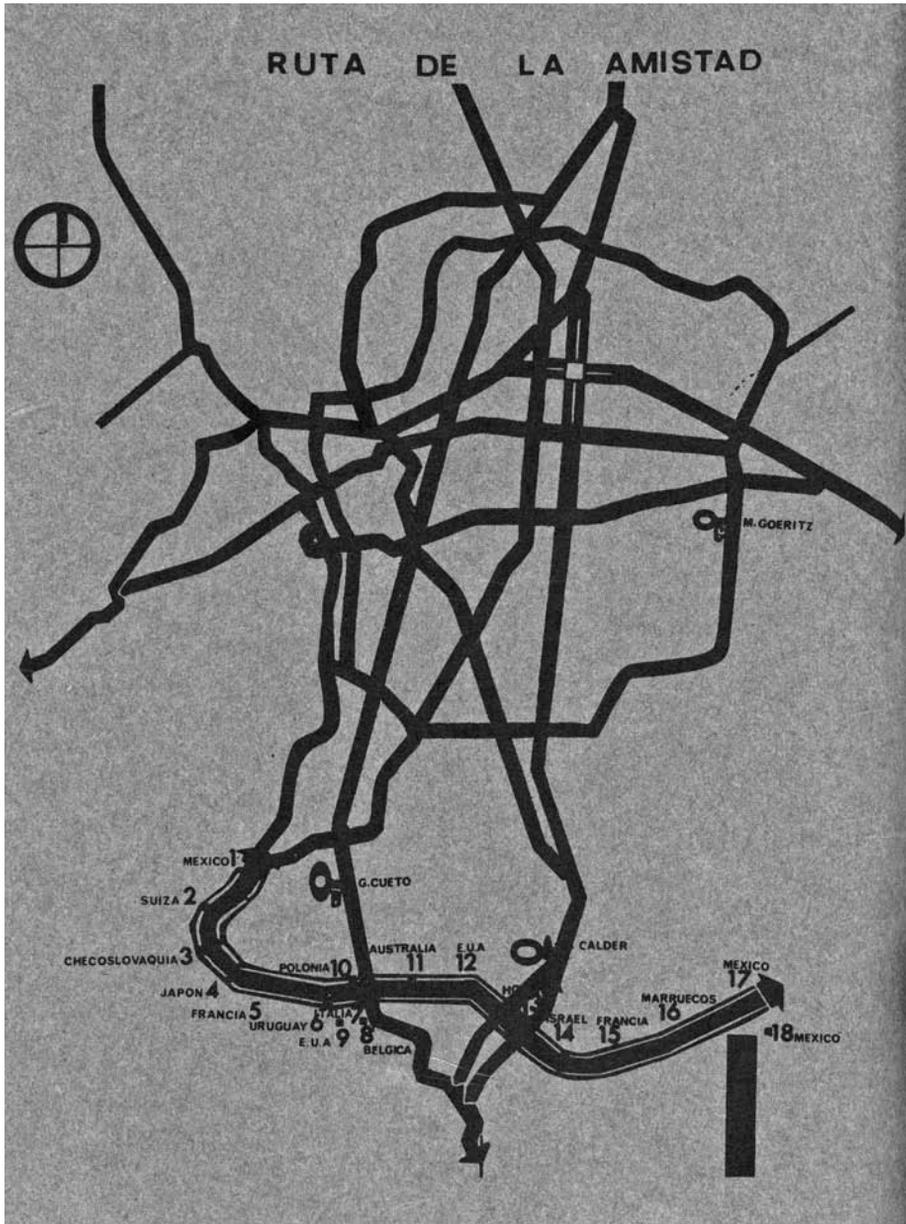


Figure 4.9. Mathias Goeritz, Ruta de la Amistad (Route of Friendship) plan, Mexico City, 1968. Courtesy of Daniel Goeritz.

that “originally [his] plans were much more ambitious.” “Yet,” he claimed, “it is not true that most of the sizes proposed by the artists were reduced. In the majority of the cases, we respected the size that was given to us. Some projects were even considerably enlarged.”⁵⁵ This was not exactly true.

As Goeritz admitted in an April 1968 MOC internal memo, Ramírez Vázquez had decided to significantly reduce the size of several sculptures because of funding problems, a measure that affected works by Willi Gutmann, Clement Meadmore, and Kioshi Takahashi.⁵⁶

FRACTURED INTERNATIONALISMS

While the global silhouette and real-estate effects of the Route were inevitably fragmentary, the logic behind the selection process of the sculptors was also considered suspect from the project's inception. A report in the *New York Times* emphasized that not only was the formal abstraction of the Route's sculptures disquieting to many of Mexico City's residents, artists, and critics, but the final selection of sculptors by the MOC was deemed questionable, precisely because it seemed to conform too closely to the format of an official diplomatic artistic event despite Goeritz's claims to the contrary. Writing for the *Times*, Harold Schonberg claimed that, in response to such criticism, the MOC had not clarified much, but had "informed people . . . that a few pieces were chosen not on merit but because they were the work of sculptors who had to be included *for international balance*."⁵⁷

Achieving this balance was not easy, nor was it easy to gather a racially diverse group to invite to Mexico. Like the selection of Basilio as Olympic torchbearer, made specifically to appease critiques of machismo's centrality to Mexican culture, this demonstration of inclusivity was meant to boost the exhibitionist state's avowed progressive and humanist credentials in the midst of a racially charged environment. Finding African American sculptors to invite to the Route of Friendship proved particularly difficult for Goeritz. Among the people he asked for advice in his search was Dorothy C. Miller, then curator of painting and sculpture at New York's Museum of Modern Art. "Offhand I could not think of a Negro sculptor who would be able to design a concrete construction thirty to fifty feet high," Miller wrote back on January 5, 1968, "but if there is one here I am sure our staff will locate him for you."⁵⁸ On January 17, Goeritz wrote back with relief, announcing that "a coloured sculptor" had been found in Brooklyn-based Todd Williams, who had been selected to complete a work in Mexico City.⁵⁹

From the start of the Route of Friendship project, for Goeritz geography was as important as race, and his ambitions to have an international roster of sculptors at the project took him even farther away from home than New York. To find a sculptor from Africa to invite to Mexico, he wrote to Julian Beinart, then a professor of urban planning at the University of Cape Town, and to Jean-François Zevaco, an architect based in Casablanca. Beinart was eager to suggest a couple of names, but Zevaco was hard-pressed to think of suitable Moroccan sculptors for the task at hand.⁶⁰ "I am personally convinced," Zevaco wrote in a letter to Karel

Wendl, secretary to the International Meeting of Sculptors, “that [sculpture] does not match up well now, or has for a long time, with the sensibility of men from this country as a means of expression.”⁶¹

Goeritz’s desire to consolidate international ties with artists, planners, and architects abroad was not limited to the selection of sculptors for his Route. Alongside Terrazas, Goeritz established direct connections with planning practitioners outside Mexico while formulating his intervention. Late in 1966, he wrote to New York–based architect James Rossant, one of the authors of the Plan for Lower Manhattan finished that year, inquiring about his recent work. Rossant wrote back in December 1966, claiming that “of particular interest to you and Mr. Teresas [*sic*] . . . will be the circulation plan for . . . New York.”⁶² Commissioned by the administration of Mayor Robert Wagner in 1965, the plan was intended to revitalize the transit and transportation systems of Lower Manhattan in the context of broader plans to racially segregate and gentrify this region of the island. It also envisioned the development of “New Office Magnets” along the Hudson and East rivers that would infuse the area with new commercial development, not unlike Goeritz’s sculptural clusters for the first iteration of the Route of Friendship, designed to revitalize Mexico’s cities, or unlike the final version of the Route, which was intended to help gentrify Mexico City’s southern boundary.⁶³

Rossant was not the only New York–based planner to come into contact with Olympic planning efforts in Mexico. Robert Moses also learned about these interventions through his acquaintance with Terrazas and Fernando Gamboa in the context of the New York World’s Fair. Moses had already had significant contacts with Latin American planners and politicians, having served as a consultant for the arterial system of highways for Caracas, Venezuela, in 1948, and for a city plan for São Paulo, Brazil, in 1955, a city that had declared him an honorary citizen a year later.⁶⁴ In November 1965, Gamboa invited Moses to travel to Mexico City to suggest improvements to the city’s transit system for the Olympics. Preparing for the visit, Moses wrote to William Chapin, commissioner for the Power Authority of the State of New York, inquiring about the condition of Mexico’s roads.⁶⁵ Chapin’s assessment was favorable: “I spent ten days in Mexico three or four years ago and went by car from Mexico City to Acapulco I see no reason why a large number of people would not be attracted to Mexico City by car at the time of the 1968 Olympics.”⁶⁶ Yet, Moses seemed to be interested in more than just circulation. Discussing his visit in a memo, he offered a set of prescriptions that seem almost prophetic in retrospect:

As to the Mexican visit, I believe we should . . . offer a diagnosis of the [Mexico City circulation] problem, including expanding the Olympic Games to include

competitions in letters, the stage, screen and the performing and other arts in the tradition of the original Olympics, arterial, housing and other durable public works for public use after the Games, the official opening of the entire Pan-American Highway, financing, etc.⁶⁷

For peculiar reasons, Moses never made it to Mexico City. Writing to Gregory Dawson, a designer and former collaborator of his at the New York World's Fair, in February 1966 he claimed that although envisioned first as a work trip, his Mexican hosts' plans for his visit were far too leisurely to be fulfilled at that time: "Originally, they wanted me to bring a group down to discuss amplification of the 1968 Olympics so as to include a larger non-athletic Olympic program, year round trade center, better arterial approaches and other public works. I did arrange for this, but it turned out that former President [Miguel] Aleman," then the minister of tourism, "wanted me to come down alone or with my daughter . . . and make a trip around Mexico, taking in the new tourist attractions." This amount of leisure travel, he said, was impossible to arrange for given his schedule; "so I guess Acapulco is off for the time being."⁶⁸

Although it did not lead to a concrete intervention, Moses's statement about the advice he would offer to his Mexican colleagues nevertheless parallels, almost word by word, the language with which Ramírez Vázquez and the MOC would promote Mexico '68's aggressive and distinctive emphasis on cultural display in tandem with the urban modernization efforts that the Olympic project fueled. Plans for a significant cultural component for Mexico '68 were in the works since the spring of 1965 at the MOC, yet the Cultural Olympiad would not acquire centrality as part of the Olympic effort until well into 1967.⁶⁹ Urban improvements were nonetheless promoted heavily after that point. An MOC document from October 1967 that details Olympic preparations, for instance, claims that as part of the Olympics, "we must beautify our City, *improve and extend its thoroughfares, impress the public by an educational campaign [sic] . . . and lastly increase the existing lodging facilities.*"⁷⁰ Far from predicting the future, Moses's statement is telling of the extent to which the MOC was conversant with a rhetoric of developmentalist planning intimately tied to the international rise of capitalist speculative development, which established that propaganda events had to come equipped with larger-scale modernization and beautification efforts for cities. Design was especially prominent in this broad context, providing processes of speculative expansion in cities with visible modernist iconographies.⁷¹ At the most significant of the lodging facilities produced for Mexico '68, the official hotel of the Olympics, all these forces coalesced in order to create a spectacular set of architectural environments.

MEXICAN DUALITIES

Early visitors to Ricardo Legorreta's Camino Real Hotel, inaugurated in October 1968, had plenty of reasons to be impressed. Adjacent to Chapultepec Park's new museums and situated in the wealthy neighborhood of Polanco, the hotel boasted a collection of artworks and design features that rivaled those of many museums in Mexico, surpassed those of the many hotels built there during the 1960s, and directly mirrored, albeit at a much more limited scale, the urban decor of the Olympic Mexican capital (Figure 4.10). Goeritz collaborated with Luis Barragán in the design of the hotel grounds, as well as creating a gate of painted metal for its entrance and a mural for one of its corridors. The New York-based interior design office Knoll International, which had collaborated with a host of corporate patrons in the United States and Europe through the 1950s and 1960s, coordinated the hotel's interiors. The vestibule included a large sculpture of sheet metal by Alexander Calder, and the lobby bar featured a tapestry by well-known U.S.-based artist Annie Albers. Shortly after its completion, in 1969 and 1971, the hotel's Industrialists Club and its lobby's main wall also came to include murals by Rufino Tamayo, then Mexico's most sought-after official painter.⁷² So dramatically conceived and presented were the hotel's spaces that a contemporary critic exaggerated little in describing the Camino Real as the kind of building "bound to be used as a movie set."⁷³

The Camino Real Hotel played an important role during the Olympics. It served as the primary convention center for all significant Olympic diplomatic events, and hosted the most prominent international visitors to Mexico City,

Figure 4.10. Ricardo Legorreta, Camino Real Hotel, Mexico City, 1968. *Progressive Architecture* (June 1969).



including International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Avery Brundage.⁷⁴ As they were for a number of other Olympic-era works in the Mexican capital, the symbolic burdens borne by the hotel's design were quite high. As a self-contained architectural project, Legorreta's Olympic hotel afforded its designers the possibility of creating the kind of controlled scenography that the socially and politically messier city would have never allowed them to construct on a larger scale. Grappling with the most significant double bind of modern tourism in the "third world," the designers and architects involved with the Camino Real Hotel also negotiated the need to present international visitors with a culturally authentic experience of Mexico that satisfied their "first-world" hospitality expectations.⁷⁵

Although many of the "miracle's" most significant design projects had the stimulation of tourism as one of their central goals, tourism and the construction of cultural authenticity had been interrelated for quite some time in Mexico. The standards for hotel design set in the 1930s by the Mexican Automobilists Association (AMA)—one of Mexico's most important early tourist associations—called for the simultaneous inclusion of "traditional" and "cosmopolitan" cultural references.⁷⁶ One of Mexico City's earliest modern hotels, the Hotel Reforma, the first of Mario Pani's significant projects finished in 1936, articulated precisely this juxtaposition, prefiguring Pani's later work as hotel designer. Pani obtained the controversial commission through his uncle, engineer and onetime finance secretary Alberto J. Pani.⁷⁷ Beyond the contained history of this project, Alberto Pani was an important figure in the development of twentieth-century tourism in Mexico, having been among the first to discuss tourism's role as a prominent component of national progress, and having authored several key studies about public and economic policy since the 1910s.⁷⁸

For Alberto Pani, the Hotel Reforma was more than a speculative venture. In his own published account of the hotel's commission, he described the project as proof that private capital aided by the state could indeed produce works of "public interest."⁷⁹ Implementing his uncle's economic vision, which saw the symbiotic roles of speculative real estate and tourist investment as central driving forces of Mexico's economic growth, Mario Pani was responsible for designing many of the hotels borne by Mexico's boom in tourism in later decades: in Mexico City, Pani designed the Hotel Plaza, built between 1945 and 1946; at Michoacán, he was responsible for the 1944 Hotel Alameda; in Acapulco, he designed the Hotel Pozo del Rey in 1953 and the Condesa del Mar hotel in 1970. In all these cases, his designs for hotels were defined by the need to conform to international expectations while accommodating foreigners' expectations of cultural authenticity.⁸⁰ George Flaherty argues that Pani's role as a professional of hospitality involved more than his practice as hotel designer. Through his promotion of architecture

produced in Mexico alongside architecture from the rest of Latin America, Europe, and the United States in his magazine *Arquitectura/México*, and through his adaptation of European and U.S. design paradigms to the Mexican context in all of his works, Pani served as a “host” for international architectural culture. On the basis of Jacques Derrida’s theorization of hospitality, Flaherty shows that the exchange between “host” and “guest” in Pani’s oeuvre was not defined by a symmetrical or stable relationship between these two parties. Instead, what defines Pani’s relationship to architectural culture of foreign origin is an anxious attempt to appropriate its images, forms, and inherited meanings in order to sustain his own prominence in the “domestic” Mexican scene.⁸¹

The design and completion of the 1936 Hotel Reforma served all these agendas. The hotel’s form reflected Pani’s recently completed training at the Parisian *École des Beaux-Arts*, and thus had all the stylistic markings of contemporary European and U.S. luxury hotels. Making the best of the hotel’s corner location, Pani included sparsely decorated curving facades on both of the meeting side streets, punctuating the building’s front entrance with two monumental bands of red granite that flanked the hotel’s stepped balconies. The hotel’s interior conformed to European and U.S. hospitality standards, introducing such unprecedented innovations for Mexico as a roof garden and private bathrooms for each of the suites, but its “Mexican” component was equally prominent. Alberto Pani, who in addition to his official capacities was an avid art collector, commissioned Diego Rivera to produce a series of works depicting Mexican folklore in the hotel lobby in an effort to provide an authentic representation of national culture for the guests.⁸² The painter nevertheless gave his murals a political tone considered undesirable by its patrons, including grotesque images of Franklin D. Roosevelt as well as former president and Mexican revolutionary hero Plutarco Elías Calles, which led to their prompt removal.⁸³ Much as Rivera’s Rockefeller Center mural caused unease, his mural painting here proved too volatile a genre for a tourist space.

By the 1960s, including artworks by national artists of international renown in high-end hotels was customary in Mexico. This was certainly the case for a project contemporary with Legorreta’s Camino Real. The Hotel de México, designed by a group of architects including the office of Guillermo Rossell and funded by construction industry mogul Manuel Suárez y Suárez, was planned as a major urban intervention scheduled to open in time for the Olympics. Promoted as the largest hotel in Latin America in its day, its initial project, formulated between 1966 and 1967, included a museum devoted to the work of David Alfaro Siqueiros. This polygonal display space would eventually become the Poliforum Siqueiros, which opened only in 1971 and hosted the largest mural ever produced in Mexico, Siqueiros’s *The March of Humanity*.⁸⁴ Siqueiros’s project was intended to align the

Hotel de México with the political legacy of Mexican mural art. Additionally, spaces for the display and purchase of “folk” art, just like those included in the world’s fairs pavilions of the “miracle,” had been planned for the hotel’s environs. In 1967, President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz described all these gestures by the hotel’s planners and patrons as emblematic of Mexico’s “open-door” policy for international visitors and potential investors.

As with the case of Pani’s Hotel Reforma, aside from its mural and folk art museum, nothing else about the Hotel de México’s actual architecture was “Mexican” in any conventional sense. A fifty-story slab, the hotel complex was set to include such novelties as a rotating restaurant in its top floor, a successor to international precedents like the top-floor restaurant at the Space Needle built in Seattle for the 1962 World’s Fair. The peculiarities of the Hotel de México’s interior design were also marketed aggressively, and not necessarily on account of their Mexican qualities. For example, the hexagonal shape of the hotel rooms promised a number of technical and sensorial benefits to its future visitors. *Construcción Mexicana* claimed that not only were hexagonal spaces structurally sound because they allowed for an even distribution of stress, a desirable quality for buildings in Mexico City’s seismic terrain, but they also presented more ample fields of vision for guests, making their experience a more visually dynamic one than that of conventionally square or rectangular rooms.⁸⁵

Had it opened in time for the Olympics, the Hotel de México would have introduced these unprecedented innovations, but the tower was not finished until 1972, and never actually functioned as a hotel. Significantly, though, this hotel project shared with the Camino Real and the Hotel Reforma ambitions to provide the experience of a cosmopolitan and urban Mexico with significant folkloric components. Like Pani before him, Legorreta had close family connections to thank for his hotel commission. His cousin, Agustín Legorreta, was not only vice chairman of the MOC but also the head of Banamex, Mexico’s national bank, which partially funded the hotel, and a major shareholder of the Camino Real Hotel itself. There were nevertheless marked differences between Legorreta’s project and its predecessors. The patronage of the Camino Real, which cost a hefty \$24 million, was of more ostensibly international nature than those that came before it. It grew out of a partnership between Mexican entrepreneur José Brockman, Banamex, and U.S.-based hotel chain Western Hotels—later to change its name to Westin Hotels. Following the expanding geographies of tourism in Mexico, by 1968 Brockman had built hotels in Guadalajara, Tampico, Saltillo, Tapachula, and Ciudad Juárez. The last of these hotels, finished in 1965, was also designed at the Legorreta office, albeit in much less ambitious fashion than its Mexico City counterpart. Whereas Legorreta’s Ciudad Juárez hotel was understood as a key component of the

PRONAF program to gentrify the U.S.–Mexican border, the Mexico City commission was intended to draw attention and visitors to the booming capital.

“EMOTIONAL” MEXICO

The expectations of cultural authenticity that the Camino Real Hotel negotiated were indebted to a long-standing cultivation of Mexico’s perceived dualities and contrasts across the spectrum of official culture. Yet, architecturally speaking, much of what the hotel introduced was unique. Most significantly, unlike its predecessors among Mexico City hotels, the actual spaces of Legorreta’s project (not just the artworks in it) were perceived to embody culturally specific Mexican traits. Writing in 1969, U.S. architecture critic C. Ray Smith praised the hotel’s overall aesthetic, claiming that it “looks as though [Mies van der Rohe] and the Aztecs got together as a design team.”⁸⁶ Understanding how the hotel’s architecture engendered this perception compels us to look at more than just its architectural precedents.

Some of the features of Legorreta’s hotel established very specific connections to traditions in Mexican architecture. Throughout the hotel Legorreta employed sun-dried brick, a material used in pre-Columbian, colonial and modern-day “vernacular” buildings in several regions of Mexico.⁸⁷ The walls in the common areas of the hotel were defined by rough plaster, while floors of exposed volcanic stone were used throughout the commission. The Camino Real Hotel also introduced a much lower height than virtually all of its Mexico City hotel predecessors, as it was designed, in large part according to Barragán and Goeritz’s recommendations, as a set of five- and six-story blocks organized in relation to patios and gardens.

This setup directly contradicted the form of the more recent Mexico City hotels, not only of the Hotel de México but also of the equally visible Hotel María Isabel, a high-rise tower clad in glass finished in 1961 by the office of José Villagrán, where Legorreta had worked until 1960, before founding his own office with architects Noé Castro and Carlos Vargas that year. Significantly, it was at the María Isabel that the MOC established its press headquarters, which included, in Salvador Novo’s recollection of their inauguration ceremony, “an ample room with desks, telephones, machines with keyboards for forty languages, and a control board through which [MOC officials and journalists] will be able to know, within minutes, what is happening in the nineteen venues of the [Olympic] games and write their chronicles near a bar; a resting room with televisions, another one with long-distance phone booths; and, toward the end of the room, a collection of telex apparatuses that were already operational.”⁸⁸ The MOC’s mass-mediated presence at the extravagant María Isabel benefited from the transparency of its glass walls, which lent a largely fictional appearance of political transparency and public accessibility to its propaganda operations.

Some foreign visitors critiqued the transparency of the María Isabel Hotel for its perceived lack of cultural authenticity. For instance, in a 1962 article written for *Holiday* magazine, George Nelson decried the lack of character of Mexico City's recent hotels, particularly the María Isabel:

It happens to be fashionable to use an extravagant amount of glass in buildings these days, and in the María Isabel the use of glass is carried to the very limit: there is no other material in the outside wall of each room. This means, from the viewpoint of the hotel guest, that the only way to get privacy is to hide in the bathroom, or else to pull the heavy draperies across glass wall and turn the lights on in the middle of the day. This kind of nonsense is not confined to Mexico; it is part of a style that has become truly international. Hotels like those just described can be found in Beverly Hills, Barcelona and Bombay.⁸⁹

Legorreta's choice of materials and scale for the Camino Real must be understood, at least in part, as a reaction against interpretations like Nelson's. In addition to its rough-plastered walls, the hotel's low-rise layout privileged opacity and private space over transparency, and echoed the planning principles of colonial-period Mexican haciendas as well as of monastic architecture more generally. Legorreta emphasized this perception by describing each of the hotel's blocks that included the guest rooms as "missions," and giving each a saint's name. The color scheme of the hotel's interior, coordinated by designers Charles Seigny and Peter Andes from the Knoll office, was also praised for its uniquely Mexican flavor and strong emotional effect. It included combinations of red, "Mexican pink" and orange, blue and green, brown and gold, and brown and beige, with the first of these combinations being most prominent throughout. Because it made a Mexican palette central to its design, the hotel was in intimate dialogue with Terrazas and Wyman's circulation and signage projects for the Olympics and their perceived associations with the "rainbow" of Mexican folklore.⁹⁰

The eventual inclusion, in 1969 and 1971, of Tamayo's murals at the Camino Real Hotel aligned this hospitality space with the Hotel Reforma and the Hotel de México, which had both featured works by internationally renowned Mexican mural painters. Unlike Siqueiros, whose political involvement had led to his imprisonment in 1960 (the Poliforum was something of a retribution gesture after he was freed), Tamayo was a much safer choice. Tamayo did not have a history of political involvement like those which Siqueiros shared with the deceased Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, the two other muralists, and which, as seen in the case of Siqueiros's inclusion at Mexico's pavilion for the New York World's Fair, could indeed alienate some U.S. visitors. Given the duality between the international

resonance of his work and his appropriation of forms and images drawn from pre-Hispanic and folkloric art traditions, Tamayo was also well ensconced within the official Mexican cultural apparatus. Indeed, no other artist of the time was so widely understood to literally personify Mexico's simultaneous primitive and cosmopolitan attributes.⁹¹

In addition to Tamayo's contribution, both the public spaces and the private rooms of Legorreta's Hotel were decorated with replicas and originals of colonial candlesticks and dressers, many of which contrasted in jarring ways with the fully abstract forms of the hotel's interior, as well as with the minimalist furniture designed by Mies van der Rohe and Eero Saarinen that was provided for the Hotel by the Knoll design office. Moreover, the hotel's ability to evoke strong emotional responses from its visitors on account of the juxtaposition of these artifacts and the sheer power of its color scheme was central to its early mystique. The absence of a clear orthogonal circulation route through the Camino Real's spaces, which encouraged circuitous walking instead of highly purposed movement, was additionally perceived to pay homage to uniquely "Mexican" ways of experiencing architecture.⁹²

Widely praised for its poetic effects, the Camino Real Hotel was often described as an example of the "emotional" architecture that Goeritz and Barragán had made popular in previous decades.⁹³ But what exactly was Mexico's "emotional" architecture, and how did Legorreta engage its forms and discourses? Goeritz launched his 1953 manifesto, discussed earlier, in defense of *El Eco* (1953), an experimental space for art displays and performances defined by the expansive, abstract volumes of its rough-plastered walls painted in primary colors and intended to evoke dramatic emotional responses, clear predecessors to the Camino Real's spaces. Goeritz's collaborations with Barragán had begun to articulate similar kinds of emotionally stimulating spaces even before *El Eco* or the Satellite City Towers, in the context of the Gardens of El Pedregal residential subdivision, during the late 1940s. Barragán and Goeritz promoted the houses of El Pedregal as embodiments of Mexico's unique duality, which included "modern" and "primitive" dimensions. Designed and landscaped to take full advantage of the volcanic landscape of the southern region of the capital city, which was venerated in pre-Hispanic times and where the UNAM campus, the Aztec Stadium, and the Route of Friendship eventually would be built, the abstract surfaces and volumes of these modernist houses literally grew out of the rugged surfaces of the area's bedrock.⁹⁴

Largely as a result of the prestige of El Pedregal and some of the collaborative ventures between Goeritz and Barragán that would follow it, narratives about the emotional qualities of Mexican modern architecture would, as architectural historian Keith Eggener shows, eventually gain broad and lasting currency.⁹⁵ Between

the late 1950s and early 1960s, this brand of architecture became increasingly attractive for corporate patrons, who multiplied in Mexico City as a result of the boom in various types of building, especially industrial building, that the city experienced during the “miracle.” Legorreta completed his earliest works at the office of Villagrán, where he worked on a number of industrial buildings.⁹⁶ But his first work of significance after establishing his own office in 1960 was the Automex car factory built near Toluca, southwest of Mexico City, in 1963. In this project, he collaborated with Goeritz for the first time, and also established initial contact with Barragán, whom he met at the inauguration ceremony of the factory.⁹⁷

Like the Camino Real Hotel, Automex was the product of a commission that combined Mexican and international capital. The factory’s patron was the Mexican-owned subsidiary of the U.S.-based Chrysler Corporation. Despite Legorreta’s attempts to downplay Goeritz’s involvement in the project, in designing and marketing the factory the sculptor’s intervention was fundamental.⁹⁸ Visitors would enter the Automex factory complex through a tree-lined promenade, the conclusion of which was marked by Goeritz’s contribution: two conical structures of concrete painted white (Figure 4.11).⁹⁹ In a 1967 interview, Legorreta claimed that, like the circuitous patios and low-rise architecture of his Camino Real Hotel, these cones exerted a “humanizing influence” over visitors to the factory, though one that operated not by creating common spaces of “human proportions,” but by exerting “a tremendous psychological impact,” marked by “man’s encounter with volumes whose dimensions are difficult to judge at first sight.”¹⁰⁰

The general layout of Legorreta’s factory was clearly indebted to U.S. corporate architecture, most clearly to Eero Saarinen’s General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan (1948–56). Many aspects of the two projects, not least the presence in each of emblematic sculptures in addition to offices and workspaces, were also quite similar. And yet, these similarities were hardly the focus of literature of the period, which instead emphasized the perceived Mexican qualities of Legorreta’s project. For instance, *Progressive Architecture* explained Goeritz’s contribution to the project as the result of “a delightful Latin propensity for putting up large sculptural objects to ‘advertise’ the existence of a place.” In discussing Automex’s relationship to Saarinen’s work, the periodical stressed that the factory’s Mexican character stemmed from its ostensibly primitive materials and forms:

The evocative forms of the *sawn-off pyramids* and the directness of most of the materials—native stone, plaster, painted concrete—make [the Automex factory] a *peculiarly Mexican place*, just as the fine machine-tooling of Saarinen’s much vaster G.M. Tech Center labels it as unmistakably a Detroit product.¹⁰¹



The reception of the Automex project in Mexico was quite different, and speaks instead to the anxiety generated by the country's accelerated industrialization during the early 1960s. The architectural periodical *Calli* portrayed Automex as a monument to the ongoing struggle for the nationalization of the car industry in Mexico, a dramatic confrontation between an exploited third-world nation and its neocolonialist oppressors: "The struggle is harsh, difficult; when in exchange of many lives and sacrifices one foreign power is expelled, another, greater one manages to infiltrate itself, take over the place left by the former one; this is what has happened throughout our history as a nation trying to become independent." "But through . . . our struggles for vindication," *Calli's* editors went on, referring to Legorreta's project as the result of one such struggle, "part of these [industrial] resources come to be possessed by the nation."¹⁰²

Calli language closely parallels the accommodationist rhetoric of government-sponsored labor associations in Mexico since the late 1940s, and indeed positions a design project as a central component of this rhetoric. This language often acknowledged the dependence of Mexico's industrial system on foreign capital,

Figure 4.11. Ricardo Legorreta, Automex Car Factory, Toluca, 1963. Mathias Goeritz, sculptor. *Calli* (February 1964).

yet presented the collaboration between Mexican labor and industrialists as central to the protection of “national” economic interests. This language also emerged alongside the culture of *charrismo*, defined by the emergence of union leaders loyal to the PRI appointed by the party in sites of potential conflict between unions and the state apparatus. As discussed in earlier chapters, the uneasy pact between state leadership and labor came under significant stress during the railway workers’ strikes of the late 1950s, which were part of a generalized context of labor unrest. During the early 1960s, the panorama of state–labor relationships had become even more complex. Mexico’s car industry played an especially prominent role in debates about Mexico’s economic development, as automobile production became the centerpiece of López Mateos’s import-substitution strategy, especially through the initial passage of the Automotive Integration Decree in August 1962. Initially, this decree established that by 1964 every automobile bought in Mexico had to have been manufactured by Mexican workers, although, after tense negotiations between U.S. automakers, the U.S. State Department, and Mexican government officials, the decree was rewritten to require that only 60 percent of the value of automobiles had to be produced in Mexico. This measure, alongside the defense of an economic policy that encouraged foreign corporations to invest alongside national ones, was one of the key elements of Finance Minister Antonio Ortiz Mena’s (1958–70) “stabilizing development” policies. Although unsuccessful in the long run, these policies were intended to maintain high levels of international capital investment in Mexico and to minimize domestic dissent stemming from economic inequity.¹⁰³

During the early 1960s, car manufacturing by Mexican workers at Mexican-owned factories was officially promoted as the driving force behind what government officials described as Mexico’s “second industrial revolution,” and an effort was made to present its friendly aspects both to the general public and to an increasingly restless workforce. As Steven Bachelor demonstrates, this process entailed recasting Mexican industrial workers as part of a transnational “family” of economically productive actors. Largely following a Fordist model, which entailed the molding of workers’ work and leisure habits within and beyond the factory, in Mexico the public face of the emerging automotive industry heavily dominated by U.S. interests reflected “Americanizations” of all types. These practices ranged from the systematic erosion of political involvement among laborers in the car industry, to the aggressive encouragement of consumption patterns among Mexican laborers that emulated those of their U.S. counterparts, to the regulation of company-sponsored social, sports, and cultural activities.¹⁰⁴

The “humanizing” Automex towers participated in this process and, like other formally abstract works by Goeritz that monumentalized the flow and exchange of

speculative capital, national as well as foreign, they reified the growth of Mexico's car industry, at once spectacularizing and erasing from view the social relations of production that conditioned this divisive process. In a July 1968 newspaper interview, Legorreta reinforced this perception, claiming that the Automex towers not only helped make the factory a memorable "point of reference," acting as a branding device to help render its patron company recognizable to the public; their aesthetic appeal also drew in and soothed the urban workforce compelled to move out to the periphery of the city for work, bringing further economic advantages to the corporation and psychological ones to the workplace.¹⁰⁵ Here again, as in the tense negotiation with Coatlinchán's dwellers, a design intervention was positioned at the very node of difficult relationships between the capital city and its expanding industrial and urban periphery.

Geographically, the Automex factory was located in the middle of an expanding industrial ring district west of Mexico City. Planners, architects, and policy managers in the early 1960s had formulated attempts to harness and efficiently manage this terrain. For example, in a description of a project for the industrial zoning of Tlalnepantla, at the time an industrial district in the northern periphery of the capital, architect Augusto Pérez Palacios had described the industrialization of formerly rural land as "an extremely painful process that creates enormous problems," and the role of the state, responsible for stimulating industry, as including not just the exercise of its executive authority, but also "an oversight that is friendly and creates confidence so as to attempt to guarantee . . . the harmonious and balanced development of industry."¹⁰⁶

In his description of the social and psychological benefits of the design of his factory in the 1968 interview, Legorreta made more explicit mention of the tense labor relations that were an integral part of this social compact, arguing that the factory's architectural form could help palliate the painful effects that the need to migrate toward the periphery of the city in order to seek work caused its laborers to experience. "The least a *middle-class worker* wants in compensation for his absence from the urban context," Legorreta claimed, referring problematically to the working-class contingent of laborers at factories like the one he had designed, "is a pleasant work environment."¹⁰⁷ Here again, as in the interventions of their more "official" colleagues like Ramírez Vázquez, Legorreta and Goeritz intervened in an attempt to sublimate social tensions between labor, the state, and private capital. The perceived commercial and psychological advantages of Goeritz and Legorreta's work drew wide praise in the United States. For instance, photographer Hans Beacham articulated these positive views in his *The Architecture of Mexico: Yesterday and Today* (1969). "In every part of [Mexico]," Beacham wrote about the Automex factory, "industrialists are discovering that efficiency reports

and production programs can be pleasantly influenced by a carefully designed and maintained environment.” Describing Automex as “a community in which extreme functionalism meshes happily with art,” Beacham translated political tensions into the language of art criticism, dwelling on the uneasy marriage of “emotional” architecture and Mexico’s miraculous industrialization.¹⁰⁸

As discussed in this book’s introduction, Mexico’s mid-twentieth-century industrialization was a process fraught with uncertainty and anxiety among thinkers in Mexico and elsewhere, but it was also a politically charged process through which the state’s persuasive powers were both exerted and tested. Incorporating labor interests into the agenda of the modernizing state was not a simple process. Although it was envisioned as a device to appease potentially volatile labor relations, the Automex factory was not meant to appease laborers all on its own. The factory’s early reception inscribed it into the panorama of urban leisure for the working and middle classes to which the new museums of the Mexican capital and the refurbished spaces of Chapultepec Park also belonged. The issue of *Calli* cited earlier makes this connection explicit. In addition to its discussion of the Automex factory’s economic and political significance, it also discusses the redesigned Chapultepec Park, including its new museums of Anthropology (MNA), Modern Art (MAM), and Natural History. While Automex is discussed in an article titled “Where Do You Work?” the account of Chapultepec Park is titled “Where Do You Have Fun?” and the section devoted to the new museums appears under the title “Where Do You Cultivate Yourself?” Finally, in a section titled “Where Do You Live?” *Calli* presents the San Juan de Aragón housing project, inaugurated by President López Mateos on November 20, 1964, the official celebration date of the Mexican Revolution. San Juan de Aragón was designed as a state-sponsored, low- to middle-income housing project by architects Héctor Velázquez and Ramón Torres, collaborators of Ramírez Vázquez at the School of Medicine at the University City, on the site of former communal agricultural or *ejido* lands in what was at the time the northwestern periphery of Mexico City. As with the production of other housing projects within the boundaries of the expanding Mexican capital, here again a conflict over the exploitation and management of land and its associated resources defined the production of a significant design intervention.¹⁰⁹

Drawn up by *Calli*’s articles is an ideal map of the expanding capital city where different design interventions fit neatly into a seemingly harmonious picture of economic and urban growth. Also present in this picture is the capital’s relentless expansion, a process that literally consumed the former agricultural and rural landscapes that surrounded it through the construction of housing and industrial facilities. *Calli* translates into the languages of architecture and planning an idyllic vision of the economic panorama that Ortiz Mena and the advocates of the capital

city's industrialized and urbanized growth envisioned. Also conjured up synecdochically by these articles is a national-scale vision, a projection of the capital city's economic and industrial evolution as a possible image of the expansion of heavy industry, mass leisure and cultural indoctrination along similar lines in all of Mexico. Included as the human component within these wish-images is the profile of the ideal, normative subject of the postrevolutionary state, a male laborer who operates as the head of household in a nuclear family; who is employed by the expanding industrial sector supported by the state; is housed by the state's bounty; is fully entertained by the state-sponsored leisurely attractions added to the capital city; and is edified by the cultural institutions with which the state has also endowed the capital city where he lives. Decisively profiled in *Calli's* articles is the image of a thankful and patriotic laborer-consumer who partakes of the economic and cultural benefits of Mexico's hegemonic arrangement and does little to challenge its normative ambitions. As it would become clear shortly after these articles appeared, these ideal subjects of Mexican developmentalism were becoming increasingly scarce.

THE PREDICAMENT OF TRANSLATION

In words as much as through buildings and their images, Goeritz perpetuated the notion that "emotional" architecture could provide foreigners and Mexicans alike with access to the contradictions between old and new, industrialized and underdeveloped, folkloric and cosmopolitan dimensions that, in his view and those of other official cultural figures, structured Mexico's existential condition. Conveniently, Goeritz abstracts potentially explosive social relations from the rosy picture that his writings and artworks construct. Precisely in his introduction to Beacham's *The Architecture of Mexico*, Goeritz argues that throughout the history of Mexican architecture "the contrasts of old and new are placed abruptly together, one against the other . . . without hesitation, without compassion." "The forcing together of varied forms and ideas," he claims, "results in a paradoxical unity that would be simply impossible in any other culture."¹¹⁰

For Goeritz the traumatic coordinates of Paz's *Laberinto*, those of the forced historical trauma of Mexico's conquest and its multiple historical reverberations, collectively draw up the cultural specificities of Mexico's national ethos. Retaining their violent character only in purely aesthetic terms, however, these coordinates don't translate into Paz's episodes of cyclical violence or any other volatile historical conditions, and instead become part of a timeless tableau of static juxtapositions. Even more so than his interventions at the Camino Real Hotel, the project that marked the official sanction of Goeritz's ideas and provided him with the opportunity to materialize them into a project was his Route of Friendship. In addition



Figure 4.12. Ricardo Legorreta, Camino Real Hotel, Mexico City, 1968, view of Calder stabile in hotel. C. Fundación Armando Salas Portugal.

Figure 4.13. Ricardo Legorreta, Camino Real Hotel, Mexico City, 1968, view of entrance fountain. C. Fundación Armando Salas Portugal.

to its ambitions to spawn urbanization in the city's periphery, for those visiting Mexico City and traversing the Route in moving vehicles, the project was intended to provide a carefully designed set of views of Mexico's emotional landscape, where abstract, monumental volumes emerged out of the primitive landscape of the still undeveloped areas of the capital's periphery. This carefully designed environment was meant to dramatically embody the structure of contradictory juxtapositions that Goeritz positioned as the key to unlocking Mexico's existential condition, recasting a panorama of contentious social relations as a peaceful, tourist-friendly journey of purely aesthetic value.

The most privileged among Olympic visitors would experience traces of this emotional landscape at the Camino Real Hotel as well. After Calder agreed to participate at the Route of Friendship with *El Sol Rojo*, Goeritz introduced him to Legorreta, who commissioned a sculpture of his, an untitled stabile, for the Camino Real.¹¹¹ This stabile transposed some of the Route of Friendship's design logic into the organization of the hotel's interior spaces. As part of a network of art objects inside the hotel, the function of Calder's work was understood primarily in relation to patterns of circulation. It was presented in dramatic fashion: upon turning the corner of one of the hotel's corridors, visitors would be overwhelmed by its presence, which literally filled its own room (Figure 4.12). Lit to emphasize its large size, the sculpture would rarefy visitors' perception of the scale of its display space, dwarfing the room in which it stood. Legorreta and Calder intended the sculpture to have just this effect, analogous to the one that Legorreta intended the Automex towers to have in the context of the car factory. Encountering the Calder stabile, circulating hotel guests would get a taste of Mexico's unexpected spatial and formal juxtapositions, echoing the similar effect that the installations of colonial and modernist objects in their hotel rooms, also literal expressions of Mexico's existential contradictions, exerted.

Goeritz's further contributions to the Camino Real created similar effects in a few crucial instances. For the hotel grounds, he designed a set of monumental cylinders in painted white concrete. Like their obvious predecessors, the towers at Automex, his Camino Real towers were designed primarily with dramatic effect in mind. Intended to prove overwhelming to visitors, the towers also acted as a dividing wall between the hotel and an adjacent street on its east end. Before they encountered these monumental towers or any other hotel features, visitors would confront an even more dramatic setting devised by Goeritz and Barragán (Figure 4.13). A metal door by the sculptor greeted them just as a dramatic fountain

marking the hotel entrance appeared before them. Fueled by a water-jet system, the fountain, designed by sculptor Isamu Noguchi, would create large whirlpools and splashes, while dramatic lighting from below heightened the aggressiveness of the moving water. Enveloped by large, windowless walls that magnified the sound of the water, the fountain's effect was intended to stir visitors' emotions, acting as a prelude to what they would experience at the hotel.

If Goeritz's towers in the hotel garden were clear successors to the monuments at Automex, the fountain had at least one direct precedent in earlier works by him and Barragán. For the entrance to the Gardens of El Pedregal, a similar space as the entrance to the Camino Real had been constructed: a fountain of splashing water flanked by a metal door and a stone sculpture by Goeritz, *El Animal del Pedregal*, marked the monumental entrance to the luxury suburb.¹¹² For the hotel's interior, Goeritz produced an artwork as arresting as the fountain entryway, a mural plated in gold that he positioned at the top of the stairs leading from the hotel's main vestibule. The golden mural was placed in a space immediately adjacent to the Calder stable, covering the better part of a wall perceived gradually as visitors walked up a flight of stairs. Gold leaf was a glamorous texture of decoration in its own right, and it contrasted starkly with the carpeting of the stairs, which was originally of a deep red color. The use of gold also tied the modern mural to colonial-period devotional art in Mexico, which Goeritz had long appropriated as a source of inspiration.¹¹³

To be sure, the intensity of the Camino Real Hotel's emotional experience was largely produced in dialogue with international trends in hotel design, and as a response to the expectations of foreigners. C. Ray Smith claimed that hotels of the mid-twentieth century, not just in Mexico, were forced to accommodate a different set of expectations from their customers as a result of the increased speed of travel and ensuing brevity of tourists' hotel stays: "Now, the jet set buzzes about so quickly, and businessmen, conventioners, and tourists stay for such comparatively short periods, that they do not need all the familiar comforts of 'a home away from home.'" On account of the shortened stays of customers, he argued, the aims of hotels had changed and, as a result of more condensed visits, hotels had to provide not only a sense of glamour more intense than they had to before, but also a more profound impression of cultural authenticity: "Hotels must provide some idea of *genius loci*, of the romantic distance [from the culture being visited] that the traveler sought."¹¹⁴

Among international precedents for the Camino Real, perhaps only Danish architect Arne Jacobsen's Royal SAS Hotel and attached Airport Terminal (1960) in Copenhagen, which provided a dramatic set of modernist environments based on the collaboration of members of the architect's office and interior and furniture

designers, was comparable to Legorreta's collaboration with international members of the Knoll office as well as the many artists involved with his hotel.¹¹⁵ Emblematic of a specifically Scandinavian approach to design to some extent, Jacobsen's work was not quite as explicitly promoted as representative of a particular cultural profile as Legorreta's project. Mexico, writers of the day emphasized incessantly, was a distinctive and exotic location precisely because it *engendered* expectations for dramatic and wide-ranging contradictions, as Beacham would most eloquently articulate in his 1969 photographic essay. In Mexico, he claimed, in terms that almost exactly approximate the effects that the Camino Real hoped to exert on its guests, "the foreigner can rarely become jaded" and is actually "*in danger of expecting to be surprised at every turn.*"¹¹⁶

The Camino Real Hotel exacerbated these expectations and effects, but it also operated as a space of cultural translation in a more literal sense, and not without generating significant organizational tension. Alongside Mexico City's Centro Médico (1963), the hotel served as the primary Olympic convention center, hosting such important events as the plenary sessions of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). To organize these events, the Olympic bureaucratic apparatus and the hotel management came to a number of uneasy encounters. An IOC document describing Olympic protocol, for instance, lists as necessary at the hotel, for the duration of the Olympics, "simultaneous translation facilities," noting that English, French, Spanish, and Russian were compulsory, while the inclusion of translation services and personnel in other languages was left "at the discretion of [the local] Organizing Committee."¹¹⁷ Many of the international Olympic guests, notably IOC president Avery Brundage, demanded the presence of translation staff as well as sophisticated translation equipment in their hotel rooms. Facing a wide range of economic pressures and possessing only a small, specialized workforce devoted to providing translation services, the MOC met most of these demands only grudgingly.¹¹⁸

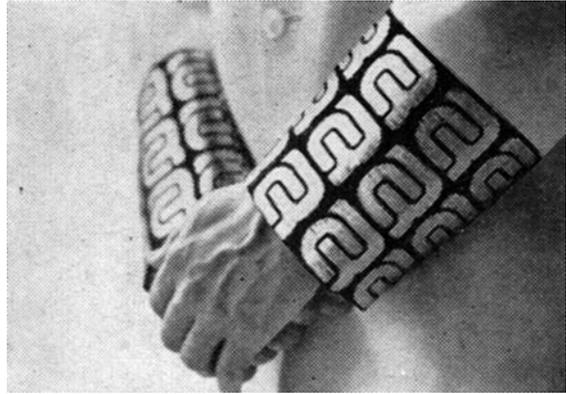
TOTALIZING ATTEMPTS, PARTIAL EFFECTS

Calder's stabile at the hotel and the rest of its labyrinthine spaces may have established pointed spatial connections between the hotel and the Route of Friendship, but the connections between the privately sponsored venture and the official propaganda effort relied on a closer but less obvious dialogue between media. Indeed, immediately after working for the MOC, Lance Wyman designed a branding campaign for the Camino Real Hotel, having been recommended for the job to Legorreta by Goeritz himself.¹¹⁹ As it had for his Olympic graphic system, for the hotel project Wyman's experience as a corporate designer in the United States came in handy.

As John Harwood notes in his analysis of the branding of IBM during the mid-twentieth century, the act of branding entails a complex set of exchanges of value among commodities. A logo, Harwood notes, “is an object that adheres to other objects and manufactures a topological equivalence; much as money grants objects exchange value through its putative status as both a universal ‘medium of exchange’ and guarantor of absolute value, the logo grants objects identity with one another.” Because it does not identify the state itself, the custodian of the brand of printed currency, the corporate logo differs from money in the way in which it assigns objects their worth. It demarcates the property of a private patron from all else, but it also engenders a parallel reality wherein it bears the prestige of the patron when displayed on its attached objects. A logo is thus “the most fundamental act of *de-sign-ation* at the beginning of the design program, a marking out that engenders a conceptual and spatial separation from that which does not bear it.”¹²⁰

This understanding of branding is directly related to the practice of industrial designer Paul Rand, who was central to the creation of the IBM design program. A fundamental figure in the rise of corporate design in the United States, Wyman has often acknowledged Rand’s formative influence on all of his early interventions, including those he formulated at the office of William Schmidt and his work for General Motors, experiences that prefigure his interventions in Mexico. At the Camino Real, Wyman operated with a similar logic in mind, creating a graphically dispersed system that bestowed the prestige of the Camino Real brand to a wide range of objects and spaces associated with the hotel commission (Figures 4.14 and 4.15). Echoing the simultaneous “folkloric” and “international” aspects of his Mexico ’68 logo, Wyman based his Camino Real logo on the heavily abstracted shape of architectural details from buildings at the pre-Columbian site of Tula, in the state of Hidalgo. Rendered abstract enough to retain only faint references to this “original” source while remaining conversant with the language of abstract art and advertising typography, these patterns read as the initials “C” and “R,” which stood for the hotel’s name. Wyman merged the two initials to create a unified image, which took various materializations throughout the hotel—it was enlarged and rendered three-dimensional through a sculpture at the hotel entrance; it was emblazoned on the clothing of hotel staff; and it was featured on all printed materials that the hotel management disseminated.

Dispersed across its various incarnations, this graphic system’s operation was as expansive as the one that Wyman had designed for the Olympics, and which Terrazas attempted to translate into an urban planning campaign. Like the Olympic branding effort, the Camino Real graphic system was intended to create an environment where hotel visitors felt fully immersed in the presence of commodities and spaces they could readily identify with a specific patron. Yet it was not just



a “look” that Legorreta’s hospitality space and the major propaganda event shared, important though their respective “looks” were. A crucial selling point of the Olympic campaign was its promotion as an ambitious work of total design, a claim that, given the top-down organization of Ramírez Vázquez’s various teams devoted to architectural, advertising, exhibitions, and diplomacy matters, was, from a logistical perspective, at least partially true. But the effort to brand the Olympic campaign as a work of total design also held considerable rhetorical value in and of itself. This effort not only afforded the Olympic project a degree of credibility within the architectural and design circles that valued this approach, which reached its heyday in the mid-to-late 1960s; it also made the Olympic organization committee’s claims to bureaucratic transparency and efficiency easier to sell to the Mexican and international publics.¹²¹ To put it differently, the presentation of the Olympic campaign as a carefully designed “product” belied the lack of transparency, widespread inefficiency, and encounters with social contestation that defined the organization of Mexico ’68 in reality.

With a much tidier commission than the larger Olympics under his watch, Legorreta emphasized the collaborative ways in which the hotel had been produced at every turn, strategically emulating the Olympic organizational discourse. He paid particular emphasis to the unprecedented degree to which designers had interacted with architects, sculptors, and artists. His team, like the Olympic design team, was in fact an international one, more so than the teams that any other hotel in Mexico City had employed.¹²² Like the organization of the Olympics itself, this international gathering of talent had been vertically organized and bureaucratically managed. So intimate was the relationship between the designed public image of the two projects, the hotel and the Olympics, that the organizational

Figure 4.14. Lance Wyman, designer, Camino Real Hotel logo, 1968.

Figure 4.15. Lance Wyman, wearable logos for Camino Real Hotel staff, 1968. Design by Lance Wyman and Julia Murdoch.

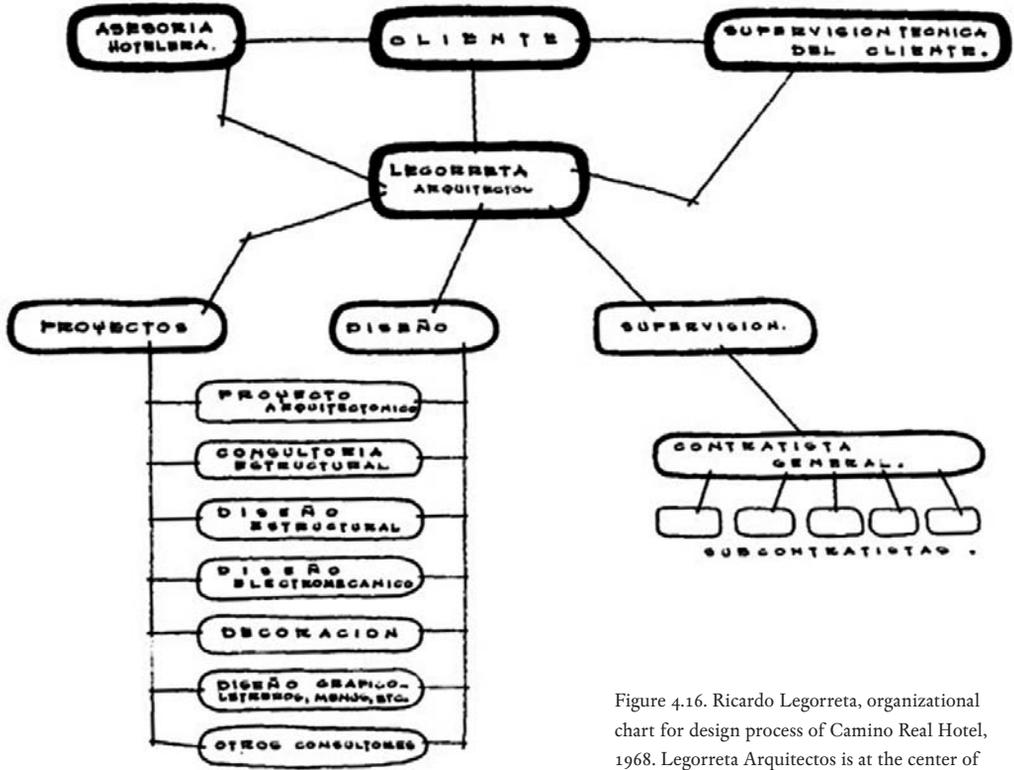


Figure 4.16. Ricardo Legorreta, organizational chart for design process of Camino Real Hotel, 1968. Legorreta Arquitectos is at the center of a node of diverse agencies that collaborated in the design and construction of the Camino Real Hotel. *Arquitectura México* 99 (September–December 1967).

chart Legorreta used in November 1967 to describe the making of the hotel was precisely like those used to diagram the Olympic campaign around the same time (Figures 4.16, 4.17). The figurehead of a large bureaucratized enterprise, in the diagram Legorreta positions himself in the role of a facilitator and administrator dabbling in various aspects of design, but having full control over none.

Yet, just as with the Olympic branding campaign, which clashed with multiple kinds of organizational and political obstacles, the totalizing ambitions to create a national scenography at the Olympic hotel were ultimately fractured by class and social divides. In other words, just whose “Mexico” was so dramatically showcased at the Camino Real was not obvious, precisely in light of the project’s graphically dispersed, organizationally diffused, and internationally staffed nature. Even for the most enthusiastic commentators, the legibility of Legorreta’s hotel as a Mexican

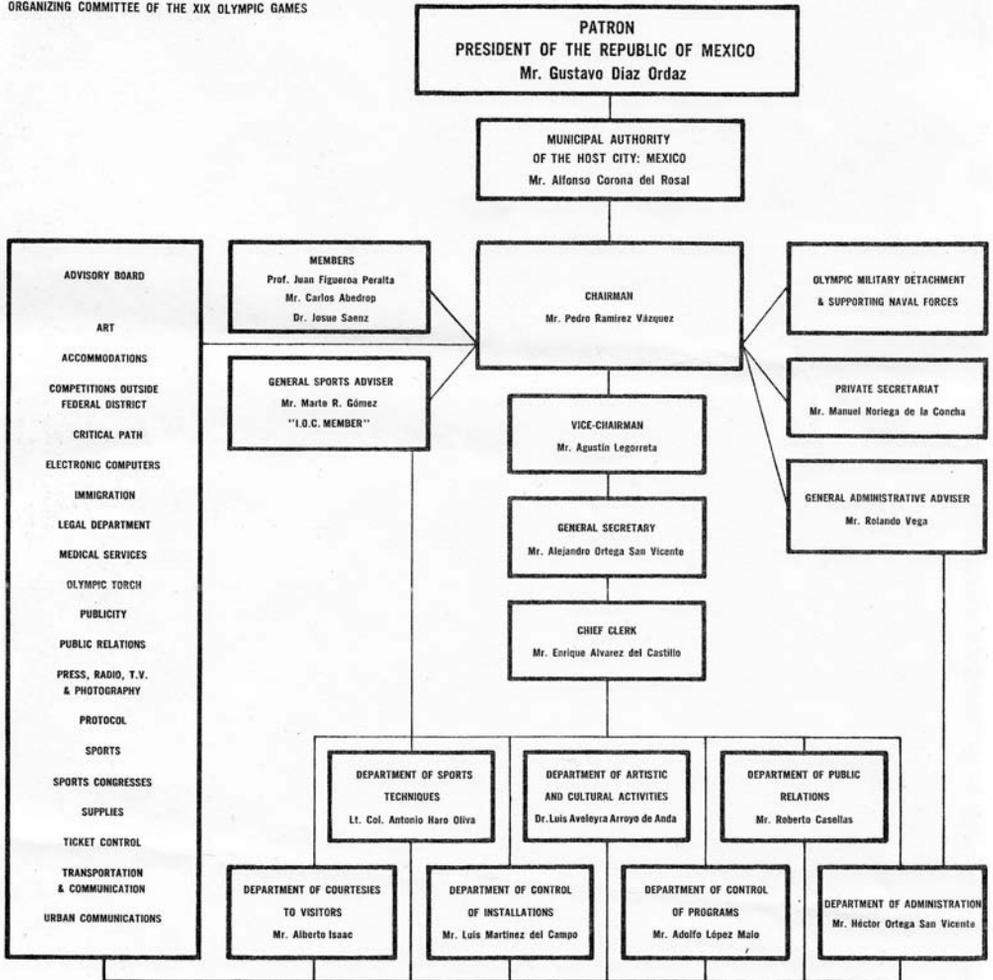


Figure 4.17. This diagram presents Ramirez Vázquez, chairman of the Mexican Olympic Committee, as the direct connector between every bureaucratic agency involved with Mexico '68 and the two most powerful politicians behind it: Alfonso Corona del Rosal, regente of Mexico City, and Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, president of Mexico. Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Mexico City.

space was entirely dependent on the national origins, and, more significantly, on the class background of those on the receiving end of the message:

[T]o the man in the street in Mexico (admittedly the man in his Mercedes in the street), the Camino Real is somewhat foreign. Explanations have it that this is because the class of Mexican who would normally visit such a luxury hotel is known to prefer “French furniture.”¹²³

The alignment between the agendas of private corporate patrons and those of the state’s cultural apparatus was long-standing in the Mexican tourist industry. The exclusionary nature of this compact was also long-standing, and in the case of the Camino Real Hotel’s construction, this exclusionary logic was literally manifested in the displacement of mostly middle-income residents of the area east of Chapultepec Park, where the hotel was built, as a result of its construction.¹²⁴ Never before the Olympics, however, had the alignment between private capital, the tourist industry, and the state been visually systematized and internationally promoted through a unified set of graphic and urban interventions. Yet, after completion of their projects for the Olympics and the Camino Real Hotel, Wyman and Terrazas continued to be active in large-scale commissions that blurred the boundaries between the interests of the exhibitionist state and the corporate forces aligned with them. In the production of the subway system during the late 1960s, these two figures and many others formulated projects that were positioned precisely where these interests intersected with the social and political tensions of the Mexican capital city. In the case of the underground venture, however, the agendas of the presidential and municipal power circles were just as visible as the corporate and technological forces that fueled its completion.

FIVE
SUBTERRANEAN
SCENOGRAPHIES
TIME TRAVEL AT THE
MEXICO CITY METRO

Public works, especially those of the monumental kind, occupy a place of special importance in all of Salvador Novo's writings, and in the 1967 edition of his *New Mexican Grandeur* they are especially significant.¹ In this book, infrastructure takes center stage, as Novo almost discusses more transportation networks to move through Mexico City than actual attractions located there. He seems especially fascinated by the Anillo Periférico (1964), the new speedway that, in his words, allows visitors to "drive round the edges of the city, with many points of entry and exit connecting with other new, wide streets," several of which lead "very quickly to the airport."² Because it facilitates the flow of tourists and investors drawn to the Mexican capital for business and for pleasure, in Novo's narrative this urban thoroughfare inhabits the same discursive space that hospitality venues like the Camino Real Hotel occupy. Although physically rooted in the fabric of Mexico City, these are also spaces of transnational interconnection that extend Mexico City's cosmopolitan reach beyond national boundaries.

In 1973, the Sistema de Transporte Colectivo (STC), the subway's official managing agency, published a lavish book to commemorate the opening of the first three lines of Mexico City's subway. Picking up where *New Mexican Grandeur* had left off, Novo's contribution to this volume discusses the vicissitudes brought about by Mexico City's growth since the sixteenth century, particularly the city's explosive expansion since the mid-1940s, and the planning responses undertaken to enhance the city's navigability over time. In Novo's narrative, these responses follow a clear developmentalist path toward the ever-facilitated flow of moving bodies and commodities through the urban fabric. "A first solution," Novo argues, "was to open . . . new circulation routes and avenues: Circunvalación, the Tasqueña,

the Universidad Avenue, the Viaducto, the Calzada de Tlalpan for rapid transit, and finally, the *magnificent Periférico*.” Despite the construction of all these roads and highways, however,

[t]he great step was missing: the most audacious one, always pushed back by doubts about whether the liquid entrails of a city built over water would sustain the penetration of a complex system of massive transportation, which could no longer be held back as the perfect solution to similar problems emerging in other major world cities.³

Novo describes two epicenters of the Olympic building campaign as significant sites of Mexico City’s mid-twentieth-century modernization. The Aztec Stadium was a monument of significance to the life of the capital city before the Olympics, and graphic and sculptural interventions rendered the stadium itself and the Calzada de Tlalpan, which connects the stadium to the city, into one of the most important venues of Mexico ’68. The Anillo Periférico provided the setting for Mathias Goeritz’s Route of Friendship, which, as we have seen, converted a section of this recent work of urban infrastructure into a permanent site for “public” art that was simultaneously a site for the performance of Goeritz’s problematic cultural cosmopolitanism. Novo’s account thus aestheticizes the intersections between the Mexican capital’s transformations in *longue durée* and the changes effected upon the city by the Olympic campaign, celebrating the construction of the subway system as the pinnacle of an encompassing sequence of improvements that positions the Mexican capital at the center of several networks of political, economic, and cultural exchange.

Novo’s claims are historically accurate on two grounds: by the end of the 1960s the potential construction of a subway was a topic of great interest among planners and bureaucrats in Mexico City; and, more significantly, the discursive, aesthetic, and ideological alignment between the Olympic and subway projects was very real. Yet what Novo describes as a unified sequence of interventions actually resulted from a fractious political field. The widening of existing streets and the creation of new streets as well as the Periférico mostly benefited bus lines and drivers of private cars. *Regente* Uruchurtu believed that vehicles that circulated above the surface should be given preeminence, partially as a result of his strong ties to the automotive industry, to bus-line operators, and to middle-class urban dwellers, constituencies that his reforms tended to favor. By contrast, planners, entrepreneurs, and politicians with a different set of agendas for the city’s future supported the subway. These figures favored the creation of a network of rapid transit that relieved some of the pressure that the roads of the city, especially those located in the city

center, were being subjected to, and which could help minimize the circulation of vehicles in the city above the surface. Many of these figures also believed that the underground system would help free up commercial and residential real estate for increased speculation aboveground, and that the gentrification of the working- and lower-middle-class spaces in the city would inevitably ensue. As we shall see, for quite some time these two visions of the Mexican capital's future were embattled, and they would never quite find an easy resolution.

NAVIGABILITY QUESTIONS

The debate about the feasibility and convenience of a subway in Mexico City began during the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1938, for instance, the year that the much-vaunted Moscow subway system, famous for the elaborateness of the architecture and public art of its stations, was inaugurated, planner Adolfo Zamora addressed the possibility of building a subway in the context of the sixteenth International Planning and Housing Conference, hosted in Mexico City. Zamora decried Mexico City's possession of only one civic and commercial center in the environs of the Zócalo, owing to the capital's sixteenth-century planning in accordance with Spanish-American traditions, which were based on the existence of one primary central square around which cities grew.⁴ In addition, Mexico City's subsoil, soft because the city was built over aquifers and was rattled periodically by severe earthquakes, "makes any subterranean or elevated alternative so expensive as to be practically unfeasible, so that all circulation matters must be resolved only involving elements of the [street] surface." "From our point of view," he concluded, "there is only one way,"

[a]nd that is *to do away with the center* . . . through a demolition of what exists and a reconstruction of a simplified center . . . or by dissolving the center into the mass of the city.⁵

Zamora's advocacy of a *tabula rasa* approach to planning and his interest in urban decentralization align him with a number of his Mexican and international contemporaries. For instance, the primary propositions of Carlos Contreras Elizondo's influential 1933 plan for Mexico City were decentralization, the regulation of the capital city's growth, and the preservation of the monumental fabric of its historic center.⁶ Trained as an urban planner at Columbia University, in 1927 Contreras became the founding director of the Asociación Nacional de Planificadores de la República Mexicana (ANPRM). In addition to his plan for the capital, Contreras formulated plans for Monterrey (1927), Veracruz (1929), and Acapulco (1929), all of which emphasized urban navigability around monumental urban centers.

Contreras also authored a set of planning prerogatives for Mexican cities that became the basis for the General Planning Law passed in 1930. Although the accelerated growth of the city at this time undermined some of their core principles, Zamora's and Contreras's calls for urban decentralization and enhanced navigability in the early decades of the twentieth century prefigure the logic behind the creation of the UNAM campus and other nodes of urban development throughout Mexico City's expanding fabric by midcentury. Their emphasis on urban thoroughfares as epicenters of urban growth is also strongly reflected in Mathias Goeritz's urban interventions of the 1950s and 1960s and resonates with those by architects like Pani and Ramírez Vázquez that determined the capital's dispersed condition by the late 1960s.

Ramírez Vázquez was among the many professionals who addressed the transit problem of the Mexican capital. An advisee of established planner José Luis Cuevas as a student at the UNAM, as early as 1948 the future architect-politician was selected to formulate a plan for the city of Frontera in the state of Tabasco, where he was also active in the design and construction of prefabricated schools through CAPFCE. He was also an original member of the Sociedad Mexicana de Planificación (SMP), a seven-person committee founded in 1958 that largely followed the institutional path carved out by the ANPRM in the 1920s.⁷ The Sociedad wielded considerable influence because of the politically connected backgrounds of its members. Additional founding members included Pani, a significant proponent of planning initiatives to enhance the navigability of Mexican cities; architect Raúl Cacho, highly active in architectural and planning circles in Mexico since the 1940s; and engineer Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the son of former president Lázaro Cárdenas and a politician active in the PRI. The Sociedad systematically decried the conditions of Mexico City's public transportation system in the specialized and popular press, calling for construction of a subway. "It is undeniable," architect and Sociedad member Mauricio Gómez Mayorga claimed in a *Calli* article in 1960, "that if we had a subway system such as those that exist in the main cities of the world . . . we would have at least palliated the difficult conditions in which we now find ourselves."⁸ Gómez Mayorga was one of the most radical critics of Mexico City's expansion and saw the increase in density and size of the capital as much more than an infrastructural problem. Instead, he believed that curbing the unfettered growth of cities throughout Mexico represented one of the primary political challenges that the state had to address.⁹

Ramírez Vázquez's involvement with planning strengthened his presidential ties as much as his extensive work on the design of museums and pavilions. He became head of the Urbanism Commission of the Council for Economic and Social Planning, an agency created as part of the presidential campaign of López

Mateos. In June 1958, during the campaign, Ramírez Vázquez sent the would-be president a series of proposals to address Mexico City's public transportation woes, one of them for a subway system.¹⁰ In October 1958, after López Mateos became president, Ramírez Vázquez submitted a report to him that described Mexico City as "monstrous and deformed, dehumanized and inefficient," and restated the need for an underground transit system.¹¹ Rodríguez Kuri suggests that, on account of the proximity to the presidential hopeful that he established through these projects, the architect-politician expected López Mateos to designate him Mexico City *regente* after he was elected to the presidency. Yet on December 1, 1958, López Mateos ratified Ernesto Uruchurtu as *regente*, the position he had been awarded by former president Ruiz Cortines. Thus Uruchurtu, who would oppose the subway project until his resignation in 1967, may have essentially gotten in Ramírez Vázquez's way.¹²

Uruchurtu was not the only influential figure to oppose the subway, and his arguments against it had considerable support. Antonio Rodríguez, an art historian who would become a key promoter of the subway's positive social and spatial effects by the early 1970s, initially favored Uruchurtu's position. In an article published in September 1965 in the popular magazine *Siempre!* Rodríguez acknowledged that enhanced networks of transportation were necessary to ensure movement through the city during the Olympics, and argued that the Olympics had to become "a *pretext* to solve or to contribute to the solution of the city's major problems."¹³ However, he claimed that Uruchurtu had "demonstrated" that building a subway would hike up the cost of transportation around the city far too much. Hence, if, as Uruchurtu claimed, Mexico City's subway system would end up being comparable in cost to San Francisco's BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), then under construction and expected to "cost twelve thousand five hundred million pesos," the price tag for a subway was simply "prohibitive."

Rodríguez also objected to the subway because it was not part of a holistic modernization plan for the capital. He argued that the subway would "in no way contribute to the integral modernization of [Mexico City]," since it would leave "extremely modern swaths in an underdeveloped [urban] context." While it "would facilitate transportation," it "would not contribute anything to the beautification of the city." Subways were largely invisible in cities, and, in terms of monumental architecture, a subway in Mexico City could at best yield "an interesting station." In addition, there was an aesthetic argument to be made against the subway, owing to the capital city's geographic peculiarities. Because Mexico City had a scenic setting and a prodigious climate of "almost eternal spring," a monorail would prove far more advantageous than a subway, allowing for a compromise between the city's infrastructural pressures and the need to provide its

dwellers with an aesthetically satisfying daily commute.¹⁴ Echoing Carlos Fuentes's description of the Valley of Mexico as the country's most "transparent" region in his 1958 novel *La región más transparente*—though not addressing Fuentes's critical stance in the book toward all the social and political "darkness" that this region also hosted—Rodríguez concluded that the possibility of traveling "in the shadows in a city characterized by the abundance of sunshine, the transparency of the atmosphere, and the visibility of nearby mountains is nonsense."¹⁵

This opposition notwithstanding, Ramírez Vázquez was not the only influential architect in Mexico City to promote the subway project aggressively. Construction conglomerate Ingenieros Civiles Asociados (ICA), co-owned by engineer Bernardo Quintana and architect Ángel Borja, eventually built the subway in conjunction with the DDF, Mexico City's municipal government office, but only after lobbying in favor of the project for the better part of a decade. In addition to major irrigation, road construction, and electrification projects in several parts of Mexico, ICA, a company founded in 1947, had built virtually every architectural project of significance in Mexico City. The earliest ICA-built project was Pani's Presidente Alemán housing complex (1949), the first large-scale modernist housing project in Mexico. Mathias Goeritz and Luis Barragán's Satellite City Towers, Ramírez Vázquez's Aztec Stadium, and Félix Candela's Sports Palace, to name only a few additional projects, were all ICA-built works too. As *Presencia*, the official journal of the Mexico City subway published for the first time in 1970, put it, ICA's patronage of the subway participated in a long history of architectural and design experimentation, embodying "the avant-garde spirit of an avant-garde country."¹⁶

ICA began preliminary studies for a subway as early as 1958, and submitted more than one proposal to Uruchurtu from 1960 on, to no avail.¹⁷ It is noteworthy that lobbying took so long, especially considering ICA's influence at the time. By the late 1950s, ICA was the largest private company in Mexico and a corporation with close ties to the highest spheres of power. If the corporation's long-standing collusion with the single-party state's modernization agendas is considered, it was as official a private patron of architecture and planning as there ever was during the "miracle." Indeed, no other corporation's history is as emblematic of the political alliance between the single-party state and large-scale construction and infrastructural interests in Mexico at this time.¹⁸ Yet, despite the fact that Díaz Ordaz was an avid promoter of the subway project and argued as early as December 1964 that the mass-transit system was necessary to ensure the success of the Olympics, right after he was elected president, it was only after Uruchurtu's resignation—which was largely motivated by presidential pressure—that ICA's subway project was officially approved. The *regente* who saw the subway project through was Alfonso Corona del Rosal, Uruchurtu's successor and a close ally of the Díaz Ordaz circle who had

formerly served as head of the PRI.¹⁹ In April 1967, Díaz Ordaz authorized the creation of the Sistema de Transporte Colectivo (STC) as a state-run company, and construction of the first subway line began in mid-June 1967.²⁰

Diane Davis argues that this chain of events had profound political repercussions. During his tenure as *regente*, Uruchurtu consistently made concessions to a series of constituencies with urban, economic, and political agendas that conflicted with those of the PRI, undermining the state's clientelist authority in the capital. Among these constituencies were the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (CNOP), as well as the Federación de Sindicatos de Trabajadores al Servicio del Estado (FSTSE). The CNOP, which encompassed a number of popular groups, including squatter settlements advocates, city merchants and small business owners, was founded in 1943. Unlike the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM), which had been strongly tied to state interests since the late 1940s, the FSTSE had increasingly resisted the PRI's coercion. In opposing the subway's construction, Uruchurtu sided with the CNOP, which was concerned that this large-scale project could compromise the economic interests of the various interests under its mantle. Uruchurtu also sided with the Mexico City industrialists represented by the Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformación (CANACINTRA), who did not receive as much official favor as the larger-scale interests grouped under the Confederación de Cámaras Industriales (CONCAMIN), which the PRI-led state deemed central drivers of the national economy. Their economic stability already threatened by the urban inflation that resulted in part from the massive Olympic expenditures of past years, these industrialists grew to be highly discontented with the PRI's policies by the late 1960s. Through his emphasis on automobile-friendly policies, Uruchurtu accommodated the interests of the sectors of the capital's urban middle class, and his support of these sectors became explicitly political when, contravening Díaz Ordaz's position, he sided with striking medical workers and UNAM students in 1965. Uruchurtu also built alliances with unionized bus drivers of the multiple lines—165, according to ICA—that converged daily in downtown Mexico City. For all these reasons, Uruchurtu's ousting inaugurated a period of exacerbated political instability in the capital.²¹

The subway's cost to the PRI leadership was not just political. Despite his very public support for the mass-transit system, Díaz Ordaz was quick to acknowledge that the costs associated with the transit system's implementation far exceeded what funds the Mexican state could provide, and gestured toward the need to find international monies. Eventually, the subway was completed as a joint venture between the Mexican state and French banking interests, while engineering and design expertise for the project was culled from various international quarters as

well as Mexico. Because it mobilized transnational capital and specialized expertise within the framework of a developmentalist state-sponsored effort, the subway became the most significant work of infrastructure completed during Díaz Ordaz's presidency.

The first issue of *Presencia* emphasized that the subway project had mobilized international energies but had adequately harnessed them to serve "Mexican" interests. In terms of the system's propaganda aspirations, this was no small matter. As with other aspects of governmental practice, in the realm of infrastructure building, colonialist interventions had historically been a decisive factor. "Foreign" hands had been responsible for many milestones in the history of Mexico's infrastructure, with interests and investments from other countries having engineered and built many of its early railroads, highways, and dams. During the Porfiriato, and more poignantly during Emperor Maximilian I's short reign (1864–67), these hands had been decisively "French." The completion of the subway allowed for a symbolic recapturing of this realm on the part of Mexican professionals and politicians, precisely from French hands. Despite their profound degree of involvement with the subway's financial, technological, and design features, these "hands" were presented as those of facilitators and custodians rather than as those of the actual executors of the infrastructural work. This discursive repositioning mirrored other diplomatic negotiations of the 1960s. As seen in chapters 1 and 2, the exhibition of pieces of Mexico's archaeological patrimony beyond national borders included the participation of foreigners not as colonialist plunderers of this patrimony—a position they had played in the past—but as its watchful custodians. The negotiations between Mexican and foreign politicians and professionals that enabled the subway's completion were presented in a similar vein, as a sign of Mexico's much-improved diplomatic purchase.

Writing for *Presencia*'s inaugural issue, Georges Derou, director of the Paris metro system, perpetuated the notion that construction of the subway had strengthened diplomatic relations between France and Mexico. In a clear paternalistic tone, he praised the speed with which the subway had been built, noting that the more than forty kilometers covered by its first three lines were finished over the course of only forty months. Derou also emphasized that the Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens had provided ICA the specifications for the construction of each of the subway stations, but that Mexican hands—of engineers and anonymous construction labor—had implemented these specifications. Likewise, a consortium of French Banks, "spearheaded by the Banque Nationale de Paris," provided long-term loans for construction of the projects' various aspects, including the purchase of equipment, civil engineering concerns, and costs associated with the transmaritime communication between French and Mexican transportation specialists.²²

Presencia's first issue also attempted to legitimize the construction of the subway by construing it as a symbol of Mexico's cultural maturity, and by discussing its successful construction as a rite of passage that signaled the country's overcoming of its previous underdeveloped status. Ariel Valencia Ramírez, an anthropologist who worked as an adviser for the STC, claimed that Mexico's "technological autonomy," as exemplified by the completion of the subway, guaranteed the "health" of the country's political and sociological "development." Indeed, he wrote, the French–Mexican collaboration that underlay the completion of the subway project was a sign of cultural advancement on the part of both countries because it had "erased [national] borders for the sake of culture and mutual benefit." According to Valencia, the efficient management of the subway by "Mexican hands," as well as the project's "broader cultural resonance," were decisive "symptoms of cultural and managerial maturity" that only strengthened Mexico's "national culture on the whole." Still more poignantly, the subway project had mobilized a large part of the bureaucratic apparatus of the Mexican state, with each of its components providing the users of the system with a number of distinct, diverse, and tangible benefits:

The Engineering Institute of the [UNAM] collaborated in resolving difficult calculations and construction problems; . . . the Institute of Nonrenewable Natural Resources allowed for the resolution of issues concerning future savings in resources, and through the collaboration between the [STC] and the National Institute of Anthropology and History, anthropologists, chemists, biologists, and other specialists managed to save the cultural patrimony of the country . . . , as well as to foster a better knowledge of the historical antecedents of the city.²³

In sum, as the propaganda language of the subway would have it, virtually the entire Mexican state had been involved in financing, designing, culturally legitimizing, and mechanically setting into motion the capital city's subway. Logically, this propaganda erases from view the multiple internecine tensions that defined the relations between these various institutions. Instead, it provides a technocratic metaphor that likens the harmonious cooperation between these institutions to the smooth functioning of the mechanical components of the subway system. Like those built around other state-sponsored projects of political importance, the subway system's image economies were constructed in relation to this tenuous set of propaganda claims. Given the magnitude of the infrastructure project and its mobilization of many kinds of experts employed by the state and its associated interests, the subway provided many opportunities for the negotiation and accumulation of professional and bureaucratic prestige. Like museums, exhibitions, and sports venues of the same period, the transit system provided its patron state

with a public interface where its normative claims could be articulated, consumed, and contested by a large population of governed subjects. Yet, because it mobilized a wider range of economic and technological forces than any of these other works, the subway's propaganda dimensions were even wider. In grasping the specificities of the subway's consumption, an insight from Gramsci might prove useful. Gramsci argues that "certain forms of technical instruments have a dual phenomenology" as "both structure and superstructure," and thus participate at once in the social relations of production—the "structure" level—and in the ideological and discursive frameworks that emerge dialectically from within such relations, or their "superstructure" counterparts. Considering "technical instruments" in the same category as "every material" instrument is liable to cause serious confusion, because "in the end the development of a particular art is [wrongly] attributed to the development of those specific instruments through which whole artistic expressions enter the public domain and can be reproduced." In other words, because some technological instruments can become so heavily charged with ideological value, it is easy to miss their "dual" condition as components of both the structure and the superstructure of a particular historical context. This contributes to rarefying the picture of both the material context for the production of these objects and the wider discursive and ideological agendas within which they are necessarily embedded.²⁴

Although distinct from the works examined earlier, the subway's graphics and architecture were intimately related to those of the Olympics. The temporary event and the permanent work of infrastructure did not quite open at the same time, much to the chagrin of Mexican designers and bureaucrats who aimed to match the efforts of other cities where international events and infrastructure projects had made their public debuts at the same time.²⁵ Despite the lack of synchrony between Mexico '68 and the subway construction campaign, the graphic identities of the two projects were closely bound together, as Lance Wyman's Olympic urban signage provided the primary template for the formulation of a signage system for the subway. As Wyman recalls, Borja and Quintana commissioned him to design this system in June 1968, before his work as a designer for the MOC was even over. Mathias Goeritz and architect Ricardo Legorreta, who collaborated with Wyman on the Camino Real Hotel (1968), recommended him for the job.²⁶ Architecturally, the Olympic and subway campaigns were also profoundly interrelated. Félix Candela designed some of the most visible subway stations in the system's first three lines simultaneously with his Sports Palace. Moreover, the scenographies of many early subway stations, especially those that showcased the archaeological treasures that construction of the subway in the Mexican capital had yielded, deployed many of the strategies of exhibition architecture that had characterized

the museums and pavilions sponsored by the exhibitionist state during the preceding decade.

With the subway reified as the animating force behind the modernization of the Mexican capital, the system's political consumption unfolded most dramatically during the first few years of its existence, which were also the last two years of Díaz Ordaz's tumultuous presidency, 1969 and 1970. The first subway line was inaugurated in September 1969, while the third line, which officially completed the first construction stage of the system, began to operate to great presidential fanfare on the sixtieth official anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, November 20, 1970. At this time, the metro's subterranean scenographies collectively attempted to instantiate the arrival of Mexico's capital city to the ranks of the developed urban centers of the world, one of the *apertura's* central and most dubious claims.

INTERNATIONAL DILEMMAS

Alongside international events like Olympics and world's fairs, subways were strongly imbricated with understandings of regional and national development. Writing a decade after the Mexico City Olympics in the context of an exhibition about subway design held at New York's Cooper-Hewitt museum, architecture critic Peter Blake discussed the relationship between expanding cities, subways, and the organization of international events:

No city really dares to call itself a metropolis unless it can boast a subway. Montreal had to get itself a metro before it qualified for Expo '67, and Munich had to get itself a U-Bahn before it qualified for the 1972 Olympics. A metropolis without a subway, nowadays, is like a church without a steeple: i.e., not entirely convincing.²⁷

Although subway design had been a field of significant interest for many decades, it saw renewed interest in the late 1960s, and Mexico City's concerns about the creation of a rapid transit system were part of an international field of debates within which North American cities were especially active. The system most similar to Mexico City's subway was in Montreal. The Montreal subway was unique because of its use of rubber tires as opposed to the more usual steel ones—a feature that the Mexican subway would also include—and because it incorporated innovative architecture as well as public art in many of its stations (Figure 5.1). And, like the Mexican system, the Montreal metro was intimately linked to the organization of an international event. Indeed, the circulation networks built for Expo '67, and those of the city where the event was hosted, were related in multiple ways. Impressive pavilions dominated Montreal's two fairground islands at Expo '67,



Figure 5.1. Subway car on rubber tires, Mexico City subway, 1969. Fundación ICA, Mexico City.

but the circulation network crafted for visitors was ostensibly the Expo's most celebrated aspect. Hence, while *Architectural Record* noted that Expo '67 had "more mediocre pavilions than [Robert] Moses was able to gather in Flushing Meadows" for the New York World's Fair of 1964–65, the Expo's plan was "subtle, varied and unobtrusive," providing "an underlying pattern of circulation networks . . . which interconnect carefully related hierarchies of buildings, placed to make the most of their setting."²⁸

Montreal showcased these spectacular circulation networks in tandem with the real evidence of urban modernization. By the spring of 1967, when Expo '67 opened, Montreal possessed not only a functioning subway system, but also a network of underground walkways in its downtown area. This combination of spectacular circulation elements designed for a major temporary event, and permanent improvements to the circulation infrastructure of a city, was one that the Mexican Olympic Committee aspired to but failed to match in the fall of the following year. Moreover, the complex relationship between the fantastic urbanism of the Expo and the real context of Montreal was relevant well past the duration of Expo '67, which lasted between April and October 1967. Michael Sorkin has emphasized the importance of this relationship for planners in Montreal. He argues that the

islands, a “captive utopia” adjacent to Montreal, operated as a “goad to the reorganization of public spaces in the ‘real’ city,” yielding a number of urban interventions in the years after the fair closed.²⁹

In addition to its practical benefits, the Montreal subway was praised widely for the high artistry of its stations. Crediting Montreal mayor Jean Drapeau with the daring choice of providing designers with an open platform for experimentation that accounted for the wide variety of formal languages evinced by each of the system’s stations, critic Robert Gretton contrasted Montreal’s system with the sterility of Toronto’s metro (1954), which had mostly been designed by the Toronto Transit Commission’s architectural department and consulting engineers. Gretton argued that in its “pathological” cleanliness and uniformity, the Toronto system “could well be represented by a prim old lady who nightly looks under one of the clean white tiles for any wicked imagination that might have escaped to go underground,” while Montreal’s system “resembles rather a gay young thing, both imaginative and prepared to shock convention.”³⁰

Referring to its completion as part of an international “boom” in the construction of subway systems, journalist Walter McQuade also praised the Montreal system in *Fortune* magazine in April 1967, just after it opened. McQuade claimed that the system had managed to marry “French verve to Canadian canniness” and alongside the Moscow subway, the most renowned for its use of public art, it had already proven influential in the design of subways in U.S. cities, especially the one in Washington, D.C., whose design process began in late 1966. In addition to Stockholm’s metro (1958), also praised for the elaborate architecture of its stations, the D.C. metro’s chief architect, Harry Weese, had visited both Montreal’s and Moscow’s subways as part of his research for the project.³¹

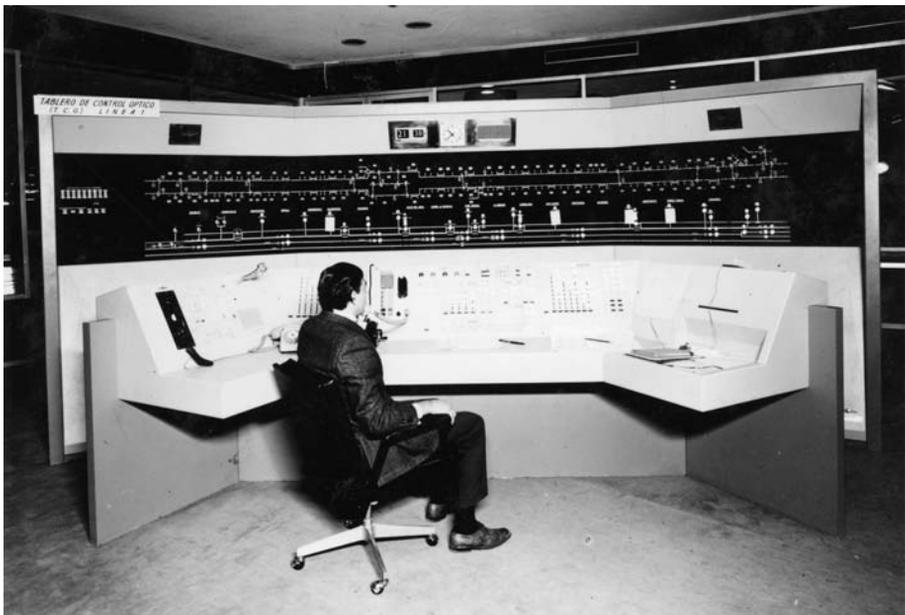
Canadian cities were not the only North American urban centers where the benefits and costs of implementing subway systems were debated in the late 1960s. Writing in 1968, U.S. design critic Patricia Conway George decried the malaise experienced in the United States regarding the possibilities and problems of mass transit, and examined a number of factors—among them the reliance on car transit and the unwillingness to support public transit in general—as the reason why the United States seemed to be running behind many other countries in the implementation of subways. As George argued, the possibilities of an imaginative and aesthetically pleasing subway experience offered by Montreal’s metro had been unveiled to millions of visitors to Montreal during Expo ’67, an event as decisive in getting the system up and running as the Drapeau administration’s political expediency, despite the fact that a rapid-transit system for Montreal had undergone various stages of development for “over 50 years” before that point. Yet, she noted, Expo ’67 was not the only international event of the time that had unveiled a rapid

transit system to the world. Tokyo '64 had been one of the catalysts for the creation of the Tokaido high-speed train that traveled between Tokyo and Osaka—a city that would soon become a world's fair site—and which had been inaugurated for those Olympics.

George also criticized many aspects of the Montreal system that the Mexican subway would address with relative success. She especially criticized the technological management of the movement of subway cars in Montreal, claiming that “Montreal’s system represents no breakthroughs,” given that an antiquated way-finding system determined the movement of each individual subway car in conjunction with a control system that did not effectively control the movement patterns of all participating cars in the system at the same time.³² Mexico City’s subway, although clearly modeled after the Montreal system in more ways than one, would respond to precisely this technological question with a fully computerized system that few other subways could boast at the time. After Montreal’s, Mexico City’s was the second subway in the American continent built in accordance with the specifications of the Parisian Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (the use of rubber tires, first implemented in the Paris subway, was one of these specifications), but it was nevertheless more advanced than its predecessor

Figure 5.2. Central control post, Mexico City subway, 1969. Fundación ICA, Mexico City.

because it was more or less fully computerized in its operations.³³



As Ángel Borja and STC engineer Enrique Warnholtz claimed at the Eighth International Conference of Soil Mechanics and Engineering in August 1969, the Mexican subway system included a Central Control Post (PCC), which acted like a “Central Nervous System.” This Post, which was housed in the STC’s central building in Mexico City, was essentially a control board that included electronic and “optical control” systems that could account for the location of all subway cars circulating in the system at any given time (Figure 5.2). The STC building functioned as a gigantic generator and converter, feeding electricity to the various subway lines. In addition, Borja and Warnholtz claimed that the PCC was “made up of a complex telecommunications network, through which permanent communication between central command and all the stations, train operators, supervisors, inspectors, train-shop personnel, authorities, etc,” was obtained. The result was not only a more efficient and safer subway system, but also an environment of fully rationalized control that transcended the realm of the subway’s technological performance to also encompass its operation in the broader social landscape of the capital city. This computerized system facilitated the mechanized policing of Mexico City more than any technological device implemented previously in the capital. Although the construction and implementation of the subway never ceased to be a socially divisive process, the presence of this mechanized system also provided its patrons with a mechanized interface for the project that hid this divisiveness under a smooth technological skin.³⁴

TIME TRAVELS

The feature article in the December 1969 issue of *Fortune* magazine was devoted to the recently inaugurated first line of the Mexico City subway system. The cover image for the article, tellingly titled “Mexico’s Subway Is for Viewing,” presents a curious scene, a scene in which the act of viewing operates on a number of levels (Plate 6). In the image, taken at the Aeropuerto stop that connected the first subway line to the Mexico City airport, a few spectators stand on a platform suspended above the subway tracks covered by a circular ceiling, watching as a subway car moves through the station. Enthralled by the spectacle of the subway car’s motion, the viewers are themselves being watched by an armed guard at the bottom right of the image, whose clearly defined silhouette is all the more apparent because of its contrast with the moving subway car’s blurred contours. The image carries unmistakable biopolitical import. A scene of urban leisure, it is also the portrait of a population disciplined by the state, held captive by the smoke and mirrors of its technological spectacles, and kept in check by the self-disciplining gazes that its members constantly cast on each other.

Fortune was particularly impressed by the quality of design in many of the Mexico City subway stations. Although just one line was functional by the time the article appeared, the text claimed that it was already apparent “that the [Mexican] subway, with its varied and inventive use of space, materials, and color, will be better looking than the much-celebrated systems in Moscow and Montreal.” A great deal of this beauty was the result of the subway’s capacity to provide visitors and dwellers of the Mexican capital with access to the city’s many underground treasures. Although other subways of the world included archaeological displays, the Mexican one outdid them given its large number of exhibits of this kind.³⁵ As the article informed *Fortune*’s readers, Mexican subway stations featured elaborate exhibitions of pre-Columbian artifacts uncovered during construction of the subway, a “fringe benefit” added to the many practical solutions that the system offered.³⁶

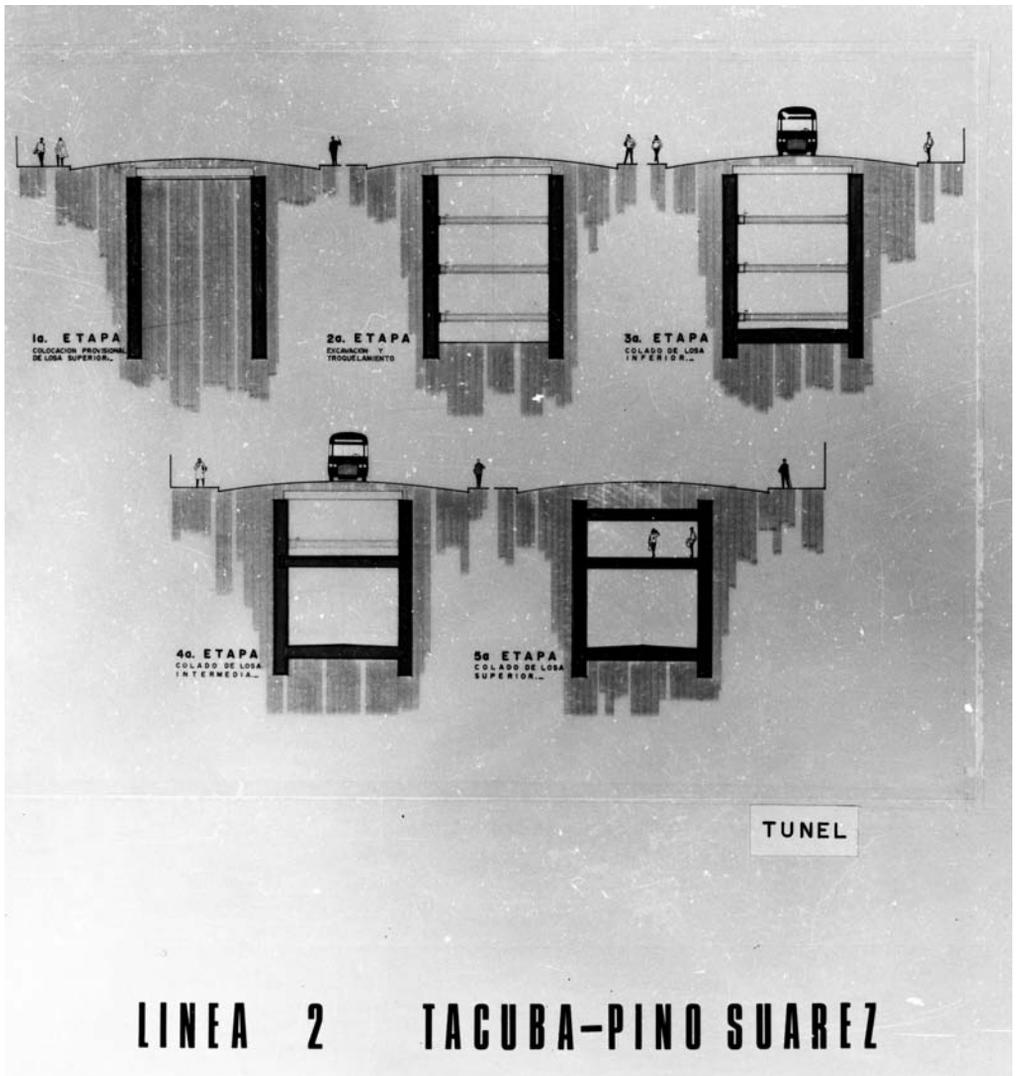
The visibility of these archaeological finds was partly the result of practical aspects of the subway’s building campaign. The subway lines were built using a method described as the “Milan Box” after its successful usage in the construction of Milan’s subway system (1964). Instead of the excavation of deep trenches to make way for the insertion of full tunnels of precast concrete, the “box” method was based on the digging up of two parallel trenches about twenty-three feet apart. Bentonite, a claylike material, was subsequently poured as preliminary filler for these trenches, before poured concrete. These filled-in trenches would provide the encasing walls for the subway tunnel box. The pouring of concrete floors was undertaken only after digging up between the perimeter walls and stabilization of the walls was completed, while the ceiling for the box was made up of precast concrete, to avoid the use of formwork (Figure 5.3). In addition to being cheaper than most alternatives, the “box” method was more adequate to Mexico City’s soft soil, which was not likely to sustain more invasive construction methods, and facilitated the excavation of archaeological remains.³⁷

Fortune claimed that the first line had only begun to uncover ancient artifacts, but many more would surely become visible as the subway system expanded. Although “the pyramid-shaped altar of Tocitlan, now the centerpiece of the Pino Suárez Station” on line 1 was an impressive ancient artifact fully integrated into the new system’s design,

[r]icher finds are expected as the second line is dug through the Zócalo, originally the Aztec ceremonial center whose pyramid temple and palace of Moctezuma so impressed Cortés. An Aztec Calendar, like the one in the [MNA], is known to lie along the new line’s path.³⁸

The potential discovery of the new Aztec Calendar Stone got a considerable amount of airplay as the subway's second line began construction in the early spring of 1968. Cultural bureaucrats seized the opportunity. Interviewed by *Science News*, for example, INAH's Eusebio Dávalos claimed that it would take "years to study and classify the relics" uncovered during construction of the subway, and added that the "quantity and quality increases from month to month" as construction moved further and further into the Zócalo area. Claiming that "archaeologists in the United States would consider finding such a Calendar Stone or a

Figure 5.3. Cross section of Pino Suárez station, Mexico City subway, 1969. Fundación ICA, Mexico City.



Stone of Tizoc as a first-class discovery,” Dávalos even suggested a specific location for the as yet uncovered object in the Zócalo area: “on a line between the facade of the sanctuary which stands next to the [Mexico City] Cathedral, a rather shaky structure that has been reinforced, and the right Portico of the National Palace.”³⁹

Although the new Calendar Stone was never found, the excavations carried out to build the subway after the early summer of 1967 yielded many other artifacts. ICA supervised these collaborations, which were undertaken by INAH archaeologists. Before excavation for each of the lines began, these archaeologists drew up maps that signaled areas of likely concentration of pre-Columbian objects on the basis of colonial-period records. Excavations started as soon as ICA’s engineers broke ground. Part of a unified infrastructural apparatus, the researchers moved, in the words of INAH archaeologists Raúl Arana and Gerardo Cepeda, “practically behind the machines.” Only two years after the first subway line was excavated, archaeological work had yielded considerable colonial-period finds, among them a number of burials at the sixteenth-century Montserrat convent, and several of the convent’s previously unknown structural walls, in the environs of the Mexico City historic core. Because of these and many other finds, Arana and Cepeda waxed confident in an INAH report that construction of the subway would afford them “a more complete vision of the history of [Mexico City].”⁴⁰

The adulatory described in the *Fortune* article cited earlier was only one of several found next to the future Pino Suárez station, located very close to the Zócalo, on line 1 (Plate 7). As archaeologist Jordi Gussinyer reported, this station “was directly adjacent to the street through which Hernán Cortés entered Tenochtitlán.” Although it was very much damaged when they initially found it, Gussinyer and his team preserved and heavily restored the circular-shaped altar. The other adatories, which were found in worse stages of conservation, were destroyed to make way for the subway stop and tunnel. This strategic decision recalls other scenarios where the shared fate of modernist and pre-Columbian structures was negotiated as the fabric of Mexico City underwent fundamental changes. It also reflects mid-twentieth-century approaches to preservation that privileged the iconic value of particular structures more than the holistic understanding of larger and more complex areas of archaeological remains.

In the INAH report about his find at the Pino Suárez stop, Gussinyer claimed that the discovery of the adatories near the historic downtown area of Mexico City was of great importance, given the near absence of such structures in the city, where other kinds of Aztec-era artifacts, mostly sculptures and ceramics, were abundant. Gussinyer described the Pino Suárez finds as part of an “extensive ceremonial site,” which, alongside Tlatelolco, Tenayuca—a ceremonial site located about ten kilometers northwest of Mexico City—and the remains of the Aztec

Templo Mayor in the Zócalo itself, allowed researchers to gradually glean the “exact characteristics” of the architecture of Tenochtitlán’s expansive religious and administrative landscape. The most important offering found adjacent to the adulatory was a stone sculpture of Aztec wind god Ehécatl, which led archaeologists to attribute the adulatory to that deity, despite the fact that the sculpture found next to it seemed to hardly display any formal features characteristic of Aztec sculptures previously known.⁴¹ Shortly after Gussinyer’s article appeared, in fact, anthropologist Doris Heyden challenged his interpretation of the altar, mainly because the sculpture of the god Ehécatl that had been found there likely belonged to a later historical period. Heyden instead attributed the adulatory to Omácatl, the calendrical incarnation of the deity Tezcatlipoca, on the basis of an iconographic analysis of this deity’s representation in colonial-period codices.⁴²

In terms of the subway’s mass-mediated reception, especially its reception outside of Mexico, however, the problematic Ehécatl attribution proved immaterial, and the Pino Suárez display became the most emblematic exhibit in the entire system. This was arguably the kind of display that proved most attractive to foreign eyes because it provided the otherwise cutting-edge system with an exotic and uniquely Mexican flare. An article published in *Newsweek* in January 1971 and reprinted in *Presencia* later that year claimed that “Unlike the spooky, tomb-like atmosphere of the subways of New York, Chicago and Boston, Quintana’s system . . . is happily decorated with Mexican art as well as some of the thousands of Aztec artifacts discovered during the excavations.” “In one stop located under the Zócalo,” *Newsweek* went on, describing the Pino Suárez display as one of the sites where the pre-Columbian past of Mexico was laid bare, seemingly unmediated by archaeological interventions, “travelers can contemplate a well-preserved pyramid used during indigenous rituals before the Spanish conquest.”⁴³ Similarly, the *New York Times* described the Mexico City subway as not only the “highest” in the world given this capital’s altitude of more than seven thousand feet above sea level, but also as “the only subway system to have a genuine Aztec pyramid in one of its stations.”⁴⁴ As so many times in the recent and more remote past, the aesthetic validation of a Mexican design project was premised on its perceived ability to reconcile culturally exotic features with elements easily palatable to “international” eyes.

AN ULTRAMODERN MUSEUM

The subway’s ability to provide commuters with access to pre-Columbian artifacts afforded it a similar condition as the National Museum of Anthropology (MNA), or the displays that Mexico had sent to world’s fairs during the “miracle,” both types of exhibitions that gave pre-Columbian artifacts central propaganda roles. Given the subway’s literal submersion underground, however, the access to these

objects that it facilitated was arguably more tangible than that which almost any other official cultural display produced in Mexico could have offered. In addition, unlike the cases of museums and pavilions in Mexico and abroad, at the subway large populations of popular classes could have consistent, daily access to these materials. This led many early critics to describe the subway as a museum of sorts, except one much more socially inclusive than any of its predecessors. For instance, the September 27, 1969, issue of *Life en Español* magazine claimed that “the play of lights, forms, and colors gives the brand-new subway of Mexico City the aspect of an *ultramodern museum*.”⁴⁵ In likening the spaces of the subway to those of museums, *Life*’s authors were not far off the mark. In addition to the fact that the stations themselves were designed like museum spaces, some artifacts found during construction of the subway eventually became part of the collections of museums, including the MNA. This was the case, for example, of a stepped adulatory uncovered behind the Mexico City Cathedral, while the subway’s second line was being built in June 1970. A clear *talúd-tablero* structure with stucco-painted sides, the artifact, although presumably of Aztec date, shared clear formal relationships with the architecture of Teotihuacán, and was transferred swiftly to the MNA, where it was restored and exhibited shortly thereafter.⁴⁶

Not only did stations look like museums, but the subway system as a whole participated in the state-sponsored push for public indoctrination out of which the commissions for the MNA and its related museums had emerged. In an essay published in the commemorative STC volume cited at the beginning of this chapter, Miguel Álvarez Acosta, an official at the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation, described the subway as the pinnacle of the process of state-sponsored facilitation of public access to culture. He argued that Ramírez Vázquez’s prefabricated schools sponsored by CAPFCE, Fernando Gamboa’s traveling exhibitions of Mexican art, and the 1968 Olympics were all a part of this process. He claimed that the subway inaugurated a “fourth culture” of integration and assimilation in Mexico, which succeeded the pre-Columbian, colonial, and modern periods of official history, each of which, as a result of extreme historical circumstances, had compelled the cultural fusion and coexistence between disparate peoples and belief systems. This “fourth culture” was one that, fueled by the social advances of the ongoing Mexican Revolution, pointed toward a future of increased access to knowledge, enhanced economic development, and social mobility. The Mexican subway, he claimed, was the most groundbreaking avatar of this incipient “culture” ever produced.⁴⁷ Writing in the same volume, Antonio Rodríguez reversed his praise of a monorail as opposed to a subway as the most sensible solution for Mexico City’s traffic woes, and described the subway as Mexico’s “temple and museum for the people.” Like his previous opposition to the subway, much of

his praise was articulated in aesthetic terms. He wrote that, unlike its more glamorous peers in world capitals like Paris, the Mexico City metro was “not limited . . . to the useful and necessary task of transporting people.” “Before placing man in the wagons that will take him to his destiny,” he claimed, it “attracts the future traveler to an environment of beauty and art that is fascinating in and of itself.”⁴⁸

Rodríguez promoted the psychological and social effects of the subway widely, writing consistently for *Presencia* and other popular publications. “Man,” he wrote in a *Presencia* article in 1972, “with difficulty accepts to be treated as *something* that is picked up *here* and dropped off *there*.” Being able to find bookstores, restaurants, cafés, and shops there, the Mexican subway gave this (presumably male) traveler the opportunity to escape the murderous chaos of Mexico City’s aboveground traffic and enjoy the “human landscape” and art treasures of a new subterranean city.⁴⁹ Rodríguez disseminated this perception beyond his writings, lecturing widely about the merits of subway design for customers and staff of the subway as part of the STC’s cultural programs. These programs were extensive. Between 1970 and 1973, they included public lectures and workshops by such artists as José Luis Cuevas, Rufino Tamayo, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, as well as other academics, intellectuals, and public figures who endorsed the subway’s positive psychological, pedagogical, and overall social effects.⁵⁰ Aesthetic arguments in favor of the subway system were not just expressed by figures active in the fields of art and culture. Jorge Espinoza, the first director of the Mexican subway system, argued that a trip to the subway would “situate Mexicans in more direct relationship with the past that lay buried beneath our subsoil” and thus in direct contact with “beauty,” broadly conceived:

Beauty of artworks, beauty of proportions and their harmony . . . a trip in the subway is thus an immersion, albeit a fleeting one, into a world that is less unappealing [than the world aboveground], more welcoming, and, in sum, *more human*.⁵¹

Much as they did in the case of other state-sponsored projects of the mid-twentieth century, here again humanist formulations intersect with the subway’s technocratic mission. In order to create the aesthetically pleasing and socially beneficial environment that the subway avowedly offered to the urban public, Borja and Quintana had been cautious. ICA’s co-owners were particularly keen to limit the involvement of high-profile architects in the early design phases of the Mexican subway stops, attempting to provide the system with a coherent look without too many idiosyncratic interventions while keeping the project’s cost at bay. Other than Luis Barragán, who was enlisted as an adviser “on matters of color,” the three architects selected to complete stations for the subway’s first three lines were Candela,

Salvador Ortega, and Enrique del Moral. Candela and Ortega produced the most lavish and architecturally unique subway stations, while del Moral produced a set of aboveground, standardized stations running along the Calzada de Tlalpan.⁵²

Between 1967 and 1969, Candela designed four subway stations: the Merced, Balderas, Candelaria, and San Lázaro stops on line 1. The San Lázaro station was perhaps the most formally ambitious among these works (Figure 5.4). Built of reinforced concrete and constructed through the use of Candela's complex handmade formwork patterns, the structure consisted structurally of two groups of hyperbolic paraboloid thin shells that overlapped, with four supports bearing their weight. Outside, the station was clad in brick and stone, with encrusted sections of gold-colored glass brick under its paraboloid roof. The station's roof was defined by the contours of the rising concrete shells, which curved upward at its entryways and at the very center of the plan, lending its concrete roof a tentlike appearance

(Figure 5.5). In collaboration with architect Enrique de la Mora, in the 1950s Candela produced a series of churches that employed the hyper in a similar way as the San Lázaro station. Cubiertas Ala also built at least one building of essentially the same structural

Figure 5.4. Félix Candela, San Lázaro station, Mexico City subway, 1968–69, exterior. Félix Candela Architectural Records and Papers, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.



makeup as the station: a market commissioned by the municipal government of the city of Cali, Colombia, which consisted of the combination of tentlike hyperbolic paraboloid shells.⁵³

In his 1973 elegy of the subway, Antonio Rodríguez reserved most of his praise for the architecture of Candela's San Lázaro station. The station's exterior, he wrote, "with its cantilevered 'wings' that make it appear to be ready for flight, announces the passage of airplanes that usually move through the clouds nearby, at the [Mexico City] airport." Candela's "hypars" were the central feature of the station. Like the Periférico in Novo's praise of the capital city's thoroughfares and Candela's Sports Palace in the architect's own estimation, seen in the preceding chapter, in Rodríguez's account the hypars, which are described as particularly visible to those traveling by plane to and from the city, are inscribed within a transnational space of cultural, political, and economic exchange. Rodríguez claimed that, surrounded by an open plaza, when showcased to domestic and international eyes the station became "a monument of cement and steel, stone, and glass, of rising lines and *paraboloid curves* always in action: a modern monument, worthy of a modern city!"⁵⁴ And yet, it was not merely the exterior form

Figure 5.5. Félix Candela, San Lázaro station, Mexico City subway, 1968–69, interior. Fundación ICA, Mexico City.





Figure 5.6. Félix Candela, San Lázaro station, Mexico City subway, 1968–69, interior. *El metro de México: Primera memoria* (Servicio de Transporte Colectivo Metro, Mexico City, 1973).

of Candela’s building that had a profound aesthetic impact on the subway traveler. Its interior situated an imagined rider at an ideal point for witnessing the subway’s spectacle of travel and motion (Figure 5.6). Here, the hyperbolic paraboloid not only operated as a highly sculptural element, but, as in the case of the Sports Palace, also functioned as an enveloping surface that facilitated mass spectatorship. “Inside the station itself, conceived with talent and audaciousness,” Rodríguez wrote,

there is a broken balcony, shaped as an acute angle, from which one can enjoy the rigorously kinetic spectacle of the trains that, with their lively orange color, enter the optic frame for observation, momentarily hide the geometry of the tracks, and depart toward their destiny in an exciting visual feast.⁵⁵

Precisely here, subway riders were intended to become entranced with the technological spectacle of the subway, enshrouded by an architectural environment at once intimately modern and essentially Mexican in its construction techniques and sculptural ambitions. Yet, for Rodríguez the persuasive powers of the subway's architecture were only fully activated where the juxtaposition between the metro's ostensibly modern architectural spaces clashed with the remains of ancient Mexican culture positioned carefully in the fabric of the capital. This, he argued, took place most effectively in the urban context of the Pino Suárez adulatory. Although "heavily restored," the adulatory gave subway travelers a sense of Mexico's unique temporal and existential condition. Rodríguez argued that the Pino Suárez exhibit acted in dialogue with the shiny steel-and-glass surfaces of Augusto Álvarez's Torre Latinoamericana, Mexico City's then-tallest skyscraper (1956), which was placed a mere few blocks from the subway stop. The Pino Suárez pyramid, he wrote, "affirms, alongside the skyscraper next door, Mexico's permanence in the past and the future, which is to say, in eternity."⁵⁶

Here again, the clashing point of ancient and modern surfaces becomes the site from which Mexico's culturally specific modernity can be articulated. As seen in earlier episodes, fragments of this juxtaposition could be found throughout the landscape of mid-twentieth-century official culture, which included several spaces in the capital city. Glimpses of it could be caught at the point of confrontation between Mario Pani's Nonoalco-Tlatelolco housing project and the remains of Tlatelolco's Templo Mayor at the Plaza of the Three Cultures, at the various display rooms of the MNA, or in the context of the encounter between Gamboa's Olmec heads and Ramírez Vázquez's Mexican pavilion at the New York World's Fair. Also encapsulated in Rodríguez's narrative is the traumatic clash of "modern" and "ancient" cultures that Paz and Goeritz described as keys to decipher modern Mexico's political and aesthetic condition. Positioning the Torre and the adulatory, two modern fruits of the capital city's ruthless modernization, as temporal anchors of an eternal national picture, in one fell swoop Rodríguez sanitizes the urban destruction that this modernization entailed and freezes in place a dynamic force field of conflicting urban, social, and political agendas that had the city as its theater.

MYTHOLOGICAL SIGNS

Just as distinctive as the archaeological finds that the subway yielded and some of its architectural environments was the system's graphic identity. For his subway signage project, Wyman had to devise images that could be readily associated with the urban context or history of the subway stations, most of which were not as dispersed as the Olympic venues. Largely owing to ICA's real-estate interests in

downtown Mexico City, these stations were concentrated in the city center, especially in the case of the subway's first three lines.⁵⁷ The earliest project for the subway was a cross-shaped plan of east–west and north–south axes, which stemmed out of the *Zócalo* area in ways that “dissolved” the city center by dispersing urban traffic in that area to its adjacent city regions. ICA subsequently modified the plan to include a ring in the core of downtown Mexico City in which the first three lines intersected, with each of them extending on east–west and north–south axes from this central location. In terms of its historic fabric, this was the most densely layered of Mexico City's areas, not only in terms of buried archaeological artifacts, but also in terms of recognizable landmarks aboveground, as well as locations of significant historical events and commercial and residential areas occupied while the subway was being built. These factors, Davis argues, made for an especially chaotic and destructive construction campaign for the subway's planners, but also provided the subway's supporters with opportunities to legitimize the new system by literally and metaphorically embedding it within the capital city's “historic” patrimony. Like Rodríguez, who naturalized the destructive process of building the subway by claiming that it helped reveal and clarify Mexico's genuine cultural identity, Wyman produced a graphic text that ultimately occludes the destructive nature of the campaign and naturalizes its effects.

Wyman recalls that it took much “anthropological” work to create memorable images for these locations, but the precedent of the Olympics, which had introduced Mexico City dwellers to a unique graphic language used for urban orientation, proved useful. Like his Olympic signs, Wyman's signs for the subway stops are based on the combinations of colors that identify each of the subway lines (Plate 8). As the primary mechanism to identify each subway station, Wyman devised a distinctive image, not a written name. His attempt to create a graphic system that was simultaneously standardized and based on the unique iconic value of specific images was by no means an isolated effort. He recalls that although there was a general push for the standardization of transportation signage systems in the mid-to-late 1960s, no international standard had been established yet for subways. The period was thus defined by a series of attempts to both unify and render distinctive the graphic interfaces of the new subways being built, or of the existing ones whose iconography was revamped.⁵⁸ Standardized systems of the mid-1960s include Dutch-born designer Bob Noorda's work for the Milan subway (1964), which encompassed not only signage inside stations but also neighborhood maps, individualized posters for each station, and diagrams of subway routes.⁵⁹ A standardized graphic system was devised for the Boston subway system in early 1965, while the standardization of the New York subway signage by the consultancy

firm of Unimark International, an intervention headed by Italian-born designer Massimo Vignelli, began in mid-1965.⁶⁰

Wyman's subway project attempted simultaneously to accommodate a general trend toward standardization with an attempt to create a culturally distinctive system. This feature made his Mexico City project unique vis-à-vis these contemporary projects. In its final form, the system's operation as a graphic language was actually quite complex, following a consistent logic but hardly sticking to one single form of visual communication. Hence, his subway project departs from the highly systematic Olympic signage system examined in the preceding chapter yet continues to pursue its expansive logic, which extends far beyond the realm of graphics alone. "Stations Sevilla and Pino Suarez are named for their streets," Wyman wrote describing the logic behind his subway icons, "but the symbol for the Sevilla station depicts a segment of the old Spanish aquaduct [*sic*] that is preserved in the park above. . . . Sometimes," he continues, discussing the multiple linguistic associations of his symbols, "a station symbol will visually enforce, or even disclose, the meaning of the name, such as the Grasshopper Hill (Chapultepec) in the ancient Nahuatl language of the Aztecs."⁶¹

Most of the subway names and the signs associated with them in Wyman's system had strong historical resonance. Poet Bernardo de Balbuena, author of *Grandeza mexicana* (1604), Aztec emperors Moctezuma and Cuauhtémoc, and a pantheon of heroes from Mexico's wars of independence and revolution all had stations named after them. Often, Wyman expressed the history of these stations in terms obvious only to those with a very specific knowledge of the station sites. For instance, in the case of the Candelaria station in line 1, he proposed an abstracted image of a duck, which was intended to refer subway travelers back to the habit of dwellers of the area to sell ducks, abundant in ponds in the area, at an informal street market since colonial times.⁶² The Merced station sign, an abstract icon of apples piled together, similarly referred travelers to the presence of a nearby landmark, the Merced market, whose history could be traced back to the sixteenth century.

The imagery Wyman devised for other subway stops was more directly architectural, and perhaps less innocent in nature. In addition to historical figures, the subway stops devised by ICA's engineers and planners also commemorated works of recent architecture and infrastructure, some of them products of the urban expansion of the "miracle." Among these are Mario Pani's Escuela Normal de Maestros, Mexico City's Beaux-Arts-styled teachers' academy (1945); the Bellas-Artes building by Adamo Boari and Federico Mariscal, a project from 1904 that was eventually finished in 1934, and long since established as the center of the historic center's cultural circuit; and the Viaducto, a major cloverleaf intersection

inaugurated in 1957 by President Ruiz Cortines, whose urban impact was as significant as that of the Periférico.

Some of the works commemorated with subway stations were more or less contemporary with the subway itself. For the Tlatelolco stop of line 3, Wyman designed an abstracted image of the Banobras Tower, the landmark that identified Pani's Nonoalco–Tlatelolco housing project. Made out of reinforced concrete and envisioned as a bell tower for the complex, Banobras was a slender structure with a glass facade facing south from the housing project, toward downtown Mexico City, and a blind facade of wood and fiberglass panels facing north, which was oriented toward what was then the capital's largely empty northern periphery. Carlos Mérida designed abstract and highly colorful mosaics based on indigenous and pre-Columbian textiles for the structure (Figure 5.7).⁶³

For his Tlatelolco sign, Wyman chose to privilege the glass facade of the tower (Figure 5.8). In choosing to illustrate a fruit of the ruthless gentrification of Mexico City, he was celebrating a highly charged monument to the urban renewal campaign that got rid of the train tracks that occupied the land on which the housing project was built until 1961 and that, after October 2, 1968, became widely associated with the massacre. Unsurprisingly, this association is rarely made explicit in mainstream accounts of the graphic system. A 1973 discussion of Wyman's sign for the Tlatelolco subway station made reference to the historic wealth surrounding Pani's complex but circumvented this last uncomfortable episode. "This METRO station announces to us, that [Pani's buildings] frame the area's origins in three distinct epochs, reflecting memories, traditions, and longings that . . . compel us to interrogate the past." The publication suggested that, alongside the technological wonder of the subway itself, Pani's structures were "proud buildings of a modern society" that rose out of the "pagan ruins" of their surroundings. The scale and radically modernist imagery of the structures was hence intended to shock and awe city dwellers and visitors, rather than inviting them to truly dwell on the recent history of this part of the city.⁶⁴

Wyman's graphic exploration of Mexico City's transformations did not only celebrate spectacular new buildings, as his icon for Candela's San Lázaro subway stop suggests. Like Tlatelolco, the San Lázaro subway station was located in the northern area of Mexico City, and it had been the site of railroad tracks before becoming a subway station. Instead of commemorating the unique modernist imagery of Candela's station, Wyman reversed the operation of his Tlatelolco sign, devising the silhouette of a train car such as those that the new subway had erased from the Mexican capital city for good. Wyman's gesture is especially politically charged. Through a less-than-subtle graphic gesture, he commemorated more than just the socially contested erasure of one of the largest working-class areas of Mexico City



Figure 5.7. Mario Pani, Torre Banobras at Nonoalco–Tlatelolco housing project, Mexico City, 1964. Reliefs by Carlos Mérida. Photograph by the author.

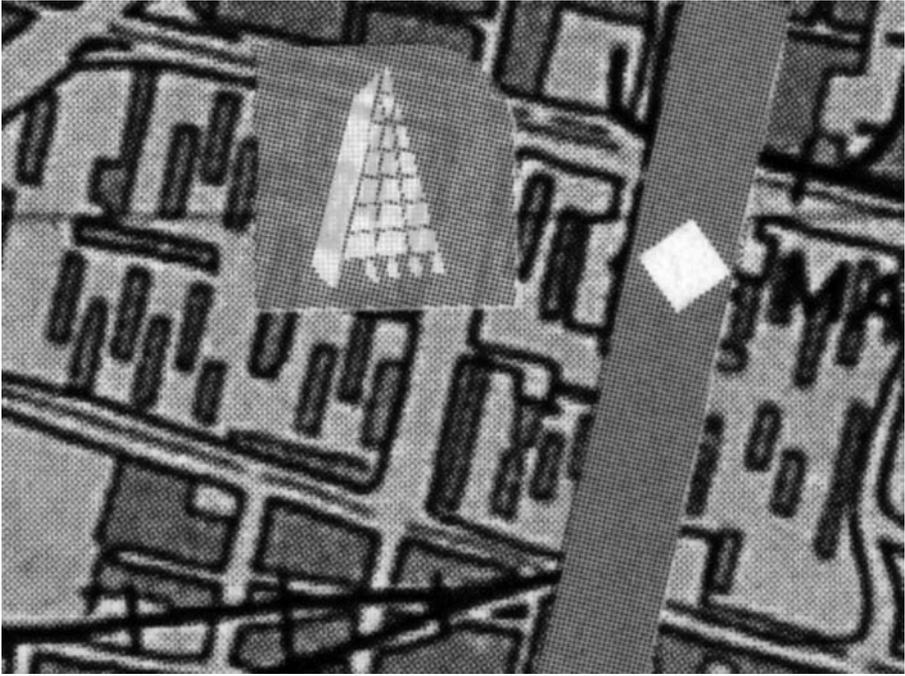


Figure 5.8. Lance Wyman, sign for Tlatelolco station of Mexico City subway, 1968–69. Design by Lance Wyman and Francisco Gallardo.

as a result of the capital city’s gentrification. Zeroing in on one of the urban regions out of which most of the railworkers’ protest energies had emerged during

the late 1950s, a region whose manifestations of urban poverty works by artists and writers such as Cuevas, Buñuel, and Fuentes had portrayed in the preceding decades, Wyman provided something like a coda for the official narrative of urban expansion of the capital city that many other artifacts seen before provided.⁶⁵ As a triumphalist sign of the demise of an avowedly chaotic urban and social order and the emergence of a much more rationally planned one, his logo elaborated further on the basis of Pani’s urban intervention.

Although derived graphically from his Olympic campaign, which attempted to unify the appearance of diverse monuments in order to orient visitors through a dispersed Olympic city, the subway signage project was somewhat subtler in the ways in which it generated meaning. In order to prove intelligible to subway travelers, it boiled down existing narratives about Mexico City’s urban spaces into their most compressed iconic expression. On account of the commentary that it imposed on urban transformations of recent date, Wyman’s graphic system also created new narratives in relation to the changes that Mexico City’s form was undergoing in the late 1960s. Given this dual operation, his urban text functioned in a modality that Roland Barthes describes as “mythological.” Mythologies,

Barthes claims, are key structuring aspects of political and visual cultures, and they emerge when “popular” narratives about peoples, places, or events of significance become official stories sanctioned by the cultural apparatuses of nation-states. In order for them to become official, these narratives necessarily undergo a process of simplification, so that their intricacies or internal inconsistencies are gradually phased out of view, while aspects simple enough to render them iconic are systematically promoted in turn.⁶⁶

Through the same visual text, Wyman’s subway graphics gave narratives about urban locations in the Mexican capital city that were part of the popular domain an iconic visual incarnation that bore the stamp of approval of the single-party state. Similarly, his system invented new narratives about areas of the city that had only recently changed. Yet, by subsuming “old” and “new” narratives within the same visual system that included historical events and sites, it de facto rendered these recent transformations historical and official. This aspect of Wyman’s system has not escaped critics during the past four decades. In a critique of the system, for example, Juan Villoro claimed that the key element of Wyman’s campaign is its “exploitation of the past.” Wyman was commissioned to create “a modern codex with a twofold purpose: proving that pre-Columbian culture was alive and well, while acknowledging,” through its reliance on images instead of words, “that many of the [Mexico City subway] riders were illiterate.”⁶⁷

Villoro’s critique is essentially on point, yet there is more to Wyman’s system than a glorification of the pre-Columbian past of Mexico, especially since this glorified past was just as prominent within his graphic system as the contemporary changes that Mexico City was undergoing during the 1960s. Like his Mexico ’68 logo, a modernist retooling of an indigenous Mexican textile tradition, his subway signage reinterpreted Mesoamerican traditions of painted books, or codices, which were similarly focused on iconic images more than on written text.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Wyman has often made explicit reference to the connection between the use of pictograms for the Mexico ’68 campaign and for the subway, and pre-Columbian systems of visual communication. Because both his Mexico ’68 and subway graphic systems focus on iconic details or aspects of the sports or subway stops represented, their operation is, in his words, “similar to that used by the ancient Mayans in designing their glyphs,” which also focus on salient iconic aspects of places, events, and narratives to engender meaning.⁶⁹

Beyond the formal similarities between Mesoamerican image systems and Wyman’s modern “codex,” however, describing his operations as appropriations of one cohesive past oversimplifies his selective appropriation of elements drawn from a complicated medley of overlapping, manufactured “pasts.” The Pino Suárez subway stop’s graphic representation brings some of the complexity of his urban text

to light. His icon for the stop was based on the image of the much-celebrated Aztec adoratory discussed earlier (Plate 9). Tellingly, he decided to make this image the iconic one for the subway because he could not find an image of relevance actually related to José María Pino Suárez (1869–1913), the statesman and poet who played a significant role in the Mexican Revolution after whom the station is named. “He didn’t really accomplish anything except being a politician,” Wyman has said about Pino Suárez, adding that “he wrote poetry but it wasn’t very good,” and that “no one cared about it” as he was designing the icons. Wyman retrospectively shows an almost complete disregard for a range of postrevolutionary political mythologies that lionized figures like Pino Suárez. Instead of this “past,” he dug deeper into a “past” at once more recent and much older, drawing upon the newly produced yet “ancient” adoratory instead.⁷⁰ As discussed earlier, the state-sponsored glorification of the pre-Columbian past at the Pino Suárez station involved the expertise of professionals from various disciplinary backgrounds, not all of whom agreed on the historical significance of the find or on how it should be officially discussed. The usage of these professionals’ expertise as a tool for political proclamation was thus never quite a unified operation. Wyman’s graphics create a mythological discourse on the basis of this shifting semantic ground, purposefully draining it of its complications in pursuit of a unified, synthetic expression.

PRESIDENTIAL ITINERARIES

The official inauguration of the subway system’s first line by president Díaz Ordaz took place on September 4, 1969. This event took place in tandem with the opening of seventy-two other public works around Mexico City. In addition to the mass-transit system, the president inaugurated several road overpasses, seven markets, fifty-five schools, three centers of social assistance in working-class quarters, and a public interest hospital.⁷¹ The president traveled between several of these venues by subway, and wherever the presidential entourage stopped, mass demonstrations of support were organized, documented, and reported by the largely sympathetic Mexico City press.

Díaz Ordaz’s outpouring of populist energies was a well-timed move, which came on the heels of his September 1 address to Mexico’s congress. In this address, perhaps the most politically charged of his entire term, Díaz Ordaz discussed the events of October 1968 and argued that, despite domestic unrest about his administration’s economic policies, Mexico’s economy kept being praised internationally. The president discussed the two radically different types of violence that had defined recent Mexican social life. One was violence of a political nature, and it had informed what he defined as the “anarchical and irrational” events of October 2. “Taking ignoble advantage . . . of the proximity of the Olympic games that situated

our country in the front line of the international scene,” he proclaimed, “the distortions of the second semester of last year were promoted.” The second type of violence was immanent to capitalist expansion, and its effects on Mexico’s social landscape were no less drastic or disorderly, although inevitable if development was to be attained. By the end of the 1960s, Díaz Ordaz claimed, Mexico presented a “complex mosaic,” except not one of ideal racial types living in harmony, as the world’s fairs displays of recent years had announced to the world. Instead, the mosaic included everything from the most “miserly subsistence” economy to “highly industrialized sectors.” “Middle classes experiencing ascent and expansion” thus coexisted with other social sectors that, “because of development itself . . . face certain decadence or disappearance in order to become absorbed within other social classes.”⁷² Although Díaz Ordaz acknowledged some of the discontent against his administration’s policies, especially among the urban lower and middle classes, he naturalized them by describing them as part of capitalism’s inherent and inevitable violence.

Because it represented his recapture of many of Mexico City’s public spaces while these sites witnessed social unrest, the inauguration ceremonies for the subway lines staged between September 1969 and November 1970 were highly significant for Díaz Ordaz. At the newly built Insurgentes Plaza, a public space that housed the most ornate of all the early subway stations, the first of these inaugurations was celebrated with an ambitious exhibition. Commissioned directly by *regente* Corona del Rosal, the president, and ICA’s leadership, Eduardo Terrazas designed and curated *Imagen México*. The show consisted of five large rooms that included both projected images on screens and photographs displayed throughout the plaza. In addition, photographs were installed in the sixteen newly inaugurated subway stops on line 1 (Figure 5.9).

The purpose of *Imagen México* was to brand the newly inaugurated subway as a work of significance not only to Mexico City but to all of Mexico. The perceived need to persuade popular audiences that this was the case speaks to the difficult relationships between city and countryside, capital city and region that defined a great deal of national politics in the 1960s. Terrazas commissioned photographers to visit several Mexican cities other than the capital and bring back photographs representative of different regional attires and cultural practices. In addition, many of these photographers depicted landscapes, historic sites, industrial and agricultural developments, as well as architectural monuments (Plate 10). The centralizing logic of the show was thus akin to that of the MNA, which also attempted to create a national-scale synthesis of Mexico’s “mosaic” of cultures, strategically erasing from the picture differences of class, race, and gender. Indeed, Terrazas argues that the overarching point of the exhibition was to present the subway as



Figure 5.9. Eduardo Terrazas, *Imagen México*, exhibition, Mexico City, 1969. Courtesy of Eduardo Terrazas.

a socially inclusive project that, in bringing so much international visibility and prestige to the Mexican capital, benefited the provinces of Mexico as much as it

did the large urban center where it was physically built. This was nonetheless a difficult argument to make, given that the subway's concrete effects, negative and positive, were clearly limited to Mexico City and in light of the fact that Mexico City residents had been all but completely excluded from the decision-making process of the mass-transit system's construction.⁷³

While images drawn from these regional expeditions were shown in the exhibition's first two rooms, the third room of *Imagen México* was devoted to images of daily life in the capital city. The fourth room provided an elaborate display of kinetic art, a then-new genre of visual art based on the interactive and dynamic relationships of color, scale, and light recently shown during the Olympics at the *Cinetismo* exhibition organized for the Cultural Olympiad. Although this type of art was in clear conversation with the Olympic graphic interface, it was still largely unfamiliar to mass audiences in Mexico. While kinetic art was perceived by some as a potentially emancipatory form of art that could break away from the strictures of official cultural production in Mexico, this genre could also be adapted to operate seamlessly within this realm, as it was in a number of different contexts in the 1960s and 1970s.⁷⁴

Terrazas's intervention demonstrated the genre's adaptability to official capacities as well as its perceptual complexity and flexibility. In his kinetic room for

Imagen México, Terrazas assembled a literal mosaic of projections by having fifteen shifting frames of images projected onto a wall. While the fifteen frames at times showcased entirely different images, many of them drawn from the regional photographic expeditions that Terrazas commissioned, at moments during the projection sequence they all collectively constructed one unified image, the logo of the exhibition (Figure 5.10). This projection sequence was coordinated with the changing tunes of musical scores, which included Johann Sebastian Bach's Brandenburg Concertos as well as music by Mexican composers such as José Pablo Moncayo.⁷⁵ Synchronized through a computerized system that matched up the projections of light that made up the images with the music, the display represented, in Terrazas's words, "an absolute fusion of music and painting," which fulfilled "the old ambition of the integration of the arts."⁷⁶ Here again, a

Figure 5.10. Eduardo Terrazas, *Imagen México*, exhibition, Mexico City, 1969. Courtesy of Eduardo Terrazas.



piece of Mexico's "national" musical canon is positioned in communion with a fragment of "universal" culture. The encounter of these musical traditions occupies the elusive realm of "universal" culture where so many other official cultural projects had attempted to position Mexico's traditions in the past. The occasional fusion of diverse images into a unified projection of the logo of *Imagen México* made an additional and relatively familiar argument, namely, that Mexico's diverse cultures, landscapes, and peoples could become successfully fused together under the mantle of a developmentalist "national" cause.

In ways reminiscent of the pavilions showcased internationally during the 1960s as well as the total design atmosphere of Terrazas's 1968 Triennial installation, the plaza itself was covered with large-scale photomontages of images deemed "typical" of life in Mexico City. The ensemble converted the circular space of Insurgentes Plaza into a continuous, enveloping mural where these images were montaged together with views of monuments, regions, and peoples from other parts of Mexico (Figure 5.9). Here the line between the spectator and the images displayed was intentionally blurred, as Terrazas took the Mexico City photographs included in the montage at Insurgentes Plaza and other spaces in Mexico City in the days and weeks immediately before the opening of the subway station, and then had them magnified and printed at mural scale. The result was that visitors to the plaza could literally "confuse themselves" with the images shown on the walls that surrounded them.⁷⁷ In addition, another strategic "confusion" was encouraged, as the mural rendered literal the logic of cultural synthesis of the exhibition as a whole, fusing capital city and nation by embedding photographs drawn from diverse regions of Mexico and those that Terrazas took in Mexico City into a seamless graphic surface. Expanding the curatorial logic of the culture museums produced by Ramírez Vázquez's office, which was intended to have museum visitors see their own self-images reflected in their various displays, Terrazas mapped this normative premise onto the streets of the capital city in an attempt to condition the urban experience of its dwellers.

Terrazas's display notwithstanding, arguably the more spectacular scenography of the Insurgentes Plaza was contained at the station itself, where a similar rhetoric of regional and cultural fusion was explored. The office of Salvador Ortega, a long-time collaborator of Mario Pani's, designed the station. Three interwoven textures defined its exterior, which was circular in shape, echoing the spiraling shape of the plaza where it was situated. The two circular walls that framed the primary entrance to the station were clad in marble (Figures 5.11 and 5.12). The entire circumference of the station was clad with stone panels that emulated the form of sixteenth-century Mexican sculpture. Bands of images that replicated the language of Maya glyphs, also found in stone sculpture, framed these panels, creating

circular strips that spanned the entire circumference of the building. In addition, two walls covered in replicas of Maya glyphs flanked the station on either side of its main entrance.

The station was situated within a roundabout built at the intersections of the busy Insurgentes and Chapultepec avenues. Its composite skin was legible both to people traveling by foot and to drivers who circulated around the station. Because it made a

Figure 5.11. Salvador Ortega, Insurgentes station, Mexico City subway, 1969. Photograph by the author.

Figure 5.12. Salvador Ortega, Insurgentes station, Mexico City subway, 1969, detail. Photograph by the author.



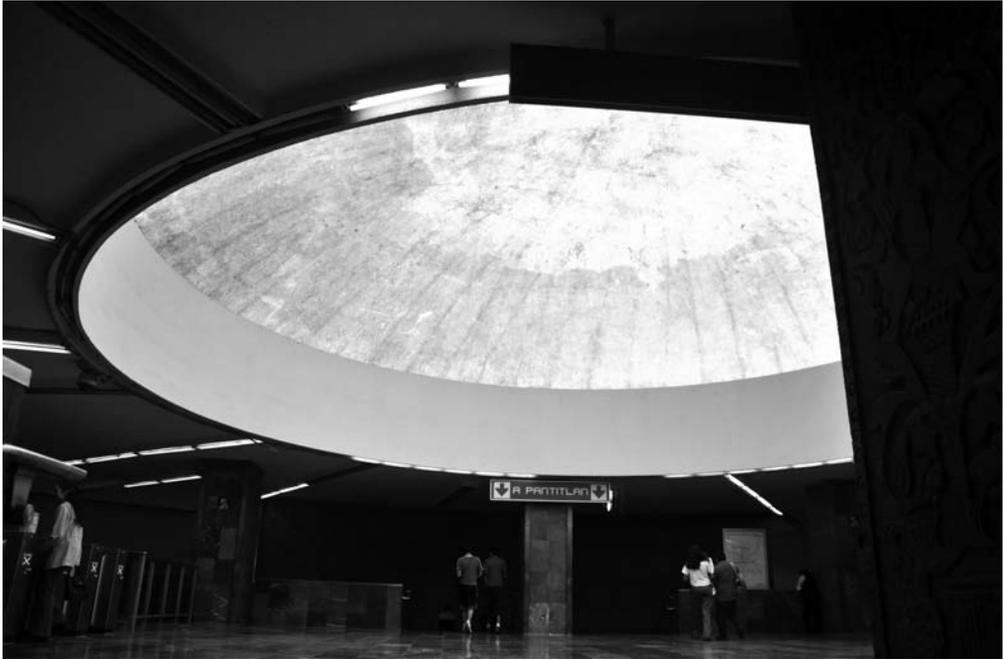


Figure 5.13. Salvador Ortega, Insurgentes station, Mexico City subway, 1969, fibreglass dome. Photograph by the author.

highly ornamental space out of this intersection, planning of the Insurgentes Plaza recalled Mario Pani's work of the mid-1940s, especially his partially built project for the Crucero Insurgentes–Reforma (1945). Pani had attempted to create a similar roundabout including a public square as well as restaurants and hotels at this busy intersection, located just north of where the Insurgentes station would be built two decades later.⁷⁸ In addition to Pani's projects, the spiraling form of the Insurgentes Plaza called to mind the Aztec motif of the snail, a highly symbolic trope that previous works like the Chapultepec Gallery (1960) had harked back to. But not everything about this station was a simulacrum of ancient things. Wyman's logo for the station, that of a large bell, recalled the narrative of the Insurgentes themselves, the armed insurgents who are officially credited with starting Mexico's war of independence led by Father Miguel Hidalgo in 1810, and after whom Insurgentes Avenue was originally named. Wyman's icon refers to the church bell that Hidalgo rang in the town of Dolores, Hidalgo, to commence the armed conflict, an event memorialized through a yearly performance where Mexico's presidents ring a bell at the Presidential Palace in the Zócalo.

As at the similarly shaped Chapultepec Gallery, the Insurgentes Plaza's spiraling form operated as a prelude to a theatrical space where the station's core narrative unfolded. Subway riders would enter the Insurgentes station under a fibreglass

dome of the same proportions as the ones that crowned the lobbies of almost every national culture museum or pavilion that Ramírez Vázquez's firm had designed during the 1960s (Figure 5.13). This list includes the chamber at the Ciudad Juárez Museum, as well as at the Mexican Pavilion for the World's Fair of 1964–65. But maybe the most obvious precedent for this space inside the subway station, especially for Mexico City residents, was Ramírez Vázquez's Museum of Modern Art, whose lobby also welcomed them under an almost identical, monumental fiberglass dome (Figure 2.12). Seen in conjunction with the ostensibly modernist form of the building, the montage operation at the Insurgentes station summarized highly abstracted versions of three Mexican cultural traditions: modern, colonial, and pre-Hispanic. It also inscribed this display within the "universal" cultural narrative that its preceding domed structures attempted to tell. As Cuauhtémoc Medina points out, the station thus embodied a reworked version of the tense narrative of cultural and historical fusion that the Plaza of the Three Cultures attempted to articulate.⁷⁹

Beyond Mexico's borders, the dome was an ideologically charged form in subway design. The dome at the Insurgentes station calls to mind Alexei Dushkin's *Mayakovskaya* metro station in Moscow (1938), where domes function as devices for propaganda. As at the Insurgentes stop, Dushkin's domes at the symbolic center of the entire Moscow subway system were clearly meant to evoke the contemplative atmosphere of a religious, ritual atmosphere. Enclosed within each of the dome spaces was a mosaic image that glorified technological and military feats. Subway riders in Moscow were thus encouraged to look above themselves in search for elevation and edification, and traveling through this station was understood by the Stalinist state that produced the system as a journey of indoctrination for the public.⁸⁰ Thirty years later in Mexico City, a similar experience of the subway was encouraged. The composite exterior skin of the Insurgentes station was replicated inside, with the same bands of neocolonial and neo-Maya images defining its spaces. Time travel and subway travel were thus aligned, so that riding the subway was conceived as a journey through the official history of Mexico, from the modern to the pre-Columbian ages.

The patrons and designers of the Mexico City subway never concealed their admiration for the Moscow system. Jorge Espinoza especially praised the Moscow metro for its "monumental stations built out of the finest marbles, in which architects and decorators competed in order to accomplish true works of art."⁸¹ Villoro also provocatively compares the Mexican subway to the Moscow metro, which "played the same role in Soviet collective imagination as the metro did for Mexico City." Both subways, he argued, attempted to perform similar functions of public indoctrination, and the dialogue between these two projects of social engineering

and infrastructure must be inscribed within a more profound set of interrelations between Soviet and Mexican design cultures during the twentieth century.⁸²

While the inauguration of Insurgentes Plaza was the most dramatic of all these events, the entire construction of the first stage of the Mexican subway was defined by elaborate propaganda episodes. The subway's second line was inaugurated on September 13, 1970. Like the inauguration of the first line, this date also had significant calendrical implications because it fell on the Niños Héroes holiday, which commemorates the death of a group of young Mexican cadets at the Battle of Chapultepec on September 12 and 13, 1847, during the Mexican-American war. On September 13, 1970, Díaz Ordaz commemorated this holiday at Chapultepec Park with a speech that praised the constructive efforts of that mythical Mexican "youth," and explicitly denounced the acts of civil disobedience of the Mexican youth of the present day, who continued to protest against his administration.⁸³

Like most major newspapers, Mexico City daily *Novedades* described the president's itinerary through each of the newly inaugurated second line's stops in great detail.⁸⁴ The report described the new Bellas Artes station as a "station-museum," because it displayed replicas of pre-Columbian structures "so well made that one cannot realize that many of them are made of plastic and clay," even though "some are real monoliths." It also emphasized that the presidential parade admired the scale models of Mexico City exhibited at the Zócalo subway stop, which displayed Mexico City as it would have appeared during the pre-Columbian period as well as during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Well-ensconced official figures were responsible for these models: while Ignacio Marquina provided information to the model maker, José Iturriaga, about Mexico City's Aztec-era form, Salvador Novo provided Iturriaga with insights about the city's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century form.⁸⁵ In addition to admiring replicas and miniatures of these urban spaces, Díaz Ordaz inaugurated a system of public squares in the historic downtown district, as well as the paving works of the Calzada México-Tacuba, a major road that connects the downtown core of the city and several highly populated districts to its north and west. Accompanied by members of the STC as well as by ICA's leadership, Díaz Ordaz was also joined by leading members of the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) and Partido Popular Socialista (PPS) opposition parties, who expressed their support for the completion of the subway.⁸⁶

November 20, 1970, the date of inauguration of the subway's third line, was no less significant than its predecessors, and included the inauguration of more public works. Díaz Ordaz began his pilgrimage at the Monument to the Revolution—a recaptured piece of the Legislative Palace project begun under Porfirio Díaz—converted by 1938 into a monumental freestanding structure by architect Carlos Obregón Santacilia.⁸⁷ Eventually, the president made his way to

the Nonoalco–Tlatelolco complex, where the third subway line had its final stop at the time (Figure 5.14). There, hundreds of residents of the housing project greeted him in a carefully staged and heavily policed demonstration, helping him reclaim the very space where the massacre had happened. Afterward, he returned to the National Palace in the Zócalo to preside over the Sports Parade that drew participants from various parts of Mexico to celebrate Revolution Day. Staged only ten days before the end of Díaz Ordaz’s presidential term, the inauguration of the third line was

Figure 5.14. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz tours the Tlatelolco station, Mexico City subway, November 20, 1970. Fundación ICA, Mexico City.



also the farewell event for the president. In his last major public appearance, he described completion of the subway as a result of Mexico's "peaceful and permanent revolution," a process whose positive and concrete effects on the fabric of Mexico City were unquestionable, the many critiques against it notwithstanding.⁸⁸

DECADENT STAGE SETS

It was never a secret that the Insurgentes station and its peers among the subway's other stations were envisioned as propaganda showpieces in addition to serving practical, infrastructural purposes. An image from ICA's archives encapsulates the desires for cosmopolitan visibility of the entire campaign of subway construction (Figure 5.15). The image displays Tuzo Iseki, an engineer from Osaka, as he experiences the station's domed interior. Iseki came to Mexico City as a delegate to the annual meeting of the International Association of Public Transit, held in tandem with the inauguration of the first subway line. In the photograph, the delegate from a city that would soon become a world's fair site curiously touches the neo-Maya glyphs at the station during a cocktail party. He

Figure 5.15. Tuzo Iseki, Osaka visitor, touches the neo-Maya reliefs at the Insurgentes station, Mexico City subway, 1969. Fundación ICA, Mexico City.



holds a glass emblazoned with Lance Wyman's Camino Real Hotel logo, a marker not only of a specific space of hospitality but of an entire economy of leisure to which Wyman attempted to give iconic value. The photograph's point is clear: as activated by a high-stakes meeting of bureaucrats, politicians, and transport technicians, the most spectacular stage set of the Mexico City subway monumentalizes the capital's arrival to the ranks of modernized, developed cities of the world, yet reminds us that the city retained its cultural specificity throughout the process, much to the awe of the foreigners who encountered it.

This triumphant scene can be contrasted with a vignette about the Insurgentes station produced almost exactly a decade later. In 1978, urban chronicler José Joaquín Blanco described a bleak social scene outside the station. Evoking the most significant artistic episodes and trends of the previous decade, Blanco claimed that in the late 1960s "Geometric art was fashionable," while "the Olympic posters, the Route of Friendship," and "words like 'abstract,' 'kinetic,' and 'computation'" were used widely. Although rooted in this design environment, Ortega's station was disengaged from the fabric of the Mexican capital city. "A publicized architectural model, the [Insurgentes station] did not associate itself with the hoary buildings that surrounded it, but with scenographies from other planets," expressing desires for a "luxurious and supermodern city, of science-fiction levels." Blanco waxed skeptical about whether the station had accomplished its task of collective persuasion. Instead of an optimistic and indoctrinated population happy to travel through official history every day, anonymous youths, members of a pauperized urban laboring class, inhabited its architecture. The station only preserved some of its intended grandeur when fully empty: "Ample and lonely, [it] would at night become the perfect scenography for a climactic danger scene: it recovers its ceremonial air, now that of a temple to violence within whose darkness . . . police officers smoke, chat, awaiting the moment to operate."⁸⁹

In Blanco's narrative, the most emblematic Mexican subway station monumentalizes the real results of the economic violence that Díaz Ordaz had described as essential to ensure Mexico's development a few days before the metro opened, though what it showcases is not quite what the former president referred to. As I argue below, the success or failure of the subway's scenographies may not be so easy to assess, especially because of their centrality to the Mexican capital's urban culture. But for all the imaginary time travels and political propaganda it attempted to facilitate in its early days, the subway also brought its share of real-world problems to its patrons long before the "miracle" was over. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the subway's early history was defined by bitter political battles between municipal and presidential power circles and the large network of clientelist forces with which they interacted. In spite of the efforts of figures

such as Rodríguez to sanitize this violent process, the physical production of the system had been traumatic all the way through. Driven by ICA's considerable real-estate interests in downtown Mexico City, construction of the subway routes had displaced numerous residents of inner-city areas, engendering significant public opposition.⁹⁰ The subway's completion could also be understood as a monumental demonstration of the extreme centralization of wealth and infrastructure in Mexico City to the detriment of the rest of Mexico, despite what Terrazas's *Imagen México* attempted to argue.⁹¹

Rarely made explicit in the celebratory accounts of the period, one aspect of the subway project's political import—its relationship to labor and protesting youth—surfaced, albeit in a less than obvious manner, in the first issue of *Presencia*, in an article about the first meeting of unionized subway workers. At the meeting, Leopoldo González, the first director of the subway system, began his speech with a not-so-veiled reference to the social unrest among Mexico City youth that had defined the city's recent life. "The metro," he claimed, "represents the most *evident and ostensible proof of what the youth is capable of doing when its enthusiasm and unrest are channeled constructively.*"⁹² González not only reified the subway as an embodiment of Mexico's diplomatic and technological maturity whose own spaces for transportation fostered the unity and harmony of the capital's divided social groups, he also described the actual *production* of the subway as a force of social unification that pacified potentially unruly youth.

Although the initial inauguration of the subway allowed its patrons to make claims about its socially unifying powers, episodes of urban violence overshadowed subsequent stages of completion of the system. For example, the inauguration of the most substantial expansion of line 1 since its construction, which took place on June 10, 1972, was almost entirely invisible in the Mexico City press. Instead, the most-discussed events at the time were the protests of youth in Mexico City, who, despite significant repression and police violence, commemorated the death of protesting students at the hands of police officers a year earlier, on June 10, 1971, at demonstrations staged during Corpus Christi celebrations.⁹³ On June 12, a bomb threat at the PRI headquarters was diffused, and on June 13, several students were killed during protests at the UNAM campus. These were all signs that urban protests against the PRI-controlled administration would not abate anytime soon, not least as a result of who came to lead this administration. Luis Echeverría, widely considered the mastermind behind the October 2 massacre, was designated president by the PRI's "internal" elections after serving as Díaz Ordaz's minister of the interior. This, in addition to worsening economic conditions in the capital city and throughout Mexico by the early 1970s, accounts for the heightened dissent of the period.⁹⁴

González's description of the subway as a force for social pacification resonates interestingly with key aspects of Mexico '68's propaganda. Before the subway was completed, Ramírez Vázquez and other members of the MOC had described the completed Olympic project, its difficult relationship to the October 2 massacre of students notwithstanding, in virtually the exact same terms as the patrons of the subway used to discuss its social effects. Dismissing their mass protests as mere "youthful preoccupations," the architect-politician praised the students who donated their labor to the "constructive" task of staging the Olympics and openly condemned those who protested.⁹⁵ *Regente* Corona del Rosal, who facilitated construction of the subway at the municipal level, had made similar statements during the Olympics. He was among the first to signal out "Communist infiltration" among the Mexican youth as the cause of the student protests in a statement specifically for the foreign press at the Olympic Village on October 3, 1968, a few hours after the massacre at the Plaza of the Three Cultures.⁹⁶ As *regente*, he fully subscribed to the propaganda campaign surrounding the subway's alleged pacifying effects, systematically praising its ability to indoctrinate the urban masses by reinforcing national mythologies.

The subway system never was the site of as dramatic a confrontation between the state's normative agendas and popular dissent as the Plaza of the Three Cultures. But, as Cuauhtémoc Medina argues, at least one event seems to have confirmed Blanco's observations that, not too long after its spectacular inauguration, the subway stood for precisely the opposite of what it was once intended to represent. As Medina notes, several of Mexico City's subway stations were used as stage sets for the most dramatic chase scenes of Paul Verhoeven's film *Total Recall* (1990), starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. Situated in the year 2084, *Total Recall* chronicles the action-packed descent of Schwarzenegger's character into existential ruin after he realizes that ReKall, a sinister corporation whose makeup resembles that of a modern nation-state, has implanted false memories in his mind. The metro's appearance in the film seems to confirm Blanco's claim that the architecture of the Insurgentes station, featured prominently in *Total Recall*, was more at home in the universe of science-fiction films than in the concrete fabric of the Mexican capital. The presence of the entire subway system in *Total Recall* also fulfills *Fortune* magazine's 1969 suggestion that the primary mode of perception of the subway was one of seemingly innocent "viewing." In "viewing" the subway in this way, the labor relations, ideological strifes, and urban conflicts that lay at the origins of the project take a back seat, and the detached, aestheticizing gaze of "international" visitors instead becomes central. Rendered anonymous by the perverse magic of film—it is, of course, never revealed in *Total Recall* that the film is shot in Mexico—the Mexican subway is now continuously "viewed" in precisely these terms every

time the popular movie is watched, though the film perhaps makes a subtle association between Rekal's brainwashing activities and the propaganda operations of the Mexican state that commissioned the subway.

In somewhat reductive terms, Medina argues that Mexico's underdevelopment explains why Mexico City was selected as the location in which to shoot the film. Because labor was cheapest there, the capital city was the most cost-efficient place in which to undertake the most expensive stages of production of the film. Indeed, shooting in the capital city's "real" scenography was cheaper than building an artificial stage set in Hollywood, a fact that rendered Mexico City into a "southern maquiladora branch of the Hollywood dream factory."⁹⁷

In the face of these production conditions, the unstable commodity status of the elaborate subway stations may render their profoundly nationalist iconography immaterial. The subtle allusions of the film to a malevolent authority that brainwashes its consumers notwithstanding, as represented in *Total Recall* the Mexico City subway is consumed as a depoliticized artifact that does not share any visible ties to its "real" urban environment, to the specific cultural milieu out of which it emerged, or to the patron state that designed, implemented, and promoted it. In a sense, then, the subway's legibility as a stage set for a science-fiction film fulfills the desire for cosmopolitan validation that the photograph of the Osaka visitor to the Insurgentes station embodies so dramatically, except that the Mexican state's authorial stamp is entirely erased from the picture. The culturally specific yet universally modernist language of the subway, which includes the sleek surfaces and dramatic scenographies of its stations as well as the distinctive graphic interface through which it was promoted, seems to betray the project's localized national aims. In other words, because it catered to an "international" gaze of cosmopolitan viewers so efficiently from the very start, the subway lends itself exceedingly well to playing a fictional role in the imaginary postnational universe that *Total Recall* attempts to construct.

Yet, Medina tendentiously examines only a small aspect of the subway's mass-mediated reception, and perhaps not the most gracious one. Having survived *Total Recall* and the 1985 earthquake, the subway has remained the most affordable way to traverse Mexico City, serving the capital's popular classes and continuing to operate as one of the more efficient systems of its kind in large world cities. Not quite the subject of bombastic official propaganda or international attention that it once was, the subway nevertheless remains central to Mexico City's urban culture. Indeed, just as significant as its appearance in *Total Recall* is the metro's larger-than-life presence across other horizons of popular culture. In popular music, for example, the metro looms large. The enduring popularity of songs like Rodrigo "Rockdrigo" González's 1982 song "Metro Balderas," inspired by the Balderas stop

where lines 1 and 3 meet, speaks to the profound attachment that some residents of the capital feel toward the metro. In the song, a man mourns the disappearance of a girlfriend, whom he has lost amid a crowd of subway riders. In perhaps the most alluring passage of the song, González evokes Freud to imply that the man's emotions emerge in the underground transit system, drawing a parallel between the Freudian conception of the subconscious as a submerged space within the mind and the subway's location under the city. González thus implies that the metro may operate as a site where Mexico City's collective unconscious can unleash itself.

González's early death at the age of thirty-four as a consequence of the 1985 earthquake has afforded him cult status, including a monument erected in his honor at the Balderas subway stop, but he is not the only figure who has pointed out the subway's important social function. Carlos Monsiváis echoes Rockdrigo's description of the subway as a space of collective expression, where diverse social sectors are compelled to mingle every day. Yet Monsiváis suggests that this fusion does not take place in the normative ways in which the subway's early proponents aimed for it to happen. Instead, locations like the Glorieta de Insurgentes, where residents of diverse social extraction, political affiliation, and sexual orientation converge daily, facilitate the expression of dissent and difference in myriad ways.⁹⁸ At the very epicenter of the infrastructural network that the exhibitionist state left behind, a cultural synthesis indeed continues to happen, one where the affective ties and urban markers of the multiethnic, socially uneven landscape of the greatly expanded megalopolis continue to evolve with the "miracle's" scenography as their backdrop.



Figure E1. Untitled photograph of construction works at Cuemanco Canal, Xochimilco, 1968. Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Mexico City.

EPILOGUE OLYMPIC AFTERLIVES

S ometime in the early spring of 1968, the Mexican Olympic Committee sent a group of photographers to document the construction of the Olympic rowing canal of Cuemanco at Xochimilco. In an unpublished image that resulted from the visit, one of the unidentified photographers, perhaps Francisco Uribe, caught another photographer directly below him as he attempted to document construction efforts from a different angle. Busily at work, both photographers hang suspended over a large yet rudimentary ditch, a rugged extension of the elaborate canal system of the then small city and hardly an impressive work of sports infrastructure (Figure E1). The image is formally intricate and somewhat difficult to read, and it is not easy to tell at first glance just what these photographers are photographing, other than each other.

In the most literal sense, the photograph illustrates how rapidly the new sports infrastructure of Mexico '68 was built: just a few months after this photograph was taken, Cuemanco became a full-blown Olympic venue. As such, this piece of Olympic ephemera could be interpreted along both triumphalist and apocalyptic lines. It could work equally well as proof of the precariousness of Mexico's third-world preparations for an event of first-world caliber or, alternatively, as a heroic demonstration of the Mexican Olympic Committee and its patron state's organizational triumph despite what were at times very bad odds for success.

Yet the photograph's formal complexity precludes such straightforward readings. The two photographers seem to avidly photograph mostly empty space, as if hoping that their act of mechanical image reproduction might create Olympic infrastructure out of thin air. Their intertwined acts of documentation thus perform more than a merely illustrative function. They become gestures of spatial and temporal projection that presage the emergence of a nascent image economy by delimiting a future Olympic site as one soon to be occupied by a monumental architectural intervention and the propaganda energies that it will attract and

generate. The Olympic outtake is thus evocative of the many logistical, real-world challenges that Ramírez Vázquez's campaign had to contend with, and given its instrumental quality as part of Olympic preparations, it is also one of many devices used to overcome them. At the same time, it points to the central role that design interventions and their associated representations played not only in overcoming Mexico '68's organizational challenges but in channeling the anxieties that these challenges engendered.

The Cuernavaca photograph delimits the boundaries of the discursive space inhabited not only by the rest of "old" and "new" monuments produced or refurbished for Mexico '68 but by the majority of the exhibitionist state's design interventions. This was a space of opportunities and risks where these official objects and their representations operated as the public interface of an unruly conglomerate of interests within and beyond Mexico's national borders. Design professionals based beyond these borders looked opportunistically to these kinds of discursive spaces. At a certain point, for example, the 1966 exchange between Robert Moses and his former collaborator Gregory Dawson cited in chapter 4 took an oddly prophetic turn. Dawson, who had recently opened a Mexico City branch for his office and was eager to attract commissions from Latin American bureaucracies, including Mexico's, claimed to be pioneering an entirely new design field. This field would be devoted to the creation of spectacular environments for all kinds of clients, from the governments of nation-states and municipal city authorities to powerful private corporations. These spaces would significantly enhance the techniques of persuasion used for commercial and diplomatic purposes at world's fairs until then. Instead of being spatially and institutionally tied to these increasingly unprofitable temporary events, however, Dawson believed that one day these environments could be built en masse in shopping malls throughout the expanding cities of the developed and developing worlds. He hyperbolically described this insight to Moses as

perhaps the most significant development in the field of reaching masses of people effectively to be developed since television. It is, in fact, the exploitation . . . of many of the principles that convinced companies to participate in the [1964–65 New York World's Fair]—the factor, for example, of involving people personally with a company or project through all the known senses.¹

Dawson's attempt to translate the advertising strategies of world's fairs into a specialized design service was certainly interesting, and it may have indeed heralded significant changes in the design of shopping environments. Yet, when compared to the projects commissioned by Mexico's exhibitionist state, it was arguably

behind the times. Ramírez Vázquez and his fellow professionals understood that designers could take on increasingly prominent roles in the midst of the geopolitical and economic transformations of the mid-twentieth century, and they provided the single-party state and its allied interests with a series of environments much like the ones the U.S.-based designer claimed to be inventing. At various levels, these works operated as advertisements for the state's multiple agendas, and, involving virtually all the senses, they made these agendas visible and palpable throughout the urban landscape of Mexico's capital city and beyond. While motivated by political interests, these works also aimed to spur economic gains, stimulating tourism, industrial, and real-estate investments through strategic incisions into the expanding fabric of the capital city as well as through broader overhauls of its infrastructures. The understanding of design practices as being able to influence their sociopolitical environments had been ingrained in Mexico's political economy for quite some time before Ramírez Vázquez's contemporaries came into the picture. Yet, at the high point of this generation's political career, this disciplinary field's capacities not just to aestheticize its environments but to shape them actively expanded to a degree that has not been matched since.

The fallout from these interventions is expansive. Ramírez Vázquez retained his position as the most politically involved architect of Mexico well past the "miracle," producing major state-sponsored and corporate commissions into the 1990s. Eduardo Terrazas remained an influential figure in architecture and planning circles. A decade after Mexico '68, between 1978 and 1979, he permanently inscribed many aspects of the temporary Olympic spectacle into the capital city's fabric through his design of signage for the Ejes Viales, major thoroughfares that crisscross some of the densest areas of the city. The influence of Lance Wyman's graphic systems for Mexico '68 and the Mexico City subway has undeniably been profound, not only because they launched his own successful career, but also because way-finding signage that relies on images and not words has become something of a lingua franca for the production of urban infrastructures.²

Other fragments of the exhibitionist state's image economies, notably those of the dispersed Olympic campus, also continue to occupy prominent sites throughout the capital city. The Sports Palace's once-shiny roof now evinces scars inflicted by time and by Mexico City's notorious air pollution, which has dramatically increased the opacity of the roof itself as well as of the capital's once-transparent atmosphere (Figure E2). The Palace's previously expansive and carefully landscaped grounds, including its painted pavement, have been engulfed by the city that has grown around them, yet this has hardly precluded the popular monument's remaining ingrained in the city's urban culture. The painted pavement in front of the UNAM Olympic Stadium was replaced several decades ago, and the

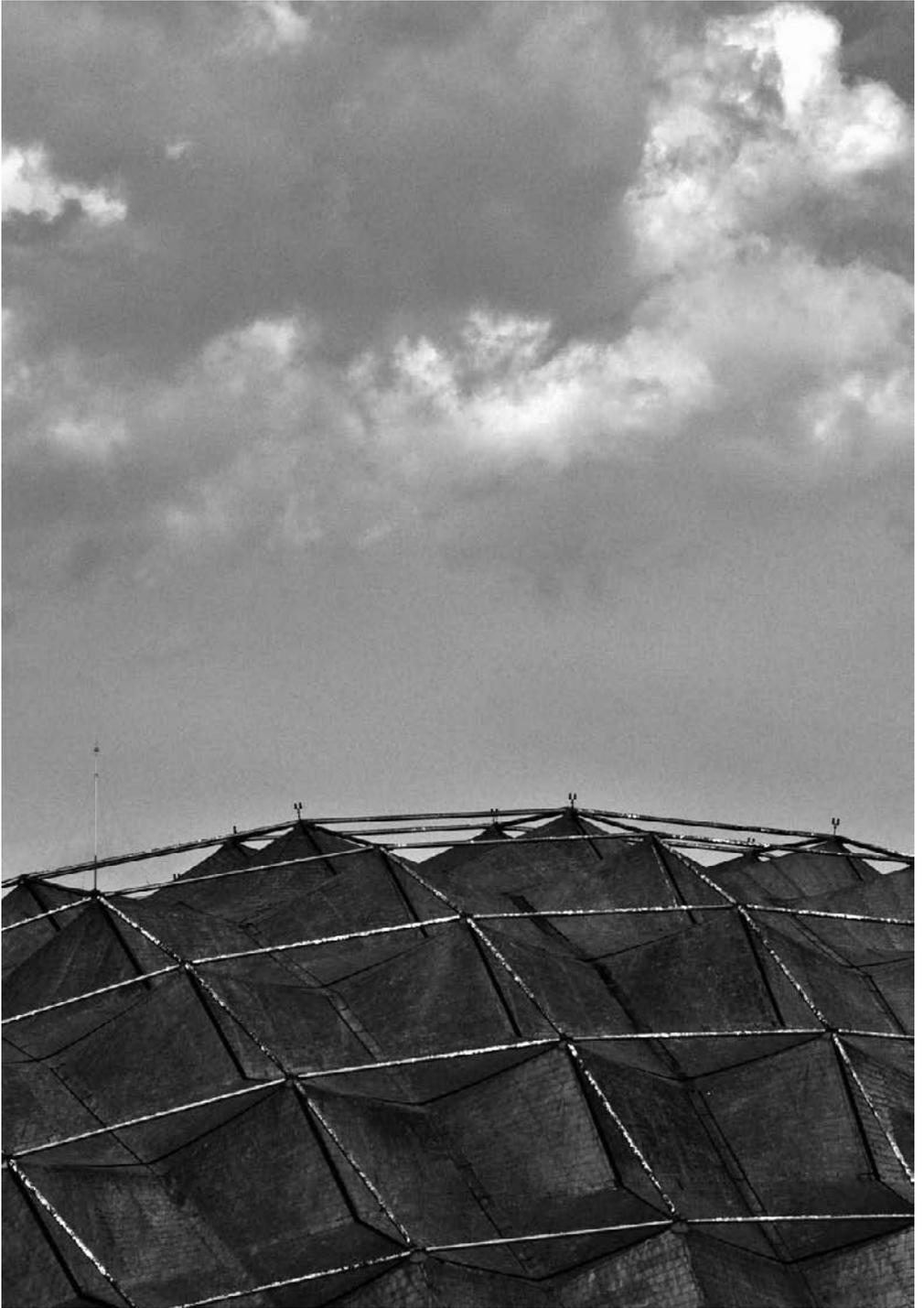
one in front of the Aztec Stadium has faded considerably, to the point where its radiating, formerly vibrant colors, still anchored

by Calder's periodically repainted sculpture, are now hard to discern. Yet, the apparent decay of this aspect of the stadium's Olympic iconography is actually a consequence of the venue's success as a magnet for ever-larger crowds of sports fans, who have not ceased to activate it during the last five decades.

Similarly, the sculptures of the Route of Friendship are now located in a densely packed area of Mexico City. Here, the capital's physical boundaries become increasingly blurred with those of the neighboring regions the city has continued to engulf, and very little, if any, trace of Mathias Goeritz's roadway utopia seems to be visible anywhere. If Goeritz thought the limited scale of the Route of Friendship's sculptures hampered their visibility in the midst of what now seems like a comparatively empty urban periphery, the city now dwarfs many of them even more than it did before. However, this apparent erasure of the Route's presence is arguably a marker of its success on another front, for the section of the city where the sculptures are placed has also grown dramatically, fulfilling at least the purely speculative component of Goeritz's promise.

At a site in Chapultepec Park that is adjacent to the main entrance to the National Museum of Anthropology and is not far from the long-since-static Tlaloc monolith, the contemporary Flyers of Papantla perform six days a week. First tested out as a temporary spectacle at world's fairs, the Flyers' act, which remains largely unchanged, is now permanently grafted onto the capital city's urban fabric. The museum to which the performance is spatially attached, and which remains a central component of the official management and display of Mexico's cultural patrimony, takes the place of both the ancient monuments and the modern pavilions in front of which generations of Flyers have performed over the decades. Like many others, this folkloric component of Mexico's official culture came into its own as an aggregate of site-specific theatrical interventions often staged far from Mexico, in the midst of various kinds of diplomatic and commercial exchanges. As the Flyers revolve around the pole planted firmly on the ground, their dizzying choreography provides an ephemeral but powerful glimpse into this chaotic history.

Figure E2. Félix Candela, Enrique Castañeda, and Antonio Peyrí, Sports Palace, Mexico City, 1968, detail. Photograph by the author.



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These archival collections, periodicals, and interviews were valuable sources of information during the research and writing of this book.

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INTRODUCTION

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4. See Soledad Loaeza, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la superpotencia, 1944–1968,” in Erik Velásquez García, ed., *Nueva historia general de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010), 653–98.

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6. See, for the official rhetoric of this time, Adolfo López Mateos, *México: 50 años de revolución* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962).

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9. See Rubén Gallo, *Mexican Modernity: The Avant-Garde and the Technological Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 179.

10. For a much broader analysis of how design practices intersected with propaganda during the Cold War, see Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

11. Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” in Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago, eds., *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004), 413–41. Patricio del Real has also foregrounded the central role that the mass-mediated dissemination of architecture, especially through exhibitions, played in the twentieth century. See his “Building a Continent: MoMA’s *Latin American Architecture since 1945* Exhibition,” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 16(1) (2007): 95–110.

12. See Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World’s Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Shelley E. Garrigan, *Collecting Mexico: Museums, Monuments, and the Creation of National Identity* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

13. For an analysis of this relationship in the case of Mexican mural painting, see David Craven, *Art and Revolution in Latin America, 1910–1990* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 25–74. For an analysis of the relationship between mural painting and politics in Mexico, see Leonard Folgarait, *Mural Painting and Social Revolution in Mexico, 1920–1940: Art of the New Order* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and *So Far from Heaven: David Alfaro Siqueiros’ The March of Humanity and Mexican Revolutionary Politics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987). In a fundamental recent study, art historian Mary Coffey demonstrates that museums were central to the legitimization of mural art as the primary

official art practice: Mary Coffey, *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture: Murals, Museums, and the Mexican State* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012).

14. See Luis Carranza, *Architecture as Revolution: Episodes in the History of Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010); Patrice Elizabeth Olsen, *Artifacts of Revolution: Architecture, Society and Politics in Mexico City, 1920–1940* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008); Antonio Toca Fernández, “Arquitectura del siglo XX en México: Distintas modernidades,” *Enlace* 6(5) (May 1996): 28–39; Antonio Méndez-Vigatá, “Politics and Architectural Language: Post-revolutionary Regimes in Mexico and Their Influence on Mexican Public Architecture, 1920–1952,” in Edward Burian, ed., *Modernity and the Architecture of Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 61–89; Enrique X. De Anda Alanís, *Historia de la arquitectura mexicana* (Mexico City: Gustavo Gili, 1995), and *La arquitectura de la Revolución mexicana: Corrientes y estilos en la década de los veinte* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1990). An urban history that examines the transformations of Mexico City during this time is Peter Krieger, ed., *Megalópolis: La modernización de la ciudad de México en el siglo XX* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto Goethe-Inter Naciones, 2006).

15. See Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “Hacia México ’68” and “El otro ’68: Política y estilo en la organización de los juegos olímpicos de la ciudad de México,” *Relaciones* 19 (fall 1998): 109–29.

16. Zolov, “Showcasing the ‘Land of Tomorrow.’”

17. See María González Pendás, “Technics and Civilization: Félix Candela’s Geopolitical Imaginary,” in Helen Gyger and Patricio del Real, eds., *Latin American Modern Architectures: Ambiguous Territories* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 270–90; George F. Flaherty, “Mario Pani’s Hospitality: Latin America through *Arquitectura México*,” in Gyger and del Real, *Latin American Modern Architectures*, 251–69.

18. Fernando Carmona et al., *El milagro mexicano* (Mexico City: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1970).

19. Fernando Carmona, “La situación económica,” in *ibid.*, 55.

20. For Italy, see *Life*, November 24, 1967, 48. For Japan, see Aaron Forsberg, *America and the Japanese Miracle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

21. Olga Pellicer de Broxy and Esteban Mancilla argue that an accommodation between Mexico and the United States was one of the decisive factors of the rise of the stabilizing development model. See their *El entendimiento con los Estados Unidos y la gestión del desarrollo estabilizador* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1980).

22. See John Minns, *Politics of Developmentalism: The Midas States of Mexico, South Korea, and Taiwan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 56–87.

23. Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “Urbanización y secularización en México: Temas y problemas historiográficos (ca. 1960s–1970s),” in Alicia Mayer, ed., *México en tres momentos: 1810–1910–2010: Hacia la conmemoración del bicentenario de la independencia y del centenario de la revolución mexicana: Retos y perspectivas* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2007), 111–13. For the “original” debate, see Frank Tannenbaum, *Mexico: The Struggle for Peace and Bread* (New York: Knopf, 1950), and the Mexican response in *Problemas agrícolas e industriales de México* 3(4) (October–December 1951).

24. Minns, *Politics of Developmentalism*, 57. See Gonzalo Robles and Ernesto de la Peña, “La industrialización en el desarrollo económico de México,” in Rafael Pérez Rubio et al., eds., *El desarrollo económico de México: Cinco ensayos* (Mexico City: Ediciones Productividad, 1968), 130.

See, for more specific descriptions of industrialization in presidential rhetoric of the 1950s and 1960s, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, “Desarrollo industrial,” in *Ideas políticas del presidente Gustavo Díaz Ordaz* (Mexico City: Editorial Ruta, 1966), 167–215; Adolfo López Mateos, *Pensamiento y programa* (Mexico City: Editorial La Justicia, 1961), 4–6. See also Albert O. Hirschman, “Ideologies of Economic Development in Latin America,” in *A Bias for Hope: Essays on Development and Latin America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), 298.

25. Víctor Urquidí, “Problemas fundamentales de la economía mexicana,” *Cuadernos Americanos* 114 (January–February 1961): 69–103. For a sympathetic appraisal of the state’s economic performance, see Enrique Pérez López, “El producto nacional,” *La Economía* 1, in *México: 50 años de revolución* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960), 571–92. Daniel Cosío Villegas remarked that the economic development of the time was not only “vertically” uneven because the upper layers of society received most of its benefits, but also “horizontally” uneven because Mexico’s different regions were not equally benefited by its effects: Daniel Cosío Villegas, “El momento actual,” in Daniel Cosío Villegas et al., *Historia mínima de México*, 3rd ed. (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1977), 162.

26. Rodríguez Kuri argues that the organization of the 1968 Olympics in large part celebrated an optimistic outlook on the expansion of the Mexican capital city during early 1968 (“El otro ‘68,” 118).

27. Flores describes this process as a result of postrevolutionary agricultural and land reform throughout Mexico. See Edmundo Flores, *Vieja revolución, nuevos problemas* (Mexico City: Editorial Joaquín Moritz, 1970), 113. For Flores’s analysis of the effects of land reform, see “The Significance of Land-Use Changes in the Economic Development of Mexico,” *Land Economics* 35 (May 1959): 115–24, and *Tratado de economía agrícola* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962). For an analysis of the broader debates concerning migration and urbanization in Mexico, see Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “Simpatía por el diablo: Miradas académicas a la ciudad de México, 1900–1970,” in Ariel Rodríguez Kuri and Sergio Tamayo Flores-Alatorre, eds., *Los últimos cien años, los próximos cien* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2004), 57–59. See also Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “Secretos de la idiosincracia. Urbanización y cambio cultural en México, 1950–1970,” in Carlos Lira Vásquez and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, eds., *Ciudades mexicanas del siglo XX: Siete estudios históricos* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México; Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2009), 19–56.

28. Flaherty, “Mario Pani’s Hospitality,” 251.

29. A nuanced account of the regional variations in industrialization and urbanization patterns can be found in Susan Gauss, *Made in Mexico: Regions, Nation, and the State in the Rise of Mexican Industrialism, 1920s–1940s* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010). For an urban history of Guadalajara, see Daniel Vázquez, *Guadalajara: Ensayos de interpretación* (Guadalajara: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1989), 110–30. For Mexico’s border cities, see Eduardo Alarcón Cantú, *Estructura urbana en ciudades fronterizas: Nuevo Laredo-Laredo, Reynosa-McAllen, Matamoros-Brownsville* (Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2000). Loeza also remarks that Miguel Alemán’s support of industrialization did not necessarily find favor in the agrarian countryside, but did find favor with urban elites in expanding cities like Monterrey, Guadalajara, and Puebla (“Modernización autoritaria,” 667).

30. Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 174–218. For an analysis of how the urban fabric of Mexico City was once reshaped by deployed propaganda energies, see Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, “1910 Mexico

City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28(1) (February 1996): 75–104. An exemplary study of how processes of nation building can affect the urban fabric of a capital city is Wu Hung’s *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). For a study of how an expanding capitalist economic system and its cultural and urban ramifications can interact historically with a political system defined by the multiple clientelist legacies of an authoritarian regime, see Laura Podalsky, *The Specular City: Transforming Culture, Consumption, and Space in Buenos Aires, 1955–1973* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

31. See Dina Berger, *Development of Mexico’s Tourist Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night* (New York: Pallgrave Macmillan, 2006).

32. For Acapulco, see Andrew Sackett, “Fun in Acapulco? The Politics of Development on the Mexican Riviera,” in Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, eds., *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), 161–82. For Cancún, see Rebecca María Torres and Janet D. Momson, “Gringolandia: The Construction of a New Tourist Space in Mexico,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95(2) (June 2005): 314–35.

33. Alex Saragoza, “The Selling of Mexico: Tourism and the State, 1929–1952,” in Gilbert M. Joseph, ed., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 91–115.

34. Nils Gilman, “Modernization Theory, the Highest Stage of American Intellectual History,” in David C. Engerman, ed., *Staging Growth: Modernization and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 47–80.

35. Gabriel Zaid, “La oferta de progreso,” in Gabriel Zaid, *La feria del progreso* (Madrid: Taurus, 1982), 217.

36. *Ibid.*, 221.

37. Loaeza, “Modernización autoritaria,” 672–73.

38. See Marta Traba, *Dos décadas vulnerables en las artes plásticas latinoamericanas, 1950–1970* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1973), 9–32; and Juan Acha, “Vanguardismo y subdesarrollo,” *Mundo Nuevo*, September–October 1970: 73–79. I thank Miguel López for this reference. For an analysis of Traba’s work, see “Marta Traba: Internationalism or Regional Resistance?” *Art Journal* 64(4) (winter 2005): 87–89. For a further discussion of this question, see Maricarmen Ramírez, “Sobre la pertinencia actual de una crítica comprometida,” trans. Hector Olea, in Marta Traba, *Dos décadas vulnerables en las artes plásticas latinoamericanas, 1950–1970* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2005 [1973]), 33–54.

39. Rafael López Rangel, *Arquitectura y subdesarrollo en América Latina: Primer acercamiento al problema* (Puebla: Departamento de Investigaciones Arquitectónicas y Urbanísticas del Instituto de Ciencias de la Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 1975), 89.

40. See Jorge Francisco Liernur, “Vanguardistas versus expertos: Reconstrucción europea, expansión norteamericana y emergencia del ‘Tercer Mundo’: Para una relectura del debate arquitectónico de la segunda posguerra (una mirada desde América Latina),” *Block 6* (2004): 18–39. Scholars have also begun to map out the international dimensions of the relationship between developmentalism and design. See Aggregate Architectural History Collaborative, *Governing by Design: Architecture, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012); Duanfang Lu, “Introduction,” in Duanfang Lu, ed., *Third World Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 9–12. In his study of urban and architectural production in

prerevolutionary Cuba, Timothy Hyde inscribes these disciplines squarely within the politically charged purview of nation-building efforts: Timothy Hyde, *Constitutional Modernism: Architecture and Civil Society in Cuba, 1933–1959* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

41. Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 40.

42. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France*, trans. Michelle Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

43. I draw from Pierre Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital. See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, trans. Randall Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

44. Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

45. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, "Review of Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*," *American Historical Review* 103(4) (October 1998): 1372.

46. Gallo, *Mexican Modernity*.

47. Anthony Vidler, "Architecture's Expanded Field," in Anthony Vidler, ed., *Architecture between Spectacle and Use* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 143–54. Vidler relies on Rosalind Krauss's formative "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," where this argument was first pursued in order to explain the mass-mediated condition of post-1945 sculpture. See Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (spring 1979): 30–44.

48. See Joseph, *Fragments of a Golden Age*.

49. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 2nd ed., vols. 1–3, trans. Joseph Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). For a contribution that draws from a variety of methodologies, see Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994).

50. See Roger Bartra, *La jaula de la melancolía: Identidad y metamorfosis del mexicano* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1987).

51. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 260.

52. Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, 4th ed., trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 57.

53. For an analysis of the multiple fissures within the party apparatus at this early stage, see Loaeza, "Modernización autoritaria," 656–65; for an analysis of how the state's structural weaknesses influenced cultural production, see Arthur Schmidt, "Making It Real Compared to What? Reconceptualizing Mexican History since 1940," in Joseph, *Fragments of a Golden Age*, 37–38.

54. Alan Knight, "The Modern Mexican State: Theory and Practice," in Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves, eds., *The Other Mirror: Grand Theory through the Lens of Latin America* (Princeton, N.J., and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 195–96.

55. See Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938–1954* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).

56. See Daniel Cosío Villegas, "México y su izquierda" (1963), in *Ensayos y notas* (Mexico City and Buenos Aires: Editorial Hermes, 1966), 21; Flores, *Vieja revolución*, 109–10; Gabriel Zaid,

“Tres momentos de la cultura en México,” in *La feria del progreso*, 144–45. For an expansion of this argument, see Gabriel Zaid, *De los libros al poder* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1988).

57. See Ortega Aguirre, *Estado y movimiento ferrocarrilero*, 13–22; Alonso, *El movimiento ferrocarrilero*, 74–98. The 1948 *charrazo* is widely considered the most significant operation of this type. This event consisted of the PRI-sponsored rise in prominence of Jesús Díaz de León as head of the railway workers union, and was followed by the purge of government opposition from the union and the subsequent “taming” of relations between it and state authorities, often through violent repression.

58. See Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico*. Recent economic histories of Mexico also provide useful cues to help us remap the relationship between Mexico’s state and the corporate interests associated with it historically. See Gauss, *Made in Mexico*.

59. As Eric Zolov suggests, Mexico City retained hegemonic status as the base of operations for the various branches of the state apparatus that sponsored cultural production, although not all the official culture produced there had equal levels of influence: Eric Zolov, “Notas sobre la capital en su contribución hegemónica,” in *Los últimos cien años*, 111–26.

60. For a fundamental analysis of Los Contemporáneos, see Guillermo Sheridan, *Los Contemporáneos ayer* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985).

61. See, for a general overview, Deborah Cohn, “La construcción de la identidad cultural en México: Nacionalismo, cosmopolitismo e infraestructura intelectual, 1945–1968,” in Kristine Van den Berghe and Maarten van Delden, eds., *El laberinto de la solidaridad: Cultura y política en México (1910–2000)* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, Presses Universitaires de Namur, 2002), 89–103. For an analysis of the diplomatic roles of these figures, see Fernando Curiel, “Jaime Torres Bodet: Retrato público,” and Guillermo Sheridan, “Aquí, allá, ¿dónde? Octavio Paz en el servicio diplomático,” in Rosario Green, ed., *Escritores en la diplomacia mexicana* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2003 [1998]), 1:283–314, 315–49. For an analysis of Novo’s relationship to the single-party state, particularly concerning the multiple instances of unrest and repression of the late 1960s, see Antonio Saborit, “El buen patrón y su grafógrafo esclavo,” in Salvador Novo, *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998), xi–xxxvi.

62. As Fernando Curiel has argued, these were only some of the figures that rose to prominence during the mid-twentieth century alongside others of diverse philosophical, literary, and political backgrounds. See Fernando Curiel Defossé, “Intelectuales del tardoporfirismo al cincuentenario de la revolución (1900–1960): Una propuesta de relato,” in Mayer, *México en tres momentos*, 313–14. For an analysis of the relationship between writers, intellectuals, and the state in Mexico, see Claire Brewster, *Responding to Crisis in Contemporary Mexico: The Political Writings of Paz, Fuentes, Monsiváis, and Poniatowska* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005), 9–34.

63. Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” (1919), trans. H. H. Gerth, in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1991), 77–128.

1. DIPLOMATIC SPECTACLES

1. “Pedro Ramírez Vázquez,” *Arquitectura /México* 100 (1968): 65. Emphasis is mine.

2. Kevin B. Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World: Mexico and the 1968 Olympic Games* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 38.

3. See Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). For an account of the late-nineteenth-century interrelation between art and representations of national identity, see Stacie G. Widdifield, *The Embodiment of the National in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexican Painting* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996). For a perceptive analysis of how the idea of the Mexican Revolution was institutionalized through art, see David Craven, *Art and Revolution in Latin America, 1910–1990* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 34–37.

4. See Manuel Amábilis, *El pabellón de México en la Exposición Iberoamericana de Sevilla* (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1929).

5. Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs*, 230.

6. For an overview of Amábilis's work, see Louise Noelle, ed., *Manuel Amábilis: Arquitectura nacional* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Dirección de Arquitectura y Conservación del Patrimonio Artístico Inmueble, 2003). For an in-depth analysis of Amábilis's 1929 pavilion, see Luis Carranza, *Architecture as Revolution: Episodes in the History of Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 86–117.

7. See José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana: Notas de viajes a la América del Sud* (Paris, 1925).

8. Itala Schmelz, ed., *Luis Márquez en el Mundo del Mañana: La identidad mexicana y la Feria Mundial de Nueva York, 1939–40* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, 2012).

9. See Rick Anthony López, *Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).

10. Eric Zolov, "Discovering a Land 'Mysterious and Obvious': The Renarrativizing of Post-revolutionary Mexico," in Joseph M. Gilbert et al., eds., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940* (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 240. This kind of palatable exoticism, the kind that, in historian Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo's words, "did not compromise Mexico's cosmopolitanism but rather made it distinctive," had been part of official culture since the late nineteenth century. See Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, "1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28(1) (February 1996): 75–104.

11. Barbara Mundy and Dana Leibsohn, "Of Copies, Casts, and Codices: Mexico on Display in 1892," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 29/30 (spring–autumn 1996): 326–43.

12. For an analysis of the 1940s, see Stephen R. Niblo, *Mexico in the 1940s: Modernity, Politics, and Corruption* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1999).

13. Shelley E. Garrigan, *Collecting Mexico: Museums, Monuments, and the Creation of National Identity* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 136–37.

14. Zolov, "Discovering a Land 'Mysterious and Obvious.'"

15. Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs*, 48.

16. See Ramón Vargas Salguero, *Pabellones y museos de Pedro Ramírez Vázquez* (Mexico City: Noriega Editores, 1995). For an analysis of Ramírez Vázquez's role in a broader Latin American context, see my "Pre-Columbian Skins, Developmentalist Souls: The Architect as Politician," in Helen Gyger and Patricio del Real, eds., *Latin American Modern Architectures: Ambiguous Territories* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 93–114.

17. Roderic Camp, *Mexican Political Biographies, 1935–1993* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 578.

18. Fernando Curiel, “Jaime Torres Bodet: Retrato público,” in Rosario Green, ed., *Escritores en la diplomacia mexicana* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2003 [1998]), 1:304–6. For a retrospective account of his national and international experiences as a diplomat, see Jaime Torres Bodet, *Años contra el tiempo: Memorias* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1969), *La victoria sin alas: Memorias* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1970), and *El desierto internacional: Memorias* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1971).

19. Robin Adèle Greeley, “Nietzsche contra Marx in Mexico: The Contemporáneos, Muralism, and Debates over ‘Revolutionary’ Art in 1930s Mexico,” in Alejandro Anreus et al., eds., *Mexican Muralism: A Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 164.

20. Among other cultural transformations, the 1930s also saw attempts to provide an anthropological definition of Mexicanness through works like Samuel Ramos’s *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2009 [1934]).

21. Ramírez Vázquez was not the only architect to begin his career in the context of post-revolutionary school building. For instance, in 1932, Juan O’Gorman (1905–82) made his mark in the architectural scene through his design of a set of now-renowned functionalist schools. See J. Víctor Arias Montes et al., eds., *Juan O’Gorman, arquitectura escolar 1932* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005).

22. Helen Thomas, “Colonising the Land: Heimat and the Constructed Landscapes of Mexico’s Ciudad Universitaria (1943–1953),” in Felipe Hernández, Mark Millington, and Iain Borden, eds., *Transculturation: Cities, Spaces, and Architectures in Latin America* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), 109–23.

23. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, *Ramírez Vázquez en la arquitectura* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1989), 64–65.

24. Letter, Unión Liberal Revolucionaria, Comité de Depuración Social, to Jaime Torres Bodet, February 3, 1959, Box 0961, Folder 703.7/62, Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Documental Adolfo López Mateos (hereafter AGN-ALM), Mexico City.

25. Roberto Vallerino, *Museums 1952–1994: Pedro Ramírez Vázquez*, trans. Debra Nagao (Mexico City: Artes Gráficas Panorama, 1995), 34. Ramírez Vázquez was also instrumental in assembling a large-scale traveling exhibition of architecture in Mexico that enhanced his international reputation. See *4000 años de arquitectura mexicana* (Mexico City: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1956), exhibition catalog.

26. Fernando Gamboa, *El Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas* (Mexico City: Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Palacio de Bellas Artes, 1947).

27. Miguel Ángel Fernández, *Historia de los museos de México*, 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Banamex, 1988), 202.

28. *Ibid.*, 188–203.

29. Elena Poniatowska, “La imagen de México en Bruselas es la de un país que ha trabajado mucho por salir de la miseria y de la esclavitud,” *México en la cultura: Suplemento cultural de Noveidades*, March 23, 1958.

30. Fernando Cassinello, “Bruselas, alarde estructural de nuestra década,” *Calli* 8 (1958): 43. The director of *Calli* was Óscar Urrutia—a collaborator of Ramírez Vázquez’s at the 1958 and 1962 World’s Fairs pavilions and director of cultural affairs at the Mexican Olympic Committee.

31. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, “Pabellón de México en Bruselas,” ARV, Mexico City, 1958.

32. Brazilian national representations had explored similar themes before. See Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, “Os trópicos como espetáculo: A participação brasileira nas Exposições Universais de finais do século XIX,” in Beatriz González Stephan and Jens Andermann, eds., *Galerías del progreso: Museos, exposiciones y cultural visual en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 2006), 195–220.

33. Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930–1945* (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 212.

34. Address of Grover A. Whalen, Box 2128, Folder 22, Brazilian Pavilion Opening, New York World’s Fair 1939–40 Corporation Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

35. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, “De Luis Márquez, México y la Feria de Nueva York, 1939–1940,” in Schmelz, *Luis Márquez en el Mundo de Mañana*, 31.

36. José Chávez Morado, “En busca de la nacionalidad,” *Espacios* 1 (September 1948): n.p.

37. See Mary Coffey, *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture: Murals, Museums, and the Mexican State* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012).

38. The UNAM campus was likely the single project most heavily promoted as symbolic of Mexico’s progress at this time. See Keith Eggener, “The Presence of the Past: Architecture and Politics in Modern Mexico,” *A + U Architecture and Urbanism* 389 (2003): 22. Chávez Morado had worked at the University City, designing a glass mosaic mural titled *The Conquest of Energy*, a celebration of advances in electrification in Mexico, for the auditorium at the School of Sciences.

39. *Guía de murales de la Ciudad Universitaria* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2008), 66.

40. Fernando Gamboa, “Exposición Universal e Internacional de Bruselas 1958,” 1958, Archivo Promotora Cultural Fernando Gamboa, Mexico City.

41. Ibid.

42. Anonymous, “El Pabellón de México en la Exposición Internacional de Bruselas,” ARV, 1.

43. Tenorio-Trillo, “De Luis Márquez,” 30. For a transnational history of muralism in Mexico and the United States, see Anna Indych-López, *Muralism without Walls: Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros in the United States, 1927–1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

44. See Jean Back and Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, eds., *The Family of Man 1955–2001: Humanism and Postmodernism* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2004).

45. This kind of museological construction of “Mexicanness” closely correlates with a Surrealist understanding of the concept, which presented Mexico as a structure of contradictions. See my “Surrealism and Constructions of National Identity in Mexico: Changing Perceptions, 1940–1968,” *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 3(1–2) (fall 2009): 9–29.

46. “El Pabellón de México en la Exposición Internacional de Bruselas,” 4–5.

47. Letter, Rafael Mijares to Óscar Urrutia, May 20, 1957, ARV; Rafael Mijares, interview by author, Puerto Vallarta, August 16, 2009. An example of a previous use of *tezontle* in Mexico City is in the restoration of the National Fine Arts Academy, between 1859 and 1862. See Garrigan, *Collecting Mexico*, 38.

48. Poniatowska, “La imagen de México en Bruselas,” n.p.

49. Letter, Rafael Mijares to Óscar Urrutia, February 25, 1957, ARV.

50. Ibid. Emphasis is mine.

51. Keith Eggener, "Postwar Modernism in Mexico: Luis Barragán's Jardines del Pedregal and the International Discourse on Architecture and Place," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58(2) (June 1999): 122–45.
52. Letter, Gloria Contreras to José Ángel Cenicerros, June 20, 1958, ARV.
53. Letter, Celestino Herrera to Gilberto Loyo, January 5, 1957, ARV.
54. Letter, J. Van Goethem to Rafael Mijares, Brussels, December 12, 1956, ARV.
55. Letter, Rafael Mijares to J. Van Goethem, December 15, 1956, ARV.
56. Ramírez Vázquez, *Ramírez Vázquez en la arquitectura*, 106.
57. María Luisa Mendoza, *La Presencia del mexicano en Seattle* 4(2–3) (1962): unnumbered.
58. Larrauri was joined in the project by six other *museógrafos* under his direction: Alfonso Soto Soria, Mario Vázquez, Jorge Angulo, Antonio Lebrija, Federico Hernández Serrano, and Miguel Celorio. For an in-depth analysis of Larrauri's work, see Carlos Vázquez Olvera, *Iker Larrauri Prado: Museógrafo mexicano* (Mexico City: INAH, 2005).
59. John Mraz, *Nacho López, Mexican Photographer* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 32–33.
60. Soledad Loaeza, "Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la superpotencia, 1944–1968," in Erik Velásquez García, ed., *Nueva historia general de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010), 690.
61. See Antonio Alonso, *El movimiento ferrocarrilero en México: 1958–59* (Mexico City: Era, 1979); Max Ortega Aguirre, *Estado y movimiento ferrocarrilero: 1958–1959* (Mexico City: Ediciones Quinto Sol, 1988); Robert Alegre, *Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico: Gender, Class, and Memory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); Kevin J. Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution: Labor, the State, and Authoritarianism in Mexico* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 159–208.
62. Francisco José Álvarez y Lezama, "Urbanismo: La feria de Seattle; América Latina; Comunidad Europea," *El Universal*, July 15, 1962.
63. Laurie Fish, "Beautiful Mexican Pavilion Stresses Unity of Mankind," *Seattle Times*, May 27, 1962.
64. Robert Esken, "Mexico's Fair Exhibit Shows Erstwhile 'Siesta Land' Awake Racing for Century 21," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, April 24, 1962.
65. On Felguérez's mural, see Juan García Ponce, *Felguérez* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1976), 31.
66. Anonymous, October 12, 1960, New York World's Fair 1964–65 Corporation Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations (hereafter NYPL1964-NYWF), Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1960–62.
67. Letter, Bruce Nicholson to Lawrence J. McGinley, November 14, 1963, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1963. Emphasis is mine.
68. A striking resemblance also exists between this pavilion and a work by German American architect Marcel Breuer, the Ariston Club, built in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in 1947–48. See Isabelle Hyman, *Marcel Breuer, Architect* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 279.
69. Letter, Allen E. Beach to Ramírez Vázquez and Mijares, November 29, 1961, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 118, Mexico Foreign Construction, Folder C1.011.
70. Memorandum, Bruce Nicholson to Allen Beach, February 1, 1963, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1963.

71. Speeches by Rafael Mijares and Héctor Echeverría for “Latin American Preview Day,” NYPL1964-NYWF, Tape 01190 B.
72. Georg Lukács, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,” in Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), 83–109. For a critique of the limitations and potential of Lukács’s understanding of reification, see Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), 93–124.
73. Letter, Rafael Mijares to Eduardo Terrazas, February 20, 1964, ARV.
74. “El Pabellón de México en la Feria Mundial de Nueva York,” *Calli* 12 (March–April 1964): 41–44.
75. “Excelente pabellón representa a México en la feria,” *Construcción Mexicana* 5(7) (July 1964): 12–13.
76. Memorandum, William E. Potter to Charles Poletti, October 14, 1960, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1960–62.
77. Letter, Robert Moses to Charles Poletti, November 24, 1961, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1960–62.
78. Holly Barnett-Sánchez, “The Necessity of Pre-Columbian Art in the United States: Appropriations and Transformations of Heritage, 1933–1945,” in Elizabeth H. Boone, ed., *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 177–204. In a March 1968 interview with Mexico City daily *Mañana*, Gamboa positioned this show as a foundational influence on his early curatorial trajectory. See Santiago de Icaza, “Promoción cultural de México en el extranjero,” *Mañana*, March 30, 1968, 48–49; Archivo Histórico Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City (hereafter ASRE), File XV-104-1 (II).
79. Letter, Jorge Canavati to Bruce Nicholson, April 7, 1964, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1963.
80. Memorandum, Charles Poletti to Bruce Nicholson, July 2, 1964, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.
81. Memorandum, M. Stone to Robert Moses, May 20, 1964, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.
82. Eduardo Terrazas, interview by author, Mexico City, July 28, 2009.
83. Joyce Martin, Press Release, New York World’s Fair 1964–65 Corporation, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.
84. Letter, Marjorie B. Davenport to Robert Moses, May 27, 1965, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.
85. For the Rockefeller Center context, see Robert Linsley, “Utopia Will Not Be Televised: Rivera at Rockefeller Center,” *Oxford Art Journal* 17(2) (1994): 48–62.
86. The reappearance of this kind of criticism indicated that the depoliticization of muralism was far from a completed process by the mid-1960s, as Coffey discusses at length in *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture*.
87. For an analysis of the reception of these displays in U.S. artistic circles, see my “Doubling Time,” *Grey Room* 51 (spring 2013): 12–39. The Olmec head would not be the last monumental stone sculpture exhibited in front of Seagram. In 1968, in an effort to preserve and promote the sculptures of Easter Island, one of these monoliths was flown from the Island to New York and placed in front of Seagram on a pedestal designed by Philip Johnson. See Grace Glueck, “5-Ton Head from Easter Island Is Put on a Pedestal,” *New York Times*, October 22, 1968.

88. "Great Stone Face from Mexico on View: How 15-Ton Original Was Moved Is Puzzle," *New York Times*, May 2, 1950.

89. "Eight Riddles of Mankind," *New York Times*, September 6, 1964.

90. Memorandum, Bruce Nicholson to Douglas Beaton, November 4, 1963, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279.

91. See Khristaan D. Villela and Mary Miller, eds., *The Aztec Calendar Stone* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010). Nicholson wrote to Adolfo Huerta, the liaison between the fair and the Mexican delegation, recommending that a sign be put up in light of the fact that most visitors were not aware of the importance of the artifact of which it was a replica, but to no avail. Letter, Bruce Nicholson to Adolfo Huerta, June 28, 1964, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, NY File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965. Fair organizers made further attempts to have a sign placed without much success. Memorandum, C. Poletti to B. Nicholson, July 2, 1964. Memorandum, Poletti to Nicholson, July 28, 1964, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.

92. See Museum of Modern Art, *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* (Mexico City: INAH, New York: MoMA, 1940).

93. Matthew W. Stirling, "Great Stone Faces of the Mexican Jungle," *National Geographic* 78(3) (1940): 309–34.

94. Joyce Martin, Press Release, May 24, 1965, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.

95. Philip H. Dougherty, "16-Ton Stone Head Arrives at Fair: Olmec Treasure Added to Mexican Exhibition," *New York Times*, July 10, 1965.

96. Gamboa's interpretation differed from most scholarly analyses, and was more in tune with the early speculations about Olmec art that proliferated after the tradition first received mainstream attention. See Joyce Martin, Press Release, July 8, 1965, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965. Such scholars as Román Piña Chan would subsequently interpret the heads in relation to the complex of representations associated with the Mesoamerican ball game, although this was by no means the dominant interpretation of the colossal heads. See *Una visión del México prehispánico* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1967), 20.

97. Joyce Martin, Press Release, April 19, 1965, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.

98. Murray Schumach, "Mexican Art Seen by Many on Coast," *New York Times*, October 23, 1963.

99. Joyce Martin, New York World's Fair Press Release, April 19, 1965, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.

100. Memorandum, Erwin Witt to Robert Moses, August 5, 1964, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 118, Mexico Foreign, Construction, Folder C1.011. In general, this world's fair was notorious for its financial problems, with the entire event proving a financial failure. See Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington, D.C., and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 106.

101. Letter, Alberto Genis Ávila to Antonio Carrillo Flores, August 8, 1967, ASRE, Box 316. See also "Que viva México," *La Mañana*, May 4, 1967.

102. Tamayo's painting would be installed at Ramírez Vázquez's Secretariat of Foreign Relations tower at the Plaza of the Three Cultures in Mexico City in 1972.

103. “El pabellón de México en Expo ’67,” *Construcción Mexicana* 8(9) (September 1967): 14. Emphasis is mine.
104. Clive Bamford Smith, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1967).
105. See Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), xlii; “Félix Candela: Architect of Shells,” *Time*, September 8, 1958; “The Prisoner of Geometry,” *Time*, June 28, 1963; Ada Louise Huxtable, “Ten Buildings That Say Today,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1959.
106. Ángela Giral, “Félix Candela en los Estados Unidos,” *Bitácora* 23 (November 2011): 54.
107. “El pabellón de México en Expo ’67,” 14.
108. See Claire Fox, *Making Art Panamerican: Cultural Policy and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 194.
109. “International Exposition Hemisfair ’68,” University of Texas at San Antonio, Hemisfair Collection MS-31, San Antonio Fair, Inc. Records (hereafter UTSA-SAF); Rydell, Findling, and Pelle, *Fair America*, 113.
110. Letter, Carlos Freymann to Tom Frost Jr., President, Frost National Bank, San Antonio, December 22, 1964, UTSA-SAF.
111. Letter, Gustavo Ortíz Hernán to William Sinkin, April 12, 1966, UTSA-SAF.
112. Robert A. González, *Designing Pan America: U.S. Architectural Visions of the Western Hemisphere* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 185.
113. Mario Pani, “Project for a Monumental Landmark Tower,” 1965, UTSA-SAF. See, for a response, Letter, O’Neill Ford to Mario Pani, January 19, 1965, UTSA-SAF. See, for Candela’s project, Juan Ignacio del Cueto Ruiz-Funes, “Las bóvedas por arista de Félix Candela: Variaciones sobre un mismo tema,” *Bitácora* 23 (November 2011): 42.
114. Letter, William R. Sinkin to Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, December 7, 1964, UTSA-SAF. Emphasis is mine.
115. This included the following painters: Gilberto Aceves Navarro, Arnold Belkin, Lilia Carrillo, Arnaldo Coen, Pedro Coronel, Roberto Donís, Felipe Ehreberg, Manuel Felguérez, Francisco Icaza, Luis López Loza, Antonio Peláez, Vicente Rojo, and Francisco Toledo. Among sculptors, Helen Escobedo, Fernando García Ponce, Peter Knigge, Oliver Seguí, and Francisco Zúñiga were included.
116. Fernando Gamboa, “El pabellón de México en la Hemisferia ’68” (San Antonio), ASRE.
117. Untitled photograph caption, UTSA-SAF.
118. “Acuerdo mexicano japonés para una ciudad industrial en el DF,” *Novedades*, September 11, 1970.
119. “40 años después, Estados Unidos concede visa al muralista Siqueiros: Homenaje de Japón al pintor mexicano, ayer,” *Excelsior*, June 9, 1972.
120. See Zhongie Lin, *Kenzo Tange and the Metabolist Movement: Urban Utopias of Modern Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
121. Agustín Hernández, interview by author, Mexico City, July 15, 2010.
122. “Editorial,” *Calli* 45 (January–February 1970): 4.
123. Raquel Tibol, “Experimento mural para la Expo ’70 de Osaka, Japón,” *Calli* 45 (January–February 1970): 7.
124. This trend remains largely unbroken in the literature about the curator’s career. See, for an example of this, Carlos Molina, “Fernando Gamboa y su particular versión de México,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 87 (2005): 117–43.

2. ARCHAEOLOGIES OF POWER

1. Ana Garduño provides an analysis of the multiple types of museums included as part of this effort. See Ana Garduño, “La ruptura de Fernando Gamboa,” *Discurso Visual*, January–April 2011, unnumbered.

2. “Lo que podemos hacer,” Pedro Ramírez Vázquez interviewed by Tania Ragasol, in *Diseñando México 68: Una identidad olímpica* (Mexico City: Museo de Arte Moderno and Landucci, 2008), 26.

3. See Carlos Molina, “Fernando Gamboa y su particular versión de México,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 87 (2005): 117–43. This is also the perception perpetuated by the exhibition *Fernando Gamboa: La Utopía Moderna*, curated by Ana Elena Mallet and shown at Mexico City’s Museum of Modern Art between December 2009 and May 2010.

4. Carrillo Flores was a notorious apologist of the import-substitution economic model. See “Las ideas acerca del desarrollo económico en el proceso de la Revolución Mexicana,” in *México y la cultura* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1961), 1179–1212.

5. Letter, Antonio Carrillo to James Johnson Sweeney, December 18, 1962, Archives, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (hereafter A-MFAH), Registrar Files, Box 25, Folder 9. Carrillo’s suggestion came as a response to a letter dated October 25, 1962, in which Sweeney had inquired about the possibility of borrowing artifacts from a number of Mexican collections, while having the Olmec head as the centerpiece of the show.

6. Matthew W. Stirling, “Great Stone Faces of the Mexican Jungle,” *National Geographic* 78(3) (1940): 309–34. As Stirling admitted in these and all his early writings, his road map for these expeditions largely followed the one established by Heinz Blom and Oliver LaFarge, Tulane University researchers who had explored this area in the 1920s. See their *Tribes and Temples* (New Orleans: Tulane University, 1926).

7. Letter, Amalia Cardós de Méndez to James Johnson Sweeney, May 13, 1963, A-MFAH, Registrar Files, Box 25, Folder 9.

8. James John Sweeney, “A Head from San Lorenzo,” in *The Olmec Tradition*, exh. cat. (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1963), unnumbered.

9. Matthew W. Stirling, *Stone Monuments of Rio Chiquito* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of American Ethnology, 1955).

10. Letter, James Johnson Sweeney to Richard de Rochemont, March 6, 1963, A-MFAH, Registrar Files, Box 25, Folder 9.

11. *The Road to the Olmec Head, Film* (1963), A-MFAH.

12. D. A., “Huge Head Hunted for Houston,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 28, 1963.

13. “Heavy Find on Display in Houston: Mexican Head Lent to Museum Whose Director Traced It,” *New York Times*, June 19, 1963.

14. Sweeney, “A Head from San Lorenzo,” unnumbered.

15. Letter, James Johnson Sweeney to Edwin W. Shook, November 27, 1963, A-MFAH, Registrar Files, Box 25, Folder 9.

16. Letter, James Johnson Sweeney to Ignacio Bernal, September 8, 1964, A-MFAH, Registrar Files, Box 25, Folder 9.

17. Lucia Allais, “The Design of the Nubian Desert: Monuments, Mobility, and the Space of Global Culture,” in Aggregate (Architectural History Collaborative), *Governing by Design* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 179–215, and “Integrities: The Salvage of Abu Simbel,” *Grey Room* 50 (winter 2013): 6–45.

18. Mechthild Rutsch, *Entre el campo y el gabinete. Nacionales y extranjeros en la profesionalización de la antropología mexicana (1877–1920)* (Mexico City: INAH, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México—Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2007). See also Carmen Ruiz, “Insiders and Outsiders in Mexican Archaeology” (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2003).

19. Shelley E. Garrigan, *Collecting Mexico: Museums, Monuments, and the Creation of National Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 65–105.

20. For an analysis of how these expeditions were central to imperialist desires in the United States during the nineteenth century, see R. Tripp Evans, *Romancing the Maya: Mexican Antiquity in the American Imagination 1820–1915* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

21. Marcia Brennan has examined the construction of Sweeney’s prestige, albeit without looking at the Olmec episode: Brennan, *Curating Consciousness: Mysticism and the Modern Museum* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010).

22. See, for example, R. H. K. Marett, *Archaeological Tours from Mexico City: A Guide to the Principal Archaeological Sites of the Pre-Spanish Civilizations of Mexico That Can Conveniently Be Visited from the Capital* (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1934).

23. The trailer was as heavily advertised as the archaeological campaign for which it was engineered: “Remolque, diseñado en México, para trasladar 167 toneladas,” *Construcción Mexicana* 5(5) (May 1964): 32–34; “Histórica escultura de 167 toneladas transportada sin moverla,” *Construcción Mexicana* 5(4) (April 1964): 18–20. See, for an overview of the process of moving the Tlaloc, Alfonso Tovar Santana, *Tlaloc: Estructura, ruta y transporte de un monolito rocoso* (Mexico City: Escuela Superior de Ingeniería y Arquitectura del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, 1966).

24. Carlos Monsiváis, *Salvador Novo: Lo marginal en el centro*, 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 2004), 203. Monsiváis provides the most comprehensive study of Novo’s relationship to Mexican cultural politics. For an analysis of Novo’s early work, see Viviane Mahieux, *Urban Chroniclers in Modern Latin America: The Shared Intimacy of Everyday Life* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 93–125.

25. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology: Art, Architecture, Archaeology, Ethnography* (New York: Abrams, 1968), 36–37. Emphasis is mine.

26. Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938–1954* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010). Although Navarro does not focus specifically on cultural politics, his formulation is certainly of interest here.

27. For a fuller examination of this conflict, see Sandra Rozental, “Mobilizing the Monolith: Patrimonio, Collectivity, and Social Memory in Contemporary Mexico” (PhD diss., New York University, 2012). In addition, see the documentary film by Sandra Rozental and Jesse Lerner titled *La piedra ausente* (2012).

28. Ariel Rodríguez Kuri accounts for the tensions between countryside and city in “Urbanización y secularización en México: Temas y problemas historiográficos (ca. 1960s–1970s),” in Alicia Mayer, ed., *México en tres momentos: 1810–1910–2010: Hacia la conmemoración del bicentenario de la independencia y del centenario de la Revolución mexicana: Retos y perspectivas* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2007), 111–13.

29. Esther Pasztor, *Aztec Art* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 167.

30. “¿Dónde te diviertes? Nuevo Bosque de Chapultepec, México,” *Calli* 15 (February 1965): 49–55. Chapultepec also had been the planned site of a series of temporary events in the preceding decades, including an unrealized world’s fair in 1940. See Andrea Kristine Moerer,

“Changing Chapultepec: Construction, Consumption, and Cultural Politics in a Mexico City Forest, 1934–1944” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2013).

31. This is an autobiographical choice on Novo’s part, because he spent his early life in Torreón, in the northern Mexican state of Coahuila.

32. Carlos Monsiváis, “De la santa doctrina al espíritu público (sobre las funciones de la crónica en México),” *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 35(2) (1987): 769.

33. For an in-depth study of de Balbuena’s work, see Stephanie Merrim, *The Spectacular City, Mexico, and Colonial Hispanic Literary Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

34. Mahieux, *Urban Chroniclers in Modern Latin America*, 109.

35. Vicente Quirarte, *Elogio de la calle: Biografía literaria de ciudad de México, 1850–1992* (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 2001), 525–27.

36. Salvador Novo, *New Mexican Grandeur*, trans. Noel Lindsay (Mexico City: PEMEX, 1967), 136.

37. The creation of the National Museum of History was part of the 1939 reform that also created the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). As a result of the creation of INAH, the holdings of the National Museum of Archaeology, History, and Ethnography, whose collection included not just archaeological objects but also zoological and botanical artifacts, were divided. In 1939, the archaeological objects in the collection were classified into “pre-Hispanic” and “post-Conquest” materials. The former collections remained at the Calle de Moneda in downtown Mexico City, the old museum’s site; the latter were moved to the newly created museum in Chapultepec at Cárdenas’s behest. See Miguel Ángel Fernández, *Historia de los museos de México*, 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Banamex, 1988), 184.

38. See Diana Magaloni Kerpel, “History under the Rainbow: The Conquest of Mexico in the Florentine Codex,” in Ilona Katzew, ed., *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2011), 86.

39. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, *Ramírez Vázquez en la arquitectura* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1989), 80.

40. Sandra Kuntz Flicker and Elisa Speckman Guerra, “El Porfiriano,” in Erik Velásquez García, ed., *Nueva historia general de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010), 530–32.

41. Iker Larrauri, interview by author, Mexico City, August 23, 2009.

42. Ramírez Vázquez, *Ramírez Vázquez en la arquitectura*, 87.

43. “México renueva a su perfil fronterizo,” *Construcción Mexicana* 5(3) (March 1964): 16.

44. Roberto Vallerino, *Museums 1952–1994: Pedro Ramírez Vázquez*, trans. Debra Nagao (Mexico City: Artes Gráficas Panorama, 1995), 52. Emphasis is mine.

45. See Sandy Eisenstadt, “Theater of Form: Eero Saarinen and the Function of Style,” in Donald Albrecht and Eeva Pelkonen, eds., *Eero Saarinen: Architect of the American Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

46. Julie Jones, “Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss and the Pre-Columbian Collection at Dumbarton Oaks,” in J. N. Carder, ed., *A Home of the Humanities: The Collecting Patronage of Mildred and Robert Bliss* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2010), 53–74.

47. Anthony Vidler, “Losing Face,” in *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 92.

48. For a broader study of the past and present of these border cities, see Daniel D. Arreola and James R. Curtis, *The Mexican Border Cities: Landscape Anatomy and Place Personality* (Tucson and London: University of Arizona Press, 1993).

49. Bruce Munro, "PRONAF," in Lee Stacy, ed., *Mexico and the United States* (Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2003), 672–73.

50. "Mexico Builds Up Her Border Cities," *New York Times*, March 4, 1962; "Juarez Is Divided on Clean Up Plan," *New York Times*, March 11, 1962.

51. "Presa de la amistad," *Construcción Mexicana* 8(1) (January 1967): 7.

52. See "Una gran puerta abre México en Tijuana," *Construcción Mexicana* 6(5) (May 1965): 21–23.

53. Ignacio Marquina and Luis Aveleyra de Anda, "Informe general de las labores desarrolladas durante el lapso inicial del proyecto, del 1 de enero al 31 de diciembre de 1961," in Ignacio Marquina, ed., *Trabajos de Planeación del M.N.A.* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología, Secretaría de Educación Pública and CAPFCE, 1962), 3–4.

54. Luis Aveleyra de Anda, "Síntesis del programa de funcionamiento para la construcción del nuevo museo de antropología, en México," in Aveleyra et al., *Estudios de consejo para la planeación e instalación del Museo Nacional de Antropología* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1961), vol. 1, unpaginated.

55. See Box 7, Folder 423, Archivo Histórico Institucional, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia Mexico City (hereafter AHI-MNA). I would like to thank Sandra Rozental for providing access to this document.

56. Iker Larrauri, Miguel Celorio, and Mario Vázquez, "Programa de funcionamiento para la construcción del nuevo Museo Nacional de Antropología," January 9, 1960, typescript, 25. MNA Library files.

57. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Rafael Mijares, and Jorge Campuzano, "Memoria descriptiva del anteproyecto para la construcción del Museo Nal. de Antropología en el Bosque de Chapultepec," AHI-MNA, Box 7, Folder 428.

58. Luis Aveleyra de Anda, untitled document, 2–3, Folios 11–15, Archivo Histórico, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City (hereafter AH-MNA).

59. "Memorandum sobre intercambios entre el Museo Nacional de Antropología y diversos museos extranjeros," December 17, 1963, AHI-MNA, Box 9, Folder 455, Folio 1–2; "Museo del hombre y su cultura," September 7, 1962, AH-MNA, Folios 3–6.

60. Trained as an architect and archaeologist, Marquina had long been invested in the study of Mesoamerican architecture. In 1964, he published *Arquitectura prehispánica*, the most comprehensive compendium of Mesoamerican architecture ever assembled up to that point. Notable for its encyclopedic breadth, the book constructed a narrative of stylistic continuity across many centuries of pre-Hispanic building in Mexico that, it claims, culminated with the grandeur of Aztec architecture. This general narrative, and the inventive reconstruction diagrams and models included in the book, would inspire the MNA's models and tableaux, which provide an architectural counterpart to the book's narrative. See Ignacio Marquina, *Arquitectura prehispánica* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología, 1964).

61. Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, 4th ed., trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 125.

62. Letter, Ignacio Marquina to Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado, June 3, 1963; Letter, Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado to Ignacio Marquina, June 5, 1963, AHI-MNA, Box 8, Folder 447, Folios 22 and 24.

63. Ramírez Vázquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology*, 45.

64. George M. Foster, "The New National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City," *American Anthropologist* 67(3) (June 1965): 736.

65. Demetrio Sodi, "The Ethnology of Mexico," in Ramírez Vázquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology*, 177. Emphasis is mine.

66. Letter, Luis Aveleyra de Anda to Eugene Miller, February 15 1961, AH-MNA, vol. 185, Folio 80.

67. Alfonso Soto Soria, interview by author and Jennifer Josten, Texcoco, August 28, 2009.

68. Mary Coffey, *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture: Murals, Museums, and the Mexican State* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012), 134.

69. Iker Larrauri, "Notas sobre el trabajo del museólogo." March 7, 1961, AH-MNA, vol. 185, Folios 208–10.

70. Iker Larrauri, interview by author, Mexico City, August 23, 2009.

71. *Ibid.* For a project of such nationalist resonance, as a model, Pope's monument to early-twentieth-century U.S. continental hegemony was fittingly grand. See Christopher Thomas, *The Architecture of the West Building of the National Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1992), 26–27.

72. Ramírez Vázquez, Mijares, and Campuzano, "Memoria descriptiva del anteproyecto para la construcción del Museo Nal. de Antropología en el Bosque de Chapultepec," AHI-MNA, Box 7, Folder 428.

73. Ramírez Vázquez, "The Architecture of the Museum," in *The National Museum of Anthropology*, 20.

74. Ramírez Vázquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology*, 41.

75. *Ibid.*, 46.

76. Mary K. Coffey, "'I'm Not the Fourth Great One': Tamayo and Mexican Muralism," in Diana C. Dupont, ed., *Tamayo: A Modern Icon Reinterpreted* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2007), 260.

77. Ramírez Vázquez, "The Architecture of the Museum," 20.

78. Ramírez Vázquez, Mijares, and Campuzano, "Memoria descriptiva del anteproyecto para la construcción del Museo Nal. de Antropología en el Bosque de Chapultepec," AHI-MNA, Box 7, Folder 428, unnumbered.

79. Iker Larrauri, interview by author, Mexico City, August 23, 2009. This possibility seems to be confirmed by archival photographs that show a wooden dummy for the sculpture in this same location, although the same dummy was tried out in other locations as well. There is also evidence that the first monolith intended for the entrance to the museum was a large Maya stela that was stolen before it could be transported to the capital city, which motivated the museum's planners to install the Tlaloc there instead.

80. After experiencing this dramatic room, visitors to the MNA would conclude their visit in a room themed "The Synthesis of Mexico," which emphasized the enduring presence of Mexico's pre-Columbian and indigenous grandeur in the country's artistic and "folkloric" panorama as a result of the single-party state's public education initiatives. See Ana María Alonso, "Territorializing the Nation and 'Integrating the Indian': 'Mestizaje' in Mexican Official Discourses

and Public Culture,” in Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, eds., *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the Postcolonial World* (Princeton, N.J., and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 53.

81. Salvador Novo, “5 de septiembre,” in *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Adolfo López Mateos* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998), 494–96.

82. Ramírez Vázquez, “The Architecture of the Museum,” 20.

83. “¿Dónde te diviertes?” 49.

84. This specific attribution permeates much of Novo’s writing about the museum commission, especially the account of its inauguration. See Novo, “17 de octubre,” in *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Adolfo López Mateos*, 505–10. This is also the argument of the official publication by Alfredo Colín Varela, *Tláloc, López Mateos y la SRH: La nueva política hidráulica de México: Realizaciones de un régimen de gobierno* (Mexico City: Impresora de Industria y Comercio, 1964). I thank Sandra Rozental for directing me to this source. Of course, the management of water was also central to the construction of colonial Mexico City, although the MNA privileged the Aztec chapters of that longer history.

85. “Ten Buildings That Point to the Future,” *Fortune*, October 1964.

86. “What Makes ‘the Best Museum in the World?’” *Progressive Architecture* 48 (February 1967): 98–105.

87. Jonathan Norton Leonard, *Ancient America* (New York: Time Incorporated, 1967), 171.

88. Irene Nicholson, *The X in Mexico: Growth within Tradition* (London: Faber, 1965), 211.

89. Miguel Messmacher, “Dos opiniones sobre un museo,” *Calli* 15 (February 1965): 29.

90. See Octavio Paz, *The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid*, trans. Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove Press, 1972), 108–10.

91. Claudio Lomnitz, “Bordering on Anthropology: Dialectics of a National Tradition,” in Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 231.

92. Shelley Errington, “Progressivist Stories and the Pre-Columbian Past: Notes on Mexico and the United States,” in Elizabeth H. Boone, ed., *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 241.

93. Enrique Florescano, “The Creation of the Museo Nacional de Antropología of Mexico and Its Scientific, Educational, and Political Purposes,” in Boone, *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past*, 99–100. For a fuller examination of the relationship between Gamio and Boas, see Renato González Mello, “Manuel Gamio, Diego Rivera, and the Politics of Mexican Anthropology,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 45 (spring 2004): 161–85.

94. García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 130–31.

95. See Octavio Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad* (Mexico City: Cuadernos Americanos, 1950).

96. Robin Adèle Greeley, “Nietzsche contra Marx in Mexico: The Contemporáneos, Muralism, and Debates over ‘Revolutionary’ Art in 1930s Mexico,” in Alejandro Anreus et al., eds., *Mexican Muralism: A Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 165.

97. See Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, “On the Brown Atlantis and Mexican Intellectuals / De la Atlántida morena y los intelectuales mexicanos,” *Literal Magazine* 6 (2006): unnumbered.

98. Letter, Octavio Paz to Barney Rosset, January 9, 1961, Grove Press Archive, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

99. Jorge Carrión, “Retablo de la política ‘a la mexicana,’” in Fernando Carmona et al., *El milagro mexicano* (Mexico City: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1970), 172–73.

100. Guillermo Sheridan, "Aquí, allá, ¿dónde? Octavio Paz en el servicio diplomático," in Rosario Green, ed., *Escritores en la diplomacia mexicana* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2003 [1998]), 1:341–44.

101. Slavoj Žižek, "Cyberspace, or How to Traverse the Fantasy in the Age of Retreat of the Big Other," *Public Culture* 10(3) (1998): 483–513.

102. Lomnitz argues that the interpassive intellectual "somatizes" national sentiments, and develops "narratives about the progress of popular will that conform to the circumstances of social movements and state policies" (Claudio Lomnitz, "Interpreting the Sentiments of the Nation: Intellectuals and Governmentality in Mexico," in *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico*, 208).

103. The primary focus was the Tlatelolco massacre, about which Poniatowska also famously wrote. See Diana Sorensen, "Tlatelolco 1968: Paz and Poniatowska on Law and Violence," *Mexican Studies / Estudios Mexicanos* 18(2) (summer 2002): 297–321.

104. Francisco González Rul, *Tlatelolco, ciudad gemela de Tenochtitlán* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1993), 30.

105. Francisco González Rul, "Trabajos en Tlatelolco," *Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 5 (March 1964): 18.

106. Ricardo de Robina, "Plaza de las 3 Culturas," *Arquitectura México* 94–95 (June–September 1966): 213–19.

107. See Enrique de Anda, "The Preservation of Historic Architecture and the Beliefs of the Modern Movement in Mexico: 1914–1963," *Future Anterior* 6(2) (winter 2009): 66.

108. Elisa García Barragán, "Tlatelolco: Geometría y lanza de la historia," in Patricia Galeana de Valadés, ed., *Tlatelolco* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990), 80.

109. Paz, *The Other Mexico*, 106–7.

110. See, in particular, *Arquitectura/México* 94–95 (June–September 1966).

111. "Torre de 24 pisos para la proyección internacional de México," *Construcción Mexicana* 8(3) (March 1967): 11–13.

112. Memorandum, Ana Mérida to Lenin Molina, August 1, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 778, Folder 41–438.

113. Hans Beacham. *The Architecture of Mexico: Yesterday and Today* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1969), 50.

114. Eric Zolov, "Discovering a Land 'Mysterious and Obvious': The Renarrativizing of Postrevolutionary Mexico," in Joseph M. Gilbert et al., eds., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940* (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 249.

115. *Tlatelolco, crisis de la mexicanidad* (Mexico City: Banco Nacional Hipotecario y de Obras Públicas, 1965), unnumbered.

116. Peter Krieger, "Nonoalco–Tlatelolco: Renovación urbana y supermanzanas modernas en el debate internacional," in Louise Noelle, ed., *Mario Pani* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2008), 238.

117. This representation of urban poverty also defined such works as Oscar Lewis's influential and controversial 1961 work of urban ethnography, *The Children of Sánchez*, published in Spanish in 1964, and, as Claire Fox points out, was also central to the early visual vocabulary of artists like José Luis Cuevas (Claire Fox, *Making Art Panamerican: Cultural Policy and the Cold War* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013], 158).

118. Cristóbal Jácome Moreno, “Las construcciones de la imagen: La serie del conjunto urbano Nonoalco–Tlatelolco de Armando Salas Portugal,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 95 (2009): 90.

119. See Mario Pani, “Conjunto urbano Nonoalco–Tlatelolco: Regeneración urbanística de la ciudad de México,” *Arquitectura/México* 72 (1960): 183–217.

120. Krieger, “Nonoalco–Tlatelolco,” 242.

121. Jácome, “Las construcciones de la imagen,” 87n5. Jácome alludes to several sources that make this claim, among them Miquel Adrià, *Mario Pani: La construcción de la modernidad* (Mexico City: Gustavo Gili, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2005), 19; Enrique X. de Anda, *Historia de la arquitectura mexicana* (Mexico City: Gustavo Gili, 1995), 228; Ana Elena Mallet, “De la crisis perenne a la modernidad suspendida: El conjunto habitacional Nonoalco–Tlatelolco,” in Adriano Pedrosa and Julie Dunn, eds., *Farsites / Sitios distantes: Crisis urbanas y síntomas domésticos en el arte contemporáneo reciente* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art / Centro Cultural Tijuana / Fundación Televisa, 2005), 176–78.

122. Rubén Gallo, “The Mexican Pentagon: Adventures in Collectivism during the 1970s,” in Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette, eds., *Collectivism after Modernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 172–73.

123. Jean Franco, *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin America in the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 186.

124. Gallo, “The Mexican Pentagon,” 173. See Rubén Gallo, “Modernist Ruins: The Case of Tlatelolco,” in Michael Lazzara and Vicky Unruh, eds., *Telling Ruins in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 107–20. See also Rubén Gallo, “Tlatelolco: Mexico City’s Urban Dystopia,” in Gyan Prakash, ed., *Noir Urbanisms: Dystopic Images of the Modern City* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2010), 53–74.

125. Ana Elena Mallet, “Tlatelolco: Perpetual Past” (text prepared for the exhibition Museum as Hub: Tlatelolco and the Localized Negotiation of Future Imaginaries, New Museum, New York, February 2008), http://www.museumashub.org/sites/museumashub.org/files/AnaElenaMallet_Tlatelolco-PerpetualPast.pdf. Produced for the same event, Cuauhtémoc Medina’s essay is also illuminating: “Modernity as Resurrection” (text prepared for the exhibition Museum as Hub), http://www.museumashub.org/sites/museumashub.org/files/CuauhtemocMedina_ModernityasResurrection.pdf.

126. Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 185.

3. IMAGE MACHINES

1. Construction of the Palace is claimed to have officially started in October 1966, but Rodríguez Kuri points out that, as late as January 1968, its copper roof was not yet in place (Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “El otro ’68: Política y estilo en la organización de los juegos olímpicos de la ciudad de México,” *Relaciones* 19 [fall 1998]).

2. Enrique de Anda, *Félix Candela 1910–1997: The Mastering of Boundaries* (Cologne and New York: Taschen, 2008), 89.

3. For exhaustive analyses of the technical aspects of Candela’s work, see David Billington and Maria E. Moreyra, *Félix Candela: Engineer, Builder, Structural Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Juan Antonio Tonda, *Félix Candela* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2000).

4. Recent monographs have provided a more nuanced account of the mass-mediated aspect of Candela's practice. See Juan Ignacio del Cueto, ed., *Félix Candela 1920–2010* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2010), and Pepa Cassinello, ed., *Félix Candela: Centenario 2010: La conquista de la esbeltez* (Madrid: Fundación Jueanelo Torriano, 2010).

5. An insightful discussion of the relationship between monuments and their mechanically reproduced images is found in Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Hannah Arendt, ed., *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 220–21. Benjamin invokes the example of the cathedral, arguing that the photographic reproduction of monuments displaces and expands the physical presence of similar built works.

6. For two recent accounts, see Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, "Pride and Prejudice: Foreign Perceptions of Mexico as an Olympic Host," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 26(6) (May 2009): 764–89. See also Michael Barke, "Mexico City 1968," in John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, eds., *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning and the World's Games, 1896–2012* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 184–88; Rodríguez Kuri, "El otro '68," 114.

7. Eduardo Terrazas, interview by author, Mexico City, July 28, 2009.

8. For an analysis of the racial politics of Mexico '68, see Amy Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

9. Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, "Hacia México '68: Pedro Ramírez Vázquez y el proyecto olímpico," *Secuencia* 56 (May–August 2003): 41–42 and 59. See also Kevin B. Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World: Mexico and the 1968 Olympic Games* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 77–78.

10. "Mexico City's Olympic Feats," *Fortune*, March 1968, 149. Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster have pointed out how the city's existing sports infrastructure was repurposed for the Olympics in "Cleaning the Cage: Mexico City's Preparations for the Olympic Games," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 26(6) (May 2009): 791–92.

11. "México ante las olimpiadas: Entrevista de Raquel Tibol," *Calli* 30 (November–December 1967): 9. Emphasis is mine.

12. George F. Flaherty, "Responsive Eyes: 'Urban Logistics' and Kinetic Environments for the 1968 Mexico City Olympics," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 73 (3) (September 2014).

13. Rodríguez Kuri, "El otro '68," 124–25. See also Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle*, 111.

14. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, "Declaraciones del Sr. Arquitecto Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, presidente del comité organizador de los juegos de la XIX Olimpiada a la prensa nacional," November 3, 1966, *Noticiero Olímpico* 12, 112–24, AGN-FCO.

15. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, "Declaraciones del Sr. Arquitecto Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, presidente del comité organizador de los juegos de la XIX Olimpiada a la prensa nacional," January 4, 1967, *Boletín del Departamento de Prensa de la Dirección de Relaciones Públicas del C.O.O.* 3, AGN-FCO. Emphasis is mine. While Ramírez Vázquez was discussing television's Olympic impact in Mexico, the medium was having far broader impact over Olympic organization internationally. See Stephen R. Wenn, "Growing Pains: The Olympic Movement and Television, 1966–1972," *Olympika* 4 (1995): 1–22.

16. Ramírez Vázquez claimed in a March 1967 interview that "the constant presentation of film footage and videotapes that show relevant aspects of the fraternity and concord among the young participants will be promoted." This, he claimed, would make "the Olympic ideals present

not only during the sixteen days which the sports events will last, but let their living, constant presence be felt during the [next] four years” (Luis Suárez, “Ramírez Vázquez señala sus metas y propósitos: Gracias a la Olimpiada se dará a conocer al mundo, con la magia de la comunicación moderna, una imagen distinta del México manoseado por lo folklórico y pintoresco,” *Siempre!*, March 15, 1967, 24–25).

17. Eugenio Mendoza Navarro, “The Olympic Scenarios,” *Artes de México*, 1968, 27–29.

18. Box 427, Folder 33–20, Ferias y Exposiciones at the AGN-FCO contains documents expressing the interest on the part of provincial authorities and business groups to use the Olympics to aid their own interests. An interesting dialogue emerges from these documents as they reveal how the MOC’s own agenda intersected with those of other power groups in Mexico.

19. Contract number 67165, Box 203, Archivo del Departamento del Distrito Federal, Mexico City.

20. “Las instalaciones para los XIX Juegos Olímpicos,” *Construcción Mexicana* 13(1) (August 1968): 16.

21. In October 1967, Martínez sent the plans and construction deadline details to Guillermo Lerdo de Tejada, chief DDF officer. Letter, Luis Martínez del Campo to Guillermo Lerdo de Tejada, October 4, 1967, AGN-FCO, Box 354, Folder 28–373.

22. Letter, Luis Martínez del Campo to Roberto Medellín, April 5, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 354, Folder 28–373.

23. See Memoranda, Mathias Goeritz to Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, May 7, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 25, 1968. For Martínez’s retort, see Memorandum, Luis Martínez del Campo to Enrique Langenscheidt, June 28, 1968. All the documents are contained in AGN-FCO, Box 777, Folder 41–419.

24. Memorandum, Luis Martínez del Campo to Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, January 3, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 354, Folder 28–367.

25. Letter, Luis Martínez del Campo to Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, March 15, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 354, File 28–373, Departamento del Distrito Federal.

26. “Las Olímpicas: Obras de utilidad pública permanente,” *Obras Públicas* 2(23) (February 1968): 26.

27. Lamberto Álvarez Gayou, “Las construcciones olímpicas,” *Impacto* 951 (1968): 26.

28. Lamberto Álvarez Gayou, “La ciudad de México, sede de la XIX Olimpiada,” *El Día*, October 19, 1963. Álvarez made a number of suggestions for the planning of infrastructure that were only taken up officially much later. He suggested at least two measures that the MOC adopted in 1966: the UNAM Stadium should undergo relatively limited improvements to be able to hold a hundred thousand spectators, including the increase in its seating areas and lighting that the MOC’s design team would eventually undertake; and the construction of an Olympic Village should take place in the vicinity of the University City, where it was eventually built.

29. Álvarez Gayou, “Las construcciones olímpicas,” 26.

30. *Ibid.*

31. See Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology: Art, Architecture, Archaeology, Ethnography* (New York: Abrams, 1968), 151.

32. Elena Poniatowska, interview with Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, *Novedades*, March 29, 1967, Box 705- exp. 39–200, typescript, 222. Emphasis is mine.

33. Rodríguez Kuri, “El otro ’68,” 112–13.

34. Omar Hernández and Emile McAnany, “Cultural Industries in the Free Trade Age: A Look at Mexican Television,” in Joseph M. Gilbert et al., eds., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The*

Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940 (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 389–414.

35. Celeste González de Bustamante, “1968 Olympic Dreams and Tlatelolco Nightmares: Imagining and Imaging Modernity on Television,” *Mexican Studies / Estudios Mexicanos* 26(1) (winter 2010): 1–30.

36. Claudia Fernández and Andrew Paxman, *El tigre: Emilio Azcárraga y su imperio Televisa* (Mexico City: Editorial Grijalbo, Hoja Casa Editorial, 2000), 102–7.

37. Joseph Arbena, “Sport, Development and Mexican Nationalism, 1920–1970,” *Journal of Sport History* 18(3) (winter 1991): 359.

38. The official *Memoria* for the stadium does not even mention the competition, claiming that the project was assigned “from the beginning” to Ramírez Vázquez: “La Sociedad del Fútbol del D.F.,” in *Memoria Estadio Azteca 1966* (Mexico City, 1966), 29, ARV, Folder 12.

39. Félix Candela, “Football Stadium for 110,000,” *Progressive Architecture*, July 1962, 148.

40. Rafael Mijares, interview by author, Puerto Vallarta, August 16, 2009.

41. “La Sociedad del Fútbol del D.F.,” 28.

42. “¡El Azteca listo en 63! México tendrá el mejor estadio de fútbol del mundo,” *Siempre!*, November 2, 1962, 57.

43. “Cómo será el techo,” *Memoria Estadio Azteca 1966*, 98.

44. This association is most evident in the work of renowned painter José María Velasco (1840–1912). See Dawn Ades, *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820–1980* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 101–9.

45. Letter, Rodolfo Godínez Hernández to Adolfo López Mateos, August 11, 1961, AGN-ALM, Box 0585, Folder 521.8/675.

46. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, “La gente, el fútbol y los estadios,” *Calli* 13 (May–June 1964): 40.

47. “Estadio Azteca,” undated document, typescript, ARV.

48. “Se escogió el proyecto de Ramírez Vázquez,” *Últimas Noticias*, July 13, 1961.

49. Carlos Calderón Cardoso, *El Estadio Azteca: Historia del Coloso de Santa Ursula* (Mexico City: Editorial Clío, 2001), 28–29. Emphasis is mine.

50. Fernández and Paxman, *El tigre*, 106–7.

51. Rafael Mijares, interview by author, Puerto Vallarta, August 16, 2009.

52. Fernández and Paxman, *El tigre*, 103–4.

53. See “Syncom III Satellite Brings Olympic Pics,” *Science News-Letter* 86(16) (October 17, 1964): 254.

54. Fernández and Paxman, *El tigre*, 107. For a discussion of Azcárraga in relation to the broader context of transformations in Mexican television at midcentury, see Hernández and McAnany, “Cultural Industries in the Free Trade Age,” 389–414.

55. “Innovadores características en la máxima estructura deportiva del país.” *Construcción Mexicana*, January 1967, 22.

56. Fernández and Paxman, *El tigre*, 103.

57. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, “IV-2 Declaraciones del Sr. Arquitecto Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, presidente del comité organizador de los juegos de la XIX Olimpiada, a la prensa nacional,” January 4, 1967, *Boletín del Departamento de Prensa de la Dirección de Relaciones Públicas del C.O.O.* 3, AGN-FCO. Working documents from the commission reveal the extent of these changes. An October 1967 diagram charting the process of the works shows the significant addition of asphalt

and tartan to the spaces intended to host track and field events at the stadium, as well as the addition of benches for spectators. A January 1968 diagram shows a set of other changes in effect at the stadium, including the expansion of its entire western grandstands and of the palomar, its cantilevered media booth, as well as the addition of lighting posts to provide adequate lighting for color TV broadcasting of sports events. Diagrams at ARV, Mexico City. A project to expand the stadium's capacity to over one hundred thousand spectators for the Olympics was introduced in 1966 but it was ultimately unrealized. See Lourdes Cruz González Franco, "El Estadio Olímpico Universitario del Pedregal: Permanencia y Vigencia," *Bitácora Arquitectura* 21 (2010): 39-41.

58. Cristóbal Andrés Jácome Romero, "Fábrica de imágenes arquitectónicas: El caso de México en 1968," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*, no. 96 (2010): 88-91.

59. Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle*, 118.

60. Letter, Gastón García Cantú, to Óscar Urrutia, undated, but received September 20, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 753, File 41-5. Emphasis is mine.

61. One report claimed that Cuban guerrilla fighters attempted to thwart the event in Veracruz: "Detienen telegrafista del 'Che' en complot para hacer fracasar las Olimpiadas en México," *El Tiempo*, October 16, 1968.

62. I thank Alexander Nagel for his close reading of this document.

63. Alberto Kalach, "Architecture and Place: The Stadium of University City," in Edward R. Burian, ed., *Modernity and the Architecture of Mexico*, trans. José Carlos Fernández and Edward R. Burian (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 110.

64. Carlos Lazo, "Plática sostenida en la Escuela de Minería," in *Pensamiento y destino de la Ciudad Universitaria de México* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1952), 220. These kinds of views about the stadium were hardly exclusive to Mexican architects. See Esther McCoy, "Ciudad Universitaria de Mexico," *Arts and Architecture* 69(8) (August 1952): 35-37.

65. Cecilia Gutiérrez, "La universidad, la familia y el deporte en México," in *Guía de murales de la Ciudad Universitaria* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2004), 40-41.

66. Rubén Gallo, *Mexican Modernity: The Avant-Garde and the Technological Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 204-5.

67. José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana: Notas de viajes a la América del Sud* (Paris, 1925).

68. Jorge Bravo, "Estadio olímpico de la C.U.," *Calli* 13 (May-June 1964): 39. Emphasis is mine.

69. Gallo, *Mexican Modernity*, 202-3.

70. Eric Zolov, "Showcasing the 'Land of Tomorrow': Mexico and the 1968 Olympics," *The Americas* 61(2) (2004): 179.

71. This date also commemorates the coronation of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's patron saint, in 1895.

72. Letter, Ernesto Aguirre to José Morales Córdova, January 9, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 397, File 31-81.

73. This was not the first monument to Columbus erected officially in Mexico; a neoclassical monument to the discoverer was built in Mexico City in 1877. See Shelley E. Garrigan, *Collecting Mexico: Museums, Monuments, and the Creation of National Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 116-18.

74. Memorandum, Federico Américo to Juan Manuel Gallástegui, August 16, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 1063, Folder 151.
75. Alberto Isaac, "Idea sobre la película de la 'Antorcha Olímpica,'" AGN-FCO, Box 1063, Folder 151-A. Emphasis is mine.
76. See Don Fredericksen, "Modes of Reflexive Film," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 4(3) (summer 1979): 299–320; Michael Mackenzie, "From Athens to Berlin: The 1936 Olympics and Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia*," *Critical Inquiry* 29(2) (winter 2003): 302–36.
77. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, interview with *El Mundo Deportivo*, March 12, 1967, AGN-FCO, Box 705, Folder 39–200.
78. See Christina Bueno, "Teotihuacán: Showcase for the Centennial," in Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, eds., *Holiday in Mexico: Critical Reflections on Tourism and Tourist Encounters* (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 54–76.
79. Sydney Hutchinson, "The Ballet Folklórico de México and the Construction of the Mexican Nation through Dance," in Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Norma E. Cantú, and Brenda M. Romero, eds., *Dancing across Borders: Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 215.
80. *Ballet Folklórico de México* (Mexico City: INBA, 1967), unnumbered.
81. The Mexican ambassador in Guatemala City forwarded this article to Antonio Carrillo Flores, then secretary of foreign affairs in Mexico City ("El Ballet Folklórico de México," *Impacto*, January 28, 1968, ASRE, Folder 40–1 1971, 73). The archival record, especially the correspondence between Mexican diplomats in the late 1960s, provides abundant indication of the Ballet's status as a major participant in cultural and diplomatic negotiations. Writing to the secretary of foreign affairs in May 1967, Mexican ambassador to Uruguay Alfonso Cortina claimed that the Ballet had been "sent to Montevideo on account of special instructions of [Díaz Ordaz] in order to [repay the Uruguayan president] for his attention during the meeting of presidents at Punta del Este" (Letter, Alfonso Cortina Gutiérrez, Ambassador, Uruguay, to Antonio Carrillo Flores, May 9, 1967, ASRE, Folder DAC 40–1 1971, 73).
82. Salvador Novo, "9 de octubre," in *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998), 2:413.
83. Alberto González Pozo, "Los edificios olímpicos: Un corte a la arquitectura mexicana de los sesentas," *Artes de México*, Número Extraordinario (1968): 11–13. An English translation for the text is found in the original.
84. See Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991).
85. González Pozo, "Los edificios olímpicos," 14–15.
86. "Big Tops by Tange at Tokyo Olympics," *Progressive Architecture*, December 1964, 176–81.
87. Fernanda Canales, "El espacio autoritario," *Arquine* 46 (winter 2008): 97.
88. Nervi's Palaces for the 1960 Olympics had two direct precedents of ribbed domes made out of prefabricated concrete panels, a 1956 project for an exhibition center in Caracas and a competition design for a Sports Center in Vienna from 1953. See Pier Luigi, *Nervi: The Works of Pier Luigi Nervi* (New York: Praeger, 1957), 98–109, 140–41.
89. This was not entirely true, because Candela's work included an auditorium for a civic center he had completed for Ciudad Sahagún, in Hidalgo, in 1959, a flattened dome of smaller dimensions than the Sports Palace built of reinforced concrete.

90. González Pozo, “Los edificios olímpicos,” 15. Emphasis is mine. The cost of manual labor increased when Díaz Ordaz decreed a minimum wage in 1964, a measure that had a significant effect on the profitability of Candela’s building practice.

91. “Primer domo geodésico construido en México,” *Construcción Mexicana* 6(1) (January 1965): 20–21.

92. Joachim Krausse and Claude Lichtensetin, eds., *Your Private Sky: R. Buckminster Fuller*, trans. Steven Lindberg and Julia Thorson (Baden: L. Müller, 1999), 35.

93. Candela’s unorthodox methods of calculation and building first garnered him accolades during his attendance at a conference on concrete-shell building at MIT in 1954.

94. “Mercado popular en Coyoacán, D.F.,” *Arquitectura/México* 12 (December 1956): 237–39.

95. Letter, Félix Candela to Arthur Rosenblatt, undated (early October 1968), Félix Candela Architectural Records and Papers, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York (hereafter FCARP), Box 52-a.

96. “Avance de obras: El Palacio de los Deportes,” *Carta Olímpica* 19, unnumbered.

97. “The Sports Palace,” *Artes de México*, 1968, 61. Emphasis is mine.

98. De Anda, *Félix Candela 1910–1997*, 83.

99. See the correspondence found at Box 52-a, FCARP.

100. “Estará listo el maravilloso Palacio Mexicano del Deporte,” *Ovaciones*, August 17, 1966.

101. Óscar Urrutia, “Una aportación definitiva a la técnica del Concreto: Calli entrevista a Candela,” *Calli* 5 (October–November 1960): 2. See also Colin Faber, *Candela: The Shell Builder* (New York: Reinhold Publication Corporation, 1963), 128.

102. “Felix Candela, o la funcionabilidad arquitectónica,” interview by Miguel Donoso Pareja, *El Gallo Ilustrado: Suplemento dominical de El Dia*, no. 312, June 16, 1968, FCARP, Box 48, File 16, subfile #2. Emphasis is mine.

103. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez interviewed by Tania Ragasol, “Lo que podemos hacer,” in *Diseñando México 68: Una identidad olímpica* (Mexico City: Museo de Arte Moderno and Landucci, 2008), 28–29.

104. María González Pendás, “Technics and Civilization: Félix Candela’s Geopolitical Imaginary,” in Helen Gyger and Patricio del Real, eds., *Latin American Modern Architectures: Ambiguous Territories* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 281.

105. Irene Nicholson, *The X in Mexico: Growth within Tradition* (London: Faber, 1965), 209. Emphasis is mine.

106. Vicente Quirarte argues that this ambiguous relationship to laborers is present in a variety of films, works of literature, and artworks like Juan O’Gorman’s *Mexico City Seen from the Monument to the Revolution* (1949), which explores the construction laborer’s alienation (Vicente Quirarte, *Elogio de la calle: Biografía literaria de ciudad de México, 1850–1992* [Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 2001], 525–35).

107. Félix Candela, “A propósito de los 70 años de Ove Arup,” *Calli* 33 (May–June 1968): 46.

108. Félix Buschiazzo, *Félix Candela* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas, 1961), 14–15. Emphasis is mine.

109. Henry E. Voegeli, “Gem of the Mexican Olympics,” unpublished manuscript, typescript, FCARP, Box 52-a. These were not the only materials that the Palace used. As noted in an August 1967 SOP bulletin, other materials such as the basaltic rock used for the base of the structure, of deep red and black color, were also crucial to its iconography. See “Palacio de los Deportes,” *Obras Públicas* 2(17) (August 1967): 1.

110. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, “Declaraciones del Sr. Arquitecto,” 4, AGN-FCO.

111. “Magazine dominical—Mil novecientos sesenta y ocho: Un año de realizaciones,” *Excelsior*, December 31, 1968.

112. Candela, “A propósito de los 70 años de Ove Arup,” 46.

113. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares, “Estadio Azteca,” Folder 0032, ARV. For a reading of concrete’s broader resonance in architectural culture of this period, see Jean-Louis Cohen, “Modern Architecture and the Saga of Concrete,” in Jean-Louis Cohen and Martin Moeller Jr., eds., *Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 20–33.

4. TOTAL DESIGN OF AN OLYMPIC METROPOLIS

1. Anty Pansera, Anna Venturelli, and Antonio C. Mastrobuono, “The Triennale of Milan: Past, Present, and Future,” *Design Issues* 2(1) (spring 1985): 28–29.

2. Michael Gross, “Michael Gross. 1968 Mexico City Cultural Programs,” interview by Milton Curry, *Critical Productive* 1 (autumn 2011): 97.

3. Eduardo Terrazas, interview by author, Mexico City, July 28, 2009.

4. See Eduardo Terrazas and Beatrice Trueblood, “Letters Eye 59: This Is not Mexico,” *Eye* 59(1) (2006).

5. Lance Wyman, in “Branding a Cityscape: Mexico City Olympics 1968: Lance Wyman in Conversation with Milton Curry on Aesthetics and Politics,” *Critical Productive* 1(1) (autumn 2011): 91.

6. See Carolina Rivas and Daoud Sarhandi, “This Is 1968 . . . This Is Mexico,” *Eye* 56(14) (2005).

7. Terrazas and Trueblood, “Letters Eye 59,” unnumbered. See also “Lo que podemos hacer,” Pedro Ramírez Vázquez interviewed by Tania Ragasol, in *Diseñando México 68: Una identidad olímpica* (Mexico City: Museo de Arte Moderno and Landucci, 2008), 26.

8. Terrazas and Trueblood, “Letters Eye 59,” unnumbered.

9. Eduardo Terrazas, “Creation of Environment: Mexico 68,” in Gyorgy Kepes, ed., *Arts of the Environment* (New York: George Braziller, 1972), 198–207.

10. Eduardo Terrazas, telephone interview by author, Syracuse, New York, July 6, 2012. Mexican designer Ramón Valdósera (b. 1918) is generally considered the inventor of the term “Mexican pink.”

11. See Anita Berrizbeitia, *Roberto Burle Marx in Caracas: Parque del Este, 1956–1961* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

12. Precedents for Burle Marx’s work in Brazil do exist, however, among them the use of “Portuguese Mosaic” in promenades in several Brazilian cities. One example of this was included in an issue of *Arquitectura/México* devoted to Brazil. See Lindolfo L. Collor, “Introducción al Brasil,” *Arquitectura/México* 64 (December 1958): 211.

13. Mildred Constantine and Egbert Jacobson, *Sign Language for Buildings and Landscape* (New York: Reinhold, 1961), 150.

14. Eduardo Terrazas, telephone interview by author, Syracuse, New York, July 6, 2012.

15. “Wolf von Eckardt, “Mexico 68: Arranging Artful Olympics,” *Washington Post*, April 21, 1968.

16. Ramírez Vázquez, “Lo que podemos hacer,” 44.

17. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, "1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28(1) (February 1996): 85–86.
18. Sandra Kuntz Ficker and Elisa Speckman Guerra, "El Porfiriato," in Erik Velásquez García, ed., *Nueva historia general de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010), 500–502.
19. Ramírez Vázquez, "Lo que podemos hacer," 42–43.
20. See Grupo Mira, *La gráfica del 68: Homenaje al movimiento estudiantil* (Mexico City: Grupo Mira, 1981).
21. Eric Zolov, "Showcasing the 'Land of Tomorrow': Mexico and the 1968 Olympics," *The Americas* 61(2) (2004): 180.
22. Memorandum, Héctor Serdán to Coordinadores, DDF, February 2, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 354, File 28–373.
23. Zolov, "Showcasing the 'Land of Tomorrow,'" 181.
24. Cristóbal Andrés Jácome Romero, "Fábrica de imágenes arquitectónicas: El caso de México en 1968," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*, no. 96 (2010): 91.
25. The comparatively cheap solutions implemented in lieu of the creation of a permanent network of transportation between venues were responses, as Terrazas recalls, to the limited funds that were available for his interventions (Eduardo Terrazas, telephone interview by author, Syracuse, New York, July 12, 2012).
26. See Eduardo Terrazas, "The Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King for Liverpool, England" (master's thesis, Cornell University, 1960).
27. Lance Wyman, interview by author, New York, November 12, 2010.
28. For an analysis of this shift, see Eric Mumford, *Defining Urban Design: CIAM Architects and the Formation of a Discipline, 1937–69* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 64–98, 104–5.
29. Mark Wigley, "Network Fever," *Grey Room*, no. 4 (summer 2001): 82–122.
30. Tom Avermaete, "Caen Hérouville, Bilbao Val d'Asua, Toulouse-Le Mirail Urban Studies 1961–62," in Max Risselada and Dirk van den Heuvel, eds., *Team 10, 1953–81: In Search of a Utopia of the Present* (Rotterdam: NAI, 2005), 96; Eduardo Terrazas, interview by author, Mexico City, July 28, 2009.
31. George Nelson, "Stylistic Trends in Contemporary Architecture," in Paul Zucker, ed., *New Architecture and City Planning* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), 571.
32. Stanley Abercrombie, *George Nelson: The Design of Modern Design* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 188. See also John Harwood, "The Wound Man: George Nelson and the 'End of Architecture,'" *Grey Room*, no. 31 (spring 2008): 90–115.
33. Lance Wyman, interview by the author, New York, November 12, 2010.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Sigfried Giedion, "The Need for a New Monumentality," in Zucker, *New Architecture and City Planning*, 568. In 1943, Giedion had authored another text on monumentality alongside Fernand Léger and José Luis Sert titled "Nine Points on Monumentality" and reprinted in Sigfried Giedion, *Architecture, You and Me: The Diary of a Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 48–52.
36. The manifesto appeared in print as Mathias Goeritz, "Arquitectura Emocional: El Eco," *Cuadernos de Arquitectura* 1 (March 1954): unnumbered.
37. Mathias Goeritz, "The Route of Friendship: Sculpture," *Leonardo* 3(4) (October 1970): 397. In 1964 Goeritz created emblematic sculptures for the Chrysler-Automex and

Wyllis-Rambler factories along the highway that leads from Mexico City to the city of Toluca, to the west.

38. Max Cetto, "Simposio de escultura, segunda sesión, 20 de junio 68," 2, typescript, Max Cetto Archive, UAM–Xochimilco. I thank Juan Heredia for access to this document.

39. *Ibid.*, 4–5.

40. Daniel Garza Usubiaga, "Las Torres de Satélite: Ruina de un proyecto que nunca se concluyó," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 94 (2009): 129–30. For Pani's insightful account of the project, see Mario Pani, "México: Problema y solución," *Arquitectura/México* 60 (December 1957): 198–226.

41. Dina Berger, *Development of Mexico's Tourist Industry: Pyramids by Day, Martinis by Night* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 45–46.

42. Goeritz, "The Route of Friendship," 407.

43. Federico Morais, *Mathias Goeritz* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982), 71.

44. Peter Krieger, "Megalópolis México: Perspectivas críticas," in Peter Krieger, *Megalópolis: La modernización de la ciudad de México en el siglo XX* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto Goethe-Inter Naciones, 2006), 34–41. For an official survey of the Uruchurtu-era public works, see México D.F. Departamento del Distrito Federal, *La Ciudad de México: Departamento del Distrito Federal, 1952–1964* (Mexico City: Imprenta Nuevo Mundo, 1964).

45. Planner Carlos Contreras Elizondo had argued that a beltway of precisely these conditions was needed as early as 1927. See his "Proyecto de un boulevard de circunvalación interior para la ciudad de México," *Revista Planificación* 4 (December 1927), reprinted in Gerardo G. Sánchez Ruiz et al., eds., *Planificación y urbanismo visionarios de Carlos Contreras: Escritos de 1925 a 1938* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UAM–Azcapotcalco, Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, 2003), 71–73. Contreras included a similar project in his 1933 Mexico City plan. See *El plano regulador del Distrito Federal—1933* (Mexico City, 1933). For an analysis of Contreras's work, see Rafael López Rangel, "Carlos Contreras en la historia de la planificación urbana," in Sánchez Ruiz et al., *Planificación y urbanismo*, 25–34.

46. Graciela Schmilchuk, "Ritmos espaciales: Escultura urbana," in Krieger, *Megalópolis*, 159–60.

47. Ramírez Vázquez, "Lo que podemos hacer," 39–41.

48. Letter, Mathias Goeritz to Alexander Calder, April 26, 1967, AGN-FCO, Box 760, Folder 41–71.

49. This selection was controversial from the start. See Roberto Rodríguez Baños, "Dice el escultor Castellanos: Quieren una olimpiada cultural . . . pero sin cultura de México," *El Día*, April 2, 1968. See also Eduardo Deschamps, "México en el Simposio de Escultura: Lo representarán Ángela Gurría, Jorge Dubón y Helen Escobedo," *Excelsior*, January 13, 1968.

50. Letter, Karel Wendl to Alexander Calder, September 13, 1967, AGN-FCO, Box 760, Folder 41–71.

51. Calder and Goeritz had been acquainted since Calder's contribution of a sculpture to Goeritz's El Eco, an experimental performance space that opened in 1953 in Mexico City.

52. Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004 [2002]), 60.

53. See Robert Osborn, "Calder's International Monuments," *Art in America* 57(2) (March 1969): 32–49.

54. Goeritz, "The Route of Friendship," 404.
55. Letter, Mathias Goeritz to Jim Budd, September 4, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 777.
56. Memorandum, Mathias Goeritz to Óscar Urrutia, April 16, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 777, Folder 41–421.
57. Harold C. Schonberg. "Sculpture on Road in Mexico Fuels Debate," *New York Times*, November 14, 1968; Fondo Mathias Goeritz, CENIDIAP, Mexico City, Volume IV, Folder 5.12. Emphasis is mine.
58. Letter, Dorothy C. Miller to Mathias Goeritz, January 5, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 777, Folder 41–429.
59. Letter, Mathias Goeritz to Dorothy C. Miller, January 17, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 777, Folder 41–429.
60. Letter, Julian Beinart to Mathias Goeritz, June 8, 1967, AGN-FCO, Box 777, Folder 41–429.
61. Letter, Jean-François Zevaco to Karel Wendl, June 7, 1967, AGN-FCO, Box 777, Folder 41–429.
62. Letter, James Rossant to Mathias Goeritz, December 15, 1966, AGN-FCO, Box 777, Folder 41–429.
63. For an enthusiastic review of the plan, see Wallace Berger, "Plan Review: The Lower Manhattan Plan," *American Institute of Planners Journal* 33(4) (July 1967): 284–86.
64. Letter, Marian Ritz to Marquis—Who's Who, April 13, 1965, Robert Moses Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations (hereafter RMP-NYPL), New York, Box 52.
65. Memorandum, Robert Moses to William S. Chapin, November 30, 1965, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.
66. Memorandum, William S. Chapin to Robert Moses, December 7, 1965, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965. With his reply, Chapin sent Moses a document describing the state of the entire Pan-American Highway system then in the works, highlighting the roads between New York and Mexico City. Memorandum, Franklin J. de Carolis to William S. Chapin, December 6, 1965, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.
67. Memorandum, Robert Moses to Charles Poletti, November 27, 1965, NYPL1964-NYWF, Box 279, File Po.3 Mexico Foreign Participation, 1965.
68. Letter, Robert Moses to Gregory Dawson, February 25, 1966, RMP-NYPL, Box 52.
69. Ramírez Vázquez, "Informe del Sr. arquitecto Pedro Ramírez Vázquez," 93–94, AGN-FCO, Box 705, folder 39–200.
70. Mexican Olympic Committee, "Report on Mexico's Olympics," 26, typescript, AGN-FCO, Box 394, Folder 31–45. Emphasis is mine.
71. One of the most nuanced analyses of this transition can be found in David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: A Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (London: Verso, 2006).
72. Mary K. Coffey, "'I'm not the Fourth Great One': Tamayo and Mexican Muralism," in Diana C. Dupont, ed., *Tamayo: A Modern Icon Reinterpreted* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2007), 260; Alejandro Anreus et al., "Chronology," in Alejandro Anreus et al., eds., *Mexican Muralism: A Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 308.
73. "Camino Real," *Architectural Forum*, November 1968, 87. Other artworks included those by Pedro Coronel, Carlos Mérida, and Pedro Friedeberg.

74. For an in-depth analysis, see Mara Partida, "Hotel Camino Real: Cruce de artistas y arquitectos en la ciudad de México, 1968" (PhD diss., Universidad Politècnica de Catalunya, 2004).

75. See Dean Maccannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

76. Mexico City has also profited historically from its ability to offer urban glamour as well as access to archaeological sites and "folkloric" displays of culture to its visitors, a quality that few other Mexican tourist centers share. See Berger, *Development of Mexico's Tourist Industry*, 55–56, 91.

77. Carlos Obregón Santacilia originally designed this project, but Alberto Pani dismissed him after construction had already begun, giving Mario Pani full authorship of the commission. See Patrice Elizabeth Olsen, *Artifacts of Revolution: Architecture, Society and Politics in Mexico City, 1920–1940* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 167.

78. Héctor Manuel Romero. *Alberto J. Pani, los fabulosos 20's y el turismo en la ciudad de México* (Aguascalientes, 1979). For some of Pani's political writings, see his *En camino hacia la democracia*, (Mexico City: Dirección de Talleres Gráficos del Depto. de Aprovisionamientos Generales, 1918), and *Hygiene in Mexico: A Study of Sanitary and Educational Problems* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917).

79. See Alberto J. Pani, *El Hotel Reforma: Caso típico ilustrativo de la función revolucionaria del capital y del esfuerzo que requiere, en el campo de la iniciativa privada mexicana, la realización de una empresa de interés social* (Mexico City, 1937).

80. Lourdes Cruz González Franco, "Los hoteles para un México moderno," in Louise Noelle, ed., *Mario Pani* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México—Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2008), 56.

81. George F. Flaherty, "Mario Pani's Hospitality: Latin America through *Arquitectura México*," in Helen Gyger and Patricio del Real, eds., *Latin American Modern Architectures: Ambiguous Territories* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 251–58.

82. See *Primitives and Old Masters: The Collection of Alberto J. Pani* (New York: Kende Galleries, 1942).

83. This episode closely paralleled Rivera's infamous 1933 Rockefeller Center murals controversy. See Robert Linsley, "Utopia Will Not Be Televised: Rivera at Rockefeller Center," *Oxford Art Journal* 17(2) (1994): 48–62.

84. For an analysis of Siqueiros's project, see Leonard Folgarait, *So Far from Heaven: David Alfaro Siqueiros' The March of Humanity and Mexican Revolutionary Politics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

85. "Hotel de México," *Construcción Mexicana* 8(10) (October 1967): 12–13.

86. C. Ray Smith, "Everyman's Mexican Home," *Progressive Architecture* (June 1969): 83.

87. See Wayne Attoe et al., *The Architecture of Ricardo Legorreta* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 31.

88. Salvador Novo, "2 de octubre," in *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998), 2:411.

89. George Nelson, "The Passionate Arts," *Holiday*, October 1962, 84.

90. Zolov, "Showcasing the 'Land of Tomorrow,'" 181.

91. Coffey, "'I'm Not the Fourth Great One,'" 266.

92. Smith, "Everyman's Mexican Home," 87. See also John Mutlow, "The Poetic Architecture of Ricardo Legorreta," in John Mutlow, *Legorreta Arquitectos* (Naucalpan: Gustavo Gili, 1997), 10–18; "Interview with Ricardo Legorreta," in Mutlow, *Legorreta Arquitectos*, 22.

93. Keith Eggener, "Barragán's 'Photographic Architecture': Image, Advertising and Memory," in Federica Zanco, ed., *Luis Barragán: The Quiet Revolution* (Milan: Skira, 2000), 178–95.

94. Photographs of the subdivision produced by Armando Salas Portugal are in part to be credited for the emotional effects of the project's spaces (*ibid.*, 180).

95. See Keith Eggener, "Postwar Modernism in Mexico: Luis Barragán's Jardines del Pedregal and the International Discourse on Architecture and Place," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58(2) (June 1999): 122–45.

96. Among these, the SF (1963) and ASEA factories (1963) in the industrial area of Toluca stand out.

97. "Interview with Ricardo Legorreta," in Mutlow, *Legorreta Arquitectos*, 23.

98. See Ricardo Legorreta, "Entrevista," *Arquitectos de México* 28 (August 1967): 16.

99. Both of these cones housed water tanks, while the larger of the two also housed an auditorium. Interestingly, the offices of Automex in Mexico City, designed by Guillermo Rossell and Lorenzo Carrasco and inaugurated in 1953, had included a prominent artwork at their entrance, Siqueiros's mural-sized sculpture-painting *Velocidad* (1952).

100. Legorreta, "Entrevista," 19.

101. "La Plaza de los Conos," *Progressive Architecture* 47 (June 1966): 203–4. Emphasis is mine.

102. "¿Dónde trabajas? Fábrica Auto-Mex en Toluca, Edo. de México," *Calli* 15 (February 1964): 20.

103. See Soledad Loaeza, "Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la superpotencia, 1944–1968," in Erik Velásquez García, ed., *Nueva historia general de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010), 682–83. For a critique of these policies, see Clark W. Reynolds, "Why Mexico's 'Stabilizing Development' Was Actually Destabilizing (with Some Implications for the Future)," *World Development* 6 (1978): 1005–18.

104. See Steven J. Bachelor, "Toiling for the 'New Invaders': Autoworkers, Transnational Corporations, and Working-Class Culture in Mexico City, 1955–1968," in Joseph M. Gilbert et al., eds., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940* (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 273–326.

105. "México visto por ojos extraños: Los organizadores de eventos y de volúmenes arquitectónicos," *Novedades*, July 7, 1968.

106. "Planificación industrial de Tlalnepantla Edo de México," *Calli* 5 (1960): 14–15.

107. "México visto por ojos extraños." Emphasis is mine.

108. Hans Beacham, *The Architecture of Mexico: Yesterday and Today* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1969), 142.

109. "¿Dónde vives? San Juan de Aragón," "¿Dónde te cultivas? Museo Nacional de Antropología, Museo de Arte Moderno, Museo de Historia Natural," and "¿Dónde te diviertes? Nuevo Bosque de Chapultepec," *Calli* 15 (1964).

110. Mathias Goeritz, "Introduction," in Beacham, *The Architecture of Mexico*, 8–9. The idea of Mexico as a resolution of opposites closely mirrors a Surrealist understanding of the country's culture and landscape. For an exploration of this notion, see Luis M. Castañeda, "Surrealism and Constructions of National Identity in Mexico: Changing Perceptions, 1940–1968," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 3(1–2) (fall 2009).

111. Partida, "Hotel Camino Real," 87.

112. For the Smith-Kline and French Laboratories designed by Legorreta in 1964, Goeritz had also included a metal railing door for the entrance.

113. See Mathias Goeritz, *Los Ecos de Mathias Goeritz: Catálogo de la exposición* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1997).

114. Smith, "Everyman's Mexican Home," 83.

115. See Christophe Mount, *Arne Jacobsen* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004).

116. Beacham, *The Architecture of Mexico*, 13. Emphasis is mine.

117. "Olympic Protocol," AGN-FCO, Box 9, Folder 1–50.

118. An exchange between MOC official Virgilio Cortés and Eduardo Hay, MOC and IOC member, and key Olympic organizer, is telling of some of the tensions involved. "In case that the system of [IOC meeting] record keepers we proposed is accepted," Cortés wrote in July 1968, "it is imperative that the size of documents required be specified, since the number of people required for this service depends on it." "In light of the great difficulties in obtaining adequate personnel for these specialized services [in Mexico]," he concluded, "clarifying this issue is of great importance." On behalf of the IOC, Hay had also requested that the translated accounts of the various proceedings at the Camino Real Hotel be transcribed in Mexico, in order to keep a permanent record. Responding to this request, Cortés wrote back that "the transcription of [IOC meetings] tapes will not be done in Mexico, since this would imply a huge increase in personnel and could perfectly be done after the Olympics at the IOC headquarters" (Letter, Virgilio Cortés to Eduardo Hay, July 11, 1968, AGN-FCO, Box 9, Folder 1–50). Cortés was not the only MOC official to find Hay's requirements excessive. Writing to Hay, Cristina Mujica, personal secretary to Avery Brundage, also found his personnel requirements unreasonably high: "We have reviewed the selection of personnel you have assigned to this office, and this seems fine to us . . . with the exception of the receptionist who can speak three languages." "Both Mr. Brundage and myself believe this is a useless expense, especially since personnel with knowledge of different languages is required in many other offices related to the organization of the Olympic Games and the IOC Session" (Letter, Cristina Mujica to Eduardo Hay, AGN-FCO, Box 9, Folder 1–50).

119. Lance Wyman, interview by author, New York, October 11, 2010.

120. John Harwood, *The Interface: IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design, 1945–1976* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 42.

121. Mark Wigley, "Whatever Happened to Total Design?" *Harvard Design Magazine* 5 (1988): unnumbered.

122. Ricardo Legorreta, "Un equipo internacional de diseño," *Arquitectura/México* 99 (September–December 1967): 195–98.

123. Smith, "Everyman's Mexican Home," 88.

124. Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 189.

5. SUBTERRANEAN SCENOGRAPHIES

1. Salvador Novo's volumes chronicling "national" life pay particular attention to urban transformations in Mexican cities, particularly the capital. For the volumes that speak directly to many of the urban transformations explored in this book, see *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Adolfo López Mateos* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes,

1998) and *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998). In addition, see his *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Lázaro Cárdenas* (Mexico City: Empresas Editoriales, 1964), *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Manuel Ávila Camacho* (Mexico City: Empresas Editoriales, 1965), *La vida en México en el período presidencial de Miguel Alemán* (Mexico City: Empresas Editoriales, 1967), and *La vida en la ciudad de México en 1824* (Mexico City: Departamento del Distrito Federal, Secretaría General de Desarrollo Social, Comité Interno de Ediciones Gubernamentales, 1987).

2. Salvador Novo, *New Mexican Grandeur*, trans. Noel Lindsay (Mexico City: PEMEX, 1967), 135–36.

3. Salvador Novo, “Crónica,” in *El metro de México: Primera memoria* (Mexico City: Sistema de Transporte Colectivo-Metro, 1973), 65. Emphasis is mine.

4. See Jean-François Lejeune, “Dreams of Order: Utopia, Cruelty, and Modernity,” in Jean-François Lejeune, ed., *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003), 39.

5. Adolfo Zamora, *La cuestión del tránsito en una ciudad que carece de subsuelo adecuado para vías subterráneas o elevadas* (Mexico City: XVI Congreso Internacional de Planificación y de la Habitación, August 1939), 2–4. Emphasis is mine.

6. See Gerardo Sánchez Ruiz, ed., *Planificación y urbanismo visionarios de Carlos Contreras: Escritos de 1925 a 1938* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2003).

7. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and José Antonio Aguilar, *Ramírez Vázquez en el urbanismo* (Mexico City: Studio Beatrice Trueblood, 1995), 62.

8. Mauricio Gómez Mayorga, “Planificación: La ciudad de México y sus transportes,” *Calli* 3 (1960): 32. Gómez Mayorga also had been a collaborator of Ramírez Vázquez’s in his Museum of Mexico City (1960). See Ramírez Vázquez, *Ramírez Vázquez en la arquitectura* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1989), 107.

9. See Mauricio Gómez Mayorga, *¿Qué hacer por la ciudad de México? Estudio* (Mexico City: B. Costa-Amic, not dated [c. 1957]); Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “Simpatía por el diablo: Miradas académicas a la ciudad de México, 1900–1970,” in Ariel Rodríguez Kuri and Sergio Tamayo Flores-Alatorre, eds., *Los últimos cien años, los próximos cien* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2004), 59.

10. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, “Informe que presentó el arquitecto Pedro Ramírez Vázquez al licenciado Adolfo López Mateos, candidato a la presidencia de la República, sobre los trabajos de la Comisión de Urbanismo del Consejo de Planeación Económica y Social en el Distrito Federal,” June 25, 1958, in Ramírez Vázquez and Aguilar, *Ramírez Vázquez en el urbanismo*, 63, 153–57.

11. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, “Documento de análisis y propuestas presentado por el arquitecto Pedro Ramírez Vázquez al licenciado Adolfo López Mateos, presidente electo, en octubre de 1958,” in Ramírez Vázquez and Aguilar, *Ramírez Vázquez en el urbanismo*, 158.

12. Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “Hacia México ’68: Pedro Ramírez Vázquez y el proyecto olímpico,” *Secuencia* 56 (May–August 2003): 43.

13. Antonio Rodríguez, “La solución: El metro o el monorriel?” *Siempre!*, September 1, 1965. Rodríguez’s position as an official art critic deserves some elaboration. He was a staunch defender of mural art’s currency during the 1960s, a period during which the legacy of this official art form underwent significant criticism. He had defended it and other official art forms in Mexico, for instance, against the critiques leveled against it by Marta Traba and by Mexican artist José Luis

Cuevas. See his “Con tinta negra y roja: El muralismo de México; uno de los momentos culminantes del arte en este siglo,” *El Día: Vocero del pueblo mexicano*, April 17, 1964.

14. At least three proposals formulated between the late 1950s and mid-1960s explored this theme: in 1958, engineer Vicente Pedrero submitted a thesis at UNAM that explored the idea of a monorail for Mexico City; Ramón Aguado produced another study for a monorail two years later; and José María Fernández produced a project for a mixed mass transportation system consisting of both a subway and an elevated train in 1965. See Bernardo Navarro and Ovidio González, *Metro, Metrópoli, México* (Xochimilco: UAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, 1989), 17.

15. Rodríguez, “La solución,” 14–15. The BART system opened in 1972.

16. “Aspectos históricos del metro,” *Presencia* 1 (1970): 28.

17. Manuel Larrosa presents a much rosier view of these events and identifies Uruchurtu’s opposition as the single greatest obstacle that Borja’s grand vision had to overcome. See Manuel Larrosa, *Ángel Borja Navarrete: Vida y obra* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005), 20–21. ICA’s study, titled *Estudio de vías rápidas para la ciudad de México*, consisted primarily of contextual information from existing subway systems in other cities of the world.

18. Despite its substantial involvement with multiple types of infrastructure projects during the “miracle,” ICA has yet to receive serious attention. A celebratory, if thorough, overview of ICA’s work can be found in the biography of Quintana, one of its co-owners. See David Martín del Campo, *Bernardo Quintana Arriola: Constructor mexicano, 1919–1984: Una biografía* (Mexico City: Grupo ICA, Grupo Editorial Casa de las Imágenes, 1994).

19. Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 164–73. The conflict between the support for highways and car transit was nevertheless not limited to Mexico, and was central to the political battles staged in relation to the subway. In this sense, Zachary Schrag has written a social history of the Washington, D.C., subway system, which has several commonalities with its Mexican precedent. See Zachary M. Schrag, *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

20. “Aspectos históricos del metro,” 28.

21. Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 186–91.

22. Derou listed 475 million francs for the purchase of materials for the stations and the subway cars; 333 million francs for civil engineering works; and 50 million francs for maritime fees associated with French–Mexican exchange of expertise. Despite the magnitude of these figures, it was the diligent administration of the funds in Mexico that he celebrated most enthusiastically. See Georges Derou, “El metro de ciudad de México visto por los franceses,” *Presencia* 1 (1970): 14–15.

23. Ariel Valencia Ramírez, “Tecnología y cultura en el metro,” *Presencia* 1 (1970): 39.

24. Antonio Gramsci, “Structure and Superstructure,” in Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 2nd ed., trans. Joseph Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 2:153–54.

25. As the Olympics approached, Ramírez Vázquez was kept updated by members of Mexico’s diplomatic services of views expressed in the international media about the perceived tardiness of the Mexican subway’s inauguration. See Letter, Héctor Raúl Almanza to Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, April 5, 1967, ASRE, Mexico City.

26. Lance Wyman, interview by author, New York, November 12, 2010.

27. Peter Blake, “The Last Word,” in Peter Blake, ed., *Subways of World Examined by Cooper-Hewitt Museum* (New York: Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 1977), 32.

28. Mildred F. Schmertz. "Expo '67: A Brilliantly Ordered Visual World," *Architectural Record*, July 1967, 116.
29. Michael Sorkin, in André Lortie, Michael Sorkin and Jean-Louis Cohen., "Learning from Montreal," in André Lortie., ed., *The 60s: Montreal Thinks Big* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2004), 154–55.
30. Robert Gretton, "Two Metros," *Canadian Architect*, February 1967, 27–28.
31. Walter McQuade, "Subways Don't Have to Be Miserable," *Fortune*, April 1967, 177, 181–82, 184.
32. Patricia Conway George, "Mass Transit: Problem and Promise," *Design Quarterly* 71 (1968): 9–13.
33. Alejandro Ortiz Reza, "México estrena metro; a las 9:10 lo aborda D.O.," *Excelsior*, September 4, 1969.
34. Ángel Borja and Enrique Warnholtz, "La primera etapa del sistema de transporte colectivo 'metro' de la ciudad de México," in *Ingeniería de Sistemas de Transporte Metropolitano, Metro de la ciudad de México: Descripción general; mecánica de suelos* (Mexico City: Ingeniería de Sistemas de Transporte Metropolitano, 1969), unnumbered.
35. For an overview of other subway systems that display art underground, see Marianne Ström, *Metro Art in the Metro-Polis* (Paris: ACR Édition Internationale, 1994), 122–91.
36. "Mexico City's Subway Is for Viewing," *Fortune*, December 1969, 106.
37. Jorge Espinoza Ulloa, *El metro: Una solución al problema del transporte urbano* (Mexico City: Representaciones y Servicios de Ingeniería, 1975), 58–59.
38. "Mexico City's Subway Is for Viewing," 106.
39. "Prehistory from the Subway," *Science News* 93(10) (March 1968): 234. See also Henry Ginger, "Mexico City Subway Runs Deep into the Past: Relics of 600 Years in Vast Quantity Are Being Unearthed," *New York Times*, January 16, 1969, 8.
40. Raúl Martín Arana A. and Gerardo Cepeda C., "Rescate arqueológico en la ciudad de México," *Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 30 (1967): 4.
41. Jordi Gussinyer, "Hallazgos en el metro: Conjunto de adoratorios superpuestos en Pino Suárez," *Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 36 (June 1969): 33–37.
42. Doris Heyden, "Un adoratorio a Omácatl," *Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 42 (December 1970): 21–23.
43. "Viva el metro," *Presencia* 2 (1971): 37.
44. Sydney Thomas Wise, "Mexico City's Metro—The World's Highest Subway—Quietly Rolls Along," *New York Times*, August 3, 1969. Emphasis is mine.
45. "El arte del metro mexicano," *Life en Español*, September 29, 1969. Emphasis is mine.
46. Jordi Gussinyer, "Un adoratorio azteca decorado con pinturas," *Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 40 (June 1970): 30–35. Gussinyer also uncovered a stone jaguar's head that was eventually transferred to the same museum; see Jordi Gussinyer, "Una cabeza de jaguar," *Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 38 (December 1969): 40–42.
47. Miguel Álvarez Acosta, "Los tres tiempos de la integración cultural de México: La cuarta cultura," in Novo, *El metro de México*, 92–102.
48. Antonio Rodríguez, "El metro de México: Palacio y museo del pueblo," in Novo, *El metro de México*, 71.
49. Antonio Rodríguez, "El metro genera una vida nueva para el hombre," *Presencia del Metro* 3 (1972): 31–32.

50. Antonio Rodríguez, "Acercamiento al arte moderno," *Presencia del Metro* 2 (1972): unnumbered. Also see his "Impulso y difusión de la cultura entre los empleados del metro," *Presencia del Metro* 2 (1972): unnumbered.

51. "Visita del ministro de Holanda al S.T.C.," *Presencia* 2 (1971): 40–41.

52. Larrosa, *Ángel Borja*, 25.

53. Drawer 113, Folder 7, FCARP.

54. Rodríguez, "El metro de México," 71.

55. *Ibid.*, 72.

56. *Ibid.*, 73.

57. Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 173.

58. Lance Wyman, "Subway Signage," in Blake, *Subways of the World Examined by Cooper-Hewitt Museum*, 8. At the time, this trend was most famously exemplified by the U.S. Department of Transportation's 1974 campaign to create a standard set of signs for the U.S. highway system.

59. Paul Shaw, *Helvetica and the New York City Subway System* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2011), 19.

60. *Ibid.*, 27.

61. Wyman, "Subway Signage," 8.

62. José Antonio Beltrán González, *Historia de los nombres de las estaciones del metro* (Mexico City, 1973), 57–58.

63. Mérida collaborated with Pani in creating a set of neo pre-Columbian reliefs of walking figures for the facades of his Presidente Juárez housing project, from 1952.

64. Beltrán González, *Historia de los nombres de las estaciones del metro*, 265.

65. Claire Fox, *Making Art Panamerican: Cultural Policy and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 158.

66. See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972).

67. Juan Villoro, "The Metro," in Rubén Gallo, ed., *Mexico City Reader*, trans. Lorna Scott Fox (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 130.

68. E. H. Boone, "Pictorial Documents and Visual Thinking in Postconquest Mexico," in E. H. Boone and T. Cummins, eds., *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), 149–99.

69. Lance Wyman, "Urban Legibility and Signs," *The Wheel Extended* 19(4) (1990): 11.

70. Lance Wyman, "Branding a Cityscape: Mexico City Olympics 1968: Lance Wyman in Conversation with Milton Curry on Aesthetics and Politics," *Critical Productive* 1(1) (autumn 2011): 93.

71. Alejandro Ortiz, "El metro y otras importantes obras se inauguran mañana," *El Día*, September 3, 1969, and "Otras 72 obras puso en servicio el presidente, ayer," *El Día*, September 5, 1969.

72. "Mensaje del Presidente Díaz Ordaz," *El Día*, September 2, 1969. Emphasis is mine.

73. Eduardo Terrazas, telephone interview by author, Syracuse, New York, July 6, 2012.

74. Although kinetic art would soon become part of the official visual culture of Venezuela and would also operate well as part of large-scale corporate art commissions in the United States and Europe, in Mexico its emancipatory potential was also emphasized early on. See "El arte cinético tiene a romper las normas tradicionales impuestas por las minorías: Julio Le Parc," *El Día*, May 28, 1968; Jennifer Josten, "Mathias Goeritz y el arte internacional de nuevos medios en la década de los sesenta," trans. Daniel Garza Usabiaga, in Karla Jasso and Daniel Garza Usabiaga,

- eds., *Readymedia: Arqueología de los medios e invención en México* (Mexico City: Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2012), 118–32.
75. Eduardo Terrazas, telephone interview by author, Syracuse, New York, July 6, 2012.
 76. *Excélsior, Magazine Dominical*, October 12, 1969.
 77. “Exhibición—Imagen de México,” *El Día*, September 5, 1969.
 78. “Crucero Reforma—Insurgentes: Proyecto de planificación y zonificación,” *Arquitectura/México* 20 (April 1946): 259–68. Significantly, this project was intended to disperse the downtown district of the capital city, essentially creating a new civic and commercial center out of the busy intersection. See Vladimir Kaspé, “Un nuevo centro de la ciudad de México,” *Arquitectura/México* 20 (April 1946): 258.
 79. Cuauhtémoc Medina, “La lección arquitectónica de Schwarzenegger,” *Arquine* 23 (2003): 80.
 80. Andrew Jenks, “A Metro on the Mount: The Underground as a Church of Soviet Civilization,” *Technology and Culture* 41(4) (October 2000): 697–724.
 81. Espinoza Ulloa, *El metro*, 35.
 82. Villoro, “The Metro,” 128. In discussing the utopian dimensions of the Soviet and Mexican subways, Villoro relies on the insights of philosopher Boris Groys, specifically his “U-Bahn als U-Topie,” *Kursbuch* 1(12) (June 1993): 1–9.
 83. Gabriel del Río, “Inauguró el presidente la ruta 2 y el metro cuenta ya con 31 kms: Un ejemplo perenne para la juventud, así fue la lucha de los Niños Héroe, recordada ante GDO,” *Novedades*, September 14, 1970.
 84. An article published in *El Día* to commemorate the completion of the second line enhanced the immediacy of the presumed historical encounter, describing the replicas of pre-Columbian works found at the Bellas Artes station as the real thing. There, it claimed, “among impeccable beauty and marble floors that shine like mirrors, the most beautiful archaeological artifacts from the Toltec, Olmec, Maya, Zapotec, and Mexica culture” were shown (Sadot Fabila Alva, “Entre el júbilo popular inauguró Díaz Ordaz la línea 2 del metro,” *El Día*, September 14, 1970).
 85. Del Río, “Inauguró el presidente la ruta 2 y el metro cuenta ya con 31 kms,” 9.
 86. Fabila, “Entre el júbilo popular inauguró Díaz Ordaz la línea 2 del metro,” 1.
 87. See Luis Carranza, *Architecture as Revolution: Episodes in the History of Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 168–201.
 88. Fabila, “Entre el júbilo popular inauguró Díaz Ordaz la línea 2 del metro,” 1.
 89. “La Plaza del Metro,” August 24, 1978, in José Joaquín Blanco, *Función de medianoche: Ensayos de literatura cotidiana* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1981), 70.
 90. Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 173.
 91. Fernando Carmona et al., *El milagro mexicano* (Mexico City: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1970), 49.
 92. “El sindicato del S.T.C.,” *Presencia* 1 (1970): 22–23. Emphasis is mine.
 93. “3,000 policías, piedras y heridos leves; actos en recuerdo de las víctimas del jueves de Corpus,” *Excélsior*, June 11, 1972.
 94. See “Bombas en el PRI, el INJM y en locales de la FTDF y CTM,” *Excélsior*, June 12, 1972; Pedro Ocampo Ramírez, “Sinrazón de la violencia: Nunca abandonaremos las cavernas?” *Excélsior*, June 13, 1972.

95. “Lo que podemos hacer,” Pedro Ramírez Vázquez interviewed by Tania Ragasol, in *Diseñando México 68: Una identidad olímpica* (Mexico City: Museo de Arte Moderno and Landucci, 2008), 133.

96. Mexican Olympic Committee, “Statement for the Foreign Press,” AGN-FCO, Box 347, Folder 5–140.

97. Medina, “La lección arquitectónica,” 71. For a broader discussion of the relationship between Mexico City’s history and the history of film, see Dietrich Neumann, “La ciudad de México y la ‘ciudad mundial’ del cine,” in Peter Krieger, *Megalópolis: La modernización de la ciudad de México en el siglo XX* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto Goethe-Inter Naciones, 2006), 109–26; Carlos Martínez Assad, “La ciudad de México en el cine,” *Chasqui* 33(2) (November 2004): 27–40.

98. Carlos Monsiváis, “El metro: Viaje hacia el fin del apretujón,” in Carlos Monsiváis, *Los rituales del caos* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1995), 109–10.

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1. Letter, Gregory Dawson to Robert Moses, February 22, 1966, RMP-NYPL, Box 52.

2. See Chris Calori, *Signage and Wayfinding Design: A Complete Guide to Creating Environmental Graphic Design Systems* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley, 2007); David Gibson and Christopher Pullman, *The Wayfinding Handbook: Information Design for Public Places* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009).

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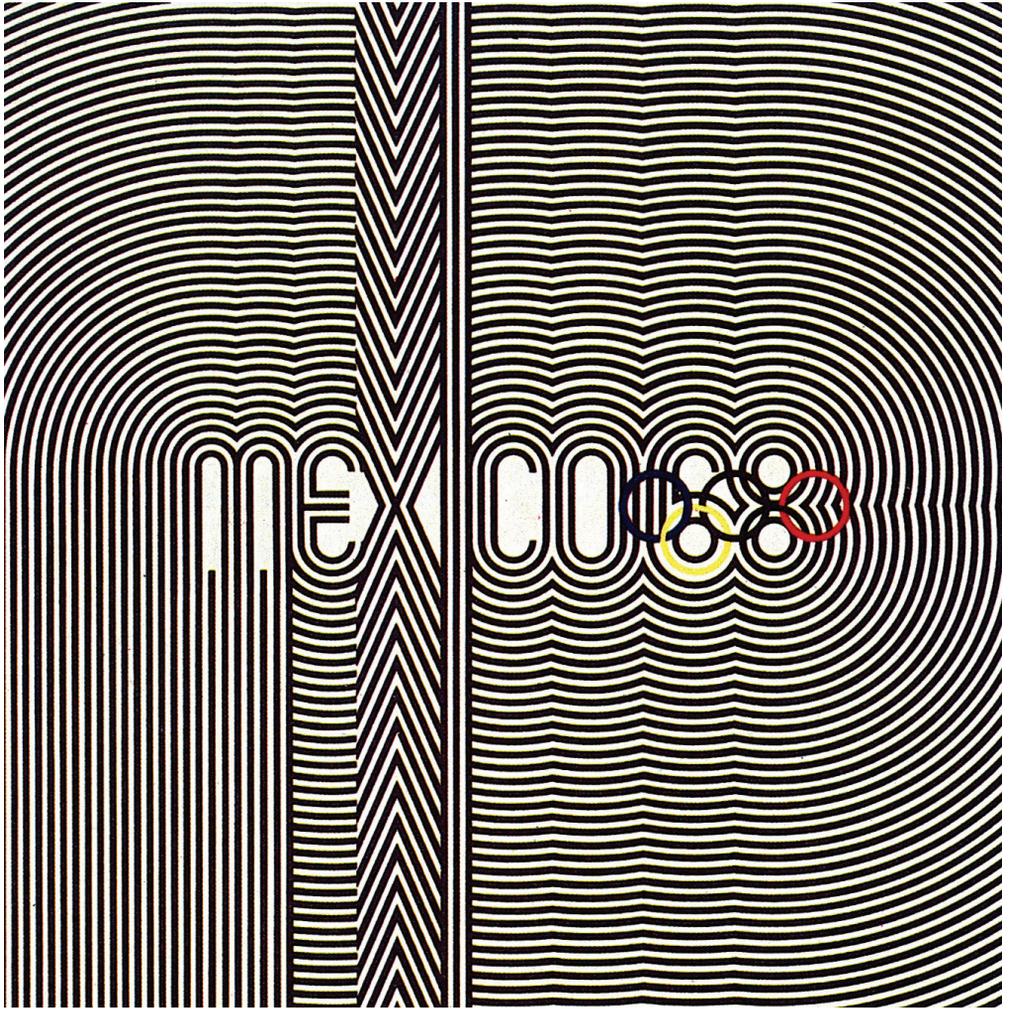


Plate 1. Lance Wyman, designer, Mexico '68 logo, 1968.





Opposite:

Plate 2. Juan Guzmán, Los Manantiales restaurant under construction, Xochimilco, c. 1957–58. Colección Juan Guzmán, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, Mexico City.

Plate 3. Eduardo Terrazas, painting of the Aztec Stadium Plaza with Calder sculpture, Olympic Design Program, Mexico City, 1968. Courtesy of Eduardo Terrazas.

Above:

Plate 4. Eduardo Terrazas, Mexico Pavilion, Fourteenth Triennale of Milan, Olympic Design Program, 1968. Courtesy of Eduardo Terrazas.



MEXICO'S SUBWAY IS FOR VIEWING

From an overhead bridge passengers at the Mexico City Metro's Aeropuerto station gaze at the French-built cars speeding past on quiet rubber tires. The elaborate funneled ceiling is typical of the imaginative use of space and decor throughout the system.

Photographs by Peter Anderson



Above:

Plate 7. Aztec Adoratory, Pino Suárez station, Mexico City subway, 1969. Photograph by Robin Bath. Courtesy of Lance Wyman.

Opposite:

Plate 8. Lance Wyman, Mexico City subway map and signage system, 1968–69. Design by Lance Wyman, Francisco Gallardo, and Arturo Quiñones.

Plate 9. Lance Wyman, sign for Pino Suárez station of Mexico City subway, 1968–69. Design by Lance Wyman, Francisco Gallardo, and Arturo Quiñones.

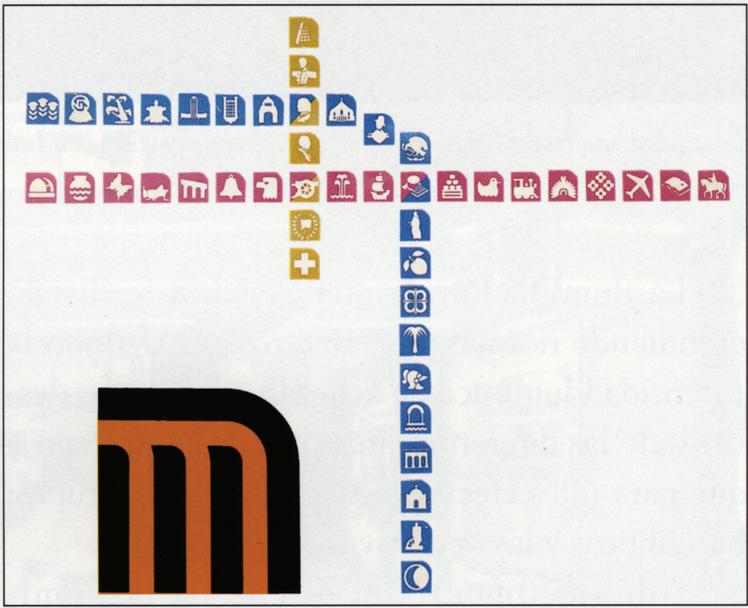




Plate 10. Eduardo Terrazas, *Imagen México*, exhibition, Mexico City, 1969. Courtesy of Eduardo Terrazas.