

By exploring the scenes of Latin American culture, politics, environments, and individuals, *Looking In, Looking Out: Latin American Photography* examines the intimate relationship between photographer and home country. This exhibition, drawn from the permanent collection of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, highlights works by Latin American photographers, or those who have adopted it as home, for an essential understanding of aesthetic and conceptual growth, history, and culture in the region. Enriched by large gifts of Mexican photography in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the core of the exhibition subsists on works by iconic Mexican photographers. A range of more recent acquisitions and donations of contemporary Latin American photographers expanded the representation of diverse Latin American countries, allowing this exhibition to fully engage with a dialogue about the evolution of photography within the region and the varying interpretations of Latin American artists who hail from different countries.

Manuel Álvarez Bravo, largely considered the grandfather of 20th century Mexican photography, spearheaded the surreal and conceptual of black and white photography but with an emphasis on the spirit, mythology, and symbolism of Mexico. Following his philosophies and teachings several female photographers, Lola Álvarez Bravo, Graciela Iturbide, Mariana Yampolsky, and Flor Garduño, shed light on their personal perspectives of cultures, indigenous life, nostalgia, and what would become an aesthetic of the common individual. Emerging contemporary photographers like Alejandro Cartagena, born in the Dominican Republic but active in Mexico, continue in the documentary tradition of M. Álvarez Bravo but through the color spectrum as they capture the exponential development of the country and its effects on the local populations.

Across the water, unfolding events in Cuban politics have prompted a reexamination of the revolutionary photography of Raúl Corrales and Alberto Korda; later, photographs of heightened infrastructure failings in the late 1990s, and, now, works of emerging and hopeful Cuban photographers. The photojournalism of internal wars was similarly adopted by travelling photographer Rodrigo Moya during the 1960s and decades later Colombian photographer Erika Diettes also captured the violent turmoil of her home country but through an abstracted memorial to death.

Large populations of indigenous communities are maintained throughout Latin America and Guatemalan photographers Luis Gonzales Palma, Daniel Chauche, and longtime resident John Edward Heaton glorify these individuals, their accessories, and the ongoing traditions that have sustained throughout the centuries.

These highlighted works truly demonstrate the experiences and traditions of unique cultures in areas of Latin America. Rather than a survey exhibition of each country, the images are a selection of prints attempting to engage viewers with the dynamic complexities but also the universal similarities of Latin American life. The photographers capture their homes for their people, but if the outsider can truly look into the regions one can attempt to understand the many spirits that emerge from within Latin America's borders.