

Press Release

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Witness: Contemporary Mexican Photojournalism
Museum of Contemporary Photography
Columbia College Chicago
February 26– April 28, 2004

CHICAGO- On February 26 through April 28, 2004 the Museum of Contemporary Photography will explore the development and contemporary forms of photojournalism in Mexico with an exhibition entitled Witness: Contemporary Mexican Photojournalism. The focus of this exhibit will be the newest generation of photojournalists within Mexico: Antonio Turok, Jorge López Vela, Marcela Taboada, Alberto Ibañez, Francisco Mata Rosas, Enrique Villaseñor, Yolanda Andrade and Eniac Martinez.

Witness is a significant exhibition for the North American photography community in that it demonstrates the vitality of this genre in Mexico today, something that has not been done specifically in the few exhibits to come out of Mexico over the past two decades. Previous exhibitions were concerned with contemporary art photography, manipulated work, historic photography, or gender specific work. Although many of the artists in this exhibit have been published individually in Mexico, there has not been an opportunity to see them together as a group, which reveals a strong common voice and similarities of vision.

While the United States and Mexico share similar traditions in the development of photojournalism, there are some serious differences. First of all, Mexican photography, except for a brief brush with Edward Weston, managed to escape Pictorialism - the formal design and symbolic strategies brought to bear on documentary photography by Paul Strand and Dorothea Lange. Additionally, the shift from concerned documentary to art photography never really happened in Mexico. As a consequence of both of these, Mexican documentary is still interested in what is in front of the lens. This approach results in photography that tends to enhance our knowledge of a given subject rather than to attempt to create a moral decoration.

The museum will host an opening reception on Thursday, March 4, 2004 from 5 pm until 7 pm at the Museum of Contemporary Photography.

The Sara Lee Foundation is the Lead Sponsor of Witness: Contemporary Mexican Photojournalism. Additional support for this exhibition was provided by Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw; The Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs/Gallery 37; the International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago; American Airlines, the official airline of the Museum of Contemporary Photography; and our members.

The Museum of Contemporary Photography is free and open to the public weekdays from 10 am until 5 pm (Thursdays until 8 pm) and Saturdays from noon until 5 pm. It is located at 600 S. Michigan Avenue on the corner of Harrison Street. For additional information please call 312-663-5554 or visit us at www.mocp.org.