

SHOP



Taka Ishii
Gallery

Group Show “¡Viva México!”

Dates: Jul 24 – Sep 27, 2020 [Summer Holidays: Aug 9 – 17]

Location: SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery, Hong Kong

Participating artists: Mario García Torres, Graciela Iturbide, Chucho Reyes, Armando Salas Portugal, Lucía Vidales

By appointment only.

Please email tighk@takaishiigallery.com.

SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to announce “¡Viva México!”, a group show featuring Mexican photography, art and design, from Jul 24 – Sep 27, 2020. The exhibition will present Graciela Iturbide and Armando Salas Portugal’s vintage prints executed in the 70s & 80s, Chucho Reyes’ classic works on paper, Lucía Vidales’ painting and ceramics, also a selection of VARON jewelry and other interior goods made in Mexico, including handcrafted rugs and the Miguelito chairs designed by modern architect Luis Barragán. Rare art books will be available for viewing and purchase too. With the variety of art and design objects travelled afar, co-presented with the music selected by contemporary conceptual artist Mario García Torres, this curatorial project serves to bring insights into the indescribably dynamic culture of Mexico.

Profoundly inspired during the photographic journeys to areas inhabited by Mexico’s indigenous peoples with master photographer Manuel Álvarez Bravo in 1970-71, **Graciela Iturbide**’s attention had remained focused on Mexico across three decades until the 1990s. Shifted from film directing to documentary photography, the artist gradually established her style under the influence of Álvarez Bravo’s and Josef Koudelka’s poetic style, Henri Cartier-Bresson’s notion of the “decisive moment,” and filmmaker Luis Buñuel’s surrealistic style. To Iturbide, photography is a medium and tool to connect with her own culture and encounter others’. Approaching her subjects with a poetic sensibility, her documentary photography, which the artist describes as the “photo essay”, reflects her strong interest in culture, ritual, and everyday life in her motherland Mexico and beyond. The five black and white vintage prints exhibited in this show cover her constant themes, including the interplay of urban and rural life, tradition and modernity, celebration and death.

Moved by the diverse natural environs of his homeland Mexico, **Armando Salas Portugal** traveled throughout the nation, photographing its varied landscapes that accumulated into an unparalleled archive. Salas Portugal also documented the rapid change of cityscapes in the economic boom, where he collaborated with many architects in Mexico City, making photographic records of the rise of numerous modernist structures in the 1960s and 1970s. Among them, he worked as the exclusive photographer of the internationally renowned modernist architect Luis Barragán’s for over 40 years. Barragán’s unique architectural expressions combined contemporary interpretations of traditional Mexican lifestyles seen in haciendas with the landscape design sensibilities of landscape artist Ferdinand Bac and Mediterranean architecture rooted in Arabic-Andalusian culture. Determined to carry out designs based on his beliefs and not the functionalist International Style popular at the time, he advocated an “emotional architecture” and built numerous important structures. Vintage prints from the renowned “Casa de Luis Barragán (House of Luis Barragán)” series (c.a. 1962, 1974) will be exhibited in the group show.

Jesús Reyes Ferreira, widely known as **Chucho Reyes**, is a self-taught artist with one of the most authentic styles in Mexican art of the twentieth century. Although starting painting late, Reyes had shared close ties with cultural creatives circle since the 1910s as an antique dealer and art collector, opening up his home to art exchanges in hometown Guadalajara and the capital. Architect Luis Barragán considered Reyes as the teacher of colors, who used louvers and color-play to create shifting

light in interior space, and made his own pigments by traditional methods to capture colors of Mexican culture in his paintings. His lively body of work including oil canvas, drawings and sculptures executed in vivid, festive colors and bold brushstrokes also won the admiration of Pablo Picasso. As suggested by its title, “Flores” (n.d.) represents the classic iconographies of flowers on papel de china, tissue paper, a medium extensively used by Reyes to honour Mexican popular arts and papel picado designs. In other works, by overlaying two or more layers of brown paper, the artist experimented with tone and textured backgrounds to enhance specific themes.

By merging fiction and history through imagination, **Lucía Vidales’** oeuvre constructs a personal universe bringing together the living of different times. In Vidales’ canvas, the multiple layers of paint display a range of densities and transparencies, which seemingly take on an organic life under the artist’s dynamic brushwork. Its capability in transformations when interacting with light and space further enhances the works’ expressiveness. As a signifier, the rich colors applied in Vidales’ paintings testify to the timely process of human labor in painting, as an attempt to bring inner world enrichment and consolation for wounds of the past and the present. Her semi-abstract and semi-figurative painting “Pésima idea (Baad idea)” (2018), as well as her low-temperature ceramics, “Días y noches (Days and nights)” (2019) and “Una explicación sin rostro (Faceless explanation)” (2019), which referenced to the unglazed practice and style of pre-Hispanic wares, represent a young voice in the exhibition to open up dialogues with masters of the twentieth century.

As an experimental retail space, SHOP continues to transcend the boundary between “gallery” and “shop” by introducing different designer goods and fine craft works into our exhibitions. Collaborating with **VARON**, a Mexico City-based jewelry brand founded by Aaron Changpo that creates avant-garde unisex pieces full of history and meaning, this exhibition will feature a special collection of Mexican amber. Geologically, Mexican amber is relatively young as it dates from between 25 and 40 million years. It is created from resin found in wood that has been isolated from the environment, hence petrifying as opposed to biodegrading and has been present in the history of humanity since its beginnings. This collection marks the first time VARON has worked with amber and has placed the petrified rocks alongside silver to showcase their timeless quality.

Mario García Torres has uniquely curated a two-hour long music playlist to be played at the group show. In addition to the artist’s own retrospective sound piece entitled “Silence’s Wearing Thin Here” (n.d.), which was composed of voices and soundtracks from previous artworks, the list also features pieces of diverse genres across decades, including the symphony of “La Noche de Los Mayas (The Night of the Mayas)” (1939) by composer Silvestre Revueltas, the 80s’ classic pop song “La chica de Humo (The Smoke Girl)” by Emmanuel (1988), a country-music piece “Eso y Más (This and More)” by Joan Sebastian (2006), the contemporary indie-pop song “Te Regalo (I Give You)” by Carla Morrison (2017). Using more than 30 pieces, García Torres has poetically conveyed unexplored aspects of histories in Mexico over time.



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Artist Biographies & Brand Story

Mario García Torres (b. 1975) was born in Monclova, Mexico and currently lives in Mexico City. He received his MFA from the California Institute of the Arts (2005). In his work García Torres explores the potential of a diverse range of media including photography, film, performance in order for it to serve as a tool in his own re-examination of concerns related to history and conceptual art practice in which there is always a time or location displacement. In so doing, he derives an new idea from history and reality. His recent solo exhibitions include The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2018) co-organized with WIELS, Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels (2019); the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2015); the Pérez Art Museum Miami (2014); Project Arts Centre, Dublin (2013); the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2010); and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2007). He has also, participated in numerous international exhibitions including Manifesta 11 (2016); the 8th Berlin Biennale (2014); dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel (2012); São Paulo Biennial (2010); Taipei Biennial (2010); Yokohama Triennale (2008); and Venice Biennale (2007).

Graciela Iturbide (b.1942) was born in Mexico City where she currently lives and works. She enrolled at the film school Centro de Estudios Cinematográficos at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in 1969 to become a film director. However, she was soon drawn to the art of still photography as practised by the Mexican modernist master Manuel Álvarez Bravo, who was teaching at the university. From 1970-71, she worked as Álvarez Bravo's assistant, accompanying him on his various photographic journeys throughout Mexico. In the early half of the 1970s, Iturbide traveled widely across Latin America, in particular to Cuba, and several trips to Panama. In the mid-70s, Iturbide began to reveal a clear preference for the theatrical atmosphere of popular Mexican Festivals, where Catholic rites blend with indigenous tradition in a great carnivalesque celebration. Through these works, Iturbide emphasizes the irony of Mexican imagery which represents death and accentuates the surrealistic character of these social rites. Her most renowned series "Juchitán de Las Mujeres (Juchitan, A Town of Women)" (1979-86) is a prolonged project featuring Zapotec Indians in Juchitán, who were economically and politically independent and enjoyed sexual freedom in their community. This series won the Eugene Smith Memorial Foundation Award in 1987 and was published in book form in 1989.

Iturbide's selected solo exhibitions include "Graciela Iturbide's Mexico," National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C. (2020), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2019); "Graciela Iturbide 1969 – 1990," Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film, Tokyo (2016); "Graciela Iturbide Retrospective," at Tate Modern (2013); Museo Frida Kahlo, Mexico City (2012); Barbican

Art Gallery, London (2012); Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City (2011); MAPFRE Foundation, Madrid (2009); Fotomuseum Winterthur (2009); Americas Society, New York (2008); J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (2007); Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro (1993); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1990); Centre Pompidou, Paris (1982). Major awards include the Cornell Capa Lifetime Achievement Award (2015); the Lucie Award (2010); National Prize of Sciences and Arts, Mexico City (2009); Hasselblad Foundation Photography Award (2008); Legacy Award (2007); Hugo Erfurth Award (1989); a Guggenheim Fellowship (1988); the Eugene Smith Memorial Foundation Award (1987).

Chucho Reyes, Jesús Reyes Ferreira (1880-1977), was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco and passed away in Mexico City. Influenced by his father, Reyes developed a profound interest in antiques and art. Without receiving a formal education in arts, Reyes presented infallible aesthetic sensibility and talents highly reputable in the upper society of his hometown Guadalajara, as well as among the cultural elites in Mexico City. From arranging the window displays at the artist supply shop to church altar dressing, interior design and art curation at home, and experimental art creation, Reyes established his personal avant-garde style with expressionist mark. Reyes enjoyed friendships with David Alfaro Siqueiros, Frida Kahlo, Juan O'Gorman, Diego Rivera and Juan Soriano. His major solo exhibitions include National Tribute, Magna Retrospective Exhibition on the occasion of his 82 years at Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes (Mexico City, 1962); "Chucho Reyes" at Plaza San Jacinto in San Angel (Mexico City, 1972); "Chucho Reyes" at Galeria Pecanins (Mexico City, 1975). Later exhibitions in tribute to him include "Homage to Chucho Reyes" at Museo Rufino Tamayo (Mexico City, 1984); "La mirada estética de Jesús Reyes Ferreira" at Museo de Arte Moderno (Mexico City, 2002); "Chucho Reyes" at Bolsa Mexicana de Valores (Mexico City, 2012); "Chucho Reyes, The Show Will Start" at Inverarte Art Gallery (San Antonio, Texas, 2014) and "Chucho Reyes, La fiesta del color" at Museo Palacio de Bellas Artes (Mexico City, 2018).

Armando Salas Portugal (1916-1995) was born in Monterrey, Mexico. He moved to the U.S. in 1932 and he studied science at the University of California, Los Angeles from 1935 to 1938. After returning to Mexico, he traveled to various regions and acquired a camera for the first time. He documented the rich and diverse Mexican landscape from a unique perspective. Starting in 1941, these photographs were published in *La Montaña*, and Salas Portugal began exhibiting his photographs widely in Mexico. Among his photographs of Mexican architectures, Luis Barragán's works, of which he was the exclusive photographer for over 40 years, are particularly famous. Executed under the compositional orders of Barragán, each print demonstrates the master architect's unique aesthetics. Salas Portugal's dialogues with Barragán and his works were carried out with notable intensity and they made his works even richer and more fertile than they might otherwise have been. Salas Portugal's major solo exhibitions include "Paisaje Mexicano" at Palacio de Bellas Artes (Mexico City, 1944-46), "Paisaje Chiapaneco" at Circulo de Bellas Artes (Mexico City, 1949), and "Luis Barragán, Architect" at the Museum of Modern Art (New York, 1980).

Lucía Vidales (b. 1986) was born in Mexico City, Mexico. She currently lives and works in Monterrey, Mexico as a BA professor at the University of Monterrey. She received her BA from 'La Esmeralda' National School of Painting, Sculpture and Printmaking of the National Institute of Fine Arts, Mexico in 2009 and MFA from the National Autonomous University of México, Faculty of Art and Design, UNAM in 2014. Vidales recently presented solo exhibitions at the House of Deslave in Tijuana, Galería de Arte Mexicano (GAM) and Galeria Alterna in Mexico City (2019). She participated in over forty group shows in Mexico and abroad. Recent group exhibitions include "Murales para un cubo blanco" at Sala de Arte Público

Siqueiros, Mexico City (2020); "Prince.sse.s des villes", at Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2019); "100 Sculptures" at Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City and Paris (2019); "Naturally" at Lulu, Mexico City (2018), "Tiger poems and songs for Hurricanes" at Galería Travesía 4, Guadalajara (2018), "Montar la Bestia" at USC Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Museo Nacional de ferrocarril mexicanos, Puebla, CaSa, Oaxaca (2017).

Born in Mexico City, Aaron Changpo spent his childhood in the city of Cuernavaca under the influence of his jeweler family. Jewelry is an intrinsically Mexican custom that has played a hugely important cultural role since Prehispanic Mexico and its influence is seen across popular contemporary society today. Enthralled by the energy found in precious metals and stones and how they relate to humans symbolically, Changpo found himself unintentionally following in the footsteps of his jeweler grandfather; a tradition going back four generations. He felt a profound calling to convey the energy he felt from the stones and materials that have inhabited this earth for billions of years and to contextualize them into objects of personal value. With a focus on genderless pieces Changpo took his knowledge of craftsmanship and his sensibility for the unique characteristics of each material and founded **VARON**. VARON was born from the energy found in materials and minerals forged here on earth for billions of years and the symbolic meaning people place on finished pieces. Throughout history and across cultures jewelry has been regarded as symbolic in relationships, self-transcendence, and gifting; concepts Changpo constantly brings into his creative process. With this in mind the pieces take on a new meaning as their purpose shifts from one person to another. They create a new biography for the pieces themselves, transcending from body adornments to personal emblems and are free of gender and full of history and meaning.

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