

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
September 1997

VIDEO WORKS REVEALING THE DIVERSITY OF MEXICAN CULTURE ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

**Exhibition Reflects Flourishing of Documentary Video and Experimental Media
throughout Mexico**

Mexican Video: Thorn of the Mountain
October 2–December 7, 1997
Garden Hall Video Gallery, third floor

A video exhibition featuring works by a range of artists—independent producers from mountain villages, rural communities, and the urban sprawl of Mexico City—opens at The Museum of Modern Art on October 2, 1997. *Mexican Video: Thorn of the Mountain*, on view in the Garden Hall Video Gallery through December 7, comprises nine programs, each approximately an hour in length, showcasing 21 works by 17 contemporary Mexican artists. Eleven of the works make their New York premieres.

“From local celebrations to national political issues, all the works present a vivid portrait of Mexico and the manifold characteristics of its culture,” says Sally Berger, Assistant Curator, Department of Film and Video, who organized the exhibition.

Highlights of the exhibition, much of which is documentary, include works created by indigenous producers at Centro Nacional de Video de Indigena de Oaxaca. Oaxaca, a state in southern Mexico, is notable for its diversity of cultures and populations. Established in 1994, the center is supported by the Institute Nacional Indigenista (INI). Originally a film and audio archive devoted to the original cultures of Mexico, INI began a special project in 1989 to encourage indigenous communities and organizations to make use of audiovisual media.

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Day-to-day life in local communities is eloquently documented in works by Crisanto Manzano Avella, who focuses on the Zapotec Indians, and Egmigdio Caballero, who chronicles various Mixtec rituals and celebrations. Their illustrative videos provide firsthand perspectives on the customs and practices within contemporary Zapotec and Mixtec cultures.

Carlos Martinez Suarez, based in San Cristobal de las Casas, has spent the past dozen years chronicling the lives of several Mayan communities in the state of Chiapas, home of the Zapatista insurrection. His *Sueños y Palabras Sabias de la comunidades Tzotziles y Tzeltales (Dreams and Wise Words from Tzotziles and Tzeltales Communities)* (1995), is a summation of the Mayan communities' cosmology and a message to the world about their hopes and dreams for a future free of conflict with the Mexican government.

In *El Pueblo Mexicano Que Camina (A Long Journey to Guadalupe)* (1987-96), veteran director Juan Francisco Urrusti interviews anthropologists, historians, bishops, and shamans in an exhaustive work that traces the cross-cultural tradition of revering the "Indian Virgin of Guadalupe" back to Tonantzin, the Aztec goddess representing Mother Earth.

The bold and imaginative work of Ximena Cuevas, a young artist based in Mexico City, is typified by *Medias Mentiras (Half Lies)* (1995). A multimedia montage of personal lifestyles, popular culture, and music, the work combines tidbits of news, common street scenes, off-air television footage, and old movies.

Video animation and image processing are employed in *Rosa Pantopón (Pantopone Rose)* (1995), a video version of a larger CD project on the writings of

William S. Burroughs. It was made by Andrea di Castro, director of Centro Multimedia, Centro Nacional de las Artes, a state-of-the-art production facility in Mexico City. The late writer's voice is electronically altered to create the musical soundtrack.

On October 6, in her first U.S. appearance, Ximena Cuevas will premiere a selection of her latest work in the Museum's **Video Viewpoints** series, an ongoing Monday night series in which videomakers present and discuss their works.

As part of the Museum's **New Documentaries** series, Carlos Martinez Suarez will present *Dreams and Wise Words from the Tzotziles and Tzeltales Communities* at 6:30 p.m. on November 6, along with a new work, *Rechazan a los Militares San Cayetano* (*San Cayetano Rejects the Federal Army*). On December 4 at 6:30 p.m., José Buil and Maria Sistach's documentary, *La Linea Paterna* (*The Paternal Line*) (1995), compiled from one extended family's home movies, will be shown. The footage covers their lives in Mexico from the 1920s into the 90s.

This exhibition is supported in part by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art and the Mexican Cultural Institute of New York.

The exhibition will be followed in the spring by a program of contemporary Mexican films, organized by William Horrigan, Curator for Media Arts, The Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, and Ms. Berger.

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For more information or a schedule of programs, please call Lisbeth Mark, Department of Communications, 212/708-9847. Visit our Web site at www.moma.org.