

PRESS KIT

Graciela Iturbide . Eyes to Fly With
Feb 7 – Jun 10, 2026



PRESS KIT

Graciela Iturbide . Eyes to Fly With

- 3 **Press Release**
- 6 **Press Images**
- 7 **Events**
- 9 **C/O Berlin x Botanic Garden Berlin**
- 10 **Wall Texts**

PRESS RELEASE

Berlin, Dec 16, 2025

GRACIELA ITURBIDE

Eyes to Fly With

C/O Berlin is pleased to present the exhibition **Graciela Iturbide . Eyes to Fly With** from **Feb 7 to Jun 10, 2026**. The **opening** will take place at C/O Berlin in Amerika Haus on **Friday, Feb 6, 2026**, at **20:00**.

C/O Berlin presents the first major retrospective of Graciela Iturbide (b. 1942, Mexico) in Berlin, taking an in-depth look at the oeuvre of one of the leading voices in contemporary photography. Developed in close collaboration with the artist, the exhibition includes iconic series along with pictures that have rarely if ever been presented, tracing the development of the artist's photographic practice that has helped to shape the image of Mexico and its people for over five decades.

Iturbide's work explores the often intimate relationships between identity, ritual, and society. Her sensitive manner of approaching the people and communities that are the subjects of her images results in the poetic quality of her documentation. The exhibition's title *Eyes to Fly With* finds inspiration in the title of one of her self-portraits and refers, on a metaphorical level, to Iturbide's understanding of photography as a means of exploring both herself and the world, one that is liberating and opens up new perspectives.

One central theme of the exhibition is the depiction of women and their role in society. In *Juchitán de las Mujeres*, her series about the Zapotec people in Juchitán, Oaxaca, Iturbide portrays a social structure in which women occupy major economic and public positions, in this way challenging gender stereotypes. Her photographs evince a range of gender identities. This project exemplifies her interest in female autonomy and cultural diversity.

Additional series explore other regions and social contexts. In the 1970s and 1980s, Iturbide photographed the nomadic Seri people in northwestern Mexico, whose way of life is characterized by nonconformity. Her impressive photographs provide insight into their day-to-day life and reveal the diversity of Mexican culture, in which precolonial and colonial continuities still shape the present. Iturbide's series *La Matanza* is an independent series documenting the ritual of slaughtering goats that is practiced in the Mixteca region, showing the intersection of colonialism, ritual, survival, and death.

In the 1980s Iturbide also depicted the everyday life of the cholos and cholas, a Mexican-American subculture that has evolved in East Los Angeles, among other places. Inspired by these encounters, she began a long-term project, titled *White Fence*, that continued for more than three decades. Featuring people whose self-image is shaped by their heritage and present circumstances, as well as experiences of marginalization and migration, her photographs offer a nuanced reflection on community and cultural continuity in urban space.

PRESSE RELEASE

Berlin, Dec 16, 2025

In her photographic exploration of *Casa Azul*, Frida Kahlo's famous "Blue House," Iturbide focuses on Kahlo's perceptible presence. Decades after the artist's death, she photographed personal items—clothing, and relics that remained in the house—and explored the traces of a life marked by pain, creativity, and self-assertion. The photographs highlight the fine distinction between life and death, suffering and joy, and the closely intertwined realms of experience that are central to many of her works. The retrospective also contains rarely shown photographs that were taken on trips to India and Bangladesh.

Over the decades, Iturbide developed her own distinctive visual language. Her photographs combine documentary observation with personal reflection, developing over time from socially contextualized series to increasingly introspective, almost meditative explorations of transience and spirituality. The tension between tradition and modernism is a recurring motif in her work.

With around 250 works, including numerous vintage prints, contact prints, rarely seen color prints, and black-and-white photographs, the retrospective reflects the extraordinary range of her work from the late 1960s to the present. The show was curated by C/O Berlin curator Sophia Greiff and guest curator Melissa Harris.

Graciela Iturbide (b. 1942, Mexico) is one of the most important photographers in Latin America. After studying film directing and photography at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, she initially worked as an assistant to photographer Manuel Álvarez Bravo. Her predominantly black-and-white photographs are characterized by a visual language that combines both documentary and poetic elements. She repeatedly explores themes such as tradition, ritual, community, and transience. For her extensive body of work, Graciela Iturbide has received numerous awards, including the W. Eugene Smith Grant (1987), the Guggenheim Fellowship (1988), and the prestigious Hasselblad Award (2008). Her works are represented in museums worldwide, including the Consejo Mexicano de Fotografía in Mexico City, the Fototeca de Cuba in Havana, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. They have been shown in numerous exhibitions, most recently at the Fondation Cartier in Paris (2022), the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City (2023), The Photographers' Gallery in London (2024), and the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York (2025). She lives and works in Mexico City.

PRESS RELEASE

Berlin, Dec 16, 2025

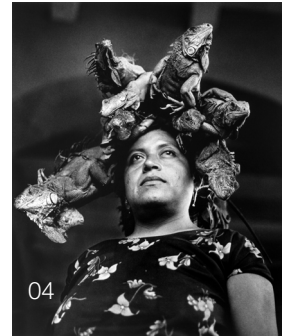
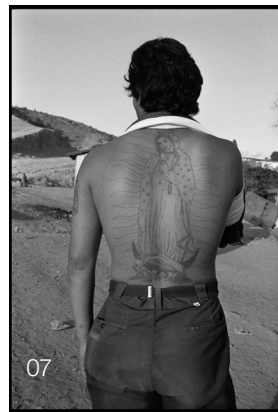
Graciela Iturbide

Eyes to Fly With

Exhibition	Feb 7 – Jun 10, 2026
Press Tour	Feb 6, 2026 . 11:00
Opening	Feb 6, 2026 . 20:00
Opening Hours	Daily . 11:00–20:00
Admission	12/6 euro
Organizer	C/O Berlin Foundation Amerika Haus . Hardenbergstraße 22–24 . 10623 Berlin Tel +49.30.284 44 16-0 . www.co-berlin.org www.facebook.com/coberlinphoto www.instagram.com/coberlin #coberlin #gracielaIturbidecoberlin
Press Contact	Beatrice Di Buduo . Head of Communication Ksenia Disterhof . Press and Public Relations T +49.30.284 44 16 0 . press@co-berlin.org
Supported by	Karin und Uwe Hollweg Stiftung

PRESS IMAGES

Graciela Iturbide . Eyes to Fly With



All images © Graciela Iturbide

01 *Desierto de Sonora*, Mexico, 1979 **02** *Mujer ángel*, Sonoran Desert, Mexico, 1979 **03** *Sahuaro*, Sonoran Desert, Mexico, 1979
04 *Nuestra Señora de las Iguanas*, Juchitán, Oaxaca, Mexico, 1979 **05** *Ciudad de México*, Mexico, 1969 **06** *Rosario, Cristina y Liza*, East LA, USA, 1968 **07** *La frontera*, Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, 1989 **08** *¿Ojos para volar?*, Coyoacán, Mexico, 1989 **09** *Novia muerte*, Chalma, Mexico, 1990 **10** *El Señor de los pájaros*, Nayarit, Mexico 1985 **11** *Homenaje a Manuel Álvarez Bravo*, Varanasi, India, 1998 **12** *Templo de las ratas*, Deshnok, India, 1999 **13** *Alhelí*, Oaxaca, Mexico, 1995

A selection of max. four images may be used free of charge at one time, three months before beginning and until the end of the exhibition in the context of editorial reporting only. They must not be used for commercial purposes or shared with third parties. They may not be modified, cropped, or printed over. Please always include the correct copyright notices and retain the captions supplied with images. Publications must mention C/O Berlin, the artist and the exhibition.

Contact Ksenia Disterhof . press@co-berlin.org . +49.30.284 44 16 40

C/O Berlin

C/O Berlin Foundation . Amerika Haus . Hardenbergstraße 22–24 . 10623 Berlin
Tel +49.30.284 44 16-0 . Fax +49.30.284 44 16-19 . info@co-berlin.org . www.co-berlin.org

EVENTS

FEB

Fri, Feb 6, 2026 . 20:00–00:00

Opening

Thu, Feb 12, 2026 . 17:00–18:30

Special Guided Tour

From Tequila Agave to Barrel Cactus

C/O Berlin x Botanischer Garten Berlin

Location Botanischer Garten Berlin, Königin-Luise-Straße 6-8, 14195 Berlin

Language German + *English*

Additional Dates *Mar 5 / Mar 12 / Apr 2 / Apr 9 / May 14 / Jun 4*

Tickets tickets.bo.berlin/mexico

Sat, Feb 14, 2026 . 15:00–16:00

Special Guided Tour

Ojos Para Volar . Visita Guiada en Español

La Obra de Graciela Iturbide

Language Spanish

Ticket 12/6 euro (incl. exhibition + tour)

MAR

Sat, Mar 14, 2026 . 15:00–16:00

Special Guided Tour

Ojos Para Volar . Visita Guiada en Español

La Obra de Graciela Iturbide

Language Spanish

Ticket 12/6 euro (incl. exhibition + tour)

Thu, Mar 19, 2026 . 19:00–21:00

Special Guided Tour

Especial: After Work Tour + Drink

Graciela Iturbide en Español y con Mezcal

Language Spanish

Ticket 20 euro (incl. exhibition + tour)

Sat, Mar 21, 2026 . 11:00–17:00

Photography Meets Creative Writing

A workshop as part of *Graciela Iturbide . Eyes to Fly With*

With Jesse Falzoi . Writer and creative writing lecturer

Participants max. 10, 16 years and older

Language German, English, Italian, French

Participation fee 45 euro (inkl. exhibition + snack)

Registration until Mar 7, 2026 via education@co-berlin.org

EVENTS

Thu, Mar 26, 2026 . 19:00–21:00

Special Guided Tour

After-Work Tour + Drink

Graciela Iturbide . Dörte Eißfeldt . Sheung Yiu

Language German

Ticket 20 Euro (incl. exhibition + drink)

APR

Thu, Apr 2, 2026 . 19:00–21:00

Talking Books

Maria Sturm . You Don't Look Native to Me

With Maria Sturm . Photographer

Welcome Sophia Greiff . Curator, C/O Berlin

Location Café C/O Berlin x Bark Berlin

Admission free (exhibition not incl.)

Wed, Apr 8, 2026 . 20:00–22:30

Amores Perros

A film series as part of *Graciela Iturbide . Eyes to Fly With*
Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2000, Mexico, drama, 2h 27 min

Venue delphi LUX . Kantstr. 10, Yva-Bogen, 10623 Berlin

Ticket online and at the box office at delphi LUX

Sat, Apr 11, 2026 . 15:00–16:00

Ojos Para Volar . Visita Guiada en Español

La Obra de Graciela Iturbide

Language Spanish

Ticket 12/6 euro (incl. exhibition + tour)

Wed, Apr 15, 2026 . 20:00–22:05

21 Grams

A film series as part of *Graciela Iturbide . Eyes to Fly With*
Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2003, USA, Thriller, 2h 5min

Ort delphi LUX . Kantstr. 10 Yva-Bogen, 10623 Berlin

Ticket online and at the box office at delphi LUX

Thu, Apr 16, 2026 . 19:00–21:00

Special Guided Tour

After-Work Tour + Drink

Graciela Iturbide . Dörte Eißfeldt . Sheung Yiu

Language German

Ticket 20 Euro (incl. exhibition + drink)

Mon, Apr 20, 2026 . 11:00–20:00

Extend Your Weekend

Free Mondays at C/O Berlin

EVENTS

Wed, Apr 22, 2026 . 20:00–22:40

Bardo, False Chronicle of a Handful of Truths

A film series as part of *Graciela Iturbide . Eyes to Fly With*

Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2022, USA, Comedy, 2 h 39 min

Ort delphi LUX . Kantstr. 10 Yva-Bogen, 10623 Berlin

Ticket online and at the box office at delphi LUX

MAY

Sat, May 16, 2026 . 15:00–16:00

Ojos Para Volar . Visita Guiada en Español

La Obra de Graciela Iturbide

Language Spanish

Ticket 18/12 euro (incl. exhibition + tour)

C/O BERLIN X BOTANIC GARDEN BERLIN



© Botanic Garden Berlin, Photo: C. Patić

To mark the exhibition *Graciela Iturbide . Eyes to Fly With*, C/O Berlin and the Botanic Garden Berlin are delighted to announce a special collaboration. The Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide has captured images in botanical gardens in various parts of the world. Her work also originates from a country whose deserts, semi-deserts, and arid forests rank among the world's most significant biodiversity hotspots.

Plant Residency

As part of the retrospective, the Botanic Garden Berlin is presenting a selection of Mexican plants that offer a glimpse into the extraordinary diversity of the region's flora—a diversity that also captivated Graciela Iturbide in her photography. Additionally, visitors can enjoy **reduced admission** to the Botanic Garden Berlin by presenting their exhibition tickets through **June 10, 2026**.

As a special highlight, the Botanic Garden Berlin is offering a **themed tour**: A Mexican evening walk "**From Tequila Agave to Barrel Cactus**". Guides will lead visitors through the fascinating world of cacti, agaves, and other succulents in the garden's greenhouses, sharing insights into the remarkable strategies these plants employ to survive months of drought.

Dates and Tickets



INTRODUCTION

For Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide (b. 1942, Mexico), photography is a way to explore oneself and the world. The exhibition title *Eyes to Fly With* expresses the ongoing changes in perspective made possible through the camera: "The lens gives me bird sight. With it, I am made aware of the many angles of truth."

In 1969 Iturbide began to study film directing at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, where she attended a course offered by photographer Manuel Álvarez Bravo (1902–2002) that would decisively shape her photographic approach. She worked as his assistant for a year and became acquainted with his poetic view of reality and also encountered works by artists such as Tina Modotti, Edward Weston, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Frida Kahlo, and Diego Rivera. She maintained a close friendship with her mentor until his death.

This first comprehensive retrospective in Berlin focuses on Iturbide's work in her home country, Mexico, a nation that was shaped by its diverse Indigenous cultures, including the Maya, Zapotec, and Mexica (Aztec) civilizations, as well as by the profound impact of Spanish colonialization, during which Catholicism, the Spanish language, and colonial power structures were forcefully imposed. Mexico is simultaneously characterized by great cultural diversity and sustained social inequality. Iturbide is interested in ritual and myths as well as encounters, fusion, and friction between tradition and modernity.

Topics that are central to her work include death and transience. In Mexican culture, death is viewed not as a conclusion but as a transition; death is integrated into everyday life, regarded with humor, and celebrated. On the *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead), altars and cemeteries are decorated with the "flower of death" (Tagetes or Mexican marigold, called *cempasúchil* in Spanish). The bright orange color is believed to show the souls of the dead the way back into the world of the living and also serves as a guidance system in the exhibition, symbolizing the cycle of life, death, and renewal.

For over five decades, Graciela Iturbide has created an extensive, internationally acclaimed oeuvre. She has been the recipient of awards such as the W. Eugene Smith Grant (1987), the Guggenheim Fellowship (1988), and the Hasselblad Award (2008). Her works are part of museum collections around the globe, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

Curated by Sophia Greiff (C/O Berlin Foundation) and Melissa Harris, this exhibition was created in close collaboration with the artist. We would like to thank Graciela Iturbide for generously sharing her vision and work as well as her registrar, Beatriz Mackenzie, for her wonderful eye and support in mounting this exhibition.

Unless otherwise indicated, all photographs are silver gelatin prints.

The wall texts are drawn from passages originally written or spoken in Spanish by Graciela Iturbide.

WALL TEXTS

“What you see through a lens, what catches your eye and causes you to point a camera, is highly subjective. Photography is not truth. Photographers interpret what is in front of them. Through this little window you compose, even dream, the reality in front of you. Even though you are seeing what passes before your lens for the first time, what the eye perceives is a synthesis of who you are, what you have learned: that is the photographic language. The task of the photographer is to infuse what we see with who we are, to make poetry out of reality.”

– Graciela Iturbide

SELF-PORTRAITS

“Self-portraiture serves as a means of questioning one’s self to become more self-aware, drawing out the ideas and struggles that one carries inside. I consider it very healing. My self-portraits have always been impulsive. It wasn’t until 1989 that I began to explore the genre with more intention. I made the self-portrait in which I’m covering my eyes with two birds, one living and one dead, at a difficult time in my life. I had separated from my husband and moved into a little house in Coyoacán that was still in the process of being built. I had no money. I felt very fragile. I titled the photograph as a question, *¿Ojos para volar?* [Eyes to Fly With?]. I was wondering whether I could still continue to make photographs, whether I had the strength and enthusiasm to create new images, to fly with my eyes.”

MEXICO

“Mexico City, and above all its historic center, was the scene of my own explorations, where I made the images I consider my first works of photography.

The city has shown me that the ordinary is the real source of the extraordinary. Street photography reveals to me how marvels are concealed within the commonplace. Of course, I’m predisposed to think this way, having had the good fortune to be born Mexican, to belong to a country where the legends of pre-Hispanic cultures still pervade our daily lives. Capturing the symbolism and meaning—the poetic dimension of humankind—is what most interests me.

I’ve also taken many portraits of artists and writers: I like it when subjects suggest poses to me. It’s really pleasant to work with people who have a good imagination, who participate in the creative process in such a way that you achieve a collaboration.”

DEATH

“Mexicans see life and death as conjoined, and are accustomed to living alongside death. There are many, many traditions and festivals centered on the theme. On feast days, people go to the cemetery; they take food, sing songs, maybe even take along a piano. On the *Day of the Dead* we give each other sugar skulls with our names on them to eat. We may play with death, but we also are afraid of it. This is why we try to face it straight on.

WALL TEXTS

When I lost my daughter Claudia in 1970, I became obsessed with photographing death, especially children dressed as *angelitos* (little angels) after they die, as is the custom in Mexico. I felt the need to involve myself in the deaths of others, perhaps in order to come to terms with my own pain. In 1978 in rural Mexico, I came across some people carrying an *angelito* to the cemetery. I asked permission to take photographs. They agreed—the whole family even posed—and they opened the coffin so I could photograph the *angelito*. They allowed me to follow them to the cemetery in Dolores Hidalgo. On the way, the father turned to me with a startled, terrified expression. In the middle of the road was a body—half man, half skeleton. It was still wearing trousers and shoes, but had been pecked all over by vultures.

It was as if Death were saying to me, 'You want to photograph me? Here I am.' That is how I began photographing birds. Death appeared, and I thought, 'That's enough! Don't keep living your suffering this way.' In the cemetery, vultures were flying overhead, and I photographed the sky full of birds instead. All of this is to say that in life, everything is connected: your imagination helps you process reality."

SERI

"When I arrive in a new place, I follow my imagination, but I also try to speak to Elders and other locals to get to know their history and way of life. It is very important to me that the communities and people I photograph are involved in the process. I don't steal images. When I arrive in a new place, I'm clear about what I'm doing there; people know that they are going to be photographed. I don't have a telephoto lens or a tripod or a flash. In some ways, with the camera, I am asking to take photos. If they don't give their consent, I don't photograph.

There were only five hundred Seris still living when I photographed them in the Sonoran Desert near Hermosillo. The Seris are former nomads and their daily life is austere. The men go fishing and make sculptures; the women gather seashells and make necklaces. I couldn't walk out into the streets and expect to document their lives in the same way I have in other places. I lived with them for a month, and we established a familiarity between us. I made portraits of almost all the families in their traditional attire.

One day, they wanted to show me some cave paintings, and I went into the desert with them. That's when I photographed the angel woman carrying the boom box, the *Mujer ángel*. For me, this photograph represents the transition from their traditional way of life and the way capitalism changed it. The Seris, who are in constant contact with the United States, believe that money promotes inequalities and individualism. They did not want to become a divided society, so they traded their folk art for electronic equipment like radios. I liked the fact that they hadn't lost their traditions, but had taken what they needed from American culture."

JUCHITÁN

“The painter Francisco Toledo had seen my work and invited me to take photographs of Juchitán, where he was from. I didn’t know that I would end up photographing in Juchitán for the next ten years. The town is located on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in southern Mexico [a land bridge between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean], a region that has been inhabited by Zapotec peoples for thousands of years. As with other places in the state of Oaxaca, the myths, language, and traditions of the Indigenous past remain alive among the people, even as they adapt to new ways of life.

I don’t aspire to mythologize Indigenous populations, as many believe. What I like is their way of mythologizing everyday life. Ultimately, I think photography is a ritual for me. To go off with my camera, observe, capture the most mythical part of man, then go into darkness, develop, choose the symbolism.

Thanks to Toledo’s friends and relatives, it was easy for me to connect with the people of Juchitán. Before too long, the *juchitecos*, especially the women, got to know me, and I began to make friends. I went everywhere with my camera so that people would know that I was a photographer, and I also lived with them, which created solidarity.

Most of the friends I made worked in the market. Women of Juchitán go there to sell or barter; men cannot enter, though *Muxes* [third-gender people of the Zapotec Indigenous communities of Oaxaca], who are genderqueer, can.

While women had a stronger place in Juchitán culture than they do elsewhere—they handled the family finances, worked several jobs at the same time, drank, danced, and enjoyed themselves just like the men—they did not consider themselves matriarchs. Outside of Zapotec culture, Mexican women are resigned to a lesser role.

Unfortunately, in Mexico the Indigenous world is very marginalized and class prejudices prevent us from experiencing it. In Juchitán, people live decently, but there are other regions in the country where Indigenous people live in deplorable conditions. This needs to be resolved, but on another level—not with photography. As a photographer, I’m not trying to change the world.”

BOTANICAL GARDENS

“At the Oaxaca botanical garden, I was fascinated by the sight of this kind of hospital for cactuses. The cactuses were covered in netting, held in place by ropes, wrapped in burlap bags or supported by iron shafts that looked like orthopedic devices. I saw these plants as sculptures. I was fortunate enough to photograph the garden while it was still under construction and not open to the public. I captured the plants, many relocated from around the region, while they were in therapy, so to speak. It’s possible that I too needed therapy at the time, because I was going through a depressive episode and that’s probably why I felt such deep empathy for these plants.

I have had the opportunity to photograph botanical gardens in other parts of the world since then—in India, the United States, Brazil and Italy. Gardens are always the product of both nature and culture. They can also be spaces of fantasy and dreams.”

FASHION

“I had never done fashion photography until I had the opportunity to work with Carla Fernández and Maria Grazia Chiuri at Dior. Fortunately, they let me do what I wanted, and now, interestingly enough, I enjoy taking fashion photos my own way.”

Carla Fernández wrote in her *Manifesto of Fashion as Resistance*: “Graciela Iturbide’s photographs for our collection titled ‘Fashion in Resistance,’ Fall–Winter 2017 feature the character of Alice in Wonderland traveling through Xochimilco and Milpa Alta, two living examples of pre-Hispanic Mexico that subsist in the present day with an endemic system of mixed agriculture. Both places are sustained upon a practice of reciprocal assistance among the communities that plant, harvest, distribute and sell what they grow.”

FRIDA’S BATHROOM

“I was asked to photograph Frida Kahlo’s *huipiles* (traditional tunics). They had been discovered in the private areas of Museo Frida Kahlo, also known as the Blue House. When Kahlo died in 1954, her husband, painter Diego Rivera, gave instructions that two rooms—bathrooms that had been converted into storerooms—could not be opened for fifteen years. When I went to the Blue House to see the *huipiles*, I realized that what the museum wanted was a straightforward record of the garments. I told the director, Hilda Trujillo, that I wasn’t the right photographer for the task, that I didn’t take studio photos. But as I was leaving, I happened to look into one of the bathrooms and saw that a bathtub was full of miscellaneous objects, including some crutches and multiple images of Joseph Stalin. I asked permission to return and make my own work there, and Hilda agreed.

The space had a charged atmosphere, along with a strong smell and the dust of half a century. The large bottles of Demerol, the painkiller, made the biggest impression on me. Here in the bathroom was the medicine Kahlo took decades ago. I rearranged the objects in order to reinterpret the traces of her. I took photographs of enemas, Demerol, a prosthetic leg, as well as some of her corsets, which looked almost like instruments of torture. It was very moving to be in touch with her, so to speak, through photographing the objects that related to the pain she suffered. I was interested in capturing the *elan vital* of Frida Kahlo, and wanted to make a series of absent-portraits of her. I tried to bring to life the real person rather than the celebrity.

I am not a follower of Frida’s legend, not a devotee of ‘Fridamania’—not everything she painted appeals to me—but I acknowledge her powerful imagination and admire that her suffering did not prevent her from remaining active as an artist or a militant of leftist political causes. Her work was her therapy. I took the liberty of making a composition with my own feet in her bathtub.”

CHOLOS

"I was invited to participate in the 'Day in the Life' book series where a large group of photographers was assigned to document in a state, country, or continent, over the course of a single day. I wanted to document people of Mexican descent in California—a community of the utmost importance to the social and economic livelihood of the United States, however much this recognition is denied them.

My destination in May 1986 was Los Angeles. Through the painter Margarita Garcia, I had arranged to photograph a group of young people known as *cholos*, which included some of her family members. Margarita took me to the house they shared in East Los Angeles. They were proud members of the White Fence Gang, which had a long history of violence in that part of California.

For one full day and a few more hours, I lived with Liza, Arturo, Cristina, and Rosario and her baby. I accompanied them while they met up with friends and other members of the gang, went out shopping or walked to the nearby park where drugs were sold. Their neighborhood had references to Mexican culture and identity everywhere.

Building on these relationships, I was able to continue photographing the *White Fence Gang*; I visited them again in 1989 and made portraits of the original subjects, as well as of other friends and family members.

I had no contact with the group again until 2007, when some of them came to the opening of an exhibition of mine, *The Goat's Dance*, at the J. Paul Getty Museum. After seeing their younger selves, they invited me to come back to make more pictures. With the help of Margarita Garcia, I was able to locate many of the people I had photographed in the 1980s. I made several trips to extend the series to show where their lives had taken them and include their widening families with many children and grandchildren."

LA MIXTECA

"I first heard about the ritual slaughter of goats in Oaxaca's Mixteca region from the painter Sergio Hernández. He was born in one of the villages where the practice takes place and shared with me his childhood memories of the bloody walls, ground, and rivers after a sacrifice. [The Spanish conquest had originally brought the particular breed of goats and the slaughtering ritual to La Mixteca, one of the poorest regions in Oaxaca, over 200 years ago.] In the early 1990s, I was able to see it with my own eyes: blood is everywhere. Only one goat is spared annually, wreathed in flowers, and led in a dance.

When I went, it was so very difficult. People who came from Spain—Galicians—hired local Indigenous people to do the work. Every time I saw the Indigenous people kill a goat, they crossed themselves, as if asking the animal for forgiveness. That's why I made a small book called *En el Nombre del Padre* [In the Name of the Father]."

WALL TEXTS

Despite its brutality and the increasing controversy surrounding this ritual slaughter, the annual event significantly helped the Mixtec economy, as the goat meat was sold, and no part of the sacrificed creatures was wasted. Now, many groups want to stop this goat slaughter and are working very hard to do so.

TRAVEL

“Traveling is lonely. Not a desperate loneliness but the kind that asks me to reflect more deeply about the place I'm in. The wings behind my eyes open wide; traveling helps me see my many selves better.

I have taken my camera to the different corners of our planet. Photography has given me the opportunity to get to know my own country, as well as many other places. I have made images for various reasons and purposes, some personal, some on commission for Mexican institutions such as the Instituto Nacional Indigenista or international organizations like Doctors Without Borders and the UN High Commission for Refugees. As with more personal work, the images I take during my travels express my own viewpoint, my surprise in the face of the unknown, my discovery of details that I consider significant.

It seems to me that if I embrace my authorial vision from the start, I can be honest regarding the realities of the people that I am portraying. Photography contains a regard within a regard between the gaze of the photographer and the gaze of the subject, the image becomes a reflection of the person taking the picture. Knowing that, I try to avoid the picturesque, the exotic, or other colonial prejudices that impose the predominance of a single value system. I am interested above all in acknowledging and valuing the diversity of cultures, geographies, and contexts in which life manifests itself. I want each of my photographs to contain a little of what it means to belong to humanity.”

INDIA & BANGLADESH

“During my first trip to India in 1998, all my work was centered on objects and symbols. Luckily, I also encountered many birds. We photographers are inhabited by an unconscious obsession that drives us to bring the theme that interests us wherever we go. I see certain echoes of Mexico in India, and that filters my experience too.

On my second trip, I was very interested in the trans people. In the situations I experienced, they were treated with respect. It's like in Juchitán, with the *Muxes* [third-gender people of the Zapotec Indigenous communities of Oaxaca], who are accepted.

In Varanasi, I photographed wrestlers who have the ritual of covering themselves with sand and massaging themselves with it; then they clean the place where they will fight and finally they take a bath. They have a guru, their teacher.

In Bangladesh a friend told me she knew of a brothel near where we were; out of curiosity, I went. The surrounding area is full of ads because sex-work is legal there, the women have permits to work and are given the necessary care.”

WALL TEXTS

BIRDS

“I use my bird sight to see the fragments. The camera as mirror as bird eye. And I with eyes to fly. Always midflight. I look to the skies. Birds like shifting stars and all of them speaking to one another—telling different stories. Wings spread and reverberate until silence.

Everywhere there are signs of calls to higher powers. I raise my ear to the sky and hope to hear a response. And I do. It is flocks of wings that fill my body and continue to guide me. I have learned to listen to the beaks that open and close as they do now. Birds speak to me from within the pit of myself as much as they do when I photograph them. I know to trust this song.”

– Graciela Iturbide