

GRACIELA ITURBIDE

Exhibition period: **March 8th – June 30th, 2019**

Opening: **Thursday, March 7th, 7 pm**

Press tour: **Thursday, March 7th, 12 noon**

Her early projects on the Seri Indians and the *Juchitán of Women* made the Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide and her unique picture language worldfamous. From 8 March to 30 June the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt presents the first retrospective of the outstanding Latin American photographer in Germany.

Frankfurt am Main, 07.03.2019 – With her black and white images Graciela Iturbide brings us the shadows of human existence. Traditions and their fragility, belief and religion, community and death are common themes for the artist. Within a five-decade career she has built an oeuvre that is fundamental for understanding the development of photography in Mexico and the rest of Latin America. The Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (FFF) honours the artist, who was born in 1942 in Mexico-City, with her first retrospective in Germany. The exhibition **GRACIELA ITURBIDE** has been organised by Fundación MAPFRE, Madrid, in cooperation with the FFF. It highlights seminal works from all creative phases of this exceptional photographer and is solely comprised of photographs belonging to the Fundación MAPFRE Collection since 2008.

Many of Graciela Iturbide's works are inspired by social norms and values, and evolve around cultural tensions, especially in her home country. This appears already in her first major photographic project "Juchitán de las Mujeres" (Juchitán of Women). Between 1979 and 1988 Iturbide repeatedly traveled to the myth-shrouded Zapotec heartland of Juchitán in the southern state of Oaxaca, which is well known for the dominance of women in the local economy and politics today. She lived within the matriarchal community and photographed the women over an extended time period, unforgettably portraying their deeply rooted independence and their dignified strength.

Another project in which Graciela Iturbide straddles the boundary between the documentary and the lyrical, focuses on the Seri Indians of the Sonoran Desert. Beginning in the end of the 1970s, she goes beyond the specifics of the everyday to capture the dichotomy of the indigenous life shaped by ancestral traditions and western modern spirit.

Again and again Iturbide reveals her talent for stirring up unusual visual metaphors to tell about the diversity of life itself. She demonstrates this by mirroring the theatricality of religious celebrations and the popular Mexican carnival rituals associated with death, or through the body language of the "White Fence" gang members from the 1980s in Los Angeles. The mystical atmosphere of botanical gardens and landscapes which she pictured in Mexico as well as on travels to such contrasting countries as India, Italy and Madagascar are also similar visual allegories, not to forget her fascinating images of birds that she has spent so many years photographing.

In 2006 Graciela Iturbide became the first person to be allowed to enter the bathroom of Frida Kahlo which had been closed since the painter's death in 1954. Respectfully the icon of Mexican

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photography approaches this icon of Mexican painting – by opening a dialogue with the painter’s objects and utensils that Iturbide found left in the room. A dynamic completely corresponding to her own artistic need: “Photography is a pretext to discover”, as Iturbide herself puts it.

Graciela Iturbide grew up in a traditional Catholic family. She first studied film at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Independent National University of Mexico) and then, inspired by her mentor Manuel Álvarez Bravo discovered photography as her true vehicle for creative expression. It also helped her to cope with a personal tragedy, the death of her six-year-old daughter. Iturbide’s photographs have been exhibited all over the world and she has received multiple recognitions for her work, amongst others with the *W. Eugene Smith Fund Grant* (1987), the *International Grand Prize of the Museum of Photography* in Hokkaido, Japan (1990) and the prestigious *Hasselblad Award* (2008). Graciela Iturbide lives and works in Coyoacán, the artists’ quarter of Mexico City.

Project partners:



FOTOGRAFIE FORUM FRANKFURT

The Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (FFF) is one of the leading centres of photography in Europe. As an exhibition space, institution and event forum the FFF deals with all aspects of photography. Since its founding in 1984 it has presented more than 250 exhibitions with historic and contemporary artists. Additionally, the program of the FFF comprises of regular workshops, talks and discussions with internationally renowned photographers, artists and experts. Further information available at www.fff Frankfurt.org

Fotografie Forum Frankfurt is supported by Förderkreis Fotografie Forum Frankfurt e.V., Stadt Frankfurt am Main and Olympus Deutschland GmbH.

