

# GRACIELA ITURBIDE

**Graciela Iturbide** (\*1942, Mexico City) enrolled in 1969, at the age of 27, at the film school *Centro de Estudios Cinematográficos* at the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* to become a film director. However she was soon drawn to the art of still photography as practiced by the Mexican modernist master Manuel Alvarez Bravo who was teaching at the University. From 1970-71 she worked as Bravo's assistant accompanying him on his various photographic journeys throughout Mexico.

After the sudden death of her six-year-old daughter in the same year she began working with Bravo, her life changed radically – photography becomes her profession and death her permanent companion in future works.

In the early half of the 1970s, Iturbide traveled widely across Latin America and documented general Omar Torrijos' attempt to build a left wing regime in Panama. In 1978 Iturbide was commissioned by the *Ethnographic Archive of the National Indigenous Institute of Mexico* to photograph Mexico's indigenous population. Iturbide decided to document and record the way of life of the Seri Indians, a group of fisherman living a nomadic lifestyle in the Sonoran desert in the north west of Mexico, along the border with Arizona, US.

In 1979 she was invited by the artist Francisco Toledo to photograph the Juchitán people who form part of the Zapotec culture native to Oaxaca in southern Mexico. Iturbide's series that started in 1979 and runs through to 1988 resulted in the publication of her book *Juchitán de las Mujeres* in 1989. Between 1980 and 2000, Iturbide was variously invited to work in Cuba, East Germany, India, Madagascar, Hungary, Paris and the US, producing a number of important bodies of work.

Since 1975 Iturbide's work has been variously published and exposed at more than 60 venues, as the Centre Pompidou (1982), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1990), Philadelphia Museum of Art (1997), Paul Getty Museum (2007), MAPFRE Foundation, Madrid (2009), Photography Museum Winterthur (2009), and Barbican Art Gallery (2012), between others.

Iturbide has received various prizes and funds as the *W. Eugene Smith Memorial Fund Grant* (1987), the *Grand Prize Mois de la Photo*, Paris (1988), a *Guggenheim Fellowship* for the project *Fiesta y Muerte* (1988), the *Hugo Erfurth Award*, Leverkusen (1989), the *International Grand Prize*, Hokkaido (1990), the *Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie Award*, Arles (1991), the *Hasselblad Award* (2008), the *National Prize of Sciences and Arts* in Mexico City (2008), an Honorary Degree in photography from the Columbia College Chicago in 2008, and an Honorary Doctorate of Arts from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009.

She continues to live and work in Mexico City.

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